

PRANK CREATIVITY IN ADVERTISING

Almira Anindita¹, Andayu Farah Devani², Ade Kusuma³

¹²³Science of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UPN Veteran, Jawa Timur, INDONESIA

Abstract

Nowadays, the prank phenomenon is viral. It is often used for social media content as humor to entertain the audience. The prank displays the audience's expressions and shock by the joke. Several Indonesian YouTubers have shown the pros and cons when the video content of prank displays lies and harms others. The concept of prank also created criticism and sentiment from the public. The phenomenon of Gantung Panci by Indonesian culinary figure, Sisca Soewitomo, was viral on social media and attracted the netizens who felt entertained by the creative content of the GoFood ad. This study aims to see how digital workers accept and interpret creative jokes based on advertising. This study used a qualitative descriptive method with the encoding-decoding reception model analysis approach from Stuart Hall. The data was collected using in-depth interviews with digital workers, observation, documentation, and literature study. The results of this study show how the backgrounds and interpretations of digital workers in a dominant, negotiate, and opposition position uses the creative content of the prank by GoFood Ads 'Mrs. Sisca Gantung Panci'. This research also finds out how creative advertising strategies in the digital era increase brand awareness and brand engagement of a product.

Keywords: advertising, creative, prank

*Corresponding author, email: anindita.almira@gmail.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization is a form of integration between traditional mass media and the internet as an effort to meet the needs of the people who have so far relied on internet-based gadgets, especially related to information and entertainment consumption patterns from previously using traditional media to using online media (Kusuma, Purbantina, Riswari, Tutiasri, 2020: 16). Nielsen Digital Consumer 2019 findings released by Nielsen Media Indonesia on March 19, 2020, explained that digital consumers showed a positive trend growth because as many as 98% of netizens used smartphone devices to access the internet in the last 2 years (Lubis, 2020: Nielsen.com).

Advertising is a form of paid communication that uses mass media and interactive media to reach a wide audience in order to clearly connect sponsors with buyers (target audience) and

provide information about products (goods, services, and ideas) (Moriarty, Mitchell, Wells, 2009 : 9). If advertising in traditional mass media is considered to require expensive resources, now online advertising is a new alternative to an advertising media strategy. According to Dickey and Lewis, digital advertising is an extension of the traditional media broadcast model (such as advertising on television and radio) (Eastin, 2010: 14). Digital advertising is a form of promotion and marketing of a product, service or brand using online media, such as websites, e-mails, messaging applications, or social media.

The increasing business competition using social media can be seen from the increasing number of social media users in Indonesia each year. Based on data from social media management service provider We Are Social, social media users in Indonesia increased by 10 million users from January 2019 to January 2020. On the other hand, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok are the most popular social media. in Indonesia. On average, Facebook is accessed by 12,398,000 users every month, Instagram 6,803,000 users, Twitter 2,769,000 users, and TikTok 2,444,000 users (Sabrina, 2020: femina.co.id). The characteristics of social media include networks, information, archives, interaction (interactivity), social simulations (simulation of society), user-generated content and sharing (Nasrullah, 2017: 16). There is a strong correlation on how social media can attract consumers due to their interest in advertisements circulating on social media (Tarigan & Tritama, 2016: 9-14).

In online media, *pranks* are becoming a modern tactic to attract consumer attention. According to Gulas and Weinberger, *prank* in branding usually involves three parties, namely; agents, objects, and audiences (Karpińska-Krakowiak & Modliński, 2014). In this case, the *prank* concept tries to exploit unsuspecting consumers then gets caught in a trap set by a prearranged actor or marketer.

Prank content or “tricking” activities have often been used by Indonesian YouTubers. The storyline of the video that is presented varies, such as doing things in public places that can make other people surprised, to make fun of other people, to make people angry because they feel cheated and harmed. There is also another type of *prank* that is often carried out by public figures, namely "social *pranks*" which disguise themselves as poor people until they finally reveal their identity and then help other people who need help.

Of all the *pranks* in circulation, there is one *prank* that has attracted attention, namely the *prank* carried out by Sisca Soewitomo, one of the figures in the Indonesian culinary world. Mrs. Sisca uploaded a photo of “Hanging the Pot”, giving internet users the assumption that she wanted to retire from the culinary world. The content, which was included in the trending topic on Twitter, was clarified two days after its appearance. Mrs. Sisca stated that the assumption of her retirement was incorrect, but instead she hung up the pot because of a promotion on the

GoFood service that made her not need to cook for a while. With Bu Sisca's viral *prank* strategy with GoFood, the researchers are interested in knowing the digital worker reception analysis of the creative *prank* content in GoFood's advertisement 'Bu Sisca Gantung Panci'.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with the encoding-decoding model reception analysis approach from Stuart Hall. The data was collected by using in-depth interviews, observation, documentation and literature study. In- depth interviews were conducted with digital workers who were randomly selected to find out how the informant's reception of the creative *prank* in the GoFood advertisement 'Bu Sisca Gantung Panci'. Observations were made by researchers by observing uploaded photos and videos on Sisca Soewitomo's Instagram account at @ sisca.soewitomo and captions from each upload. As for the literature study, researchers analyzed the results of research based on existing theories and concepts.

Researchers used the encoding-decoding model reception method from Stuart Hall which refers to the study of the meaning of the audience in consuming text and media impressions. Reception analysis can find out why the audience interprets something differently based on *the field of reference and the field of frame*. Stuart Hall in (Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019: 130) explains that the encoded and decoded codes can be different. When the audience decodes a message, there are three positions, namely: (1) *Dominant-Hegemonic Position*, namely the position of the audience to fully accept the message conveyed by the media (2) *Negotiated Position*, is the position of the audience to accept the meaning conveyed by the media but try to make exceptions in accordance with what he believes (3) *Oppositional Position*, is the position of the audience that completely rejects the message conveyed by the media.

By using this method, the researcher wants to get an in-depth picture of the audience reception in interpreting the concept of *prank* in GoFood advertising creative ideas. As well as determining the position of the informant in interpreting the message according to the three positions put forward by Stuart Hall. In addition, an overview of the audience reception, this study will also discuss the *prank* concept used in the creative idea of an advertisement.

No Informats	Name	Gender	Profession	Domicile
1	Nofia Ulfah	female	SocialMedia Specialist– Platform Podcast	Tangerang

2	Claudia Benita	female	Content Creator - Freelance	Surabaya
3	Almanditya s Keizya Putri	female	Marketing Analyst Parfume manufacturer	Sidoarjo
4	Gregorius Satrio Adi	male	Social Media Strategist- Creative Agency	Surabaya
5	Nofia Febriani	female	Content Maker/Edutech Social Media – Stasiun Televisi Swasta Nasional	Surabaya

Table 1. Informant Data Table

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Meaning of GoFood Advertisement 'Bu Sisca Hanging Panci'

Advertising is not only aimed at introducing products and directing the audience to make a purchase, but advertising also plays a role in convincing the audience why it is important to use a certain product or service. Advertising is considered as something that is effective and effective in influencing consumers. The form of advertising has also developed along with advances in communication technology (Arviani, 2013: 131)

Humor and celebrity endorsements are options in creating creative message formulas. Humor provides surprises, shows situations that can attract empathy, and communicates messages that are relevant, unexpected and easy for the audience to remember (Drewniany, Jewler, 2008: 17). Humor in an advertisement can be displayed in the form of funny words, entertaining advertising model behavior, tricking the audience, giving innuendo in certain circumstances, or doing other unique things that can trigger laughter. The element of humor in an advertising message will attract the attention of the audience more.

Prank content is rife and is often used for social media content needs, especially by Indonesian YouTubers. So far, the *pranks* have reaped pros and cons among the public. In the end, the concept of *prank* is synonymous with negative things in people's minds. Of all the *pranks* in circulation, there is one *prank* that has attracted attention, namely the *prank* content by Sisca Soewitomo as a figure in the Indonesian culinary world.

Informant 1 argues that the use of the concept of *prank* in creative advertising ideas is natural as long as it does not harm others, because *prank* content can attract the attention of the public among the many content circulating on social media. Especially advertising is closely

related to *brands*, which will be related to sales. So the use of the concept of *prank* in the creative idea of advertising, should think carefully.

"... In the world of advertising, people should advertise it so that people have a good perception of the brand. So, if, for example, people like a lot of people prank it more in a negative direction for the brand. Like the prank itself is quite risky. If for example the story telling is not right it will have more negative impact on the brand. " (Informant 1)

Similar to informant 1, informant 3 said that creative ideas will never end. There is always something new, and digital workers must be smart and creative in packaging an advertising creative idea.

"... I think there is no end to marketing. If there is a threat, it should be given a concept. But the good thing is, don't go negative too. Just the same. " (Informant 3)

On the other hand, Informant 2 argues that the concept of *prank* in creative ideas can be done as long as it refers to certain standards, such as the ITE Law.

In addition, in its use, informant 2 does not object to the concept of *prank* in advertisements as long as it conforms to the laws and norms of Indonesian society.

Meanwhile, informants 4 and 5 realized that the content was only a gimmick. Although the knowledge and experience of each individual is different, these two informants are in the same position. Even though it was the first time I learned about the uploaded photo of Mrs. Sisca "Gantung Panci" from a trending topic on Twitter, informant 4 did not necessarily mean that Sisca Soewitomo would retire.

".... at most a gimmick. The term, he is a master of cooking, is that it is rare for a chef to hang up the pot, because usually the older he is playing is pulled (sells). The problem is that he is, the term is rarely controversial, I see him personally. Of course there is cooperation with brands ". (Informant 4)

With evidence of their suspicion that this content is just a gimmick or a *prank*, informants 2, 4 and 5 also stated that they were not too interested in *prank*- concept content.

".... If in the future I will still see pranks, I'm still bored, to be honest. Because there are too many pranks, there are too many on YouTube. The last go food is okay, that's right, it's just right. " (Informant 2)

Even though all informants confirmed that the *prank* concept was okay to use, they felt that there were other concepts that might be more interesting. Informant 5 thinks that content with a *prank* concept will be easier for netizens to guess if more and more parties are using it.

"... I will definitely read it with netizens, so automatically in my opinion, if I prank again it will still be like this' aahah, this is like yesterday's gofood" (Informant 5)

3.2. Prank Concept for Digital Workers

The concept of *prank* appears in the realm of social media because creative workers consider *prank* content to be a strategic concept to reach audiences. This is also supported by the statement of the first informant, who stated that with *prank* content, it is for the audience to pay attention to one particular content, among the many content circulating on social media today. Thus, the goal of content creators to expand the reach of the content to be created, or generate high traffic, can be achieved with the concept of *pranks* that can be wrapped in different executions.

High *traffic* does not come naturally. According to (Yuniat, Puspitasari, Hardi, 2019: 11-18) The *clickbait* phenomenon in online media is an objective to increase the number of visitors or traffic. In this case, *prank* content often tries to grab the audience's attention by using a title that is quite clickbait or with controversial captions and statements.

All informants also acknowledge that *prank* is something that is justified as long as the whole concept does not harm others and as long as the *prank* is also clear, it is that clarification that will be the difference between *prank* and false information or hoaxes. Informant 2 also added that the legal aspect also really needs to be considered.

"Back again, we are already under the ITE Law. So in my opinion it is okay to do so as long as it follows the legal guidelines and norms in Indonesia. " (Informant 2)

Although *prank* is a concept that is allowed in creative advertising ideas, *prank* also has its own risks to *brands*. Even though at the end of the concept there is a clarification broadcast, it is possible that this will also get negative reactions from the audience. This is supported by the opinion of Informant 5, regarding the causes of risk for brands when using *prank* content.

"The concept of prank involves other parties to become victims and then the reaction is used. Well, usually the other party is used to take their reaction. Well, it's like selling pity or something. In my opinion, there is a lot of content that could be better than that." (Informant 5)

This statement ultimately shows that the risk of the *prank* concept is the loss of the audience's sense of trust in the brand. Informant 2 also agreed with this and added that if the creative process in making *pranks* is followed by strict rules to comply with the prevailing norms, then the concept of *prank* will be a good promotional weapon.

3.3. Prank As Creative Advertising Ideas

Professor Charles Frazer from the University of Washington proposes a set of six creative strategies, namely preemptive strategy, unique selling proposition, brand image, positioning, resonance, and affective / anomalous (Moriarty, Mitchell, Wells, 2011: 236). The six creative strategies are used as the basis for creating advertising messages that are in accordance with the position and objectives of a product, service or brand.

Preemptive strategies are often used to introduce new products by displaying creative messages related to general attributes or advantages of a brand. Positioning strategy can also be used for product category newcomers who want to face the main competitors of the market leader, to put their brand in the mind of the audience. The unique selling proposition strategy can be used to create an impression of benefit for potential consumers and is usually used for products that contain innovation such as technology. The brand image strategy uses attributes that display excellence based on extrinsic factors such as psychological differences in the minds of potential customers. Resonance and affective / anomalous strategies are used for highly competitive products. Both use an emotional approach to attracting attention and retaining consumers.

Resonance tends to be used for advertisements that are classified as *highly competitive and undifferentiated products* (Moriarty, Mitchell, Wells, 2011: 236). This creative strategy makes use of contemporary situations, lifestyles and emotions that are easily identified by the audience. Since its appearance in 2015, GoFood is Gojek's food delivery service that has been widely known by the public for its up-to-date advertisements that easily attract the attention of the audience.

Informant 2 explained that Gojek is always innovative in its advertising content.

"I think GoFood team's ads are quite creative and the ads are congruent with their services. So in my opinion, good". (Informant 2)

Resonance and *Affective* are often used for highly competitive products. In this case, GoFood has big competitors who are engaged in the same field. To touch the cognitive side of the audience, GoFood uses the concept of "Hanging the Pan" at the beginning, to lead audience opinions leading to Mrs. Sisca's retirement in the culinary field. On the other hand, this concept also touches on the affective aspect of the audience. Informant 5 added that on the comments page there were also many thanks to Mrs. Sisca for her dedication in the culinary field for quite a long time.

Ads do not only attract the attention of the audience for the sale of the products or services offered in the ad. Advertising is also able to attract attention and is widely discussed in the community. Like the GoFood advertisement "Bu Sisca Gantung Panci" which uses a public figure who has many fans in Indonesia.

The selection of Sisca Soewitomo to be the *talent* in the advertisement was perceived differently by the informants who were digital workers. Some informants thought that the choice of the model was in accordance with the product or service being offered, but other informants had a different opinion.

Informant 2 argues that it is very possible if the Z generation children, do not know Mrs. Sisca as one of the leading culinary experts in Indonesia. Furthermore, according to him, this GoFood advertisement again introduced Mrs. Sisca to today's young people. This statement is similar to that of the informant 3 that the difference in age factors that are not appropriate can cause confusion, especially in children of the 2000s generation.

"I was, I was confused at first. This is Mrs. Sisca - who? Because I'm not in the 90s, I don't know who this is"(Informant 3)

Informants 1 and 5 conveyed different things, who said the opposite. There are many times like this who use *celebrity endorsements* as a formula in creating creative messages. *Celebrity endorsements* are increasingly becoming a trend in the digital age. Advertisers hope that fans' admiration for celebrities will be diverted to their attention to the advertised brand (Drewniany, Jewler, 2008: 20). Celebrities or *public figures* promote products and services by providing testimonials about their experiences with certain brands. A celebrity has the power of word of mouth (WOM) messages. Indicators measuring the success of word of mouth (Armeilini, Villanueva, 2010: 7) include; 1) how often WOM promotions are received by consumers, either directly or through e-WOM ?, 2) What is the value of WOM information that consumers receive? informant's ability to influence)

Even though Mrs. Sisca is not quite right to be called a celebrity endorsement, she has the power of word of mouth (WOM) in conveying messages. The GoFood advertisement model is a celebrity chef figure known by generations X and Y. Especially for parents who know Sisca Soewitomo as a chef of Indonesian cuisine as said by informant 5.

"I think I really got it, got it, now who doesn't know Mrs. Sisca, of course, this is the subject of discussion. Yes, right? Well, what's the name, the segment is definitely 18-30s. The problem is those who are internet literate too. So in my opinion, GoFood is really good, it creates an emotional connection. For the parents, 'you know, this chef, parents are part of GoFood, let's try the one with Mrs. Siscanya' so I think hooking up on those people too, this one is Mrs. Sisca too. When she (Mrs. Sisca) went off, it was really true, respected by the mothers and trusted by those who were talked about by her. So when she started GoFood, the mothers were like 'oh the lady, you know' so I think that's what definitely got an emotional connection from that"(Informant 5).

Not only among parents, some informants also talked about it with their friends and shared it on their social media accounts. So many people were talking about this, Mrs. Sisca had become trending topics on twitter.

A company or brand, will definitely include the identity of their brand in an advertisement or other creative message. Brand *identity* or what is known as brand identity is a unique brand association that shows promise to consumers. To be effective, brand identities need to resonate with consumers, differentiate brands from competitors, and represent what the organization can and will do over time. (Ghodeswar in Halim, 2014: 2). Brand elements can be in the form of a name, logo, or a form of visual identity of a brand.

In the first photo upload, there is a book with a red and white cover. However, the book with a red cover is placed on the front. Without realizing it, the red color symbolizes the brand identity of Gofood. Because the identity color of GoFood is predominantly red. When viewed carefully, the audience can analyze this, even though the brand identity in red is not small.

Advertising is one part of integrated marketing communication planning, also known as *integrated marketing communication* (IMC). Advertising activities, of course, cannot be separated from marketing activities. Advertising is an option of promotional media that is used to attract the attention of potential customers and increase sales.

The rapid development of the internet demands that advertisers be more creative in seeing opportunities to use online media. One of them is combining an advertising creative planning strategy with viral marketing. Online media is considered capable of making a piece of information that is viral, including the existence of an advertisement that is widely discussed and spread from one netizen to another (Kusuma, Purbantina, Riswari and Tutiasri, 2020: 23)

Viral marketing proposes that messages can be rapidly disseminated from consumer to consumer, leading to large-scale market acceptance because of the credibility of the source of the information—friends, family, relatives, co-workers, etc. (Krishnamurthy, 2003 in Burns, Daugherty, Eastin, 2011: 16)

According to Professor Hairong Li, relationships on social media offer opportunities for marketing communication, because internet users function as 'viral marketing agents' by leveraging their network of friends on social media pages (User-generated ads) (Maynard & Maytham, 1948). This is evidenced by the busy conversations on social media related to Mrs. Sisca, which made her occupy the trending topic of Indonesia's Twitter social media on August 4, 2020. (urbanasia.com, 2020). Messages conveyed through viral marketing have the potential to spread very quickly in online media. This is a form of word of mouth marketing strategy or providing referrals from friends to other friends, who often use new media such as the internet,

email and cell phones as a means to have an impact like a viral infection (Frith, Mueller, 2003: 286).

*"This traffic is intended to increase brand awareness, the same is the promotion."
(Informant 4)*



Figure 1. The number of likes on Bu Sisca's upload of Hanging the Pot and the number of followers of Sisca Soewitomo (image source: [instagram.com/sisca.soewitomo](https://www.instagram.com/sisca.soewitomo))

Not only is it a trending topic on Twitter social media, but Informant 2 also emphasized that although Mrs. Sisca's number of followers is only 51 thousand followers, the number of likes on Ms. Sisca's Gantung Panci content actually reaches around 60 thousand likes. In addition, informant 4 also added that with this viral content, it can increase traffic from the content.

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the conclusions of this study can be explained in four points, namely:

- a. There are digital workers who fall into the dominant hegemonic category. They accept the prank concept used in these advertisements because pranks are considered to be able to attract the attention of netizens from various generations. The success of Mrs. Sisca's prank in GoFood advertisements is considered to be an example for digital workers that similar creative content is still possible to use.
- b. Other workers are in negotiated positions. Those in this position, express their acceptance of the prank concept in the ad, but they consider that prank content is considered a commonly used strategy. They will choose to use other creative ideas that are new and unpredictable. For digital workers, there is nothing wrong with the creative process of an advertisement, as long as it does not harm consumers.
- c. Prank content in advertising creative ideas can be used as part of integrated marketing communication. There is a combination of advertising creative planning strategy with viral marketing. Prank content that uses opinion leaders like GoFood uses Mrs. Sisca Soewitomo as an opinion leader in the culinary world to generate

message power (WOM) so that advertisements have more opportunities to go viral. However, digital workers must pay attention that prank content can only be used if it does not harm others and is in accordance with the laws and norms that apply in society so as not to harm the brand or good name of the content creator itself.

This research is one of the most recent studies that discusses the concept of prank in advertising creative ideas. The weakness of this research is that the researcher does not get the point of view of the advertiser who is the object of research. So that it is possible to find other new results.

5. SUGGESTIONS

It is hoped that further researchers will be able to reach advertisers who are the object of research or become the main sources in the research, so that it is possible to find other new results.

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