LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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Perfect Parents: Portrayals of Parenthood in Advertising

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä:	Lavikka, Tiina
Tutkielman nimi:	Täydellisiä vanhempia – vanhemmuuden kuvauksia mainonnassa
Tiedekunta:	Kauppatieteellinen tiedekunta
Pääaine:	Kansainvälinen markkinointi
Vuosi:	2012
Pro gradu –tutkielma:	Lappeenrannan teknillinen yliopisto
	94 sivua, 8 kuvaa, 8 taulukkoa
Tarkastajat:	prof. Sanna-Katriina Asikainen
	prof. Olli Kuivalainen
Hakusanat:	mainonta, diskurssianalyysi, sukupuoliroolit, vanhemmuus
Keywords:	advertising, discourse analysis, gender roles, parenthood

Mainonnalla ei myydä kuluttajille ainoastaan tuotteita ja palveluita vaan myös kuvaa täydellisestä elämästä. Lapsen saaminen on suuri muutos elämässä ja tällaisessa muutosvaiheessa ihminen voi olla altis sille, kuinka vanhemmuus esitetään mainoksissa. Mainonta rakentaa osaltaan versiota todellisuudesta uusille vanhemmille.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on selvittää, kuinka vanhemmuutta kuvataan mainonnassa. Mainokset 24:stä kahden eri pienten lasten vanhemmille suunnatun aikakauslehden numerosta tutkittiin. Näistä 71 mainoksen lopullista otantaa tarkasteltiin tarkemmin. Vanhemmuuden kuvaa tutkittiin sisältöanalyysin ja diskurssianalyysin avulla. Mainonnan elementtejä ja sukupuolien esittämisen eroja tarkasteltiin. Tutkimuksen vahvistamiseksi seitsemää mainonnan kohderyhmään kuuluvaa pienten lasten vanhempaa haastateltiin ja haastateltavien mielikuvaa vanhemmuuden esittämisestä verrattiin mainontaan.

Mainoksista löydettiin kuusi eri vanhemmuuden diskurssia. Täydellisen vanhemman kuva rakentui melko kapeaksi, sillä suurin osa vanhemmista mainoksissa kuului samaan ikäluokkaan, oli ulkonäöltään samankaltaisia ja teki samoja asioita. Äidit dominoivat mainontaa selvästi ja sukupuoliroolien erot olivat selviä. Vanhemmille suunnattu mainonta luottaa vahvasti kuviin lapsista ja vaarana onkin, ettei mainonta erotu journalistisesta sisällöstä vanhemmuutta käsittelevissä aikakauslehdissä.

ABSTRACT

Advertisements are created for the purpose of selling not only products and services but images of ideal life to consumers. Becoming a parent is a major transition in life and in such a stage of life a person can be susceptible to how parenthood is shown in advertising material. Advertising plays a part in constructing a version of reality for new parents.

The purpose of this study is to find out how parents are portrayed in advertising. Advertisements in 24 numbers of two different magazines directed at the parents of small children were researched. A final sample of 71 advertisements was further investigated. Representations of parenthood were analysed with the means of content analysis and discourse analysis. Elements that were used in the advertisements were studied and differences in the portrayal of genders were examined. For the purpose of triangulation seven people in the target group of the advertisements, parents of young children were interviewed and the advertisements were discussed with them. The perception of interviewees was compared with images of advertisements.

Six different discourses of parenthood were found in the advertisements. The portrayal of a perfect parent was found to be quite narrow with most of the parents being in the same age category, same appearance and engaged in same activities. Mothers dominate advertising and gender roles are clear. The advertising directed at parents relies heavily on images of children and it can be questioned whether the readers can separate journalistic content and advertising images in parenting magazines.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

"If I ask about the world, you can offer to tell me how it is under one or more frames of reference, but if I insist that you tell me how it is apart from all the frames, what can you say?"
(Goodman 1978 p. 2 –3)

When a baby is born, a new consumer is born at the same time. This means a flow of marketing material for the new parents, as it is considered to be against good practice to advertise directly to children (International Chamber of Commerce 2006; Kuluttajansuojalaki 1978) and parents are doing the consuming for the baby. Infants have simple needs: nutrition, sleep and a dry diaper. Still, there are various companies that try to create a need for their products. Baby food manufacturers, diaper companies, book clubs, clothing stores, insurance companies and many more all want their share of the new consumer (Ebenkamp 1999). Targeting is easy as companies can just find information of a newborn and start marketing their products directly to the parents, usually to the mother. In addition to this, magazines directed to the parents of babies and toddlers offer a channel for the marketers to target the right group.

The literature analysis for this research has revealed that marketing to parents has not been researched widely. Marketing to children has been a popular area of research (e.g. Morley 1968; Laczniak, Muehling and Carlson 1995; Chandler and Heinzerling 1998; Ji 2008) as has been the interaction between parents and children (e.g. Commuri and Gentry 2000; Marquis 2004; Wimalasiri 2004). The marketing of baby formula is covered rather well as the

International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes prohibits all marketing of baby formula to consumers (World Health Organisation 1981) and many companies have been circumventing the code (Allain and Kean 2008; Cutler and Wright 2002; Guilkey and Steward 1995).

The contents of advertising to parents of young children are one subject for study. The marketing material builds a certain image of parents and the perfect childhood that includes the use of the product marketed. This research aims to reveal how parenthood is portrayed in advertising material. Advertisement can either reflect or construct reality and in today's society the reality of parenthood is in a constant motion. Discourses about how a perfect mother or father should be are always a subject on debate, both from political and media perspective. While the subject of discussion on society level may be the length and distribution of parental leaves between mothers and fathers (Varjonen 2011) or the supposedly changing role of fathers (Aalto and Kolehmainen 2004; Mykkänen and Aalto 2010; Lammi-Taskula 2007), especially the yellow press and women's magazines bring up issues on how a mother should be and cover the opinions of celebrity mothers on pregnancy and child rearing (e.g. Parkkinen 2012; Paloniemi 2012) and even magazines directed to general audience have a say in parenting (e.g. Rochman 2012). When it comes to their journalistic content, magazines concentrating on parenting issues are of course a central part of this construction of reality. Advertising can be seen as a part of these discourses and certainly reveal something about the current trends.

Parents as the actual consumers and decision-makers are a constant interest for companies but little scientific articles have been written on the subject (Story, Davies and Farrell 2005). Parents can be seen as one group of consumers and marketing can be directed to this group. Parenthood can also

be constructed through consumption (Carrigan and Szmigin 2004; 2006; Thomsen and Sørensen 2006). Infants and toddlers create a consumer group of their own; they are users that have no say in the purchase decision-making. Therefore parents are responsible for all consuming. (Prendergast and Wong 2003) With older children the child plays an active role in consumption. Due to these facts the research concentrates on studies on parents of infants and toddlers.

From a marketer's point of view an interesting question is whether the advertisements in parenting magazines appeal to consumers and is there enough variation to draw attention to advertisements and separate them from the articles. In a magazine with a clearly defined target group and themes the synergy between articles and advertisements can be a benefit but can also turn against the advertisements in the competition of the attention of readers. Another issue is whether the portrayals of parents reflect reality and how do the parents themselves perceive the portrayals.

1.2 Research problem and objectives

This research concentrates on the portrayal of parenthood in advertising directed to parents of young children.

The main objective is to find out *how parents are portrayed in advertisements of products for children aged four or younger*.

Supportive research questions are:

How can parents portrayed in advertising be categorised?
How does gender domination show in advertisements to parents?
What elements are used in advertising to parents?

How do parents of small children perceive the portrayal of parenthood in advertisements?

The portrayal of parenthood in advertisements constructs an image of a perfect parent. The research aims to find out what this portrayal is like and whether there are different types of portrayals that can be connected with previous studies on portrayals. Part of this is investigating gender domination in the advertisements and what advertising elements are used to gain the attention of the potential consumers, the parents. The age of the children that the products are for is limited as in this age category the children are not so strongly part of the consumer decision making (Prendergast & Wong 2003) and the identity of parents as mothers and fathers may still be forming (Carrigan and Szmigin 2004; 2006; Thomsen and Sørensen 2006). In the theoretical part portrayals in advertising are discussed from gender, age and race perspectives to find out what kind of norms and categories exist in advertising in general.

The main fields of interest for this research are firstly, academic studies on advertising and its elements and secondly, research on parenthood and gender. In the theory part of the study, according to the supportive research questions, theory of four areas of the research are investigated more closely. The theoretical framework is illustrated in figure 1.

Analysing advertisements

Print advertising

Elements of advertising

Focus group perceptions

Portrayals in advertising

Gender dominance

Parenthood and gender research
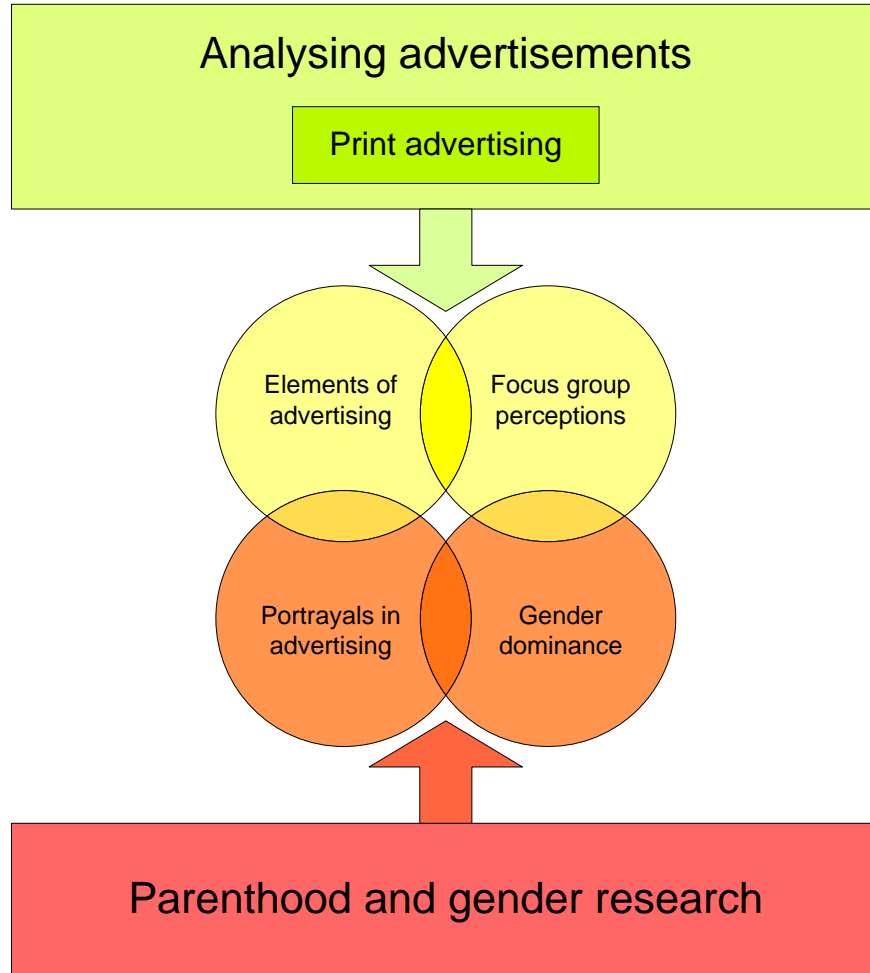
Figure 1. Theoretical framework

1.3 Definitions of key concepts

Parent is in this study understood as a caretaker for a child, mainly a person that can be perceived as a mother or father. Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines parent as "a person who has begotten or borne a child; a father or a mother" and extends the definition by stating that a parent can also be "a person who holds the position of or exercises the functions of a parent; a protector, guardian".

Gender can be defined as a "*culturally shaped group of attributes and*

behaviours given to the female of the male" (Humm 1995 p. 106). In this research, gender is understood as the social gender of a person and as a dichotomy, a male or a female.

Gender domination means that one gender is more prevalent or privileged in a material for a research or dominates a cultural domain (Acker 1990).

Elements of advertising are the components of which the advertisement is made of and which influence the effectiveness of the message (Pieters and Wedel 2004).

Portrayal can be described as the representation or depiction of a certain group of people in media, art or other context. Oxford English Dictionary (1989) offers the term such meanings as "*to form a mental image of; to picture to oneself*" and "*to represent or depict in words*".

Target group perception is the way people in the portrayed group of people see portrayals (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006).

1.4 Delimitations

The main objects of this research are the parents of children aged under 4 years. In this age group children are not considered to influence the purchase decision-making and therefore the parents decide of the consumption for the child (Prendergast & Wong 2003). The advertising material is limited to products for the child, children and parents or for pregnancy and breastfeeding. This limits out all advertisements of products for just the parents or adults in general although the parents would otherwise be in the

right target group.

Gender is understood as a binary variable in this research. Although there is variance in the cultural and sociological manifestations of gender and human sexuality, for the purposes of this study gender is limited to male or female and family is seen from a heteronormative perspective. The changing concept of family is not discussed in the study.

1.5 Research methods

Figure 2 illustrates the framework for the research.
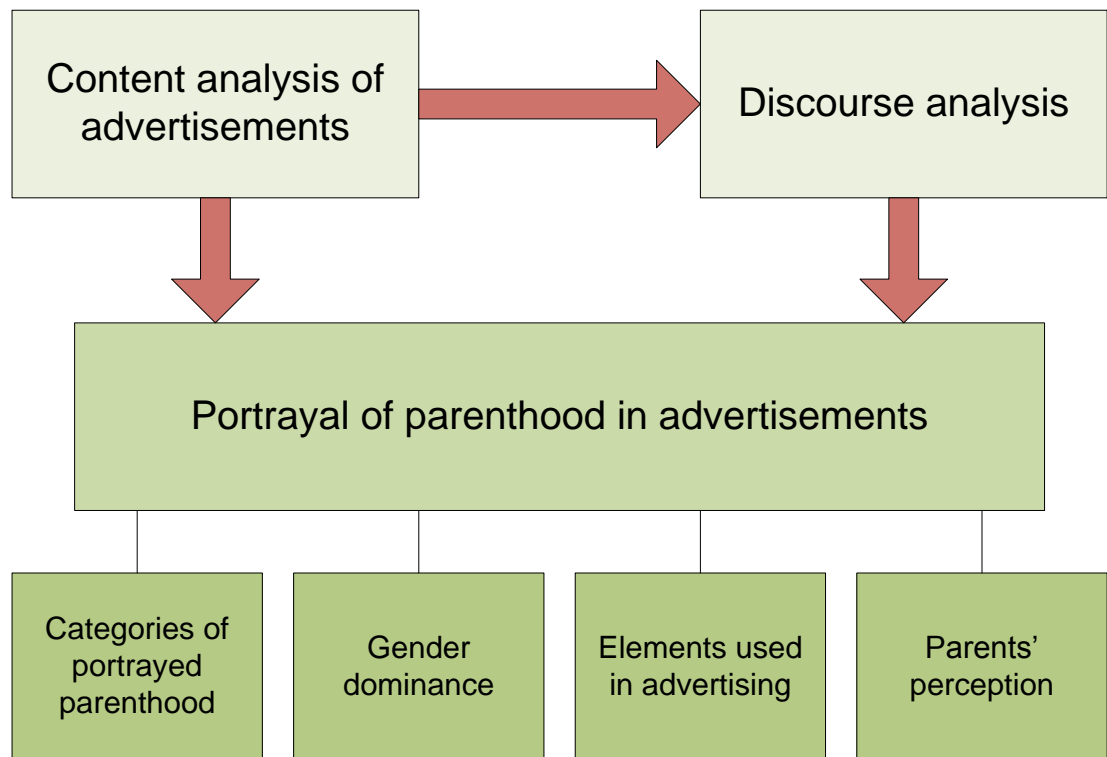
Figure 2. Research framework

Advertising to parents constructs a picture or pictures of parenthood. By researching the contents of advertising to parents and analysing it with the

methods of discourse analysis a portrayal of parenthood can be constructed. In accordance with the supportive research questions, the different categories of portrayed parenthood are presented, issue of gender dominance is addressed, elements used in the advertisements are analysed and parents' perceptions are presented.

The research includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The main part is based on advertising material of products for children under the age of 4. The advertisements are collected from Vauva-magazine volume 18 (numbers 1 – 12) and Kaksplus-magazine volume 41 (numbers 1 – 12), totaling 24 numbers. The advertisements are chosen based on the promoted product being suitable for the delimitations of the research and parents being a visible part of the advertisement. The contents of the advertisements are studied first with the methods of content analysis to gain quantitative data and classify the material. The content analysis serves as a basis for a discourse analysis that is conducted in order to find out how parents are portrayed in the advertising. The content analysis classifies the advertisements in the following categories:

- Product type
- Adult center figure in the advertisement
    - gender of the center figure
    - parent or other adult
    - approximate age of the adult center figure
- Children in the advertisement
    - amount of children
    - age of children
    - gender of children
- Activities in the advertisement
- Amount of text and images

– Size of the advertisements

In addition to the aforementioned classification, the overall amount of all advertisements and the amount of advertisements with parents in them is also counted in order to see how common the use of parental figures is in advertisements. For those advertisements that do not fit the delimitations of the study, the product category of the advertisement is classified as it also gives valuable background information of what is advertised to parents.

The discourse analysis includes analysing the texts as well as the images. In reference to the supportive research questions the different portrayals of parents are categorised if such groups are discovered. In addition to the discourse analysis done on the advertisement material, interviews will be carried to gain more understanding on the phenomenon. The people interviewed are of four mothers and three fathers of children in the appropriate age group, i.e. the target group of the advertisements. During the interviews, a selection of advertisements is discussed with the interviewees. The discussion will be analysed in the light of discourse analysis results. The purpose of the interviews is to shed light to how the people in the target group see the portrayals of parenthood in the advertisements. The findings of the content analysis as well as the discourse analysis will be further discussed in the empirical findings section.

1.6 Structure of the research

The research consists of introductory part, theory part, methodology part and empirical part. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the empirical findings and suggestions for further research are made. In the theoretical part, different perspectives on analysing advertisements are presented and previous literature on portrayals in advertising is discussed. The empirical part introduces the results of the research and the discourses found in the

advertising material using content analysis and discourse analysis. The perceptions of the interviewees are discussed in relation to the findings of the research.

2 ANALYSING ADVERTISING AND PORTRAYALS

In this chapter the theoretical viewpoints of the research are presented. First, literature analysis and the background of the study are introduced. Second, the categorizing of portrayals is presented. Third, the question of gender dominance and how it has been studied is answered. Fourth, general elements used in print advertising are discussed. Fifth, the perceptions of focus groups are addressed.

2.1 Literature analysis

This chapter introduces the literature analysis for the research. First, the goals of the analysis are presented. Second, the scope of the review is revealed and the articles are introduced analysed shortly.

2.1.1 Objects and scope of the review

The goal of the literature analysis was to find information about parenthood and consuming. One issue relating to this is marketing and advertising of children's products to parents and how much this subject has been studied. Another area of interest for the literature analysis was the analysis of portrayals in advertising. This subject will be further discussed in the theory chapter.

The main research questions for the literature analysis are: 1. What has been written about consumption and parenthood? 2. What kind of portrayals in advertising have been studied?

Scope of the literature review

The literature review includes seven articles discussing subjects linking to the research questions. The sample was collected using various keywords such as *consumption, parenthood, motherhood, parents, mothers, advertising* and *marketing*. The following databases were used: ABI/INFORM, EBSCO, Elsevier, Emerald and JSTOR. In addition to these databases some key articles were found through the references in relevant articles.

2.1.2 Parenthood and consumption

This subchapter concentrates on the main articles reviewed revolving around the first research question of the literature review. Table 1 introduces the reviewed articles concentrating on parenthood and consumption.

Table 1. Reviewed articles.

Study	Field of research	Nature of study	Focus group
Prendergast & Wong 2003	Marketing, consumer behaviour	In-depth interviews Four-part questionnaire	mothers
Carrigan & Szmigin 2004	consumer behaviour		mothers
Carrigan & Szmigin 2006	Marketing, consumer behaviour	Qualitative interviews	mothers
Story, Davies & Farrell 2005	consumer behaviour	In-depth interviews*	parents
Neeley & Coffey 2007	Marketing, consumer behaviour	SMRB 2003 Full Year Study	mothers and children
Thomsen & Sørensen 2006	consumer behaviour	In-depth interviews	mothers
Lehikoinen 2005	Marketing, consumer behaviour	Interviews, group discussion	mothers

Thomsen and Sørensen (2006) have been discussing the role of consumption in the making of a mother. Their work revolves around consumer identity and life role transition. The article "The First Four-wheeled Status Symbol: Pram Consumption as a vehicle for the Construction of Motherhood Identity" discusses the meaning of the baby perambulator as a building block of a mother's new role.

Carrigan and Szmigin (2004; 2006) have also examined the transition to motherhood through consumption. Whereas Thomsen and Sørensen have been concentrating on a single purchase, the pram, and its influence, Carrigan and Szmigin have investigated the effects of consumption to the perception of time during pregnancy and the early days of motherhood in their 2004 article "Time, Uncertainty and the Expectancy Experience: An Interpretive Exploration of Consumption and Impending Motherhood." They have also been studying what role the consumption of convenience products plays in creating a self-identity of a mother in the 2006 study ""Mothers of invention": maternal empowerment and convenience consumption."

In their study, "Understanding the "Four-eyed, Four-legged" Consumer: A Segmentation Analysis of U.S. Moms," Neeley and Coffey (2007) concentrate on the decision-making dynamics of mothers and children. Yet, their research also classifies mothers as consumers and therefore sheds some light to how mothers are seen from a marketer's point of view.

The consumption of luxury apparel for young children has been studied by Prendergast and Wong in "Parental influence on the purchase of luxury brands of infant apparel: an exploratory study in Hong Kong" (2003). The purchasing behaviour of parents is the main interest in this research, which concentrates on a small niche of products for infants. Prendergast's and

Wong's research has its roots in marketing luxury items but the emphasis is on parents' reasons for buying luxury apparel for infants.

Lehikoinen (2005) has investigated the consumer's relational motivation with daily goods in her dissertation, "A consumer's relational motivation with daily goods – Why a mother joins the Piltti-circle." The focus group in the study was new mothers. The relational motivation with industrial baby foods was investigated by interviewing mothers in groups. Lehikoinen's study (2005) concentrates on marketing to mothers and the ways marketers can influence the parents of a new baby.

Story, Davies and Farrell discuss the relation between being a parent and consumption in their 2005 conference paper "The Impact of Parenthood on Consumption: The New Car Buying Experience." The article introduces a research on the subject with in-depth interviews of parents.

2.1.3 Portrayals in advertising

Advertising can be analysed in various ways to reveal how different roles are portrayed through marketing communications. Content analysis is a popular research method in investigating advertising material. Research has been conducted on both printed media and television advertising.

Gender roles are a popular area of investigation as especially the role of women in advertising has proven a long-lasting subject for public discussion since the 1970's (Sullivan and O'Connor 1988; Ferguson et al. 1990; Kates & Shaw-Garlock 1999). Sex roles in advertising have been widely studied (e.g. Ford, Voli, Honeycutt and Casey 1998; Koernig and Granitz 2006; An and Kim 2007; Royo-Vela et al. 2007) and categorising can also be based on for

instance age (e.g. Gantz, Gartenberg and Rainbow 1980; Swayne & Greco 1987; Carrigan & Szmigin 1999). Race is another popular subject for researching portrayals in advertising (e.g. Humphrey and Schuman 1984; Sudbury & Wilberforce 2006). Although portrayals of women in advertising have been studied extensively, male portrayals have not received the same attention. The feminist research has contributed to this field of study and motherhood has been investigated through the means of content analysis (e.g. Johnston and Swanson 2003). However, the focus is not on advertising, rather on journalistic content.

2.2 Background

This study moves between various disciplines and fields of study and therefore it is essential to shed some light to how the subject has been addressed in previous research. Portrayals in advertising can be approached from a consumer behavioural as well as a sociological point of view. In order to understand what the background of the research is, the little research done on parenthood and consumption need to be investigated.

One viewpoint to parenthood and consumption is found in the theory of transitional consumption (Carrigan and Szmigin 2004; Thomsen and Sørensen 2006). Becoming a mother or a father for the first time means the beginning of a new life with a new role. In the case of new parenthood, the transition requires consumption in the form of baby paraphernalia. Of the studies included in the literature review for this research, five examine the impact of consumption to the construction of the new identity as a parent. Carrigan and Szmigin (2004) argue that the transition to motherhood is not a simple process. All reviewed articles relating to consumption's importance to building a new identity agree that parents, especially mothers, reflect their identity from the things they buy for the baby. A common opinion seems to be that some parents invest a significant amount of time to investigating the

options for baby paraphernalia while others a more relaxed about the choices they make. This is clearly demonstrated by Thomsen's and Sørensen's (2006) study. They discuss the importance of a single purchase decision to the self-image of a mother through women's choice of a pram. According to the study women reflect their identity from the different attributes of the pram. While some mothers that participated in the found the purchase of a pram a rather meaningless decision, other invested a lot of time in considering the different alternatives and what their meaning was to the mother's identity. Cross case analysis generated three central themes. First were the symbolic meanings of the pram consumption, both public and private signal meanings but also public and private experiential meanings. Second, the study revealed that the importance of the pram purchase decision depends on the level to which the women embrace their role as a mother. Third, the concept of liminal consumption is modified as consumption caused liminality, i.e. instead of consumption helping in the transition phase, consumption actually causes the feeling of liminality increase. (Thomsen & Sørensen 2006)

Prendergast and Wong (2003) suggest that their study on buying luxury apparel for infants could be extended to research the impact to the parents' self-image. However, their study found no correlation between the parents' level of social consumption and the aptitude to buy luxury brands for their children. The same study revealed that there is a positive association between the parents' materialism and the consumption of luxury apparel. These findings could indicate that parents feel that the consumption for their children is a part of their own identity.

The term "good mother" is frequently used in articles dealing with parents and consumption. Lehikoinen (2005) and Carrigan and Szmigin (2006) link the image of a good mother to food products. In both studies it is argued that the

mythical good mother does not use convenience products to ease the burden of domestic work. Food is a particularly sensitive issue as the myth of a perfect mother includes food made from scratch with no aid from the industrial products. The aforementioned studies reveal the mixed feelings mothers have in relation to using convenience products. Although Lehikoinen concentrates mainly on baby food products and Carrigan and Szmigin have a wider scope, both illustrate well how mothers reflect their maternal identity from their consumption decisions for the children. Interestingly, the latter discovered that mothers also use convenience products to raise their motherhood identity to their desired level by for instance utilising food products in getting more variety to meals. Also the consumption of processed baby foods can be a result of higher perceived quality and better nutritional composition than in home-made foods as Lehikoinen's study reveals. However, both the study on convenience consumption (Carrigan & Szmigin 2006) and the baby food study (Lehikoinen 2005) mention the guilt factor. The studies report that some mothers feel guilty for using convenience products or industrial baby foods.

The aforementioned five articles clearly demonstrate that parents build their identity as mothers and fathers through consumption. There are also several ways to approach this field of study. Transitional consumption is an area of research that includes also other life stages, but for instance Prendergast and Wong (2003) have studied parental identity from a totally different point of view. As parents reflect themselves through consumption, it is likely that advertising can also play a part in the picture of a perfect parent and advertising images contribute to this consumer identity (Borgerson, Schroeder, Blomberg and Thorssén 2006). The following subchapters investigate the theories and research in the different areas of interest for this study.

2.3 Portrayals in advertising and categorising of portrayals

This chapter introduces different studies on how people are portrayed in advertising and journalistic content. Often in studies that concentrate on how a certain group of individuals is represented or portrayed and the results are different categories of portrayals. The study of portrayals reveals how advertisers build their brand meaning (Borgerson, Schroeder, Blomberg and Thorssén 2006) and what messages they want to communicate to audiences through the attributes of people in the advertisements (Albanese and Kolbe 1996). Advertisements can be seen as a reflection of culture as well as mirroring people's dreams and ideal images (Hakala 2003 p. 8–9).

Segmentation is classical tool in marketing (Kotler 2003) and parents should not be seen as a homogeneous group of consumers. Nevertheless, the reviewed articles reveal the lack of academic research in segmenting parents and therefore the subject has to be approached through portrayals with other perspectives. Gender, age and race are examples of ways to create a norm in advertising. The following subchapters briefly introduce the most commonly researched subjects of portrayals that can provide a perspective to studying parental portrayals.

2.3.1 Gender portrayals

As gender studies are a popular area of research, one main focus of portrayals studies of advertising has been the battle between sexes. Feminist research has widened the scope from studying female portrayals to differences between genders and portrayals of men. Traditionally female images in advertising have gained more attention, but in recent years interest has shifted towards male portrayals (Kolbe and Albanese, 1996; Hakala 2006 p. 14). Print media has attracted a lot of research in this field mainly as it

relies heavily on visual content (Wolin 2003). In studying parenthood portrayals, gender is a key issue and therefore it is vital to take a look at previous studies on the matter.

Many of studies on gender stereotypes concentrate on portrayals of a certain gender and do not consider the product category or type of media as such. When investigating female role stereotypes in print advertising, Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) found that there is variation across both magazine type and product type.

Gender portrayals have been studied from many perspectives. Cross-cultural studies of portrayals in advertisements shed light to differencies between countries, mainly within the Western countries (Wiles & Wiles & Tjernlund, 1995; Hakala 2006) but also comparing Western and Asian cultures (An & Kim 2007). Another popular way to approach the subject is studying the development of portrayals over time (Lindner 2004; .Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) and Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) did researches on women's portrayals over three decades whereas Hakala (2006) studied changing masculinity. Generally the movement in advertising portrayals has been towards slightly less stereotypical (Wolin 2003). In Finnish cultural setting the images of masculinity are seen as generally versatile, although there is variation depending on the medium and especially the target group as advertising in women's magazines differs from those targeted to all audiences (Lakotieva, Kortelainen and Niemelä 1999).

Categorising gender portrayals

Categories of gender representations have been found in many portrayal studies. To sum it up, mostly these categories can be dealt to three main ones: decorational roles, traditional roles and non-traditional roles. It can be said that all human figures in advertising are somehow gendered and easy to

recognize as men or women; the power of such advertising lies in the fast recognition (Rossi 2003 p. 11).

Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) introduce eight stereotypical roles for women in advertisements. Traditional roles include dependency and housewife. Decorative role categories are women concerned with physical attractiveness and women as sex objects. Women in non-traditional activities and career-oriented women make the women in non-traditional roles category. The last category, neutral, is labeled under women portrayed as equal to men. These categories are consistent with the four stereotypes compiled from several previous studies. The main suggestions of these studies are that according to advertising portrayals a woman's place is at home, women do not make important decisions, women are dependent on men and men regard women primarily as sex objects. (Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1977) One way to categorise portrayals is through action and classifying them to working roles and non-working roles, which are further divided to sub-categories (Sullivan and O'Connor 1988).

Studies on male images in advertising have found several categories for the representation of masculinity. Hakala (2006 p. 190) introduces nine images of masculinity in advertisements: daddy, spouse/partner, homemaker, farmer/rancher, businessman/salesman, scientist/inventor, working man, Don Juan and metrosexual. Dahle (1999) approaches the issue first from occupational point of view (domestic, non-domestic occupation, non-domestic and non-occupational), second from family role perspective (no mention of family role, romantic relationship, family role) and third from the perspective of using males in a decorative role (decorative and related to the product, decorative and unrelated to the product).

The similarities found in studies on female and male characters are traditional, non-traditional and decorative roles. For purposes of this study,

certain categories are chosen to represent those that appear in the final advertisement sample. The gender portrayals found in previous studies are summed up in the following table.

Table 2. Gender role categories.

	Female roles	Male role
Traditional roles	Dependent woman	Working man/businessman
	Housewife	Breadwinner
Non-traditional roles	Woman in non-traditional activities	
	Career-orienteed woman	
	Voice of authority	
Decorative roles	Woman concerned with physical attractiveness	Men in decorative roles
	Woman as a sex object	

(Plakoyainnaki and Zotos 2009; Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1977; Hakala 2006; Dahle 1999; Martens 2009)

Table 2 represents the main female and male portrayal categories found in advertisement portrayal studies. There is congruence in the categories as the categories are often based on cultural stereotyping. In some of gender portrayal studies the portrayal of only one gender is researched whereas others compare the portrayals of both genders. Due to this context, the role category of one gender does not necessarily have a counterpart in the other gender. A classical pair is the housewife, a female, and the breadwinner, a male (Martens 2009 p. 114).

2.3.2 Race and minority portrayals

Just like gender, race is a very sensitive and political issue for research. When studying race portrayal, the central question often is whether minority races are an exception from an unwritten norm and how race is used to

underline something. Minority portrayal studies often deal with how often members of a minority are shown, what is their importance in the context and what their employment status is (Taylor and Bang 1997; Bailey 2006). Portrayal studies in this category concentrate more on the perceptions of the group portrayed and the majority than gender studies.

With all portrayal studies but especially in those concerning race the cultural setting of the research is pivotal (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). It can also be argued that the representation of minority groups can affect whether the members of the group feel that they are accepted as a part of society and stereotypes in mass media can even become self-fulfilling prophecies (Taylor and Bang 1997). The portrayals can affect people's perceptions of themselves, but the ones that already strongly relate themselves with media images, are the most likely to be influenced (Bailey 2006). Humphrey and Schuman (1984) argue that due to little face-to-face contact between the racial groups they studied, the portrayal of a certain group in advertisements can significantly affect how people see members of another group. In this sense, advertising images construct a certain reality about this group people. If the majority sees advertisement portrayals as reflecting reality, it may lead to distortion of their image of minority groups and therefore in fact the advertisements start constructing reality (Taylor and Bang 1997). Racial portrayals highlight the question of how different groups of people should be portrayed. If the presumption is that everyone should be portrayed equally, image of certain groups may be distorted. However, if representations in advertising are taken from social reality, they can be perceived as negative towards a certain group. (Humphrey and Schuman 1984) Studies on minorities and ethnic groups are naturally tied to cultural, sociological and demographical setting and therefore the initial proposition concerning ethnic variation in the empirical data is that **there is little ethnical variation in the advertising images of parents.**

2.3.3 Age portrayals

One demographic way to categorise people is their age. Portrayals based on the age of people mostly focus on elderly people. As with race issues, age portrayals often deal with the age norm in the society and advertising discourse. Older age group might be underrepresented in advertising although the number of people in this demographic category is rising throughout Western countries. Although companies may acknowledge the growing purchasing power of seniors, the images of mature people do not show in advertising as much as they could. In a Japanese cultural setting especially elder women are missing in the advertisements although there are more women from the younger age groups shown than men (Prieler, Kohlbacher, Hagiwara and Arima 2010). There are also clear gender portrayals in older age groups although studies do agree on the ratio of older male and female figures (Carrigan and Szmigin 1999). As this research is limited to products for child of certain age, proposition for the empirical research is that **the parents in advertising are mostly from an age category in accordance with the children's age.**

2.3.4 Previous parenthood portrayals

As the main focus of this research is the portrayal of parenthood in advertising it is essential to introduce previous studies on this subject. Academic research of parenthood has mostly concentrated on sociological perspectives with some research on parents as consumers. This subchapter concentrates on how parents are categorised as consumers and what kind of portraits can be found in academic literature.

Carrigan and Szmigin (2004) argue that pregnant women have been ignored as consumers as they can be seen as "temporary citizens". Yet, both their 2004 study and Thomsen's and Sørensen's 2006 study show, that the

consumption begins before the baby is born and the transition in life is a crucial stage for future consumption.

Consumption can affect the construction parenthood, but parenthood can also have an impact on consumption patterns and habits. Story, Davies and Farrell (2005) argue that parents of an infant pay attention to different features in a new car than couples without children. Parenthood can change the attitudes of a person. Neeley and Coffey (2007) also suggest that *"the priorities, concerns and self-focus"* of a woman can change as a consequence of becoming a mother. In a study by Lehikoinen (2005) the demographical factors did not affect the consumers' relational motivation as much as the new life situation. Becoming a mother made women naturally more interested in baby products, but the overall life situation also had an impact. The birth of a first child had a different effect on the consumption and receptiveness to marketing than the birth of a second child. (Lehikoinen 2005)

Neeley and Coffey (2007) concentrate on the dynamics of mother and children in consumption, but their study also segments mothers as consumers. They found six separate mother segments: *the Balancer, the Diva, the Nurturer, the Protector, the Struggler and the Stoic*. These segments were further divided to two groups in relation to their resistance to marketing. The first three clusters are impulsive as consumers and they are more receptive to marketing. The latter three segments are purposive decision makers and more resistant to marketing. The study also determined the different clusters by factors such as occupation. It serves as one segmentation of U.S. mothers for the marketers, although the results cannot explain all the variation in the population. The trend is more towards consumer behaviour and as such the study does not portray mothers as much as categorises them as consumers.

Gayle Kaufman's 1999 research "The Portrayal of Men's Family Roles in Television Commercials" is a rare exception as it concentrates on fathers rather than mothers. Kaufman examined the role of men as fathers and husbands in television commercials. The study showed for example that men are more likely to appear in advertising for computers or electronics with children but without a spouse whereas these kinds of advertisements do not have women and children without the man present. Men are also typically doing certain activities with children, such as teaching, reading or playing, but rarely taking care of children and never taking care of a girl. The role of a family man is very narrow according this study, it is that of a middle-class, non-Hispanic white man with stereotypically male knowledge and activities. (Kaufman 1999) Based on the previous studies, an initial proposition for the empirical study is that various types of portrayals of parenthood can be found in the advertisement sample.

2.4 Gender dominance

In order to create a child, two sexes are needed. After the birth of a baby, the clear division between sexes seems to continue at least in the parenthood discourse. There is an abundance of research on the subject of gender. Feminist research has investigated gender and the equality of sexes from many different viewpoints and advertisements have also been one field of interest. Men's studies also have their say in examining gender issues from a different, although not opposite, standpoint than women's studies.

The concept of gender

In order to discuss gender dominance, it is essential to define what is meant by gender. In biological sense there is only sexes and no gender (McElhinny in Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003) yet the reality we live in is another thing. Biolological sex profoundly affects a person's socialization experiences

although per se it does not predetermine behaviour (Fischer and Arnold 1990). In a way, sex and gender cannot be totally separated as gender is in contrast to sex "*the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category*" (West and Zimmerman 1987 p. 127). Humm (1995, 106) defines gender as "*culturally shaped group of attributes and behaviours given to the female of the male*". Catharine R. Stimpson (Brod, 1987) reminds that in gender studies, both femininity and masculity are assumed to be the products of historical processes, human constructs. Martens (2009 p. 105) refers to the concept of gender as "the cultural manifestations of biological sexual differences". Bristor and Fischer (1993 p. 519) continue the discussion on gender and consumption: "Gender is a pervasive filter through which individuals experience their social world, and consumption activities are fundamentally gendered".

Especially Western cultures consider gender to be a dichotomy, but in other societies there can be also a third gender (Hakala, 2005 p. 15). Although in psychological and social sense there is more to variance to gender than just male or female, in studies concentrating on gender in marketing gender is treated as a binary variable (Wolin, 2003). This research follows the same tradition in dividing parents strictly to mothers and fathers.

In addition to defining gender, researchers have attempted to define masculinity and feminity. Hakala (2005 p. 16) sums that especially early on the two were seen as simply opposites; what is feminine is not masculine and vice versa. This dualistic gender structure does not take into consideration any variance inside a gender nor does is recognise a broader spectrum in femininity or masculinity. The question of gender is a mix of politics, biology, sexual issues, and all sort of perspectives that all may in contradiction with each other. The complex issue is never truly done as it is constantly changing (Butler 2006 p. 56).

Sexual orientation

The discussion of gender and sex also revolves around the assumption of two sexes and based on that, dichotomous gender and therefore heterosexuality (McElhinny in Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003). Althought this particular research does not take into consideration the aspect of sexual orientation, in the research fields of social studies and especially gender studies the heteronormativity of advertising has been one viewpoint and certainly a subject of interest. Focus on sexual orientation can also be seen as one possible way to analyse the change of family. Borgerson, Schroeder, Isla and Thorssén (2006) investigated people's perceptions on gay families in the advertisements. At the moment, the concept of family in relation to people's sexuality and the legal aspect of family are a subject of heated discussion in both politics and society (e.g. Huovinen 2011; Lehtonen 2002).

Even a brief investigation of article names reveals the dominance of mothers in the research. The reasons and effects of this trend are investigated in this chapter. The fathers are absent in the majority of researches as the mothers are the main object. There are several reasons for this phenomenon, although most researchers justify concentrating on mothers with resources and keeping the research simpler. Thomsen and Sørensen (2006) acknowledge the role of a father in the constructing of a mother's identity, but due to pragmatic reason their research is limited to mothers. However, they recognise a need for research on the fathers' feeling towards a central purchase decision for the child. Both the aforementioned study and the 2004 study by Carrigan and Szmigin investigated the experiences of pregnant mothers, which is another pivotal reason to excluding fathers from the research sample. In both studies the fathers or husbands are referred to. In Carrigan's and Szmigin's 2006 study the focus is again on mothers. In this study mothers are the ones in charge of the housekeeping and the identity of a mother is examined through convenience consumption.

Although Prendergast and Wong (2003) state that the research was conducted with parents, all the parents interviewed were mothers. They also refer to Darian (1998) and Martinez and Polo (1999) that all agree on mothers being the dominant consumer for the infant apparel. According to Darian (1998) mothers buy 92 percent of luxury items for children. This can be one explanatory factor for the dominance of mothers in research: mothers are those doing the consuming for the infant. On the commercial side, Penn and Zalesne (2007 p. 199–200) point out that in the future, fathers can be more important decision-makers when considering purchases for the children. Yet, advertising does not show fathers in a positive light, instead, they are more in the role of mothers' comedic sidekicks. (Wasserman, 2007)

Interestingly, one article that especially mentions fathers as relevant consumers is the conference paper by Story, Davies and Farrell (2005). They argue that the purchase of a new car is a joint decision by both parents as opposed to the majority of products related to the child. However, the first stage of the research only includes interviews with mothers due to pragmatic reasons. Kaufman's (1999) study has men in advertising as the main research object as this study concentrates on how men are portrayed in family roles in television commercials.

Neeley and Coffey (2007) recognise the need for research with a broader perspective to parenthood. Although their study was executed with only mothers and children, they point out that parents are not necessarily the only caregivers for children. They also remind that including both mother and father in similar research can provide a better understanding of purchase decision-making dynamics within a family.

Based on the reviewed articles parenthood is still the mothers' domain and fathers are left with supporting roles. Research in marketing and consumer behaviour does not recognise fathers as a separate consumer group but a part of the family unit. Perhaps fatherhood is not seen as such a watershed in a man's life as motherhood is seen in a woman's life. The assumption that mothers are the primary caretakers may lead research towards studying mothers instead of parents, i.e. fathers and mothers. Based on the previous studies on the subject, the proposition for empirical research is that **women dominate advertisements and there are fewer men shown in them.**

2.5 Elements used in advertising

In this chapter general elements used in advertising are briefly discussed and the characteristics of print advertisements are clarified.

Defining advertising

Generally advertising can be seen as a part of promotional mix that marketers use to promote the sales of their product. According to the American Marketing Association (1995) advertising is "*The placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and/ or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas.*" In accordance with this definition, Rosenberg (1995, 8) also argues that advertising has three basic objectives: 1. Informing customers about the subject of promotion 2. Persuading an audience to act according to the advertisement's suggestions and 3. Reminding consumers about the aforementioned subject or where it can be acquired.

American Marketing Association (1995) defines advertisement as "*Any announcement or persuasive message placed in the mass media in paid or donated time or space by an identified individual, company, or organization*." Rosenberg (1995 p. 8) ads to this by stating advertisement as "*a public announcement or sale offer in a public area or medium, expressed in print, by other visual means, or orally.*"

The following subchapters cover briefly the elements of advertisements in general, the specific characteristics of print advertisements (especially magazine advertisements) and what has been written about parents and advertising.

2.5.1 General advertising elements

There are many ways to describe how advertisements influence people, what the stages of the process are and how it advances. It can be argued that advertising is generally unwanted communication (Messaris 1997 p. 5). In order to sell products and services to people, advertisements first need to gain the attention of the audience. After attracting attention, it also needs be held. The tactical goals of advertising can be divided to three categories: cognitive goals, affective goals and conative goals (Tellis, 1998 p. 28). Drawing attention to the product of other offer falls under the first category, cognitive goals. Affective goals deal with personal attitudes towards the promoted object and liking it. The last, conative goals, include reducing dissonance, i.e. convincing the consumer of the good qualities of a product instead of concentrating on negative features or doubts they might have about it and persuading them to buy and finally instilling loyalty for the brand. From a message processing point of view there are four concerns: attention, learning, acceptance and emotion (Percy and Elliott 2005 p. 183). An advertisement must gain exposure, attention and interpretation to cause any

effect (Vuokko 2002 p. 204).

As the magazine advertisements face the difficulty of standing out from the journalistic content (Pickton and Broderick 2001 p. 210; Boerman, Smit and van Meurs 2011), the emphasis of this research is on how advertisements can gain attention. Emotions triggered by advertisements are also another perspective due to the specific target group of advertising audience in this study.

Pickton and Broderick (2001 p. 473) list the following ways to gain attention in advertisements:

1. Humour	18. Claymation
2. Real-life dramatizations	19. Music
3. Slices of life	20. Symbols
4. Testimonials	21. Animals
5. Guarantees	22. Contests and sweepstakes
6. Comparisons	23. Offers
7. Problem solving	24. Exaggeration
8. Characters	25. Glamour
9. Recommendations	26. Personalities
10. Reason why	27. Spokespersons
11. Facts	28. Free phone numbers
12. News	29. The product alone
13. Emotion	30. The product in use
14. Cartoons	31. Different uses of the product
15. Animation	32. Effects of not using the product
16. Charts	33. The package as the star
17. Computer graphics	34. Before and after

Whereas the aforementioned list covers most advertisements, Percy (2008 p. 197) sums the tricks up to five core creative tactics: unexpected elements, colour, larger pictures, correct placement in print and motive-dependent structure for commercials. The suggestion of larger pictures is criticized in a study done by Pieters and Wedel (2004). Their research proved that larger pictures in a print advertising do not have significant effect on the attention to the advertisement as a whole, but the results inconsistent. Although simply enlarging pictures does not help in gaining the attention, increasing the share of text in the advertisement has a positive effect on attention. Vuokko (2002 p. 220) draws attention to the size of the advertisement as such. While the main purpose of the size is to gain attention, size can also serve a purpose per se, e.g. a large advertisement can signal that the product, company or message is of high importance. Messaris (1997 p. 33) emphasizes that visual cues have two distinct roles in advertising: attracting attention and eliciting emotions on behalf of the sold item.

As mentioned above, during the message processing of an advertisement an emotional response is triggered. Although emotional response can be elicited by any element of an advertisement, visual stimuli is the most effective way due to human biology (Percy and Elliott 2005 p. 202–203). From a wide range of emotions, advertisers most commonly resort to nurturing instinct, fear, sexual arousal and curiosity (Tellis 1998 p. 127).

2.5.2 Print advertising

As the material for this research is in print media form, i.e. magazine advertisements, the characteristics of this medium need to be investigated. In this chapter, the reasons to choose print media, advantages and disadvantages print advertising and elements of advertising are discussed.

According to Kotler (2003) the benefits of magazine advertising are mainly in

the selectivity and quality of the media. As magazines usually have a clearly defined target group, marketers can also tailor their advertising for a certain demographic audience. In addition to the initial reader, magazines also get passed on to a next reader and have a longer life than for example newspapers. (Kotler 2003, 601) When selecting the right channel for marketing communication, it is essential to choose one that suits the product and target group. Magazines and especially magazines that have clearly defined reader demographics are the best channel for products that are marketed to that particular group of consumers. Rope (2000 p. 313) emphasizes that the more defined the subject of the magazine or other print media is, the more close the readers relate to it and therefore are more interested in the advertisements in the magazine.

As Pickton and Broderick (2001) point out, choosing magazines as the medium for advertising has both advantages and disadvantages. In the case of a magazine with a clearly defined audience, content synergy with editorial material, high selectivity and high information content are definitely very important. Unfortunately in magazines, the micro-environment can often be crowded with advertisements, making it harder for a single advertisement to stand out. From visual points the good quality of reproduction and creative flexibility stand out. This can also serve as a disadvantage as advertisers are basically limited to visual sense with magazines. (Pickton & Broderick 2001 p. 210) While synergy with editorial material can benefit advertisers, the advertisements also compete for the readers' attention with the articles (Boerman, Smit and van Meurs 2011). From a marketers' point of view, although journalistic content benefits the ads when revolving around the same subject as the promotional message, the more boring articles are, the more attention the more colourful advertisements gain. (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson 1992)

Especially in print media advertisers should pay attention the visual factors of

the advertisement as sight is the only sense that print can stimulate effectively (Tellis 1998 p. 123). As a study by Pieters and Wedel (2004) shows, such thing as the size of pictures and text have a significant effect on how the advertisement gains the attention of the reader. Magazine advertisements have three elements they consist of: brand, visual (images) and text. These are building blocks of attention capturing. Also the placement of an advertisement in the magazine and the arrangement can affect the attention of a reader, as evidently the left and upper half of an image attract more attention. (Pirhonen 1979 p. 62; Tellis 1998 p. 134; Boerman, Smit and van Meurs 2011)

2.5.3 Marketing directed at parents

This chapter summarises, what has been written about marketing to parents. Given the limited amount of material for this subject, it is obvious that academic research of marketing directed to parents is scarce. This may be due to research focusing on families and children instead of parents.

Lehikoinen (2005) argues that the marketing of baby food tends to be more traditional than advertising in general nowadays. The advertising of baby foods contributes to building a mother's perception of correct nutrition for the infant. Certain patterns were found in the baby food advertising messages. Advertisements portrayed the life of a family in a happy way, but at the same the products were helping the burden of parenthood and giving energy to the child. Companies appeared as sources of information and advice-givers. The author argues that the image of motherhood is more versatile in the marketing material than in the magazine articles studied for the research. (Lehikoinen 2005) The marketing of baby food has to appeal to parents instead of children and in this sense it is marketing to parents in its purest

form. Lehikoinen (2005) observed that mothers were receptive to advertising messages when deciding on the nutrition of their first child. After the birth of a second child the mother felt the marketing material had nothing new to offer. The author suggests that after having gone through the procedure once the mythic and magic disappear from feeding the child and the mother relies more on her own instincts. This supports the idea that mothers seek support to their motherhood from consumption in the first transition.

A study by Neeley and Coffey (2007) focuses on reaching children through their mother and the managerial implications are also made from this point of view. Nevertheless, their article also recommends some tactics for influencing certain types of mothers. The three clusters of mothers that are more receptive to advertising are easier targets for marketers, but according to the authors, there are ways to persuade the marketing restrictive mothers to buy the product. For instance, the type of mother that values high quality is receptive to advertising that emphasises the quality features of the product and offers an interactive campaign, such as Internet sites.

An alternative viewpoint to marketing for parents is given by Pradeep (2010) in his book the Buying Brain. Coming from the neuromarketing field, Pradeep introduces the term "mommy brain". Basically the author claims that pregnancy and childbirth neurologically change the brains of a woman and this should be taken into consideration when marketing to this particular group of consumers. The main message is that a new mother becomes essentially a lean, mean, child protecting machine who focuses their energy and attention to her child. What does that mean from a marketing perspective? Pradeep suggests that mothers seek empathy, products and characters they can relate to and feeling of safety both in the form of familiar brands and products for their children. As this theory sees motherhood springing from human biology, fathers are not discussed at all. Interestingly,

grandmothers are mentioned as being a part of human species' success and therefore an element in the forming of the mommy brain. (Pradeep, 2010)

If we return to ways of gaining attention it is safe to assume that universal listing are designed to cover most tricks used by advertisers and these are aimed at all audiences. What would be the ways to influence especially parents? A sure way to gain the attention of a parent, especially a mother or a mother-to-be is using small children. Humans are genetically designed to find features of infants or juveniles appealing and such characters arouse a nurturing tendency in us (Messaris 1997 p. 41; Percy and Elliott 2005 p. 202) and especially parents are susceptible to this (Tellis 1998 p. 127). Childlike poses of adult females are also used for the same effect, although this particular gesture of subservience and submissiveness is more likely to be found in advertisements directed for other audiences than parents. Another crucial point that Messaris (1997 p. 44) makes is identification with the character in the advertisement. In the case of such a clear segment of consumers as parents, getting the audience to identify themselves with advertisement images can be a good way to make the advertisement work. Based on this theoretical background an initial proposition for the empirical part is that **advertisements directed at parents are very visual and advertisers use the following elements to appeal to parents: small children, parental figures and emotion-triggering images.**

2.6 Target group perceptions

Although the analysis of advertisements gives valuable information about how for example parents are portrayed, another viewpoint is that of the parents themselves. With this in mind the perceptions of focus groups have been studied. Sudbury and Wilberforce (2006) studied how black people are portrayed in UK television advertisements. Their research included content analysis of advertisements as well as the interviews of both the

representatives of advertising agencies and the focus group, ethnically black Britons. This particular study serves as an example of how the people who the target of the advertisements can feel alienated by it and may not recognise themselves in the portrayals.

Perceptions of the particular group of people who are the target of the portrayal can also be studied through surveys. Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977) found that women were more sensitive to role portrayals in advertising than men. Their study revealed how people perceive gender portrayals and whether the representations of femininity and masculinity are accurate with reality. Content or discourse analyses as such do not answer this question alone and it is often not the purpose of such studies. With the support of other methods or perspectives they can be tied to the so called reality. In addition to interviewing or surveying focus groups or target groups, the supportive data can also be factual such as demographic data or statistics on employment.

2.7 Summary of theory

The theoretical background of this study is in different disciplines. Portrayals have been studied from various perspectives and especially from the viewpoint of categorising the representations of a certain group of people. Advertisements can be seen a part constructing and reflecting reality. An array of methods is used to capture the attention of the audience and magazines provide a challenging environment for advertisers as their journalistic content may make it more difficult to separate advertisements.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methodology of the research is discussed. First, the means to analyse the advertising material are explained and second, the analysed material is introduced and the quantitative analysis briefly summed. Third, the setting of the focus group interview is introduced.

3.1 Analysing advertisements

The advertising material selected for this research was analysed using two methods, content analysis and discourse analysis. Content analysis serves as a basis for the discourse analysis. In the content analysis all the advertisements in the chosen magazines were categorized as either belonging to the research area or not. The combination of content analysis and discourse analysis was chosen as a method for this research as although content analysis gives a good overall picture of the advertisements and the numbers behind them, it does not go as deep as discourse analysis. Yet, discourse analysis relies heavily on the researcher and content analysis supports the qualitative analysis. The following subchapters introduce the methods in more detail.

3.1.1 Content analysis

Content analysis can be defined as a scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative and generalizable description of communications content (Kassarjian 1977). Krippendorff (2004 p. 18) specifies content analysis as "*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences for texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use*".

In content analysis, the object of study is the message per se, not the participants of communication (Kassarjian 1977). Although the roots of

content analysis are in journalistic research, it has evolved into a method that can be used to analyse verbal, pictorial, symbolic and communication data (Krippendorff 2004 p. 17).

A key concept in content analysis is consistency. Being consistent in analysing material and categorising it ensures both objectivity and systematical examination of the contents (Kassarjian 1977). In order for a research to be valid, the results should be replicable and content analysis used correctly allows another researcher to conduct the same research and get the same results.

3.1.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis can be described as a way of approaching a subject rather than being just a method or a tool of analysis. The method of discourse analysis is hard to define unambiguously.

Lazar (2000 p. 376) refers to discourse as "*a set of related statements that produce an structure a particular order of reality, and which within that reality makes available specific subject positions*". Discourse can be seen as language as it is put to use in social situations, i.e. context of language (Bucholtz 2003. P. 44). Jokinen, Juhila and Suoninen (2004 p. 9–10) define discourse analysis as the study of actions that transmit meaning and how social reality is constructed in different social practices.

When analysing the use of language, there are two different perspectives. Either language can be seen as a reflection of reality or as constructing reality. The latter perspective, referred to as social constructionism, sees language as a part of reality and the basis of discourse analytic research is in this perspective. (Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 2004) There does not exist one

right way to do things in discourse analysis (Halme 2011). In a nutshell, discourse analysis studies how reality is constructed through discourses.

Discourse analysis is anti-realist as it does not recognise an external reality awaiting a definite portrayal by the researcher (Potter 1997). On the contrary, the goal is to find out, what kind of reality is created through the researched material. This means that discourse analysis is always tied to the context (Jokinen, Juhila and Suoninen 2004 p. 30). In discourse analysis the main interests are not phenomena as such but how they are described and given reasons. This leads to *how* being the question instead of *why*. (Jokinen, Juhila and Suoninen 1999 p. 18, 249)

The material that is used in analysing discourses is referred to as 'texts'. Although the word itself implies the analysed material including only words, in the case of discourse analysis text has a broader meaning. Text can include non-verbal language as well as visual aspects. What every discourse analyst has to do is choose what to include and what to exclude as text for analysis. (Johstone 2002) Excluding images from discourse analysis can lead to actually excluding a part of language and communication and a restricted scope (Lazar, 2000).

The discourse analysis in this research was executed by investigating the final sample of advertisements, both their text and images. As magazine advertisements rely heavily on visual content, the emphasis was on that. This was also due to the fact that the texts often did not offer enough material from the perspective of parenthood portrayal. Content analysis served as the basis for the discourse analysis and especially categorisation of the portrayals.

3.1.3 Target group interview

Discourse analysis as a method relies heavily on the judgment of the researcher, discourse analyst. In order to strengthen the analysis made by the researcher, interviews were added to the triangulation.

The persons interviewed were parents of children aged four or younger. Seven people were interviewed, three of which were fathers and the rest mothers. Table 3 shows the age, gender and education of the interviewee and the ages of their children.

Table 3. Interviewees.

Inter-viewee	Gen-der	Age	Education	Children
I1	F	29	Master's degree	girl 4yrs, boy 1,5yrs
I2	F	25	Student, university of applied sciences	boy 2,5yrs
I3	M	28	Vocational degree	boy 3yrs 8 months
I4	F	30	University student	boy 7yrs, girl 4yrs, boy 1yr
I5	M	28	University student	boy 4yrs, girl 1,5yrs
I6	F	31	Master's degree	girl 1yr 2months
I7	M	31	Student, university and university of applied sciences	girl 1yr 2months

The interviewees were selected using convenience sampling, through personal contacts and based on their children's ages being suitable for the study. The limited age of the child partially explains the rather small range in the ages of the parents, which in turn has an effect on the large amount of students among the interviewees. Two interviewees were a married couple, otherwise the people interviewed were inviduals not having relationships with each other. Two were single parents, others were married.

The interviews were conducted on five separate occasions, three individual

interviews and two interviews with two interviewees present. The arrangement was due to practical reasons. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and transcriptions used in the analysis of the discussions with interviewees.

Eight advertisements were chosen to be discussed in the interviews. All advertisements represented a certain type that had surfaced in the content and discourse analysis and were a typical sample of their category. Due to the fact that advertisements were chosen based on the analysis, there was certainly a bias towards factors that affected the interviewees' perception on the advertising in the magazines as a whole. The clearest bias was the relatively large amount of fathers in the advertisements, as only two of the chosen advertisements did not have an adult male figure at all.

The interview consisted of three parts: first, general questions on background information, second, going through the eight advertisements one by one and discussing them briefly and third, discussion on the general perception on parents in advertising. The length of the interview varied from 25 minutes to one hour, depending on the interviewees' interest on the subject.

3.2 Analysed material

The material for content and discourse analysis consists of advertisements in two magazines, Vauva and Kaksplus. Vauva (in English 'baby') is directed at the parents of babies and toddlers and according to the publisher, the target audience is women aged 20–40 years. Kaksplus (in English 'two plus') covers a wider age range as it has articles from newborns to 12-year-olds. The essential figures of both magazines are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Information on analysed magazines.

	Vauva	Kaksplus
Circulation	39601	28760
Number of readers	149000	128000
Gender of readers (female/male) %	75/25	79/21

(Levikintarkastus 2010)

As can be seen from table 4, Vauva has a bigger circulation. Both magazines cover pregnancy, babies and toddlers, but Kaksplus also has articles about children aged over 3 years all the way to 12-year-olds. Although both magazines target women, a substantial percentage of readers are men with Vauva having 25% male readers and Kaksplus 21%.

For the content analysis, all advertisements in the magazines from year 2010 were counted. Classified advertisements at the end of both magazines were excluded from the statistics. The 24 numbers, 12 numbers from each magazine, had a total of 669 advertisements. These advertisements were classified according to whether there was an adult center figure in the advertisement or not. In addition to this, all these advertisements were studied to find out what was advertised.

Out of the total 669 advertisements 168 had an adult center figure. Clearing double copies produced a final sample of 71 separate advertisements that were fully analysed with the means of content analysis and discourse analysis. Advertisements shown to the members of focus group during the interviews were among these final advertisements.

4 PORTRAYALS OF PARENTHOOD – DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

In this chapter, the advertising material chosen for the study is analysed with the means of discourse analysis. Content analysis on the advertisements is used to support the quality analysis. The main purpose of the empirical part of the study is to answer the main research question: *how parents are portrayed in advertisements of products for children aged four or younger*.

4.1 Elements in advertising to parents

In order to find out what elements are used in advertising to parents, it is essential to first investigate what is advertised. All advertisements of the 24 numbers of the two magazines were categorized for what was promoted. Initially there were twenty different categories for products. In the final sample, there were advertisements from only 15 of these categories and no advertisements from the following categories: Snacks, Clothing, Children's magazines, Children's books, Adult magazines/books.

The most common product categories were 'Other food' (12,8%) and 'Pharmaceuticals' (12,7%). Although the former is a major category in all advertisements, only four of these ads had a parent visible. Pharmaceuticals were equally represented in the final advertisements, being the second biggest category of products. There were no clear differences between the magazines, although there were more advertisements in Kaksplus (total of 353 advertisements) than in Vauva (316). Table 5 shows the categories for products and the distribution of product categories in the final sample of 71 advertisements. Advertisements were given one or several labels according to what was advertised.

Table 5. Advertisements by product category.

Product category	Number of ads in category	% of cases
Baby food	1	1,4
Other food	4	5,6
Diapers	8	11,3
Other hygiene products	10	14,1
Pharmaceuticals	10	14,1
Pushchairs and prams	6	8,5
Carseats	3	4,2
Insurances/financial	4	5,6
Other services	7	9,9
Pregnancy/breastfeeding	11	15,5
Cleaning products	2	2,8
Toys	3	4,2
Other products	5	7
Beauty products	1	1,4
Cars	3	4,2

When advertising to a clear target group such as parents, it is obvious that advertisers know which strings to pull. The undisputable star of advertising in both magazines is the baby. Babies and children naturally dominate advertisements as most of the promoted products are aimed for them, but the cuteness of a young human being is taken advantage of as a way to gain attention also. With this in mind, it is wise to investigate the children in the advertisements also as the reveal something about the reality that advertisements construct. In the advertisements that had parents the majority of children (64,7 %) were under the age of three. With 38,2 per cent babies (under 12 months old) dominate. Three to five year old children were in 19,1 % of the advertisements. Only nine advertisements (13,2%) had children from the oldest category in the study, over five years old. Although 26,8 per cent of advertisements with an adult center figure did not have a child present, almost half (47,9%) of the advertisements with a parent had just one child, typically a baby. 11,3 per cent had two children, but larger numbers of children were quite rare.

Compared to the children's age, the adult center figures were usually aged so that they could plausibly be the children's parents. The most common age group was parents aged approximately 25–35 years, with 50 out of 71 advertisements with parents belonging to this category. Older than this was more common than younger as five cases fell to the category over 35 years and only two in the under 25 years. The rest of advertisements had parental figures whose age could not be evaluated. The age of parents in the advertisements is rather realistic in comparison to demographical statistics. As the average age of first-time mothers is slowly rising, the image of a "normal" mother and father may be revised and there could a demand for a wider age range. In 2011 the average age of Finnish mothers at the time of their first-born's birth was 28,4 years. This figure has gone up by 0,8 years in the 21st century. Average age of all women that gave birth in 2011 was 30,3 years. (Tilastokeskus 2011)

An aspect to parenthood is the actions of adults and children in the advertisements. The final sample of advertisements was given one or more labels according to what the people did. As an individual advertisement was able to get more than one label, the total does not add up to a hundred per cent.

Table 6. Advertisements by activity category.

Activity	Number of cases	% of cases
Playing/games/fun	21	29,6
Caregiving	7	9,9
Cuddling	16	22,5
Teaching	2	2,8
Eating	12	16,9
Housework	1	1,4
Transporting	13	18,3
Other activity	13	18,3
Total	85	119,7

Table 6 shows the action categories and distribution of advertisements of the final sample in the categories. Initially there was a ninth category, 'Punishing/restricting child' but there were no advertisements belonging to this category found in the primary screening of advertisements and this category was removed. Most common activities were 'Playing/games/fun', 'Cuddling' and 'Transporting'. 'Playing/games/fun' included such actions as playing with a child or engaging in sports. Often in these advertisements there were toys visible. 'Caregiving' label was given to advertisements that had some sort of physical act of taking care of the child such as applying lotion, cleaning a child or conducting a procedure concerning child's health. Image 1 shows and example of an advertisement labeled in this category. 'Cuddling' was understood as for example hugging, holding a child on parent's arms and other such actions of closeness. Category of 'Teaching' had parents and children in situations where the parent was showing how things were done. 'Eating' included breastfeeding in addition to older children eating regular food. 'Housework' was the rarest category with only one advertisement, which is natural due to the limitation of what kinds of products were included in the sample. 'Transporting' had all kinds of transportation ranging from cars and train to strollers. The activity categories are discussed further under the different discourses and gender domination.

When investigating what kinds of elements are used in the advertising directed at parents, the ways to gain attention are a central issue. Next, the observed effects that were used to gain attention or arouse emotions are analysed.

Arousing emotions is a popular way to get the readers' attention. Emotions are used widely, but the use images that arouse nurturing tendencies dominate. Considering the fact that the advertisements compete with journalistic content using the same range of images, it is interesting to see

how much the images of young babies (e.g. figure 3) are used. The pictures of babies and mothers are used repeatedly and it is sometimes hard to differentiate brands as many companies use such similar effects in their advertising.

Figure 3. Advertisement for Natusan intensive care.

In the material analysed for this study the use of celebrities in advertising was rare. Only three advertisements used famous people and two of these were promoting a TV-series of a celebrity couple. Two of these advertisements,

advertising the same product, also used sex appeal as a way to gain attention. These were the clearest example of this effect and the only ones not promoting clothing. In the advertisements that celebraties are used, their presence is justified by their parenthood or impending parenthood, i.e. they are advertising the product first because of being parents and second because of being celebrities. In the case of promoting the TV-series, it is clear to see target audience thinking and targeting the readers that may be interested in such entertainment. As this particular advertisement is the only one clearly using nudity and sex appeal as the main way to gain attention, it certainly succeeds, not so much because of its shocking effect but the environment that is so different from it that it stands out easily.

Cartoons were not widely used in the final sample of advertisements, which is natural as advertisements with a cartoon do not often have parents in them. Two advertisements had clear parental characters in them and were included in the sample. Testimonials can appeal with products that are promoted based on clear results or scientific findings. This way to gain a reader's interest was mainly used with dietary supplements, food and cosmetics. In all of the advertisements that took advantage of this effect, the expert or witness was a mother, often stating their motherhood in text. No fathers were giving testimonials on product, nor were outside (non-parent) experts used either.

When focusing on magazines as the chosen advertising channel, it is clear that the benefits of the medium are taken advantage of quite well. As magazines perform best with pictures, most of the advertising in the sample relied heavily on large images. The two magazines that were chosen for analysis have a clearly defined target group and therefore it is easy to advertise for this specific segment. For some products, such as pregnancy and breastfeeding related items they offer the best possible channel for marketing to the unique audience. The magazines are also often subscribed and many advertisers used repetition effectively. Some advertisements

appeared virtually every month as they were always in at least one of the monthly magazines.

If we look at the size of advertisements, it is clear that one page is the most common size by 56,3 per cent. The second most popular size is half a page (31,0 per cent) and third quarter page (7,0 per cent). Only three advertisements were an entire spread. The size of advertisements and the amount of text in them further suggests that images are the most important part of the advertisements and they are knowingly used in attracting attention. Final sample of advertisements had an average of 80 words, with most advertisements having less than a hundred words. The minimum of words in an advertisement was 9 and the maximum 379. How much of the whole space the text took, varied a lot, with the advertisements that had the most text having 70 per cent of the space covered by words and some only taking 10 per cent. Only 17 per cent had over half of the space filled with text. The use of words was usually the same: headline and/or brand name in large font and a longer text with small font. The advertisements that had the most text were those with mainly small font and used long, informative texts. These were in the product category Hygiene products, mainly the long texts were used with lotions that were not just for small children. Interestingly, in the same product category were the advertisements that had the shortest texts. These were the ones that advertised hygiene products for babies and a large image of a naked or nearly naked young baby was the main part of the advertisement.

The appearance of people in the advertisements does not vary much. Most commonly people are rather light-haired and have light complexion. The looks of models in the advertisements would not stand out from a crowd of Finnish people. There are approximately equal amounts of light-haired and dark-haired people and parents and children are coordinated so that their looks do not contradict. Red hair is an exception; there are only four people with that

hair colour in the material, which is rather in line with the occurrence of red-hair in the population.

Racially the advertisements are very homogenous. The few non-European or non-Finnish-looking characters are in advertisements for international brands. At least in the advertisements that have parents in them the norm is very narrow when it comes to appearance. The clothing of parents is always clean and very neutral, almost fading into the background. Only exceptions from this are advertisements of maternity clothing that naturally show the clothing at its best. The normal uniform of a parent is a white t-shirt. Only in outside setting bright colours are used in clothing. In some instances there are some signs of social status or employment status in clothing. These examples are in advertisements for items that cost a lot (car advertisements) and are branded high-quality (a "luxury" model pram).

The dominant language in the advertisements is Finnish. In many advertisements the brand name and slogan may be in English, but with the exception of few advertisements the texts are otherwise in Finnish. If English is used, the texts are short and mostly slogans and clearly linked to the international brand. The use of Finnish language allows certain gender-neutrality in the advertisements as unlike quite many languages, Finnish does not separate personal pronouns according to gender and only has one third singular pronoun for all genders. Gendering words such as mother or father do not show in the material without explanation. If they are used, they have story (girl in the swimming hall with mother, shared moments, "As a mother I want the best for my children") or the gender is related to the product (pregnancy and breast-feeding related products). The advertisements did not address mother or fathers as such, if addressing was used, it was done with neutral personal pronouns or using word parent.

4.2 Gender dominance

Initial proposition was that mothers clearly dominate advertisements of products for small children. This was supported by the analysed material. Content analysis revealed that in the total of 71 advertisements that were included in the final analysis, only four had a man as the sole adult center figure. Only a woman (or women) were the adult of 43 advertisements, meaning 60,6% of all the advertisement that had a parent visible. While 19 samples (26,8%) had both a female and a male, five advertisements had an adult without an identifiable gender. Mostly the center figures of the images were parents, with one exception of a female babysitter. Gender dominance of mothers does not reflect to the gender of the children in the advertisements as there were approximately as many boys and girls, although in general most children, 22 out of 53 advertisements with children and adults, were babies with no visible signs of gender. Using infants as a way to gain attention and appeal to emotions can be an explanatory factor in the children's gender and age finding.

Due to the small amount of men appearing in the advertisements conclusions cannot be made about men interacting with children and whether a father in the image reflects to the gender of the child with him. The lack of fathers supports previous findings that women are more likely than men to be shown with children and taking care of children (Kaufman, 1999). When the activities of mothers and fathers in the advertisements are compared, there are some figures that stand out. While 25,6 per cent of all mothers in the sample are 'Cuddling' with children, none of the fathers are in this category. The same goes for 'Caregiving', all advertisements having a mother or both parents and none just male center figures. The few fathers on the advertisements concentrate of categories 'Transporting' and 'Playing/games fun'. Especially transporting is a male domain as only three of 13 advertisements with this act had just a woman and no man, making it the only category that men

dominate. Also in the 'Playing/games/fun' category there were few advertisements that did not have a male figure. The same numbers are reflected to product categories. The clearest examples are the two product categories that are advertised with 'Transporting' action. In 'Pushchairs and prams' four out of six advertisements had both genders. Cars were only advertised with both genders, usually the whole family appearing in the images. Otherwise, women dominated all categories in both activities and products.

Looking at the gender distribution of the readers may explain the dominance of women over men as the majority of readers (75–79 per cent) are female. Either the advertisers believe that women can more easily identify with female images or the explanation is that they feel women do better with children. As children are widely used in the advertisements and often to appeal to emotions, the combination of a mother and child can be even more effective. Fathers with children were not used for this purpose in the advertisement sample, fathers were always more in a supportive role than creating emotional situations through their interaction with the child.

What became clear in the final advertisement sample were the different roles of mothers and fathers. In the world of advertising, men and women do different things with children.

4.3 Perfect parent

The people, situations, products and settings in advertisements all create a certain image of both the promoted product and the consumers that it is sold to. As advertisers try to sell their product, there is an underlying idea of the ideal image of a person that would use it (Hakala 2005 p. 7). Buy this, be like this. From this perspective, there exists the truth of advertising about a perfect parent. This portrayal of parenthood was investigated with the means of

discourse analysis. As expected based on the theoretical background, certain discourses were found. The following subchapters reveal the different discourses that are communicated through advertisements with parents to parents.

4.3.1 Nurturing mother

Caring, cuddling, nurturing, playful and on the go. Mothers are all that if we are to believe advertising. The portrayal of mothers is quite versatile in advertisements, but one role is dominant: the role of a caretaker. Figure 4. shows a typical advertisement with a mother and a small baby.

Figure 4. Advertisement for Gefilus Tipat+D3.

Numbers show that mothers are present in all the activity categories as there were women shown in all the categories. When breastfeeding is excluded,

the categories that women are most dominant in were caregiving (71,4%) and cuddling (68,8%). Interestingly, 25,6% of all advertisements that had mothers, were labeled with 'Cuddling'. Mothers apply lotions, check for ear infections, feed children and simply just hold babies on their arms. Usually the nurturing mothers have very neutral clothing, hair and makeup and the center of attention in the image is the child. This may imply that in the world of parenthood, the child is the center of the universe and mothers should not try to steal the light from their offspring. Even the use of colours reveals that the pink baby skin is highlighted as the clothing and background are most commonly in very light colours. The texts in these advertisements speak of care, wellbeing and nurturing, but with the exception of those advertisements that are related to breast-feeding or pregnancy, the word "mother" is not mentioned.

4.3.2 Father

Most commonly, fathers are presented with the whole family. A father with just a child and no woman present is a rare exception. In all of the advertisements that had a clear adult center figure, only four had just a man. What does it imply? Are men not capable of being alone with a child or do advertisers just find women more appealing to their target audience?

When men are presented with the family, they are on the move. Whether it is a stroll in the park with a baby or going for a ride with the family car, fathers and an outdoor setting is a tight pair. An example of such advertisement is seen in figure 6. This would imply that the world outside home is a man's domain and it is a more natural environment for fathers than the domestic setting.

An exception to the aforementioned rule is an advertisement campaign that

has a father playing with a toddler (see figure 5). This certain campaign stands out as the all advertisements have a father with a child, always with the child playing, inside the family home. Whereas the man on the go is a certain portrayal, the playing man offers another stereotype of fatherhood. Even in a domestic environment, the father is not engaging in any housework. This suggests that fathers' most important task with their children is playing.

Figure 5. Advertisement for Pampers Active Fit.

Four advertisements with just a father present in a total sample of 669 advertisements, totaling 0,6%, is small and insufficient for making any assumptions in numbers. Yet, the absence of men tells more than the few advertisements with fathers. A father's place in the family is clearly less important than a mother's, judging on the message of advertisements. Fathers are seen as the second parent instead of equals with the mothers.

4.3.3 Perfect family

The typical advertisement family consists of four people: mother, father, daughter and son. The happy family is usually set outside and is on the move. Especially cars and prams are advertised with the whole family, for example figure 6 is a typical advertisement with a family. In the two advertisements that had a family of five, the family was travelling and the reason for having three children in the picture seems to be emphasizing the ease of the transport mode. The age of the children also varies according to what is advertised. In this category there were not that many babies present, the children were mostly old enough to walk and talk. The use of babies had a clear purpose and the products advertised were linked to small children more obviously than in the advertisements in general.

Figure 6. Advertisement for Volkswagen Caddy.

Texts in the advertisements that have families refer to the use of the product with phrases such as "for the whole family" whether the promoted object was a dietary supplement or a mode of transport. Also in other advertisements

that did not have more than one parent and a child, texts often referred to family. Nuclear family of four represents happy ordinary life that is possible through the consumption of these products.

4.3.4 Pregnant and gorgeous

When the chosen media is magazines devoted to babies, small children and pregnancy, a certain proportion of advertising is bound to be for pregnant and breastfeeding women. A substantial amount of these are advertisements of clothing for pregnant and breastfeeding women. As a consequence, the image of a pregnant woman is a model of a beautiful, young woman, e.g. figure 7. Pregnant women are used in the promotion of maternity clothing, nutritional supplements and cosmetics. In these advertisements, a common element is serenity. People are very static and there is not much happening in the pictures. The two main discourses with pregnant women are safety and health during pregnancy and looking good despite the pregnancy as they are promoted dietary supplements, safety products and clothing. The advertisements of maternity clothing were the only ones promoting clothing and the ones that most heavily used women as decorative objects. An advertisement for maternity clothing summarizes the style of this category stating in the text *"For mothers only. Motherhood is an amazing journey. We're on your side, to help you be comfortable and look your best ever, all the way from tiny bump to baby at your breast."*

Figure 7. Advertisement for Mamalicious.

Whereas breastfeeding goes, it is interesting to find such a variety of products that are directly related to a natural way of feeding an infant. Although the act of breastfeeding itself is not the promoted object, it is often mentioned to underline what is the reason to use a product. These advertisements also rely heavily on the magic of a suckling baby. Although using a baby to capture attention and stir emotions is quite common in the advertisements, this particular category of products promotes with the connection of the breastfeeding mother and baby.

4.3.5 Parents on the leave

The world of advertising reminds parents to have some time for themselves also. This discourse takes the form of parents on the beach as well as having a child-keeper taking care of a child. For a parent, time without a child is both rare and valued, so enjoyment is a key factor in advertisements that highlight the importance of quality time without the children. Although generally the children and parents in advertisements are rather young, in the few advertisements of this category both were in the older categories. This may

be a way to suggest that when children reach a certain age, it is acceptable for parents to spend time without the children.

4.3.6 Neutral hand

When it comes to nudity and especially naked babies, advertisers seem to be very cautious about placing any male figures around children. In all of the advertising material analysed for the study there were no men in the same picture with a naked child or a baby in just a diaper. This is in accordance previous findings about fathers with children in advertising (Kaufman 1999). A naked or almost naked infant appeared in 12,7 per cent of the advertisements of the final sample, making it one of the most common visual effects used. As the sample for this research only represents roughly ten per cent of the advertisements in the magazines, it is likely that this effect is used even more commonly. Figure 8. shows an example of this type of advertising.

Figure 8. Advertisement for Natusan First Touch.

The "neutral hand" plays an important role with especially new born babies. As they are always presented on the arms of the mother or being held by a hand, the hands are the only attempt of neutralizing gender from the picture altogether. A typical hand in this type of advertisement has long but slender fingers and very short but carefully manicured fingers. It is left entirely to the observer to decide whether these hands are feminine or masculine as all the easy traits of gender or sex are erased. The texts in advertisements with just a hand do not reveal the gender and refer only to the relation of baby and parent. This discourse reveals more with what is not present than what is shown. Are there cultural, social or purely visual reasons for not having men presented with new born babies? Do advertisers just find mothers more appealing or more natural in this setting or is it an intentional decision to prefer non-gendered hands to male figures?

The products that are promoted with naked or nearly naked babies are naturally in such categories where it is justifiable to show soft baby skin. These include lotions, baby wipes and pharmaceuticals. Interestingly one insurance company has also understood the appeal of a baby in little clothing. This category has the youngest children, mostly newborns or infants younger than approximately three months. The babies are often presented sleeping. The sleeping, naked infant is often used as a way to gain attention also in the advertisements that had no traits of adults present.

4.4 Viewpoint of parents – interview results

In order to have multiple perspectives to the analysed advertisements and to validate the findings of the discourse analysis, seven parents of children aged four or younger were interviewed. The following subchapters present the views of the parents, the targets of the advertising.

4.4.1 Typical parent in advertisements according to interviewed parents

According to the interviewees a typical parent in the advertisements is young, slim, well-dressed and smiles a lot. This typical person enjoys spending time with their children, drives a shiny car and has a nicely decorated home. Mothers were described as nurturing but their physical appearance had two different types: everyday plain look and well-dressed look. Interviewees found the latter unconvincing and especially the mothers that were interviewed though that it was good to see more realistic female images such as those with a plain look, neutral clothing and little make-up.

"It's important what a parent can look like. The mothers can't have very revealing clothes, well in this swimming hall picture but otherwise I guess the parents should be quite decent." (I1)
"The mother slim, like well-dressed but doesn't stand out in any way, so not like too well-dressed, quite light make-up if any and really basic clothing, happy and a good posture." (I4)

The fathers were seen in two ways: either been career-oriented or family-oriented. Either way, the interviewees thought that the fathers seemed somehow separate from the family, as if they had been just thrown to the picture and were not sure what they were supposed to do with the children. The interviewees felt that the fathers were less realistic in the family setting than mothers.

Although the interviewees mostly agreed on the typical parent, they found different things contradicting in the portrayal of parenthood and the reality of parenthood. Whereas some felt that the life in advertisements was too clean and shiny, others looked at the same pictures and thought they gave a realistic image of family life. This was the case especially with an advertisement presenting a living room. Likewise, others preferred the more

polished image of a parent and others identified themselves with the more mundane mothers and fathers.

4.4.2 Gender domination in the minds of parents

As mentioned before, the advertisements chosen for the interviews presented significantly more male figures than the advertisements in the whole sample. This led to some interviewees basing their image of the typical parent in advertising on fathers more than mothers.

"It's always that same guy, at home he has the energy to play with the child and then he's in a rush to get to work with his shiny car and still he has time to push the stroller too." (I2)

One of the advertisements had a naked baby held by a hand. The interviewees were asked whether their first impression of the hand was a woman's hand of a man's hand. One mother answered that it is a man's hand and another thought it could be either gender, but five interviewees viewed it as a woman's hand. All of these based their assumption on the fact that it held a newborn baby and thought it was more natural that the baby was resting on its mother's chest.

Interviewees perceived the roles in the advertisements as being quite traditional. Special attention was paid to a car advertisement where the father was clearly heading towards the driver's side of the vehicle. Interviewees found the role of a father to be more limited than that of a mother. An advertisement with a father playing with his offspring aroused questions of whether it was intentional to choose a father instead of a mother for the picture and lead to discussion on fathers being the second parent and having secondary tasks in taking care of a child.

When asked what a stereotypical parent would be like based on the advertising material, one interviewee answered with a question: *"It's probably usually a mother. Would it be modern to use a father?"* (I6) This takes us back to whether advertising images should reflect reality or construct it. The reality of parenthood and division of parenting may be changing (Varjonen 2011) but whether the pace is the same in advertising and whether images in advertisements should reinforce the trend is a pivotal issue.

4.4.3 Elements of advertisements in practice

If the interviews are analysed from the viewpoint of advertisements in general, there were some interesting findings. Almost none of the interviewees paid any attention to small texts in the advertisements. For example, two of the advertisements had a competition and the information about having a chance to win something gained no attention at all. One has to bear in mind that the interviewees were asked to pay attention especially to the parents in the advertisements, i.e. basically look at the pictures, and this could have an impact on whether the text is read. No generalizations can be made based on such a small amount of interviews about advertisements in general. Interviewees were shown the advertisements as they were in the magazine but with the advertisements folded ready so there was no searching for it. Interviewees had a change to take a closer look at the advertisements and the journalistic content surrounding them. With the exception of two half-page and one two-page advertisement, all others were full-page advertisements.

In most advertisements the interviewees first paid attention to the people, especially to the children if any were visible. As the emphasis was on parent central figures, the chosen advertisements had large images. With some of the advertisements the interviewees found it hard to even relate the product with the advertisement and admitted that if they were reading the magazine,

they never would have thought of the advertisement. An exception among the eight products was an advertisement for a pram. As the only one of the sample, it managed to steer attention first to the product instead of the person in the photograph. This advertisement was also found the most informative as it had informative picture instead of text telling about the qualities of the product.

As noted before, the amount of children used in these advertisements is high. The sample shown to the interviewees also had a high proportion of children. Majority of interviewees found the children especially appealing and said that the small babies in particular caught their attention. From an advertiser's perspective this is a two-sided issue as although the images of newborns were rather effective in gaining attention, they also seemed to keep the focus on the child instead of the product advertised. Although the advertisements serve the first function of gaining attention, the value of the attention is lessened if the audience cannot make a connection between the images and the product promoted.

4.5 Categorising portrayals of parents

Through discourse analysis there were several clear discourses that could be found in the final sample of advertisements. Due to the nature of this method, it is not easy to compare these results with previous studies. Other studies have revealed that there are consistent categories of portrayals of genders in advertising. Based on these studies, categories for the portrayals of parenthood were created.

As the focus of this study is parenthood and the material chosen includes only parental roles, such categories as family roles were found unnecessary. Due to the same limitation, decorative roles were not divided into sex objects and other representations of physical attractiveness like e.g. Plakoyiannaki

and Zotos (2009) do in their study. The selectiveness of material significantly influences what categories are needed. The juxtaposition of male and female roles is intentional and reflects the traditional views of gender roles, not so much the discourses in the advertisements or even general opinions. As there is a lack of previous studies on the particular subject, parental portrayal categories were mainly based on portrayals of males and females in advertising. When investigating previous research on gender portrayal categories, it became evident that new categories were needed to serve the purpose of this study. The categories that were used in the study were based on the research of Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009), Hakala (2006), Dahle (1999) and Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977). The categories of male and female portrayals were complemented by new categories: *Nurturing mother*, *Nurturing father, Family-oriented man, Independent man* and *Male voice of authority*. The categories needed for the research were either counterparts of a category for the other gender (Female voice of authority – Male voice of authority) or result of the empirical data of the content and discourse analysis. The clearest example of this is Nurturing mother, which was a category that surfaced from the advertisements and did not fit any of the categories that were created for gender portrayals in the previous studies. The following chart sums up the gender portrayal categories found in previous studies and the ones that were created based on the advertisements researched for this study.

Table 7. Role categories for parental portrayals.

	Female roles	Male roles
Traditional roles	Dependent woman Housewife **Nurturing mother**	**Independent man** Working man/businessman **Male voice of authority**
Non-traditional roles	Working woman/business woman Female voice of authority	**Nurturing father** **Family-oriented man**
Decorative roles	Women in decorative roles	Men in decorative roles
Equal roles	Men and women in equal roles	

The traditional female roles include Dependent woman, Housewife and Nurturing mother. Dependancy means being dependent on a male's protection, making unimportant decisions and being in need of reassurance. A Housewife is concerned with housekeeping issues and their primary role is that of a good wife and housekeeper. (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos, 2009) The Nurturing mother concentrates on the child and their primary task is nurturing the child in various ways. The traditional male roles consist of Independent man, Working man/Businessman and Male voice of authority. Independent man reflects a male figure that is not dependent on other's decision, rather the master of the situation and making decisions for others. Working man/Businessman combines economically oriented person and hard-working, industrious portrayals suggested by Hakala (2006 p. 137–138) and represents a career-oriented male. Male voice of authority is an expert in relation to the product advertised.

In non-traditional roles the roles are basically opposite to the traditional ones. For women, non-traditional role categories are Working woman/Businesswoman and Female voice of authority. These are the same as the male equivalent but with female characters. Nurturing father and

Family-oriented man are men's non-traditional roles. Nurturing father is a man concentrating on their child and nurturing them in any way the situation calls for. Family-oriented man enjoys spending time with their family and is interested in family matters and well-being.

Decorative roles were merely divided into male and female categories. Decorative role can be portrayed as either being in the pursuit of beauty and physical attractiveness or being a sex object, whether sex is related with the product or not. (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos, 2009) The final category is Men and women in equal roles. This category does not separate men and women as they are portrayed equal.

Content analysis was conducted to research how common different portrayal categories are in the material. All the advertisements were coded according to the roles of male and female figures in them. If an advertisement did not have a representative of a certain gender or gender was not defined, it was labeled as not defined. The results are shown in table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of role categories for parental portrayals.

	Female roles	Male roles
Traditional roles	Dependent woman 4 (5,6%) Housewife 7 (9,9%) Nurturing mother (25) 35,2%	Independent man 5 (7%) Working man/businessman 2 (2,8%) Male voice of authority 0
Non-traditional roles	Working woman/business woman 2 (2,8%) Female voice of authority 1 (1,4%)	Nurturing father 3 (4,2%) Family-oriented man 3 (4,2%)
Decorative roles	Women in decorative roles 11 (15,5%)	Men in decorative roles 1 (1,4%)
Equal roles	Men and women in equal roles 19	

All the advertisements were given only one role category for a female and one for male if there were members of the gender present in the advertisement. This could have affected the small numbers in some categories such as Female voice of authority as the role which was more prevalent was chosen if there were two possible roles. As table 8 demonstrates, in female roles the traditional roles, especially Nurturing mother, dominate. In the male roles non-traditional roles are quite common considering the size of sample but as mentioned before, the results of such a small sample cannot be generalized. Equal roles are quite common for both men (9) and women (10) and this suggests that although fathers are underrepresented in the material, in those advertisements that both male and female adult figures appear, they are often in equal roles. For women decorative roles are quite common. Considering that there were basically no advertisements that used the otherwise common effect of sex appeal, the large amount of decorative roles can only be explained by large numbers of advertisements for maternity clothing.

When the results of content analysis on role categories and the discourse analysis are compared, it is evident that there are some commonalities. The discourse of nurturing mother is so pervasive throughout the material that it can be seen with both methods of analysis. Another role category clearly tied to a discourse is women in decorative role that has a connection with the Pregnant and gorgeous –discourse. With the male categories the trend is more towards equal and non-traditional roles as the traditional male roles are rare in the material.

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The main goal of the research was to find out how parents are portrayed in advertising of products for young children. Through discourse analysis several different discourses of parenthood were found in advertising material. There are clear roles for fathers and mothers and the how they are set in advertisements. These results are consistent with previous studies showing different portrayals of men and women (Plakoyainnaki and Zotos 2009; Martens 2009; Hakala 2006; Kaufman 1999; Dahle 1999; Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1977). The clearest difference is how mothers and fathers are shown with children. A mother's task is to nurture and take care of infants, while men are more likely to be shown with the whole family. Men are not portrayed taking care of small babies. Unlike in the study by Kaufman (1999) in this research no link between the gender of the child and the gender of the parent.

If advertising either constructs or reflects reality, the advertisements included in this research are certainly congruent with journalistic content (Rautanen 2012) and the everyday practices (Varjonen 2011; Lammi-Taskula 2007). Fathers are still largely seen as the second parent after mothers and not treated by the society as equals with mothers when it comes to child rearing issues although the situation may be slowly changing (Rautanen 2012) and what we see as historical tradition may in fact untrue and some fathers have been nurturing throughout history (Mykkänen and Aalto 2010; Aalto and Kolehmainen 2004 p. 15). In that sense, it is only natural that there are not that many fathers appearing in this certain group of advertising but there could be a trend towards a new perspective on fatherhood in advertising as well.

The perfect parent in advertising is a neutral, yet happy character, typically a

woman, that does not stand out. The true star of advertisements is the child and advertising parents spend all their energy on fulfilling the needs of their offspring. There is little diversity as parents are portrayed very homogenously when it comes to ethnicity, age or appearance. Both content and discourse analysis support the findings of previous research on portrayals. The perceptions of target group members are also in line with the analysis.

5.1 Theoretical contribution

Based on previous studies a categorization of portrayals especially for classifying representations of parental figures in advertising was created. The empirical data suggests that this particular target group is portrayed in a rather homogenous way and therefore the categorisations used for gender portrayals do not necessarily suit research done when the subject of research is parental portrayals. In parenthood portrayals there was a need for categorisations that take into account the roles of men and women in relation to their family and children rather than as individuals in the society.

5.2 Managerial implications

When designing advertisements targeted to a very clearly defined group of consumers such as the parents of small children, it is advisable to take into consideration that the message needs to stand out from both the journalistic content and the other advertisements. Although the use of children's images is appealing, the crowded magazine environment full of similar pictures may weaken the power of otherwise effective ways to gain attention. For the consumer, several products and brands using the same kind of way for promotion may be confusing and attention to the advertisement may not be realised as a purchase. As appealing as the small babies are, they are also overused and put in the environment of journalistic content full of similar images the cuteness of an infant can fade.

From the perspective of the discourse analysis it is clear that the portrayal of parenthood is rather homogenous and heteronormative at least from a gender point of view. Whenever there are male adult figures, they may gain more attention than the long line of mothers cuddling their newborns. With this in mind, it would be advisable for the advertisers to use more men when promoting products to parents.

5.3 Reliability

In qualitative research, the evaluation of reliability and validity is not as straight-forward as in quantitative research. As qualitative methods, especially discourse analysis, rely heavily on the researcher, total objectivity cannot be reached (Eskola and Suoranta 2008 p.210). However, the content analysis served as a basis for the discourse analysis and the results of the interviews of target group of advertisements supported the discovered discourses. In the framework of social constructionism validity of the research is also hard to reach as the results are not facts as such and they can only be evaluated in the context of the material that was used to produce the discourses.

5.4 Limitations

The research included the advertisements in one volume of two different magazines from the same segment. Although choosing two different magazines may have widened the amount of different advertisers included in the sample, concentrating on one magazine for a longer period of time would have possibly revealed the changes in advertising or the lack of change over time. Although the final sample of 71 advertisements with parents in them out of the total 669 advertisements paints a certain picture of the issue, a larger sample would be needed for the results to be generalizable.

Interviews conducted for the research were intended to support the discourse analysis and bring varying perspectives to the advertisements. While the interviews gave relevant results, due to the small amount of interviewees and advertisements shown in the interviews the results are not generalizable.

When it comes to cultural aspects, the language setting of the research is guaranteed to affect especially the discourse analysis. The results of the research may only apply in a Finnish cultural environment.

5.5 Future research

The field of parents, not just mothers, as consumers and audiences of advertisements has not been widely studied. This study revealed that fathers are still not considered proper parents in the minds of the advertisers or at least this side of parenthood does not show up in the reality that is constructed through advertising. Fatherhood has been studied from many perspectives and there is a growing interest towards this particular subject (Mykkänen and Aalto 2010) but as consumers for baby paraphernalia men are not the first choice for marketers, at least if a new family car is not included in this group of necessities (Story & Davies & Farrell 2005). The position of fathers as consumer may also be changing (Penn and Zalesne 2007 p. 199–200).

The results of this study indicate that there is a scarcity in elements that are used to capture the attention of a reader and small children are used quite often in advertising to parents. However, the emphasis in this research was on the parents in advertisements and more attention was paid to the images where parents appeared. There is a need for taking a closer look at the advertisements as a whole to investigate whether there is enough variation in the messages for them to be differentiated from each other and the journalistic content that relies heavily on the same imagery. While marketing

research is undoubtedly conducted in corporations interested in the sales and advertising of products for small children, there is little academic research on the consumers of such products and whether the advertisements are effective enough to entice consumers to buy products.

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