



# Fear, Finance, and Festivity: Satirical Storytelling in Integrated Marketing Communication of Danamon's 'Financial Fears' Campaign

Fredericko Zein Kurniawan<sup>1</sup> and Arsa Widityarsa Utoyo<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Tangerang, Indonesia  
arsa.widityarsa@umn.ac.id

**Abstract.** This study explores the role of satirical storytelling as a persuasive technique in integrated marketing communication, with a focus on Danamon's "Financial Fears" campaign. Designed around the theme of financial anxiety among millennials and Gen Z in Indonesia, the campaign used horror-inspired visuals and festive Halloween motifs to frame complex economic issues in relatable narratives. Employing a qualitative case study method, this research examines campaign executions across multiple channels, including outdoor media, digital platforms, and consumer activations, while applying the frameworks of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and narrative persuasion. Results show that satire and humor, when combined with cultural symbolism, effectively captured audience attention, reduced the stigma surrounding financial struggles, and encouraged proactive financial decision-making. The campaign's cross-platform consistency, emotional resonance, and creative humor prove how financial institutions can employ unconventional approaches to foster meaningful connections with audiences. This article argues that satirical storytelling within IMC not only enhances brand engagement but also contributes to social discourse by framing financial literacy in accessible and culturally resonant ways.

**Keywords:** Satirical storytelling, Integrated Marketing Communications, Financial campaign, Digital advertising, Humor, persuasion

## 1 Introduction

Money stress is a key issue among Indonesian millennials. Millennials and Gen Z, especially in urban areas, confront structural economic headwinds like skyrocketing housing prices, defined wages and precarious job prospects. Findings from Katadata Insight Center (2022) and IDN Research Institute (2019) also suggest that over a third of millennials describe feeling financially insecure, with housing affordability and long-term savings being front runners for especially intimidating prospects.

"Theoretical Background" This introduction elaborates the background by framing financial anxiety as an economic and psychological experience. At a global level, the World Bank (2021) and OECD (2022) noted that young people anywhere in the world face affordability problems and precarious work, but Indonesia is unique among them

in terms of cultural dynamics, fast urbanization, and hybridizing with global culture practice.

Historically, Indonesian banking advertisements have similarly used rational formal teaching tone. They tend to stress credibility, education, and guidance. Their approaches, though successful in setting up trust, however, often overlook emotional and cultural aspects of financial behavior. Certain banks have turned that belief on its head, and 'Financial Fears' by Danamon which is timed around Halloween provided a point in case. By using satire, humor and horror, the campaign turned financial woes into funny but recognizable stories.

The presence of Halloween as a cultural sign has steadily been more popular in Indonesia over the past decade, particularly to urban youth. Although it is not a customary celebrated day, Halloween has penetrated the pop culture through malls, social media, and entertainment (Azizah, 2024). Danamon ingeniously adopted this celebratory imagery to deliver sober financial topics. By being debts, mortgages and financial "pressures" as figurative 'monsters' the campaign amalgamated global cultural imagery with local worries. "Using humor helped soften the stigmatization and allowed people to approach financial literacy in a non-threatening way.

This passage of the chapter provides more explanation of how satire works in communication studies. Political communication scholars often consider Satire (Baym, 2005; Gray et al., 2009) which questions those in power while transmitting to wide publics. Translating satire in financial advertising is an innovative extension of a rhetorical technique. In humorously denigrating money woes, the campaign made a "benign violation" (McGraw & Warren, 2010), whereby negative topics were made safe to talk about in a jesting way.

This research is important in theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature of narrative persuasion, humor theory, and cultural hybridity in financial communication. More, it provides lessons for finance companies hoping to attract the digital- first youth market. The study is informed by the key question: In which way did the use of satire and horror in 'financial fears' work to mediate financial messages for Indonesian youth?

## **2 Literature Review**

The literature reviews situate the study in four domains: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), narrative persuasion, humor and satire in advertising, and earlier studies on financial communication and cultural hybridity. In comparing these dimensions, the research locates Danamon's 'Financial Fears' campaign theoretically and practically.

### **2.1 Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)**

IMC highlights the importance of integrating various communication tools to deliver a consistent brand experience. Shimp (2018) defines IMC as the "strategic melding" of advertising, PR, direct marketing, digital channels, and promotions. IMC most effec-

tively uses channels via integration, adding up to more than their individual components. In Asian culture, Valentia & Bangun (2023) found that IMC presents, and the brand trust and message recall is increasing when campaign is consistent in a platform. For 'Financial Fears', Danamon brought the visuals, satire, and narrative throughout Instagram, Videotrons, outdoor posters and activation events to make sure that the tone of horror humor were consistent and easily identified.

## **2.2 Narrative Persuasion and Storytelling**

Narrative persuasion theory (Green & Brock, 2000) proposes that stories immerse audiences in a fictional world and thus inhibit counter-arguing while facilitating emotional involvement. Stories can make unfamiliar or taboo subjects into something people can relate to. In advertising, narrative persuasion has been used in health campaigns, environmental communication, and social issues. When similarly employed in a financial context (in Danamon's case) they made debt and mortgages the focus of their story – haunted houses, monsters, or shadowy figures – allowing audiences to relate to financial concerns symbolically, rather than. Other explorations (Escalas, 2004; Van Laer et al., 2014) support appeal to storytelling in relation to the development of consumers' brand-relationships by stimulating empathic and identificatory resonant experiences.

## **2.3 Satire and Humor in Advertising**

Humour is known as a preparatory aid that reduces defence, improves recall, and promotes involvement (Eisend, 2009). Nabi et al. (2007) suggest that humor presented in social advertising have a potential power to reduce stigma by bringing sensitive issues within reach. Satire across all media, is a mix of comedic relief and challenge, allowing viewers to confront social or personal issues without feeling personally targeted. In advertising, humour has been used rarely but effectively especially in ads for taboo or emotionally weighty subjects. The concept of satire presented in the 'Financial Fears' ads can shift financial fears into comedic storied, a benign violation (McGraw & Warren, 2010) that make serious situations laughable and therefore obtain public domain. In a place like Indonesia, where many people's financial struggles are private and even shameful, satire offers a novel inroad into this conversation.

## **2.4 Cultural Hybridity in Communication**

According to Cultural Hybridity theory (Bhabha 1994), global and local cultural signs coalesce in new meanings. In Indonesia, international celebrations such as Valentine Day, Christmas and Halloween have been gradually localized to match youth audience by brands (Azizah, 2024). Hybrid campaigns evoke global imagery in local terms and provide the audience with a taste of both its continuity and novelty. By tapping into the horror motifs of Halloween in financial advertising, Danamon fomented a hybrid narrative that intersected these 'occidental' symbols with some of the anxieties found

among Indonesian citizens around banking. This hybridity resonates with Fay & Haydon (2017) who believe that hybridised campaigns help brands cross cultural frontiers as well as remain meriting.

Research Gap Previous research has already investigated IMC within digital branding (Valentia & Bangun, 2023), humor in advertising (Eisend, 2009) and cultural hybridity in consumer markets (Fay & Haydon, 2017). There are studies on satire in financial advertising in Indonesia, but they are still rare. Communication in banking preserves rational and formal nature, rather than being humanized and emotional. This deficit highlights the necessity of examining, in 'Financial Fears', a novel type of whereby satire and horror were intentionally synthesized to draw in younger, Internet-literate audiences. To summarize, the literature seems to suggest that IMC provides message consistency, storytelling engages users through vicarious experience of being there (Kress and van Leeuwen and Brooks) same as above; see also Fabian), humor lowers resistance, and cultural hybridity makes global symbols local. This framework not only enables us to analyze the use of satire and horror in Danamon's campaign, but also as a bridge between general areas mentioned above (scholarly discussions on modern media) we apply it to understand their uses beyond these borders of financial messages.

### 3 Research Method

This research used a qualitative case study method, and it saw how comedy and horror were applied in Danamon's Financial Fears campaign. Given the need for in-depth understanding of complex communication strategies and cultural adaptations (Yin, 2018), a case study design was employed. It is a highly pertinent example of cultural hybridity and narrative persuasion within financial advertising.

The audience engagement metrics cited in the research have been ascertained using secondary data, namely social media analytical tools, and referenced reports in the media, citing the number of impressions on the Instagram project. These engagement metrics were used descriptively in this research to place context around the extent to which the online audience was made aware of the campaign.

**Data Collection:** The primary data comprised campaign artifacts of Instagram carousel posts, Videotron visuals, and outdoor posters as well as documentation of activation events on Sarinah. Additional materials came from conversations with two creative directors at LUP Jakarta, the agency behind the campaign, and one marketing manager at Danamon. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with six young professionals (aged 23–34), in Jakarta, were also conducted to obtain audience belief of the campaign's relevance and influence. **Sampling:** Informants were selected by purposive sampling and thus had physical hands-on experience in how the campaign was created and was a part of sending the message to target audiences. To understand the views of digital-savvy urban young people (the campaign's core target audience) FGDs were conducted. **Analysis:** Data was analyzed using a thematic analysis.

The research is aware that there could be a positive bias emanating from the interviews conducted among the campaign insiders, the creatives, as well as the brand representatives who took part in the making of the campaign. To offset the influence of bias, the research findings will be balanced through the collection of data using a range of methods that include the focus group discussions among the independent audience members.

It does recognize the possibility of positivity bias with the addition of the research interviews with the insiders in the campaign who contributed to the design and implementation of the campaign. It could mitigate this positivity bias by adding the focus group discussion (FGDs) with the members of the target audiences and the assessment of the campaign material through different platforms.

Coding campaign visuals for common themes (e.g., haunted houses, monsters, eerie shadows), narrative elements (satire or humor) and IMC breakdown of key ideas across platforms that share similar messages. Interview transcripts and notes FGD were coded for audience understandings and feelings. The themes were identified as (1) monstrous discourse, (2) satire as guilt tripping, (3) cross-channel IMC and (4) the audience in turn. Reliability and Validity: A double coding was used to validate the data. Triangulation was used to verify findings between the campaign artifacts, interviews, FGD and secondary sources including media coverage. Danamon's performance metrics as an internal organisation were difficult to access, so I added some engagement metrics (Social Media Reach / Brand Talkability Index) that were publicly available.

## **4 Results And Discussions**

### **4.1 Horror-Inspired Storytelling**

The campaign creatively reframed Halloween's horror tropes as metaphors for financial anxiety. Haunted houses were used to visualise the terror of a mortgage we can't afford, while the spooky shadows and monsters became metaphors for expenses that never seem to go away. One image that caught my attention was the haunted 'living amidst in-laws' fear as a pictorial representation of unmet demand for housing. These visual metaphors turned abstract financial issues into concrete, understandable anxieties and connected with young viewers in a powerful way.

### **4.2 The persuasive potential of humor and satire Horror-Inspired Storytelling**

The horror scenes had humor mixed in, taking off the edge of the shame about money. With satirical copywriting, we treated the everyday as ridiculous; in this way, we made it possible for audiences to laugh nervously about their concerns and yet take them seriously. This is consistent with benign violation theory (McGraw & Warren, 2010) which suggests that things that are inappropriate or distressing in some way can be transformed into acceptable topics for discussion via humour. Feedback from the FGDs also suggested that humour made the campaign less intimidating than typical financial advertising.

### **4.3 Cross-Channel IMC Strategy**

One Voice Policy of the IMC strategy brought uniformity in its message on different mediums. Instagram carousels captured digital-native attention with playful, shareable visuals. Videotrons, and outdoor posters in the city of Jakarta generated widespread public visibility. We took event activations at Sarinah that were very immersive experiences and made financial fears into haunted attractions. Media attention in Indonesian and international media furthered the debate, lending credibility to the campaign as an entertainment vehicle.

### **4.4 Audience Resonance**

The potential audience for the campaign was young (18–40) digital urbanites susceptible to both global and youth pop culture, plagued by financial pressure at a disproportionate level. According to reactions on social media, consumers found the campaign relatable, humorous and a breath of fresh air from traditional bank advertising. Participants in FGD highlighted how the satire humour minimized taboo about talking money problems and perceived the brand as being more amiable. The campaign earned a 359.77% raise in talkability index of Danamon's brand based on secondary data and 45,000,000+ impressions on social media.

This research underscores the value for marketers to incorporate cultural hybridity and satire/humor in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) connected with financial advertising. Danamon's 'Financial Fears' campaign took horror elements and key satirical storytelling to turn financial fears into entertaining, relatable stories. This section grounds the findings in communication-theory perspective and discusses their meanings.

### **4.5 Cultural Hybridity and Localization**

The campaign showed how foreign cultural references such as Halloween were hybridized and localized to the Indonesian context. It is also consistent with Bhabha (1994) who posits that the encounter of global and local symbols yields new cultural meanings. By fusing Halloween scenes with financial storytelling, Danamon made a Western ritual relatable and fresh to Indonesian viewers. This hybridity not only facilitated engagement but also positioned the brand as cross culturally adaptable.

### **4.6 Narrative Persuasion and Emotional Resonance**

These results are consistent with the Green & Brock (2000) model of narrative persuasion, positing that narratives have the ability to carry people away from this world in a fictional world and reduce resistance and enhance identification. By describing mortgages and debts as "monsters" that haunt houses, the campaign gave audiences a visual means to imagine complex financial issues without feeling overwhelmed. This narrative approach contributed to a successful destigmatization and the initiation of informal, humorous conversations about financial literacy.

Satire as Soft Persuasion

Satire was a strong rhetorical tool in this campaign. In line with benign violation theory (McGraw & Warren, 2010), satirizing the taboo topic of finance led to funny discussions. Where ads conventional banking adverts used power as a weapon, unorthodox and unexpected humour allowed Danamon to be accessible and selling with its heart on its sleeve. FGDs also revealed that women really liked the humour, which took away some of the scariness of talking about finances and draw them in.

#### **4.7 IMC Consistency Across Platforms**

It was such a successful campaign because IMC execution has been practiced consistently. Instagram, Videotron, outdoor and activation all built towards the satirical horror theme. Such congruence supports Shimp's (2018) claim that IMC optimizes campaign impact by achieving message synergy. This proves that even unorthodox modes of storytelling needs to respect IMC rules if its reach and frequency is to be at its best.

#### **4.8 Comparative Insights**

DonatianusIt sounded like a move away from rational, credible & functional financial campaigns in Indonesia Donatianus yeah compared to the traditional banking/financial campaigns that are based on credibility and also logic / reason "Financial Fears" no they meant it as emotion and culture which is not typically indonesian actually i think those ads was mapping to emotional without prescription side rather than traditional indonesian advertising. This is consistent with international financial advertising trends where the use of storytelling and reference to popular culture have become typical in attempts to reach younger audiences (Fay & Haydon, 2017). The campaign shows off the fact that satire and humor can appear as practical strategies in businesses typically ruled by seriousness.

## **5 Conclusion**

This research extends previous work in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and narratives of persuasion into the area of financial communication, where the dominant type of communication has been rational/instructional in nature. This research proves that satire and hybridity have a valid role in the realm of soft persuasion for financial institutions in communicating complex financial matters in a culturally convincing manner.

The satiric/horror-based narrative IMC can function as a persuasive strategy in financial ads, based on the results of this research. Danamon's 'Financial Fears' campaign successfully showcased financial fears in an entertaining and approachable manner, breaking down barriers and making conversation easier.

The implication of this research is that satirical and horror-influenced narrative can be a highly persuasive tool in financial advertising when incorporated into IMC. Danamon's 'Financial Fears' campaign Relevantly, found new ways to position Indonesians

ready for banking with conversations around funny financial fears. The campaign illustrates using global and local cultural symbols, how creative fusion in the culture industry enhances modalities of communication.

## References

1. Aprinta, G. (2023). Globalisasi Budaya, Homogenisasi dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Identitas Budaya Lokal. *Jurnal Janaloka*, 1(1)
2. Azizah, F. N., Wang, M. S., & Maserona, L. (2024). Penerapan integrated marketing communication bumdes sinergi sidowayah dalam pengelolaan desa wisata sidowayah periode 2023. *Jurnal solidaritas fisip unisri*, vol 8(no 2), 1–8
3. Azizah, U. N. (2024, October 31). Mengapa Halloween Diperingati pada Tanggal 31 Oktober? Ini Asal-usulnya.
4. Eisend, M. (2009). A meta-analysis of humor in advertising. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 37(2), 191–203.
5. Firmansyah, M. A. (2020). *Komunikasi Pemasaran (First)*. CV. PENERBIT QIARA MEDIA.
6. Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(5), 701–721.
7. Nabi, R. L., Moyer-Gusé, E., & Byrne, S. (2007). All Joking Aside: A Serious Investigation into The Persuasive Effect of Funny Social Issue Messages. *Communication Monographs*, 74(1), 29–54.
8. Shimp, T. A., & Andrews, J. C. (2018). *Advertising, Promotion, and other aspects of Integrated Marketing Communications*. Cengage
9. Stephen Fay, & Liam Haydon. (2017). *An Analysis of Homi K. Bhabha's The Location of Culture (1st ed.)*. MaCat Library, Routledge.
10. Sulistyani, H. D., Rahmaji, L. R., & Rahardjo, T. (2024). The Significance of Culturally Hybrid Religious Artifacts in a Multicultural Society. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 16(2), 324–339.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

