

Depiction of Masculinity in the Advertisement 'PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future'

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ABSTRACT

Traditional masculinity remained deeply embedded in society, associating values such as strength, independence, power, and work primarily with men. This study aimed to examine the portrayal of masculinity in the male lead character of Prudential Indonesia's advertisement titled "PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance: #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future." The research employed a qualitative descriptive method, utilizing data collection techniques such as documentation, observation, and interviews with gender observers. The findings revealed that the advertisement depicted six out of seven characteristics of traditional masculinity, including physical appearance, functionality, sexuality, intellect, interpersonal skills, and personal character. These portrayals reinforced conventional gender norms that continued to shape societal expectations of men. Understanding such representations was essential in analyzing the broader impact of advertising on gender perceptions.

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Masculinity; Advertisement; Gender.

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1. Introduction

The rapid development of the modern era has influenced various aspects of life, including communication and information dissemination. With the internet, information is now easily accessible to anyone. The internet is not just a medium for communication but also a tool for seeking information, whether beneficial or harmful (Prasetya et al., 2023). One significant impact of this development is how media often construct masculinity to portray the ideal man and femininity to depict the ideal woman. This, in turn, shapes societal perceptions of gender roles and identities, even though these portrayals often conflict with the more complex and diverse realities of life.

Gender and sex have distinct meanings. Gender is a concept that refers to the traits, behaviors, and characteristics associated with men and women, shaped by their social and cultural environment (Kristianto et al., 2024; Abbas et al., 2022; Muslimat et al., 2023; Junaid et al., 2024). On the other hand, sex is a biological term that refers to the physical and anatomical differences between males and females (Latief et al., 2019; Tenrisanna et al., 2024; Irmayani et al., 2024; Dalyan et al., 2024). Thus, gender is a product of cultural norms and societal practices. In Indonesia, gender is generally categorized into two: masculine (male) and feminine (female), with social expectations shaping behaviors, roles, and identities associated with each category.

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI) (2022), masculinity is defined as a man's virility associated with his sexual attributes. Meanwhile, Kimmel and Aronson (2022), define masculinity as an idea encompassing the social roles, behaviors, and meanings assigned to men at specific points in their lives. Men are often perceived as leaders, decision-makers, and primary providers for their families (Nurwahyuningsih et al., 2024). Traditional masculinity is often characterized by attributes such as strength, power, resilience, control, independence, self-sufficiency, loyalty, and work ethic.

Masculinity is an important concept to study as it shapes individual identities and influences social norms, gender relations, and power structures in society. A deeper understanding of masculinity can help identify how societal constructions of manhood evolve and their impact on behavior, policies, and gender equality. Exploring different cultural and historical perspectives on masculinity reveals how its definitions and expectations vary across time and place. This knowledge can contribute to more inclusive discussions on gender roles and support efforts toward achieving social equity.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz classifies masculinity into seven categories: 1) Physical appearance includes attributes such as manliness, athleticism, strength, and bravery. 2) Functionality, men are viewed as the primary providers for their families and themselves. 3) Sexuality, men's experiences in forming relationships with women. 4) Emotional control, the expectation that men should suppress or manage their emotions. 5) Intellectual traits, the ability to think logically, be intelligent, rational, and objective. 6) Interpersonal skills, men are expected to be responsible, independent, and exhibit leadership qualities, making them dominant. 7) Personal character includes traits such as ambition, competitiveness, adventurousness, and egotism (Saputra & Albab, 2024).

With technological advancements, communication has become more accessible, allowing people to connect across different regions instantly. One form of communication that reaches a broad audience is mass communication. According to Romli (2024), mass communication is the process of conveying messages (information or ideas) to a large audience through media, allowing the same message to be received simultaneously.

In mass communication studies, media content is often the subject of research due to its significant role in reflecting social and cultural issues. Media content not only contains explicit messages but also conveys hidden and complex meanings that reveal societal values, culture, and interests (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). Research on media content is considered an important tool in understanding societal norms, perspectives, and issues.

According to Kotler and Keller (2024), advertising is any non-personal presentation that promotes products, services, or ideas, with the goal of attracting customers to purchase them. Advertising is often regarded as an art form that combines text and visual elements to deliver a message to the audience. Advertising has permeated every aspect of modern life, making it an essential part of society.

Advertising is a crucial visual communication tool that influences how people perceive and understand products and services. Beyond promoting products, advertisements also serve as a medium for advertisers to communicate specific messages (Husna & Hero, 2022). According to Williamson (2020), advertisements work by transferring key meanings—such as beauty, success, or happiness—from real-life experiences to the products being sold. Subconsciously, the audience absorbs these messages and imagines that the advertised products can help them achieve their ideal self-image.

The advertising landscape has undergone a significant transformation due to the rapid growth of digital technology. Digital advertising accounted for only 6% of total ad spending from Q3 2018 to Q2 2019, but this figure surged to 41.18 trillion rupiah in 2021, according to Nielsen data (2022). Projections indicate that digital advertising will dominate the market, contributing 75% of Indonesia's total ad spending by 2025 (Campaign Indonesia, 2024). This shift reflects how the advertising industry is adapting to consumers' increasing reliance on digital platforms for information and entertainment.

Prudential Indonesia is among the companies transitioning from conventional to digital advertising. PT Prudential Life Assurance (Prudential Indonesia) is part of Prudential plc, a leading financial services group based in the UK, established in 1995. With a focus on Asia and Africa, the company offers asset management and various life and health insurance products. In early 2024, Prudential Indonesia launched its latest life insurance product, PRUFuture, which provides long-term life protection with affordable premiums starting at Rp. 500,000 per month. PRUFuture targets younger demographics, particularly millennials and Gen Z who are beginning to build their families.

The researchers selected Prudential Indonesia's advertisement "PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future" because it portrays masculinity, specifically the role of men as leaders and financial providers for their families. Through its narrative and visuals, the advertisement reflects masculinity in the context of responsibility, leadership, and interpersonal relationships in ensuring family well-being. Additionally, the advertisement adopts a masculinity concept that aligns with modern social contexts, emphasizing care and responsibility as essential aspects of male identity.

Beyond its conceptual significance, this advertisement was chosen due to its wide reach and high digital engagement. According to data from Prudential Indonesia's official YouTube channel, the advertisement has been viewed 6,383 times and has received 219 likes within a short period since its release on January 31, 2024. This indicates that the ad effectively resonates with digital audiences and reflects how masculinity is represented in modern advertising.

Regarding media portrayals of masculinity, several previous studies have been conducted, highlighting how cultural and societal influences shape the representation of male identity. Hartono (2023) analyzed masculinity in the Garnier Men advertisement featuring Joe Taslim, using Charles S. Peirce's semiotic analysis. The study found that the ad aimed to shift public perceptions of masculinity through constructed meanings. Furthermore, (Srisadono et al., 2022) examined masculinity in The Saem Urban Eco Harakeke Cream advertisement featuring Seventeen, employing Roland Barthes'

semiotic analysis. The study found that the ad redefined masculinity by presenting skincare as a necessity for men. Besides that, (Saputra & Albab, 2024) analyzed masculinity in the character Dom from the film *Jakarta Vs Everybody*, using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Their findings showed that Dom embodied six out of seven masculinity traits defined by Janet Saltzman Chafetz.

Based on the discussion above, this study, titled "Depiction of Masculinity in the Advertisement 'PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future'", aims to analyze the depiction of masculinity in the advertisement. The research uses content analysis based on Janet Saltzman Chafetz's masculinity framework, employing a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a research approach that focuses on natural phenomena or observable events. This method emphasizes various qualities of the research object, including meaning, values, human emotions, experiences, diversity, artistic beauty, and historical significance (Abdussamad, 2022). Ultimately, qualitative research is a social science approach that applies scientific paradigms.

In this study, the researcher applies media content theory by McQuail (2011), a theory used to interpret the role of media in everyday life. Media content carries hidden and complex meanings that reflect the values, culture, and societal interests of the context in which it is produced. This theory is considered suitable for this research, as media content analysis helps illustrate prevailing societal views, norms, and issues.

This study adopts qualitative content analysis. In communication studies, content analysis is commonly used to examine the components of a communication message (Prima, 2022). According to Pembayun (2022), content analysis is a research method that comprehensively examines written or printed materials in mass media. Research utilizing content analysis focuses on the content and contextual meaning of texts in communication. Qualitative content analysis aims to interpret subjective data meaning through a process of classification, coding, and identifying patterns or themes.

The researcher employs content analysis techniques to select scenes from the Prudential Indonesia advertisement that align with the predetermined categorization. Primary data was collected directly from Prudential Indonesia's official YouTube channel, specifically analysing advertisement scenes that depict masculinity based on the researcher's categorization. Secondary data consists of theories derived from books or journals, which the researcher uses to support and validate the primary data obtained.

3. Result and Discussion

In analyzing the Prudential Indonesia advertisement titled "PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future", the researcher employs a qualitative content analysis method with a descriptive approach to describe the depiction of masculinity based on Janet Saltzman Chafetz's masculinity characteristics framework.

Table 1. Characteristics of Masculinity

Characteristics	Description
Physical Appearance	Traditional male appearance can reflect masculinity, encompassing attributes such as manliness, handsomeness, strength, athleticism, and bravery, as well as an indifference to their appearance as they age.
Functional	Traditional male functionality is characterized by the role of men as breadwinners, responsible for providing for the needs of women or their families.
Sexual	From a sexual perspective, masculinity is reflected in how men establish relationships with women.
Emotional	In terms of emotions, masculinity is demonstrated through a man's ability to control and conceal his emotions.
Intellectual	Men's intellectual traits showcase masculinity through intelligence, decisiveness, logical reasoning, rationality, and pragmatism

Interpersonal	In interpersonal interactions, men exhibit masculinity by being responsible, disciplined, independent, free-spirited, leaders, and individualistic.
Personal Character	A man's personality reflects masculinity through attributes such as ambition, a strong desire for success, egoism, honesty, competitiveness, and adventurousness.

Sources: Janet Saltzman Chafetz (2024)

The research findings reveal the presence of masculinity in the Prudential Indonesia advertisement titled “PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future”, particularly in the depiction of the male lead character, father, and husband. In this advertisement, masculinity is portrayed in alignment with Janet Saltzman Chafetz’s masculinity framework, which outlines the key characteristics that define a man: physical appearance, functionality, emotional control, intellect, interpersonal skills, and personal character.

The advertisement emphasizes these traits by showcasing the male lead as a responsible and dependable figure who prioritizes his family’s well-being. His ability to remain composed and take decisive action in challenging situations further reinforces the traditional masculine ideals outlined in Chafetz’s framework.

3.1 Depiction of Male Physical Appearance

Table 2. Male Physical Appearance


Scene	Description
	<p>This scene features a man with an athletic build and a masculine appearance, characterized by a mustache and beard. He takes the initiative to help his wife by bringing down the clothes to be loaded into the car.</p>

Figure 1. Physical Appearance

Sources: Researcher, 2025.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz's theory states that a man's physical appearance determines his masculinity. Every aspect of a man's physique reflects masculinity, which can be observed through body shape and physical changes over time. A man's physical appearance serves as a key indicator in portraying male characters.

In terms of physical masculinity, as depicted in the advertisement “PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future,” masculinity is represented through the male character, who plays the role of both a father and a husband. The main male character in this advertisement is portrayed with a strong physique, tall posture, muscular build, and well-groomed hair, all of which signify masculinity, aligning with the characteristics described by Janet Saltzman Chafetz (Saputra & Albab, 2024).

In addition to his physical appearance, his confident demeanor and protective nature further reinforce traditional masculine ideals. His role as the family's primary provider and protector aligns with the societal expectations of masculinity depicted in media representations.

3.2 Depiction of Male Functionality

Table 3. Functional


Scene	Description
 <p>A screenshot of a video showing a man in a brown shirt sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop. The background shows a window with greenery outside. The video player interface at the bottom shows a progress bar at 0:33 / 1:00.</p>	<p>This scene features the main male character working from home, attending a work meeting using a laptop.</p>

Figure 2. Male Functionality

Sources: Researcher, 2025.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz's concept of masculinity views male masculinity from a functional perspective. A man's role, in this context, includes being the head of the family and the primary provider, responsible for fulfilling his family's needs (Rizqina et al., 2023). In the advertisement "PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future", the functional characteristic of masculinity is represented through the father figure.

A man is considered masculine when he assumes the role of the family's breadwinner and is capable of providing for himself (Chafetz, 2006). The advertisement features a scene where the main male character is working from home, attending an online meeting using his laptop. According to Rowena & Rutherford (2023), this action indicates that a man not only possesses sufficient material resources but also takes responsibility for himself, his family, and those around him.

3.3 Depiction of Male Sexuality

Table 4. Sexual


Scene	Description
 <p>A screenshot of a video showing a family of three (a man, a woman, and a child) sitting on a sofa and smiling. The man is holding a phone. The text "Bebas premi" is overlaid on the image. The video player interface at the bottom shows a progress bar at 0:37 / 1:00.</p>	<p>This scene features a father, mother, and child gathering happily, as they are free from paying insurance premiums.</p>

Figure 3. Sexual

Sources: Researcher, 2025.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz identifies sexual characteristics as a defining aspect of masculinity. In this advertisement, masculinity is represented through a male character, specifically the father. According to Chafetz (2023), sexual masculinity can be observed in a man's experience in relationships with women, demonstrated through romantic gestures and a sense of care toward women.

The main male character in this advertisement is shown in a relationship with a woman—his wife. In the scene, they are depicted as happy because they are free from paying health insurance premiums, illustrating the man's care and concern for his wife. According to Fitri nasyah & Nurussa'adah (2023), when someone shows concern for others, it signifies emotional investment and attraction toward them.

3.4 Depiction of Male Intellectuality

Table 5. Intellectual


Scene	Description
	<p>This scene features the main male character in the kitchen cooking, wearing a helmet while chopping onions to prevent his eyes from stinging.</p>

Figure 4. Intellectual

Sources: Researcher, 2025.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz defines masculinity as embodying characteristics such as intelligence, rationality, logic, practicality, and objectivity. According to Purwanto (2020), the ability to adapt to new needs using appropriate thinking tools aligned with a specific goal is known as intellectual intelligence. This implies that intelligent individuals carefully consider their actions and their potential consequences.

In this advertisement, intellectual characteristics are depicted through several scenes featuring the father character, who demonstrates logical and objective thinking. His intellectual ability is shown in how he creatively solves problems, such as figuring out how to chop onions without irritating his eyes and using a phone flashlight in a way that illuminates an entire room. According to Rowena & Rutherford (2023), intelligence is not solely measured by knowledge or intelligence quotient (IQ) but rather by a person's ability to solve problems and find effective solutions.

3.5 Depiction of Male Interpersonal Skills

Table 6. Interpersonal


Scene	Description
	<p>This scene portrays the main male character's sense of responsibility, as he demonstrates his duties as a husband and head of the family by working, and as a father by taking care of his child while they play.</p>

Figure 5. Interpersonal

Sources: Researcher, 2025.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz states that masculine traits can be observed through how men interact with others—they are expected to be responsible, disciplined, independent, free-spirited, leadership-oriented, and dominant. In this advertisement, the main male character exhibits interpersonal characteristics, demonstrating independence, responsibility, and dominance.

The father figure's sense of responsibility is highlighted in this advertisement. In one scene, he is shown working while simultaneously caring for and playing with his child, who is riding a toy horse. Responsibility can be defined as an attitude or behavior in which an individual fulfills their duties and obligations, whether to themselves, others, society, or even to God (Melati et al., 2021).

3.6 Depiction of Male Personal Character

Table 7. Male Personal Character


Scene	Description
	<p>This scene depicts expressions of happiness, as they are free from paying their family's life insurance premiums.</p>

Figure 6. Personal Character

Sources: Researcher, 2025.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz defines masculinity as encompassing traits such as ambition, a desire for success, egoism, morality, trustworthiness, competitiveness, and adventurousness. The main male character in this advertisement is portrayed as highly enthusiastic. According to KBBI (2023), ambition is defined as a strong desire to achieve a goal, aspiration, or dream.

The male character's ambition is evident in the scene where he wants to protect his family, leading him to register them for life and health insurance. As an ambitious individual, the main male character demonstrates an inner drive to achieve his goals, overcome challenges, and strive for a more successful future (Winardi & Azehari, 2022).

Based on the research findings, the advertisement reflects six traditional masculinity characteristics in line with Janet Saltzman Chafetz's framework. The social construction of masculinity in Indonesian society still aligns with traditional masculinity, where masculine traits are attributed to men, while feminine traits are associated with women. In reality, both men and women possess qualities that can be considered masculine or feminine, but due to societal constructs, these values are separated and categorized, reinforcing the idea that what is considered feminine is not masculine, and vice versa.

This perspective is supported by findings from an interview with Khotimun Sutanti, Executive Coordinator of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice (LBH APIK) and a gender observer (2025), who stated: "Our society has long constructed masculinity as an inherent male trait, but that is not necessarily the case. Associating masculinity exclusively with male identity and gender is actually inaccurate." However, in this advertisement, traditional masculinity is depicted in a way that promotes gender equality. According to Octaviana (2025), reveals that the use of gender issues in advertising often does not aim to encourage real social change, but as marketing strategy to attract audience attention. The male lead character, who plays the role of a husband and father, is shown helping his wife with household chores and taking care of

their child. "This advertisement effectively illustrates the social construction of masculinity by showing that household chores are not solely a woman's responsibility but a shared duty."

Through its marketing campaign, Prudential Indonesia—a multinational company operating in various countries—adopts the "Think Globally, Act Locally" principle. This means that while the company operates on a global scale, it adapts its approach to local cultural characteristics to align with Indonesian society.

Since Indonesian society still holds traditional values, masculinity in Indonesia is also shaped by traditional perspectives. This explains why Janet Saltzman Chafetz's masculinity framework was chosen for this study, as it aligns with Prudential Indonesia's marketing approach, which continues to reflect traditional masculinity traits in its advertisements.

4. Conclusion

After analyzing Prudential Indonesia's digital advertisement titled "PRUFuture Prudential Life Insurance, #SimpleButMeaningful Protecting Families Now and in the Future," it was found that six out of seven traditional masculinity characteristics align with Janet Saltzman Chafetz's concept of masculinity. The advertisement portrays masculinity through a masculine physical appearance, represented by the main male character having a mustache and beard. It also highlights the role of a breadwinner, where the man is responsible for providing for his family. Additionally, masculinity is depicted through the ability to establish relationships with women, as well as acting wisely and rationally in decision-making. The advertisement further reinforces traditional masculinity by emphasizing a sense of responsibility, independence, and leadership, along with traits such as ambition, egoism, and a competitive spirit.

Furthermore, the researcher concludes that the social construction of masculinity in Indonesia still largely relies on traditional masculinity. However, despite this, advertisements show that traditional masculinity is not always negative or inherently linked to inequality. Instead, advertisements demonstrate that masculinity can be embodied by both men and women, promoting gender equality.

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