

#MAKE
MONEY
EQUAL



STARLING BANK

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#MAKEMONEYEQUAL

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS 2018

OVERVIEW



- 1 Overview of macro-analysis on female articles**
- 2 Overview of macro-analysis on male articles**
- 3 Key differences between male and female articles**
- 4 Key statistics and themes**

FINDINGS OVERVIEW


Across the stories analysed, it is implied that, in the sphere of finance, women are less productive than men: men *make* money; women are represented as saving small sums, making small amounts, or simply being dependent on men for the money they spend.

Many articles routed women's economic contributions to forms of thrift - where saving is made through finding the means to spend less on everyday goods.

It also ties women's economic participation to the domestic sphere and obligations to the family/household, whereas men's economic participation is directed towards the productive sphere of work and autonomy – an image we'd associate with the 1950s not 2018.

This also strongly implies that women are not legitimate earners (and no doubt contributes to salary inequality) – this could be read as: their contribution is to spend less of men's money, not to make their own.

MACRO ANALYSIS OF FEMALE ARTICLES



“... an endless array of complex financial products can make even a pro's head spin—and our failure to grasp it all, despite the fact that we are successful, intelligent women, can feel a little humiliating and ‘resigned to my own cluelessness’”

MONEY IS A MINEFIELD

Language around money in women's mags is frequently demeaning towards women despite their audience.

Often it suggests women are incapable of autonomous thinking, unable to make discerning or responsible choices, subject to irrationality and 'spending splurges' and suffering the consequences of poor judgement (i.e. feeling overwhelmed and guilty, hiding from reality, shameful loss of money and relationships as consequence)

Notably, advice is often dumbed down with generic terms frequently used in place of technical specifics e.g. 'things', 'items'.

The landscape of financial planning is depicted as complex and fraught with dangers – often depicted as 'complicated' or a 'minefield'.

**COMMON
TOPICS FOR
FEMALE
ARTICLES**

Micro-budgeting (saving funds in small ways)

Bargain hunting / deals / discounts / cost-cutting

Reigning in spending / regaining control of outgoings

Combining income with a partner (and risks)

Providing for others / Family responsibilities

TONALITY IN WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

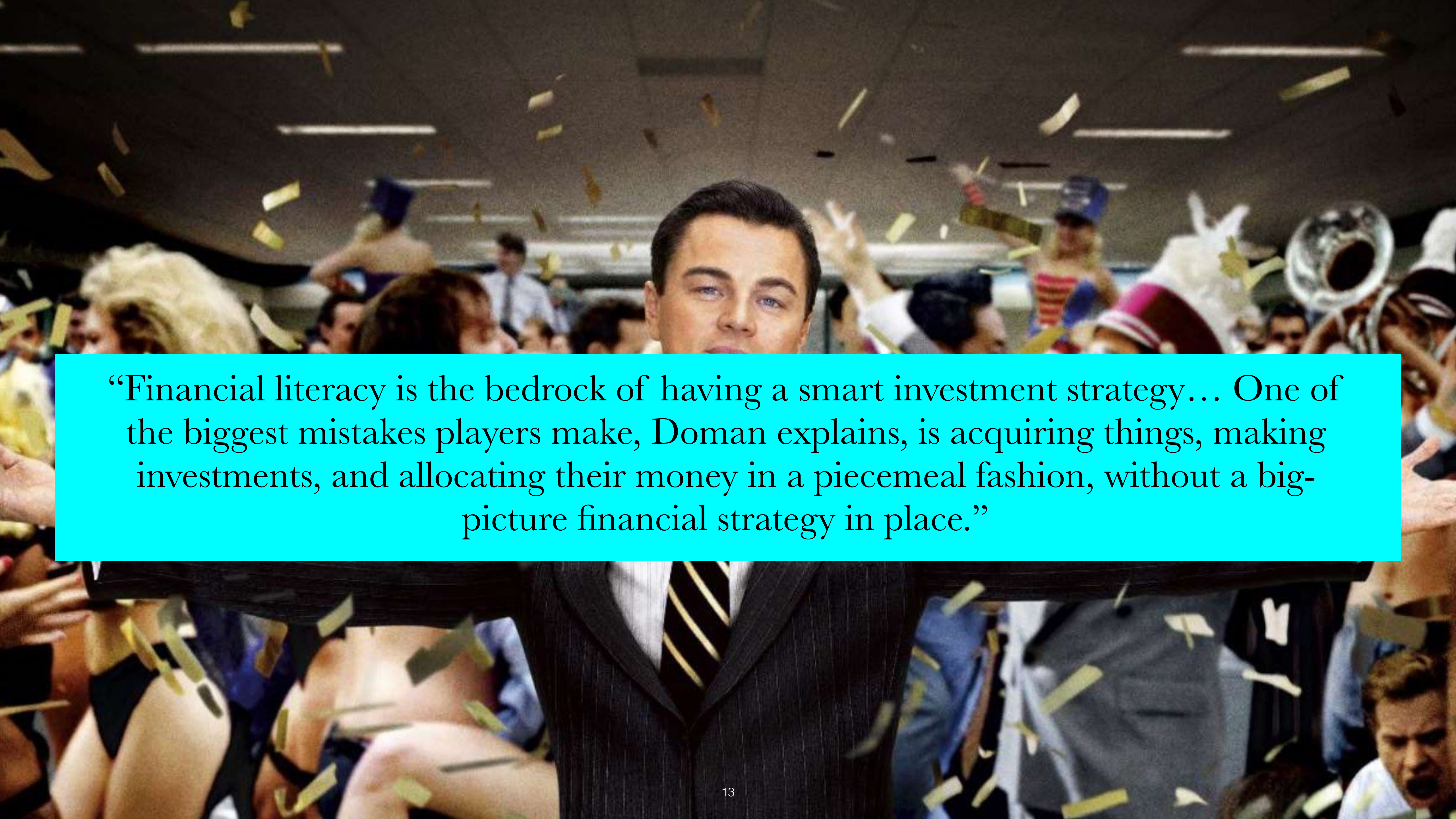
"Tonality tends to be patronising, didactic and accusatory (laying blame and pointing at faults) with expert and personal testimonials employed as narrative devices to lend persuasive credibility to the financial advice given."

IMAGERY IN WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

“Imagery tends to show distressed or physically conquered women (often face-less or obscured), looking hopeless or lost (e.g. physically overwhelmed and consumed by an over-sized credit card).

Alternatively, isolated piggy banks and recycled jam-jars filled with pennies against bleak backgrounds cue (solitary) infantile saving methods.”

MACRO ANALYSIS OF MALE ARTICLES

A photograph of Leonardo DiCaprio in a dark suit and tie, looking slightly to the right. He is surrounded by a large, dense crowd of people in a dimly lit indoor setting, possibly a party or a club. The air is filled with falling gold and silver confetti. In the background, there are people in various outfits, including a cheerleader in a blue and white uniform with a pom-pom, and a man in a white shirt and tie. The overall atmosphere is one of a high-energy, celebratory event.

“Financial literacy is the bedrock of having a smart investment strategy... One of the biggest mistakes players make, Doman explains, is acquiring things, making investments, and allocating their money in a piecemeal fashion, without a big-picture financial strategy in place.”

MONEY IS AN OPPORTUNITY

Language in articles aimed at men about money tend to be demeaning towards women – positioning them as risky, high maintenance and unreliable. (“If you’re getting divorced, we’re sorry she betrayed you”).

Heavy reliance on masculine stereotyped aspirations which leverage codes of combat, strength, power, competition and performance. Frequent use of local colloquialisms and common adages makes inserted ‘expert advice’ feel more authentic and trustworthy.

The landscape of financial planning is depicted as easily conquered – more about taking calculated risks than saving pennies. Notably it is opportunity-filled for those daring enough to give it a go.

**COMMON
TOPICS FOR
MALE
ARTICLES**

Macro investments (e.g. cars, art, property)

Saving money to enhance status & standing in society

Letting technology do the hard work

Identifying and avoiding risk

Protecting self (e.g. preparing for divorce, having emergency funds etc)

TONALITY IN MEN'S MAGAZINES

“Tonality is upbeat with heavy reliance on goading peer pressure nudges typically seated in peer-to-peer fear propositions -leveraging status envy triggers.

Articles also tend to be highly suggestive that the reader is competitive, status driven and open to taking risks (e.g. gambling, ‘having a punt’, or ‘playing the game’) to get ahead and impress.”

IMAGERY IN MEN'S MAGAZINES

“Imagery focuses on (shiny) objects of aspirational value (i.e. money porn glamour shots) e.g. super cars, yachts, close-up gold bars, large properties (from modern apartments to red brick country houses) typically featuring a suited (tanned) young white male leaning casually, smiling to camera, with an air of smug accomplishment.”

KEY DIFFERENCES

MALE ARTICLES:

“Make money”

“invest” “portfolio” “big”
“asset”

“clever” “easy” “smart”
“quick”

“market opportunity”
“capital” “prioritise”
“prepare” “avoid”

“impress” “win” “score”
“luxury”

“emergency fund” “stash”
“you”

**KEY
LINGUISTIC
DIFFERENCES**

FEMALE ARTICLES:

“Reign it in”

“hints and tips” “help”
“rescue”

“cashback” “saving pennies”
“all counts” “free” “little”
“here and there” “waste”

“charge” “splurge-spend”
“guilty” “ashamed” “hide”
“costs”

“understand” “combine”
“compromise”

“provide” “responsibility”
“care”

MALE ARTICLES:

Tend to imply the reader is status driven, competitive and au fait with the world of finance and investment

Macro investments

Savvy solutions that do the hard work for you (and provide oversight)

Avoiding risks (e.g. bad investments)

Enhancing status / Getting ahead

Protecting self

FEMALE ARTICLES:

Tend to imply the reader is easily bamboozled, anxiety-ridden, overwhelmed and in need of rescue

Micro-saving methods

Find it yourself: small discounts & bargains wherever possible

Regaining control: ‘Splurge Spending’ (where self-gifting is especially shunned)

Combining income (reliant on partner)

Providing for family

**KEY
THEMATIC
DIFFERENCES**

MALE ARTICLES:

Peer to peer: HOW / WHY NOT

Take action: THINK / MAKE /
INVEST

It's easy: JUST...

Empower: COMBAT / SEIZE /
CONQUER / GRAB / GET /
PUNT

Compete: WIN / LOSE / RISK /
GAMBLE / PLAY / VENTURE /
STAKE / RACE

Aspiration (reward): STATUS /
AFFLUENCE

Future focus: SELF / YOU

Tension: Pride / Peer pressure /
FOMO

KEY TONAL DIFFERENCES

FEMALE ARTICLES:

Didactic: DO / DO NOT

Take time: WONDER /
CONSIDER / MOMENT

It's complex: SIMPLY...

Restrict: REDUCE / REIGN IN /
HIDE / MINIMISE / LIMIT / CUT
/ REMOVE / TRIM /
MODERATE

Plan: STEPS / PREVENT /
PREPARE / ORGANISE /
TRACK

Aspiration (reward): BALANCE /
CONTROL / HAPPINESS

Future focus: CHILDREN /
HUSBAND

Tension: Guilt / Shame / Fear (loss)

KEY STATS & THEMES

MALE ARTICLES BY THEME

“Women aren’t interested in men who earn less than they do, so take home a jumbo salary now, invest well and you’ll get the sailboat, bathtub on a cliff, and a functional erection later in life.”

MALE ARTICLES BY THEME

Macro investments

73% of articles targeting men talked about the importance of making big investments (property, vehicles, art, wine etc)

Enhancing status /
Getting ahead

70% used the notion of enhancing your status as a man (and getting ahead of your fellow man) as a key benefit to managing finances

Savvy solutions that do
the hard work for you

Nearly 60% recommended trading solutions and investment portfolio management apps (*with higher incidence of recommendations the more recent the article indicating a growing trend*)

Avoiding risks (e.g. bad
investments)

Over 50% offered advice on the subject of mitigating risks when investing

Protecting self

50% used a fear proposition to trigger action focusing on protecting self from future harm (e.g. financial ruin due to divorce/debt/loss)

MALE ARTICLES BY THEME

Macro investments

“Play the game, play the stock market...and remember, wine is a living thing. Like a footballer, people are willing to pay above price when it’s young...remember, a shiny new ISA doesn't have the same ring as a shiny old Ferrari”

Enhancing status /
Getting ahead

“Women aren’t interested in men who earn less than they do, so take home a jumbo salary now, invest well and you’ll get the sailboat, bathtub on a cliff, and a functional erection later in life”

Savvy solutions that do
the hard work for you

“You don’t have to think about your accruing balance as it’s growing cash for you... With this app, you don’t have to think about it”

Avoiding risks (e.g. bad
investments)

“It’s very easy to build a nest egg, you just have to be committed and avoid the rookie mistakes”

Protecting self

“I’m always helping wealthy clients harvest large sums in tax relief with little chance of losing money... Save money on a split if you’re getting divorced – make sure you have a stash she doesn’t know about.”

FEMALE ARTICLES BY THEME

“Are you guilty of "financial cheating" and hiding your own treat shopping from your partner?”

FEMALE ARTICLES BY THEME

Micro-saving methods

Nearly 90% of female targeted articles focus on small ways to save money (often by creating hobby revenue streams and/or by ‘cutting back’ on outgoings)

Find it yourself: discounts & bargains

71% encourage women to specifically seek out vouchers, discounts, bargains and coupons to save money

Regaining control: ‘Splurge Spending’ (where self-gifting is especially shunned)

65% define women as excessive spenders advising them to limit, restrict and take better control of shopping ‘splurges’

Combining income (reliant on partner)

47% focus on combined income issues (often with stories on sharing expenses and what’s deemed ‘fair’)

Providing for family

A third of articles mention the woman’s responsibility to support family (e.g. paying for kids, buying gifts for loved ones, financial implications of being a parent)

FEMALE ARTICLES BY THEME

Micro-saving methods

“Make yourself use up the odds and ends of things you have already bought. Whether it’s a half-finished bottle of shampoo or open cereal packets, using everything up will save you money”

Find it yourself: discounts & bargains

“Nab a good deal and haggle for a cheaper price to get yourself a bargain...and check out these nifty sites for voucher codes”

Regaining control: ‘Splurge Spending’ (where self-gifting is especially shunned)

“Guilty of overspending at Christmas? So, fess up!” “Are you guilty of “financial cheating” and hiding your own treat shopping from your partner?”

Combining income (reliant on partner)

“I’m still able to pass off purchases by saying, ‘it was a fiver from Primark’ with only a twinge of guilt”

Providing for family

“I have to subsidize my kids income: that’s being a parent – so I’m buying her an outfit – that gives me great pleasure. Is that a crime?”

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The research was completed by Dr Nick Gadsby, founder of leading semiotics and culture agency, The Answer.

The Answer combines semiotics with the latest advances in social cognitive science and cultural evolution to deliver linguistic insights.

The principal method used to understand differences in language is called **Discourse Analysis (DA)**.

DA is an academic method that is used to understand the difference between what a person says and what they *really* mean. It makes written language transparent and reveals underlying opinions and beliefs.

MAKE MONEY EQUAL MANIFESTO

We don't just see financial inequality in our wages, we see it in the way men and women are spoken to about money.

The media talks to women as if they are splurgers. It talks to men as if they are financiers. While men are taught the benefits of blockchain and cryptocurrency, women are told to give up coffee so they can buy a pair of Louboutins.

Language is separating us into spenders and earners, into the frivolous and the empowered. This is a call to every business owner, every news editor, every podcast presenter, every headline writer and copy checker:

Let's talk about money in the same way to everyone.

Money is genderless.

We need parity

We need equality

We need to **#MAKEMONEYEQUAL**

**ANNE BODEN,
FOUNDER
STARLING
BANK**

“Money is an issue. At least if you’re a woman it should be. There are a myriad of factors at play when it comes to being our woman and our finances - but gender inequality doesn’t just start with lower salaries or tokenism in the boardroom.

It starts with the way we’re taught. It starts with the way we’re spoken to about money.

Language is separating us into spenders and earners, into the frivolous and the empowered. That is why Starling Bank believes we need to **#MAKEMONEYEQUAL** - a call to every business owner, every news editor, every podcast presenter, every headline writer and copy checker: Let’s talk about money in the same way to everyone. And let’s start now.”

THANK YOU



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