

## Representation Of Single Father Image in McDONALD's: *Still My Little Girl* Advertisement

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### ABSTRACT

Many advertisements employ gender stereotypes to attract people nowadays. If advertisers continue to employ and display a specific gender in their advertisements, it might lead to gender bias. Through verbal and visual expressions in McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl* advertisement, this study seeks to discover a depiction of a single father, and he can replace the mother's role in the family. The writer uses semiotic theory and a qualitative approach to analyze the data. The findings indicate that a father who is portrayed as the main character can replace the role of a mother in performing household tasks and dealing with his daughter's sensitive situations.

**Keywords:** Gender role; Mother role; Advertisement

### INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one of those things that cannot be separated from people's lives. One of the most common platforms companies use to promote their products to customers is advertising. In addition, advertisements may be seen on various social media platforms, including television, YouTube, Instagram, and other media outlets. In order to attract the attention of consumers, marketers are trying to make their advertisements as appealing as possible.

Advertising is used to communicate mass message. Using direct and indirect advertising, marketers attempt to convey messages to consumers. The message in the advertising can affect the customer, resulting in a good shift in behavior for the marketer. "The messages of advertising have, as anyone can see, permeated the entire cultural landscape." (Beasley & Danesi, 2020, p.1). Therefore, the development of advertising may impact a society's socialization, lifestyle, and culture. Moreover, these issues are associated with the appearance of visuals and the effect of advertising on people's perceptions, understandings, and behaviors.

In modern commercials, gender roles are frequently used to attract consumers. Rodgers and Thorson (2019) highlighted that gender roles are frequently utilized for advertising a particular product or brand. Since the early 1970s, scholars have shown great interest in portraying men and women in advertising. Gender roles in advertising may be utilized to increase advertising performance, such as obtaining a good image and raising sales of companies or products, or vice versa, which can have unexpected dire consequences for society. Gender is a segmentation feature frequently utilized as a basis for developing marketing strategies targeting both men and women (Rodgers & Thorson, 2019).

In advertising, one gender is frequently shown, and as a result, many people develop a bias against one gender. This can lead to sexism and be classified as such. Sexism is defined by Cortese (2007) as "any attitude, behavior, institutional arrangement, or policy that favors one gender over another" (p.57). Consequently, there are still several marketers that use sexist

advertising content. As an example, the Citra: Sakura Fair UV advertising. The Citra: Sakura Fair UV advertising depicts the perfect female body shape. L-men Gain Mass: Men's Guide commercial is another instance of sexism in advertising. In this advertisement, L-men demonstrates how men should behave in the twenty-first century. Males are shown as muscular and slim in ads, billboards, and magazines.


Thus, McDonald's "Still My Little Girl" is one of the advertisements that symbolize gender roles. The intriguing aspect of the McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl* advertisement is that it is based on a storyline that is contained within the advertisement, in which the advertisement tells the story of a single parent who is required to perform multiple roles simultaneously, including working as a breadwinner, performing household chores, and dealing with sensitive topic issues that women face. Typically, only mothers perform housekeeping duties such as cooking, grocery shopping, and laundry. Because women are gentle, patient, loving, and considerate, housework, child-rearing, and dealing with sensitive matters are mainly mothers' responsibilities. Due to this, the writer will utilize a *Still My Little Girl* advertising from McDonald's in Taiwan.

## METHOD

This study used a qualitative content analysis by Schreier (2012). The data is obtained from the McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl* video on the YouTube channel of Murphy Chou. This study's data consists of McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl* visual and verbal expressions. The writer transcribed the dialogue speech from a subtitle in the video for the verbal expressions. Moreover, for the visual expressions, the writer screenshots the scene that depicts the father doing mother roles. The data were analyzed using Peirce's Triadic concept, which consists of representamen, object, and interpretant.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research applies the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce to analyze an advertisement for McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl*. The writer analyzes the data using the Triadic model (representamen, object, and interpretant). McDonald's in Taiwan aims to introduce a branding campaign highlighting company values such as "a place to connect with family and enjoy a good meal." McDonald's desires to remind customers of all the good experiences they experienced at one of its locations. McDonald's also created the "Feel-good moments" theme to illustrate the beautiful moments of loved ones connecting over a delicious meal and to demonstrate that McDonald's restaurants offer a space for everyone to connect. In analyzing this data, several scenes are not supported by verbal expressions and are only based on visual expressions.


Screenshot	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
 <p><b>Figure 1</b></p>	<p>A man is going to the traditional market and wearing an office uniform. This condition is supported by the shops on the left and right of the street and some vegetables that</p>	<p>The father, riding a motorbike, goes to a traditional market.</p>	<p>The sacrifices made by the father to fulfill his responsibilities to the family and he is willing to sacrifice his time and prestige as a man.</p>

	showed in this scene.		
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This scene's visual expressions are from seconds 00.21 to 00.25. McDonald's aims to deliver the message that the father creates the highest level of affection and demonstrates a relationship with his daughter. The message is conveyed through the father's sacrifices, which might strengthen his relationship with his daughter when he returns home. The father's sacrifice shown in this scene was sacrificing his time and prestige as a man. Figure 1 depicts the time sacrifice made by the father. This image depicts the father wearing a shirt that resembles an office uniform. The father's office clothes indicated that he was the primary breadwinner for his family. After leaving the workplace, he immediately heads to the traditional market to get ingredients for cooking. This suggests that the father has returned from work and is likely tired after a long day. However, the father is willing to sacrifice time to buy at the traditional market.

The father sacrifices his prestige as a man as well. Shopping in the traditional market is often the responsibility of mothers. This condition has become so common in society today that men rarely shop in the traditional market. According to Wienclaw (2011), men frequently dislike undertaking traditionally female responsibilities. However, McDonald's wants to reveal that the father has no difficulty shopping at conventional markets. It is noticeable from the expression on the father's face, which suggests that he is relaxed and at ease in his surroundings. The father also whistled as he drove his motorcycle to the traditional market, indicating that the task did not stress him. A father's sacrifices for his daughter are the happiest thing for him. Even in the absence of a mother, the father can fulfill the mother's role and create a relationship with his daughter.

When visiting a traditional market, the father talks in conversation with a seller. The father says, "Hey, Good Morning. One celery, one carrot, one onion, thank you." From the monologue, we can determine that the father is aware of the items required to prepare a dish at home. Additionally, the father's actions and facial expressions indicate he is confident while engaging with the seller and ordering the needed goods; he does not look puzzled or reluctant when mentioning the required items. In addition, the seller addressed the father, saying, "Big dinner tonight, huh?" According to the Cambridge dictionary (n.d.), "huh" is used following a question or remark, particularly when you want someone to agree with you. In response to the seller's inquiries, the father said with certainty, "Yup, it's a good day." The dialogue implies that the seller knows that the father will prepare and cook the dinner. According to Clark (2005), shopping is yet another habit associated with women. This demonstrates that shopping at the traditional market is a mother's responsibility, yet in scenes 00.21 to 00.26, the father takes the mother's role and responsibility.



Screenshot	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
 <p><b>Figure 2</b></p>	A man is seen holding some clothes.	Some clothes are seen to be inserted by the father into the washing machine.	The father who is doing household chores, namely washing clothes even though he is busy working as the breadwinner for the family.

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The facial expression in the scene beginning at 0:47 is meant to convey his effort to connect with his daughter. Figure 2 depicts the responsibility of the father, which is washing clothes. In addition to his day-to-day employment as a security guard and family breadwinner, the father still performs domestic tasks. This may be observed in Figure 4.5, which illustrates the father's natural-appearing motions as he gathers clothing and places them in the washing machine. The father is seen separating the clothes when attempting to load the laundry into the washing machine. The father's movements indicate that he knows how to wash clothes and is accustomed to or routinely performs housekeeping. Additionally, the expression on his face when he washes clothing implies that he is at ease and not confused.

The house will devolve into a mess if the father disregards his responsibilities, as no one will care for it. If the home gets untidy, the circumstance may strain the relationship between the father and daughter. This may occur if the father arrives home from a long day at work to find a mound of dirty clothing. The circumstance may cause discomfort for the father and daughter. By not disregarding or forgetting his responsibility to wash his daughter's clothes, the father demonstrates his affection to develop a deeper relationship with his daughter.

In the verbal expressions from this scene, McDonald's wants to show the theme of their company, namely "Feel-good moments." The father's words reveal the value that McDonald's wants to display. The father said, "Daisy, I'm working the afternoon shift in two days. Then, let's eat out." From the father's utterances to his daughter, it is clear that he is attempting to make moments with her. The father attempted to take the daughter out to dinner. The father did this for work reasons, which caused him to not come home for two days because he worked as a security guard. However, the father told his daughter, "Let's eat out." From these words, we can see that the father seems to want to pay for the two days spent on work and compare it with the time he eats with his daughter. We feel the father has a sense of paying back a debt based on what he said. The father demonstrates this by finding a solution to replace the time he has spent working by eating with his daughter. In this way, they may also share quality time to have great moments.



Screenshot	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
 <p><b>Figure 3</b></p>	A man is holding and looking at the pants with a red spot in front of the washing machine.	Pants with a bloodstain held by the father shows that a girl is having her first period.	The father realized that his daughter has reached puberty phase because his daughter is having her first menstruation.
 <p><b>Figure 4</b></p>	A man is seen just standing and staring into the distance while holding clothes.	The expression on the father's face shows that he is opening his mouth and his eyes are blank.	The father looks surprised and confused by the situation in which his daughter is getting her period.

There is no verbal expression that complements the visual expression in this scene. In this scene, the intended message is that the father seeks a closer relationship with his daughter. While washing laundry, the father noticed a pair of pants with red stains, as seen in Figure 3. The blood stains on the clothes revealed that his daughter was menstruating, indicating that she had matured and was no longer a kid. This condition also shows that the father washes his

daughter's clothes consistently with attention to detail and not as a formality. A circumstance such as this is unexpected for a father since a father or man does not know what to do when dealing with such problems.

In figure 4, the father appears confused and surprised. This is seen by the father's facial expression, which appears to be an open mouth, and he remains silent while holding the pants. The father's feelings of surprise and confusion show that he believes he is spending time with his daughter. The father's attitude is sad since he no longer considers his daughter to be a kid. At the same time, the father was wondering how he might spend as much time as possible with his daughter in the remaining time he had.

Typically, a mother will teach and advise her daughter on what to do when she gets her period while dealing with these situations. Because a daughter is typically closer to and more comfortable speaking with her mother about this sensitive issue. Because children have stronger bonds with their mother's kin than with their father's kin, women or mothers have been identified as powerful kin keepers (Rosenthal, 1985; Thomson and Li, 1992: 15, as cited in McDaniel et al., 2019). However, this scene demonstrates that the father must replace the mother's role in addressing the child's sensitive problems. The father's action attempts to improve the quality of his relationship with his daughter.

Screenshot	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
 <p><b>Figure 5</b></p>	The lights above a man seem to indicate that he is in a supermarket.	The father who is staring at the supermarket shows that he is wondering.	The father looks surprised by the number of products from the sanitary pad.
 <p><b>Figure 6</b></p>	A man standing in front of a shelf of sanitary pad products in a supermarket.	The father is confused about choosing sanitary pads because there are many product choices.	With a variety of sanitary pad products, the father is standing still for a long time and he is careful to choose what kind of sanitary pads that are suitable and comfortable for his daughter to wear.

There is no verbal expression that complements the visual expression in this scene. In this scene, the intended message is that the father is attempting to improve his relationship with his daughter. The father's action in Figure 5 indicates that he looks to the right and left. The father's gestures might imply various sanitary pad products in a store. The father's facial expressions consist of an open mouth and a frown. The expression on the father's face reveals that he is surprised and confused by the variety of sanitary pad products, and he does not know how to select the best one for his daughter. The father's uncertainty indicates that he is concerned about selecting an appropriate sanitary pad product for his daughter. This is illustrated by the fact that the father does not quickly purchase a particular product but instead takes the time to consider which product is best for his daughter.

This action demonstrates the father's care for his daughter. Indirectly the father wants to buy a sanitary pad product suitable for his daughter. The father attempts to make his daughter comfortable because she is now an adult and will use her first sanitary pad. If the daughter feels comfortable, the relationship between father and daughter will be good. Additionally, the father's actions can foster a stronger relationship with his daughter, allowing her to appreciate the transition from childhood to adolescence.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl* advertisement video, the writer might deduce that a father can take up the mother's duty in housework and accompanying his daughter. McDonald's: *Still My Little Girl* advertising demonstrates that the video is consistent with the company theme that McDonald's wants to convey: "Feel-good moments." McDonald's wants to foster a sense of belonging and maintain a positive and harmonious relationship among family members. It is only that there is not a mother figure in this family. Nonetheless, the father can fulfill the mother's roles, including buying at traditional markets, washing clothing, operating washing machines, preparing dinner, and cooking. Not only may the father assist with household chores, but he can also accompany his daughter during her puberty phase. As seen in the McDonald's advertising, the father is willing to consult his friends about menstruation and purchase sanitary pads for his daughter without changing his image. The father's actions are intended to make his daughter happy. Furthermore, this advertising emphasizes household tasks as a gender-neutral responsibility, meaning that both men and women may perform at home.

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