



# MEN'S CAREGIVING IN ADS



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## Backgrounds

- ▶ This report is part of Goodvertisings, a campaign promoting gender sensitivity in advertising content. Our purpose, in line with that of high-profile initiatives such as UN Women's [Unstereotype Alliance](#), Kantar's [Getting Gender Right](#), and Think with Google's [Diversity and Inclusivity Report](#), is to call on advertisers to portray people of all genders as multi-dimensional and empowered in the complex realities of their lives.
- ▶ Goodvertisings' [review of Tet 2022 advertisements](#) has indicated positive shifts in gender portrayals in advertising. To some extent, people of different genders have been portrayed in more multi-dimensional manners. Progressive portrayals of men and women in non-stereotypical gender roles have started to be more visible and normalised.
- ▶ At the same time, the review recognised that there is room for improvement in terms of challenging gender biases which default women to caregiving and men to breadwinning. As gender roles continue to evolve, i.e. more women are thriving in the economy and dads' roles are shifting at home, the ads have not caught up to the same extent.
- ▶ With a view to further recognising good practices in portrayals of men's caregiving and providing recommendations on what remains to be stereotypical, this report provides a snapshot of how men's caregiving has been portrayed in top 60 TVCs in Vietnam in 2022.



## Why gender sensitivity in advertising matters

- ▶ Definitions of gender have evolved, and gender roles are shifting. Consumers are increasingly holding brands accountable for their stance on unsterotyping ads. Therefore, it is critical for advertisers to accelerate progress.
- ▶ Stereotyping in advertising refers to the repetitive portrayal of a certain group with a generalised set of characteristics, roles or behaviours to differentiate with other groups based on outdated perceptions, e.g. women are dressed in pink and portrayed performing housework while men are dressed in blue and portrayed as successful career people. Unstereotyping ads refer to the efforts to portray individuals in progressive and multi-dimensional manners in order to challenge stereotypes and norms.
- ▶ Advertising not only reflects society but also has a powerful role in influencing and normalising progressive attitudes and behaviours. Gender-sensitive advertising, which gives the interests, needs, priorities and complex realities of all genders equal consideration and representation, helps brands to achieve higher purchase intent from consumers while inspiring positive change in society.

## Purpose

**Provide a snapshot of how men's caregiving has been portrayed in top 60 TVCs in Vietnam in 2022**

**Highlight positive examples and trends**

**Identify gaps and actionable insights for marketers moving forward**



# Methodology

- ▶ The sample includes 60 TV commercials launched in 2022 (exclusive of Tet 2022 ads, which have been reviewed as part of Goodvertisings' [previous report](#)). Selection criteria include:
  - Ads cover a wider range of product categories;
  - Ads are most popular in their respective product categories;
  - Ads have caregiving scenes.
- ▶ The sample spreads across 12 product categories as in the sample table.
- ▶ Data analyses are done mostly on the visual content of the TV commercials. Data analysis is done using manual coding. Data analysis is done using manual coding in accordance with the analysis framework in Annex 1. Following the coding, the research team explored the relationships and comparisons between different coded elements to identify and explain key trends.

## Filling a research gap on stereotypical portrayals of men in Vietnamese TV commercials

While there have been multiple studies looking at gender stereotypes in Vietnamese advertisements through how women are portrayed, no published research has been found providing statistical evidence on the stereotypical portrayals of men. Yet, anecdotal remarks by researchers and advertising practitioners<sup>1,2</sup> indicate a general consensus that portrayals of men in Vietnamese ads tend to conform to patriarchal ideologies entrenched in Vietnamese society. As such, men tend to be portrayed with traditional masculinity traits such as having a successful career, being dominant at home and not associated with feminised tasks. A study<sup>3</sup> of Vietnamese women's representation in Lunar New Year ads published in 2016 included some anecdotal evidence of the stereotypical portrayals of absent or negligent men occupied with career priorities. Goodvertisings report<sup>4</sup> on Tet 2022 ads from a gender lens also pointed to evidence of the portrayals of men as incompetent at housework and needing guidance and support from women.

This report seeks to fill the research gap on stereotypical portrayals of men in advertising in Vietnam by exploring the prevalence of a number of stereotypes of men pre-identified through aforementioned anecdotal evidence. Key stereotypes or tropes to be examined include the incompetent dad, the protective dad, the career dad, the negligent or absent male caregiver. Comparisons will be drawn against the prevalence of portrayals of moms or female caregivers with similar characteristics. The naming of these tropes are indicative and aims to suggest a baseline framework for future ad monitoring.

Product category	# of ads
Food	11
Drink	8
Hygiene and cleaning	7
Health	5
Milk	5
Snack	4
Banking and finance	4
Electronics	4
E-commerce	4
Scooter	3
Restaurant	3
Diaper (baby & adult)	2
Total	60

<sup>1</sup>Quảng cáo tết và những "nỗi đau" - Insight hay Định kiến? | Advertising Vietnam

<sup>2</sup>Gender in Marcom | Brands Vietnam

<sup>3</sup>Vietnamese Women's Representation in TV Commercials Related to Lunar New Year: A Critical Discourse Analysis | VNU Journal of Foreign Studies

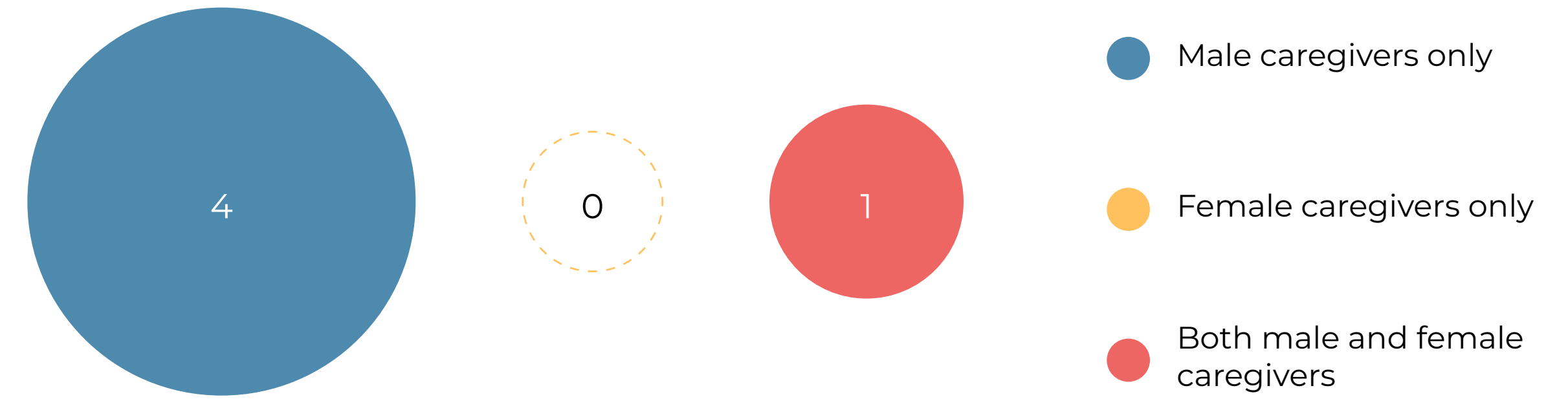
<sup>4</sup>Report on Tet 2022 ads from a gender lens | Goodvertisings

# What is working well?

## 1. The incompetent\* dad stereotype is being retired

- ▶ When men are portrayed cooking, doing household chores, taking care of children or the elderly, either by themselves or together with women, they are most often portrayed as competent at the tasks.
- ▶ Images of men performing household chores or caregiving tasks tend to be normalised. They do not get singled out for performing such tasks that they are traditionally not expected to do.
- ▶ Only 4 out of 60 ads portray men as being clumsy or incompetent.

Number of ads with incompetent caregivers



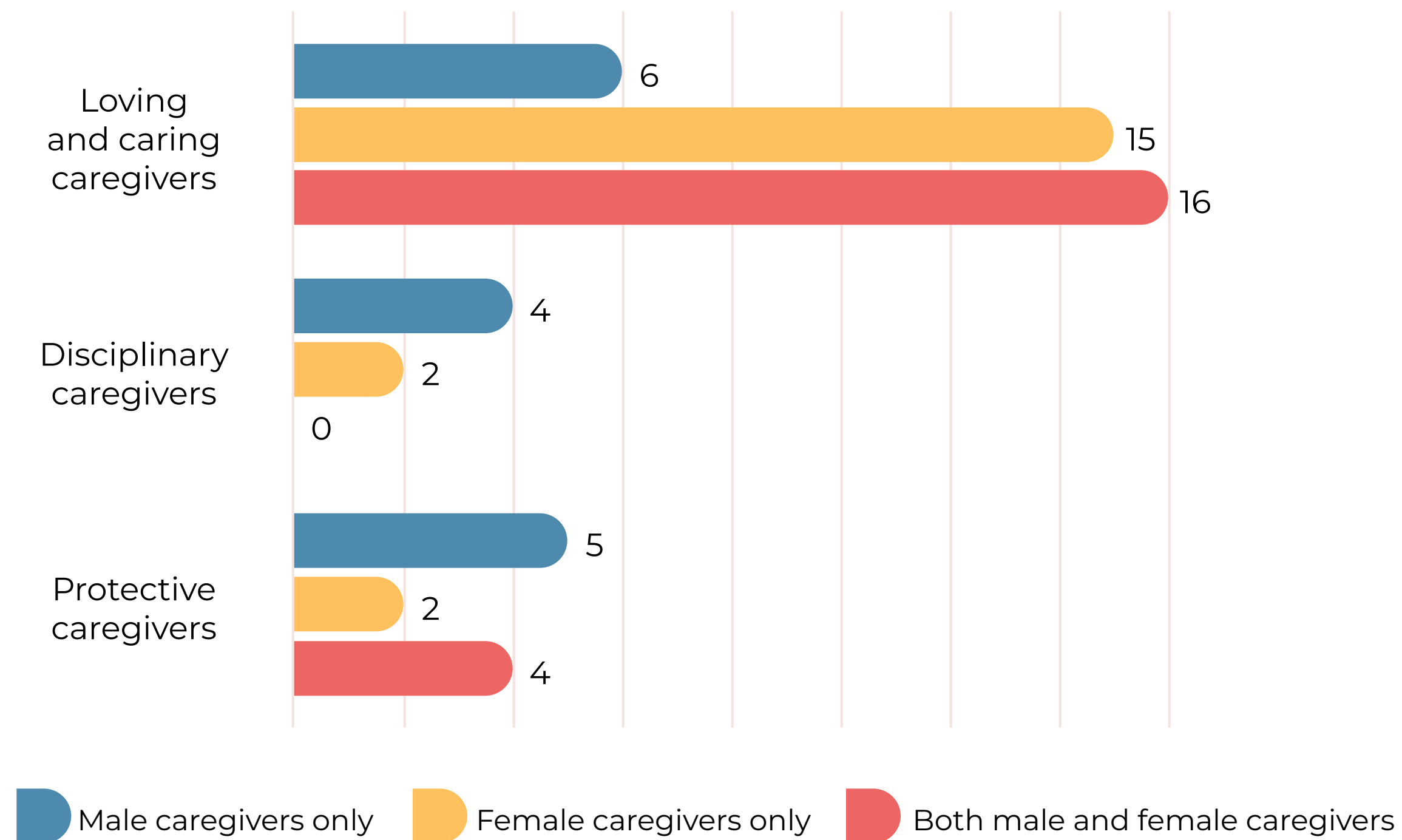
\*Incompetent portrayal refers to being clumsy, incapable of the tasks at hand, and needing help or guidance from other people in order to complete the task.

# What is working well?

## 2. Male caregivers are portrayed with multi-dimensional personalities

- ▶ While the stereotypical images of disciplinary or protective dads or male caregivers still exist, they are found relatively less frequent than the portrayals of loving and caring male caregivers. Loving and caring acts are portrayed to be done by male caregivers of different generations, and in a wide range of product categories, i.e. food, drink, motorbike, insurance, hospital, restaurant, banking and finance, or e-commerce.

Number of ads with caregivers by personality



Grandfather caring for grandmother  
*Ensure Gold*



Dad sending a pillow for daughter first time going to preschool  
*Techcombank*

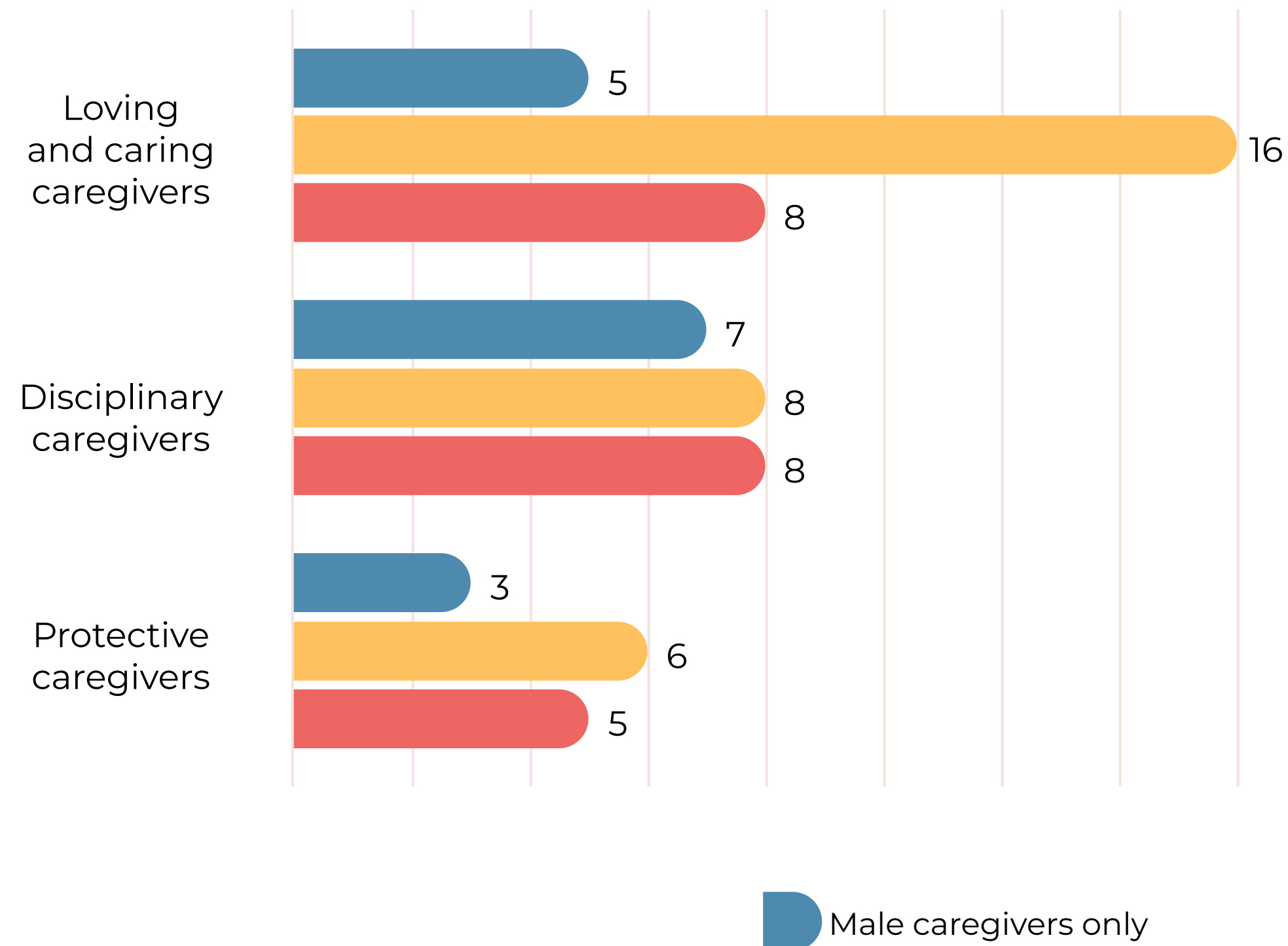


Dads, together with moms, joining parent-teacher meeting to address unclean toilet issues at school  
*Vim*

# What is working well?

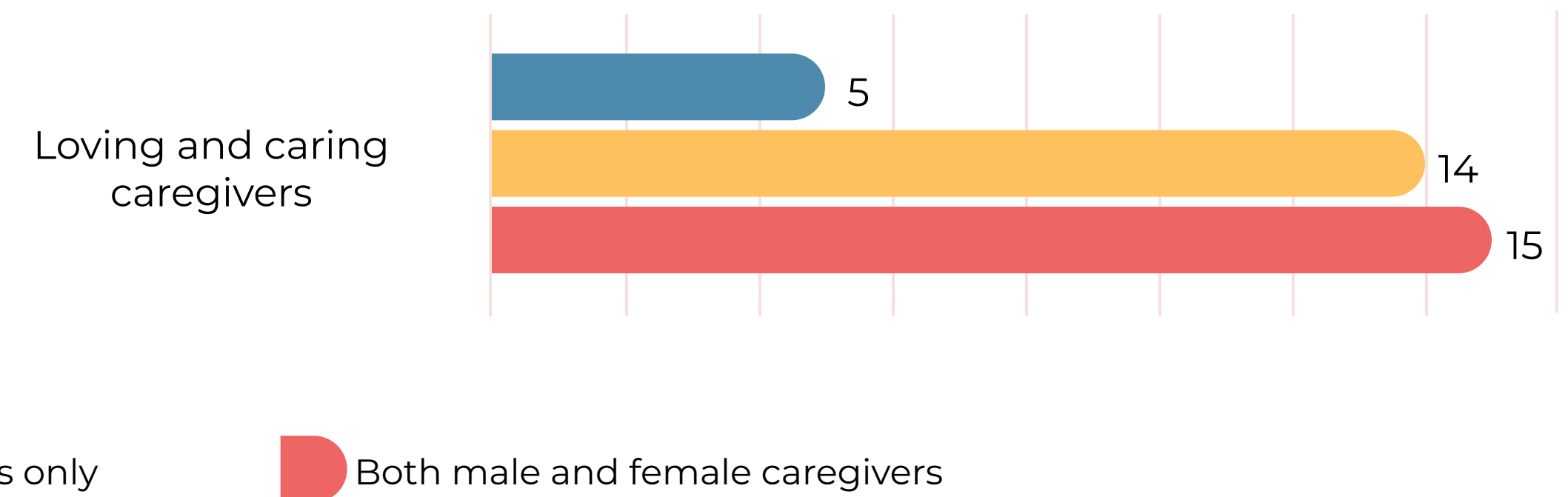
- ▶ Male caregivers are portrayed performing a relatively wide range of caregiving tasks, including attending to the physical or emotional needs of children, the elderly or other family members. Portrayals of men taking care of the elderly and attending to emotional needs of family members (e.g. listening to, comforting or encouraging), either by themselves or together with women, are found relatively more frequent than portrayals of men taking care of children.

Number of ads with caregivers performing different caregiving tasks



- ▶ When men are portrayed performing caregiving tasks, they are often shown as emotionally present and enjoying the tasks.

Number of ads with caregivers performing different caregiving tasks





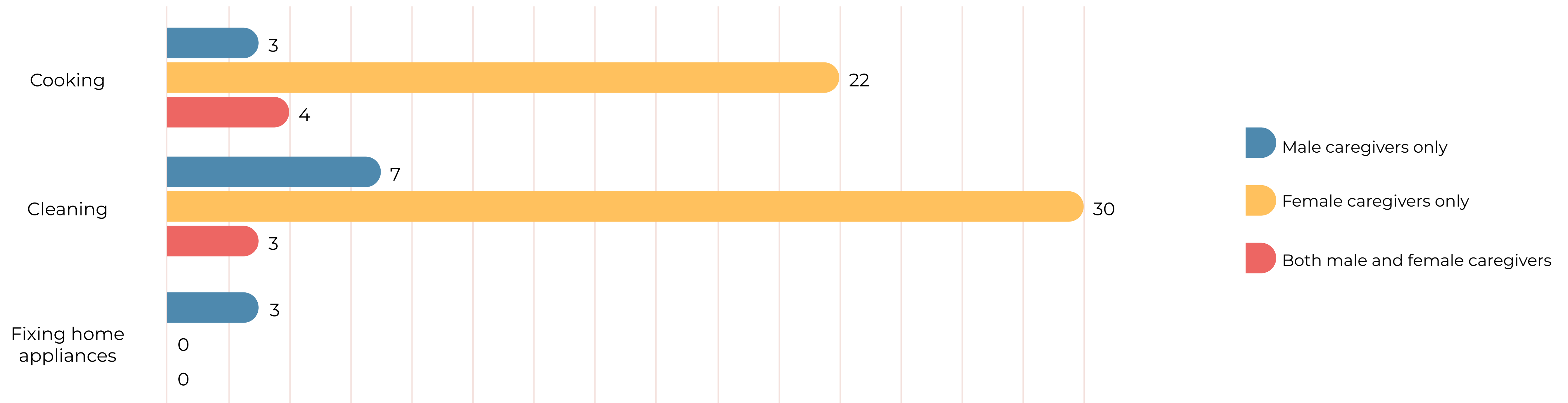
# What remains stereotypical?

## 1. The negligent dad stereotype still persists in multiple manners

- ▶ **Dads are rarely portrayed sharing the everyday household chores.** Even though they are portrayed taking care of children and other family members, they are rarely portrayed performing cooking at home, tidying the house, washing the dishes, or doing laundry.
  - ▷ 75% of ads feature cooking and cleaning tasks done by female caregivers. When men are portrayed doing housework, it is often the traditionally masculinised tasks such as fixing electronics.
  - ▷ 11 out of 11 of ads in the food product category feature women endorsing the products, of which only 1 ad feature both women and men endorsing the product. In the hygiene and cleaning product category, the frequency is 5 out of 7.



Number of ads with caregivers by personality



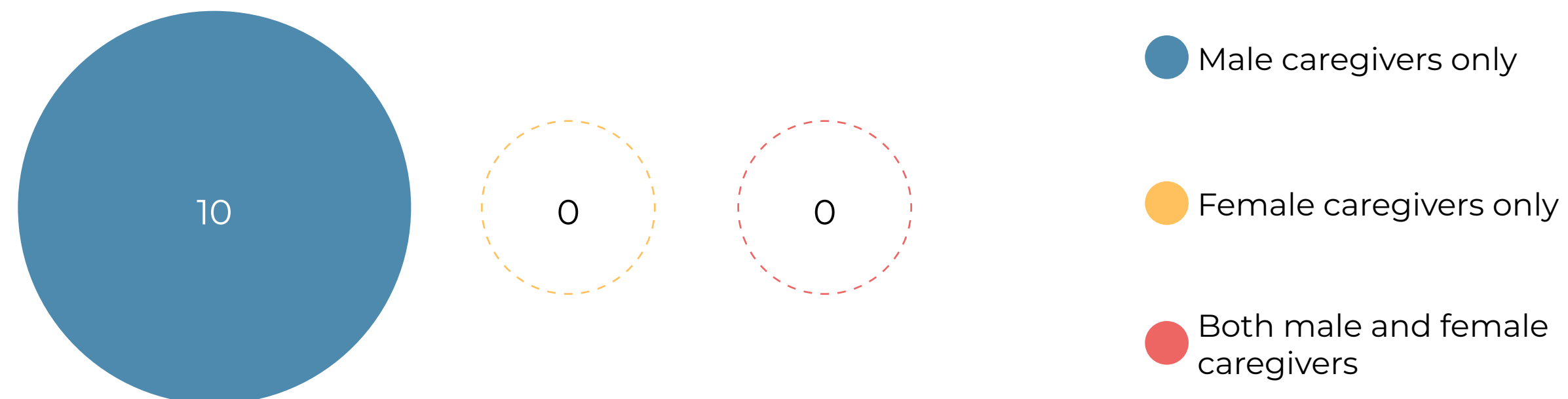
# What remains stereotypical?

- ▶ Out of the 5 ads portraying **incompetent caregivers**, 4 ads portray men as clumsy, and 1 ad portrays both men and women as such. The 4 ads that portray men as clumsy are in the food and cleaning product categories which typically target women consumers.



- ▶ A total of 10 ads portrays male caregivers as **physically close to care receivers but not paying attention or absent**, often due to work commitments, while none portrays female caregivers as such. These ads spread across a wide range of product categories including those typically targeting women, e.g. food, milk, or cleaning and those typically targeting men, e.g. motorbikes and electronics.

Number of ads with emotionally unavailable/absent caregivers



Dad busy working from home  
*Coca-cola*



Dad sitting there doing his own thing  
*TH True YOGURT*



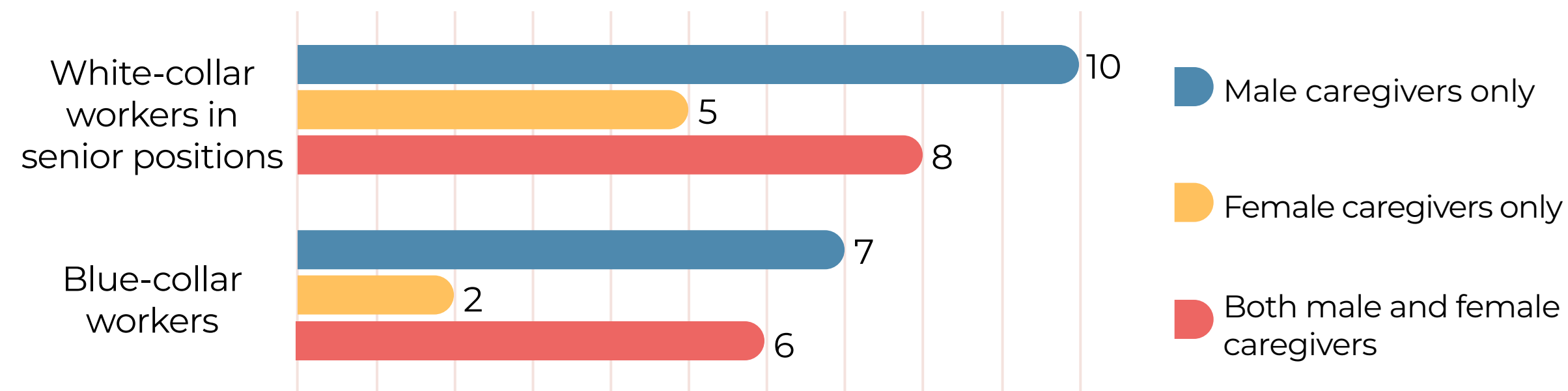
Dad coming home late from work when daughter is already asleep  
*Yamaha Jupiter*

# What remains stereotypical?

## 2. The career man stereotype

The number of ads with portrayals of men who are in senior positions at work or financially provide for the family outnumber that of women. Even among blue-collar workers, the number of ads portraying men as working to make ends meet outnumber that of women.

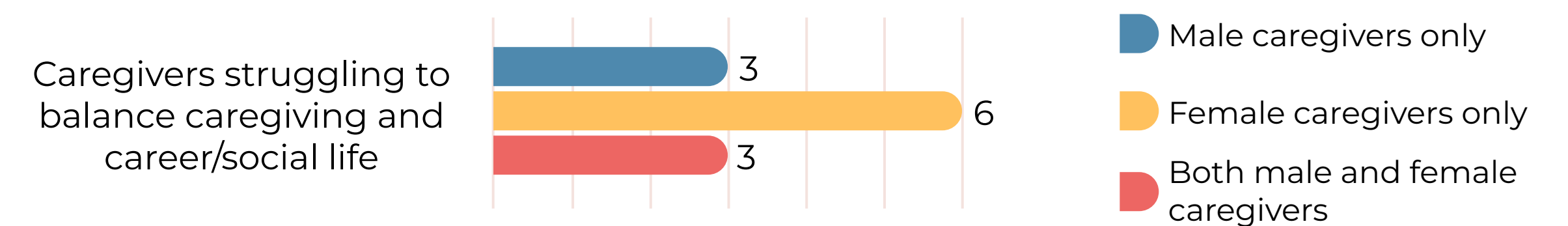
Number of ads with portrayals of workers by gender



## 3. Ads tend to be silent on men's caregiving struggles

While there is an overall tendency among ads to overlook the challenges and struggles of caregiving by both female and male caregivers, the struggles by male caregivers are relatively less visible. Female caregivers' struggles tend to be more acknowledged and receive more empathy from other characters in the ads.

Number of ads with portrayals of workers by gender

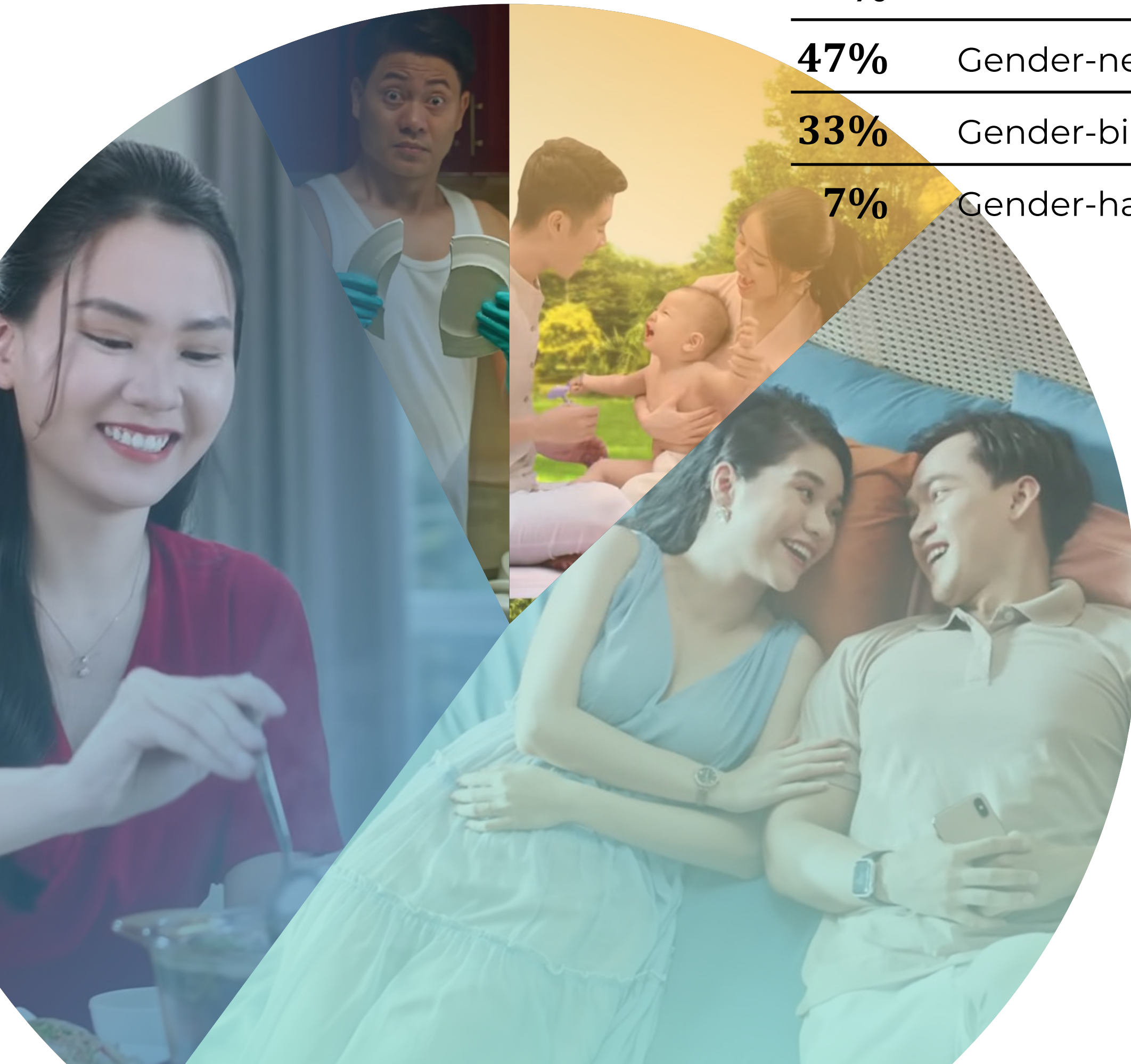


# Gender sensitivity level as a whole

- ▶ Given the persistence of stereotypes related to caregiving, 40% of the sample are rated from gender-bias to gender-harmful.

Gender sensitivity level of the sample

<b>0%</b>	Gender-progressive
<b>13%</b>	Gender-sensitive
<b>47%</b>	Gender-neutral
<b>33%</b>	Gender-bias
<b>7%</b>	Gender-harmful



## Gender-progressive

Main content addresses the causes of gender in equality issues. It portrays women and men in multi-dimensional and empowered ways beyond their gender norms. It makes an effort to challenge outdated gender norms and negative gender stereotypes.

## Gender-sensitive

Key message and main content show certain understanding of gender inequality issues. Women and men appear in multi-dimensional ways. The content might address gender-related insights based on an understanding of gender issues. Yet, the solution tends to make it easier for women and men to fulfil gender roles rather than challenge them.

## Gender-neutral/blind

Key message, main content and main characters are often constructed based on the principle of being “fair” by treating everyone the same. Minor stereotypes might exist but do not appear offensive. It may ignore gender norms, roles and relations and border being gender-blind.

## Gender-bias

Key message, main content and main characters may not directly reinforce harmful gender norms, privileging one gender over another. Yet, there are details which normalise unbalanced gender norms, roles or relations.

## Gender-harmful

Key message, main content and main characters are reinforcing gender norms in a serious manner. Portrayals of women and men are based on negative stereotypes, respecting one gender while downplaying another.

# Recommendations

## 1. Eliminate unconscious bias

- ▶ Think twice about reproducing the common stereotypes of incompetent, negligent, absent, workaholic dads and male caregivers. If you must portray these images, contextualise the behaviours and their consequences as opposed to normalising them.
- ▶ Refrain from portraying men taking on housework and caregiving only because they are single or single dads.
- ▶ Move beyond the one-dimensional portrayal and defaulting men as breadwinners and women as caregivers.
- ▶ Show positive portrayals of men and women in their non-stereotypical caregiving roles and refrain from drawing unnecessary attention to them with a view to normalising these images.
- ▶ Adopt a checklist to help surface unconscious bias that might be hidden in subtle details. References: [1](#) and [2](#).

## 2. Diversify portrayals of men's caregiving

- ▶ Show more positive portrayals of diverse male caregivers of different age groups and backgrounds (e.g. parent, husband, grandfather, brother, blue-collar and white-collar workers, etc.) performing a wide range of caregiving tasks (e.g. attending to the physical and emotional needs of children and elderly or performing household chores).

## 3. Embrace more storytelling about the nuances and complexities of caregiving

- ▶ When portraying caregiving, refrain from painting an overly rosy and simplistic picture of caregiving for both male and female caregivers.
- ▶ Portray the struggles male and female caregivers might encounter in real life as they try to balance caregiving and career or social life, as well as the emotional and well-being benefits that come with it.



Photos used in this report is taken from TVCs published in 2022 and some other marketing campaigns. The front and back covers have been designed using assets from Freepik.com

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