

Heli Aaltonen

Co-creation of Value in Advertising

An Interpretive Study from the Consumers' Perspective



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ABSTRACT

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Finnish summary

The purpose of this interpretive study was to investigate how consumers participate in co-creation of value in advertising and what the dimensions of value were. The motivation arose from the growing centrality of consumers as “production partners”; the growing centrality of advertising value; the growth of experiential and visual consumption; and the growth of social media. Advertising was conceived as experiential media products to be consumed.

Empirical material consisted of consumer focus group discussions and interviews about advertising. The study involved 31 females. The empirical material was first categorized by qualitative content analysis following which it was analyzed using hermeneutical interpretation. The theoretical constructs of the *consumer co-production model* and aspects of *consumer value* provided the basis for interpretation.

The consumers engaged in the co-production process in three different ways and experienced value in several ways. The first type was *mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping*, highlighting as value the females' sense of autonomy: a feeling of independence and freedom of choice and a feeling of being up-to-date. Second, the *goal-oriented journey* generated: a feeling of empowerment; learning experiences; an increase in consumers' cumulative product knowledge; and economic value. The third type was *daydreaming and fantasizing* that elicited feelings such as excitement, fun and pleasure as value.

As the theoretical contribution a refined model of consumer co-production process in advertising is proposed. The model constitutes a new consumer-centred, hierarchy-free model of advertising. Value is the consumer's subjective experience based on the experience of co-creation itself and the consumer's customized meanings of advertising. The practical implications were also proposed.

Key words: co-production, co-creation, consumers, value, advertising, experiences, consumption

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Mikkeli, 4 October, 2010

Heli Aaltonen

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Advertising as the dominant global communication force (Schroeder 2004, 234) is a topic evoking conflicting attitudes and reactions. During the last decades consumers' exposure to advertising has multiplied and new mediums for advertising have arisen but the public's view of advertising has not changed noticeably (O'Guinn 2007, 450). On one hand advertising is regarded as false and self-seeking, on the other it is conceived as entertaining or offering valuable information. In general, consumer attitudes to advertising are complex, multidimensional and fundamentally ambivalent (O'Donohue 2001, 93). This ambivalence makes advertising a challenging and even fascinating topic. Consumers for instance enjoy advertising as a form of popular culture but at the same time they get tired of its repetition. They experience advertising as a distinct genre although they see it as exploiting intertextual references. Consumers have built mechanisms to cope with the increasing amount of advertising and as advertising-literate they feel themselves resistant to advertising yet vulnerable to its ideological power (O'Donohue 2001, 103). There are several common beliefs attached to advertising which are paradoxical by nature (Tellis & Ambler 2007, 3). The most popular belief is that advertising persuades people to buy unnecessary commodities and shapes consumer preferences. It urges people to consume more by making them feel dissatisfied or by appealing to greed. This claim sees ads as powerful and assumes that consumers react to them. If this were true all new products and innovations would sell successfully only by using advertising. However the consumers are far from responsive and much advertising gets lost in the noise of competing brands (Schroeder 2004; Tellis & Ambler 2007, 4). Even if the ad is absorbed it seldom leads to an actual purchase of the brand (Fowles 1996, 164).

In spite of these common contradictory views of advertising it is hard to imagine consumer culture without it (O'Guinn 2007, 458). Like the "wallpaper of a consumer society" (O'Guinn 2007, 451) it has become an integral part of

consumers' everyday life. Consumers also utilize advertising in many ways. For instance advertisements may act as "social glue" in consumers' everyday social interactions (Mitchell et al. 2007; O'Donohue 1994; Ritson & Elliott 1999) or as entertainment, common language or a means to position oneself (Aaltonen & Uusitalo 2007; O'Donohue 1994). The use of advertising is extended beyond business life purposes, as non-profit organizations such as religious organisations use advertising to communicate with people. This means that today advertising is much more than mere information or persuasion.

Advertising and how it works has been studied by using various models and theories. Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) suggest one useful categorization in which the models can be divided into seven classes. The categories are summarized in Table 1. According to their basic assumption, advertising has either a conscious or unconscious mental effect implying an intermediate type of consumer response. The three major intermediate advertising effects are *cognition* as a thinking aspect; *affect* as a feeling aspect; and *experience* as memories of prior experience of brand purchase, usage and advertising.

TABLE 1 Categorization of models of how advertising works (based on Vakratsas & Ambler 1999, 27).

Model	Sequence of effects	Essentials
Market response models	Do not consider intermediate advertising effects	Econometric models Measure advertising related to buying behavior
Cognitive information models	Think	Rational decision making Utility of ads
Pure affect models	Feel	Emotions, feelings, liking
Persuasive hierarchy models	Fixed hierarchy: Think - feel - do	Direct causal links Strong theory (Hackley 2005, 34)
Low-involvement hierarchy models	Fixed hierarchy: Think - do - feel	Causal links less direct Weak theory (Hackley 2005, 34)
Integrative models	Not fixed hierarchy of intermediate effects	Product involvement and context matters Weak theory (Hackley 2005, 34)
Hierarchy-free models	No processing sequence	Effects are not measured More receiver-centred view

The first type of the models does not consider intermediate effects at all. They are *market response models* which relate advertising measures directly to purchasing behaviour measures. As econometric models they focus either on the aggregate or the individual level. Second, there are models that assume only *one* type of intermediate effect. *Cognitive information* models emphasize consumers' ra-

tional decision-making in which the role of advertising is to provide information and utility. *Pure affect* models instead focus on the liking, emotions and feelings that advertising may evoke as the basis of consumers' preference. The third type consists of models wherein intermediate effects form a hierarchy. The hierarchy may be fixed, such as "think-feel-do" in *persuasive hierarchy* models. (*ibid.*). By stressing the role of direct persuasive information as the basis of a powerful message the persuasive hierarchy models are also known as the "strong theory" of advertising (Hackley 2005, 34). The *low-involvement hierarchy* models represent a fixed hierarchy of "think-do-feel". In more complex *integrative models* the hierarchy is instead not fixed but dependent on the product involvement and the context in which advertising operates (Vakratsas & Ambler 1999). The latter two models are also known as the "weak theory" of advertising wherein the causal link is less direct and an emphasis is on emotional reinforcement in advertising (Hackley 2005, 34). In summary, all aforementioned models assume a few core beliefs, which constitute preconditions for an appropriately interpreted advertisement (Aitken et al. 2008, 280; Heath & Feldwick 2008, 31). First, effective ads communicate a clear message about the product, which is "believed" and "understood" by consumers. Recall of the message is an indicator of successful advertising. Second, emotional elements in ads are supportive in that they aim at facilitating the consumers' liking of the ad or invoking the consumers' attention. Third, effective advertising is processed with high levels of attention requiring active involvement of the consumer (Heath & Feldwick 2008, 31). The models thus assume communication to be a one-way process from an advertiser to a consumer, and consumers to be *reactive receivers of the transmitted advertising message* (Aitken et al. 2008, 290). Hence the underlying paradigm¹ is *exchange of value* (Bagozzi 1975; Houston & Gassenheimer 1987) which considers advertising as the realizer of exchange from marketers to consumers.

Finally there is a class of *hierarchy-free models* that assume no particular processing sequence. These models represent a more receiver-centred view of advertising and their focus is not on measuring effects. Advertising is not considered as persuasion models consider it, but more as an integrated part of a brand. Consumers' decision making as well is not conceived as rational. (Vakratsas & Ambler 1999). As an example, *reception studies* focus on the interaction between the reader (consumer) and the text (advertisement) and on *understanding the readers' interpretations*. (Fish 1980a; 1980b; Holland 1980; Iser 1980; Mailoux 1982). Stuart Hall (1974) argued that messages are always encoded with preferred readings and he presented four different reception environments from which people decode these messages. It has been suggested that Hall's study is the foundation of reception studies. The *uses and gratifications approach* is interested in consumers as *users of mass media*, and it studies the motivations of active audiences, and how and why people respond to advertisements. It has

¹ According to Kuhn (1996) a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share: that is it constitutes the world view of the scientific community. It will include theories that depend in part on the shared beliefs, symbolic generalisations and shared values of the scientific community.

its roots in mass communications research and it is widely applied in advertising research. These studies have resulted in, inter alia, various classifications of the utilization of advertising. (Katz et al. 1973; 1974; Ruggiero 2000.)

The consumers' interaction with advertising, however, is a complex and dynamic process, which is not adequately explained by conventional models of advertising effects. The models overlook the fact that meanings of ads cannot be transmitted but they are negotiated by consumers. They also ignore the interactive nature of communication. Likewise, the abovementioned receiver-centred approaches offer only a partial understanding of the interaction. Although reception studies stress the reader's active role and autonomy in the reception and take into account the context, they mainly focus on interpretations. The uses and gratifications approach focus on ways and reasons how advertising consumption satisfies consumers' needs. It emphasizes that meanings are transferred and the consumers make individual interpretations.

1.2 Motivation to study consumer interaction with advertising

This study aspires to examining advertising from a view dissimilar to previous ones. The question here is not how advertising works but rather how consumers work with advertising. The motivation for this study derives from the observation that during past decades the phenomenon of mutual value creation has attracted marketing researchers. The phenomenon is based on the idea that sources of value in the value chain are diversified and extended. Accordingly, manufacturers are no longer the only source and deliverers of value, but sources are also based on "the uses and creativity of customers" (Hartley 2004, 131). This implies that manufacturing increasingly becomes a matter of partnership with customers and co-creation of value. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that *customers are concerned with* participation in value creation. For this reason the interaction between consumers and advertising deserves more attention and should be examined from the co-creation viewpoint. Consequently, *this study aims at extending the knowledge of consumer interaction with advertising, by examining how consumers participate in the value creation process and what the dimensions and meanings of value to the consumer are.*

Examining the interaction from the co-creation view is justifiable for several reasons. First, many studies refer to *the growing centrality of consumers as key actors* in the communication process (Aitken et al. 2008; Austin et al. 2007; Boutlis 2000; Fowles 1996, 161; Heath & Feldwick 2008; O'Donohue 2001; Wilkie & Moore 2007) and attention turning into communicating *with* people rather than *to* audiences (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 10). Contemporary consumers and advertising have a relationship which expects a novel way of thinking by advertisers. Consumers have grown up surrounded by advertising and they are used to living in an environment where advertising is ubiquitous. The ambivalence of attitudes and their advertising literacy skills challenge advertisers' conventional way of thinking (Nava 1997, 46; O'Donohue 2001) since they are

“turned off by literal, hard-line ads that take themselves too seriously” (Boutlis 2000, 21). Advertisers are interested in the effectiveness of their advertising meaning if advertising meets the goals set for it (Tellis & Ambler 2007, 3). Therefore to be effective advertising should offer consumers not only hard facts, but opportunities for the mutual co-creation of value.

Second, the centrality of *advertising value* – not the message – is increasing (Aitken et al. 2008) and thus it is necessary to investigate the nature of the value co-creation process. This notion is also supported by consumer culture theory which focuses on the empowerment of consumers (Arnould & Thompson 2005; 2007) and the new service-dominant logic of marketing (Vargo & Lusch 2004) which suggests deeper levels of interaction between consumers and producers (Aitken et al. 2008, 290). Furthermore, the centrality of co-created value is currently emphasized in the shift from the value exchange paradigm towards a value creation paradigm in consumer marketing research (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Sheth & Uslay 2007; Vargo & Lusch 2004). Instead of exchanging, i.e. giving and receiving value, the value creation paradigm emphasizes value co-created by firms and consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b), and advertising is one field where value is co-created.

Third, consumption has become more *experiential* and *visual* (Carù & Cova 2007a;b; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b; Schroeder 2002; 2004; Schmitt 1999;2003). Contemporary consumers do not consume mere products or services but instead, they consume meanings and images related to the products (Carù & Cova 2007a), such as advertising. Consumers’ mundane lives are made up of consuming visual experiences which do not involve economic exchange or occur without a market relation. Consumers however do not want to be manipulated by marketers’ “predetermined experience offerings” but they seek to actively design and produce their own experiences. The marketers’ role thus is to offer experiential contexts or platforms where consumers can co-produce their own experiences (Carù & Cova 2007a;b). Advertising offers to consumers one context for experiential and visual consumption and co-production.

Finally, *new social mediums* have augmented advertisers’ opportunities to customize their advertising and at the same time the power of consumers has increased in that they have access to a free distribution channel of messages via the Internet (Ihator 2001, 199; Hurme 2001, 73). Instead of overloading consumers by using intrusive and more shocking mass advertising, a use of social media, such as peer-to-peer communication, may offer new possibilities (Austin et al. 2007). It may encourage consumers to be more active partners in a communication process and integrate them via interaction. In addition it affords opportunities to target consumers who are resistant to conventional advertising (*ibid.*).

The purpose of this study is to investigate how consumers participate in co-creation of value in advertising and what the dimensions and meanings of value to the consumer are. The study takes the consumers’ perspective on advertising and investigates their participation in the value co-creation process by

means of an interpretive approach. Empirical material consists of Finnish female consumers' discussions about advertising. Focus group discussions and personal theme interviews are used as methods to generate talk and descriptions of experiences of advertising in various media. The empirical material is first categorized by a qualitative content analysis and after that analysed using a hermeneutical interpretation. Findings are examined by using theoretical constructs of the model of consumer co-production process (Etgar 2008) and consumer value (Holbrook 1996; 2006) and they are also discussed in terms of previous studies and literature. The findings indicate that the participants engaged in the value co-production process in different ways and experienced value various ways during the process. Finally, the conclusions and theoretical and practical implications are discussed, and suggestions for future research are made.

1.3 Theoretical positioning of the study

In this chapter the basic set of beliefs which guide the research process are first discussed. After that the study is theoretically positioned according to its three main research fields.

This study aims at understanding how the value co-creation process in advertising is constructed and how the consumers describe their experiences of value. Accordingly, this study takes the consumer perspective. The underlying philosophical assumptions here are based on *constructivism* and *interpretivism*. The paradigms are closely related to each other, sharing common concerns (Creswell 2003, 6; Guba & Lincoln 1994, 111; 2005,195; Schwandt 1994,118). Reality is conceived as relativistic by nature. It is pluralistic, since it is expressed in a variety of symbols and language systems. Moreover it is plastic since it occurs as multiple mental constructions, which are socially and experimentally co-constructed by individuals and thus shaped and stretched to fit individuals' purposes. (Schwandt 1994, 125).

The paradigms aim at *understanding* and *reconstructing* the complex "world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by the social actor (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 133; Schwandt 1994, 125). Understanding or *Verstehen* implies understanding the meanings and the actor's particular situation and context. To understand the world of meaning it must be interpreted (Schwandt 1994, 118). Meanings are included in the actor's actions and language. The researcher has to illustrate the actor's meaning construction and interpret it by offering reconstructions. Furthermore, elements of these constructions are often shared by individuals and groups. (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 111; 2005,195.)

The epistemological basis of constructivism is transactional and subjectivist emphasizing that *knowledge is created in interaction* among a researcher and respondents. The researcher thus is at the same time a participant and facilitator. Knowledge and "truth" are created and they are results of the particular perspective. That is, knowledge is neither discovered nor objective (Schwandt

1994, 125). In consequence a research methodology expects hermeneutical techniques and inductive processes. Instead of being absolutely “true” and constant, the constructions are dynamic; they become improved and sophisticated while the study proceeds. The aim is toward mutual understanding yet being open to new interpretations as information improves. (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 111; 2005, 195.) The researcher must also be aware of how her own background and experiences influence and shape the interpretation.

In this study the researcher aims at understanding the consumers’ meanings and value constructs. The consumers seek to understand and make sense of the world they live in. They develop subjective and multiple meanings of their experiences of advertising. Moreover, they are engaged with their own historical and social contexts and hence understanding the contexts is essential. The reality however is not entirely subjective since the consumers’ meanings and constructions are shared. The knowledge is created socially in focus group discussions and personal interviews where the researcher acts as facilitator. Both parties also bring their values and perspectives into the interaction situation. The researcher’s understanding improves and develops while the analysis and interpretation process proceeds. In the interpretation process the researcher creates reconstructions which constitute the knowledge.

Figure 1 illustrates the focus and the theoretical context of this study. The core in the figure consists of co-production of value in advertising, which is seen as an *intersection* or an *overlapping area* of two research traditions, namely research related to *co-creation of value* and *consumer-centred research of advertising*. These research areas are studied in a wider context of *interpretive consumer research* especially taking the experiential view of consumption. In the next sub-chapters the three research areas are discussed.

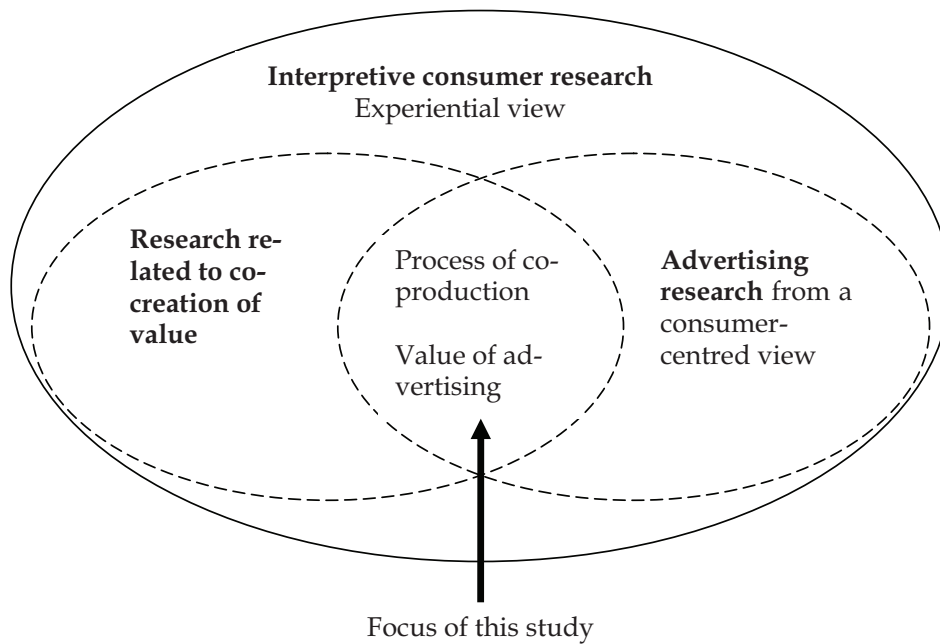


FIGURE 1 The focus of this study and the main research areas constituting its theoretical context.

1.3.1 Interpretive consumer research and experiential view

As depicted in Figure 1 this study is positioned on a wider context of consumer research, which encompasses various approaches to consumer behaviour². In the 1980s consumer research went through an *interpretive* turn (Sherry 1991) introducing a new way of approaching consuming individuals and consumption (Östergaard & Jantzen 2000,10). The interpretive turn was preceded by a marketing science approach and a traditional approach providing diverse insights into consumer behaviour (Peter & Olson 2008, 10). In advertising research a notable part of the models and theories describing how advertising works is based on these two approaches.

The interpretive turn added new perspectives on consumer research. Interpretive consumer research seeks to understand consumption and its meanings; what products and services mean to consumers and what consumers experience in using them (*ibid.*). Its roots are in cultural anthropology, and long interviews and focus groups constitute typical methods for generating empirical material. In the 1980s Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) contrasted previous views presenting a new *experiential view* of consumption. They enriched the views by emphasizing consumers' experiences and symbolic, hedonistic and

² Arnould et al. (2004) define consumer behaviour as "individuals or groups acquiring, using, and disposing of products, services, ideas, or experiences".

aesthetic nature of consumption. Accordingly, consumption is mainly driven by emotions and feelings and a meaning in life is created by consumption of commodities. Instead of being rational, consuming individuals are “emotionally and narcissistically” determined and actively looking for new experiences generated by consuming. (Östergaard & Jantzen 2000,17). During the past decades the experiential approach has become the foundation for an experience economy and experiential marketing (Carù & Cova 2007a; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b; Schmitt 1999;2003; Sherry et al. 2007). The emphasis of experiencing is on consumers’ participation and connection³ (Pine & Gilmore 1998). What is consumed is meanings and images which may or may not require economic exchange or commercial relations⁴. Consumers do not want to experience predetermined and standardized experiences but they actively seek opportunities to customize their own experiences. The firms have to provide for experiential contexts or platforms enabling the customization. (Carù & Cova 2007a;b.) In short, consumers are less interested in maximizing their benefits but they are more focused on hedonistic gratification within a social context (Carù & Cova 2007a).

This study investigates the interaction between consumers and advertising assuming the interpretive view. Consumption of advertising is interpreted from an experiential view. The experiential view relates to the nature of advertisements as media products, which are *not* meant to be read and consumed for utilitarian reasons (Blom 1999). Instead, they are mainly meant to appeal to consumers’ emotions. Actually, consumers do not want advertising to deal in realities which already abound in consumers’ everyday lives and they do not literally “believe” advertising messages (Fowles 1996, 163). In other words advertising may represent qualities such as “fun, feelings and fantasy” (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982) for consumers and it may be consumed as an “experiential product” itself (Falk 1994, 157). The experiential view however does not mean preventing consumers from using the advertisements as information. The main interest here is not directed towards individuals’ interpretations of single ads, but the meanings and experiences of advertising common to several consumers.

³ Pine and Gilmore (1998, 101) suggest thinking experiences across two dimensions. First, *customer participation* varies between passive and active. In *passive participation* the customer for instance listens to or observes the event. In *active participation* the customer plays a key role in creating the event. The second dimension is *connection*, uniting the customer with the event. In one end is *absorption* and in the other end lies *immersion*. Esthetic and escapist experiences are related to immersion. Entertainment and educational experiences are related to absorption.

⁴ Consumption experience is more than mere “shopping experience”. It involves several stages which are spread over time and the boundaries are not clear. It is suggested that a mental pre-consumption experience begins when the consumer starts to plan, imagine or day-dream about the experience; the purchasing experience involves for instance the choosing, paying and packaging; the core consumption experience involves for instance sensation, irritation or flow and; the remembered consumption experience and nostalgia experience include social communication about the past (Arnould et al. 2004; Carù & Cova 2007; Grönroos 2006).

1.3.2 Research related to co-creation of value

The second research area constituting the theoretical context of this study examines mutual creation of value. The motivation for combining this field with advertising research is based on the idea that advertising constitutes one point of interaction between marketers and consumers and all these points are opportunities for both value co-production and value extraction (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b, 121). Recently there has been a wide interest in studying mutual value creation and roles of parties' involved in the process (Etgar 2008; Hartley 2004; Normann & Ramirez 1993; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Ramirez 1999; Sheth & Uslay 2007; Vargo & Lusch 2004; 2006). The concept of value co-creation consists of *two main components* (Lusch & Vargo 2006b). First, *co-production* involves the participation in the creation of the core offering and second, *consumption* (ie. value-in-use) is the process through which the consumer creates and determines value. The co-production process precedes consumption and these two components are subordinate to co-creation of value. Co-production refers to the *customization of the consumption experience* which precedes the actual consumption phase (Lusch & Vargo 2006, 284). Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the differences between the concepts. In figure 2 value *creation* occurs as an activity of only one actor. Figure 3 depicts value *co-creation* as a process which both parties are involved in. Co-production is a linkage between product operations and consumption activities (Etgar 2008,97) constituting an overlap between the activities. The area of this study is outlined in the consumers' view.

The concept draws on the emerging *value co-creation paradigm* in marketing research (Normann & Ramirez 1993; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Ramirez 1999; Sheth & Uslay 2007; Vargo & Lusch 2004) and the socio-cultural approach to consumer behaviour (Arnould & Thompson 2005; 2007; Hirschman & Thompson 1997). In contrast to the predominant *value exchange paradigm*, which is based on giving and receiving value (Bagozzi 1975; Houston & Gassenheimer 1987), and which has been "the foundational construct in marketing for several decades" (Sheth & Uslay 2007, 302), value co-creation emphasizes mutually created value by firms and consumers. The view and studies of value co-creation are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.4.

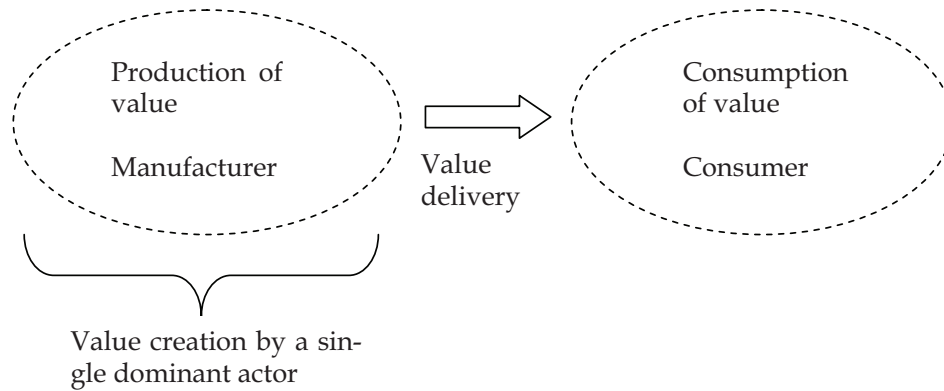


FIGURE 2 In value creation a single actor dominates (Hartley 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Sheth & Uslay 2007).

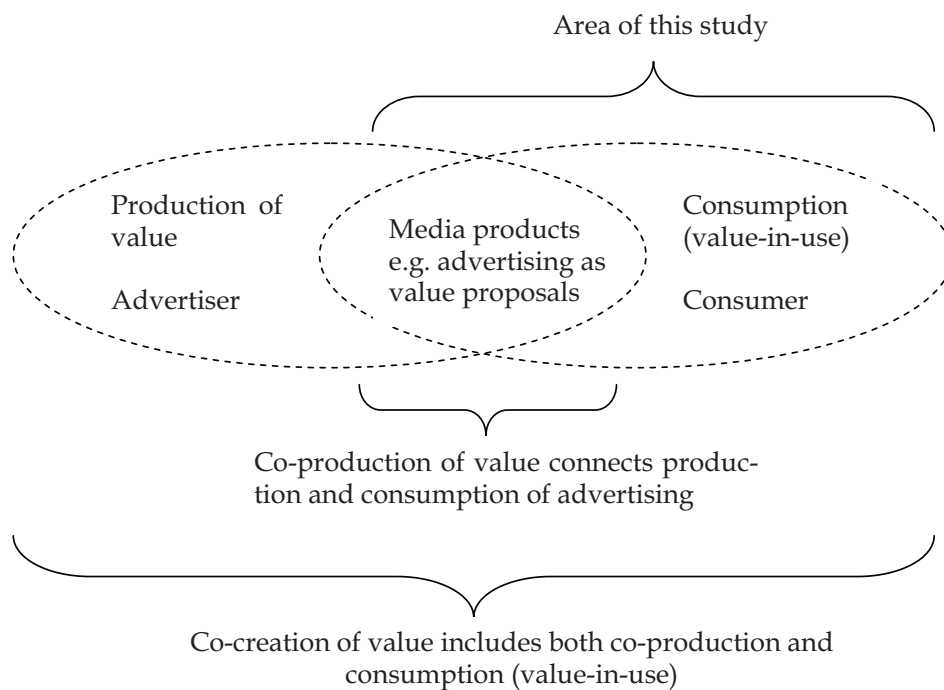


FIGURE 3 Concepts of co-creation and co-production and the area of this study. (Arnould, Price & Malshe 2006; Hartley 2004; Lusch & Vargo 2006b; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Sheth & Uslay 2007).

This study, however, does not draw just on a view of value co-creation. Instead it draws on a “combination view” in which value is created *both* in exchange *and* consumption, in a process that is simultaneous or sequential (Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006). The process where marketers and consumers interact is socially constructed, taking place prior to, during and after the actual exchange and use⁵. The combination view is reasoned here since it allows more alternatives for consumers either to engage in the value creation somehow or to bypass the process. The view can be described as a continuum where one end is complete co-creation of value and the other end is complete exchange of value (Sheth & Uslay 2007). The intensity of the consumer’s engagement varies in different positions along the continuum depending on the consumer, the situation and the commodity. In consequence it is assumed here that not all advertising in every situation and in every context evokes co-creation. Value may be purely exchanged (Etgar 2008; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Sheth & Uslay 2007) or consumers may completely filter, resist and tune out non-relevant advertising (Fowles 1996, 162; Goldman & Papson 1996; Hackley 2005; Nava 1997, 46).

1.3.3 Advertising research assuming a consumer-centred view

Advertising research constitutes the third area of interest in this study. In advertising studies consumers have been viewed from two main perspectives. One approach has focused on advertising effects, where consumers are viewed as *targets* processing transmitted information. The other is interested in reception and a *relation between receivers and advertising* assuming that readers of ads and audiences of commercials have an active role in relation to advertising. This study is positioned under the latter approach. The focus however is not merely on the reception of advertising. Instead, the consequences of consumer activity are assumed to go beyond active interpretation, resulting in the process of value co-creation. The consumer-centred approaches and theories are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Since the perspective here is consumer-centred and emphasizes co-creation of value, the concept of advertising should include openness to co-creation. In this study advertising is considered as a *value proposition* which is a target of two operations by a consumer. First, advertising is considered as an *object that is consumed* (Holt 1995), since it is one category of experiential media products to be consumed (Falk 1997, 70-71; Kantola et al. 1999, 7; Schroeder 2004). Advertisements are representations, in which products are transformed into positive experiences (Falk 1994, 157; 1997, 66) and thus, while consuming those promoted products, consumers actually consume those positive experiences (Blom 1999, 221). Furthermore, advertisements have to some extent be-

⁵ Grönroos (2006) has paid attention to the boundaries of co-creation process. According to him it is sometimes difficult to define where consumers’ co-creation and consumption starts and ends. A mental pre-consumption (Grönroos 2006, 360) may begin when the consumer perceives an advertisement or starts to think about the good or service and, similarly, a mental post-consumption may occur.

come independent entertaining experiential goods, which may also be consumed independently of advertised brands (Falk 1997, 70; Nava 1997, 46).

Second, advertising is considered as a *target of co-production*. This challenges traditional producer-consumer separation by assuming that consumers have become more integral to the marketing process. They are *producing consumers*, which may even take a role of a producer. (Austin et al. 2007, 351; Blom 1999, 208; Hirschman & Thompson 1997, 45; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b.). This idea is also illustrated in figure 3 where the co-creation concept includes productive activities of both the advertiser and the consumer linked up with the co-production process.

1.4 Purpose and setting of the study

This study enhances the understanding of value co-creation process in relation to advertising by taking the consumers' view. The focus is particularly on the co-production process and the nature of the customer value of advertising. In co-production consumers as well as producers actively create value. Co-production includes all forms of co-operation between consumers and producers (Etgar 2008,108) and advertising is one field where value could be co-created. The traditional view of advertising, however, does not support this idea of co-production, since it regards advertising as one-way mass communication of a uniform message. Co-production instead refers to customization and requires active and mutual participation.

Although the interaction between a consumer and advertising has been widely studied from consumer-centred views supposing an actively participating consumer, the activity only involves *interpretation* of the ad and *creation of meanings*. However, this study aims at deepening the understanding of the consumers' activity⁶ and participation in the interaction. To be specific, *this study aims at going beyond the level of interpretation and meaning creation in advertising, towards an understanding of mutual creation of value*. This means that the consequences of consumer activity go *further*, resulting in co-production of value in advertising. Meanings of advertising, actually, are a significant basis of value, serving as indicators of consumer value. The main interest here is how consumers exploit meanings to create value.

⁶ Consumer activity is not a stable construct but a variable one (Levy & Windahl 1985, 110). This implies that consumers show varying kinds and degrees of activity. In their study regarding audiences of mass communication, Levy and Windahl (1985, 119) suggest four activity subtypes. They categorize activity types according to two variables which are *the individual's pre-exposure selectivity* and *involvement during exposure*. This results in four different types of activity: 1) motivated gratification seeking an especially active orientation; 2) topic ritualism as a relatively non-involved orientation; 3) indiscriminant involvement as an active orientation towards almost any type of media content and 4) time-passing as a relatively inactive orientation. In addition, it is stated that the consumer's activity is influenced by individual, social and media variables (*ibid.* 120).

This study examines advertising as *experiential media products* (Falk 1997) to be consumed. It is not seen as a mere realizer of exchange in the communication process but subjected to co-production. Considering advertising as media products implies that the interaction between the producer and the consumer is more like a marketing process than a communication process. Advertising is the producer's value proposition in a marketing process in which the consumer is assumed to be an integral part and co-producer of meanings and value.

Owing to the novelty of this idea there is a lack of studies combining the research traditions of value co-creation with advertising, though social media and the Internet, for instance, have enabled and increased consumers' opportunities for co-production. Under these circumstances the idea of co-production invoked many questions, such as: Is advertising valuable for consumers? Are theoretical constructs regarding consumer co-production applicable in the field of advertising? What is the nature of the customization of advertising? As an answer to the first question it is assumed that advertising is valuable for consumers, but not all advertising and not in all situations. Similarly, dimensions of the gained value may vary according to individuals and situations. Consumers are also supposed to be willing to participate in the co-production because of their own preferences, but not in every consumption situation. The other two questions will be discussed in this study.

1.4.1 Research questions

The purpose of this study is *to investigate how consumers participate in the process of value co-creation in advertising and how consumers bring out collective meanings of advertising in social interaction*. Based on this purpose the main research question and its sub-questions are as follows:

1. How do consumers co-create value in advertising?
 - 1.1. How do consumers describe the meanings of advertising to them?
 - 1.2. How do consumers describe their value experiences of advertising?

Figure 4 illustrates the basic setting of this study to answer these questions. The consumers' participation in the co-creation process is investigated by means of an interpretive approach. This approach follows the knowledge claims of constructivism which were examined in the earlier chapter. It enables deep understanding of advertising meanings and consumption, which constitute an integral part of the consumers' everyday world (Denzin & Lincoln 2000).

The process and value dimensions are investigated from the consumers' perspective and the focus is on the consumers' discussions about advertising. To be more specific, this study takes a consumer-centred approach and excludes advertisers' view. This means that in the co-production process the advertiser is represented only by value propositions, i.e. the advertisements.

This study uses focus group discussions and personal theme interviews as methods to generate cultural talk as empirical material (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Cultural talk refers to social texts that are produced, shared and used in

culturally specific and socially organized ways. Discussions are not precise representations of marketplace phenomena, but they give access to particular accounts of those phenomena (*ibid.*). In the discussions here female consumers describe their experiences of advertising in various media. They express their views and create meanings in interaction with others. The interest, however, does not lie in the meanings of the content of a single advertisement, but on the consumers' common and shared meanings of advertising.

Meanings play a significant role in the content of advertisements and they are remarkable components of value in a process of exchange and consumption (Holt 2003; McAlexander et al. 2002; Penalzoa & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Venkatesh et al. 2006). Advertising meanings are subjective decodings of an ad as an outcome of an interpretation process (McCracken 1986). Meanings of the ad are constructed both from the consumer's personal experiences in a specific context and from the content of the ad. People do not experience advertising in isolation from their social and cultural world (McCracken 1987; Buttle 1991). Here the context is taken into account including four dimensions aiming at interpreting the discussions as properly as possible. First, the participants share the wide *cultural* context of being Finnish female consumers who read the same women's magazines. Second, the *semantic* context of advertising meanings (Ritson & Elliott 1999, 260) takes into account the consumers' general media use and the surrounding content of advertising. Mass media shapes consumers' frame of reference through which they interpret advertising (Hirschman & Thompson 1997). As noted earlier, single advertisements are not studied here as disconnected from their media context, but advertising is discussed as an integrated part in the media. Third, advertising constitutes a *genre* itself (Cook 2001, 9) which is one context influencing how advertisements are interpreted. Finally, the participants' social, cultural, physical and economic *resources* (Arnould et al. 2006) are examined in the questionnaire and discussed in the interviews.

The empirical material is first categorized by a qualitative content analysis and after that analysed using a hermeneutical interpretation. Findings are examined and discussed by using theoretical constructs of the model of consumer co-production process (Etgar 2008) and consumer value (Holbrook 1996; 2006). The theoretical constructs act only as a guide defining the perspective and the key assumptions of the study. According to the interpretive approach these constructs are not applied to be "tested" with empirical material. Instead, they provide the perspective from which the empirical material is interpreted and the findings provide the basis for evaluating the usefulness of the theoretical constructs (Moisander & Valtonen 2006, 178). Hence, an inductive way of inference is applied and emerged ideas are then related to the literature (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 7).

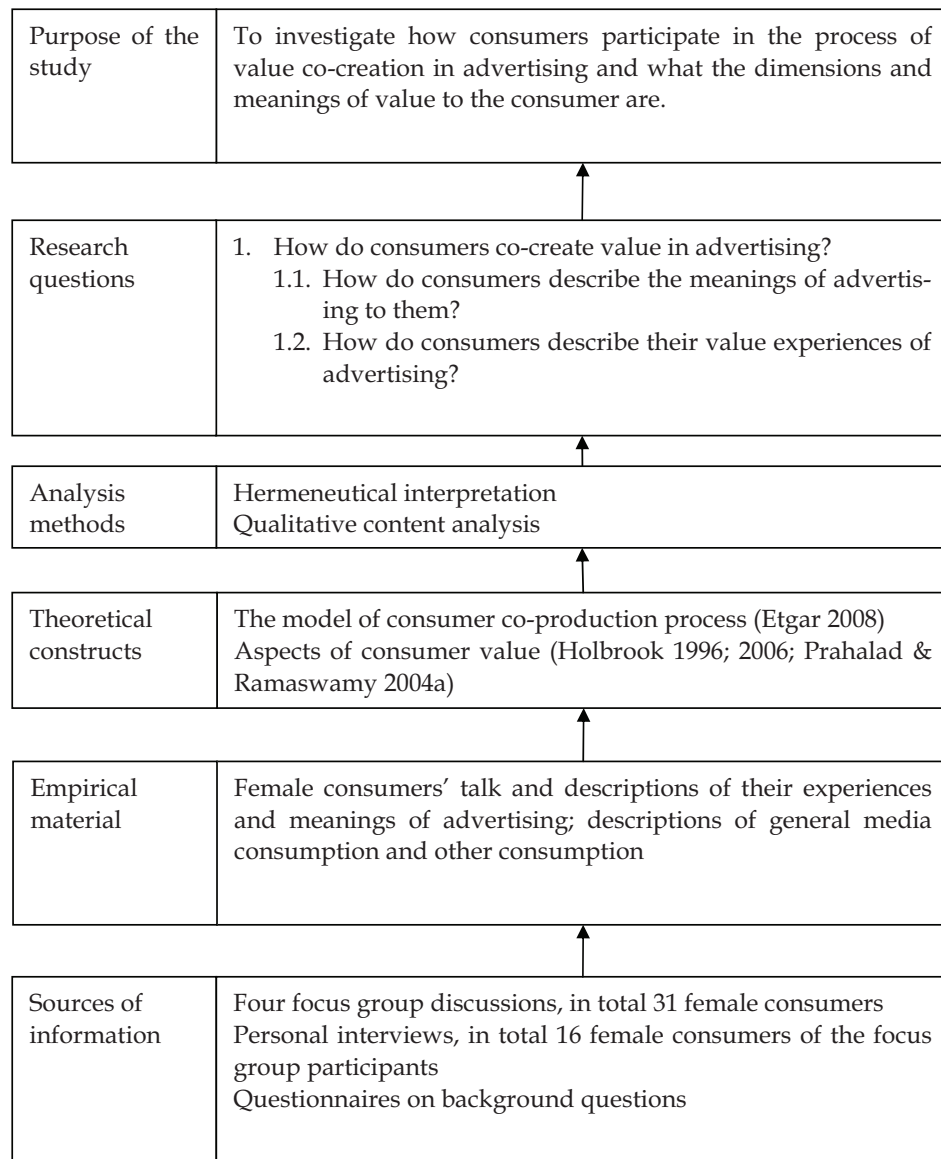


FIGURE 4 The setting of the study.

1.4.2 Defining the basic concepts

There are a few concepts which are essential and frequently used in the study at hand and hence need to be defined. First, in this study the term *consumer* refers to an individual or group who acquires, consumes and disposes⁷ products, ser-

⁷ Acquirement involves activities such as receiving, finding, producing and purchasing. Consumption encompasses for instance wearing, evaluating, collecting, serving,

vices, ideas and experiences and is involved in the continuing value creation process. Consumers interact with marketers in marketing process and thus are co-producers of value. (Vargo & Lusch 2006, 18). Added to this, the *terms consumer and customer are used here as having identical meanings*, although *customer* in studies elsewhere also refers to an individual or business entity who buys commodities aiming at upgrading them or integrating them into their other production or reselling them to their own customers (Webster 2000, 20). In this study the participants of the empirical research are consumers who are recruited in order to tell about their experiences of advertising as *final* consumers.

Second, *value* has many diverse meanings in consumer research. For a start, value must be distinguished from “values” which are personal or organizational referring to enduring beliefs about right and wrong, good and bad (Woodruff 1997, 141). Values are guiding principles and bases for attitudes by which the judgements are made (Ballantyne & Varey 2006; Xie et al. 2008). To specify, in this study value does not refer to the lifetime value of the customer, that is to say all the profits a customer will generate in future for the firm (Gupta & Lehmann 2003). Definitions of value, instead, often emphasize product use and customers’ perceptions of a trade-off between what they receive and what they sacrifice (Zeithaml 1988; Woodruff 1997, 141). In this study value means more *customer value* than product value (Holbrook 1996). It differs from product value in that it emphasizes value as the *customer’s experience*. This experience depends on some object; it involves a consumer who compares utilities among objects and appreciates the object; and finally evaluates it as relevant for himself. The experience also varies personally from one consumer to another and it depends on the consumer’s situation and context (*ibid.*). Hence, value is dynamic by nature and it cannot be determined objectively by a producer. The same advertisement thus could be experienced as valuable in one situation, but of no value in another. Holbrook’s (1996) typology of customer value will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.6.

Third, a conventional definition of *advertising* emphasises that it is a paid, non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, products, or services by an identified sponsor. Advertising is one part of the promotional mix and in turn, promotion is one sub-category of the marketing mix among product, price and distribution (Hackley 2005). In this study however advertising is viewed from the consumers’ perspective in a broadened way. First, advertising is conceived as an *experiential media product* which is consumed by consumers (Falk 1997, 70-71; Kantola et al. 1999, 7; Nava 1997; Schroeder 2004). It is also assumed that consumers do not perceive boundaries between different promotional tools, but generally regard all marketing communications as advertising (Hackley 2005). Consumers may find it difficult to distinguish advertising from editorial content of media which is also commercialized (Dahlén & Edenius 2007; Hirschman & Thompson 1997; van Reijmersdal et al. 2005; Wernick 1991) and hence in the empirical research it is reasonable to discuss advertising as an integral part

sharing and preparing. Disposing activities include giving, throwing away, recycling and depleting. (Arnould et al. 2004).

of media context. Likewise, consumers do not make a strong distinction between different media that carry advertising (Hackley 2005, 15) and thus discussions include advertising in all media. Advertising is discussed as a value proposition earlier in Chapter 1 and evolution of advertising is briefly described in the next section.

Fourth, in this study the terms *medium* (singular) and *media* (plural) are primarily used to mean various tools mediating advertising in different forms. The tools are conventionally divided into major media types consisting of print media; broadcast media; network media; electronic media; and display media (Kotler et al. 2010, 705). Within each general media type there is a large number of specific media vehicles.

Finally, the terms *marketer*, *advertiser* or *producer* are equally used in this study meaning the company or organization who is a producer and sponsor of advertising. Advertising agencies, however, are excluded from this definition.

1.5 Brief history of the development of advertising

1.5.1 Phases of development

To understand contemporary advertising it is necessary to examine the evolution of advertising (O'Guinn 2007, 447). In this section the consideration is mainly based on the periods according to Leiss et al. (2005) and their viewpoint of advertising development in northern America and western societies. Leiss et al. (2005) describe the development of modern⁸ advertising in the twentieth century through five cultural frames. These frames consist of the interaction between certain elements in a particular period: consumers' values; forms of communication; marketing and advertising strategies; and the mass media and popular culture. Each frame represents the cultural context and characteristics of consumers, products and producers typical in this era⁹. In addition, some aspects of advertising in Finnish society are taken into consideration, in that the empirical material of this present study is collected from Finnish female consumers.

In western societies advertising has developed in parallel with industrialization (Leiss et al. 2005; O'Guinn 2007, 447) and the roots of modern advertising can be traced in Great Britain late in the eighteenth century (Falk 1994,158; Heinonen & Konttinen 2001,20). This early advertising mainly consisted of posters, leaflets, postcards and shop signboards, until paid announcements became common along with the development of newspapers. Intentions, however, were not yet very developed, but customers were informed about the exis-

⁸ The beginning of *modern* advertising is in the second half of the nineteenth century, and it is defined as an *active* strategy of selling and marketing (Falk 1997, 65). Here, *active* implies an intentionality to raise demand.

⁹ It is worth noting that when evolution is described as separated periods, in reality these periods are overlapping (McDonald & Scott 2007,30).

tence of products. At the same time most goods were sold well without any promotion or specific brand name (Falk 1994, 159). During the next hundred years this crude early advertising turned into something that was more badly behaved and tawdry, fit for the “harsh realities of a harsh world” (O’Guinn 2007, 447-448)¹⁰. A use of negative register and exaggerated claims were typical, especially in advertisements of medicines (Falk 1994, 155; 1997, 67; O’Guinn 2007, 447). These ads illustrated conditions of deficiency following the non-use of the product, promising to solve these problems. Here for instance, the customers’ senses of anxiety or dissatisfaction were abused (Falk 1994, 154-155). Modern advertising, instead, later operated mainly with positive register¹¹.

In the nineteenth century mass production accelerated and in the last quarter of the century manufacturers began to experience difficulties with distribution (Fowles 1996, 34; McDonald & Scott 2007, 19). This situation where manufacturers needed to raise demand resulted in two things. First, branded mass products began to replace unbranded commodities, and second, modern advertising was needed to promote these brands to mass markets (*ibid.*). As a consequence the advertising industry as well as the mass media underwent rapid growth during this era (Falk 1997, 65; O’Guinn 2007, 448). Leiss et al. (2005) characterize this development phase of advertising in the years 1890 – 1925 as *product oriented* or *idolatrous*. Due to the novelty and efficiency of mass production, products were adored and even idolised. Advertising followed these prevailing cultural norms and accordingly, commercial messages concentrated on rational benefits, price, quality and the potential uses of products. Newspapers and magazines constituted essential mediums and photographs were introduced to printed advertisements in the 1890s (Falk 1994, 156). Since printing technology in its early stages did not yet enable pictorial messages to be of good quality, written text still played a key role as a mediator of the message. (Leiss et al. 2005).

The second phase in the years 1925 – 1945 is called *iconology* (Leiss et al. 2005). During it marketing thought shifted from rational-based product benefits towards an increasingly non-rational and symbolic basis of consumption. Accordingly, advertisers’ interests were directed at consumers’ motivations and other factors affecting consumer behaviour. Market information, however, was mainly restricted to demographics and voting behaviour. In advertising the focus shifted from products towards the intended consumer (Falk 1994, 156; Leiss et al. 2005). Consequently, advertising messages emphasized the social motivation of consumption, such as status, glamour, family satisfaction and the reduction of anxiety. Instead of the earlier dominance of denotative elements in advertisements, the ads included more connotative meanings, conveyed for instance by cues, metaphors and analogies. This was supported by achievements

¹⁰ Interestingly, in spite of the huge changes of the social conditions and advertising, these essential assumptions regarding advertising still exist (O’Guinn 2007, 448).

¹¹ According to Falk (1997, 67-68) negative register was also in use in the early twentieth century. For instance, competitor’s product was *negatively named and compared* to their own product, or the advertisement focused on the negative *social consequences* of the absence of the product (Falk 1997, 67-68).

in communication technology enabling a more advanced use of photograph illustration in print advertisements. (Leiss et al. 2005.) In this phase the radio also strengthened its position as a charming new medium. At first only “indirect” advertising, such as sponsored programmes, were permitted. (Fowles 1996, 38; Leiss et al. 2005; McDonald & Scott 2007, 23.)

In the third, the *narcissism and personalization* phase during the years 1945 – 1965, a use of people and emotions gained ground in advertising (Leiss et al. 2005). Consumers were encouraged to consider products selfishly as generators of personal benefits, as if products represented a means to dominate and control other people. Visual images in print advertisements accordingly often characterized staring, stylized and distant people. Consumers, in addition, were also represented in social interaction situations where advertised products linked these people. For instance, representations of romances or warm family relations were typical situations. In this era producers’ and advertisers’ interests increasingly focused on buyer behaviour and market information, aiming at creating a basis of effective advertising. Television started to develop in the 1940s and it represented a perfect new medium for national advertisers (Fowles 1996, 38) whose marketing concept and practice were dominated by mass marketing and a model of a consumer reachable by television commercials. In this way television took a dominant position among the media with its ability to mediate stories and cultural symbolism. (Leiss et al. 2005; McDonald & Scott 2007, 19).

The fourth era comprises the years 1965 – 1985 and is called a phase of *totemism, segmentation and social groupings* (Leiss et al. 2005). This phase combined three previous themes of rational benefits, symbolism and personalization. Consumption was meant to be a public spectacle and accordingly industrial products represented “totems” constituting metaphors, codes and meanings of consumption habits of reference groups. Consumer lifestyle became a salient concept as a basis of segmentation and advertising messages. So advertising campaigns were created based on statistics and marketing research that produced information regarding media use, consumption preferences and lifestyles of consumer subgroups. In this era the position of advertising changed from being a main promoter of consumption to only one element in the marketing mix. Television maintained its position as an essential medium, although media mix thought gained ground (Leiss et al. 2005).

The fifth phase started approximately in 1985 and it seems to be still ongoing. This phase is characterized by *fragmentation*. (Leiss et al. 2005). In contrast to the previous fixed and passive era of totemism, this stage is active by nature and in continuous modification. Consumer research is approached from an anthropological point of view so target groups are found to be more diverse and connected with complex social networks. Accordingly, consumers can not anymore be classified in predefined categories. Consumption in this era is described as a “scene of action” wherein products represent “properties” needed in the consumers’ “script” of consumption. In addition, these scenes are not directed by marketers, but the consumers themselves (see also Holt 2002). During

this phase advertising has given room for sales promotion (Tellis & Ambler 2007, 7) and marketers actively look for new promotional media. In addition, supply of the branded entertainment has extended and consequently, commercial messages are mediated in increasingly subtle ways. This trend is supported by new communication technology, such as internet and wireless, which enable global media connections and interaction with consumers.

To summarize, advertising developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries “from announcements to advertisements”, that is, to the active strategy of selling and marketing (Falk 1994, 151). Thus advertising has constituted an essential communications link between mass production and mass consumption (Fowles 1996, 39). In addition, it has contributed to the rise of communication industries and technologies (McDonald & Scott 2007, 32). Over the course of the years each new medium augmented the advertisers’ opportunities to communicate their products in multifaceted ways: “from text alone, to text plus pictures, to the immediacy of sound, to moving pictures with compelling imagery” (Fowles 1996, 39) and last with a chance to reach consumers globally and to elicit direct interaction with an individual consumer. The media have always been cooperative with advertisers and sponsors, and in earlier decades even more openly than at present (Fowles 1996, 145). Decades ago product placement in movies, sponsored programmes in television and editorial content in magazines that were favourable toward advertisers were widespread.

Instead of providing information, today’s ad contents seek to appeal to emotions, to entertain and to build brand-consumer relationships (McDonald & Scott 2007, 32). However, owing to the ubiquitous nature of contemporary advertising, individual ads have lost their singularity (Fowles 1996, 39) and, furthermore, visually rich and complex advertising has also resulted in consumers who are alienated from and resistant to advertising (Goldman & Papson 1996). In the next chapter these conditions at the beginning of the “sixth phase” are discussed.

1.5.2 In the beginning of the “sixth phase”

In the previous section the main development stages of advertising in the preceding two centuries were described. Through its history advertising has aimed at leaving a positive impression on the potential consumer of the associated advertised product, though the ways of creating these associations have changed (Falk 1994, 156, 179). At the present moment, supposing that development proceeds in the same way as in the past, we seem to be in a transition towards the sixth phase. Therefore, taking into account the past advancements and current modes and methods of creating positive advertising impressions, it is necessary to discuss the concept and nature of contemporary advertising.

First, contemporary advertising is often something more than mere persuasive product information: it aims at creating and maintaining *brand images*. Accordingly, a trend of advertising expression has shifted from the verbal to the pictorial and audiovisual, emphasizing *experiential* aspects of consumption (Falk

1994, 156; Forceville 1998, 70). In other words, products are transformed into positive experiences in advertising (Falk 1994, 156-157, 178). These experiences are mediated by *visually rich imagery* including multilevel symbolic and hidden meanings (Boutlis 2000; Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver 2004; Schroeder 2004, 234). Moreover, a *rhetoric* construct of advertising has significantly changed (Leiss et al. 2005) and advertising messages exploit for instance irony, puns and humour (Phillips & McQuarrie 2002), or are “filled with dramatic and spectacular elements, touching mini-stories of life which may bring tears to one’s eyes” (Falk 1994, 179). The constant flow of these dramatized commercial messages, however, requires more loudness and novelty than the competitors to ensure that an individual advertisement will be noticed by consumers (Falk 1997, 70-71). There also resides a danger that the ads become independent “entertaining experiential goods” (*ibid.*, Nava 1997, 46) in their own right, which are remembered better than the promoted product. Besides, at the same time advertising as a category of media products competes with other media products, such as music videos or films, for the attention of the consumers (Falk 1997, 70-71).

This trend towards symbolic and imagery advertising requires more in-depth involvement in the interpretation process (Messaris 1997) and accordingly consumers have become *advertising literate* (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998; O’Donohue 2000, 2001; Ritson & Elliott 1995; Schroeder 2004, 235). They have developed skills to interpret advertising through cultural, media cultural and universal advertising conventions (McCracken 1987; Malmelin 2003) and “[advertising literacy] may enable consumers to distance themselves from advertising’s influence, disengage from its mystique, and unmask” (O’Donohue 2000, 168). Advertising has constituted its own genre (Blom 1999, 204; Cook 2001; Falk 1994, 178) which determines how it is read and interpreted.

Second, advertising according to its traditional definition, is one-way mass communication of a uniform message. However there is a growing interest to the shift from this “monologic” (Ballantyne & Varey 2008) way of communication to *dialogic* communication. Actually, new media such as Internet or peer-to-peer (Austin et al. 2007) do not fit in the traditional definition anymore. In these mediums messages are often *customized* in order to *evoke a dialog and interaction* with consumers. Interestingly, the Internet has also changed the power balance between marketers, consumers and the media (Ihator 2001, 199; Hurme 2001, 73). Consumers have access to a free distribution channel of messages globally connecting them with other consumers. Moreover in peer-to-peer advertising consumers have even assumed the role of the marketer, re-combining media and content as “mashups” (Austin et al. 2007, 351). On the one hand peer-to-peer promotions are a means of targeting consumers resistant to traditional advertising, while on the other hand consumers are seen to be more integrated into the marketing process and more willing to “co-create and re-create” value (Austin et al. 2007, 351-352).

Finally, consumers encounter not only distinctly identifiable advertising, but also *commercial messages embedded* in the editorial content of media. It is stated that boundaries between media and advertising are blurred (Hirschman

& Thompson 1997; Wernick 1991) and it is difficult for consumers to distinguish a paid message within commercialized media (Dahlén & Edenius 2007; van Reijmersdal et al. 2005). Thus it is also difficult to identify the sender of the message. According to Hirschman and Thompson (1997, 43) the relationship between advertising and media is *symbiotic* and “media enhance the effectiveness of advertising by portraying certain products and brands as more desirable than others, and providing subtle instructions on how to be a consumer”. Theme feature advertising in magazines and programmed content on TV exemplify these mixtures of advertising and editorial content; in the same way as mass media companies use cross-media to promote their own productions (Wernick 1991).

In sum, contemporary advertising is an integral part of media, it is assimilated into media and vice versa (Wernick 1991). As a category of media products it competes with other media products, such as music videos, films or radio programmes, for the attention of the consumers. The death of advertising has even been predicted (Schroeder 2004, 236) and replaced by reason of the developments of marketing communications technology. The rapid growth of the Internet as a medium threatens television’s dominant position. The Internet makes prices transparent and comparison easier. Advertisers are looking for substitute media, such as advertainment, product placement and sponsored programmes (McDonald & Scott 2007). New media are no more “monological” but dialogical, aiming at co-creating value with active consumers.

1.5.3 Some observations regarding advertising in Finland

The empirical material of this study is collected from Finnish female consumers and therefore in this chapter some characteristics of advertising evolution in Finnish society are discussed.

The first advertisement was published in the first Finnish newspaper in the year 1771, as in Great Britain (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001, 20). However the amount of advertising remained low and did not grow until the 1850s when book stores started to publish their catalogues in magazines (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001; Kähkönen 1980).

In the twentieth century the evolution of Finnish advertising was influenced by remarkable societal occasions, such as gaining national autonomy, the Second World War and period of rationing, and the increasing affluence of society (*ibid.*). Finnish advertising broke through in the 1920s and 1930s, when the young nation was in a transition from an agriculture society to an urban one. During those decades exhibitions, display windows, posters and advertisements constituted essential mediums. At first the ads were simple copies from abroad, but step by step advertising became more national by nature. (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001.)

Because of the war and a rationing period after it in the 1940s, brand advertising was almost suspended for years and consequently its development decelerated. Advertising was, instead, a means to sustain patriotism and ethics among citizens. In this era Finnish advertising lagged behind the development

of advertising in other western societies. For instance while television commercials already started to develop in North America in the 1940's (Fowles 1996, 38), in Finland advertising in the cinema became a remarkable new medium. Actually television itself did not become widespread until the 1960s¹². None the less, in the 1950s international mass entertainment such as rock music, blue jeans and Coca-Cola reached Finland and consequently the young became a new target group for advertisers. Compared with an increasing trend of personalized advertising in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, in Finland personalized ads also became popular, but for a few decades Finnish advertising still concentrated more on rational benefits, information and product images (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001, 306).

In the 1970s due to consumerism and an increasing number of ads, advertising was at the centre of political discussion in Finland. Consumer rights were protected by national legislation and in addition advertising and promotion of certain products such as alcohol and tobacco were regulated. Legislation also governed the development of media, for instance commercial radio, which was first launched only in 1985 (*ibid.*)

To summarize, Finnish advertising has followed a few steps behind main streams of global advertising trends. For example, a concept of consumers' lifestyle was not adopted until late in the 1980s, which is approximately a decade later than the time described by Leiss et al. (2005). However this distinction seems to be reduced on account of the globalization of brand advertising and a boom of new media, such as the Internet in particular.

1.6 Overview of the research process

This chapter builds up a general view of how this research process has progressed in a temporal sequence. It presents the most relevant milestones and their importance to the study. After that the role and influence of the researcher in a qualitative inquiry is discussed.

When starting my post-graduate studies – ten years after my master's thesis - and considering a possible topic, I asked myself "What is a topic which has potential enough to captivate my interest during a long research period?" In my master's thesis I examined customer relationships in the paper industry context and it would have been practical to continue with this topic. During the 1980s and 1990s I worked for fifteen years in the advertising industry as an account manager on brand marketing in companies. I was responsible for customer relationships and closely linked up with the creative work of advertising and promotions. During this period the dominant way of thinking seemed to be founded on the idea of consumers as receivers of the advertising message who only process the transmitted information. Later on my interests focused on the

¹² Interestingly, Finland was the first European country to allow sponsored television programmes (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001).

consumers' perspective of advertising (though my present position as a training manager of continuing education is not very close to this topic). So it was easy to choose advertising as a topic. On the one hand because of its tendency to create contradictory "love-hate reactions" (Cook 2001, 3) it was fascinating and interesting enough to study; on the other hand because of the emerging view of the value co-creation which offered fresh constructs for the study of advertising.

Table 2 summarizes the main content of this research process. Different phases are illustrated as partially overlapping since it is difficult to determine precisely where one phase ends and the other starts. In the starting phase I studied philosophical bases, methodologies and read other appropriate literature as a foundation for my understanding. During that time I felt that I struggled hard to learn the "scientific language" and qualitative procedures which I had already forgotten. In the first research proposal in autumn 2005 my interests were focused on the advertising of low-alcohol content drinks. This topic was current in political discussion in Finland because of the prospect of new regulations for advertising and promotion of alcoholic drinks. In order to improve my pre-understanding of this phenomenon I conducted an exploratory study concerning alcohol advertising in spring 2007. The aim was to enhance my understanding of advertising as a resource for consumers. Moreover and equally important, the goal was to refine my research questions and to develop my skills in interviewing, reflecting and writing. So I was starting to develop my research although I still felt uncertain about my topic.

There was a very intensive phase in my studies during two years when I was on study leave focusing on my research. I took several courses in methodologies, consumer research and psychology; wrote and presented papers at conferences; I read new literature and theories and refined my research problem. The main research phase was in 2008 when I first collected new empirical material, then analyzed and interpreted it and finally started to write the report.

Although I had taken several courses and read numerous books regarding research procedures, the research process has been anything but well-defined. The whole process has been demanding, especially crystallizing the research problem and writing the report as a logical and sound monograph.

TABLE 2 The main phases of the research process.

Phase	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Starting phase - Learning “scientific language” - The first research proposal - Foundation for understanding						
Exploratory phase - Exploratory study with 10 interviews and analysis - Conference papers and presentations - Intensive reading of literature						
Main research phase - Collecting new empirical material - 4 focus group discussions and 16 interviews - Intensive reading of literature - Analysis - Writing the report						

1.7 Reflecting on the role of the researcher

Guba and Lincoln (2005, 210) point out that a researcher has many selves and each self has a distinctive voice which comes up in the research. For this reason it is necessary to reflect consciously and critically on the self as researcher.

According to the philosophical bases of constructivism the inquirer has two concurrent roles in the process of understanding: she is both a participant and a facilitator (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 113). Actually, the inquirer and the object of inquiry interact so that findings are “created” as the investigation proceeds. This interaction is crucial in order to develop more sophisticated interpretations. (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 111; Patton 2002). Because of this it is impossible to capture an objective truth in interpretive research (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 5). In the background of qualitative research is a researcher, who is always biographically situated and who looks at the world through her personal lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. As a result the researcher may become sensitive to specific characteristics and patterns of the text and ignore others. Since the interpretations are personally shaped there should be conscious reflection of the influence of biography. Thus personal values, inter-

ests and biases should be recognized during the research process (Bogdan & Biklen 1992, 46-47; Creswell 2003, 182-184; Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 11-12; McCracken 1988, 18; Patton 2002; Thompson 1994, 441).

My own background may be seen on one hand as a constraint and on the other as an opportunity for this study. Daymon and Holloway (2002, 5) suggest that in order to understand the world of marketing communications, interpretive researchers must first actively engage it before going on to interpreting it. I have engaged in the marketing world through practical experience in the advertising industry. This implies that working with brand marketing has shaped my pre-understanding, and existing “schemes” perhaps constrain my view. I have seen how campaigns were planned and pretested, how ads were encoded and effects of advertising were measured, though after my time in the industry the whole industry and its conventions have lived through remarkable changes owing to the rise of new media. In the light of this background my own perceptions of advertising and mode of reception may vary from an ordinary consumer’s. On the other hand this “active engagement” in the advertising industry also gave me tools to better understand consumer behaviour. In addition it gave me the potential to easily approach respondents and companies; to get the respondents to describe their experiences; and to understand and interpret meanings. To summarize, as it was impossible to avoid my subjectivity during the research process, I aimed to become aware of it and its potential effects on the process (Arnold & Fischer 1994).

1.8 Outline of the dissertation contents and structure

This report follows the basic directions of reporting qualitative research and a summary of the contents and structure is presented in figure 5. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic and describes objectives of the study. It also positions the study according to its three main themes and provides a review of advertising evolution. In addition it describes the whole research process and reflects the researcher’s role as a view of limitations.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background of consumer-centred advertising research and the studies considering value co-creation. It presents the process of consumer co-production and discusses the concepts of value. The exploratory study is also introduced and discussed in the chapter. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology. First, it describes the use of focus group discussions and personal interviews in this study. Second, it provides illustrations how the empirical material is analysed and interpreted. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the empirical research. Chapter 5 discusses the findings and provides conclusions of the study including theoretical and practical implications. Then suggestions for future research are made and limitations and evaluations are also discussed.

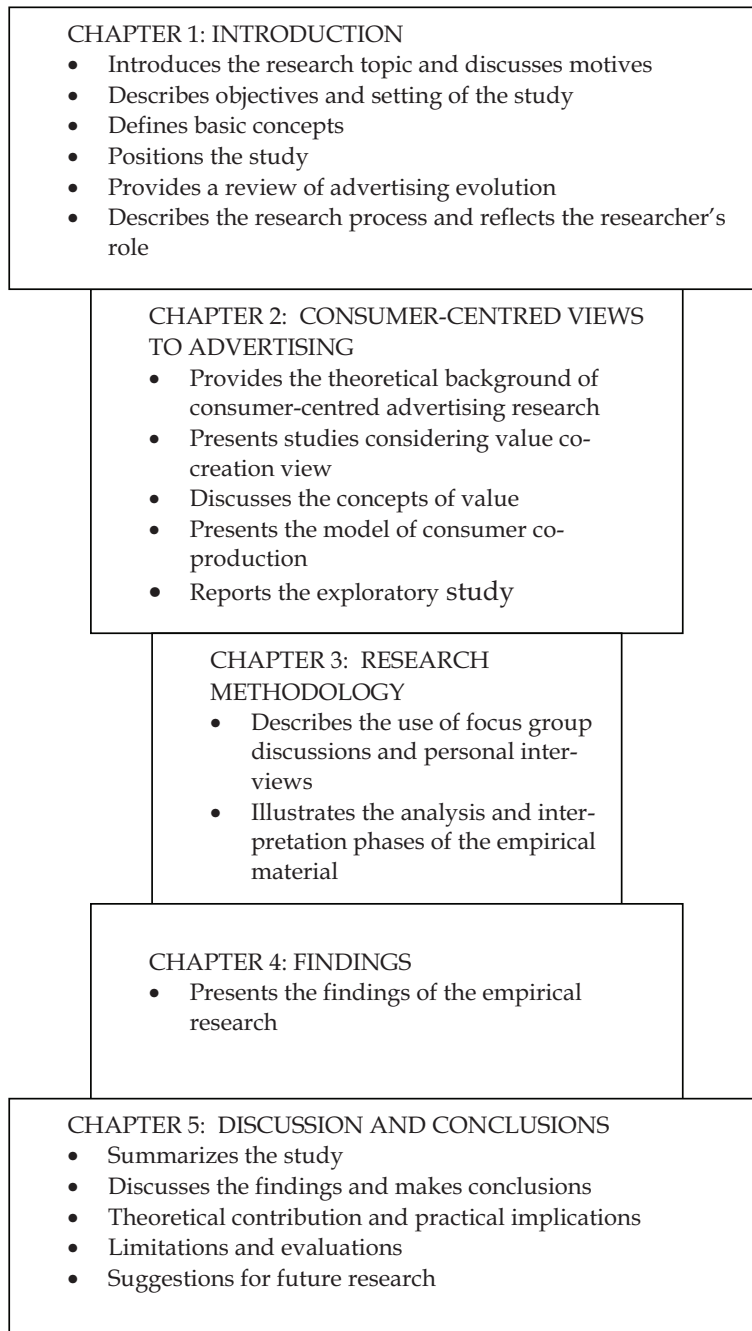


FIGURE 5 Summary of the contents and structure of the report.

2 CONSUMER-CENTRED VIEWS OF ADVERTISING

This chapter presents consumer-centred approaches and theories for the study of advertising. In chapter 1.1 the models of how advertising works were categorized in seven classes (Vakratsas & Ambler 1999) and the consumer-centred views belong to the hierarchy-free models of advertising effects. Actually, the views do not focus on measuring effects but on investigating the ways in which consumers read, interpret or use advertising. Since the focus is on models that assume no particular processing sequence, the examination of information processing models is excluded (see for instance Batra, Meyers & Aaker 1996; Clow & Baack 2001; Vakratsas & Ambler 1999). The information processing models were briefly introduced in chapter 1.1 and therefore they are not reviewed here.

In this review the consumer-centred approaches conceive consumers as actively involved in a communication process in two ways: first, as users of mass media, and second as readers of text. Four theories assuming these perspectives are presented below. In addition, examples of advertising studies applying the theories or other receiver-centred approaches are outlined and the main findings are summarized in Table 4.

As the fifth approach the value co-creation view is proposed aiming at going further towards how customers and manufacturers mutually create value. In advertising research this implies for instance how consumers exploit meanings of advertising to create value. Accordingly, models of co-production are discussed and examples of studies considering value co-creation are summarized in Table 5. The concept of value is an essential element in the research questions and various perspectives on value are reviewed. Finally, the empirical exploratory study and its key findings and contribution are presented.

2.1 Consumers as users of mass media

2.1.1 Uses and gratifications approach

The roots of the study of the uses and gratifications approach are in mass communications research and early research of media effects in the 1940s (Katz et al. 1973; Panula 1997; Ruggiero 2000). It focuses on individual use of the media and poses a key question “why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another, and what gratifications do they receive from it” (Ruggiero 2000, 29). One central notion is the need of individuals to be connected; people use mass communication to connect themselves with different kinds of others, for instance self, family or friends (Katz et al. 1973). Moreover, uses made and the satisfaction obtained are influenced by an individual’s social role and psychological predisposition (Katz et al. 1973, 165).

The uses and gratifications approach regards communication as transmission of messages (Fiske 1990) and there are five basic assumptions (Katz et al. 1974, 21). First, the audience is conceived as active and individuals have particular motives for media use. Second, an audience member initiates the linking of needs gratification and media choice. Although the term “media effects” suggests that media *does* something *to* audience, it is not assumed that there is straight-line effect of media content on audience members’ attitudes and behaviour. Thus audience members use information and the message is interpreted individually in spite of the sender’s intentions. Third, mass media constitute a resource on which audiences draw to satisfy various needs (Fiske 1990), and the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction. Fourth, individuals are conscious of their interests and motives and they are able to report them and finally, judgement of the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms. (Katz et al. 1974, 22).

This approach has been criticized for being, for instance, too individualistic, for too generalized conclusions, for lacking synthesized findings, and for the absence of clarity among concepts and for the lack of validity of self-reports (Ruggiero 2000, 12). The central concept of the activity of audience has also been argued out (Ruggiero 2000). It is suggested that audience activity is not an absolute concept but a variable one. Accordingly the term “active” suggests too rational and selective an audience, when instead different individuals tend to display different amounts and types of activity in different communication settings at different times in the communication process. (Panula 1997, 182-193; Ruggiero 2000, 8).

The uses and gratifications approach has been widely applied to advertising research. In the studies consumers are considered as an audience and advertising is parallel to mass media. Crosier (1983, contributed by May) suggested seven types of utilization of advertisements; however he proposes information processing theory as a promising conceptual framework for explaining the advertising transaction. Griswold and Moore (1989) studied the reading of adver-

tising in daily newspapers and found selective readers. Alwitt & Prabhaker (1992) applied the uses and gratifications approach to their study of attitudes toward TV commercials, proposing that attitudes are related to the functions advertisements serve for consumers. O'Donohue (1994) studied the experiences of young adults' advertising consumption and classified uses of advertising into six categories; Stafford and Stafford (1996) identified enjoyment as one motivation of viewers for avoiding TV commercials; Tsao & Sibley (2004) examined free papers as a source of advertising for readers and found the papers relevant and a convenient source of information; van Reijmersdal, Smit and Neijens (2008) studied the role of media context factors on brand placement.

2.1.2 Accommodation theory

Accommodation theory (Anderson & Meyer 1988), as well as social communication theory (Sigman 1987), is also based on communication research, and emphasizes communication as a social process and a social group – not an individual “sender” or “receiver” as a starting-point of analysis. According to these theories traditional stimulus-response models are not adequate because they ignore the social context of communication.

The accommodation theory offers a social action framework for investigating media effects. It emphasizes the role of audience members' interpretive processes and social context in shaping how media content is used. The individual is seen as a member of a social community, for instance friends, family or other social groups, and thus research should be focused on the community (Anderson & Meyer 1988, 310).

This theory has two basic assumptions. First, people are continuously making sense of meanings and this sense making is historically situated, i.e. it reflects a particular moment in time. Second, routine social actions and practices between self and others characterize human behaviour. (Anderson & Meyer 1988, 299.) The view of reality is constructionist and following that meanings are constructed in discourse; meanings are not pre-packaged and delivered by the media content. Thus media content such as advertisements are raw material (Buttle 1991) to be processed in routine social actions. To summarize, according to this theory advertising integrates into routine social everyday practices – it is embedded in social experiences – and those practices are also modified by advertising (Buttle 1991). This is the ongoing accommodation of media content in everyday life and, indeed, this is the effect of media (Anderson and Meyer 1988, 44). The theory does not assume unlimited interpretation of the ad content, but the limits are defined by the readers' interpretive resources, including the “moment” (Sigman 1987, 101) or socio-historical location, and conventional structural codes of ads (Buttle 1991, 103). In advertising research these theories are usually applied in parallel with other theories, for instance the uses and gratifications approach.

2.2 Consumers as readers of texts

2.2.1 Reader-response theory

Reader-response theory derives from literary theory and it focuses on readers during the reading process or reading experience, i.e. the interaction between a reader and a text. Texts are not analysed for their own sake. (Mailloux 1982, 20). In fact, this approach is not a single theory or model, but instead a movement under a term of reader-response criticism. This term is based on the work of critics who use the words reader, the reading process and response indicating the target of their investigation (Tompkins 1980, ix). In this approach communication process is seen as production and exchange of meanings (Fiske 1990). Reader-response criticism represents a variety of theoretical orientations, for instance phenomenology, subjectivism and structuralism. Moreover, both sociological categories, such as communities or collective conventions, and psychological categories of individuals are examined and discussed. Nevertheless, all critics assume that a text is not autonomous or completely separate from readers' creation. Reading is conceived as an interpretive process where meanings are created, not discovered. (Mailloux 1982, 20).

The critics emphasize different aspects of the interaction between a reader and a text. According to Iser (1980) the reader and the reading process constitute the source of all literary value. The readers' role is not instrumental, but he/she is identical with the text: "the reader comes together with text and imagination" (Iser 1980, 54). Fish (1980a) states that meaning is not extracted from literature, but it is an experience during the course of reading. He argues that the experience, as well as the production of the text, is constricted by the same literary and linguistic constraints and rules. Therefore, in one sense, the author creates the experience. Fish also developed a concept of interpretive communities (Fish 1980b, 182) which have an influence on individual member's perceptions and judgements. Holland (1980) also brings out the socio-cultural context of a reader. According to his identity theme "interpretation is a function of identity" (Holland 1980, 123). Readers approach literary texts the same way they approach their life experience and their identity has an impact on behaviour and textual interpretation. Holland however states that interpretation is also partly based on the actual words and content of text.

The reader-response - or consumer-response (Hirschman & Thompson 1997) - approach has been applied in advertising and consumer research. Scott (1994b) proposed this approach as a new way to study the link between advertising texts and consumer response. In these studies consumers are conceived as readers and advertisements, regardless of their visual nature, are considered as texts. Primarily the focus is on consumers and their reading experience. This theory has been used, for example, in understanding consumers' interpretations of advertising; Mick & Buhl (1992) and Parker (1998) examined the personal nature of advertising experiences; Zhou and Belk (2004) analyzed Chinese consumers' understanding of global and local television and print advertising.

They proposed that readers may have “extratextual” competences, such as knowledge of various narrative conventions and genres, which allow them to understand metaphorical texts (*ibid.*). Additionally, readers may associate these texts, codes and metaphors with their own social and historical contexts (Mick & Buhl 1992; Stern 1989). McQuarrie & Mick (1999) investigated the persuasive impact of visual style in advertisements and they pointed out the role of visual elements as rhetorical devices and the relevance of consumers’ cultural knowledge to the interpretation of advertisements. Ritson & Elliot (1999) contributed advertising research notably by presenting social uses of advertising. They proposed that advertising often forms the basis of various social interactions and influences the interactions of adolescents. In consequence, the social setting of the consumer alongside the textual setting of the ad expands the concept of advertising context.

2.2.2 Reception theory

Reception theory has its roots in the 1960s in West Germany and it is influenced by phenomenology and hermeneutics. The term reception is close to response, and both point to having an impact of the work on someone, but reception, however, can be more related to the reader (Holub 1984, xi). This theory has connections to reader-response criticism through Wolfgang Iser, who is one initiator of reception theory but regarded as reader-response critic as well. Both approaches share the same readers’ perspective on texts. Reception theory, however, is described as a “more cohesive, conscious and collective undertaking” (Holub 1984, xiii), while reader-response criticism stems from more loose and diverse combination of critics and writings.

In order to clarify how meaning is produced Iser (1978) highlights the reader’s activity in making mental images when reading and processing a text. These mental images are constructed consciously or unconsciously and the activity is called “passive synthesis” (Iser 1978, 135). This theory also assumes that a text is in a more manipulative position in relation to meaning production. In other words, compared to reader-response theory a reader is less free to interpret texts, and the author has more power to define the meaning.

In advertising studies for instance Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008) applied both reader-response and reception theory for comparing the interpretation of advertising texts between interpretive communities.

2.2.3 Hall’s reception studies

Reception studies is an umbrella term covering diverse branches of empirical audience research and it draws, among others, on literary theories (Panula 1997, 297). It has been said that Stuart Hall’s (1974) study is the foundation of reception studies (Ridell 1998, 442; Seppänen 2005, 192) and here I only deal with Hall’s study of the encoding and decoding of television messages. According to Hall (1974) messages are always encoded with “preferred readings” guiding the reader to the preferred meanings and aiming to close off other meanings. Mes-

sages, however, are polysemic by nature and the producer of the message is not able to ensure that the receiver will acquire the preferred meaning exactly in the same way in which it has been encoded. Denotative or literal “misreading” of a message represents only noise in the channel, but misreading at the connotative or contextual level instead has a societal basis. Therefore readings can be interpreted through “the structural conflicts, contradictions and negotiations of economic, political and cultural life” (Hall 1974, 32).

Hall presented four different positions - reception environments - from which to decode mass media messages. First, viewers operate with the dominant or hegemonic code when they interpret the message in the same manner as it has been encoded by the producer. Second, informed and “expert” audience operate with a professional code when they recognize that the message has been modified according to institutional principles and practices. Broadcasting professionals use their hegemony to encode significations and the preferred meaning is transmitted in a communicative process. Third, the negotiated code is a combination of adaptive and oppositional elements. Viewers are aware of and accept major elements of the dominant definition, but instead of the “global”, hegemonic interpretation, they reserve the right to make their own more “local” and modified interpretation. Finally, the viewer may operate with an oppositional code and determine to interpret the message in an opposite way to the dominant code. The denotative and connotative meanings may be accurately understood, but the message is interpreted in a different framework of reference.

Hall’s model is criticized for its starting-point that a dominant meaning encoded in messages always exists and, in addition, that people have too few alternatives for decoding messages (Seppänen 2005, 194). Consumers of media are conceived as mere receptors of an ideological system (Hirschman & Thompson 1997, 45). The model closes off the possibility to negotiate all meanings of the message – not only dominant or preferred. Viewers are able to create meanings independently and from their own basis. (Seppänen 2005, 194.)

2.3 Summarizing the previous approaches to consumer-centred advertising research

Four previous approaches and theories are summarized in table 3 according to three aspects: the focus of the approach; how the theory conceives the consumer; and the nature of the communication process.

All four approaches supplement the idea of the consumer as an active participant in a communication process, but they also have significant differences. The uses and gratifications approach emphasizes *transferred* meanings and an *individual* interpretation, while accommodation theory stresses *social* construction of meanings. The reader-response theory and reception theory also emphasize individual interpretation, but they assume that *both reader and author* are

producers of meanings and meanings are exchanged between them. These two theories are very alike, but the reader-response theory also takes into account the socio-cultural context of the consumer.

TABLE 3 Summary of four consumer-centred approaches.

Approach/ theory	Focus of the theory	Consumer	Nature of communication process
Uses and Gratifications	People draw on mass media to satisfy needs. People have particular motives for media use. Individual interpretation.	Individual audience member	Transmission of messages
Accommodation theory	Meanings are constructed in discourse. Media content is accommodated in everyday life. A social group is a starting point of analysis.	Member of social community or social group.	Social process
Reader- Response theory	Reader-text interaction. Meanings are reader's experiences during the reading. Interpretation results from reader's identity, socio-cultural context and actual content of text.	Individual reader (influenced by interpretive community)	Production and exchange of meanings
Reception theory	Reader-text interaction. (Compared to reader-response theory an author has more power and a text is more manipulative in meaning production.)	Individual reader	Production and exchange of meanings

Table 4 outlines examples of consumer-centred advertising studies and summarizes the main findings. The studies in the table have applied previously presented approaches as well as other theories. The table however only presents a sample of the studies and it is not an exhaustive summary.

The theories and the studies presented below provide *pre-understanding of the interaction between a consumer and an advertisement*. According to the studies consumers have assumed an independent or commanding role in the communication process and a few issues are emphasized. First, consumers' interpretation and meanings depend on the ad's content and context. The context includes several elements: the media environment; non-advertising forms and editorial content of media; the consumers' individual and socio-cultural struc-

tures; and a specific situation. In addition, consumers' experiences and interpretations of ads are shaped by intertextual references. This means that the consumers exploit and associate their knowledge related to other genres, for instance films, music or television programmes while interpreting the ads. Second, advertising provides pleasure for consumers and the consumers use ads for various marketing and non-marketing purposes. However advertising is often consumed separately from the product purchase or use. Finally, advertising may offer a basis for everyday social interactions because it is socially used as one form of popular culture and mass communication. The social use often means consuming advertising in its own right and independently from the promoted product.

TABLE 4 Examples of consumer-centred studies related to advertising.

Author(s)	Focus of the study/ Theoretical basis	Main findings/ conclusions
Alwitt & Prabhaker (1992)	Reasons for attitudes towards television advertising. Uses and gratifications Dimensions of attitudes	Attitudes are related to the functions advertisements serve for consumers.
Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver (2004)	To understand consumers' approaches in interpreting television perfume commercials.	Consumers recover intended meanings and generate a variety of responses to ads. Interpretation depends on context and individual, social and cultural structures.
Buttle (1991)	Review of previous research of advertising effects: how advertising is integrated into everyday social practices. Accommodation theory	Active audience manages its relationship with advertising and integrates ads into everyday social actions.
Boutlis (2000)	Integrated theory of postmodern advertising. Conceptual paper	Advertising as "appearance" is integrated into the "truth" and "substance". Consumers respond to ads on a "knowing" level.
Crosier (1983)	Utilization of advertising: people consume and use ads for their own purposes. Conceptual paper	Seven uses of advertising. Audiences are initiators of transaction. Information-processing theory is suggested for explaining the advertising transaction.
Dahlén & Edenius (2007)	How advertising context influence consumers' perceptions of the ad as advertising. Representation and categorization theory.	Advertising context affect reactions to the advertised message and it affects the identification/definition of the message.
Ducoffe (1995)	How consumers assess the value of advertising.	Advertising value as a representation of the perceived value of

(continues)

TABLE 4 (continues)

Author(s)	Focus of the study/ Theoretical basis	Main findings/ conclusions
	Four factors to account for the assessment of advertising value	advertising to consumers. Informativeness and entertainment are related to ad value.
Elliott & Wattanasuwan (1998)	Self-identity as a key determinant of postmodern consumption. Advertising as a source of symbolic meanings. Conceptual paper	Relationship between self-identity and social-identity, domains of self-symbolism and social-symbolism, process of mediated experience of advertising and lived experience of products.
Griswold & Moore (1989)	Is exposure to newspaper advertising linked to reading of other types of newspaper content? What factors are associated with frequency of exposure to specific types of advertising in the newspaper? Uses and gratifications	A pattern of audience segmentation for advertising content and other types of content. The newspaper readers are selective about what they read and the selectivity applies to advertising as well as to news, information and entertainment content.
Hirschman & Thompson (1997)	Consumers' relationships to non-advertising forms of mass media are an essential aspect of the perceived meanings they derive from ads. Grounded theory	Three interpretive strategies that consumers employed to form relationships with the mass media.
Kates & Shaw-Garlock (1999)	To understand and theorize advertising communication model and identify interpretation strategies. Consumption of women's magazines. Grounded theory	Advertising communication model as revised to an ad interpretation model.
McQuarrie & Mick (1999)	Interpretation of rhetorical figures in advertising. Synthesis of the strengths of the text-interpretive, experimental, and reader-response approaches.	Rhetorical figures can have two primary effects on consumer response: increased elaboration and a greater degree of pleasure. Visual elements can be structured as rhetorical devices. A sufficient stock of cultural knowledge is required to interpret the rhetorical structure assembled by the advertiser.
Mick & Buhl (1992)	Factors motivating and shaping advertising meanings and interpretations. Reader-response	A meaning-based model of advertising. Many actualized ad meanings are a function of consumers' salient life projects as conjoined by life themes.
Mitchell et al. (2007)	Social uses of TV advertising slogans and taglines.	Critical amount of exposure and consumer awareness is needed

(continues)

TABLE 4 (continues)

Author(s)	Focus of the study/ Theoretical basis	Main findings/ conclusions
	Social uses of advertising Word-of-mouth Advertising literacy	before social uses become reality. Consumers feel to be manipulators of ads. Advertising meanings consumed by the group were independent of promoted product.
O'Donohoe (1994)	Classification of advertising uses and gratifications.	Classification of marketing and non-marketing uses of advertising.
O'Donohoe (1997a; b)	Intertextuality shapes descriptions and experiences of ads.	Boundaries between advertising and other cultural genres are blurred. Ads shape and are shaped by other texts.
O'Donohoe (2001)	Ambivalence of consumers' attitudes towards advertising. Conceptual paper	Three sets of tensions in consumer attitudes.
Parker (1998)	How life experiences influence consumer's experiences of alcohol advertising and how alcohol-related myths are identified by consumers. Reader-response	Ad interpretations are a function of highly individual cognitions developed by consumers about themselves, alcohol and advertising during their lives.
Ritson & Elliot (1999)	Ethnographic study of the social uses of advertising. Reader-response	Social uses as a new phenomenon in consumer research. Advertising meanings are shown to possess social uses relating to textual experience, interpretation, evaluation, ritual use and metaphor.
Scott (1994a)	Analysis of previous consumer research of advertising images. Outline of an alternative view. Conceptual paper	A new theoretical framework for the study of images, in which advertising images are a sophisticated form of visual rhetoric.
Stafford & Stafford (1996)	To understand the motivations stimulating zipping and zapping behaviour. Uses and gratifications	Zippering and zapping are two different and distinct phenomena. Enjoyment is one motivation in engaging these types of mechanical commercial avoidance.
Tsao & Sibley (2004)	Readership of free community papers as a source of advertising information. Uses and gratifications	Free paper readers are active information seekers who could identify their needs and would use the medium to obtain advertising information. Free papers were regarded as a relevant and convenient information source providing information surveil-

(continues)

TABLE 4 (continues)

Author(s)	Focus of the study/ Theoretical basis	Main findings/ conclusions
		lance and product values.
van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit (2005)	Readers' reactions to mixtures of advertising and editorial content in magazines. Source credibility theory	Audience reactions were influenced by the perceived authority and informational value of the magazines. Intertwining of advertising and editorial content is promising format for advertisers and publishers.
van Reijmersdal, Smit & Neijens (2008)	Role of media factors in reactions to brand placements in a real-life setting. Uses and gratifications	Genre (special interest versus general interest), program evaluation, and the program's informational value positively affect brand memory, attitudes, and behaviour. The study shows the importance of context factors in audience responses to brand placement and shows the underlying mechanisms.
Yannopoulou & Elliott (2008)	Interpretation of print advertising. Distinguishing between open and closed text ads. Reader-response/reception theory Interpretive communities	There are meaningful differences in interpretation based on the social class and gender of the participants.
Zhou and Belk (2004)	Presence of global images and foreign appeals in advertising in a local Chinese culture. Reader-response	Two dialectic reactions to global advertising: one largely driven by the desire for global cosmopolitanism and status goods, the other motivated by more patriotic desire to invoke Chinese values.

As noted above the approaches and studies provide useful pre-understanding of the interaction between a consumer and advertising as well as the active role of the consumers. In spite of the activity and participation of consumers in the communication process the participation only involves active *interpretation* of the ad and *creation of meanings*. However the present study aims at deepening the understanding of the consumers' activity and participation in the interaction. To be specific, *this study aims at going beyond interpretation and meaning creation towards an understanding of mutual creation of value*. Importantly, meanings are significant components of value (Holt 2003; McAlexander et al. 2002; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b) and this study assumes that the consequences of consumer activity go *further* resulting in co-production of value in advertising. In addition, this study examines advertising as a *media product* equal to other media products and not as a part of the com-

munication process. For these reasons the previous approaches do not offer adequate concepts for investigating the *nature of the co-creation process and value*. In the next chapter the view of co-creation of will be discussed in detail.

2.4 Consumers as co-creators of value

The consumer-centred approaches emphasized consumers' active interpretation and meaning creation. This study aims at investigating further the consequences of activity towards an understanding of co-creation of value in advertising. In this chapter the value co-creation view is discussed and proposed as a novel perspective for investigating interaction between consumers and advertising. To be specific, here the co-creation of value is seen as a kind of interaction between consumers and advertising. *The novelty of the perspective is based on an observation that in advertising research there is lack of studies combining the research traditions of value co-creation with advertising.*

2.4.1 Justifying the perspective

The justification of the perspective in the field of advertising is based on several premises. First, contemporary consumers challenge advertisers' conventional thinking in many ways, resulting in the call for new points of view in advertising studies. Consumers have grown up in and so are used to living in an environment where advertising is ubiquitous. They express ambivalent attitudes towards advertising, stating that on one hand they enjoy advertising as a form of popular culture, but at the same time they get bored with its repetitiveness. Likewise they have built mechanisms to cope with the increasing amount of advertising, and being advertising literate they feel themselves resistant to advertising. (Nava 1997,46; O'Donohue 2001).

Second, new media have augmented advertisers' opportunities to customize their advertising and enabled the participation of the consumers in the co-creation process. The Internet offers consumers free access to social media facilitating peer-to-peer communication. New media may encourage consumers to be more active partners in a co-creation process and in addition, it affords opportunities for advertisers to target consumers resistant to conventional advertising (Austin et al. 2007).

Finally, advertising value – not the message – has increased its centrality (Aitken et al. 2008) and thus constructs are needed to investigate how the process of the co-creation of value occurs. This idea is also supported by consumer culture theory which focuses on empowerment of consumers (Arnould & Thompson 2005; 2007) and the new service-dominant logic of marketing (Vargo & Lusch 2004) which suggests deeper levels of interaction between consumers and producers (Aitken et al 2008, 290). To sum up, advertisers are interested in the effectiveness of their advertising. To be effective, advertising should invite

and encourage consumers to participate in mutual co-creation of value offering tempting ways to obtain value.

In this chapter the studies considering *co-creation* of value from the customers' view are discussed and after that the perspectives on *customer value* are presented.

2.4.2 Studies considering value co-creation view

This section considers studies where consumers are conceived as co-creators of value and it is organized as follows. First, the background to the perspective of the co-creation of value is introduced and examples of the papers contributing to that perspective are summarized. After that some opposing statements are identified and discussed. Then the concepts of value are examined and the studies considering value are summarized, describing various types of value. Finally, a model of consumer co-production and a conceptual model of co-creation are described and compared and the main elements of the models are summed up.

The traditional *value exchange view* has been an underlying dominant view in marketing research for several decades (Bagozzi 1975; Houston & Gassenheimer 1987). In the industrial era customers were seen as “destroyers” of the value which had been created for them by producers (Ramirez 1999, 49). Value was seen as sequentially added in a value chain. It realized through the transaction and it was equal to the price paid by customers (*ibid.*). Thus, the view emphasizes economic and product value and it considers advertising as a *realizer of exchange* from marketers to consumers. The consumers are conceived as buyers or selectors, and exchange is perceived as a key phenomenon for satisfying the buyer's need. The focus is on sellers and buyers, not on producers or consumers. (Sheth & Uslay 2007).

In recent decades, however, there has been growing interest in investigating mutual creation of value in marketing research. This emerging *value co-creation paradigm* has shifted the focus towards customers as value-creating initiatives (Firat et al. 1995; Normann & Ramirez 1993; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Ramirez 1999; Sheth & Uslay 2007; Vargo & Lusch 2004). The producers do not any more control the whole production process and generation of value, but they have to take into account the experience of consumption. This means that the *source of value no longer exists in the manufacturing industry alone, but it is also based on the involvement of consumers* (Hartley 2004, 131).

In table 5 examples of research regarding co-creation are summarized. In the early 1990s Normann and Ramirez (1993) introduced a fundamental understanding of value creation. According to them a company's goal was to mobilize customers to create their own value. Firat et al. (1995) proposed furthermore that postmodern consumers have become “customizing consumers”. They are willing to integrate into the production process implying that companies' offerings will become processes rather than finished products. Another essential article proposed the “new service-dominant logic” of marketing (hereafter SDL, Vargo & Lusch 2004) generating wide interest and discussion. SDL main-

tains that value is created by use, thereby proposing that a consumer participates in the value creation process via the consumption experience. This implies that production and consumption are not separate activities but one continuous whole where consumers are not merely receiving an outcome but engaged in creating the outcome (Etgar 2008). The foundational premises (FPs) of the SDL view have been clarified and the concepts refined, and various conceptual models have been developed, such as resource interaction (Arnould et al. 2006); consumer co-production (Etgar 2006; 2008); intensity of customer participation (Kalaighnam & Varadarajan 2006); customer participation in service recovery (Dong et al. 2008); and value creation (Payne et al. 2008). The view has also evoked many opposite viewpoints and later in this chapter some of them are highlighted and discussed.

To clarify the discussion it is necessary to elaborate the focal concepts. First, many investigators have focused on customer participation in production of *services* as a type of intangible products (see a review for instance in Bendapudi & Leone 2003). However, in the SDL view the singular term “service” does not refer to “the opposite of goods”, but instead to a *process of doing something for someone*, where goods are used as appliances in service provision (Lusch & Vargo 2006b, 282). There the concepts of value *creation* and value *co-creation* are diverse. In value creation there is a single dominant actor, for instance a producer, who creates value. Other actors, such as consumers, are enablers with whom value is exchanged. In value co-creation instead, all stakeholders are enabled to contribute to value creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b; Sheth & Usley 2007, 305-306). According to Lusch & Vargo (2006b) the concept of value co-creation consists of *two main components*. First, *co-production* involves the participation in the creation of the core offering and second, *consumption* (i.e. value-in-use) is the process through which consumer creates and determines value. Co-production precedes consumption and these two components are subordinate to co-creation of value.

In practice the value co-creation is dependent on the consumers’ efforts and engagement and it may occur in extended ways, such as co-design; co-promotion; co-maintenance or co-consumption (Sheth & Usley 2007, 305). This means that consumers are also encouraged to participate in actions that traditionally have been occupied by commercial actors (Xie et al. 2008, 111). Co-promotion is close to advertising and new media, and it may include for instance word-of-mouth; the consumers’ web logs regarding brands and consumption; the consumers’ news groups in the web; the consumers’ testimonies as editorial content in magazines; the consumers’ book reviews and recommendations on e-commerce companies’ web sites; or web sites devoted to brand communities or fan clubs. Co-creation may contribute interdependence between actors and it may thus build confidence in relationships (Sheth & Usley 2007) as a kind of value. To clarify, value co-creation however does not mean shifting activities to consumer self-service or only slight customization of products (*ibid.*; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b, 16). Importantly, Sheth & Usley (2007, 305) also point out that not all marketing implies co-creation. They sug-

gest that co-creation should be viewed as a continuum. At one end there is a pure transaction with an entirely passive consumer, while at the other there is a co-creation process in which most of the value is co-created. Thus, the consumers' participation in the value co-creation process varies by mode and intensity throughout the continuum.

TABLE 5 Summary of examples of studies considering value co-creation view.

Author(s)	Emphasis of the paper / Contribution to the value creation view
Arnould, Price & Malshe (2006)	A model of cultural resource view of consumers. The model assumes a consumer perspective, and its basic concepts are <u>consumers' operant and operand resources</u> , the co-creation of value in a <u>resource interaction process</u> and conditioning elements. The interaction between the firms' and the consumers' resources implies that both parties offer their resources to the value-creation process as resource integrators.
Bendapudi & Leone (2003)	Examine <u>psychological consequences</u> of customer participation in joint production suggesting that increased customer participation in co-production could have negative psychological consequences for customers. Two studies were conducted to investigate the effects of participation on customer satisfaction. Focus on customer co-production of goods and services.
Boyle (2007)	Develops a <u>five stage process model of brand co-creation</u> and identifies stages which are controlled either by the firm or the consumer. Company driven stages in the process are 1) new product development and 2) marketing communications. Consumer driven stages are 3) consumer interpretation, 4) purchase and consumption and 5) commitment.
Etgar (2008)	Develops a <u>model of consumer co-production process</u> presenting co-production as a dynamic process which includes five stages: 1) development of antecedent conditions, 2) development of motivations, 3) calculation of the co-production cost-benefits, 4) activation, and 5) generation of outputs, i.e. value, and evaluation of the results of the process. Co-production encompasses all co-operation formats between consumers and production partners. Consumers may participate in one or more of these stages.
Firat, Dholakia & Venkatesh (1995)	Considers marketing in the postmodern age suggesting that modern marketing is undergoing transformation to postmodern. Postmodern consumers are not driven by needs but they have needs which are driven by external forces. The consumers have become <u>"customizing consumers"</u> . Companies' offerings will become processes rather than finished products and the consumers will increasingly integrate into the production as producers. Conceptual paper.
Hartley (2004)	Suggests the <u>value chain of meanings</u> corresponding to the value chains in business. The value chain of meanings links a producer, a commodity and a consumer. In this chain the source of meanings has shifted down to the other end of the chain. Discusses the value

(continues)

TABLE 5 (continues)

Author(s)	Emphasis of the paper / Contribution to the value creation view
	chain of meanings correlated with historical periods: time and place, regime, knowledge, form and communicative politics.
Normann & Ramirez (1993)	<p>A company's goal is not to create value for customers, but to <u>mobilize customers to create their own value</u> from the company's various offerings. The company's offerings have value to the degree that customers can use them as inputs to leverage their own value creation. This means that companies do not profit from customers, but they profit from customers' value-creating activities. Value occurs in complex constellations, not in value chains. Value has become more dense, since more opportunities for value creation are packed into the company's offerings.</p> <p>Key assets for companies are 1) integration of knowledge and relationships and 2) a fit between company's competencies and the customers.</p> <p>Case examples of Danish pharmacy industry, IKEA and a French water supply business.</p>
Payne, Storbacka & Frow (2008)	<p>Develops a <u>conceptual framework for value creation</u> where roles of both a supplier and a customer creating value together are examined, though the <u>focus is on the supplier</u> in managing the value creation. Learning and knowledge are core competencies. Customer's emotional experiences in relationship are emphasized. Encounter processes are points of interaction between suppliers and consumers, facilitating value co-creation. Advertising is seen as one form of communication <u>encounter</u>, mediating the connections. The model is grounded in field-based research. Conceptual paper.</p>
Penaloza & Venkatesh (2006)	<p>Markets as a <u>social construction</u>. The value creation process involves exchange and use simultaneously or sequentially and it includes exchange and use of meanings and values. Consumers have to be re-centered in the contexts of their lives. Market is a social terrain that consumers construct in a continuous dialectical process with marketers towards their life projects and goals. Focus should be on social groups of consumers, marketers and firms, addressing international and cultural differences. Consumer subjectivity and agency should be incorporated.</p> <p>Conceptual paper.</p>
Pitt, Wattson, Berthon, Wynn & Zinkhan (2006)	<p>Corporate brands are examined from an <u>open source perspective</u> where power and control of brands are decentralized and heterarchical. Producers and consumers coalesce into "prosumers", both creating value. An analogy to the open source code in computer programming is applied.</p> <p>Typology of brand aspects that can be open or closed: multiple sources are physical, textual, meaning and experiential.</p>
Ramirez (1999)	<p>Presents historical roots of concepts of value; value co-production; customer's consumption; and services. Outlines the <u>value co-production framework</u>. Compares an industrial view of value production with co-productive view. Conceptual paper.</p>

(continues)

TABLE 5 (continues)

Author(s)	Emphasis of the paper / Contribution to the value creation view
Sheth & Uslay (2007)	<p>Discussion of AMA marketing definition and accordingly <u>limits of the exchange paradigm</u> and merits and implications of the <u>new value creation paradigm</u>. In the value co-creation view roles of both the marketers and consumers are broadened, since they are engaged in problem solving. All stakeholders, such as intermediaries, suppliers, investors, community or government are involved in the value creation view.</p> <p>Call for the theory of value co-creation.</p> <p>Conceptual paper.</p>
Vargo & Lusch (2004) Lusch & Vargo (2006b) Vargo & Lusch (2008)	<p>Initiative article of <u>new “service-dominant logic” of marketing</u> as opposed to traditional “goods-dominant logic” of marketing. Introduces eight foundational premises (FPs): 1) The application of specialized skill(s) and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange, 2) Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange, 3) Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision, 4) Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage, 5) All economies are services economies, 6) The customer is always a co-producer, 7) The enterprise can only make value propositions and 8) A service-centered view is customer-oriented and relational .</p> <p><u>They refine essential concepts</u> of SDL such as service; resource integrator; co-creation of value versus co-production; and the role of networks and interaction. Introduce SDL lexicon.</p> <p>Modifications and additions of ten foundational premises of SDL.</p>
Wikström (1996)	<p>Applies <u>co-production logic obtained in industrial markets to consumer markets</u>. Sequential value chains become compressed and value creating activities overlap, occur as simultaneous and interactive process.</p>

2.4.3 Critical remarks about SDL and summing-up

As noted earlier the SDL article (Vargo & Lusch 2004) is one milestone in value co-creation research, which advanced the development of concepts and models but also invoked mixed reactions and criticism by scholars of marketing. Some opposing views are thus discussed here. First, the *novelty* of SDL has been questioned. As Day (2004) pointed out, new logics do not emerge suddenly but develop gradually and are fed by “many tributaries”. For instance, in this case the tributaries consist of the development of services marketing, customer relationship management, networked markets, mass customization and interactivity. In addition, the extended concept of “service” is not conceived as a new insight since a large number of companies have offered customized solutions where goods are used as a part of service provision (*ibid.*). Moreover the content of

SDL is defined as an update from the earlier work of Boyd and Levy in the 1960s (Levy 2006, 60) in which the consumer's purposes of consumption were already viewed more symbolic than handling the goods themselves. Furthermore, Brown (2007) draws an analogy between SDL and brand revivals of retro-autos, such as the neo-Beetle or the Mini, implying that the old content is polished and disguised as novel.

Second, Brodie et al. (2006) suggest that there is not a *single* dominant logic in every period of time. Instead, they suggest a plurality of opportunities to adapt according to the firm's situation: either goods-centred or service-centred logic or both. Penaloza and Venkatesh (2006) also propose a combination where value is created both in exchange and use. Third, Schembri (2006) pays attention to the ontological contradictions. She maintains that the *underlying assumptions* of SDL are rational and similar to the traditional goods-dominant view. While SDL suggests marketing as a process of interacting with the customer, she highlights the customer's experience as a starting-point of effective marketing. Finally, criticism has also been directed towards: *inaccurate concepts* resulting in repeated *revision* of concepts (Achrol & Kotler 2006; Brown 2007, 294-295); the lack of a *systematic framework* and the overlooking of the concept of *customer value* (Holbrook 2006); and an excessive confidence in *consumers' willingness and ability* to engage in co-production (Achrol & Kotler 2006, 327).

To summarize, the previous examples of opposing views highlight the incompleteness of the SDL and the fact that it is work in progress. The call for novelty is justified, as well as demand for plural co-existence of logics and ontological consistency. However although the SDL does not consist of totally new and perfect concepts, it constitutes a new ensemble, providing a further step in the examination and understanding of value co-creation.

In this study the value co-creation view offers a novel and useful foundation for developing new understanding of interaction between consumers and advertising. The SDL however, does not constitute a specific frame of reference in this study but one cornerstone of the underlying view. Instead, here the "combination view" is assumed in which value exchange and value co-creation do not exclude each other (Brodie et al. 2006; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006). Value exchange thus is not completely replaced with value co-creation but value is created *both* in exchange *and* use in a process, simultaneously or sequentially (Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006). That statement assumes the co-existence of the traditional value exchange view and the value co-creation view. The process of interaction between marketers and consumers is socially constructed occurring prior to, during, and after the actual exchange and use. Importantly, in this process *meanings* are important components of value and for marketers meanings constitute a significant means to connect with consumers (*ibid.*).

In the present study this view provides a perspective to examine advertising as *experiential media products* (Falk 1997) to be consumed. Considering advertising as media products implies that interaction between the producer and the consumer is more like a marketing process than a communication process. Ad-

vertising is the producer's value proposition in a marketing process, in which the consumer is assumed to be an integral part and co-producer of value and meanings.

2.5 Co-production process as a component of co-creation

2.5.1 Comparison of two models of co-production

This chapter discusses and compares in detail two studies considering the co-creation view: the co-production process models of Etgar (2008) and Payne et al. (2008). Table 6 summarizes the salient points of the comparison. The co-creation process consists of co-production and consumption (value-in-use). This chapter focuses on the former concept and Chapter 2.6 discusses consumption of value. In addition to the models there are other studies investigating customer participation. One is the cost-function model of co-production (Etgar 2006), which presents a consumer-producer model and investigates managerial decision-making about consumers. It assumes that consumers behave as co-producers aiming at minimizing their costs, i.e. obtaining economic value. Because of the purely economic nature of this assumption, the model is inadequate for examining value co-creation here, since in this study non-utilitarian aspects of consumption are also emphasized. This study takes the experiential view of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Schmitt 1999; 2003) assuming that consumers increasingly seek and consume sensations and experiences. The other model is a conceptual model considering the intensity of customer participation (Kalaighnam & Varadarajan 2006). According to it the customer's intensity of participation is a function of characteristics of a product; the market and the customer; and a firm. It is enabled by macro environmental trends and development. This model does not offer adequate theoretical constructs to examine co-production in this study either, since it focuses only on intensity and not on value.

The models of Etgar (2008) and Payne et al. (2008) explore value co-creation in the context of SDL. The latter takes a perspective of a *supplier managing* the co-creation process, in which value co-creation occurs in the supplier-customer relationship. The process is longitudinal and dynamic by nature and includes interactive sets of experiences and activities performed by both parties. The framework consists of three main processes, which are customer and supplier processes and encounter processes between them. In the *customer side* the customer's experience of the relationship and customer learning are essential elements. In the *supplier side* relationship, experiences of co-creation are designed and facilitated by planning and offering opportunities for co-creation. The supplier's knowledge resource is based on organizational learning. The *encounter processes* between the parties include a series of transactions and other two-way interactions. Importantly, in this model advertising is seen as one form of communication encounters *mediating* the connection and *facilitating* co-

creation (Payne et al. 2008, 90). The model proposes tools such as mapping to identify and design encounter processes in customer relationships.

Etgar's (2008) model of the co-production process takes the *consumer perspective*. It presents co-production as a dynamic process including five stages: 1) development of antecedent conditions, 2) development of motivations, 3) evaluation of costs and benefits, 4) activated co-production and consumption and 5) evaluation of the results of the process. Consumption thus follows co-production. In compliance with the model, co-production is an explicit result of consumers' decision making reflecting their own preferences implying that consumers may participate in one or more of these stages. In addition, co-production compasses all co-operation formats between consumers and production partners, but co-production does not occur in every consumption situation. (*ibid.*) In Table 6 the main characters of both models are summarized. Payne et al. (2008) examines value co-creation in a *broader context* of supplier-customer relationship. This model does not concentrate on a specific co-production process, but management and facilitation of these processes as encounters in the course of the relationship. Etgar (2008) in contrast focuses more on stages of a *specific co-production process* from the consumer's perspective. The model nevertheless has a few limitations in relation to intangible media products. It assumes conscious decision-making whether to participate or not in co-production; it uses terms related to goods production (such as assembly or manufacturing) and it describes the process in distinct stages. In this study, however, it is assumed that consumers' decision-making could also be unconscious and the stages could occur simultaneously. In spite of its limitations the constructs of the model provide a basis for examining co-production of value from media products, e.g. advertisements. The remaining part of this chapter considers this model in more detail.

TABLE 6 Comparing two models of value co-creation (Etgar 2008; Payne et al. 2008).

	A model of the consumer co-production process (Etgar 2008)	A conceptual framework for value co-creation (Payne et al. 2008)
Perspective	Consumer participating in co-production process	Supplier managing the value creation processes
Emphasis	Customization of the consumption experience Individual co-production process	Supporting customer learning by managing encounter processes Relationship between supplier and customer
Preconditions facilitating co-creation	Economic Cultural Technological Consumer linked factors Product-linked factors Situational factors	Opportunities provided by Technological breakthroughs Changes in industrial logic Changes in customer preferences
Main components/ Nature	Five stages Dynamic process	Three main processes Interactive process Recursive process

(continues)

TABLE 6 (continues)

Customer's motivation for co-creation	Economic drives Psychological drives Social drives	Emotions Cognitive processes Experience of the relationship
Level of customer engagement in the process	Optional levels to choose: Initiating level Design Manufacturing Distribution Consumption	Complexity of customer learning: Remembering (attention) Internalization Proportioning

2.5.2 Stages of the consumer co-production process model

The model of consumer co-production (Etgar 2008) contains five stages (see Figure 6). The first stage encompasses macro environmental conditions including economic, cultural and technological issues, which are regarded here as facilitating the co-production process. As an *economic* precondition co-production seems to be more likely in mature Western markets where consumer culture encourages customization. As a *cultural* precondition in these economies consumption has shifted from products to experiences as major ways to satisfy needs (Etgar 2008). Consumers are also willing to be creative in generating personal satisfaction. This is consistent with the idea that value resides in *consumption experiences* but not in products themselves (Holbrook 2006). In the case of experiential media products, i.e. advertisements, *technological* preconditions can also contribute co-production in advertising. Technological changes may offer new devices enabling more dialogical communication and allow rapid and low cost interactions between a firm and a consumer.

Added to this the first stage contains consumer-, product- and situational-linked factors. *Consumer-linked factors* are related to individual consumers and their operant and operand resources¹³ (Arnould et al. 2006), which enable them to engage in co-production. In the case of advertising the consumer's emotions and energy (physical resources), specialized knowledge and skills (cultural resources) or membership of a consumer community (social resources) may have an influence on co-production. Time is a scarce but essential resource in which consumers invest in co-production. Consumers may also have various skills facilitating the co-production, such as expertise capacity, co-ordinative skills, dialogical capability and skills based on computer and electronic communications technology. *Product-linked factors* are related to the relevance of the advertised product, service or ideology, in other words how relevant a consumer

¹³ The consumer's operand resources are economic and tangible (e.g. income, real property, material) and they fall within the consumer's allocation as economic and material "power". Operant resources in turn are virtual by nature and they are divided into three categories. First, social operant resources consist of networks of relationships with traditional groups like families, and with emerging groups, like brand communities and subcultures. Second, cultural resources constitute specialized knowledge of cultural schemas, life expectancies, history and imagination. Finally, physical resources consist of the consumer's mental and physical endowments. Consumers vary in the type, quantity and quality of their resources. (Arnould et al. 2006).

finds an ad or the promoted item for herself. Not all ads or advertised items are equally relevant to consumers. In addition, although co-production refers to the customization, consumers usually have no need to customize powerful brands and brand personalities. Finally, *situational factors* are related to the advertiser's ability to facilitate co-production and co-operation. The consumer may find some ads dialogical and interactive, but others "monological" indicating one way communication (Ballantyne & Varey 2006, 338). As other facilitating conditions consumers expect trust, empathy and evidence of commitment. Related to media products this means appreciating the consumers' ability to make their own interpretations.

When engaging in co-production, the consumers aim at achieving preset goals which serve as motivational forces. In the case of advertising, the second stage constitutes an essential part of the co-production process. As a consequence of its persuasive nature, advertising is an often unwanted media product (Messaris 1997) implying that the decision to engage in co-production reflects the consumer's own preferences (Etgar 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b). The second stage includes three possible drives. First, *economic* drives refer to the cost rewards and cost reduction. Second, *psychological* drives refer to the act of participation, which may itself provide an experience of psychological benefits. These benefits are divided into intrinsic and extrinsic ones that serve as a motivational force (Holbrook 1996; 2006). Third, *social* drives are related to social benefits. Social drives may include seeking status and social esteem, or social contact values when joining consumer communities. The consumer's desire for control also acts as a social drive. On one hand it refers to the consumer's feeling of being able to dominate her own environment, on the other to her feeling of being able to determine the final outcome of the co-production.

In the third stage consumers *analyze* costs and benefits and make a decision either to move on to the co-production or else to ignore it. Economic costs include for instance the consumer's time, and non-economic costs may include psychological effort. In the fourth, *activation* stage, after moving on to the co-production, consumers have to choose a level in which they engage in the actual performance of co-production. There are several options to choose. For instance consumers might operate in an initiating phase as "script writers"; in a design phase; in a manufacturing phase constructing "virtual" outputs, such as writing weblogs or producing images or videos for broadcasting on the web; in a distribution phase controlling the media; or participate in the final consumption stage. *Value is an output* of this activation stage and the whole process of co-production ends up with an evaluation. In the final *evaluation* stage the consumer compares the goals with the value received. They may apply various methods for calculating whether the effort to participate was worthwhile. The process of co-production is followed by consumption constituting a part of value co-creation.

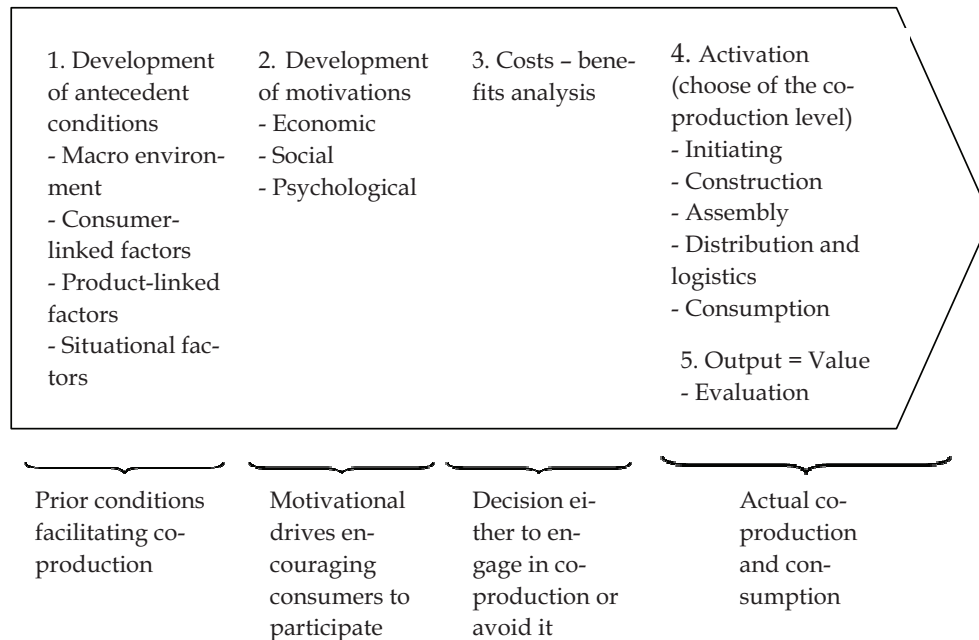


FIGURE 6 The consumer co-production process model as distinct stages. The illustration is based on the descriptive model of Etgar (2008).

2.6 Customer value as a component of co-creation

The concept of value is one essential element related to the purpose and research questions of this study. This chapter discusses consumption of value as the second component of co-creation. The basic definition of the value concept is determined earlier in Chapter 1.4.2. Various perspectives on value are presented and summed up in Table 7.

This study views value as the customers' *experience of co-creation and consumption*. The view thus emphasizes two items. First, the actual experience of co-creating is the basis of value for customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 8). Second, the usage of products or services per se is valuable for the customers, not only the purchased products. Accordingly, this study finds it more interesting to understand how consumers describe their value experiences of advertising than to evaluate whether value has been formed or to what extent it has been formed.

Economic value represents the predominant form of value in marketing research according to the traditional value exchange view. Economic value refers to consumers' willingness to pay a particular price to acquire a product deriving from utilities the product provides. However, economic value embodies

only one type of value and it does not fully capture the actual value perceived by consumers. People may for instance value things and intangibles which are not objects of economic exchange and thus cannot be purchased or sold (Richins 1994). The value hence is not based on material things, but for example experiences and emotions which cannot be priced in monetary terms (*ibid.*).

The co-creation view encourages extending the perspective on value into *other types* of value (Sheth & Uslay 2007). The view emphasizes a customer as the final arbiter of value and, accordingly, the *customer's perceptions and personal experiences of unique value* are under focus (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a; b). Table 7 summarizes some perspectives on value which can be distinguished by emphasizing: economic value or product utility (Bowman & Ambrosini 2000; Ducoffe 1995;1996; Ducoffe & Curlo 2000; Zeithaml 1988); both customers' perceptions and economic value (Norman & Ramirez 1993; Sheth & Uslay 2007; Woodruff 1997); customers' experiences or meanings (Babin et al. 1994; Ballantyne & Varey 2006; Holbrook 1996; 2006; Richins 1994); or value embedded in the customers' practices (Korkman 2006).

TABLE 7 Perspectives on value.

Author(s)	Perspective/ Types of value
Babin et al. (1994)	Consumers evaluated value of shopping along dimensions of <u>utilitarian and hedonic value</u> . The essential of the shopping value is <u>the complete shopping experience</u> , which is more than simply the shopped products. Expressions of pure enjoyment, excitement, captivation, escapism and spontaneity are aspects of hedonic value. Expressions of accomplishment or disappointment over the ability to complete the shopping task are aspects of utilitarian value. The measuring scale for assessing experiences is developed. Emphasis on customer's evaluation of his/her experience.
Ballantyne & Varey (2006)	<u>Value judgement is based on two parts</u> : exchange value means judging desirability and preference; value-in-use means judging the value of the product during consumption. Value is not embedded in things and the judgement of the value will change according to the needs of the evaluator. Emphasis on interaction and value co-creation.
Bowman & Ambrosini (2000)	Distinction between <u>use value</u> and <u>exchange value</u> : use value is perceived by the customer, it is the subjective valuation of an individual consumer. The consumer's perception is based on his/her needs and the usefulness of the offered product. Use value can be translated into monetary terms and it can be defined as the price the customer is prepared to pay for the product, i.e. total monetary value. Use value is equivalent to "total utility". Exchange value is realized when the product is sold and it refers to the amount the consumer pays for the perceived use value. Emphasis on managerial perspective.
Ducoffe (1995, 1996); Ducoffe	Advertising value is a "subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers"(p. 1). A model of advertising

(continues)

TABLE 7 (continues)

Author(s)	Perspective/ Types of value
and Curlo (2000)	value: a consumer's first assessment forms <u>expected advertising value</u> and if it is positive, advertising processing ends to <u>outcome advertising value</u> . Emphasis on advertising processing and effects.
Holbrook (1996; 2006)	Customer value is an <u>interactive relativistic preference experience</u> . Dimensions of value are 1) extrinsic versus intrinsic 2) self- versus other-oriented 3) active versus reactive. Typology of eight distinct customer values. Emphasis on customer's experience.
Korkman (2006)	Customer value is <u>embedded in the practices</u> . Value appears and could be improved in the system of practice, which is a dynamic collection of elements. Customer is one equal element in the system. Value is neither objective nor subjective, implying that the practice is not a process of creation but a systemic context of doing, where value is formed in the interaction while doing. Value is enhanced through service providers' interventions. Emphasis on customer value formation in practices in the context of service marketing and management.
Normann & Ramirez (1993)	Value occurs in <u>complex constellations</u> but not in sequential value chains where value is simply added. Value is <u>dense</u> by nature: a company's offerings include plenty of opportunities for value creation by customers. Emphasis on mutual co-production.
Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004a; 2004b)	<u>Basis of value is the customer's co-creation experience</u> which differentiates one firm from another. They see market as a forum where the firm and the consumer converge and interact. Value is co-created at multiple points of interaction. (2004a, 13). Emphasis on customer's experience.
Richins (1994)	A <u>possession's value</u> is based on its <u>meanings</u> for a consumer: what is the possession's communicative power and what role does it play in forming and reflecting the self. Distinction between value in use and economic value. Value in use refers to the extent to which the possession is unique to the owner and independent of exchange. Emphasis on consumers' perceptions and meanings.
Sheth & Uslay (2007)	<u>Multiple stakeholders</u> are involved in value creation. <u>Various types of value</u> : performance and personalization value (defined by users); value for money (defined by payers); value in disposal (recycling, refurbishing, sale of used equipment); value in information; value in possession. Emphasis on co-created value.
Woodruff (1997)	" <u>Customer value</u> is a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from uses that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations" (p. 142). Emphasis on customer value as a source of companies' competitive advantage.
Zeithaml (1988)	"Perceived value is the <u>consumer's overall assessment</u> of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (p. 42). Value involves trade-off between what customer receives and what sacrifices (for instance money, time, energy, effort) to acquire a product. Emphasis on product value.

In the remainder of this section two views of value are described and discussed. First, there is little research regarding *advertising value*, except for studies of Ducoffe (1995; 1996) and Ducoffe and Curlo (2000). Ducoffe (1995) defined advertising value as a “subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers”, stressing subjective measurement and usefulness of advertising. It is also analogous with the definition of product value (Zeithaml 1988), although the consumers’ costs for advertising are not emphasized. Costs for advertising are usually non-monetary, such as expending time and energy on interpreting advertising. Ducoffe (1995) suggests that the informativeness (what is said) and entertainment (how it is said) of advertising contribute significantly to advertising value, whereas irritation reduces experienced value. Ducoffe and Curlo (2000) introduced a model of advertising value and advertising processing. According to their model the consumer’s first assessment forms expected advertising value and, if positive, advertising processing results in the outcome of advertising value.

This value model is an interesting attempt to capture the concept of advertising value and develop a measurable instrument. It assumes advertisements to be valuable themselves and stresses *a content of ad* as an essential source of meanings and value. The studies hence do not take into account the consumer’s experience of the ad, but consider value as created by the advertiser and embedded in the content of the ad. In sum, in this model advertising value is equivalent to product value stressing exchange of value.

Second, Holbrook’s concept of value is based on the *customer’s experience of value* (1996; 2006). According to him customer value is an *experience* which is *interactive*, *relativistic* and *preferential* by nature and these features are applicable also when considering consumer value of customizing in advertising. First, *interactive* means that value is dependent on some object (an advertisement), but it only occurs with an involvement of someone who appreciates the ad. Second, *relativistic* means that utility is compared among the ads, value varies personally from one individual to another and value depends on the situation and evaluation context. In other words, consumers are extensively exposed to advertising, but they “choose” only the ads relevant to them. The same ad could be experienced as valuable in one situation, but of no value in another. Third, value refers to the *preference*, based on subjective evaluation, of the ad, i.e. the “chosen” ad is relevant or meaningful to the consumer. Finally, value resides in the consumption *experience* of the ad as a potential resource to a consumer (*ibid.*). To conclude, the nature of value is subjective.

There are three key dimensions in Holbrook’s value framework. First, value can be extrinsic or intrinsic. The *extrinsic* value can be defined as an experience where an advertisement is prized for its functional or utilitarian instrumentality in achieving the consumer’s practical purposes. Saving money, saving time or gaining desired information exemplify these kinds of purposes. The *intrinsic* value, instead, occurs when the experience of the ad is appreciated in its own right, for instance as “social capital” (O’Donohue 1994; Ritson & Elliott 1999). Advertising may be consumed independently from the promoted

product and with no relation to the advertiser's intentions. For instance, the ad may represent pure entertainment for the consumer.

The second dimension is denominated as self-oriented versus other-oriented. *Self-oriented* value emphasizes the individual's *own* reaction to the experience of the ad and what effect the experience has on *him/her*. The experience is prized for *his/her own* sake. Conversely, *other-oriented* value is appreciated for *some other's* sake, or for *their* reaction to the experience, or the effect the experience has on *them*. The others might be other people or some common good, for instance Nature.

Finally there is the dimension of active versus reactive. *Active* value requires mental or physical manipulation of an object (the advertisement), i.e. the *consumer does* something to an ad. In contrast, *reactive* value results from responding to an ad in some way, such as appreciating or apprehending it. In this case *the ad does* something to a consumer.

As a combination of these dimensions Holbrook (1996;2006) suggests eight types of value. They are described in Table 8 in which each value type is illustrated also with an example of customer value of advertising. What is important here is that any consumption experience can yield *many or even all types* of customer value, not only one of these value types (Holbrook 2006, 215). Furthermore, a given type of value is understandable only in relation to other value types, i.e. *when it is compared* with other value types.

TABLE 8 Typology of customer value (Holbrook 1996; 2006). Each type of value also includes an example of customer value of advertising.

	Extrinsic value	Intrinsic value
Value is self-oriented and active	EFFICIENCY Active involvement in an experience aiming at achieving some self-oriented purpose. Measurable outputs and inputs. Consumer saves money by deploying discount coupons while purchasing goods.	PLAY Actively enjoyed for its own sake. Leads to having fun. Consumer finds jokes or jingles of commercials entertaining or funny, but considers them isolated from the promoted product.
Value is self-oriented and reactive	EXCELLENCE Reactive counterpart to efficiency. An object is admired for its capacity to serve as the means to a self-oriented end in the performance of some function. Satisfaction; quality. Consumer finds a catalogue (e.g. IKEA catalogue) valuable, because it provides plenty of ideas for home decoration although she	AESTHETICS Reactive side of play. Self-oriented appreciation of some object where this experience is valued as an end of itself, for instance as a source of beauty. Fashion; product design; beauty. Consumer finds advertisements, for instance in a magazine as artistic or beautiful though she would not intend to buy those

(continues)

TABLE 8 (continues)

	Extrinsic value	Intrinsic value
	intends to buy only a few items.	advertised products.
Value is other-oriented and active	<p>STATUS The active use of one's own consumption behaviour aiming at achieving a favourable response from the others. Success; symbols; impression management.</p> <p>Consumer keeps a fashion weblog diary introducing her own clothes, purchase decisions and promoting her preferred brands.</p>	<p>ETHICS Pursuit of ethics aims at justice, virtue and/or morality sought for its own sake as an end of itself.</p> <p>Consumer finds a commercial illustrating activities or ideologies contradictory to her prevailing views. She may dissociate herself from the ad's reference groups. The ad is experienced as a means to reinforce and justify the consumer's own existing views and to clarify her own position.</p>
Value is other-oriented and reactive	<p>ESTEEM Reactive counterpart to status. May result from somewhat passive ownership of possessions appreciated as a means to building one's reputation with others. Conspicuous consumption; materialism.</p> <p>Consumer reads fashion weblogs of other consumers to keep up with fashion and she may write back comments to weblogs.</p>	<p>SPIRITUALITY A reactive counterpart to ethics entails an adoption, appreciation, admiration or adoration of the Other. Sacred consumption.</p> <p>Some commercials become famous as "cult" advertisements for instance among a particular community of young adults representing a shared way of thinking and reinforcing communal feelings.</p>

Here the value concept of this framework is applicable when considering consumer value of customizing advertising. The valued product or object refers to *any offering* by a producer (Holbrook 2006, 212) and advertisements as experiential media products (Falk 1997) represent intangible offerings, which are experienced by consumers. The value concept takes the consumer's perspective and accentuates the nature of the consumer's experience, not the trade-off between what is given and received. It focuses mainly on the consumer's meanings but also takes into account economic value and pays attention to the consumer's context and situation. These constructs provide a basis for understanding empirical material in customer value.

2.7 Summing up views of value and co-production in this study

In this study the model of consumer co-production and customer value provide the essential constructs to interpret the empirical material. This section describes and sums up the value concept of this study. It discusses the ontological and epistemological consistency of the constructs and summarizes the relations between them.

The model of consumer co-production (Etgar 2008) describes the assumed stages of the customization process. Value is assumed to emerge during the process as a desired output, but the model does not determine type of the value. Since this study takes the consumer view it is reasoned to consider value as the customers' *experience of co-creation and consumption* (Holbrook 1996; 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b). Meanings are in a significant role in visual consumption of media products. Contents of ads are made up of meanings and meanings constitute remarkable components of value in the process of exchange and consumption (Holt 2003; McAlexander et al. 2002; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a; b). Figure 7 illustrates the value concept of this study, bridging three aspects of value. First, the core is the experience of the co-creation occasion (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 8) constituting the basis of value. The experiential context or platform facilitates the experience (Carù & Cova 2007a; b). Second, advertising meanings are outcomes of the interpretation process. The process is shaped by specific contextual elements, such as the consumer's cultural context; socio-cultural resources; semantic context and advertising genre. (Arnould et al. 2006; Cook 2001,9; McCracken 1986; 1987; Ritson & Elliott 1999,260). Finally, the types of value include psychological, social and economic value (Holbrook 1996;2006).

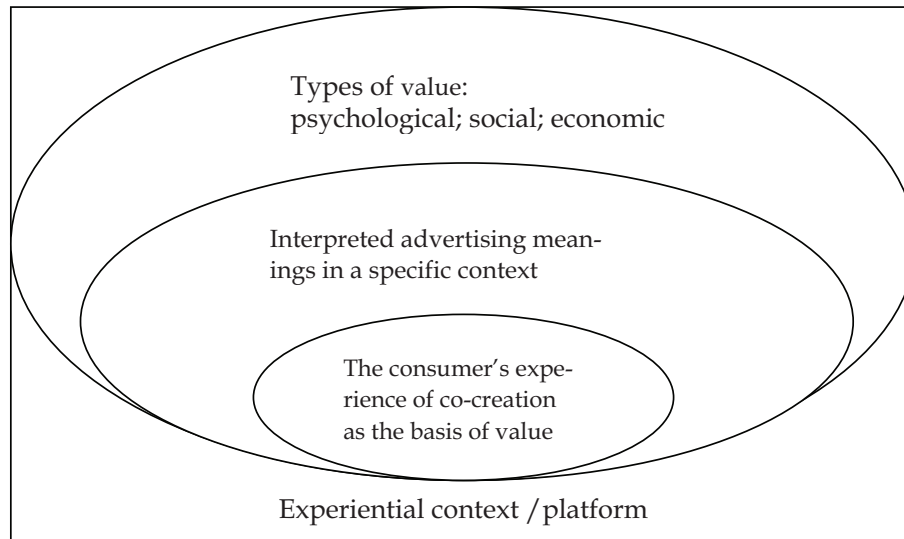


FIGURE 7 The value concept of this study bridges three aspects of value: the experience of co-creation as the basis (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 8), advertising meanings (Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Venkatesh et al. 2006) and types of customer value (Holbrook 1996; 2006).

Furthermore, although this study focuses on customization and co-creation activities, it does not exclude exchanged value. Value is assumed to be *both* exchanged *and* co-created (Brodie et al. 2006; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006). The “fusion view” is reasoned here because it allows more alternatives for consumers in the customization process. The pre-understanding of the phenomenon of co-creation is based on an exploratory study. The study resulted in preliminary ideas of co-creation of value in advertising and the research process is outlined in the Chapter 2.8.

The ontological and epistemological consistency of the theoretical constructs of co-production (Etgar 2008) and aspects of value (Holbrook 1996; 2006) also need to be discussed. The idea of co-creation covers both concepts, implying that value is created in the co-production process by several actors in the market. The consumer is one vital actor in the process. However there are different views on the consumer's position and role in the process. One view sees the active consumer as *a resource* to carry out certain actions, aiming at decreasing the costs of the manufacturer. This view highlights the suppliers' managerial perspective. Another view stresses that value co-creation does *not* implicate the consumers' increasing *self-service* or only *slight customization* of offerings (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b, 16; Sheth & Uslay 2007). Accordingly, its underlying idea is to get customers engaged in the relationship and increase mutuality. In both views the process results in value for the participants. The emerged value is neither subjective nor objective. This study assumes the latter view which aims at engaging consumers.

Customization however refers to tailoring to individual needs and the model of consumer co-production (Etgar 2008) illustrates the process from the individual's perspective. Since this study takes the consumer view of co-creation it investigates aspects of value from the same viewpoint. Although the customer value concept (Holbrook 1996; 2006) has phenomenological grounds it is not inconsistent with the constructivist and interpretivist assumptions¹⁴ of this study. Interpretivism actually accepts characteristics of both social constructivism and the phenomenological approach (Sayre 2001). It emphasizes social interaction as well as taking into account individual perceptions and distinctions. Although the empirical material here consists of both group discussions and personal interviews, the material is not interpreted at the individual level. The analysis and the interpretation highlight similarities between the consumers, exploring meanings common to many participants.

2.8 Empirical exploratory study of co-creation of value

2.8.1 Background of the exploratory study

In order to improve my pre-understanding of value co-creation and consumers' experiences of advertising I conducted an empirical exploratory study. The study was conducted in the early stage of my doctoral studies and it was a necessary phase for refining the perspective of this dissertation and forming a preliminary conception of the phenomenon. Besides, and equally important, it aimed at refining the research instruments and developing interviewing, reflection and writing skills (Janesick 2000).

The exploratory study examined consumers' own experiences of alcohol advertising. I was thus concerned with the subjective meanings that consumers attached to the advertisements and the consumers' lifestyles and consumption context in order to understand these meanings and interpretations. The research and findings are also reported in detail elsewhere (Aaltonen & Uusitalo 2007), but it is relevant to present the main findings of this study and its implications to the present study and its choices in this report as well.

This study took a consumer perspective on alcohol advertising and drew on consumer culture theoretics (Arnould & Thompson 2005; 2007) and especially the cultural resource view of the consumer (Arnould et al. 2006). The view assumes a consumer perspective, and its basic concepts are consumers' operant and operand resources, the co-creation of value, i.e. resource interaction process, and conditioning elements. The emphasis lay on the micro level: on the consumers' active uses of media and critical readings of codes. The following research questions were addressed: 1) What types of resources does alcohol advertising offer consumers? 2) How do consumers use alcohol advertising as a

¹⁴ The philosophical grounds of this study are discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.3.

resource? Here, an advertisement constitutes a resource for a consumer, as an outcome of the value co-creation process, for achieving her goals.

2.8.2 Methods and empirical material

The exploratory study used an interpretive approach which made it possible to describe, understand and interpret the meanings of the everyday lived world and experiences of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Kvale 1996). The empirical material was collected through personal interviews, written diaries and a short questionnaire on background questions. The guidelines of the phenomenological interview (Thompson et al. 1989) and the long interview (McCracken 1988) were adopted in the interviews. However, the interviews were not purely phenomenological, as the questionnaire was included and the interview was semi-structured relative to the advertisements. The diaries supplemented the interviews and the instructions for writing the diary were semi-structured applying a variant of the event-based type of design (Bolger et al. 2003). The participants were asked to write about their experiences of alcohol consumption and other lifestyle-related activities, interests and opinions (Holt 1997). In the questionnaire they were asked for instance to estimate their own alcohol consumption¹⁵ and to list their favourite brands of alcoholic beverages.

The empirical material was collected among Finnish consumers. Alcohol advertising had recently been a focus of public debate in Finland because of problems caused by increased alcohol consumption. Alcohol advertising is regulated and the latest legal constraints on the advertising of low-alcohol content drinks were imposed in 2007. Before conducting the interviews three major Finnish breweries and one importer of alcohol products were contacted in order to refine understanding of the industry as well as to select adequate TV commercials for research purposes. Four TV commercials and two posters were selected to represent the brand advertising of low-alcohol content drinks. The commercials were for "Baileys" cream liqueur, "Koff" beer, "Kurko" long drink and "Up cider" cider. The breweries also provided non-alcoholic beverages and promotional materials to be given to the participants as compensation for their time and effort.

Ten voluntary participants were purposively selected. They were recruited by electronic bulletin boards, directed email group messages and colleague networks. Four males and six females who used low-alcohol content drinks volunteered to participate in the study. Their ages ranged between 19 and 33 years. Nine of them were students and one was a working professional. However three students had also had a previous working career of several years. Table 9 presents the background information on the participants. Each participant was interviewed once, and in the case of two participants a second supplementary interview was conducted. The duration of the interviews ranged from 1 hour 10 minutes to 2 hours 5 minutes.

¹⁵ The questions regarding alcohol consumption were consistent with the World Health Organization's (WHO) Audit test (alcohol use disorders identification test)

The interview procedure consisted of two parts. First, four TV commercials and two posters for brands of drinks with low-alcohol content were viewed and discussed. The participant was asked to describe how he/she experienced the given commercial. The interviews were conversational in nature and the participants were given plenty of opportunity to talk. The second part of the interview focused on his/ her lifestyle and consumption habits; the covered themes were such as hobbies, work, social life, entertainment, sports, travel, family, food, fashion, home décor and religion.

TABLE 9 Description of the participants of the exploratory study.

Pseudonym	Age	Status	Main subject/ (previous) industry
Annie	19	student, university	chemistry
Brad	22	student, university	mathematical information technology
Carrie	25	student, university	computer science and information systems
Daniel	31	student, university	computer science and information systems
Eric	22	student, polytechnic	business and administration
Fred	23	student, polytechnic	cultural services/ (paper industry)
Gina	26	student, polytechnic	cultural services/ (ICT)
Hannah	22	student, polytechnic	catering
Iris	33	working professional	sociologist, local state administration
Janet	21	student, polytechnic	nursing/ (social and health services)

2.8.2.1 Analysis of the empirical material

The analysis aimed at constructing an understanding of the resources that are conveyed by the alcoholic beverage advertisements and how consumers use these resources. The hermeneutic method was applied in analysing the data. The purpose of hermeneutical interpretation is to “obtain a valid and common understanding of the meaning of a text” (Kvale 1996, 46). Language implicitly conveys a person’s cultural meanings and shared beliefs and it thus has a critical role in hermeneutic analysis (Arnold & Fischer 1994; Thompson et al. 1994). Although there are no specific guidelines to the hermeneutic method (Arnold & Fischer 1994), Thompson et al. (1994) and Thompson (1997) for instance, among others, present a hermeneutic framework for the study of consumer meaning.

The analysis consisted of the following phases: 1) Preparing the material 2) First impression and a general sense of the whole, 3) Perspectives and metaphors and 4) Identification of resources. At first, all the interviews were transcribed literally resulting in 146 single-spaced pages. In addition the material included 39 pages of diaries, 24 pages of notes, 10 questionnaires and four TV commercials and two posters, and the marketers’ resource definition for each ad. All the material was generated in Finnish. The texts were first analysed in Finnish and then the analysis was translated into English, aiming at maintaining the original meaning.

In the second phase, all the texts were read through several times to obtain a general view of each participant's material and the empirical material as a whole. Attention was paid, for instance, to the participants' general attitudes towards the commercials and to alcohol consumption; to the features typical of their consumption habits and current life situation; how the participants used language; to their willingness and ability to express themselves and to their advertising literacy (Ritson & Elliott 1995). This phase represented an intratext cycle (Thompson 1997), though interactive movements between different interviews were also made.

The third phase aimed to identify the participants' personal perspectives and to find a symbolic metaphor which would be sensitive to differences between the participants (Thompson et al. 1994). At this phase I acquainted myself with each text. I concentrated on the participant's stories and experiences and tried to look at the world from his/her viewpoint: what typifies his/her viewpoint; through what kinds of "lenses" (McCracken 1986) he/she views the world; and how he/she verbalizes it. During the reading process notes were taken and key words were written down. Consequently, several alternative expressions for the participant's perspective and symbolic metaphor emerged in each case. Finally, I wrote summaries on each participant's socio-cultural background on the basis of his/her lifestyle and consumption habits, interpreted the participant's meanings related to alcohol consumption and alcohol advertising, and labelled the participant's perspective and symbolic metaphor.

2.8.2.2 Example of Eric's perspective and metaphor

As an example, Eric's (22) perspective was referred to as "idealistic" and the metaphor was "superior person". This interpretation is based on his interview, diary and questionnaire. Eric seemed to have focused and optimistic attitude towards his life and future and he showed respect of traditions. He had very definite views about "good life", where everything is in order and consumption and particular brands have an important role. His future plans included, for instance an elegantly decorated house with his future wife and two children, and two Audi cars. He described how he and his wife would be "busy business people"; how they would take in an opera, theatre, art exhibitions and other culture events, and how they would have a glass of wine together at home after the children have fallen asleep. In his words, they wanted to be members of a "higher social class".

His everyday life was organized as well. He had a precise schedule of various physical exercises during his week; every Sunday he and his girlfriend had lunch with one or the others parents; and they had decided to travel abroad once a year aiming at obtaining experiences from different cultures. In order to be able to travel, eat at restaurants and consume more than a "standard" student, he has had a part-time job for years. His diary description of Valentine's Day exemplifies his way of thinking:

“Valentine’s Day was wonderful. I made the table reservation for us in the restaurant --- After the movie we dined on beefsteak and had also a glass of white wine in Valentine’s Day’s honour --- it was nice to celebrate and the wine notably brought in romantic and precious feeling ---”.

Eric also had clear “order” regarding alcohol consumption and he categorized people according to their preferred drinks. For instance, he classified beer as vulgar and cheap, and as a drink of “the common people”. Beer was also absolutely inappropriate for women. He preferred cider himself and conceived cider as “more expensive” and as a drink of better “groomed” people.

2.8.2.3 Identification of resources

The last phase aimed to explore the kinds of resources that the advertisements seemed to provide the participants with. The interpretations were informed by each participant’s given perspective and symbolic metaphor. On the basis of the resource view (Arnould et al. 2006), I assumed three alternatives: 1) a commercial may act as a marketer-supplied resource and as the marketer has intended, i.e. the commercial and the product generate valued consumption experiences for the consumer; or 2) a commercial acts as a resource for the consumer in some other way; or 3) a commercial represents no resource for the consumer.

This phase comprised two main cycles. During the first cycle I read through all the interview texts and highlighted words and sentences expressing the participants’ experiences regarding the viewed commercials. I paid attention to the subjective meanings which the commercial evoked and how they were expressed by the participant. Identifying subjective meanings helped me to specify qualities or types of resources. Subjective meanings can thus be seen as creators of the nature of the resource. Consequently, I was able to identify whether a given commercial represented a resource to the participant or not. I then proceeded to focus on the nature and the qualities of the perceived resources. I also compared the marketers’ resource definitions of the commercials with the participants’ own experiences. Importantly, the nature and qualities of the participants’ resources emerged from the texts and were described using the participants’ own terms and categories (Kvale 1983 *cited in* Thompson et al. 1989).

The second cycle aimed to revise and adjust my interpretations. The interviews and my own interpretations were read and compared once again, and some adjustments were made. Finally, after having analysed all of the participants’ interpretations of the four commercials, in total 40 cases, I had identified seven different ways in which the commercials seemed to represent a kind of resource to the participants. Examples of my interpretations are included in the next chapter.

2.8.3 Findings

The following types of resources emerged from the hermeneutic analysis: a meaningful experience; positioning oneself; the demonstration of developing

consumption habits; an entertaining moment; a common language; nostalgia; and supporting and developing professional expertise. In some cases the commercial provided no resource for the consumer, whereas some of the commercials represented various resources to one consumer. Table 10 summarizes the perspectives, metaphors and resources identified in relation to each participant and commercial.

TABLE 10 Summary of findings of the empirical exploratory study.

Commercial/ Participant (perspective and <i>metaphor</i>)	"Baileys" cream liqueur	"Koff" beer	"Kurko" long drink	"Upcider" cider
Annie (romantic/ control, <i>girls</i>)	Meaningful experience	Entertaining moment	Entertaining moment Demonstration of developing con- sumption habits	Positioning one- self
Brad (rejection, <i>neutral</i>)	No resource	No resource	No resource	No resource
Carrie (sensual enjoyment/ reflection, <i>good life</i>)	Meaningful experience	No resource	Entertaining moment	Positioning one- self
Daniel (elit- ist/sarcastic, <i>low-class people</i>)	Nostalgia	Positioning one- self Nostalgia	Positioning one- self	Entertaining moment Positioning one- self
Eric (idealistic, <i>superior person</i>)	Meaningful Experience	Positioning one- self	Positioning one- self Entertaining Moment	Entertaining moment
Fred (creative, <i>chill out</i>)	Meaningful experience Supporting and developing pro- fessional exper- tise	Supporting and developing pro- fessional exper- tise	Meaningful experience Supporting and developing pro- fessional exper- tise Common lan- guage	Supporting and developing professional expertise
Gina (distant/ external evalua- tor, <i>drama</i>)	Entertaining moment Meaningful experience	No resource	No resource	No resource
Hannah (un- complicated, <i>Finnish manhood</i>)	Entertaining moment	No resource	Entertaining moment	Entertaining moment

(continues)

TABLE 10 (continues)

Commercial/ Participant (perspective and metaphor)	"Baileys" cream liqueur	"Koff" beer	"Kurko" long drink	"Upcider" cider
Iris (hedonistic/ convenience, <i>quality time</i>)	Meaningful experience Nostalgia	Meaningful experience Demonstration of developing con- sumption habits	Positioning one- self	Entertaining moment (post- ers) Positioning one- self (commercial)
Janet (control- ling, <i>drunken- ness</i>)	No resource	Common lan- guage	Positioning one- self Common lan- guage	Positioning one- self

The descriptions below portray the essential nature of the resource types and each includes an example of a description of the interpretation and some representational citations.

Meaningful experience

Here, the consumer's experience of the advertisement seems to be highly consistent with the marketer's intentions. The commercial awakes favourable subjective meanings and it is experienced positively. In this case, the participants were involved with the advertised brand and they described enjoyable and satisfying experiences of consuming the given low-alcohol content drink. For six participants, the Baileys commercial seemed to convey a meaningful experience.

As an example, Carrie (25) has a perspective of "sensual enjoyment" but on the other hand she is reflective on the universal level. The metaphor is "the good life". She has well-defined goals and dreams regarding her future career after graduating. In her consumption she is selective and expresses individuality by using particular brands. Strong emotions such as "falling in love" with the preferred product illustrates the emotional context of her buying. She enjoys aesthetics, such as a beautifully decorated home and she is interested in handicrafts, cooking and baking. Carrie became independent at the age of 15, and she has also had a working career in her parents' business. Her guideline regarding alcoholic drinks is "as good you can get, but only a little". Her parents' problems with alcohol have made her carefully control her own drinking habits.

Carrie experienced the Baileys commercial as very pleasurable and it was consistent with her conceptions of the good life and drinking. People in the ad were satisfied and successful in their life, having caring friends and no stress. She experienced the illustrated party with an intimate group of friends as an ideal for her own life. While discussing the Baileys commercial, she also discussed her own relations to alcohol. Baileys as a product represented something enjoyable to her, almost at the level of champagne, something more occasional than habitual drinking:

"--- for me Baileys has always been the drink to be enjoyed at home and you have to drink it from a glass, particularly at home, before going out to a bar or spending evening party at home. --- Especially on situations when you don't want to be drunk, it is something you want to enjoy and you drink only one glass or at the most two during the evening. (.) --- In a way it (Baileys) is more (..) precious than, for instance cider (.) --- It is not worth wasting it by being too drunk, ((laughing)) because if you can't taste it, you can't appreciate it (.) and it is more like (.) you don't drink it in an ordinary day, but it is the drink of ((laughing)) "the better day"."

Positioning oneself

In this case the advertisement illustrates activities, ideologies or models, which are distinctive or contradictory to the consumers' prevailing views. Consumers do not accept these views, but disprove them, and argue for their own views. The advertisement enables the consumers to define their own position in relation to the product (drinks with low-alcohol content), users of the product, drinking habits or situations presented in the commercial. Consumers may, for instance, argue against or dissociate themselves from reference groups, criticize the product category, or consider the story of the commercial immoral. Therefore the advertisement seems to serve as a means to reinforce and justify the consumer's own existing views and to clarify his/her own position through a negation. The Koff, Kurko and Upcider commercials appeared to act as a positioning resource.

Daniel's (31) perspective is labelled "elitist and sarcastic" and his metaphor is "low class people". Daniel aims to enjoy his life. He was talkative, frank and expressed himself in a rather provocative way by criticizing Finnish beverages of low-alcohol content and Finnish restaurant culture and commercials in general, while bringing out his expertise and more sophisticated taste regarding alcoholic beverages. In the questionnaire he described his beer preferences in a very detailed manner. In his diary and second interview he also highlighted his liberal attitude towards social life. He had lots of friends and acquaintances and dated several girlfriends.

In his consumption habits he emphasized products of high and long-lasting quality. On one hand he was very economical and deployed special offers of food; on the other hand he bought expensive quality beers for instance, and delicacies to enjoy. His attitudes towards Finnish low-alcohol content beverages are shown in his experiences of the Kurko commercial. He strongly dissociates himself from the "redneck" men in the ad, from this "miserable" product (Kurko long drink) and from the situation illustrated in the ad. From his critical and intellectual viewpoint the men drinking this "stuff" do not represent his reference group. They bluster and are masculine in a too traditional way.

"--- well, that (Kurko commercial) induced quite repugnant feelings --- It tastes like the same stuff that my "trashy" friends made when we were young, it even looks the same as if there is no colour added --- a kind of stuff including yeast, sugar and essence (.) rather yucky --- thi's not my thing, maybe I'm not punk-spirited enough to tipple this stuff, but honestly, it would be cheaper for those people if they would dis-

til their stuff themselves, and they wouldn't notice the difference between the tastes -

 "--- when I was younger I was familiar with people like them --- probably unemployed, probably living off their poor retired mothers, and their only hobby is drinking those kinds of expensive stuff at their mothers' expense--- " (original emphasis)

Demonstration of developing consumption habits (cultural changes)

This type of resource implies that the advertisement manifests cultural changes in conventional consumption habits. Advertising may either reinforce the consumers' existing insight into the changes, or advertising may encourage the consumer to become aware of novel trends. Importantly, consumers are the initiators and they are well disposed towards the cultural changes portrayed in the advertisement. In our study two of the commercials seem to be deployed as a demonstration of cultural changes.

Iris's (33) perspective is "hedonism and convenience" and these are also characteristic of her consumption habits and life style. Her metaphor is "quality time". She enjoys low-alcohol content drinks quite often but small amounts in a controlled way. She is well educated, married without children and has a good job. Travelling, dining good food and drinking in restaurants in a sophisticated way, branded classic clothes and quality cosmetics represent investments for her well-being and life style. Relationships with friends, economic independence and equality between men and women are important for her and these themes come up in her interview and diary.

Iris reflects on and analyzes experiences of advertisements and she is able to express herself using rich language. Although some commercials clearly irritate her, she does not want to judge or attack in her comments. In the questionnaire Iris emphasizes beer as one of her favourite drinks. For Iris the Koff beer commercial represents a theme of equality between women and men and this ad demonstrates acceptance of women's consumption habits of low alcohol content drinks. (The same ad, interestingly, was regarded as a sexual exploitation of women by another female participant.) Women in this ad are conceived as beautiful and independent, enjoying their quality time. They do not need to think if it is acceptable or feminine enough to sip at canned beer.

" --- I think this (Koff commercial) has a rather fresh approach --- a woman doesn't always need to hold a glass of wine in her hand, but it is equal for a woman to drink what she prefers --- I feel it is important that women also enter this masculine territory." (original emphasis).

Entertaining moment

In this case the advertisements convey enjoyment and have entertaining power. The advertisement is seen as pure performance, an enjoyable story or even a joke, which is consumed independently from the advertised product. The pleasure derived could be based for instance on jingles, slogans or visual elements of the ad. The brand or the product may not be relevant to the consumer.

Consequently, the consumers may not remember the advertised brand after viewing the commercial.

Hannah's (22) perspective is "uncomplicated" and her metaphor is "Finnish manhood". She was rather straight and open. In the questionnaire and diary she described her heavy alcohol consumption, and she seemed to be quite tolerant of alcohol. While her father's alcoholism and death few years ago were important events in her life, alcohol serves as a means to relax, but it did not seem to cause her problems. In her diary she notes that "now it is the time for drinking and celebrating, but after having kids drinking and celebrating ends". Home represents an important place to her and cooking and baking are her favourites. She prefers mail-order when buying especially cosmetics and clothes.

Her experiences of commercials seemed to remain rather shallow. She preferred ads with realistic type stories and straight selling proposals which are concrete enough. Hannah experienced most commercials as entertaining although the products seemed to be irrelevant to her. She regarded the men in the Kurko long drink commercial as humorous representatives of real and ordinary "Finnish masculinity". The ad did not provoke her to become angry at their masculine togetherness where women would be outsiders, or at their "retrosexual" outward appearance. She enjoyed the jingle of the ad and she laughed spontaneously while watching it.

--- "Finnish men are really, I mean really aptly illustrated here (..) Sofa athletics. --- This commercial is the tops, I'd say that Finnish men are pictured here as real and true as they really are (.) FELLOWS, SOFA (.) and long drink. --- "This is funny, authentic and somehow marvellous...it's so humorous..."

Common language

In the case of the common language resource an individual element such as the music, brand name or slogan is disconnected from the commercial and used for the consumers' own or the community's purposes. This resource seems to reinforce togetherness and fellowship. The advertisement acts as social adhesive and thus as a social resource. The resource is not necessarily connected with consumption of the product. The advertisement provides a shared language, which is valid, however, only during a limited time. Thus, this common language is not permanent, but instead, gives way to a new language as new commercials appear.

Janet (21) has a perspective called "controlling" and her metaphor is "drunkenness". She regarded alcohol consumption with suspicion to the point of negatively, and she herself consumed low-alcohol content drinks only rarely and in very small amounts. Her biological mother was an alcoholic and she had grown up in a foster family. In her interview drinking and drunk people were discussed and at the same time her critical attitude towards alcohol was highlighted.

She had lots of friends and used to be the driver while they were celebrating, and they constituted a compact community. She was very sporty, engaging in a variety of different sporting activities. In her own words she wants to

“burn off energy”. She did not accept that “light” alcoholic drinks are truly ‘light’. Cooking and baking for others and handicrafts were also her interests.

Janet perceived nuances in commercials. She wondered, for instance, what people meant when they had a particular expression or laughed; she wondered if people were drunk in the ad; and what the empty fridge signified. She did not drink beer at all, but the taglines of the Koff beer commercial had been disconnected by her and her community and adapted to be used as “the inside joke”. Using the taglines as a common language in particular situations connect the members of a group. In Janet’s case the use of these taglines also highlights the contrariness of her alcohol consumption habits.

“...with my friends we imitate these lines ...while sitting for instance in the snow on the ski slope, and when another friend coming along, we shout at him (the lines)...and while I’m cleaning the toilet at home, and my mother comes to watch me, I will say to her (the lines)...”

Nostalgia

Sometimes advertisements create positive nostalgic experiences for consumers. These experiences may be related to the advertised product, or the nostalgic experiences may emerge independently. These advertisements are not merely entertaining, but they also convey personal meanings to the consumer.

Daniel was introduced above. His perspective is elitist/sarcastic and his metaphor is low class people. He brought out his expertise regarding beers and did not value Finnish “basic lager beers” very highly. Accordingly, he experienced the Koff beer commercial negatively and dissociated himself from the product and also criticized in a detailed way the preferred “bar feeling”, but in the same time the setting in the ad evoked sunny and pleasant memories, nostalgic visions and familiarity with summers of childhood.

“ --- this sunny Finnish countryside, it evokes very pleasant associations, the atmosphere was warm and in those circumstances, er (..) maybe a cold Koff beer would not be bad at all. --- When I was a child I spent a great many summers with my grandparents, and there was a similar kind of red shelter, but there weren’t any girls sipping beer in those days, but that landscape reminded me of it, in a positive kind of way. Maybe it’s regionalism or something, a yen for the old days.”

Supporting and developing professional expertise

This type of resource emerged in the interview with one participant, Fred, whose hobbies, studies and perspective could be delineated as “creative”. His metaphor is labelled as “chill out”. Fred (23) has just begun to study cultural services and he has a previous career in the paper industry. Fred is active in local politics and has many positions of trust. Acting in a student theatre is also one of his interests. According to his questionnaire and diary his alcohol consumption is quite heavy but it seems to be an ordinary part of student life. Fred’s working career has enabled him to spend money on home electronics, clothes and travelling more than a “standard” student would have.

The commercials were viewed as a technical performance, i.e., Fred actually considered himself more as a creative professional than a consumer. This came up especially regarding those ads which promoted a product irrelevant to him. He showed he was familiar with the professional terms and language used in the advertising industry when he for instance analyzed and evaluated the dramatization of the story, the cast, the characters and acting. According to the questionnaire Kurko Long Drink was his favourite drink and this particular ad represented also a meaningful experience for him.

“ --- series of events went on all the time, and basically, they didn’t happen in one scene. The others (commercials) did, in the Koff commercial they are located in that one particular scene, and in the Kurko commercial they remain in one certain scene ---” (Upcider), “ --- a simple production --- it is just shot with only a couple of cameras ---” (Kurko), “--- they have constituted a well-defined group. One is the boss, who is talking...there is a clear hierarchy between them...those two (girls) just support her (the boss)” (Koff).

No resource

In the case of no resource the commercial seems to be insignificant to the consumer or the consumer cannot make sense of it. Such commercials may be regarded negatively; their messages may be rejected or their meaning may be downplayed. In our study each of the four commercials was interpreted as no resource in some cases.

Brad’s (22) perspective was labelled as “rejection” and his metaphor was “neutral”. In his interview and questionnaire it came up that alcoholic drinks and brands seemed to be rather irrelevant products to him. His diary was also short but he did write about the situations and events when consuming alcoholic drinks. He also criticised consumption and commercialism, as if signalling that products and brands do not have any special role in his life. He stressed for instance that he did not own a television and he bought products only when he had a well-defined need. His way of expressing himself was very laconic to the extent that one could say he was quite uncommunicative.

“ --- I see nothing in these commercials, but “again some kind of product named something” --- I’m not guided by advertisements at all --- In my opinion it’s (about the Kurko commercial) just a drink with a name (Kurko), and nothing more.”

2.8.4 Discussion and conclusions

This discussion also includes conclusions related to this empirical material and published in a separate conceptual conference paper (Aaltonen 2008). First the findings are discussed in the light of co-creation of *meanings* and then preliminary ideas of co-creation of *value* in advertising are considered.

Co-creation of meanings

The exploratory study constituted the groundwork for understanding how advertising meanings are co-created and in general, the *findings seemed to be rather consistent with previous advertising research regarding active audiences*. The participants interpreted commercials and created subjective meanings through their own lifestyles and consumption habits. In other words, they discussed their own relationships to alcohol and consumption while discussing the advertisements. The study aimed at answering two questions: “What types of resources does alcohol advertising offer consumers?” and “How do consumers use alcohol advertising as a resource?” The advertisements seemed to constitute various potential resources for consumers and the nature of the resource was shaped by subjective meanings and interpretations by the consumer in relation both to the given advertisement and the consumer’s socio-cultural context.

A single advertisement could offer several types of resources to the same consumer, while different consumers obtained different resources from the same advertisement. The study also showed the twofold use of ads: while consumers deploy the advertising resources intended by the marketers, they also used the advertisements independently, i.e. for their own purposes.

The type of resource called “meaningful experience” suggested that the consumer deployed the ad in the way intended by the marketer. This type of resource could emerge where mediated and lived experiences (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998) were interconnected. In this case, the consumers’ mediated experiences of the ad were consistent with their lived experiences of the given brand. Actually, it could be proposed that the positive lived experiences support the mediated experiences and the marketer’s embedded intentions. O’Donohue (1994) has classified several marketing uses of advertising close to “meaningful experience”.

The other types of resources were mainly connected to the mediated experiences of the advertisement. These resources were deployed independently of the product and for the consumer’s own purposes. “Positioning oneself” constituted an ambiguous resource. While the consumer was critical of the advertisement and sought to clarify his/her own position by dissociating him/herself from the proposed way of thinking, the same consumer could at the same time find the advertisement entertaining. “Positioning oneself” differs from O’Donohue’s (1994) category of self-affirmation, which emphasizes a positive association with the ad, but it is quite similar to Hall’s (1974) idea of oppositional reading. The resource’s “entertaining moment”, the “demonstration of developing consumption habits”, the “common language” and “nostalgia” are also consistent with previous research findings. O’Donohue (1994), for instance, categorized independent non-marketing uses of advertising, such as enjoyment, familiarity and social interaction. Mitchell et al. (2007) and Ritson & Elliott (1999) also noted uses in a ritual manner and emphasized the social use of advertising.

The participants also seemed to be advertising literate. They discussed the nature of advertising itself and were familiar with advertising strategies, styles

and terminology (O'Donohue 1997a; 2000). Thus it seems that consumers increasingly seek to understand the interests and practices of advertisers (Leiss et al. 2005). One of the resources that emerged, "supporting and developing professional expertise", in fact highlighted this issue.

Finally, in some cases the advertisements represented "no resource" to the consumers. This can hardly be considered to be surprising, given that advertising has become an integral part of everyday life and consumers have acquired the ability to filter, resist and tune out commercial messages (Hackley 2005; Leiss et al. 2005). The experiences of some participants also reflected "the myth of personal immunity" (Pollay 1986); they conceived themselves as immune to persuasion and regarded advertisements as trivial.

Preliminary ideas of co-creation of value

The above-discussed findings emphasize more the co-creation of meanings than the co-creation of value in advertising. Meanings, however, are remarkable components of value in a process of value co-creation and exchange (Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006). In order to advance my understanding of value I applied Holbrook's (1996; 2006) concept of customer value to describe the value in advertising. As a result I proposed a tentative framework to distinguish consumers' advertising experiences from the perspective of value co-creation and exchange (Aaltonen 2008). In the framework, advertising resources are classified according to two essential questions: "How willing to participate, and how active in participating, is a consumer in the co-creation process?" and "What kinds of value does an advertisement represent to a consumer?" This tentative framework is depicted in Table 11, where each of the four boxes represents a particular type of resource.

The box "Resource of benefits and efficiency" at bottom left represents exchange of value. Ads are experienced as resources that are useful for practical purposes. The consumer is responsive and the ad may provide useful information and save the consumer's money or time (Ducoffe 1995; O'Donohue 1994).

In the box at the bottom right, "Resource of reinforcement", the active consumer is willing to create subjective meanings and therefore value is only partially exchanged and to some extent co-created. Ads serve as a resource to strengthen or reinforce personal favourable experiences, for instance of promoted brands or novel trends portrayed in the ads (Aaltonen & Uusitalo 2007; O'Donohue 1994). The consumer's personal experience of the ad is quite consistent however with the advertiser's intentions. Accordingly, this type of resource may be strongly connected to the advertised product.

In the box at the top left, "Resource of entertainment and aesthetics", consumers respond to ads and they may experience the ad as entertaining, pleasurable, fun or purely beautiful for its own sake (Aaltonen & Uusitalo 2007; Ducoffe 1995; Mitchell et al. 2007; O'Donohue 1994; Ritson & Elliott 1999). Here, the value is partially co-created and to some extent exchanged. Importantly, the ad is usually consumed independently of the promoted product.

“Resource of reflection” top right represents a situation where the final value is co-created by an active consumer who may use an ad as a means to define his/ her own position in relation to the preferred ideology, model or product (Aaltonen & Uusitalo 2007; Hall 1974; O’Donohue 1994). An active consumer mentally manipulates ads, which serve as resources to reflect on and become conscious of, for instance the consumer’s prevailing ideologies, own self-concept or ethical thoughts and principles. This type of resource could also be opposite to the advertiser’s intentions.

This model was an attempt to examine the co-creation and exchange of value in advertising and it was one phase enhancing my pre-understanding of the phenomenon. It stresses consumers’ own experiences of ads and outlines four types of resources. It seems that the more value is co-created, the more independently advertisements are consumed as a resource. In contrast, value exchange occurs more where ads are experienced as a resource in a way the advertiser has intended. However the model does not offer adequate constructs for investigating the co-production process.

TABLE 11 The tentative framework of advertising experiences as consumers’ resources.

	Reactive consumer	Active consumer
Intrinsic value	RESOURCE OF ENTERTAINMENT AND AESTHETICS E.g. social uses, enjoyment, fun, beauty Value is (partially) co-created	RESOURCE OF REFLECTION E.g. consciousness, positioning self-concept, ethics Value is co-created
Extrinsic value	RESOURCE OF BENEFITS AND EFFICIENCY E.g. discounts, information, saving time Value is exchanged	RESOURCE OF REINFORCEMENT E.g. strengthening personal experiences, loyalty Value is (partially) exchanged

The main limitations of this exploratory study are the small sample, the context of the interview situation and the objectivity of the interpretation. First, the small number of participants is justified on the grounds that this study aimed at building a pre-understanding of the phenomenon of the co-creation and exchange of value in advertising. The participants varied in their ability and willingness to express their experiences, but almost all were able to generate rich descriptions. Second, the interview situation was not equal to natural advertising exposure (Cook 2001,4; Ritson & Elliott 1999, 273), since the commercials were projected on the wall and viewed at least twice. This may have been intrusive and influenced the participants’ experiences. Finally, one of the challenges in the hermeneutic analysis and interpretation resides in its subjectivity (Arnold

& Fischer 1994; Spiggle 1994; Thompson 1997). In this study two scholars conducted all the phases of analysis and interpretation separately, but in the same manner. This enabled them to discuss each others' interpretations, to question and evaluate the supporting evidence, and to view the phenomenon from a broader perspective.

2.8.5 Summarizing the contribution of the exploratory study

The exploratory study stressed consumers' subjective interpretations of single ads and co-creation of advertising meanings. The findings seemed to be rather consistent with previous advertising research regarding active audiences. Importantly, *the findings highlighted the role of meanings as components of customer value*. Advertising, however, was examined as a potential resource for the consumer and the theoretical constructs of the study did not concentrate on the process of value co-production. None the less, the typology of customer value (Holbrook 1996) was applied to describe consumers' advertising experiences and to form a tentative framework. The framework was an attempt to classify co-creation and exchange of value in advertising, but it classified more the results of the process and did not provide constructs that were sufficient for delineating the process of co-production. This exploratory study significantly enhanced the pre-understanding of the phenomenon, however. It gave *valuable insights into consumers' experiences of advertising, meaning creation and customer value* and in addition *tentative ideas of the co-creation process*.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methodology of the present study. First, the methodological choices are explained. Second, the methods of focus group discussions and personal theme interviews are described. Finally, the analysis phases of the empirical material and the way of the interpretation are detailed.

3.1 Methodological choices

The research methodology describes the processes for studying the knowledge constituting a plan of action which links methods to outcomes (Creswell 2003, 5-6). The methodology thus must be consistent with the underlying knowledge claims, which in this study are based on constructivism and interpretivism as considered earlier in Chapter 1. They aim at understanding the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who live it and to understand the world it must be interpreted (Schwandt 1994, 118). Likewise, they emphasize knowledge as created in interaction among a researcher and a participant (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 111; 2005, 195). This study aims at investigating how consumers participate in co-creation of value in advertising and how consumers bring out collective meanings of advertising in social interaction. This purpose leads on to the use of the qualitative research¹⁶ approach. It expects the collection of open-ended, emerging empirical material with the intention of developing themes and patterns from the empirical material by using inductive interpretation processes and hermeneutical techniques (Creswell 2003). The in-

¹⁶ In their definition of qualitative research Denzin & Lincoln (2003,4) state that qualitative researchers study things in their natural environment, aiming at making sense of the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. The researchers use a variety of empirical materials reflecting the world such as cases, personal experiences, life stories or visual texts which are turned into representations such as field notes and memos, interviews or photographs. Then the world is made visible by interpretive practices.

ductive process is illustrated in Figure 8. The process begins by gathering information from the participants and continues by developing broad patterns from themes or categories. It ends by comparing the generated knowledge with the researcher's existing pre-understanding and literature. In practice, the process in qualitative research does not proceed in such a precise linear order but rather moves backwards and forwards between the phases.

In this study focus group discussions¹⁷, personal semi-structured interviews and questionnaires of background questions are used as methods to collect direct accounts of consumers' experiences. The selection of these methods is motivated by the following factors. First, rather little is known about the phenomenon of value exchange and co-creation in relation to advertising and hence it is suggested that focus group discussions are useful in these kinds of situations (Stewart et al. 2007). This study concentrates on advertising meanings which are common to several consumers and brought out in social interaction. Advertisements are potentially polysemic, i.e. the same ad has many distinct interpretations (Puntoni et al. 2010). Here however the main interest is not directed towards individual interpretations of single ads, but at the consumers' shared meanings of advertising. The group discussion situation represents a natural-like environment for discussing advertising - "simulations of naturally occurring talk and social interaction" - because participants are influencing and influenced by others, just as they are in everyday life (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis 2005, 904; Krueger & Casey 2000; Morgan 1997; Wilkinson 2004, 180). Advertising is usually not a topic which is personally thought out in detail (Schroeder 2004, 237), but it is easy to discuss advertising with other consumers. Advertisements are in fact reported to act as "social glue" in consumers' everyday social interactions (O'Donohue 1994).

Second, personal interviews aim at deepening and completing the information that comes up during the group discussions. They also afford the opportunity to acquire knowledge of the participant's socio-cultural context. Both methods enable open-ended questions and collaboration between the participants and the researcher. The main distinction between the methods lies in the influence of social interaction. In group discussions all participants influence and are influenced by others and the social interaction is an essential generator of data (Daymon & Holloway 2002; Morgan 1997).

Finally, the questionnaire aims at completing the view by collecting information about the participant's resources (Arnould et al. 2006). To summa-

¹⁷ Boddy (2005) highlights the inaccurate use of the terminology for qualitative group research methods in literature. He suggests that the terms should be reduced to two: focus group discussions and focus group interview. The key differences between the methods are "in the level, direction, width and breadth of interaction in the group" (p. 251). In focus group discussion members participate in the discussion interacting with each other. The discussion progresses and evolves based on the interaction resulting breadth and depth in discussion. The role of the moderator is to keep the discussion on the area of interest. In focus group interview instead the discussion occurs between the moderator and an individual group member and the moderator controls the interaction. The members act more like respondents than participants (*ibid.*). In this study the terms focus group discussion, focus groups and group discussion are used interchangeably.

size, the methods are used in combination because they enable first-hand accounts of advertising experiences; they allow both wide and deep discussion of experiences and interpretations (McCracken 1988); they complement each other by providing richer material when used together (Fontana & Frey 2005, 704). In addition, the use of various methods allows for methodological triangulation of data (*ibid.*; Bloor & Wood 2006, 170).

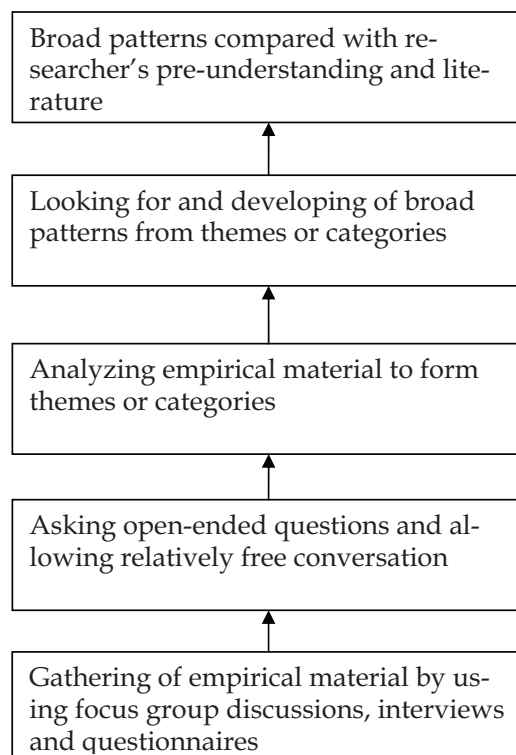


FIGURE 8 Inductive process of the study adapted from Creswell (2003, 132).

There is increasing interest in studying consumers as social viewers of advertising in a social environment (Aitken et al. 2008; Mitchell et al. 2007; Ritson & Elliott 1995; 1999). A focus group offers a social environment for discussing and sharing experiences of advertising with other consumers. Accordingly, it provides the researcher with insights into shared and personal meanings consumers attach to advertising.

In qualitative advertising research, focus group discussions and personal interviews are widely applied as research methods. Group discussions have been used for instance to understand consumers' interpretations of perfume commercials (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver 2004); as small group discussions to classify advertising uses and gratifications (O'Donohoe 1994; 1997); to complete

observations of social uses of advertising (Ritson & Elliot 1999); in conjunction with content analysis to investigate masculinity in advertising in two cultures (Hakala 2006); in conjunction with depth interviews to understand how brand props are interpreted by moviegoers (DeLorme & Reid 1999); as mini focus groups along with questionnaires and diaries when studying young people's motivations for using mobile phones (Grant & O'Donohoe 2007); to explore young people's views, attitudes and behaviours towards smoking, and examine young people's response to different types of message appeal (Devlin et al. 2007).

Personal interviews are generally used in various forms, such as semi-structured, unstructured, phenomenological, depth or long interviews. In advertising studies interviews are applied as a method for instance when investigating consumers' interpretive strategies (Hirschman & Thompson 1997; Kates & Shaw-Garlock 1999); as a complement to experiments for the interpretation of rhetorical figures in advertising (McQuarrie & Mick 1999); when identifying factors motivating and shaping advertising meanings and interpretations (Mick & Buhl 1992; Parker 1998); in conjunction with diaries when studying social uses of advertising slogans and taglines (Mitchell et al. 2007); when examining interpretations of print advertising and open and closed text ads (Yannopoulou & Elliott 2008); and when studying the motivations behind reactions to global advertising in China (Zhou & Belk 2004).

3.2 Focus group method

The roots of the focus group method can be traced to studies of communication research in the early 1900s (Stewart et al. 2007, 2). The method began to develop as "focused interviews" by social scientists in the 1940s and it began to be used more regularly in the late 1960s (Bloor et al 2001; Krueger & Casey 2000; *ibid.*). Various disciplines such as sociology, communications, marketing, the health sciences, psychology and political science have embraced research with focus groups implying that the method is likely to be adapted for use from different viewpoints. Current focus groups however have contributed mainly in the fields of sociology and social psychology, clinical psychology and marketing research.

In focus group theory there are four core elements common across the disciplines that constitute the basis, and core logic of, focus group research (Stewart et al. 2007, 8). The elements are essentially based on the thinking of Robert Merton and Alfred Goldman (*ibid.*). First, focus groups are means to gather qualitative data from participants who have experiences of a particular situation constituting the focus of the discussion. The aim is to understand how people feel or think about a particular issue. The participants are selected because they have some characteristics in common that relate to the research topic. This suggests that the discussion should *concentrate on a relatively narrow issue*. (Krueger & Casey 2000; *ibid.*).

Second, the interaction in the focus group is based on group dynamics affecting the participants' perceptions, information processing and decision making (Stewart et al. 2007). In group discussions attention is drawn to the interaction within the group, so, the *group interaction aims at producing data that would be less accessible without the interaction* (Daymon & Holloway 2002; Moisander & Valtonen 2006; Morgan 1997). The participants usually like to compare their different experiences, but they might be reluctant to challenge each other's opinions. The experiences and perspectives are observable through group interaction in the way that participants respond to each other, accept or reject others ideas or ask and answer questions. (Morgan 1997; Stewart et al. 2007). It is also suggested that focus groups generate synergy since they facilitate collective memories and shared stocks of knowledge (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis 2005). The nature and quality of interaction is influenced by three main elements: group composition including demographics, physical characteristics and personality; interpersonal influences including group cohesiveness, compatibility, social power and non-verbal communication; and the research environment including the material environment, territoriality, spatial arrangements, interpersonal distance and groupings of strangers. (Stewart et al. 2007).

Third, the original emphasis of the focus groups is on obtaining *in-depth information* of consumer insights. As noted earlier this implies concentrating on a narrow issue and in addition restricting the number of questions and using open-ended, indirect questions and nonverbal techniques. Finally, focus groups research is characterized as "humanistic" since it requires *entering into individuals' lives* and expecting skills of active listening and open interaction with participants. (*ibid.*)

The focus group method also has limitations. First, in a sense focus groups are unnatural social settings, because a human moderator observes and controls the group and guides the discussion (Daymon & Holloway 2002,199; Morgan 1997,8). However, focus groups are less controlled than one-to-one interviews, because of the participant-defined nature of group interaction. Second, focus groups have a tendency toward conformity, in which some participants, as a result of group pressure may suppress information that they might impart in private. At the same time there is a tendency toward "polarization" of views. This implies that some participants may express more extreme views in the group discussion than in private (Morgan 1997,15). Finally, the group discussion may be dominated by one or two individuals, influencing the other members' opinions or preventing them from expressing their views (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 199; Stewart et al. 2007, 43). Related to these limitations the moderator has a critical role in steering the conversation. She has to pay attention to silent participants and ask participants to specify their views. In this study personal interviews and questionnaires are used in conjunction with focus group discussions as a means to diminish the limitations and to complement the view. During the interviews the participants are allowed to add to or expand on what they have said.

3.3 Focus group design

The design and use of focus groups research can be described as a sequence of steps as illustrated in Figure 9. In practice, however, the process may not proceed in clearly defined separate stages, but more like a flow of overlapping phases. At the first stage the research problem or general research question, meaning what information is sought and for what purpose, must be clearly stated (Stewart et al. 2007). Here the aim is to understand how consumers participate in the value creation process; how they bring out collective meanings of advertising in social interaction and what the dimensions and meanings of value are for the consumer. The research questions constitute the basis of later development of the discussion guide and questions.

The second stage aims at identifying those people representing the population of interest in the study. This relates to sampling and the number of groups to be conducted. According to Morgan (1997, 58) the number of groups must be determined based on the research aims. There are no general norms regarding an optimal number of groups, but in many cases three or four groups per segment would be enough for saturation (*ibid.*). This study concentrated on Finnish female consumers and used a single-category design (Krueger & Casey 2000). In this design there is a single audience and focus groups are conducted until the point of saturation has been reached. Because it is a single segment there is no need to compare or contrast between the groups (*ibid.*). For this reason, and according to Morgan (1997,58), in this study saturation was supposed to be achieved with four focus groups. The time and resources available for this study also constricted the number of segments. It is worth noting that the issue here is not generalization and the participants are not chosen to represent some part of the larger population (Krueger & Casey 2000; McCracken 1998; Morgan 1997; Stewart et al. 2007,43).

The composition of a focus group should be homogenous enough, meaning that the participants have something in common. Moreover, at the same time adequate variation among participants is needed to invoke contrasting opinions. Participants should also feel comfortable to share their ideas in the group discussion. (Krueger & Casey 2000, 71-72).

First, it was assumed that the topic in question requires focus groups segmented by sex. In mixed groups and particularly in face-to-face situations men tend to dominate conversations and speak with more authority. Both genders also have a tendency to "perform" for each other (Daymon & Holloway 2002; Krueger & Casey 2000,73; Morgan 1997). Also, for the budget and convenience reasons it was not possible to expand the number of participants and conduct groups with several (female and male) audiences in this study.

The second issue was the homogeneity of the participants' age. In the early stage of this study the aim was to concentrate on females over 40 years old, but aiming to evoke challenging conversation and different views between participants (Bloor et al. 2001; Stewart et al. 2007,20) it was decided not to limit

the age of participants. It was thought that the commonality of being female, adults and readers of a particular magazine would form a group - or "grouping" (Stewart et al. 2007, 34) - homogenous enough. It was also thought that the participants would feel comfortable and be willing to discuss in the group.

There were several reasons for choosing readers of women's fashion magazines. First, consumption of these magazines belongs to many women's lives as an everyday event (Ferguson, Kreshel & Tinkham 1990; Kates & Shar-Garlock 1999). Second, reading a particular magazine was an overarching experience of a use of one medium. It was supposed that as the subscribers they were motivated to read the media. Third, the magazines carry a large amount of advertisements targeting female consumers and magazines could be used to elicit material (Moisander & Valtonen 2006) in the discussions. Finally, the readers would be reachable and little effort would have to be expended in recruiting the participants among subscribers.

The third stage of the design steps includes the production of a discussion guide. In this stage the moderator of the groups also has to be defined and here the researcher naturally acts as the moderator. The standardization of the questions asked and the degree of moderator involvement determine how structured the group discussion will be (Morgan 1997). In the present study all the groups had the same issues to discuss, and the questioning route, and the writing task using a complementary technique, were prepared in advance. However the moderator allowed relatively free conversation and according to the progress of the discussion the prepared questions were sometimes asked in a different order. Likewise, if the group had already spontaneously discussed a particular theme, there was no need to ask about the same topic again. The moderator had to ensure that all consumers participated in the conversation and that no one dominated or took an "expert position". Also, the moderator's style, gestures and facial expressions had to be controlled in order to convey a non-judgemental atmosphere. In the next chapter the course of the discussion and the guiding questions of this study are considered in more detail.

The fourth stage deals with the recruitment of the participants. In this study the participants consisted of 31 adult female consumers who in Table 12 are summarized by age and occupation. In focus group research the most common methods for selecting participants are purposive¹⁸ sampling and convenient sampling (Morgan 1997,35; Stewart et al. 2007,54). This is justified on the grounds that the purpose of focus group research is not to achieve generalization about a population.

¹⁸ Purposive sampling or *purposeful sampling* (Lindlof & Taylor 2002, 122) is often treated as synonym for *theoretical sampling*. In theoretical sampling the "purpose" behind the sampling is theoretically defined. In purposive sampling instead the individuals, groups or cases illustrate features or processes which are in a focus of interest in the study. (Silverman 2005).

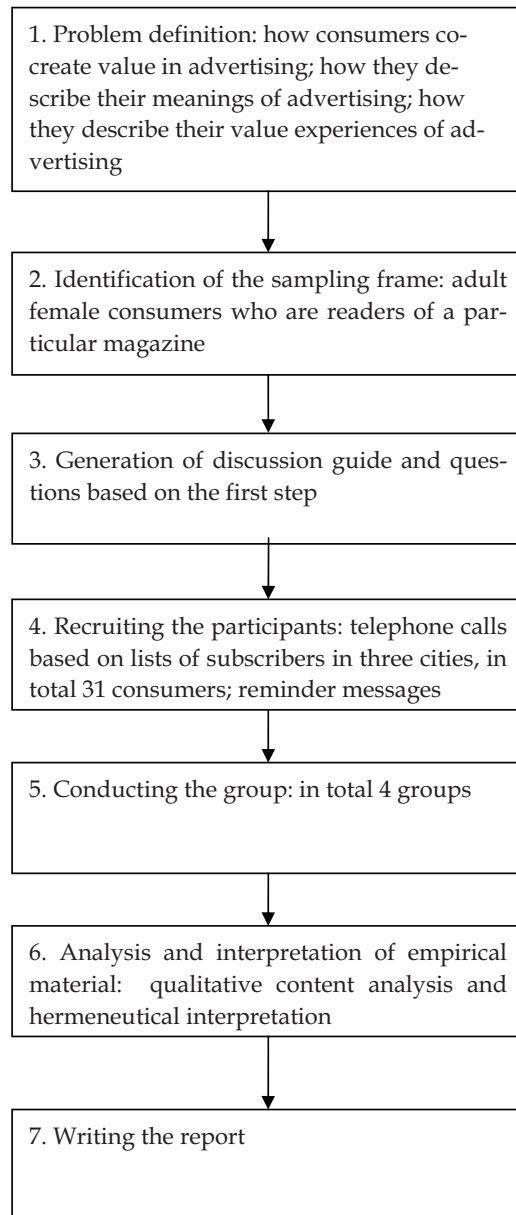


FIGURE 9 Steps in the focus group design in this study (adapted from Stewart et al. 2007, 48).

In this study the participants were selected purposively, meaning that the selected individuals would likely have experiences related to the phenomenon of interest, that is they had features which were interesting (Lindlof & Taylor 2002, 122; Silverman 2005, 129). The use of purposive sampling here aimed at building up groups of females holding at least one common experience of an advertising medium as a foundation for a meaningful discussion. In focus groups the

participants' willingness to discuss a topic together is a critical element which is based on similarities between them. (Morgan 1997). In purposive sampling the sources from which participants are recruited are defined (*ibid.*) and in this study the source was magazine subscribers. The participants were volunteers who were recruited among subscribers to two Finnish women's fashion magazines. The predetermined lists of subscribers were received from the publisher of the magazines¹⁹. Three Finnish cities were selected as predefined areas where focus group discussions would be conducted. The publisher's lists contained names and contact information of subscribers in accordance with the defined area. The cities were selected for reasons of their convenience. The participants also had to be unknown to the moderator and each other, and they should not have special knowledge of advertising (for instance having a working career in the advertising industry). The participants were strangers to each other in order to achieve free and open conversation, to challenge each other and point out contradictions (Bloor et al. 2001).

TABLE 12 Summary of the participants of four focus groups (A,B,C,D) and personal interviews.

Symbol	Age	Degree/ Occupation	Attend the focus group	Attend the interview
A1	46	M.Sc. Journalist, Entrepreneur	X	X
A2	21	Student at university	X	X
A3	47	M.Sc, Teacher	X	X
A4	48	Cosmetician, Driving Instructor	X	X
A5	33	M.Sc., Planning Officer	X	X
A6	40	M.Sc, Planner of Communication	X	X
A7	55	Office Secretary, not working	X	X
A8	54	Bank Officer, not working	X	X
A9	46	B.Sc, Kindergarten teacher	X	X
A10	58	Licentiate, Translator	X	X
B1	59	Vocational Qualification, Entrepreneur	X	
B2	42	M.Sc, Officer in Ministry	X	
B3	50	M.Sc, Planning Officer	X	
B4	45	B.Sc, Nurse	X	
B5	48	Office Secretary	X	
B6	66	Estate Agent, Entrepreneur, retired	X	
B7	45	Manager	X	
C1	49	M.Sc., Assistant	X	
C2	25	M.Sc. Officer in embassy	X	
C3	27	B.Sc, Financial Manager	X	
C4	37	Vocational Qualification, Cosmetician, Product Manager	X	
C5	57	M.Sc, Bank Director	X	

(continues)

¹⁹ Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy

TABLE 12 (continues)

C6	49	M.Sc, ICT Consultant	X	
C7	63	M.Sc, Head of Department, retired	X	
C8	37	B.Sc, Housewife, Student	X	
D1	45	M.Sc, Customer Service	X	X
D2	34	B.Sc, Housewife	X	X
D3	25	B.Sc, Project Secretary	X	X
D4	40	Vocational Qualification, Head of Department	X	X
D5	26	B.Sc, Student	X	X
D6	46	B.Sc, Teacher	X	X

Potential participants were contacted directly by telephone about two weeks before the focus group session. Eight to ten people were recruited to every group. It is suggested that the group must be large enough to provide diversity of perceptions (Krueger & Casey 2000) and this group size enables the participants to have time enough to express their views (Bloor et al. 2001; Morgan 1997). After the participants had agreed to attend the group, a follow-up message was sent by e-mail or by mail. The message was composed of three documents: an invitation letter; a written agreement describing the background of the study and the terms of participation and confidence; and a questionnaire (Stewart et al. 2007, 56) (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3). The questionnaire aimed at mapping the participant's socio-cultural and economic background as their consumer cultural resources (Arnould et al. 2006). The questions were formulated by following the ideas of Holt (1997) and McCracken (1988). Open-ended questions covered themes regarding age and places of habitation; education and working career; family and other social relationships; leisure and key interests; preferred stores and basic principles of consumption; and activity as a user of the Internet. The questionnaire was pretested by two females who were not participants in the study. The questions were revised according to their feedback.

In each discussion session it was expected to show up to 6 - 10 participants and in the day prior to the session the participants were reminded by a short text message. As was predicted, cancellations occurred during the previous days of the group discussions, except in one group. Replacement members had to be found at short notice, but finally all groups were at their optimum size (Bloor et al. 2001, 26; Stewart et al. 2007, 58). In this study incentives were used as a stimulus to attend the session and their primary function was to get the participants to show up for the focus group (Krueger & Casey 2000; Stewart et al. 2007, 56). The participants were paid 30 - 40 Euros²⁰ as a monetary incen-

²⁰ 30 Euros was paid for those participants who only attended the focus group discussion and 40 Euros was paid for those who attended both the discussion and the personal interview.

tive and in addition they were given two magazines and one book as non-monetary incentives²¹.

The fifth stage consists of conducting the focus group which is considered in detail in the next chapter. Finally, the last two stages include analysis and interpretation of data which are considered in chapter 3.7 and 3.8 and the process ends with the writing of the report.

3.4 Conducting the focus group discussions

3.4.1 Course of the focus group discussion

In this section the situation, environment and the course of the discussion are outlined. As presented in Figure 9 the discussion guide was prepared in the third stage before recruiting the participants and conducting the groups (see Appendix 8).

All discussion sessions were conducted on weekday evenings and the duration of the session was limited to two hours. The physical location had to be easily accessible by the participants and comfortable enough to promote openness among the participants. According to Bloor et al. (2001, 39) "There is no such thing as a neutral venue for a focus group", meaning that the venue itself will always impact on the data collected. In this study the sessions were conducted at three Finnish cities and for budgeting reasons and ease of accessibility they took place in university meeting rooms. It was taken into consideration, however, that some participants might feel a sense of unfamiliarity when entering the facilities of the university. But in practice there was no confusion among the participants.

When the participants arrived the moderator welcomed them and aimed at creating a relaxed atmosphere. Refreshments were offered before and during the session. At the beginning the written agreements and questionnaires were filled in and returned to the moderator. The actual session began with a five-minute introduction by the moderator. In this introduction the overview of the topic and the basic rules to help discussion were described (Krueger & Casey 2000). The participants were not told about the specific research questions of this study. They were told that the research interest focused on their experiences of advertising as consumers, and that it was hoped to hear about experiences of ads regarding different products, services or ideologies in different media. The participants were also encouraged to bring out diverse and opposing views and experiences and use their own words and examples. It was emphasized that in the conversation each participant had the key role of bringing out her own experiences; it was not an interview where questions are resolved.

²¹ Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy sponsored these two magazines and one book as the non-monetary incentive for each participant.

The independence of this academic study and the terms of participation and confidence were also highlighted once again.

The session was divided into four parts. After the introduction the first opening question aiming at “breaking the ice” and getting all participants to say something was asked: *“Let’s briefly introduce ourselves. Would you please say your first name and also describe which two to three words immediately come to your mind from the word “advertising?”* After a round of answers an introductory question asked the participants to remember the advertisements they have recently noticed. The “think-back” question asked them to reflect on their personal experiences and then respond to the question (Krueger & Casey 2000) - *“Think back to the last weeks and the advertisements you have paid attention to. What kinds of experiences and ideas did they evoke? Please feel free to express your views.* All follow-up questions were open-ended and they were related for instance to the benefits or disadvantages of advertising.

The second part focused on advertising of cosmetics in women’s fashion magazines (see examples in Appendix 4). Several examples of magazines²² were available on the table and the participants were asked to watch and read cosmetics advertisements (see examples in Appendix 5). - *“Please look at the cosmetics advertisements in these magazines. What kinds of experiences and ideas do they elicit?”* The follow-up questions were related for instance to the users or buyers of the promoted products, or the pictured persons and events in the ads. The participants were also asked to discuss the boundaries between media and advertisements, for instance which parts of the magazine or what content on television they considered as advertising and how they drew the line between editorial and commercial content.

In the third part of the session a complementary technique (Moisander & Valtonen 2006) was used in order to express participants’ ideas and to construct meanings regarding one particular advertisement. The moderator had in advance chosen the ad from the magazines (see Appendix 7). Every participant was asked to write and complete “the story” or event they saw in the ad. The participants were given both verbal and written directions for the writing.

The last question aimed at getting their ideas for the use of a diary as an instrument of data collection. - *“Let’s assume that you are asked to keep a diary and take notes of interesting advertisements of a particular product during one or two weeks. What would be an easy and convenient way for you to keep the diary and take notes?”* The discussion and ideas evoked by this last question were not included for the analysis of this empirical material, but analysed separately for further research purposes.

At the end of the session the moderator expressed thanks to the group members for participating and provided them with the incentives. All focus group discussions were taped and photographs of each group were taken for

²² There were Finnish magazines such as Gloria, Sara, Me Naiset and Kodin Kuvalehti. Cosmetics advertisements in those magazines were marked with yellow “post-it” papers. Participants were allowed to choose the magazine and watch and read the ads freely (see Appendices 4 and 5)

refreshing the researcher's memory when transcribing the tapes. After the discussion a general impression of the session was written down.

As summarized in Table 12 the participants varied by age and socioeconomic backgrounds, but they had the commonality of being female, adults and readers of a particular magazine. Reading the magazine was an overarching experience (Krueger & Casey 2000) between the participants, and advertising in this medium constituted a common foundation for the group discussion. However, the discussion also covered advertising widely in other media, such as television, radio, the press, word-of-mouth, brand placement, the Internet and direct mail. Compared with the interview setting of the exploratory study described in Chapter 2.8, here the participants considered advertising more comprehensively and in more natural advertising exposure conditions.

3.4.2 Notices of the course of group discussions

All recruited participants, except one who did not show up, arrived on time and the discussion sessions started as planned. Each group consisted of six to ten participants, in total 31 females, their age ranging from 21 to 66 years. The discussions ranged from 1 hour 16 minutes to 1 hour 43 minutes.

Interestingly, the atmosphere in all groups was relaxed although the participants were strangers to each other. In one group it came up that one participant had an earlier working career in the cosmetics industry as a manager of consumer tests and this could have influenced her own views and those of some other participants. Such tests are widely deployed as selling proposals in cosmetics advertisements and in the group, as well as in other groups, the trustworthiness of the tests was discussed and differing views were aired. One participant also brought her own luxurious fashion magazines and the ads in the magazines also elicited discussion. In every group the moderator needed to encourage some silent participants to bring out their views, as well as to restrain too talkative persons from dominating the discussion. One rather silent participant highlighted her rejection of advertising and she was not very willing to share her views.

In general, the feedback after the session was affirmative. The participants seemed to be in a good mood and many of them manifested their interest in participating in similar discussions in the future. In all four focus group discussions were conducted during February and March of 2008. After the third discussion all the empirical material was listened to obtain a first impression. In the fourth discussion completely new information did not seem to become evident and it was thus thought that saturation had been reached.

3.5 Personal interviews as complements to the group discussions

In this study individual interviews were used in combination with focus group discussions. Compared to the focus group discussion, personal interviews provide for a different discussion context. This means that individuals may act differently in groups than in dyads which might lead to differences in resulting data (Morgan 1997). The interviews thus aimed at deepening and completing the information that came up during the group discussions or were only broadly discussed in the group (*ibid.*) generating multifaceted data. The aim was also to reduce the potential uncertainty within the focus group discussion data, which resulted for instance from inconsistencies and unfinished speech when participants were interrupted by each other (Bloor et al. 2001).

The number of interviewees necessary depends on the purpose of the study and the resources available for the study. In this study the purpose is *to understand* the co-production process. The participants of two focus groups, A and D, in all 16 females, were interviewed one to one after the focus group discussion. These two particular groups were selected for interview because of reasons to do with time and resources available for the investigation.

The interview was semi-structured, so while it aimed to address the topic areas it also allowed the participant to respond according to her assumptions (McCracken 1988). Here, the term *semi-structured* means that the interview proceeded according to the predetermined themes²³ which were similar to all interviewees (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 47). The “grand tour” or opening questions (McCracken 1988) were asked in four topic areas: general habits in using various media; ideas and experiences regarding advertisements of clothing, shoes and other fashion products in the magazines (see Appendix 6); boundaries between advertisements and the editorial content of media; and personal consumption habits and buying behaviour. In spite of the preplanned themes the questions however were not precisely formulated and they were not posed in a fixed order. Accordingly, the interviews were conversational, the questions were open-ended and the participants were given plenty of room to talk. At the end of the interview the participant was invited to give feedback regarding the earlier group discussion (Krueger & Casey 2000). She was asked to tell if there had been something she especially had paid attention to, or for instance if the views of the other participants had been astonishing. The interviews were conducted a few days after the group discussions and this last question possibly enabled the participant to give more deliberate feedback.

All interviews were conducted in university meeting rooms which already had become a familiar environment for the participants. The opportune time for

²³ In this study the semi-structured form of an interview is similar to the “theme interview” (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 47) which is based on the concept of focused interview. In the theme interview the attention is focused on particular themes to be discussed. However the theme interview does not assume a certain experimentally generated common experience as the focused interview assumes. (*ibid.*)

the interview was arranged in advance with every participant. The interviews ranged from 34 minutes to 1 hour 3 minutes, and on average 50 minutes. All interviews were taped and notes were written down after the conversation.

Interviews as a data collection method also have limitations which must be taken into account when analysing the data. The interview is a prearranged event which does not represent natural occurring data and it is suggested that the information is still “indirect” since it is filtered by the interviewee (Creswell 2003, 186). Moreover, individuals do not have uniform skills and willingness to express themselves verbally (*ibid.*).

3.6 Ethical issues related to the gathering and use of the empirical material

In this section the consideration of ethical issues covers principles of the relationships between the researcher and the participants. In addition the sponsor relationships are discussed.

Focus groups and interviews involve human subjects producing knowledge and understanding of the human situation and for this reason ethical²⁴ questions should be considered (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 64; Kvale 1996). Ethical issues may arise at different stages and the researcher should watch for sensitive issues that may turn up during the inquiry. Ethical codes provide guidelines to be adapted according to their relevance to the study at hand and here ethical guidelines about informed consent, confidentiality and consequences for the participants are discussed (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Kvale 1996).

First, *informed consent* means informing about the overall purpose and the main features of the study. According to the nature of qualitative research however, the researcher may not know all specific issues *before* the situation and, on the other hand informing should not lead the subjects to desired answers. In this study the informed consent is taken into account as follows. Participants were volunteers and they were informed beforehand with an invitation letter and written agreement. In addition they were informed verbally before the discussion and interview situation. They also had the right to refuse to comment during the discussion and they could withdraw from the study by afterwards notifying the researcher.

Second, *confidentiality* implies that the participants’ identity is secured in all research stages and they cannot be identified from the published report (*ibid.*). In the focus group discussion of this study only the first names of the participants were used when they introduced themselves. The recorded discussions and interviews are listened to and transcribed only by the researcher and in the written report the names and the participants’ citations are marked with

²⁴ Ethics are defined as “sets of principles for good professional practice, which serve to advise and steer researchers as they conduct their work” (Bloor & Wood 2006, 64).

codenames. Here, the analysis is not verified by the participants, since the interpretation is not grounded on statements of a single participant, but instead it is based on synthesis of statements.

Finally, the researcher is responsible for addressing the possible *consequences* of the participation to the subjects (Kvale 1996, 116). In this study the consequences are mainly related to the purpose of use of the acquired material and reciprocity experienced by the participants. The purpose of the use of the material as a part of an independent academic dissertation study was explicitly stated both written and verbally when the participants were recruited. The reciprocity implies what they give and receive from participating in the study. By investing their time and energy and sharing their knowledge they receive an interaction experience and a small monetary incentive. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the study if they came to regret their participation in it.

In business research co-operation and sponsorship with companies and organizations should be made publicly explicit (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 66). In this study one company²⁵ has offered access to its subscriber register of two women's magazines facilitating the recruitment of the participants. The company has also given free copies of magazines and a book as incentives to each participant. To clarify the discussion, the company has not offered the research questions, research methods or any financial compensation. The researcher has made a short presentation of the preliminary findings of the research in the company's customer event and written managerial implications as a part of the report. In addition this study has received financial support from the Foundation for Economic Education and Foundation of Commercial and Technical Sciences (KAUTE).

3.7 Analysis of the empirical material

Focus group discussions in combination with semi-structured personal interview provide empirical material which is more *emic*²⁶ than *etic* by nature. This results from the methods used, that allow the participants to use their own words, vernacular and categories, though the research situation has been to some extent structured by the researcher. In this study the empirical material consists of texts²⁷ considering female consumers' experiences of advertising in a context of media and consumption. The texts included self-reported experiences of general media use; descriptions of consumption preferences closely linked to

²⁵ Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy

²⁶ Two types of data have been distinguished. *Emic data* consists of naturally occurring data which is not, or only slightly, imposed by researcher. *Etic data* instead includes the researcher's imposed view of the situation. (Krippendorf 2004 cited in Stewart et al. 2007). The *emic* and *etic* nature of the data represent opposing ends of a continuum in which different data gathering methods and techniques can be positioned.

²⁷ Empirical material of discussions, notes and interviews are transformed into *texts* (Sayre 2001, 202).

advertising; written narratives regarding a particular ad; and information about the participants' socio-cultural and economic background. All texts were generated for the purposes of this study.

The analysis of the empirical material must follow the premises of the philosophical orientation of the study²⁸. In this study the analysis follows a perspective of interpretivism (Sayre 2001) which accepts characteristics of both social constructivism and the phenomenological approach. On one hand it emphasizes social interaction between the participants; on the other hand it takes into account individual perceptions and distinctions. In addition, the perspective aims at taking into consideration both the participants' words and actions as determining meanings of words. (Stewart et al. 2007, 112). In this study the transcription aims at describing laughs, hesitations and pauses in the participants' speech and field notes were taken to capture exceptional events during the discussions.

The analysis and interpretation phases of the empirical material are illustrated in Figure 10. A funnel shape of the figure depicts the extraction of the interpretation over time. The texts are first analysed thematically according to the *qualitative content analysis*²⁹ which provides a tool for identifying preliminary themes and patterns (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 187). Themes which highlight similarities between the participants and the content analysis serve as a basis for the actual *hermeneutical interpretation*. The interpretation constitutes an iterative process ending in findings of three co-production processes. The qualitative content analysis and hermeneutical interpretation complement each other constituting a continuous process. Principles of both methods are described in following sections.

²⁸ Sayre (2001,203) distinguishes three relevant perspectives to analyse verbal focus group data: social constructivism, phenomenological approach as its opposite, and interpretivism.

²⁹ A similar way of analysis aiming at identifying patterns or themes from verbal data is also known as *thematic analysis* (Sayre 2001, 211). In this study however the term *qualitative content analysis* is used to illustrate the analysis process preceding the actual interpretation.

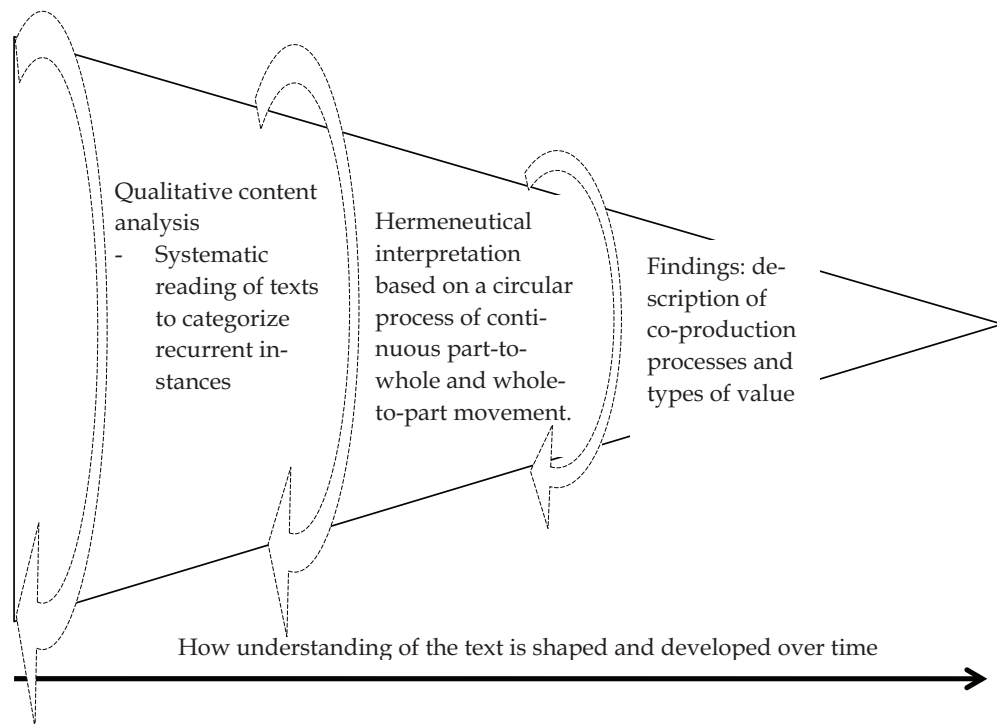


FIGURE 10 The process of analysis and interpretation of the empirical material.

3.7.1 Qualitative content analysis

Content analysis implies a systematic reading of texts and visual or symbolic material that enables inferences to be made derived from the material (Krippendorff 2004). The roots of the method can be traced back to early studies of journalism. Content analysis comprises various qualitative approaches such as discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis or ethnographic content analysis. All qualitative approaches require a relatively small amount of material to be handled; they involve interpretation of the material into new descriptions and; they allow applying the hermeneutic circle and the researcher's pre-understanding (*ibid.*). Content analysis may be based on coding. The use of computer software as a tool for coding is widespread (Morgan 1997). Krippendorff (2004,16) considers it not necessary to draw a strict line between qualitative and quantitative content analysis, suggesting that basically all reading of texts is qualitative although particular parts of the text would later be converted into quantitative form. In content analysis all empirical material is examined in a systematic way to categorize recurrent instances such as expressions, themes or discourses (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 187). To be specific, the analysis in this study is more qualitative by nature since words, sentences or utterances were not counted or quantified to form the themes or categories.

Krippendorff (2004, 30) presents a framework for content analysis, the elements of which are outlined in Figure 11. First, *the texts* have their origins in the other people's worlds and are connected to possible *answers* of the research questions by a network of stable correlations. Second, the research *context* makes sense of the text, constituting an *analytical construct* or model that operationalizes the researcher's knowledge of the context. Third, the texts are subjected to content analysis building *inferences* which are motivated or explained by analytical constructs. Finally, *validating evidence* is in principle needed to justify the analysis. Although Krippendorff (2004) emphasizes more quantitative form of content analysis the basic elements and their relations in the framework are mainly applicable to qualitative content analysis.

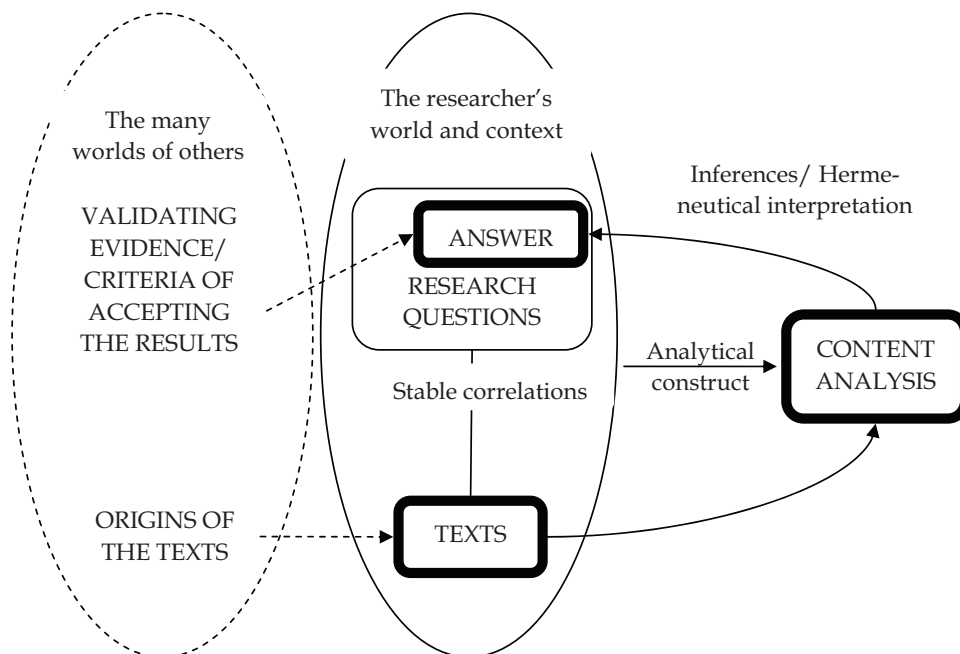


FIGURE 11 A framework for qualitative content analysis in this study (modified from the model of Krippendorff 2004, 30).

In this study the focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaires constitute the texts to be analysed to answer the research question "How do female consumers co-create value in advertising?". The context here relates to the consumers' cultural context and socio-cultural resources, to the semantic context of the ads and to the advertising genre. This means that the texts are read through this context by the researcher and their significance is developed in this context. The analytical construct then derives from the text and its context. In this study

it stems from the model of the consumer co-production process and aspects of value.

Krippendorff (2004,32) stresses the purposeful and efficient reading of the texts in which the research questions direct the reading. In this study however *the first reading and categorization is made more "open-ended"* according to the interpretive approach. Since the content analysis is applied in conjunction with hermeneutical interpretation the inferences here are replaced by hermeneutical interpretation that leads to the answering of the research questions.

Finally, according to the framework (*ibid.*,39) it should be possible to validate any content analysis *in principle*, which implies that although validation in practice might not be feasible, the researcher should consider issues of validation in advance. Repeating the analysis or coding twice supports the reliability but does not validate the analysis. Analysis and interpretation in constructivist research however allow subjectivity and multiple interpretations (Arnold & Fischer 1994, 57; Patton 2002) and they tend to apply criteria other than reliability and validity, such as, for instance, credibility, transferability, dependability or confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln 2003,35). The evaluation criteria are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.7.2 Hermeneutical interpretation

In consumer research interpretation is used as a means to make sense of the text (Sayre 2001,204). Interpretivism includes hermeneutics as a philosophical view³⁰ seeking to identify the ways personal meanings and shared beliefs are conveyed through a person's language (Thompson, Pollio & Locander 1994). Language as a mediator of this often unspoken background has a critical role in hermeneutics (Arnold & Fischer 1994; Sayre 2001; Thompson et al. 1994). There are not many specific guidelines for the use of the hermeneutic method, but for instance Thompson et al. (1994) and Thompson (1997) present a hermeneutic framework. The framework that is outlined in Figure 12 provides a model for understanding how consumers perceive consumption in relation to themselves. There is a continuous interplay between the person's life history and the person's interpreted meanings. The cultural background includes the consumer's common sense beliefs, social categories and folk knowledge. In order to generate a holistic understanding of consumption texts the researcher has to understand the relations between the consumer's cultural background and life history. The key concept therefore is a personalized cultural frame of reference which results from this relation. (*ibid.*)

This study applies hermeneutical interpretation as a methodological process. In practice, interpreting the texts has two stages. First, an initial reading aims at obtaining a sense of the whole story. Second, additional readings build

³⁰ The concept of the *hermeneutical circle* has three distinct meanings in social science literature. The basic meaning is a general model of the process by which understanding is formed. The other two meanings derive from it: first, a methodological process for interpreting a text, and second, a philosophical view of the research process. (Thompson, Pollio & Locander 1994).

an understanding of the meanings (Sayre 2001). Hermeneutical interpretation is based on a circular process of continuous part-to-whole and whole-to-part movement. It is thus an iterative process where the text is interpreted and reinterpreted in relation to the developing the sense of the whole. The understanding of the text is shaped and developed over time. Iterations are means to generate a more developed sense of the text's meanings (Thompson, et al. 1994). In this study the personalized cultural frame of reference means that information of the participants' cultural backgrounds is collected and taken into account as much as possible. Hermeneutical interpretation also assumes that there is a common frame of reference³¹ between the researcher and the text. This means that the researcher's personal knowledge and experiences, underlying assumptions and questions of interest (Sayre 2001, 205; Thompson 1997, 441) sensitize the researcher to the specific characteristics of the text. Basically, it constitutes an initial frame of reference (Thompson 1997, 441). The essence of this interpretive orientation is often expressed by a metaphor *researcher-as-instrument* (Sayre 2001, 205).

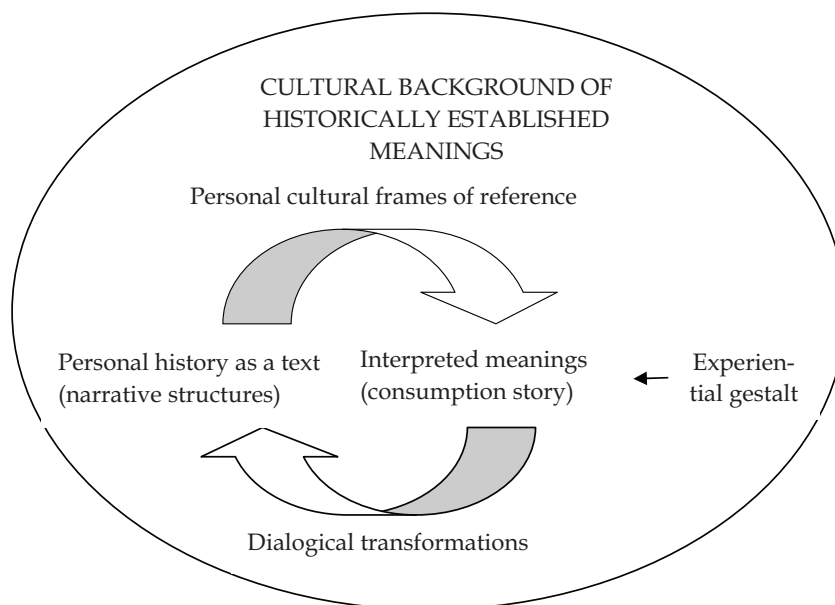


FIGURE 12 Thompson's (1997, 440) hermeneutic model of meaning construction illustrating a continuous interplay between a person's life history and the person's interpreted meanings.

3.7.3 Levels of analysis

While analysing focus group discussions the challenges of the interactive nature of the material must be taken into account. This means that attention must be

³¹ Thompson (1997) uses the concept *fusion of horizons* to illustrate this.

paid to the discussion as a whole instead of to individual statements. Morgan (1997, 60) suggests that when analyzing focus group discussions the unit of analysis is neither the individual participant nor the group. Instead, these two “levels of analysis” are interacting and they should be analysed in conjunction with each other. Figure 13 illustrates this interaction. The discussion in groups is dependent on both the individuals constituting the group and the dynamics of the group as a whole. What individuals discuss in a group depends on the group context, but also what happens in the group depends on the individual participants (*ibid.*). The focus group discussions are analysed as the interplay between the individual level and the group level. This means that the individual statements are interpreted against group interaction and vice-versa.

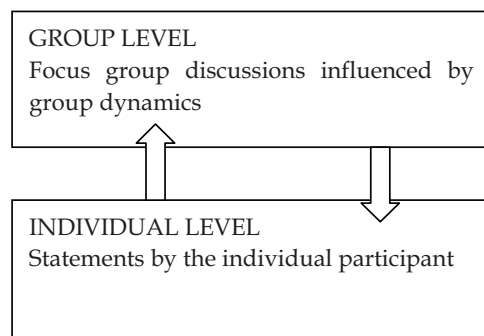


FIGURE 13 Interplay between two levels of analysis of focus groups according to Morgan (1997).

Personal interviews are analysed together with the group discussions; that is, they are not interpreted separately at the individual level. Although the empirical material represents descriptions of individual experiences, the analysis and interpretation focuses on the cultural level, i.e. the consumers’ collective meanings of advertising which are brought out in social interaction. In order to answer the research questions the researcher must construct a world or context in which the texts make sense (Krippendorff 2004, 24). The texts of interviews as well as questionnaires also include contextual information through which the consumer’s descriptions of experiences are interpreted.

3.7.4 Organizing the material and obtaining a general sense

The purpose of this phase was to transform all the material into written form; to become familiar with the material; and to gain understanding related to the participants’ prior conditions and motivational drives which potentially might have facilitated or prevented co-production.

At first all four group discussions and sixteen personal interviews were listened to and transcribed. During the transcriptions the situations and atmos-

pheres were recalled and photographs of the discussion situations were examined. The transcriptions cover all recorded speech as it occurs; including unfinished and interrupted talking; other oral communication, e.g. laughter; and silent moments and hesitations (Bloor et al. 2001). All speakers and speech were identified if possible, or marked as unidentifiable, in order to follow the participants' changing points of view through the transcripts. The participants' handwritten stories about one particular print advertisement and all field notes were typed up.

The transcribed group discussions and interviews resulted in 192 single-spaced pages of texts and notes. In addition the material included 31 short stories, 31 two-page questionnaires of background information and several examples of print advertisements in women's magazines. The transcribed group discussions and interviews were used as primary material and the questionnaires and stories were used as secondary, complementary material. All the material was generated in Finnish. All texts were first analysed in Finnish and then the analysis was translated into English, aiming at maintaining the original idea expressed. Phases of the whole process of analysis and interpretation are described in Table 13. The purpose and outcome of each phase are also outlined.

Next all the questionnaires were read through and the information of each participant was compressed in a tabular format. After that the information was combined into four tables of focus groups. Based on the tables the conclusions of the commonalities of the participants' socio-cultural and economic contexts were made. The conclusions are discussed in the Chapter 5.

All texts were read through to get a general view of the entire material and each participant's role in the discussion. During the reading the situation and the "participants' tones of voice" were recalled. Attention was paid, for instance, to the participants' general attitudes towards the topic; how the participants themselves expressed similarities and differences in their views and what explicit and implicit norms seemed to govern the discussion (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Also notes were taken to extract key ideas. These issues are discussed in the Chapters 4.1.3 and 4.1.4.

TABLE 13 Phases of the qualitative content analysis and interpretation.

Phase	Purpose of the phase	Outcome
Organizing the material and obtaining a general sense		
Transcription of 4 focus group discussions and 16 interviews	To describe the participants' speech as it occurs. To become familiar with the empirical material.	192 single-spaced pages of texts and field notes
Compressing information of 31 questionnaires	To gain understanding of the participants' background.	Conclusions regarding the commonalities of the participants' socio-cultural and economic context in a table format.
Reading through all texts and recalling the situation	To obtain a general view. To form an impression of participants' attitudes to the topic. To identify explicit and implicit norms governing the discussion. To identify the participants' prior conditions and motivational drives facilitating or preventing co-production.	Conclusions regarding attitudes to the topic and underlying norms. Pre-understanding regarding the participants' cultural and technological preconditions; socio-cultural resources; product-linked and situational factors and; economic, psychological and motivational drives.
Indexing process by using NVivo software programme		
Disconnecting each participant's speech from the discussion as a separate <i>case</i>	To examine: consistency of the participant's views; her contribution to the discussion; her general ideas toward the topic.	Hand-written mind-maps (Appendix 11) of emerging ideas, topics and notes (See discussion in Chapter 4).
The material of <i>one focus group</i> including mind-maps was categorized based on two questions: "how females describe the meanings	To formulate preliminary titles for indexing in an inductive way ³² .	List of <i>preliminary titles</i> (Appendix 12)

(continues)

³² Krippendorff (2004, 36-38) instead uses the term *abductive inference* illustrating the nature of inferences employed in content analysis. Abductive inferences are drawn about phenomena that cannot be directly observed. The researcher uses for instance intuition, experience and theory when answering the research questions with the texts. (*ibid*). In this study however the term *inductive* is used to illustrate the nature of the process where inferences proceed from emerging themes of the text: that is the themes are found in text and they are not based on theories to be tested.

TABLE 13 (continues)

Phase	Purpose of the phase	Outcome
of advertising to them” and “how females describe their experiences of advertising”.		
The titles were examined through the theoretical constructs and research questions. The material was read aiming at dovetailing the material with the titles. Similar topics were clustered together and new topics were added.	To link the titles with the theory and to revise and specify the titles for indexing.	An advanced list of master-codes and sub-codes as <i>tree nodes</i> (Appendix 13).
Reading and indexing all texts according to the tree nodes hierarchy. Taking into account the participants’ contextual conditions. Adjusting and adding a few codes during the indexing.	To index all meaningful parts of the texts.	All meaningful parts of the text were examined and indexed as <i>nodes</i> .
Printing out and reading through all categorized <i>nodes</i> .	Re-examining possible mistakes; correcting and re-indexing.	Corrected categorizations as a basis for the interpretation.
Interpretation of the material		
<p>Interpretations regarding several questions associated with the research questions and theoretical constructs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how elements of prior conditions and other contextual factors facilitate or prevent the co-production - how the consumer is motivated to participate - how the consumer evaluates costs and benefits of the process - how the actual customization experience is described - how the distinctive levels of customization are described - how value is con- 	<p>To make sense of the categorized material through more abstract conceptualizations.</p> <p>To identify the actual way and level of consumer activation to co-production and the types of value.</p>	<p>Two tentative themes as an intermediate phase for the further interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-producing self-indulgence - Co-producing information and ideas <p>Three different ways describing how consumers customized advertising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping - Goal-oriented journey - Daydreaming and fantasizing <p>Several types how value</p>

(continues)

TABLE 13 (continues)

Phase	Purpose of the phase	Outcome
<p>structured.</p> <p>Interpretation by paying attention to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - extensiveness of the themes and comments - importance of the issue - how detailed and specific descriptions were - emotions, enthusiasm or intensity of expressions - the participants' general media use and consumption preferences and background information <p>Interpreting the material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reading the categorizations again and seeking similarities, differences and nuances related to the theoretical constructs. - taking into account the interplay between an individual level and group level - separate parts of the text related to the overall content as a continuous part-to-whole and whole-to-part process in order to interpret issues in an appropriate context. 		<p>was constructed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feeling of independency and freedom of choice - Feeling of being up-to-date. - Feeling of empowerment - Learning experiences and increase in cumulative product knowledge - Economic value - Fascinating feeling beyond mundane including for instance excitement, fun and pleasure.
<p>Revision of the interpretations.</p> <p>Re-reading through all material and re-indexing it.</p>	<p>To examine if there exists enough evidence regarding the outcome.</p> <p>To examine if there exists unnoticed processes.</p>	<p>Interpretation of three adjusted and specified processes and types of value.</p>

3.7.5 Indexing process

The purpose of this phase was to structure and categorize the empirical material according to an inductive approach. The theoretical constructs of co-production process and aspects of value and the research questions guided the

categorization. The categorization was based on the females' descriptions regarding advertising meanings; experiences of advertising in general; preconditions and motivations facilitating or preventing co-production; consumption and media use as contextual elements; and experiences of value. This phase focused on finding similarities and conformities between the participants' descriptions. The NVivo software programme was used here only as a helpful tool. The more profound interpretation phase regarding the intensity and levels of co-production and types of value followed the indexing phase and that is described in the next chapter.

After obtaining the pre-understanding of the material, the qualitative content analysis was started by categorizing the material. Qualitative empirical material is categorized during a coding process (Spiggle 1994, 493). In qualitative content analysis the terms coding and indexing are often used interchangeably (Bloor & Wood 2006, 101). In this study the term *indexing* is used, since it allows for the allocation of the same piece of text into multiple codes, while the term coding refers to the allocation of a code into only one section (*ibid.*). The empirical material was indexed and organized in several phases using NVivo software programme as a facilitating tool. With this software texts can be indexed under different types of *nodes*, for instance *cases*, *free nodes* or *tree nodes*. In this study a *node* is typically a collection of indexed parts of texts: "chunks" of expressions, phrases and sentences (Spiggle 1994, 493; Miles & Huberman 1994, 56) (see example in Appendix 10).

First, each participant's speech was indexed as a separate *case* from the group discussion in order to examine how consistent the participant's views were during the group discussion compared to her interview. As a separate case it was also easy to examine her contribution to the discussion and her general ideas towards the topic. As a result hand-written mind maps of emerging topics, ideas and notes regarding the participants' views (example in Appendix 11) were outlined.

Second, according to the inductive approach (Creswell 2003, 132) the preliminary ideas of classification titles were created drawing on Tesch (1990, 142-145), Miles & Huberman (1994, 56-62) and Bogdan & Biklen (1992, 166-172). The material of *one focus group* (Tesch 1990) including hand-written mind-maps, ideas and notes was classified by two basic questions: "How do females describe the meanings of advertising" and "How do females describe their experiences of advertising?" The basic questions aimed at eliciting emerging themes and not confining to theoretical constructs of the study. The intention was to catch the underlying meaning of the text, not only the explicit substance. The described meanings and experiences were interpreted by drawing on the researcher's own stock of meanings (Spiggle 1994, 499). The participants' descriptions were written in the table in columns and classified as preliminary themes in rows. Similarities and consistencies were easy to notice. This resulted in the list of preliminary classification titles (Appendix 12).

Since the titles were tentative and needed revision, the third phase aimed at linking the titles more intensively with the theoretical constructs and the re-

search questions. The titles were examined through the constructs of advertising meanings; environmental and other contextual conditions such as consumption and media use; economic, social and psychological motivations; the participants' experiences of advertising in general; and their experiences of value. The group discussions and interviews were read with the aim of dovetailing the material with the titles. Similar topics were clustered together and new topics were added. As a result, the preliminary titles were revised as a list of master codes and sub-codes (Miles & Huberman 1994, 58-59) applying NVivo's hierarchical structure of *tree nodes* (Appendix 13).

In the final phase all group discussions and all interviews were read and meaningful parts of the text were indexed according to the tree nodes hierarchy. During the indexing the differences and similarities between nodes were compared (Spiggle 1994, 493). A few sub-nodes were adjusted and added. After indexing all categorized nodes were printed out and read through to re-examine possible mistakes in indexing. Corrections and re-indexing were made and positions of a few sub-nodes were shifted in the hierarchy.

The participants' written stories regarding a particular "Nanso" advertisement were indexed not till after the actual interpretation phase. The stories were used as complementary material and they were indexed according to the final three themes.

3.8 Interpreting the material

The purpose of this phase was to identify the actual level and manner of consumer activation in co-production and to identify the types of value. The previous indexing process also included interpretation when situating the nodes under the correct titles. The focus however was on categorizing the material and by indexing it was not possible to get direct answers to the research questions. The interpretation phase hence aims at making sense of the categorized material through more abstract conceptualizations (Spiggle 1994, 497). It is "intuitive, subjective and particularistic" by nature and it cannot be presented as a linear procedure (*ibid.*).

In this phase I made interpretations regarding several questions which were associated with the research questions and theoretical constructs: how elements of prior conditions and other contextual factors facilitate or prevent the co-production; how the consumer is motivated to participate; how the consumer evaluates costs and benefits of the process; how the actual customization experience is described; how the distinctive levels of customization are described; and how value is constructed. All issues aimed at answering the main question "how do consumers co-create value in advertising?"

In the interpretation I aimed at taking into account both the consumers' observable behaviour and unobservable mental activities. Both types of activities came up in the consumers' descriptions of their experiences. Interpreting

the mental activities and their meanings was challenging. I followed a few basic rules that directed my interpretation. One basic decision was how much weight to give to the participants' comments and to the themes that had emerged (Krueger & Casey 2000, 136; Morgan 1997, 63; Stewart et al. 2007). Here attention was paid to a few essential features of the texts (*ibid.*). First, *extensiveness of themes* was examined, which means how many focus groups and different participants expressed or discussed a particular theme. According to the research questions the focus was on the advertising meanings and experiences which were common to several consumers.

Second, *frequency of utterances* may indicate the importance of the issue. How repeatedly something is said may imply the significance of the issue, but sometimes a key issue may have been mentioned only once. It is also necessary to distinguish if a particular theme was repeated by only one participant or if it occurred in the talk of several participants. It is however worth noting that in the qualitative content analysis the participants' expressions or phrases were not specially counted or quantified.

Third, the participants' *detailed and specific* comments regarding a particular topic were noted. Basically, more weight was given to elaborate descriptions. Fourth, comments and discussion that aroused *emotions, enthusiasm or intensity*, could carry more weight (*ibid.*). However Morgan (1997, 62) points out that it is important to distinguish also between what people find interesting and what they find important. A long discussion about a topic indicates that the topic is found interesting, but it does not mean that people find it important. In the interpretation a combination of these four elements was taken into account, also known as "group-to-group validation" (Morgan 1997, 63).

The indexing phase generated categorized material, which constituted the basis for interpretation. I made inferences in order to find more similarities between the categories and more generalized patterns characterizing the consumers' experiences (Spiggle 1994, 499). This resulted in two preliminary themes that emerged as an intermediate phase for the subsequent hermeneutical interpretation. The themes proposed were "co-producing information and ideas", and "co-producing self-indulgence".

The subsequent interpretation required reading the categorizations again and seeking similarities, differences and nuances related to the theoretical constructs. During the interpretation the interplay between an individual level (for instance subjective meanings) and group level (for instance meanings common to several females) were taken into account. Separate parts of the text were related to the overall content as a continuous part-to-whole and whole-to-part process in order to interpret issues in an appropriate context. The consumers' descriptions of advertising experiences were interpreted taking into account their general media use routines of consumption as a context which enriched the understanding of their talk.

Finally, the interpretation resulted in three different ways of describing how consumers customized advertising and in several ways in which value was constructed. Short descriptions of the processes were written, but at the same

time it was noticed that the interpretations needed to be revised. Next, all the empirical material was read through once again and manually re-indexed according to the particular three themes. On the one hand the aim was to examine if there was enough evidence regarding the processes; on the other hand the aim was to examine if there were any unnoticed processes. In this phase different colours were used as indexing marks so that it was easy to find the highlighted text, and as a result of considering it, descriptions of the interpretations of the three processes were adjusted and specified.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter the empirical findings are introduced in relation to the purpose of this study. The purpose was to investigate how consumers participate in co-creation of value in advertising and what the dimensions and meanings of value are to the consumer. The research questions were specified as follows:

1. How do consumers co-create value in advertising?
 - 1.1. How do consumers describe the meanings of advertising to them?
 - 1.2. How do consumers describe their value experiences of advertising?

The findings are discussed by using the theoretical constructs of the consumer co-production process (Etgar 2008) and aspects of value (Holbrook 1996; 2006; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a; b). The findings are also supported and exemplified by quotations. The quotations of the focus group discussions aim at illustrating the interactive nature of the discussions (Wilkinson 2004, 184), resulting in some cases in rather long quotes. In addition, parts of individual interviews and questionnaires are also cited as evidence supportive of interpretation.

4.1 The participants' contextual environment

This chapter considers the main points of the participants' background information. First, the females' prime interests related to consumption are introduced. After that their socio-cultural context is examined by using the theoretical constructs of macro environmental conditions and the consumers' operant resources (Arnould et al. 2006; Etgar 2008). Then their general attitudes toward the topic are analyzed. The consistency of the views they expressed in the group discussion and interview is also examined. Finally, some perceived norms gov-

erning the discussions and the interaction between the participants are brought out and discussed.

4.1.1 Prime interests and manners of consumption

All participants were well-educated females, and many of them had a university degree and a long working career (see the profile of the participants in Table 12). Most of them had a family and children. Some women were divorced living in a new relationship and family. A few were single.

The participants reported various leisure activities, such as: travelling in Finland and in foreign countries and taking also short breaks to travel; spending spare time in their summer house; taking physical exercises such as golf, yoga, dancing or walking; attending cultural events like movies, concerts or opera; and reading, which was the most popular activity. Some of them studied besides working. Interestingly, one participant had a passion for buying and reading two to three books every week. When asked about her presumably huge book collection she explained that unwanted books could be donated to her local library. Many participants were interested in home decoration and furnishing. This was also manifested in the way they used various mediums related to decoration, and in their consumption habits. Actually, a few of them were so skilled that they practised as advisors in their social networks. In addition there were some artistically developed women who sang in choirs and one even sang and played in a band with her sisters.

In the interviews as well as in the questionnaire the women were asked to describe themselves as consumers. The discussed consumption of products varied from personal goods to larger investments such as furniture or cars, but the focus was on consumption of personal goods and intangibles. In their descriptions many women emphasised their preference for high quality; for brand names; for classical and long-lasting clothes and other goods; for boutiques and big department stores; and they stressed the cautiousness that characterized their approach to consumption. In contrast, some women preferred second hand goods, with flea markets and recycling as an essential part of their lifestyle. This did not mainly spring from economic needs; rather it was a matter of principle. Likewise, among the buyers of high quality brands there were participants whose financial resources were extremely restricted. Moreover, some participants were inspired to blend different styles using both expensive brands and flea market findings. Interestingly, both the "high quality" and "second hand" supporters justified their purchases by describing how their consumption follows the principles of sustainable development. It may be noted here that there were also some enthusiastic collectors who invested money and time in their interests. One collected cookery books, the earlier-mentioned female read and collected books and there were a few antique collectors who renovated their findings. The women were also asked if and how they used the web. Most of them used it as a basic part of their work or studies and also privately for their own information searches and for shopping. Only a few participants did not use the Internet at all, or used it only occasionally.

4.1.2 The socio-cultural context and resources

The participants' overarching macro environmental conditions seemed to contribute to their engagement in the co-production process (Etgar 2008, 99). First, the participants' financial situations implied that they were well-educated female consumers with a working career, living in an economy of mature markets and sharing a coherent cultural background. Then, considering the preceding state as a cultural condition, it is assumed that they live in an economy where consumers increasingly appreciate experiential consumption (Carù & Cova 2007; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Pine & Gilmore 1998) instead of conventional tangible goods. This shift encourages consumers in co-production and customization (Etgar 2008). This was evident in the interviews when manners of consumption and spending of money were discussed. Some women, regardless of their diverse life situations or financial resources, emphasised that they preferred investing in services and pleasant "experiences". In fact, the investments were not necessarily expensive ones but small purchases that brightened up their ordinary lives. They experienced these purchases as more rewarding than shopping for "unnecessary tangible goods". Finally, technological development in the Finnish consumers' macro environment also facilitates co-production, since for instance the use of the web is widespread at work and at home.

Based on the questionnaires, discussions and interviews, the participants seemed to be fairly equal in their operant resources, i.e. social, cultural and physical competences (Arnould et al. 2006). They reported having significant social relationships and vital friendships outside their family life. They belonged to various social networks for instance through their work, hobbies, studies or societies. The significance of social relationships became evident when themes of consumption and peer-to-peer communication were discussed. One interesting part of their cultural competence was that they seemed to be fairly advertising literate. Advertising literacy comprises more than only understanding the meaning of the ad; it is an ability to facilitate the understanding by using it within the social context and social interactions (Ritson & Elliott 1995). This ability came up when the participants expressed their familiarity with advertising trends and styles or discussed advertising objectives using professional language and terms (O'Donohue 2000, 165). It is possible, however, that only advertising literate females were interested in and volunteered for the group discussions. The next quotation exemplifies the participants' skills and consciousness of the marketers' intentions.

B4: --- but then I thought that advertisers today, they are actually like really professional, because I've been impressed by these well prepared and like polished and newspaper ads and such that I just, they don't like directly hype up some issue like buy buy buy or do this and this, but instead they like create this illusion or perception of some lifestyle or something and then it like little by little injects itself under your skin and then you think like yeah, that kind of lifestyle is pretty nice and then little by little you start to maybe orient yourself in that direction too so that here when you look at this offering, you see they're really thought out and not anymore like those only ninety-nine ads like back in the

day ((laughter)) when was it that we had those, really horrible ones, and you thought who'd like fall for that, but they did actually.

B3: They worked

B4: Yeah, yeah

U: At least back in the day ((laughter)), () they have to be made well because we customers pay for them, we pay for them ()

U: [Yes]

U: [That's true, that's true] ((talking on top of each other))

Another part of the participants' cultural competence was highlighted in the discussions regarding the ethics and social responsibility of advertising. All focus groups spontaneously brought out several issues, such as: vulnerability of some target groups like children, young girls and the elderly; advertising as a booster of unnecessary consumption; misleading advertising of "light " products; persuasive advertising of unhealthy and junk food; and the use of sex in advertising. Furthermore, the theme of ecological responsibility in advertising and on the part of consumers emerged in almost all focus groups, especially when women discussed car advertisements and talked about their experiences of car purchases.

Moreover, in one group the participants were stimulated when one member complained about the absence of minority groups such as homosexuals and the handicapped in advertising. The atmosphere in the discussion slightly tensed up and the participants challenged each other's views. In fact, the underlying issue in this discussion of minorities was whether advertising reflects the prevailing values of the society, or is advertising a powerful instrument for changing attitudes. Interestingly, from the consumers' perspective it was supposed that if advertising were socially responsible it would take into account the minority groups. However it was thought that audiences may not yet be ready to encounter the minorities in the ads. What was interesting here was that at the same time as the participants considered themselves to be conscious of and "resistant" to the impact of advertising, they also believed that advertising influenced *other* consumers and society. The participants expressed the view that if minorities appeared in advertising, the minorities would become a more visible and therefore a more accepted part of the society.

Consumer's physical competences refer to the person's physical and mental capacity (Arnould et al. 2006, 93). All participants were supposed to be physically equally capable, but it is proposed that they differed from each other in energy and emotion. This was evident especially in the group discussions where the interaction brought out the most salient differences. From the view of value co-creation, the consumer's energy and emotions influence her activity. This in turn is a variable construct (Levy & Windahl 1985) influencing her intentions to engage in co-production. Finally, the participants' operand resources constituting economic and material resources (Arnould et al. 2006) were not directly asked about in the questionnaire or discussed, but some women were spontaneously explicit about their purchasing power. Regarding the other females, inferences about the economic and material resources were made based on the participants' occupations and positions in the labour market. Only a few

participants were outside the labour market by reason of unemployment, studies, children or retirement.

In spite of the cultural consistency each participant had an individual way of regarding advertising based on her socio-cultural background. One participant for instance was interested in photography and had a passion for fashionable clothing. On one hand she enjoyed the visual compositions, settings and meanings of advertising illustrations and found them fascinating. On the other hand the advertisements provided her with up-to-date knowledge about fashion, even if she did not intend to buy the particular product herself. Another participant with scarce financial resources delighted in her luxurious fashion magazine advertisements which she found visually satisfying. She did not desire to buy those products which in fact were not accordant with her style. Direct mail from shops and department stores instead was a remarkable source of information for her and she examined the mail for the purpose of saving money.

4.1.3 Attitudes towards the topic and perceived consistency

It was natural and easy to discuss advertising in the focus groups, and interestingly, interaction elicited examination of advertising that was more elaborate compared to one-to-one interview situations (Stewart et al. 2007, 46). During the interviews many participants examined the clothing advertisements quite quickly and their descriptions often were not very nuanced. Probably all the participants felt more comfortable about expressing their opinions on ads in the context of interaction with others.

The participants' general views towards advertising that were expressed in discussions could be presented as a continuum. At one end advertising is experienced as an effective force, which insidiously aims at penetrate into people's everyday lives and has a damaging effect on consumers. Advertising thus represented a *threat* and the participants rejected it from this *defensive* position. On the other end the participants were very conscious of the commercial goals of advertising, but they did not see it as threatening for themselves. Instead, they felt that they could *control the influence* of advertising and even *benefit* from it. They saw advertising as a negotiable proposal and treated media influence as a matter of personal choice, which reinforced their sense of autonomy (Hirschman & Thompson 1997). Finally, the rest had views between these two ends.

The next citation illustrates the view of the participant regarding the feeling of empowerment. She described in the group discussion and in her interview how she "pragmatically" deployed advertising when planning to purchase for instance home electronics, food or travel services. She noticed the huge amount of advertising in the media, but at the same time that it is necessary to have it for instance for low subscription fees of magazines. None the less according to her the consumer has the final power to ignore or make use of advertising.

A10: Yes, I don't feel that to be fashionable or to be a good person I'd have to consume a terrible amount, (.) and as such ads don't really irritate me, because I understand well that magazines can't survive without ads they have to advertise things, but you don't have to read them and it's not worth it to get irritated by them, why would you get irritated, you can just skip them like with a digital TV set you can jump over the ads, those magazines couldn't operate without advertising, that's a reality, and that's that. But you don't have to read them if you don't want to, it's really voluntary, you don't have to get annoyed by TV programmes if you don't watch them. Why would you watch something and then get angry? ((Laughs)) Why on Earth?

The first opening question in the group discussions aimed at relieving the atmosphere and exploring the participants' general feelings and underlying attitudes towards advertising. Most of the participants made a rather neutral or unfavourable stand on the topic, and only a few participants expressed favourable attitudes. According to Stewart et al. (2007, 63) the issues that the participants raise first are likely to be those that are most memorable, important or salient to them. The answers to the opening question are typically excluded from the interpreted material (Krueger & Casey 2000, 44), but in this study the question was directly connected to the topic at hand, and there are a few observations on the answers. First, the participants did not attempt to please the moderator by expressing opinions regarding advertising that were too approbatory. One participant for instance pointed out that she felt relaxed and free to talk, since the moderator in her introduction had stressed that this study was not sponsored by the publisher of the women's magazines. Second, the participants did not get provoked by other participants' answers and opinions. Only one person directly pointed to another's opinion when stressing her own opposite view. In one group, a rather long answer by the first participant evoked quite long answers from others. Finally, answers to the opening question were quite consistent with the participant's views in the later discussion and interview, reflecting her general attitude towards the topic. Taken together, the participants expressed a balanced understanding of advertising. On one hand they questioned and criticized it, on the other they also saw benefits.

The consistency of each participant's views during the discussion and with her interview was also explored. No one showed noticeable inconsistency. Although the views of some women were challenged by others, they usually explained and negotiated their views. In the interviews a few participants broadly described their main views and the views they expressed in opposition to others during the group discussion. This one-to-one situation deepened the level of the discussion.

4.1.4 Underlying norms governing the discussions

The focus group discussions carry underlying norms, which govern the discussion and define what kinds of behaviour are approved and disapproved by the group (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). These norms influence the interaction between the participants. In the group discussions at hand four underlying norms were perceived. First, the female participants were very sensitive to the illustra-

tion of age in the advertisements. According to this “age norm” the women were not allowed to believe in the image of a perfect women illustrated in cosmetics advertisements. However, they were willing to use these prestige global cosmetics brands involving a sense of luxury and pleasure. Photographs of perfect faces of seemingly ageless women were considered as unreal, and the models were conceived as too young to promote for instance wrinkle creams. It was noticed that the images were artificially improved and the skin of the model was smoothed and her eyelashes lengthened by the use of software programmes. The advertisements of cosmetics and clothing were typically read through the “age lenses”. Aging seemed to be a common concern for the women. The middle-aged participants in particular discussed it with a mixture of humour and sarcasm. Interestingly, the younger participants also shared this view - or did not want to challenge it. The age norm was similar to the consumers’ *critical and rejecting interpretive reading strategy* (Hirschman & Thompson 1997) that the consumers may apply when forming a relationship with the mass media. According to this strategy consumers criticize the false and unrealistic media representation and the economic motivations behind it.

The second norm was named “uncovered selling propositions”. The selling propositions in cosmetics ads were generally assessed to be unreliable and “monkey business”, especially if the propositions were supported by results of various consumer tests. This is exemplified in the next citation in which one woman, who had earlier worked in the cosmetics industry, challenged this norm. After a short silence the conversation continued, but finally the participants did not really become convinced by the reasoning. Thus the norm is assumed to remain unchanged.

- C8: - these percentage values I mentioned, this elongates and thickens by so and so many percent well that's one of those which (.) I don't know if they work, can they make (.) now I'll get really long flutterers when I buy this mascara
- H: yeah, why are they so widely used?
- C8: isn't there some law against that too? ((laughing))
- C2: yes because there's no way they can know it exactly like that
- C8: [yes]
- C2: You'd think there would be some rule about what they are allowed to
- C8: What they are allowed to promise?
- U: Yes
- U: Mmm
- C3: Here they have, Nivea. Umm in the consumer test 76 women rated 86 % firmer skin, 82 % less wrinkles [mmm]
- C4: I carried out testing like that for ten years. It's a genuine test.. ((short silence))
- U: (.) is the feel?
- U: [they would've measured] ((talking on top of each other))
- C4: it can be done, it is done both ways, yeah. It is terribly important how the consumer feels and here they do say that the consumer [yes, yes] when you read this carefully, they give them to people and they test them out and then they have a form and then they say, I mean these aren't total hogwash these really are and then it can be, they do do this stuff in testing facilities out there
- C6: if the consumer says 80 % then how does she know how to calculate it herself, it's dif-
- C4: (.) [for twenty, fifty people and they've calculated it from that, (.) they have (.) different surveys

- C6: yeah but if the person says herself that yeah, @I lost 80 % of my wrinkles then how can she count that 80 % ((common laughter)) ((talking on top of each other))
- C3: () Out of 76 women 86 % felt their skin to be firmer [mmm]
- U: [it's the feeling]
- U: yeah what they ask for
- C3: yes and not any, I, not so- ((laughter))
- U: [understand]
- C3: exactly
- C7: but there must some trick there I must say, I think that if you ask most people like @you believe this? Well no, but still everyone will go, and buy and use it [mmm]
- C3: £ what if there's something to it after all and ((laughs))
- C7: I'm sure everyone understands these must be somewhat exaggerated but, but you have to use some lotion so then why not. [mmm mmm]
- C8: Maybe the thing is that like luxury kind of [yeah] (.) and spoiling yourself like why not buy something £ lovely for myself for once and maybe the bottle is prettier and the product smells better than some Pirkka product [mmm]

The third underlying norm was the expectation that the advertisements should always sell something, the “selling norm”. Accordingly, the participants often expected to see selling proposals, information of prices or a list of dealers in the ad. This idea of expected selling often confused the participants. For instance, in one focus group the women discussed enjoyable and cheerful advertisements for one particular optician store. The ads contain funny drawings, wordplay and rhymes, and this style has been used for years by the advertiser. At the same time, however, the participants considered if these ads were effective enough to generate sales. This idea of advertising as “salesmanship in print” (Heath & Feldwick 2008, 34) is based on the information processing models, where the advertising message is transmitted to the reactive consumer who rationally processes the obtained information. Actually, this expectation implies that ads are read and evaluated through ideas of consumption and buying. Accordingly, Scott (1994b, 464) presents the view that advertising is the literature of economic exchange and when we “read ads as consumers”, we understand the text as an effort to sell. However, this expectation of selling excludes the idea of co-production of value, since it is based on the idea of exchange of value.

The final perceived norm assumes that consumers do not want to experience themselves as “victims of advertising”. The metaphorical expression “victim of advertising” is usually used to illustrate a person who has bought something as a result of being seduced by advertising and who for this reason is considered as irrational and easy to entice. Therefore reading and believing in ads is not conceived as rational behaviour and some participants tended to present themselves as “non-victims”. This came up particularly in two focus group discussions. In one group the first participant answered the first question³³ stating in short “Well, I’m (name) and (.) I could say that I’m absolutely not a victim of adver-

³³ The first opening question was asked aiming at “breaking the ice” and getting all participants to say something: -“Let’s briefly introduce ourselves. Would you please say your first name and also describe which two to three words immediately come to mind from the word “advertising?”

tising ((give a laugh)). (.) *That's it.*". She explicitly wanted to express her immunity to advertising as well as her rationality as a consumer, as became evident later in the discussion. This answer, however, provoked discussion where other participants questioned this view and also used this expression in a reverse way, illustrating how they consciously *were* "victims" of their own will when they made use of advertisements for instance in order to gain financial benefits.

4.2 Female consumers' experiences of co-production

This chapter aims at answering the research questions regarding how the consumers' co-production and customization process occurs. From the consumers' view the co-production of value means that certain encountered advertisements offer valuable substance to the consumers' further purposes. Three different types of co-production processes were identified and they were named metaphorically. The types of the co-production and value are summarized in Table 14 and also singly described below. The types of value are depicted in detail in Chapter 4.3

TABLE 14 Summary of the types of co-production processes and types of value.

Name of the co-production process	Essential features of the process	Types of value
Mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping	The consumers co-produced value by mixing, matching and blending the brand ads and the editorial promotional content of magazines. Advertising constituted one part of the experiential platform which was constructed from the ads and their surrounding media context. The platform facilitated the consumer's immersion in the co-production experience. The consumers engaged in co-production at the consumption level.	Feeling of independency and freedom of choice; Feeling of being up-to-date Self-oriented; Efficiency; Aesthetics; Excellence
Goal-oriented journey	Searching, evaluating and producing advertising and information are conscious and goal-oriented activities. The motivation may stem from economic rewards or females may have social motivations. The consumers' participation in the co-production experience is more active than passive and includes educational features. Direct mail catalogues, print	Feeling of empowerment; Learning experiences; Increase in cumulative product knowledge; Economic value Self-oriented; Efficiency; Ex-

(continues)

TABLE 14 (continues)

Name of the co-production process	Essential features of the process	Types of value
	advertisements and customer magazines constituted the experiential platform of co-production, which was complemented with the social forums of “prosumers”. Information technology, marketers’ ability to facilitate the co-production and the females’ skills to deploy the technology contribute the process. The co-production occurred at the consumption and distribution level.	cellence Other-oriented; Esteem; Status
Daydreaming and fantasizing	The experiential platform was made up of visually rich and activating advertising imagery. It was open enough to co-production of ephemeral but fascinating feelings. The co-production activities took place at the consumption and also distribution level. The co-production was related to entertaining and aesthetic experiences. It implies more passive than active consumer participation, but engaging in the distribution suggests more concrete activity. Mythic thinking as one interpretive strategy was characteristic of the daydreaming and fantasizing. Consumers were assumed to have supportive resources, such as time, energy, emotions and imagination. Moreover, they were mainly motivated by psychological drives.	Fascinating feeling composed of excitement, fun and pleasure Self-oriented; Play; Aesthetics Other-oriented; Esteem

4.2.1 Mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping

B3: so so, so like (.) with some others you just really rather skim through even if you don't read any of it, nothing sticks to you like that but like for the evening, in the evening it's nice to look through it and look at the pretty pictures ((minimum feedback)), beautiful people and beautiful things, interior designs (.) clothes ---

In this co-production process the females participated in co-production by blending the value of brand advertisements and the editorial content. In the context of a women's fashion magazine the brand advertisements were conceived as suggesting ways of current look and styles. However, at the same time they were conceived as portraying only one-sided - i.e. the producer's preferred - view. The females appreciated the editorial fashion photographs and articles or product tests which were conducted by magazine readers for their ability to "blend different brands and styles" and introduce a more multifaceted view of brands compared to the brand advertisements. As evaluated against the females' goals the editorial content offered more "practical" value in relation to consumers' scarce time resources and needs of efficiency (Etgar 2008, 100). The brand advertisements instead "stated the position" of the particular promoted brand maintaining the brand image. Actually, these two ways of promoting brands and products in magazines *complemented* each other. However, it is not supposed that the women wanted to change or customize the brand personalities (*ibid.*), but they wanted to see more imaginative and creative compositions of different brands. They desired more "freedom of choice" and also information regarding the prices and dealers. Here, advertising constituted one part of the experiential context (Carù & Cova 2007b) which was constructed from the ads and their surrounding media context. The brand ads alone did not offer experiences, but as a platform they facilitated the consumer's immersion (Carù & Cova 2007a;b; Pine & Gilmore 1998) in the co-production experience. In addition, this reflects the symbiotic relationship between advertising and media in which both parties enhance the effectiveness of each other (Hirschman & Thompson 1997). In this process the intensity of the consumers' level of engaging in co-production reflected the *consumption level* (Etgar 2008, 103).

A note by one woman in her questionnaire exemplifies this type of co-production: "Women's fashion magazines constitute the site of window-shopping for me". Window-shopping as a metaphor (Spiggle 1994, 498) illustrates this participation in the co-production process. Consumers mixed, matched and blended different brands stylishly and innovatively in their minds, also including information of prices and dealers. The role of the brand advertising is to maintain particular brand image. The editorial promotional presentations complement this, exemplifying the usage of the brands. The consumer can view the supply by wandering around the magazine at leisure. She may compare the alternative brands and assess their adequacy for her own purposes. She may end up making a buying decision or the window-shopping may serve merely as entertainment. What is important here is the female con-

sumer's way of mixing, matching and blending commercial ads and the editorial content of magazines.

A quite similar process of combining the ads and promotional editorial content occurred regarding decoration and furnishing products. This came up especially in personal interviews, where the women talked about their media use. Home decoration as an interest has become popular in Finland during the last decade and accordingly the supply of the decoration-related media has remarkably increased. Among the participants were several heavy users of decoration magazines and TV programmes of decoration and furnishing. They had subscribed several different magazines and in addition they reported recording of the programmes and watching them later at leisure. They were also active users of direct mail catalogues, books and web sites related to this topic.

The media context constitutes an essential element in this co-production process. The females discussed the commercialization of media content in the focus groups and during the interviews. They were asked to discuss the boundaries between media and advertisements, for instance what parts of the magazine they considered as advertising and how they drew the line between these parts. Although it was seemingly easy to distinguish between the advertisements and identify the paid messages, drawing the well-defined line was not an easy task (Dahlen & Edenius 2007; van Reijmersdal et al. 2005; Hirschman & Thompson 1997; Wernick 1991). The women were very conscious of the editorial product presentations as a part of the content and articles in the magazines. None the less, most of them had not considered these presentations as advertising. Many of them identified the congruence between the promotional goals of paid advertisements and many editorial articles. The editorial articles - despite their explicitly commercial nature - were conceived as more objective, informative or interesting, and even more educational than paid brand advertisements. However the editorial product presentations were also considered as hidden advertising affecting consumers' wants. The next quotation of one focus group exemplifies this view. Actually a few participants had discussed this issue while having refreshments before the formal group discussion started. During the group discussion one woman posed this issue.

- C8: It's maybe a bit blurred perhaps that line, we just talked about it here, like for example Gloria which we all follow, here when they have these, fashion pieces, they always carefully mention who it's by, how much it costs, so is that an ad or is that some piece of writing?
- H: Mmm yeah, so what's your view? (.) If we think about these magazines here, so you can skim through them, what parts are advertising in these?
- U: Well everything
- C2: everything ((laughter)) I'd say yeah
- C7: Mmm I think, about these clothes so a lot of times you look at a magazine where you see these lovely clothes, I mean a lot of times it's happened that () you look where can you get them from then there is of course that (.) but of course the picture can be related to some fashion piece but but but, I feel that it's some type of an ad, that I can get interested and I want to see which outlet sells these at the moment. [yeah] (.) but I don't know really, if it's an ad or what it is.
- C8: That's marketing

- C6: I'd say the difference between an ad and a story in the magazine like this is, that the ad is the one where this, what's this (.) provider of the product or service, the producer themselves can choose the message, whereas others, if it's like placed inside some program or story in a magazine, [yeah] so then it's the writer of the story who selects how he experiences the product [so] [so]
- C8: I ran into, was it, well just recently there's been some, it was some cosmetics product which was, not in an ad but it was something like editorial staff favorites or something and what do you know I happened to need the product I went to buy it here from the Kamppi (.) what is it Stockmann Beauty, the product had run out because it was mentioned in this Gloria magazine (.) and it was no ad ((laughter))
- H: Yeah (.) yeah
- U: But worked like (.) an ad [yeah] [yeah]
- U: and apparently for them it was (.) common that these things work like this
- U: and I'm sure there's competition between these products, producers for whose products get to be in the magazines and I'd think that
- C2: Well so (.) how about (.) this picture here, I think it even advertises this person's movies a little bit. (.) You see this out there somewhere, like oh he's there in that movie, I'll go see it. So is that then advertising or is it just (.) ° publicity°?
- H: This is a good question (.) yeah, to like draw the line there, what are your opinions (.) where do you draw the line (.) like between advertising and not advertising?
- C3: I (.) would consider that an ad ((laughs))
- C4: A very considered one ((laughter)) I am actually currently working at this company where they come to get props, for these magazines and we're very happy to give all that and the precise prices and [mmm] so for us it's like extremely important that we do that, [yeah] because then it's even more (.) believable when it's not an ad that we paid for, [mmm] [yeah] (.) someone famous wearing that, around his neck, £ well that piece of jewelry is so £ well so it's very important, that as if he would always wear that piece of jewelry, and it just happens to be there, (.) on the cover of the magazine and.
- H: Yeah
- C7: it's kind of the same as in those interior design magazines when they present, umm expensive interiors and such but, they all do have this [mmm] [yeah] where you can then get them, so is that just product- (.) like this product information or what is it, infor- product information about all the stuff that exists out there, kind of really good because, because well, there's so much new stuff that if you had to start from like nothing, you'd have empty walls and interiors then you wouldn't even know what exists, so it's sort of information too, like consumer education in some sense, but of course it's also marketing, like do you need a sofa well here's one
- H: mmm
- C5: it's somehow so I thought it's some kind of soft advertising when they don't pay for it and you take it like for real more, and and umm you don't experience it so much as an ad even though you know that aha Rils has a spring collection that looks like that like good I saw it here now I can go and see what other similar stuff they have there [yeah]

The advertisers' capability and willingness to *facilitate* the co-production process also came up in the discussions. For example, as came up in the quotation above, one woman in her earlier position as a product manager of one manufacturer told that they were often asked to lend their products to fashion magazine photographs and this co-operation with media was considered as a highly important way of presenting products. This convention was a well-known fact among focus group members.

Although the females were aware of the promotional nature of the editorial content, they did not want to experience it as mere advertising. Instead, they *softened* the commercialized nature of the editorial content. This unwillingness to classify the commercial content as advertising may result from many reasons. One reason could be that although advertising is visually consumed (Schroeder 2002;2004) it is not considered as a commodity to be paid by a consumer. People tend to consider themselves as rational and the rational consumer is not willing to admit that she pays a subscription fee for having the advertisements; as one participant expressed that she is not willing to “pay for nothing”. The second reason could be that consumers do not generally want to be seen as “victims of advertising” while appreciating the promotional editorial content of magazines. This view was emphasized especially by those women who were negatively disposed towards advertising.

To summarize, in the context of women’s fashion magazines the consumers co-produced value by mixing, matching and blending the brand ads and the editorial promotional content of magazines. The role of the ads was to maintain particular brand images. The editorial promotional presentations complemented this, exemplifying the usage of the brands. This reflected the symbiotic relationship between advertising and media, in which both parties enhance the effectiveness of each other. Advertising constituted one part of the experiential platform which was constructed from the ads and their surrounding media context. The platform facilitated the consumer’s immersion in the co-production experience. The consumers’ level of intensity in their engagement in co-production reflected the consumption level.

4.2.2 Goal-oriented journey

A10: --- That it’s pretty difficult to like go to a store and look at the huge amount of stuff that’s there, without any idea on, what you’re looking for so yeah there is a lot of information.

In this type of process co-production was a more conscious and goal-oriented process than the previous one. The participants engaged in searching, evaluating and producing information, hints and ideas. The basis of the process lies in the females’ involvement in the promoted item. Basically the process is initiated by her perceived needs, such as a need to assess differences between brands before making a buying decision. According to Pine & Gilmore’s proposal (1998, 102) here the consumers’ participation in the co-production experience is more active than passive and includes educational features. Consumer activity here refers to awareness and goals. The motivation to engage in a goal-oriented journey may stem from cost rewards and cost reduction in spite of the consumer’s wealth and buying power. On one hand the received value is measurable in terms of saved money or saved time, i.e. the economic value results from the co-production process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b). On the other the social motivations such as the desire for control or feeling of empowerment, i.e. making controlled and more “rational” decisions, may also be valued. Thus, co-

production is seen as worth the psychological effort and the time and energy invested. However in some cases it was difficult for the females to admit that advertising would offer anything valuable for co-production. This was a little confusing, because a goal-oriented journey illustrates “rational” behaviour and a means of co-production. From the females’ point of view, however, “rational” behaviour may imply rejecting and ignoring the consumption of advertising and paid messages altogether.

Here direct mail catalogues, print advertisements and customer magazines³⁴ constituted one part of the experiential platform of co-production. This came up especially in the interviews. Moreover, information technology and the consumers’ skills to deploy it contribute to and deepen this type of co-production. Consumers have an easy access to information via the Internet, connecting for instance to newsgroup discussions, weblogs, manufacturers’ web sites or comparison search engines. In addition to Internet news groups the consumers have other supportive social resources, which may be seen as co-production partners (Etgar 2008, 103; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a). Communications and dialogical skills are maintained with these consumer networks. For instance, during the discussion in one focus group one advertisement elicited a discussion which exemplifies this kind of supportive social resources. In this situation the women acted as co-producing consumers. In the next citation they actively share their views regarding the “Louis Widmer” brand and its advertisement. They actually co-produced value based both on the ad and their experiences of the product. As a result they had developed more comprehensive view of the brand. The conversation also reflected the idea of the market as a forum, in which the roles of producer and consumer converge and consumer communities initiate dialogues related to products and consumption (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a). The social forum of “prosumers” (Pitt et al. 2006) thus complements the experiential platform.

- I: Yeah true yes. What do you have there (.) B6 still there?
 B6: yeah, this is a Louis Widmer (.) ad [yeah] this is umm (.) I don’t really, this is pretty bland this ad, but umm I have learned during my long life that the less they advertise it the better the product. I’ve used this at some point, started using it in the 70s, and used until (.) -87, or so [yeah], and extremely good lotions, absolutely, at least in those days like the best that there was, [yeah] I still use their hand lotion because I haven’t found any equivalent, hand lotion. But these days this is only available at drug stores, [so] [yeah] [mmm] back then in the 70s-80s this was umm, my friend had a chemist’s store, and she sold this line [yeah yeah] (.) so I bought it from there but, (.) umm, they advertise really little and, and (.) this ad probably doesn’t speak to anybody for example [mmm mmm] [mmm] [mmm], someone who doesn’t, doesn’t know this or hasn’t heard of this product so, so so I doubt that someone, someone who has never used this, and hasn’t developed a preference for this then I don’t think this ad would, light their fuse.
 B2: how do you think the price-quality ratio is?
 B6: good

³⁴ In Finland for instance “Pirkka” and “Yhteishyvä” are two big customer magazines which are included in customer programs. Pirkka is published by Kesko which is a corporation providing trading sector services. Yhteishyvä is published by S Group, which comprises cooperative enterprises.

- B2: that it's not too expensive
 B6: it's not too expensive it's not quite one of the cheapest ones but it's not one of the most expensive ones either, so the hand lotion alone, it's pretty (.) expensive, but it's worth it all.
 U: mmm
 U: mmm
 B6: So so umm.
 B5: This also reminds me of I remember that brand from my mother, probably when it had just arrived, so I've been left with this that that's one of those things that you should like have, I mean I don't have those definitely but that a mother should have them, I always look at it like aha, that's Louis Widmer I remember that pretty well, so in that way it would speak to me like if you knew what brand this is [yeah yeah exactly] if it didn't have the picture of this woman or anything and Louis Widmer you'd see this logo here then that could be a car make or something [yes it could] [mmm] well maybe not a car make but some (.) (.) brand Louis Widmer [mmm].
 B6: Mmm. For example.
 B5: Or did it come from there now (.) ((laughing together)) some after all some
 B7: There's a coupon there, doesn't that speak to you, you get-
 U: Do you get a discount?
 B5: I've seen that somewhere, but you didn't get it for free you got a discount-
 B6: [This is yeah], yeah, you get a discount, I don't like run after this stuff that I would go out and get them when they are so hopelessly small these, jar- tubes that they have there and they still cost like
 B3: Oh this is the travel pack this one?
 B6: Well yeah as a travel pack it's okay of course, (..) so this doesn't, campaign price only 3,50, so it is really cheap [mmm]
 B3: Well that's it, you try it
 B6: It's normally [is it like] 6 euros, the package includes 6 coupons of different sizes, (.) valid until 31.3.08 ((laughs))
 B5: But do you think she's of the appropriate age that person for the ad?
 B6: (.) umm (..) well (.) yes, I think that these lotions they are better exactly for younger skin. (..) I myself stopped using them when I started like, to shrivel a bit, so then, I thought now I must get some stronger stuff. (.) So this does (.) this is pretty close to the real, I'd say something like (.) up to forty years of age, max, for this one, unless the formula has changed.
 B7: £ All right and then the next £ ((laughing together))
 U: That's the fifty- ((laughter))

Here, the actual co-production occurred in the *consumption* and *distribution level* (Etgar 2008). However, according to the degree and type of consumers' communicative activities, the level could even be manufacturing with co-producing consumers. Distributing and manufacturing advertising implies controlling both the media and the content of the message. The Internet, as well as word-of-mouth, has changed the power balance between marketers, the media and consumers (Ihator, 2001, 199; Hurme 2001, 73). Consumers and marketers have free access to the real time mass medium in which they can publish what they want and whenever they want (Rowley 2001, 203-204). According to its dialogical nature the Internet provides a direct contact between marketers and consumers. Consumers may manufacture and distribute advertising by opening or entering into news group discussions or weblogs, sharing opinions and producing estimations in relation to products, services or other topics they are interested in. Advertisers and manufacturers often facilitate this co-production by offering essential and relevant information. For instance, marketers may provide de-

tailed product information and contribute the loading of pictures and links to weblogs from web sites. Through this social interaction the consumers are co-producers of value.

According to the interviews and focus group discussions, the above-mentioned communicative activities were not explicitly considered as advertising. When the females were asked about advertising on the Internet they usually pointed to irritating banners, pop-up ads or junk mail, which constitute the conventional types of web advertising. However the communicative activities came up especially in the interviews when the women described their media use and ways to search for the information they wanted.

In sum, co-producing value by searching, evaluating and producing advertising and information is a conscious and goal-oriented activity. It is often supported by communicative activities with social networks and co-consumers. The co-production occurred at the *consumption and distribution level*. The motivation may stem from economic rewards or females may have social motivations, such as a desire for empowerment or feeling of making controlled decisions. The consumers' participation in the co-production experience is more active than passive and includes educational features. Direct mail catalogues, print advertisements and customer magazines³⁵ constituted the experiential platform of co-production, which was complemented by the social forums of prosumers. Information technology, marketers' ability to facilitate the co-production and the females' skills in deploying the technology contributed to the process.

4.2.3 Daydreaming and fantasizing

A1: It is, something, dreams ((words on top of each other)) you get something like @hey, something could happen, maybe, if you get lucky@ I mean like that you want to like, dream about something--

The citation above illustrates expressions of "mythic thinking" (Kates & Shaw-Garlock 1999,44; Thompson & Haytko 1997,36) which was characteristic of the daydreaming and fantasizing type of co-production. Mythic thinking represents one interpretive strategy in which the consumer's knowledge enables her to recognize unrealistic or exaggerating images but paradoxically the consumer uncritically believes in those images: "I know, but all the same..." For instance the female behind this citation was a journalist and professionally acquainted with visual materials and photographing. Despite her professional background mythic thinking represented a way to negotiate personal meanings of ads: rejection and attraction by turns.

In this type of co-production the experiential platform was made up of visually rich and activating advertising imagery which was open enough (Carù & Cova 2007a;b; Sherry et al. 2007) for co-production. In practice, the consumers understood that ads are designed for commercial purposes, but in the particular

³⁵ In Finland for instance "Pirkka" and "Yhteishyvä" are two big customer magazines which are included in customer programs. Pirkka is published by Kesko which is a corporation providing trading sector services. Yhteishyvä is published by S Group, which comprises co-operative enterprises.

situation they desired visual consumption. The platform facilitated the co-production of a sense of fascination (Schroeder 2004). Importantly, the advertised brand or consumer's buying intentions were not focused on but rather the *enchanted atmosphere* elicited by brand advertisements. Experiential consumption requires the involvement of the consumer in the creative task. Co-production by daydreaming and fantasizing is related to entertaining and aesthetic experiences, implying more passive than active consumer participation (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Passive however does not imply completely passive people, but the consumer's contribution to the event is visual and aural (*ibid.*). Thus they do not re-construct the ad physically but mentally co-produce a fascinating experience. Actually, the females' descriptions of their experiences of the Dove campaign, which is described later in this section, suggested more active consumer participation.

A daydreaming and fantasizing way of co-production is supposed to occur occasionally according to the females' interests and time resources. The women are also assumed to have supportive physical resources, such as energy and emotions, and cultural resources such as imagination (Arnould et al. 2006, 95). They are assumed to be motivated by psychological drives, such as the act of participation itself as a satisfying experience; the desire for fun and aesthetics; the desire for excitement and variety; the desire for relaxation or deviation from their daily routines (Carù & Cova 2007a;b; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a; Sherry et al. 2007).

In three focus group, discussions of the advertising of the Dove brand elicited conversation exemplifying this way of co-production. The discussions were also related to the women's sensitivity about age and the earlier described "age-lenses". Accordingly, the traditional image of "the perfect woman" in cosmetics advertising made female consumers feel inadequate and incomplete, since it emphasizes unnatural perfection and ageless faces. Advertising of Dove brand instead represented something so real and lifelike for the participants that, interestingly, it was called *anti-advertising*. According to the participants the Dove brand makes females feel accepted as a way they are. It illustrated a woman as brave and self-confident and emphasized the beauty coming inside-out. The participants discussed several Dove ads and also one documentary they had seen on television. All of those conveyed the feeling of reality and the "transparency" of the brand image. For instance, one commercial had shown how a Dove billboard in Manhattan had actually been produced from the beginning all the way to the wall. In addition, in the documentary the women who had performed in the Dove advertisements were introduced and interviewed.

In the next citation the females discuss the feeling of fascination which was elicited by the Dove campaign. They bring out that *the feeling* in its own right is the main point – the value – and it is not necessarily linked with buying intentions. The quotation also shows the co-production activities take place at the *distribution level* (Etgar 2008). This is exemplified by one woman who had bought a campaign t-shirt due to the "fascinating", "approving" and "affirma-

tive" feeling of the campaign. Importantly, buying and wearing the campaign t-shirt is interpreted as a part of the co-production process.

- B7: A good-looking grandma, like that one in the Dove ads could be there ((laughter))
- B3: I have a Dove ad here precisely. Pro age décolleté lotion for neck and chest skin. [mmm] [yeahyeah] [I've tried it] and well yeah ((laughter)) I've liked these ads they have on TV, they have you know women of different looks and sizes and like for example this, this pro age then that's for older age, adult skins, like umm, I think this like "beauty has no age limit", I think this is like a positive impression that it creates, and then like a feeling that okay, I can believe this thing without using that lotion so that, (.) beauty has no age limit, I want that so I can believe it without having to get that product and using it, but that in this is in that way (.) mmm, (.) in a positive sense, so that when you see that jar then you will take it with you, at the store.
- U: Mmm
- U: Yes
- B3: That I won't get worse with that at least. ((laughter))
- B5: But that's interesting there with that pro age, like there (.) they just had there at the Kamppi marketplace some time ago this photo exhibition, which had just like, older women, and umm (..) umm, what was it I don't remember was it support for people with eating disorders or something, where they sold those photos then, so that was really
- B3: [yeah I remember now]
- B5: interesting like that that I stood there
- B3: [postcards was it?]
- B5: yeah, I stood there for quite a long time and looked at the photos and then some girls passed by like, maybe 13 (year olds), 13-15 let's say between there then they said that so the advertisements from different products have worked anyway because they said @oh yeah there's that anti age like that photo exhibition@ (.) I mean anti age, ((laughter)) pro age (.) so (.) [almost the same] [mmm] [yeah] they didn't even get it at all when they went I was left thinking what did I ((laughter)) or then (.)
- B7: it's one of their campaigns because before that they had a campaign where different sized, different fatter and skinnier and ((many talk on top of each other)) [oh yeah] like usually they all have to be really skinny, and that campaign they (Dove) had before that and I was just then at the Beauty and Health Fair when they had that campaign, and I thought it was absolutely charming when they sold these T-shirts that said Lovely Daughter and Lovely Mother. I didn't buy that Lovely Mother one for myself but for my daughter I did buy the Lovely Daughter one (.), they had somehow such a terribly (.) [yeah] [positive] accepting and positive and [mmm] charming and they're somehow made believable because they accept us [mmm], there was some photos like that there too, (.) they had these like this portrait here they had these of like scarred stomachs [mmm] and wrinkly [mmm] stretch marks, [mmm] and all these things that are part of life.
- B5: And then umm well, I've seen there was some documentary or something or in some program about these women who had been a part of this [mhm] and a few of them like opened out that others didn't want that the photos have now been taken but there's no discussion. Yeah, so there was even more there that even I had to look at that woman there for example several times like is that the same woman that was there oh dear me like they and how old was the oldest of them, I don't remember now. Actually that's totally irrelevant to this matter.

Naming the Dove campaign as anti-advertising reflects the consumers' multi-dimensional and ambivalent attitudes towards advertising (O'Donohue 2001). In general, consumers regard ads as false and they are used to apply critical and rejecting interpretive reading strategies (Hirschman & Thompson 1997) when

encountering ads. Consumers hence may feel confused if advertising utilizes devices contrary to the advertising genre (Cook 2001) since the genre itself also influences her interpretation. While the Dove campaign surprised the females as advertising, at the same time it offered raw material (Sherry et al. 2007) and sufficient openness for co-production activities.

Daydreaming and fantasizing as a type of co-production came across in the females' discussions in many ways. For instance, a fascinating atmosphere of the ad was transferred to the actual use of the product. In one focus group the women watched a kind of fairytale imagery in the advertisement of "Herbina" cosmetics. One of them described how she had used these cosmetics with her 14 year old daughter, aiming at affirming the "girlish feeling" and togetherness. Thus, the co-production experience started as *pre-consumption* and continued as the *core consumption* of the product (Arnould et al. 2004; Carù & Cova 2007a; Grönroos 2006). The social interaction in the group discussion elicited the *remembered consumption* experience of co-production (*ibid.*).

The females also spoke about their longing for beauty and for aesthetic experiences, which were satisfied especially by advertisements of "clothing, lipstick or blusher". In the next citation they discuss this way of co-production. Interestingly, two of them had emphasized their scarce economic resources, but they were subscribers to a particular luxurious female magazine. However, they did not read the magazine and ads included it with buying intentions. The ads and the magazine allowed them to fantasize and imagine - or as one participant put it: "*It is a kind of peeping, if you can't afford the product, at least you can look at it in the magazine.*"

- D1: [but if], (..) does the advertiser think for example, some Longchamp bags, I don't buy Longchamp bags well I don't put terrible amounts of money into shoes or stuff like that, then I see that big bags like that are in fashion so I can go look at them somewhere else and (.) it affects the style I can buy, and stuff, and then if I look at these prices and the women's clothing they are totally outrageous in Gloria here but it doesn't (.) I'm not gonna go buy that product but instead it might give me the incentive to buy some product in the same style, yeah that this here looks good now this is plastic
- D6: yeah so for real it's nice to browse the magazine and look at the pretty pictures when you don't have the money to buy them for real
- D1: but then you can buy something in the same style
- D6: [yeah something in that]
- D2: yeah some idea on what you might like yourself, and in any case it's like, when it's, if I open this or I open Kotivinkki then the, it's somehow it's so, looks so good, as if it was a kind of surprise for me, because of that I could like continue (laughs) even though part of it misses me but that's not so and stuff, but that doesn't, that doesn't mean that you have to buy it, I wouldn't buy it from another magazine either.
- U: mmm yeah exactly
- D2: but they do then have the colors and such, umm

To summarize, the experiential platform for daydreaming and fantasizing was made up of visually rich and activating advertising imagery. It was open enough to for the co-production of ephemeral feelings but ones none the less of fascination. The co-production activities took place at the *consumption* and also

distribution levels. The co-production was related to entertaining and aesthetic experiences. It implies more passive than active consumer participation, but engaging in the distribution suggests a more concrete activity. Mythic thinking as one interpretive strategy was characteristic of the daydreaming and fantasizing. The advertised brand or consumer's buying intentions were not focused on. Consumers were assumed to have supportive resources, such as time, energy, emotions and imagination. Moreover, they were mainly motivated by psychological drives.

4.3 Dimensions of value in the co-production process

In this section the dimensions of value in three diverse co-production processes are described. According to the co-production process (Etgar 2008), the value is an *output* of the consumer's activation stage where he/she engages in the actual co-producing activities at the selected level. Value is assumed to emerge during the process, but the model does not determine type of the value. This study takes the consumer view and considers value as the customers' *experience of co-creation and consumption* (Holbrook 1996; 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b). As illustrated earlier (see figure 7) the value concept bridges three aspects of value. The basis is the experience of co-creation occasion itself (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 8) which emerges in an experiential context or platform. Second, advertising meanings are remarkable elements of value (Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Venkatesh et al. 2006) and they are outcomes of the interpretation process. Finally, the types of customer value include psychological, social and economic value (Holbrook 1996;2006). The process is shaped by specific contextual elements, such as the consumer's cultural context; their socio-cultural resources; their semantic context; and the advertising genre. (Arnould et al. 2006; Cook 2001,9; McCracken 1986; 1987; Ritson & Elliott 1999,260).

The types of value were briefly summarised earlier in Table 14. As presented earlier, Holbrook (1996; 2006) defines customer value as an interactive, relativistic preference experience. The value dimensions are extrinsic versus intrinsic; self-oriented versus other-oriented; and active versus reactive, resulting in eight key types of customer value. Despite the dichotomy of the typology the dimensions actually occur in continua.

In the first place the females experienced *self-oriented* value. It implies that value was appreciated for the females' own sake. It was not based on how others react to it, or the aim was not to achieve favourable responses or respect from other consumers. Second, there were examples of *other-oriented* value. It is for instance appreciated for other people's sake or for their reaction to the experience. Furthermore, a common feature to all three co-production processes was a *combination* of value exchange and value co-creation. This implies that value exchange and co-creation do not exclude each other (Brodie et al. 2006;

Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006) but co-exist, allowing more alternative activities for consumers in the co-production process.

4.3.1 Independency, freedom of choice and being up-to-date

The females' value experiences of "mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping" can be summed up in two types: a *feeling of independency and freedom of choice* and *feeling of being up-to-date*. Figure 14 illustrates the dimensions of value. First, the value experience emerged in the experiential context (Carù & Cova 2007b) which was constructed from the brand ads and the surrounding media context. Then, the females creatively mixed and matched together the value of brand advertising and promotional editorial content to generate a variety of consumption options. The experience itself as the core and the interpretations and meanings constituted elements of value. Finally, the types of emerged value were psychological and also economic.

Experiential context/platform	Interpretations and meanings	Types of value
Brand advertisements + Media/Editorial content	Experience of mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping	Feeling of independency and freedom of choice; Feeling of being up-to-date Self-oriented; Efficiency; Aesthetics; Excellence

FIGURE 14 The aspects of value in the co-production process as "mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping".

The exchange of value came up, since the brand images were positioned in the females' mind by advertising and thus the images were not the only platform of the customization. Instead the consumers customized the images and the editorial content by matching them up. In the customization process value was both exchanged and co-produced. The exchange value was not merely enough, but the females wanted to have more authority and more options. As an example one female emphasized her power to decide and choose between alternatives:

" --- and then maybe I myself still interpret it like, that it maybe still has a bit more of something than an advertisement when it tells about the product in a kind of article format that it leaves the decision up to me in that way that I can decide for myself if it's such a product that it serves my needs and the things I want---".

The promotional editorial content often includes artful photographs and creative compositions of fashion products nourishing females' imagination. It also acts as the "second opinion" strengthening the female's view or offering novel

ideas. Interestingly, the second opinion is assumed to be more objective than pure brand advertising since the presented products are chosen by the editors. Their opinion is appreciated serving as an affirmative proposition. However despite the expressed lower confidence towards advertising, both the ads and the editors' promotional presentations are needed to complete their mutual influence on one another (Hirschman & Thompson 1997). Based on the empirical material here it was not possible to infer if the brand advertisements enhanced the value of promotional editorial content, or vice-versa.

In this type of co-production the value experience satisfied both *utilitarian* (*extrinsic*) and *aesthetic* (*intrinsic*) needs. On one hand females appreciated especially the informative nature of the promotional editorial content and ads. Busy working females for instance felt that they did not have enough time to wander around the malls and department stores to find suitable clothes. They valued dressing advice and information about novelties offered by magazines. Although they would not exploit the proposed brands or products but decided to stay loyal to their favourites, they may feel comfortable to make choices independently and from a wide variety of options. This refers to *excellence* as a type of customer value in which the quality is admired more than actively used. On the other hand the females enjoyed the visually beautiful photographs. This experience refers to aesthetic value in which the magazine and its content including ads are appreciated for its design and beauty (Holbrook 1996; 2006).

To summarize, the females are interested in what is going on in their social and cultural environment. As female consumers they need to be up-to-date about which brands are consumed at the present moment. This represents value which is co-produced by blending brand advertising and editorial media content.

4.3.2 Empowerment, increasing product knowledge and economic value

In the "goal-oriented journey" three main types of value emerged: the females' *feeling of empowerment; learning experiences and increase in cumulative product knowledge; and economic value*. The goal-orientation here supposes that the value experience involves conscious mental activities and involvement in the promoted product. In Figure 15 the dimensions of value are depicted. The facilitating experiential platform for the experience consists of advertising, catalogues and customer magazines plus the consumer's various social forums. The experience itself as the core and the interpretations and meanings constituted elements of value. Finally, the types of value were economic and social.

Experiential context/platform	Interpretations and meanings	Types of value
Advertisements, direct mail catalogues, customer magazines + Consumers' social forums	Experience of goal-oriented journey	<p>Feeling of empowerment; Learning experiences; Increase in cumulative product knowledge; Economic value</p> <p>Self-oriented; Efficiency; Excellence</p> <p>Other-oriented; Esteem; Status</p>

FIGURE 15 The aspects of value in the co-production process as a “goal-oriented journey”.

Here, as well as in the preceding value type, value is both exchanged and co-created. The exchange of value occurs since the catalogues and customer magazines include elaborate promotional information of products. The co-produced value also includes the social interaction.

The social aspect of value implies that the females deployed their social networks and other social resources to yield new information and improve their prevailing views. Through the networks the females shared their knowledge and increased their own cumulative product knowledge. The social aspect increases the female's self-confidence as a consumer and makes her feel practical and rational. They also felt empowered and that they had control over advertising media and the content of commercial messages when entering into newsgroups aiming at sharing their ideas. Consuming and buying became justified actions when they were based on “rational” comparisons between products and experiential knowledge of other consumers. Likewise, reading advertising and keeping up with it became more acceptable activity. In sum, *sharing* the knowledge with co-consumers refers to the *esteem* or *status* as other-oriented value. Exploiting the social networks mainly for the consumer's *own purposes* refers to *efficiency* and *excellence* as self-oriented value. (Holbrook 1996; 2006).

Efficiency occurs also as *economic* value which is measurable. Excellence may also imply economic value. Consumers appreciate it since it provides the consumer with more value than she actually needs or could deploy. The females expected to save money, time or effort when they invested in searching, evaluating and producing new information. As an example, in the interview a student female told how she always compared alternative brands and products before making a buying decision. She wanted to be sure that she had enough information to make a well advised decision. She read direct mail catalogues, compared the supply and the prices between the stores to feel empowered and to gain economic value. She also emphasized that she could wait for a long time to find a particular product at a special price. For this reason she read and com-

pared advertisements before making the final buying decision. In the next citation she describes a typical example of the search and evaluation:

I: Yeah. Do you read them or do they go straight to the trash?

A2: Well that depends on the situation a bit, whether ((laughs)) (.) usually they'll go straight in but then if I have some need (.) like we talked there in that discussion that for example before Christmas, if there would be some ideas for presents and then now (.) in the autumn when I was moving (.) I did follow all of them really carefully (.) Anttila and Jysk, and what happened in the end was that probably almost all the products I bought new, I found them probably in some ad and on offer too so £ it was nice that I was able to save some money too.£

Taken together, the value experience of the “goal-oriented journey” is strongly associated with an image of a competent consumer practising rational consumption.

4.3.3 Fascination

Value experience of daydreaming and fantasizing is illustrated as a *feeling of fascination* which may include excitement, fun and pleasure. Figure 16 represents the dimensions of value. First, the females were willing to invest their energy and emotions in creating meanings based on visually rich advertising imagery as the experiential platform. Second, the imagery attracted interpretations and meanings “beyond mundane” and the core of the value was the experience itself. The consumer’s interpretations and meanings generated other elements of value. Third, the types of value were mainly self-oriented and psychological. The marketers seemingly had succeeded in creating exchange value and the consumers were actively engaged in value co-production. However, the particular brand or the consumer’s buying intentions remained to the background.

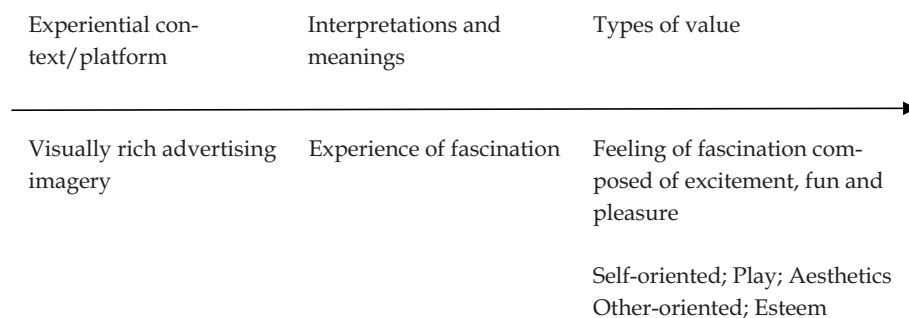


FIGURE 16 The aspects of value in the co-production process as “daydreaming and fantasizing”.

The next citation from an interview illustrates the feeling of fascination. During the discussion the female spontaneously remembered and described a captivating series of advertisements she had seen a few years ago. The value lies in the captivating elements and in the hidden story behind the ads, which also leave space enough for the individual imagination to pose the question if the ad is fact or fiction. The citation gives an insight into her feelings and her ability to imagine:

D1: --- (..) Then (..) well this is Lacoste the same as what was that Ralf, the Polo ads too, where they used that Cousteau now (..) like a while ago and then his daughter? Whose was it? (..) do you remember (..) it was by the way this reminded me of an absolutely lovely ad story, when it had that Cousteau and his (..) daughter and son and, I thought it was really effective and it had been shot like at sea and below the sea and I thought it was absolutely fascinating that umm series of ads, I remember it cos it was like a year ago, well this has a bit of something too, I for myself like this ad, this is light and young at heart, they're free out there and (..) looking a bit into the future and all that jazz, this has like everything, ((getting excited)) well let's say youthfulness and speed and happiness and going forwards at high speed and, I like this arrangement this has a certain mobility and dynamic feeling.---

In addition, not all visualizations fascinated the females but they were selective. They expected consistency between the ads and the fancy magazine. As an example, they experienced the "Hennes & Mauritz" (H & M) advertisement as inconsistent with the other content of the luxurious fashion magazine. In spite of the high visual quality of the ad, they conceived H & M products as too mundane and of low quality. In the fashion magazine the ad was in a wrong media context.

"Daydreaming and fantasizing" represented mainly intrinsic value for the females. *Play* is an experience of value which is actively and personally enjoyed. It was highlighted when the women actively engaged in dreaming and fantasizing, creating narratives in their minds. *Aesthetics*, instead, is a reactive side of play. Here the visualizations attracted interpretations and meanings as key elements of value. Furthermore, the consumers' engagement on the distribution level refers to *esteem* as extrinsic value. Esteem may ensue when consumers wanted to show and share the feeling of fascination with others (Holbrook 1996; 2006).

To summarize, the fascination strongly reflects the value of experiential and visual consumption. The value experience resembles the feeling of reading mythical stories which include elements truthful enough to be believable; or legendary or celebrated personalities and also unbelievable elements nourishing consumers' imaginations.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter first summarizes the study and discusses the findings. Then the theoretical contribution and practical implications are proposed. The end of the chapter considers and evaluates the limitations of the study and finally suggests topics for further research.

5.1 Summarizing the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how consumers participate in co-creation of value in advertising and what were the qualities of the consumers' value experiences. The focus was on the consumers' perspective to and experiences of advertising and their participation in the value co-production process. The motivation to study consumer interaction with advertising from the value co-creation view arose from four main reasons: the growing centrality of consumers as "production partners"; the growing centrality of advertising value instead of advertising message; the growing interest in experiential and visual consumption in consumer research; and the growth of social media. The underlying philosophical assumptions of the study were based on constructivism and interpretivism. The theoretical context consisted of two research areas: research related to co-creation of value and consumer-centred perspective of advertising. They were examined in a wider context of interpretive consumer research especially taking an experiential view of consumption. Four focus group discussions, sixteen personal semi-structured interviews and questionnaires of background questions were used as methods to collect descriptions of consumers' experiences of advertising. The participants consisted of in total 31 females. The empirical material was first categorized by a qualitative content analysis and after that analysed using a hermeneutical interpretation. The constructs of the consumer co-production model (Etgar 2008) and aspects of consumer value (Carù & Cova 2007a;b; Holbrook 1996; 2006; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 8; Venkatesh et al. 2006;) provided a basis for interpreting the empirical material. However here the aim was not to test the model.

It was noticed that co-production of value occurred in various ways and on various levels. The metaphorically named findings indicated that female participants engaged in the co-production process in three distinct ways and experienced value in several ways. Three types of processes were identified in the empirical material. First, in *mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping* the females mixed together brand advertising and non-advertising content of the magazine. This phenomenon is illustrated by the finding of a symbiotic relationship between advertising and media context whereby the editorial content of fashion magazines gives the females a frame of reference for interpreting ads and vice-versa (Hirschman & Thompson 1997). The type of value highlighted the females' sense of autonomy: the feeling of independence and freedom of choice and the feeling of being up-to-date. The second way of co-production, a *goal-oriented journey*, is based on the pragmatic and inspirational substance of the ads. The process was supported by the females' dialogical skills and communicative activities with co-consumers. This generates a feeling of empowerment, generates learning experiences, an increase in consumers' cumulative product knowledge, and it also generates economic value. Finally, *daydreaming and fantasizing* draw on visually rich and activating advertising imagery. The imagery inspired the female leading her to the right mood to experience a feeling of fascination beyond the mundane including for instance excitement, fun and pleasure.

Taken together, the consumers' experience of value co-production can be described as follows. In the light of the empirical material it is a *process where a consumer becomes inspired by an advertiser's value proposition; she becomes involved in the process and experiences the process as valuable*. To be specific, becoming involved depends on the surrounding conditions, the motivational drives and the experiential context. The experienced value consists of psychological, social and economic dimensions. This implies that the marketers' should offer value propositions open enough to the consumers' own activity and own imagination. It also necessitates the marketers' willingness to conceive consumers as "prosumers" rather than targets of one-way communication.

5.1.1 Reflecting on the research process

Afterwards thinking it was a challenging idea to combine a perspective of value co-production with advertisements as intangible experiential media products. The ads are usually conceived as mere mediators of messages but not independent products to be consumed. In addition, very little previous research existed considering consumers' perspective of value co-production. However, previous research had pointed out that the emphasis in consumption research is shifting to an experiential approach (Carù & Cova 2007a; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b; Schmitt 1999;2003; Sherry et al. 2007) emphasizing the symbolic and aesthetic nature of consumption. This confirms the importance of adopting the consumer-centred view.

On one hand it would perhaps have been easier if the empirical material had been collected among bloggers or focused on users of social media. It is obvious that the kind of empirical material could have indicated different ways of value co-production, possibly stressing the deep levels of engagement. On the other hand, here in the empirical material advertising was discussed broadly in various forms and media. It reflected the everyday experiences of common female consumers. Actually, the challenge was to examine if the co-production of value occurred in the conventional ways of advertising.

5.2 Discussing the findings

5.2.1 Discussing the constructs of the model

This chapter considers the suitability of the constructs of the consumer co-production model in this study. The constructs of the model contributed to the understanding of the relationship between consumers and advertising. They enabled the dimensions of the phenomenon to be found, defined the relative importance of its elements and examined the dynamics of the co-production process. First, the model defined conducive *prior conditions* which constitute a prerequisite for the process. At the same time they constitute a particular social and cultural context for consumers' interpretations, meaning creation and co-production of value. In this study the participants were a culturally cohesive group of Finnish female consumers living in mature markets and having a shared knowledge of the genre of advertising (Cook 2001, 9) and semantic context (Ritson & Elliott 1999, 260). The other environmental elements which facilitated the engagement in co-production were: an advanced technological environment available to consumers; the females' cultural competencies and experience-seeking behaviour; time resources; relevance of the advertisement; and situational factors. The latter came up when the females found the counterpart marketer as co-operative and trustworthy they were willing to engage in co-production. They for instance became inspired by the Dove campaign and found it dialogical. Co-production is linked to the relevance of the product and its customization. The relevance of an ad relates either to the promoted product or to the ad itself. The consumers' context-specific interests seem to determine the relevance. This implies that the same ad may be relevant in some situations but irrelevant in others.

Second, *motivational drives* constitute another part of prerequisites. Here the psychological motivations seemed to be especially emphasized as consumers' drives to engage in co-production. The psychological drives are consistent with the consumer values (Holbrook 1996; 2006) acting at the same time as prompts to co-production and as the pursued value experience. In addition to psychological ones, economic drives, risk reduction and desire for control also emerged as incitements. The aim of being up-to-date, of learning, or having

relevant product knowledge, which might be appreciated information in the consumer's reference group, emerged as social drives.

Finally, the *levels of engagement* in the activation stage illustrate how intensively the females engage in the co-production. The scale of the levels enables the depth and intensity of the consumers' activation to be examined. Figure 17 depicts the levels of engagement in the activation stage. Some terms in the figure are "product-oriented" and it was challenging to adapt them to advertising. In the findings mainly the surface levels of consumption and distribution were represented. This may have resulted from the fact that in the empirical material the dominant part of the females' experiences of advertising regarded conventional media, such as fashion magazines and television commercials. Advertising in the social media was considered less. The females might engage in deeper levels of activation if they are for instance technologically skilled at exploiting dialogical media. It could be possible that more dialogical or social forms of advertising could represent engagement at deeper levels of design, manufacturing or distribution.

Etgar (2008) paid attention to the possibility that consumers may skip over some stages and accordingly, a few constructs of the model did not seem to be suitable for illustrating co-production in advertising. First, the consumer's *conscious cost-benefits analysis* did not become evident. The analysis stage was supposed to precede the decision whether it is worthwhile to engage in co-production. The findings indicated that the females' activation also occurs unconsciously and without a specific analysis of costs and benefits. It seemed for instance that "mixing, matching and blending" or "daydreaming" would often appear unconsciously. The "goal-oriented journey" instead included more conscious activities. However, the consumers may not relate "costs" to advertising, although they may notice some benefits.

Second, *evaluation* as the last stage was not perceived in the data. Consumers did not evaluate the possible gap between their goals and value experiences. One reason could be that consumers do not consciously expect to gain any value as output from advertising which would be comparable with invested efforts. The situation and outcome could have been different if they had paid for advertising.

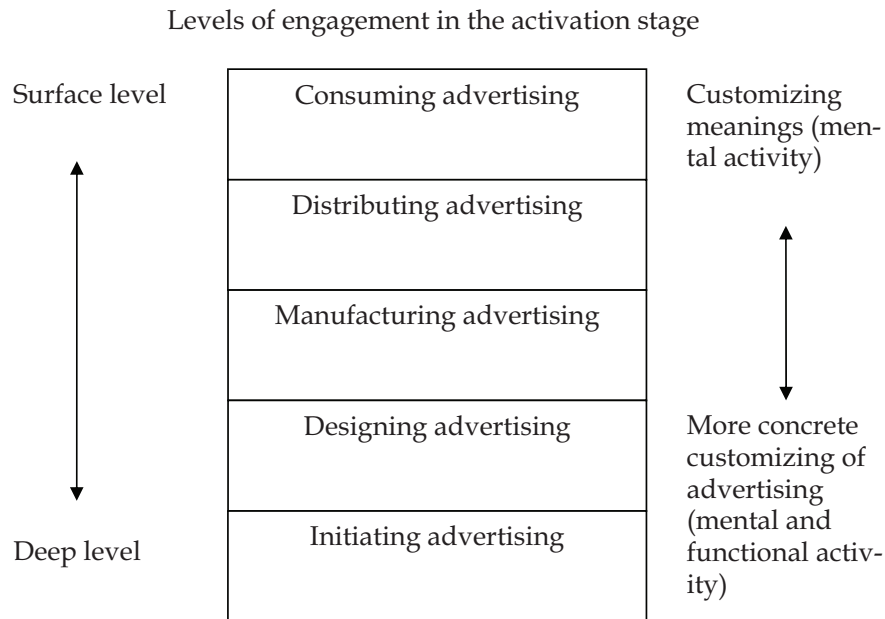


FIGURE 17 The levels of engagement in the consumer activation stage and customization of advertising and assumptions of activity (based on Etgar 2008).

5.2.2 Discussing customization of advertising

This chapter considers the question how customization of advertising occurs in the empirical material. Co-production means customization of the commodity according to the customer's desire (Etgar 2008). Customization constitutes the core of the co-production process and it is also the only reason why consumers participate in co-production. In the light of the empirical material, customization of advertising differs from customization of a physical product such as a computer, although in both cases the consumer's value experience is customized. Customization of advertising seem to be based on customization of meanings which constitute an essential part of customer value (Holt 2003; McAlexander et al. 2002; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b). Figure 17 illustrates how customization relates to various levels of consumer engagement. On surface levels *meanings* of advertisements are customized. At deeper levels customizing consists of *both meanings and more concrete actions*. Concrete actions to customize advertising are also known as co-promotion (Sheth & Uslay 2007, 305) which may include peer-to-peer communication; sponsored fashion web blogs; consumers' testimonies among editorial content; customers' open feedback and recommendations on companies' websites; and consumer-initiated websites devoted to brands. It seems that customization at deeper levels is associated with opportunities of interaction in social media and the Internet.

Co-production and customization are based on *consumer's activity*. It is influenced by individual, social and media variables and can be manifested in varying kinds and degrees (Levy & Windahl 1985, 119). According to the categorization of activity subtypes³⁶ regarding audiences of mass communication the "goal-oriented journey" seems to expect especially active orientation stressing consumers' pre-exposure selectivity. The journey contains searching, engendering and evaluating activities as well as communicative activities with social networks. The other two types of co-production emphasize involvement during the exposure and may require at least indiscriminant involvement as an active orientation towards media content.

The subtypes, however, take into account only individual's pre-exposure selectivity and involvement during exposure and thus they do not provide adequate nuances to describe activity in the co-production process. None the less, they serve as complementary categories. Consumer activity which is illustrated in Figure 17 was perceived in the empirical material. Consumer activity varies in accordance with customization activities at different levels of engagement. On surface levels activity seems to be mental, since meanings are customized. At deeper levels both mental and functional activity is needed.

Pine and Gilmore (1998, 101) suggest that customer participation in experiences varies between passive and active. In active participation the customer plays a key role in creating the event or re-constructing it. Passive participation however does not imply completely passive people, but the consumer's contribution to the event is visual and aural and occurs in more cognitive and affective ways. In passive participation the co-production thus is a mental process. In this study for example "daydreaming and fantasizing" represents more passive than active participation in co-production.

Consumers' activity and intention to be involved are also examined by Hartley (2004) who proposes developments in the value chain of meanings during historical periods. According to Hartley the ongoing globalization period has raised consumers into the focus of the chain. Their relationship with marketing communications is based on interactivity and participation, which means that contemporary consumers are able to "read and write" their own "scripts" instead of earlier expectations to "read only" or "hear only" scripts written by authorities. Consumers expect conversation and dialogue instead of being convinced or converted. In this study the female consumers showed creative activity when "reading and writing" their advertising scripts. They did not accept value propositions as such, but expected to direct the conversation and co-production.

³⁶ Levy and Windahl (1985, 119) categorize activity types according to two variables which are *individual's pre-exposure selectivity* and *involvement during exposure*. This result in four different types of activity: 1) motivated gratification seeking as an especially active orientation; 2) topic ritualism as a relatively non-involved orientation; 3) indiscriminant involvement as an active orientation towards almost any type of media content and 4) time-passing as a relatively inactive orientation.

Despite Hartley's (2004) statements of changes in the value chain, this study assumed that value is created *both* in co-production *and* exchange. It means simultaneous or sequential value creation in which both marketers and consumers participate. This *combination view* (Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006) was manifested in the findings at least in a few ways. First, in "mixing, matching and blending in window-shopping" the women mixed the brand ads and their surrounding media context. Actually, they did not want to customize the brand personalities, but they wanted to see more imaginative and creative compositions of different brands. Here, brand advertising constituted one part (exchange value) of the experiential context, but at the same time the females co-produced more value by blending the ads and the editorial content. Then, in the "goal-oriented journey" the substance of the advertising catalogues and customer magazines constituted the basis of exchange value. The consumer's social forums completed the co-production of value. Finally, it is proposed that value exchange occurred as well in "daydreaming and fantasizing". The females invested their energy and emotions in creating meanings based on visually rich advertising imagery as the experiential platform (co-produced value). As was described in the example of the Dove campaign, the females considered it to be real and lifelike and almost anti-advertising. It was supposed that this experience also was the advertiser's intention and thus it represents exchange of value. Taken together, it was not possible to define the exact amounts of co-produced versus exchanged value in the process.

5.2.3 Theoretical contribution

This study was motivated by the possibility to find a new approach to the consumer-centred research of advertising. The earlier studies of co-creation of value have been mainly conceptual or examined the phenomenon from the supplier's view. Consumer-centred advertising research has mainly concentrated on advertising uses, interpretations and creation of meanings. In order to view advertising from a new perspective this study aimed at going towards the idea of co-production of value and consumption of value. Consequently, here female consumers' experiences of advertising and value were in the centre. The starting point for this study was challenging but not overwhelming.

The theoretical contribution of the study focuses on two main issues. *The first theoretical contribution relates to the model of the consumer co-production process.* The findings pointed out that to some extent the constructs of the model (Etgar 2008) enhanced the understanding of the consumers' value co-production process of experiential media products. The constructs needed refinement, however. *As the theoretical contribution, the refined model of consumer co-production process in advertising is proposed.* The model is illustrated in Figure 18. The need to refine the model of Etgar (2008) arises from the fact that advertising differs from other consumer consumption commodities. As an ubiquitous media product, advertising should be examined from the experiential view, stressing the desired value as the consumer's experience. This is reasoned, since advertising is consumed as a part of other experiential media products different from other con-

sumption subjects. The difference is also shown in the customization process. It includes mainly customization of abstract elements, such as meanings, as well as customization of representations of advertising, for instance representations of social media. In fact, the main challenge of the model is the process of customization of meanings, since it is difficult to capture personal meanings of advertising.

In the refined model the process is divided into three main elements: environmental conditions; consumer activities; and consumer value experience. *Prior conditions and motivational drives* constitute the surroundings in which consumer activities occur. They are elements which have an influence on the consumer's actions, not just in the beginning but during the whole process. This implies that for instance motivational drives may vary when the process proceeds. *Consumer activities* are divided into activation and actual co-production. Activation is needed to begin the customization process and it is based on favorable conditions and drives. The chosen level of customization depends on the consumer and the form of advertising. Customization varies at different levels including mere customization of meanings or more concrete customization of advertising. It should be noted that not all advertising in every situation and in every context evokes co-production, but value may be purely exchanged or consumers may ignore non-relevant ads. The refined model describes only the choice of activating in co-production. The final element of the model is consumption of value, implying *the consumer's experience of value*. Although Figure 18 shows the process as separated stages, the activation, customization and consumption of value can occur simultaneously as well.

The original model (Etgar 2008) was earlier presented and the main distinctions between the models can be summarized as follows. In the refined model consumers are not conceived as rational decision makers who make conscious costs-benefits analysis and decision whether to participate in the co-production process or not. Instead, value is emphasized as consumers' experience and not as an outcome to be measured. Then, consumers do not evaluate the benefits and costs after the process. Finally, the elements of the process can occur simultaneously as well as sequentially. In both models the core is the levels of engagement and customization and despite the "product-oriented" terms of the levels they succeed in illustrating the co-production. To conclude, the refined model takes the experiential view of consumption and stresses more symbolic and hedonic consumption.

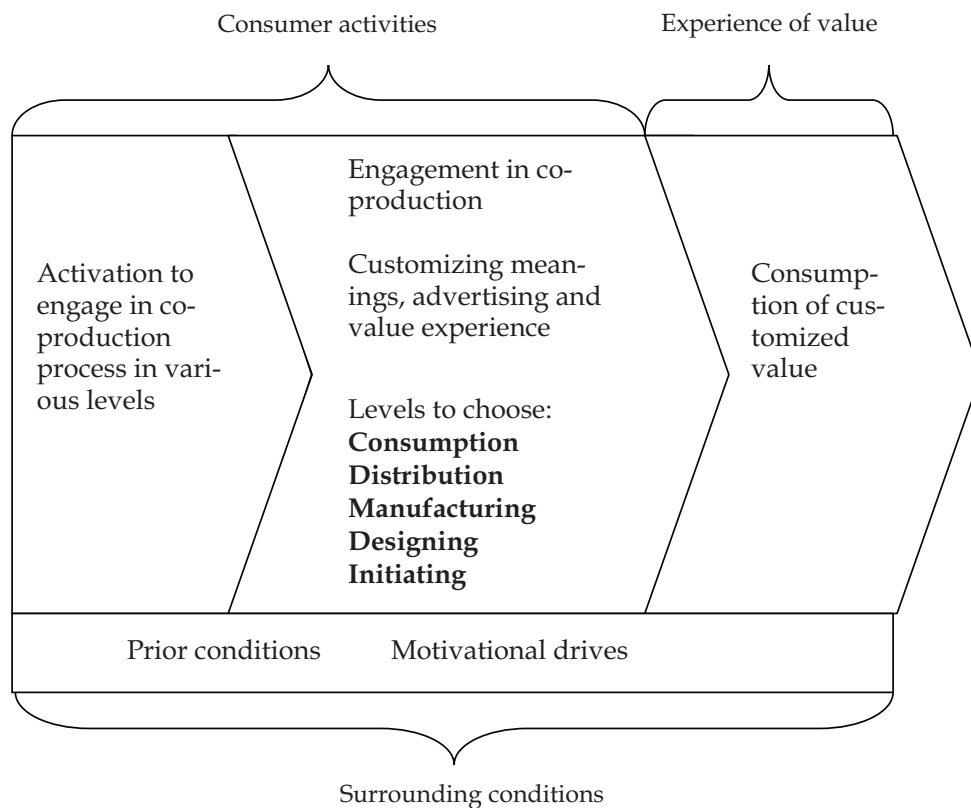


FIGURE 18 The refined model of consumer co-production process in advertising based on Etgar (2008) and findings of the study.

*The second theoretical contribution relates the theories of advertising. This study is based on the previous studies and theories which provide pre-understanding of the interaction between a consumer and an advertisement. According to the previous studies and theories, advertising interpretations and meanings are depended on the ad's content and context; consumers' own experiences, identity and social-cultural structures; and intertextual references. Consumers use ads for various commercial and non-commercial purposes and ads may offer a basis for everyday social interactions. The value co-production instead takes a new perspective emphasizing customization and consumers' value experience of advertising developed in the process of co-production and exchange. Importantly, in advertising research there is a lack of studies adapting value co-production approach and the notion of *producing consumers* (Austin et al. 2007, 351; Blom 1999, 208; Hirschman & Thompson 1997, 45; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b). Therefore, the contribution is that this value co-production approach is a new model among consumer-centred hierarchy-free models of advertising (see Table 1 in Chapter 1). Moreover, by examining advertising as consumable media product from the view of the co-producing consumer, the position of advertising studies is shifted from the field of communication studies towards the field of con-*

sumption studies (Östergaard & Jantzen 2000). The value co-production view is a reasonable approach for the study of contemporary advertising in which the characteristics of visually rich imagery and audiovisual forms come closer to the entertainment industry and its dramatized stories.

The value was examined as the customers' *experience of co-creation and consumption* (Carù & Cova 2007a; b; Holbrook 1996; 2006; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a;b). The core of the value was the experience of the co-production occasion itself. The experiential context or platform facilitated the emergence of the experience. Advertising meanings constituted elements of value as outcomes of the interpretation process. The process was shaped by the consumer's cultural context; socio-cultural resources; semantic context and advertising genre. The aspects of value seemed to catch the sense of the females' experiences, allowing several types of psychological, social and economic value. This leads to *the contribution stating that the value of advertising is the consumer's subjective experience which is based on the experience of co-creation itself and the consumer's customized meanings of advertising.*

The findings of this study also pointed out that *the consumers' activity* related to advertising can be examined from a new viewpoint. This means, as discussed in the previous chapter, that consumer activity can be described as the intensity of the consumers' engagement in customization at various levels in the co-production process. Two basic types of activity were identified. At the surface levels of engagement consumer activity seemed to be more mental, since in the first place meanings were customized. At deeper levels activity is assumed to be both mental and functional. Here functionality means that the consumer concretely produces advertising; she might for instance participate in producing content in social media. Kalaighnam and Varadarajan (2006) have investigated intensity of customer participation, but the notion of activity at the levels of engagement needs more research.

5.2.4 Practical implications

This study aimed at bringing out the "voice of the customer" and as practical implications for advertisers a few issues become salient. First, advertising constitutes *an opportunity to enter into dialogue with consumers*, but it seems that this chance is not yet fully exploited. Dialogue is opposed to the traditional view of advertising as one-way communication. To succeed it requires a new orientation towards consumers, who should be conceived more as production partners than targets. Marketers should consider advertising as a process of interaction with the consumers. The traditional subject-object relation between marketers and consumers should be substituted for a subject-subject relation emphasizing the benefits of the interaction. The selection of media should also be based on the medium's potential for facilitating dialogue. Advertisers should also induce consumers to share more openly feedback and ideas to be utilized in marketing. The Internet provides a perfect facility for this.

Second, advertising constitutes remarkable investment as one part of brand marketing and for this reason more attention should be paid to the value it generates for consumers. Co-production is a means to make advertising more

valuable to consumers. This implies that *the advertisers' value propositions should offer experiential platforms open enough to the consumers and enable the consumers' activity and customization of meanings and value*. Value is the consumers' subjective experience and personalized meanings constitute an essential part of value. Becoming involved in co-production depends on the consumer's own preferences and situation. During the focus group discussions and personal interviews the consumers emphasised that advertisers too often do not appreciate consumers' abilities. Consumers experienced a lack of appreciation when they encountered boring ads or commercials of poor quality or ads in the "wrong medium context", i.e. the ad was not consistent with the quality and editorial content of the medium. The opposite positive attitudes came up when the consumers described in detail the ads which had inspired and fascinated them. To sum up, the focus of advertising should be on customer value and facilitating the dialogue.

5.3 Evaluating the reliability

This section considers the criterion of reliability in this study. The study is based on underlying beliefs of constructivism and interpretivism and accordingly constructivist criteria should be applied when evaluating it (Patton 2002). The appropriate criteria for evaluating the study are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Here, *credibility and dependability* of the findings are verified in several ways. First, *prolonged engagement* (*ibid.*) implies that the researcher should examine the topic broadly. I was acquainted with the informants' culture and context and familiar with the research field from my working career though the actual time spent with the females was not very long. It was hence easy to build trust with the females and to understand their viewpoints, since many of them were at the same age and had similar life situation. Moreover, the credibility of the researcher means *consciousness of the influence* of the researcher's own experiences and background and explicitly reporting of them (Patton 2002). Hence, I have reflected on and discussed my role as the researcher and the influence of my background as well as other motivations, such as funding, earlier in this report. The relationships between me, the participants and the sponsors were also discussed earlier in the chapter 3.6.

Interpretive research acknowledges *subjectivity*, which however constitutes one challenge for implementing analysis and interpretation that requires self-awareness and taking biases into account (Arnold & Fischer 1994; Patton 2002; Spiggle 1994; Thompson 1997). Interpretive research does not lead up to one objective truth, which in fact cannot be captured (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 5), but multiple interpretations and truths to be discussed (Patton 2002). The empirical material here was analysed from a certain hermeneutic perspective. If it was analysed from another perspective the same material could result in a

different interpretation, which however would be equally justified (Arnold & Fischer 1994,57). Here, subjectivity also relates to the researcher's own pre-understanding which was discussed in Chapter 1.7.

Second, the *depth* of the material (Lincoln & Guba 1985) is verified by identifying and focusing on the relevant issues and sorting out irrelevancies. The broad scope and pre-understanding of the research area facilitated this. Third, *triangulation* (*ibid.*) was applied by using different data collection modes. Focus group discussions were completed with personal interviews and questionnaires. This aimed at checking for the consistency what the participants said in public group discussions compared to the private personal interviews and questionnaires. This aimed at diminishing the limitations of one method and complementing the view.

As to the credibility of the methods, the limitations of the focus group method and personal interviewing were discussed in detail in Chapter 3.2 and 3.5. Put simply, both methods represent unnaturally occurring data which is not equivalent to the situation of natural advertising exposure (Cook 2001; Ritson & Elliott 1999). In addition, the moderator may have had an impact on the participants' views. However, the methods are widely applied in qualitative advertising research.

Fourth, to gain *referential adequacy* (Lincoln & Guba 1985) the preliminary findings and interpretations were checked against the "raw" empirical material. This check was made in two points of analysis and interpretation. The first was in the content analysis when formulating preliminary codes for indexing. The second was the final phase of the interpretation. Patton (2002, 563) also stresses *keeping the findings in context*. In this study it implies that the findings should not be generalized about other consumers, other situations or other products. The findings of three types of co-production processes and dimensions of value are applicable in advertising consumption only.

The empirical material here concentrates on experiences of female consumers and the amount of 31 participants is relatively small, but yet sufficient in qualitative advertising research (McCracken 1988, 17). Concentrating on a female audience possibly incurs limitations to the findings and it is conceivable that male audiences could have generated different ways of co-production. If male audiences had been included, the number of focus groups would have increased which, in practice, would not have been realizable for reasons of the budget and convenience. Importantly, according to the constructivist evaluation criteria the issue here is not of generalizing but understanding. The participants were not chosen to represent some part of the larger population (Krueger & Casey 2000; McCracken 1998; Morgan 1997; Stewart et al. 2007,43).

Finally, *transferability* and *confirmability* are assured with dense description and the possibility of tracing the process and assessing the findings. They enable other scholars to reach the conclusions with the empirical material. The process of gathering the empirical material and conducting the analysis and interpretation phases are reported in detail. The analysis phases resulted in documents of preliminary findings. The phases and their purposes and main

outcomes are also summarized in Table 13. (Arnold & Fischer 1994, 64; Koskinen et al. 2005, 258; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

5.4 Topics for further research

This study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between consumers and advertising from the value co-creation view. By coupling these two topics it was possible to examine advertising from a new angle. As one outcome, several new issues for future research emerge. One interesting theme relates to *the variety of types* of value co-production. Here in the empirical part only three types were identified, and they are assumed to be applicable especially in advertising consumption. It is however supposed that many others exist and thus more research regarding various products, services and other commodities is needed.

Another valid theme pertains to *the deep levels of value co-production*. In the case of advertising it would be interesting to detect how for instance consumers' use of the Internet advances the intensity of engagement in co-production. As an example, sponsored web blogs could offer interesting empirical material. Since an opportunity for dialogue is supposed to be an essential premise, other types of social media could also provide worthwhile material for capturing the situation at deeper levels. Investigating co-production via social media also encourages developing new methodological solutions and research instruments.

The third topic deserving more attention is *the value experience*, especially from a consumer's view to advertising and experiential consumption. This results from an assumption of a shift from utilitarian values to more experiential non-monetary values. From the marketers' view advertising represents a significant investment and input in brand management, and hence it should propose meaningful value for consumers to meet the goals set. From the consumers' view value is notable as a motivational driver to engage in co-production and thus better understanding of consumers' motivations would also help marketers to encounter consumers' needs.

Fourth, it would be fruitful to examine *co-operation with other consumers* in the co-production process. The above-mentioned social media offers one example of co-operation with other consumers and individuals. Interesting issues include for instance what motivates consumers to co-operate and what are the forms and nature of co-operation in co-production.

Finally, this study took the consumer's view but the co-production process should also be studied from *the advertiser's perspective*. For instance, it would be worth studying how advertisers create valuable experiential platforms and value propositions; how they exploit co-production by customizing their advertising; and how advertisers facilitate consumers' willingness to customize.

SUMMARY IN FINNISH (YHTEENVETO)

Yhteinen arvonaluonti mainonnassa. Kuluttajakeskeinen tulkitseva tutkimus.

Kuluttajien ja markkinoijien yhteinen arvonaluonti on viime aikoina noussut kiinnostuksen kohteeksi markkinoinnin tutkimuksessa. Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee mainontaa yhteisen arvonaluonnin ja erityisesti kuluttajan näkökulmasta. Mainonta määriteltiin kokemukselliseksi mediatuotteeksi, jonka kuluttamista tarkasteltiin yhteisen arvonaluonnin prosessin käsitteillä. Lisäksi selvitettiin millaista arvoa kuluttajat kokivat saavansa prosessista.

Aiempi kuluttajakeskeinen mainonnan tutkimus on painottunut mainonnan käyttötarkoitusten, tulkintojen ja merkitysten käsittelyyn. Yhteinen arvonaluonti tarjoaa uuden näkökulman mainontaan, ja sitä voidaan pitää perusteltuna useasta syystä. Ensinnäkin, kuluttajien rooli on muuttunut arvonaluontaja arvonaluontamisen kumppaniksi. Toiseksi, mainonnan itseisarvon merkitys on kasvanut pelkän sanoman välittämisen sijaan. Kolmanneksi, kokemuksellinen ja visuaalinen kulutus on noussut kulutustutkimuksen kiinnostuksen kohteeksi ja neljänneksi, yhteisöllinen media on luonut mahdollisuuksia yhteisen arvonaluonnin toteuttamiselle.

Aiheen teoreettinen tausta ja esiymmärrys perustuvat kolmeen tutkimusalueeseen, jotka ovat yhteinen arvonaluonti, mainonta erityisesti kuluttajan näkökulmasta ja laajempaan taustaan tulkitseva kulutustutkimus ja erityisesti kokemuksellisen kuluttamisen tutkimus.

Empiirinen tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena. Empiirinen aineisto koottiin neljän fokusryhmäkeskustelun, kuudentoista henkilökohtaisen haastattelun ja taustatietolomakkeiden avulla. Tutkimukseen osallistui yhteensä 31 suomalaista naista. Materiaali luokiteltiin ensin laadullisen sisällön analyysin avulla ja analysoitiin sen jälkeen käyttämällä hermeneuttista tulkintaa. Tulkinnan perustan muodostivat kuluttajakeskeinen malli arvonaluontamisen (Etgar 2008) ja kuluttajan arvonaluontuvuudet (Carù & Cova 2007a,b; Holbrook 1996; 2006; Penaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 8; Venkatesh et al. 2006). Tulkinnan taustaoletuksena oli, että kuluttaja saa arvoa sekä vaihdannan että yhteisen arvonaluontamisen kautta.

Kuluttajat osallistuivat yhteiseen arvonaluontamisen prosessiin eri tavoin ja erilaisella intensiteetillä. Aineistosta tunnistettiin kolme erityyppistä prosessia. Ensimmäisessä prosessissa kuluttajat *sekoittivat ja sovittivat yhteen* mediassa olevaa brändimainontaa ja toimituksellista aineistoa. Media muodosti kuluttajille eräänlaisen näyteikkunan. Tässä prosessissa nousi esille mainonnan ja sen mediakontekstin välinen symbioottinen suhde. Toimituksellinen sisältö tarjosi kuluttajille viitekehyksen mainonnan tulkintaan ja päinvastoin (Hirschman & Thompson 1997). Kuluttajat kuvasivat arvonaluontamisen kokemuksiaan tunteena itsemääräämisestä ja valinnanvapaudesta ja tunteena ajan tasalla olemisesta kuluttajana.

Toista prosessia kuvasi *päämäärätietoinen vaellus* ja se perustui mainonnan käytännölliseen ja innoittavaan asiasisältöön. Tätä prosessia tukivat erityisesti

kuluttajien dialogiset taidot ja aktiivinen viestintä muiden kuluttajien kanssa. Arvon kokemuksissa nousivat esille kuluttajan tunne valtaistumisesta, oppimiskokemuksista ja kumuloituvasta asiantuntijuudesta ja myös taloudellisesta arvosta.

Kolmatta prosessia kuvaavat *unelmointi ja fantasiointi*. Se ammentaa visuaalisesti rikkaasta mainonnan kuvastosta, joka inspiroi kuluttajien mieltä ja johdatti heidät sopivaan vireeseen ja tunnelmaan. Arvon kokemuksissa korostui kiehtovuuden tunne, joka oli arkipäiväisen yläpuolella olevaa iloa ja mielihyvää.

Yhteistä arvontuottamisen prosessia voidaan empiirisen materiaalin perusteella kuvata kuluttajan kulmasta seuraavasti. Se on prosessi, jossa kuluttaja inspiroituu mainostajan arvoehdotuksesta, osallistuu prosessiin ja kokee sen tuottavan arvoa itselleen. Osallistuminen riippuu ympäröivistä olosuhteista, motivoivista tekijöistä ja siitä miten konteksti mahdollistaa ja tukee kokemuksellisuutta. Arvo koostuu psykologisista, sosiaalisista ja taloudellisista ulottuvuuksista. Tämä tarkoittaa, että markkinoijan tulisi tarjota kuluttajalle arvoehdotuksia, jotka riittävän ”avoimina” antavat kuluttajalle mahdollisuuden aktiiviseen osallistumiseen ja innoittumiseen. Tämä edellyttää myös, että markkinoijat suhtautuvat kuluttajiin arvontuottajina (prosumers) sen sijaan että pitävät heitä annetun arvon vastaanottajina.

Yhteisen arvontuottamisen mallissa kustomointi muodostaa prosessin tarkoituksen ja syyn miksi kuluttaja osallistuu prosessiin. Mainonnan arvon yhteistuotannossa kustomointi perustuu mainonnan merkitysten kustomointiin. Merkitykset ovat keskeinen osa kuluttajan saamaa arvoa. Prosessissa kuluttajan osallistumisen intensiteetti eli aktiivisuus arvon yhteistuottamiseen vaihtelee eri tasoilla. Tasoilla, joilla osallistuminen on vähemmän intensiivistä (ns. pintatasot) kustomoinnin kohteena ovat mentaaliset merkitykset. Syvemmillä tasoilla, joissa osallistuminen on intensiivisempää, kustomointia tapahtuu sekä konkreettisten toimintojen että mentaalisten merkitysten osalta.

Teoreettisena kontribuutiona on prosessimalli arvon yhteistuottamisesta mainonnassa, joka on edelleen kehitetty alkuperäisestä mallista (Etgar 2008). Se voidaan luokitella uutena ei-hierarkisiin mainonnan malleihin, jotka tarkastelevat kuluttajan näkökulmasta miten mainonta toimii. Arvo, jonka kuluttaja saa osallistumisesta prosessiin on luonteeltaan subjektiivista ja perustuu sekä kuluttajan kokemukseen arvon tuottamisesta sinänsä että kustomoituihin mainonnan merkityksiin.

Tutkimuksen käytännön merkitykset liittyvät kahteen asiaan. Ensinnäkin mainonta tulee nähdä mahdollisuutena dialogiin kuluttajan kanssa, mikä edellyttää markkinoijilta uudenlaista suhtautumista kuluttajan rooliin. Toiseksi, mainonnan arvoon kuluttajalle tulee kiinnittää enemmän huomiota. Sen tulee tarjota kokemukselliselle kuluttamiselle alusta, joka on riittävän avoin ja mahdollistaa kuluttajan aktiivisen osallistumisen ja kustomoinnin.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Example of the invitation letter

Tervetuloa ryhmäkeskusteluun

Kiitän mielenkiinnosta tutkimustani kohtaan! Tässä on lupaamani vahvistus osallistumisestanne ryhmäkeskusteluun ja henkilökohtaiseen haastatteluun, joiden aiheena mainonta.

Mikä on ryhmäkeskustelu?

Ryhmäkeskustelu on vapaamuotoinen ja rento keskustelutilaisuus, jossa vaihdetaan ajatuksia ja keskustellaan omista kokemuksista. Kaikki osallistujat ovat tavallisia ihmisiä, eikä mitään erityisasiantuntemusta aiheesta vaadita. Keskusteluryhmään osallistuu 6 – 10 henkilöä. Keskustelussa ei ole tarkoitus löytää ”oikeita vastauksia”, vaan olen kiinnostunut siitä millaisia koke-
muksia ja näkemyksiä Teillä on mainonnasta.

Ryhmäkeskustelun tarkempi aika ja paikka

Päivä: Torstai 14.2.2008

Aika: Kello 18.00 – noin 20.00

Paikka: Jyväskylän yliopisto (Mattianniemi) Ahlmaninkatu 2, Taloustieteiden tiedekunta, E-rakennus, 3.krs. Kokoushuone MaE 303.
Sisäänkäynti E-rakennukseen on yliopiston pysäköintipaikalta, ohjeet näet tarkemmin liitteenä olevasta kartasta.

Valmistautuminen keskusteluun

Keskusteluun voi valmistautua seuraamalla mainontaa omaan tavanomaiseen tapaan noin viikon verran ennen keskustelua. Mainoksista voi tehdä myös joitakin muistiinpanoja tai pitää pienimuotoista päiväkirjaa niistä mainoksista, jotka kiinnittivät jostain syystä huomiota.

Henkilökohtainen haastattelu

Sovitaaan erikseen Teille sopiva ajankohta ja paikka henkilökohtaista haastattelua varten. Haastattelu on vapaamuotoinen ja siihen on hyvä varata noin tunti.

Palkkio

Keskusteluun ja haastatteluun osallistumisesta maksetaan 40 € palkkio.

Lomakkeiden täyttö

Ohessa on myös sopimuslomake ja taustatietolomake. Ne voi täyttää etukäteen ja tuoda keskustelutilaisuuteen. Mikäli Teillä ei ole mahdollisuutta tulostaa lomakkeita paperille, voin lähettää lomakkeet postitse.

Mikäli Teille tulee este ja joudutte perumaan osallistumisenne, pyydän ilmoittamaan siitä etukäteen puh. 040 7022 892. Näin ehdin hankkia tilallenne toisen osallistujan.

Kerron mielelläni lisää tästä tutkimuksesta. Lämpimästi tervetuloa mukaan!

Heli Aaltonen, KTM

Jyväskylän yliopisto, taloustieteiden tiedekunta

kotiosoite: Jalavakatu 7 B 11, 50130 Mikkeli, puhelin 040 7022 892

s-posti: helmaraa@cc.jyu.fi

APPENDIX 2 The written agreement

Sopimus tutkimusaineiston tuottamisesta ja käsittelystä

Tutkija: KTM Heli Aaltonen

osoite Jalavakatu 7 B 11, 50130 Mikkeli

puhelin 040 7022 892, s-posti helmaraa@cc.jyu.fi

Jyväskylän yliopisto, taloustieteiden tiedekunta

Tutkimuksen ohjaaja: professori Outi Uusitalo, outi.uusitalo@econ.jyu.fi**Tutkimukseen osallistujan nimi**

Ryhmäkeskustelujen ja henkilökohtaisten haastattelujen aineistot ovat osa KTM Heli Aaltosen akateemista väitöskirjatutkimusta, joka käsittelee mainontaa ja kulutustottumuksia. Tutkimukseen osallistuu yhteensä noin 40 henkilöä. Tutkimusta rahoittavat Liikesivistysrahasto sekä Kaupallisten ja teknisten tieteiden tukisäätiö KAUTE.

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista. Osallistuja voi halutessaan kieltäytyä vastaamasta kysymyksiin. Osallistujalla on mahdollisuus myös myöhemmin ilmoittaa tutkijalle, ettei hänen osuuttaan aineistosta saa käyttää tutkimustarkoitukseen.

Osallistujan henkilöllisyys jää ainoastaan tutkijan tietoon, eikä tutkimukseen osallistuvien henkilöllisyyttä julkaista missään yhteydessä. Tutkimusraportissa tutkimukseen osallistuneista kerrotaan vain tutkimuksen kannalta oleelliset taustatiedot ja heistä käytetään peitenimiä.

Keskustelut ja haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja kirjoitetaan puhtaaksi, jonka jälkeen aineistot analysoidaan. Keskusteluja ja haastatteluja ei julkaista itsenäisinä kokonaisuuksina, mutta niistä voidaan julkaista sitaatteja, jotka erityisen osuvasti kuvaavat käsiteltävää asiaa. Sitatit eivät sisällä tietoja, joista osallistujat voitaisiin tunnistaa.

Aineistoja käytetään ainoastaan tähän väitöskirjatutkimukseen ja siihen liittyviin julkaisuihin.

Allekirjoittaja on suostunut osallistumaan tutkimusta varten toteutettavaan ryhmäkeskusteluun ja henkilökohtaiseen haastatteluun.

Tätä sopimusta on laadittu kaksi kappaletta, yksi kummallekin osapuolelle.

Päiväys _____

Allekirjoitus ja nimen selvennys

 Heli Aaltonen

Toinen sopimuskappale palautetaan täytettynä tutkijalle.

OSALLISTUJAN TAUSTATIEDOT

Tutkimusta varten pyydän Sinua kertomaan taustatietoja itsestäsi. Tietoja käsitellään ehdottoman luottamuksellisesti ja henkilöllisyytesi jää ainoastaan tutkijan tietoon.. Palauta täytetty lomake tutkijalle ryhmäkeskustelun yhteydessä.

Nimi

Syntymäaika ja -paikka

Lasten syntymävuodet

Luettele tärkeimmät paikkakunnat, joilla olet asunut. Kerro myös asumisaika vuosina (arviolta).

Seuraaviin kysymyksiin pyydän Sinua vastaamaan omin sanoin. Voit tarvittaessa jatkaa kirjoittamista lomakkeen kääntöpuolelle.

1. Kerro millainen koulutus sinulla on? Missä olet opiskellut?

2. Kuvaile työtäsi. Jos olet työelämän ulkopuolella niin kerro esimerkiksi aiemmasta työstäsi.

3. Kuvaile millainen perheesi on. Jos olet perheetön, voit kuvailla muita Sinulle läheisiä.

4. Kuvaile ystäväpiiriäsi.

5. Miten vietät vapaa-aikaasi? Millaisia harrastuksia Sinulla on?

6. Miten vietät lomiasi?

7. Millaisia luottamustehtäviä Sinulla on? (järjestöissä, yhdistyksissä, politiikassa tai muussa vastaavassa toiminnassa)

8. Millaisista liikkeistä tai ostopaikoista hankit itsellesi esimerkiksi pukeutumiseen tai kosmetiikkaan liittyviä tuotteita? Entä millaisista liikkeistä tai ostopaikoista hankit kodin sisustukseen liittyviä tuotteita?

9. Miten kuvailisit itseäsi kuluttajana?

10. Miten kuvailisit itseäsi Internetin käyttäjänä? Millaisia tuotteita (tavarat tai palvelut) olet hankkinut verkon kautta?

11. Lopuksi, kerro 1 – 3 asiaa joita teet mielelläsi silloin, kun Sinulla on aikaa vain itsellesi.

Kiitos vastauksistasi!

APPENDIX 4 Examples of women's fashion magazines available in the focus group discussions.



APPENDIX 5 Examples of cosmetics advertisements in women's fashion magazines



APPENDIX 6 Examples of advertisements of clothing and shoes in women's fashion magazines available in the interviews.



PHILOSOPHY BLUES ORIGINAL
anno 1994



DAKS



APPENDIX 7 The “Nanso” advertisement which was subjected to the writing task.



Keskustelun runko

Aloituksesta

- Jos kaikki ovat ajoissa paikalla niin aloitus täsmällisesti, muutoin odotellaan esim. 5 minuuttia
- Lomakkeet voi viimeistellä ennen ryhmäkeskustelua ja keskustelun jälkeen.
- Varataan henk koht haastattelun aika tämän keskustelun lopuksi niiltä kenen kanssa ei ole vielä sovittu.

Alustus ennen keskustelua

Tervetuloa mukaan keskustelemaan mainonnasta. Minun nimeni on ____ ja teen Jyväskylän yliopistossa väitöstutkimusta mainonnasta. Minua kiinnostaa se miten yksittäinen ihminen tai kuluttaja katsoo mainontaa eli millaisia kokemuksia mainonta saa aikaan ja millaisia näkemyksiä kuluttajilla on mainonnasta ja mainoksista.

Kerään tätä tietoa mm. näiden ryhmäkeskustelujen avulla, joten olen kutsunut teidät tänne kertomaan ja keskustelemaan juuri teidän omista kokemuksistanne. Teidän jokaisen näkemykset mainonnasta ovat minulle yhtä tärkeitä. Mainonta on hyvin tunneperäinen aihe ja tunteita saa tuoda esille tässä keskustelussa.

Tämä on täysin riippumaton akateeminen tutkimus eli mikään yritys ei ole toimeksiantajana tässä.

Keskustelussa toivon, että puhutte mainonnasta ja mainoksista täysin omalta kannaltanne. Ei siis kannata miettiä sitä miten muut suhtautuvat mainoksiin, tai mitä mainostajat haluavat mainoksillaan viestittää. Eikä tarvitse rajautua vain tv-mainoksiin tai lehtimainoksiin vaan voidaan puhua mistä tahansa viestistä, minkä itse koet mainonaksiksi.

Itse en ole mainonnan asiantuntija sen paremmin vaan tutkin sitä ja teidän näkemyksenne ovat minulle aineistoa.

Sopiiko kaikille että voidaan sinutella toisiamme?

Puheenvuoroja ei tarvitse erikseen pyytää, vaan voit osallistua keskusteluun vapaasti. Eli puhukaa toisillenne, esittäkää kysymyksiä ja antakaa palautetta toisillenne, mutta tietysti rakentavassa mielessä.

Tuokaa esille erilaisia mielipiteitä ja näkökulmia. Eri mieltä saa olla. En pyri hakemaan mitään yhteistä lopputulosta tälle keskustelulle. Oikeita tai vääriä vastauksia ei ole ja kaikkien näkemykset ovat yhtä tärkeitä.

Kahvia ja virvokkeita saa ottaa vapaasti keskustelun aikana.

Kenenkään nimeä ei mainita tutkimusraportissa ja luottamuksellisuusasiat olen kirjannut sinne sopimuspaperiin, niitä papereita voidaan vielä täydentää keskustelun lopuksi.

Palkkio on 40 euroa ja sen saa tänään mukaansa. Lisäksi saatte valita tuolta kaksi lehteä ja pokkarin. Päätetään keskustelu viimeistään kello 20 aikaan.

Nauhoitan tämän keskustelun analyysia varten ja sitä helpottaa jos vain yksi on kerrallaan äänessä ja puhutaan riittävän kuuluvalla äänellä.

Korostan vielä että tämä on nimenomaan keskustelu, ei haastattelu. Nostan esille keskustelun aihealueita ja pidän keskustelua sitten aiheessa. Näissä puitteissa saa vapaasti tuoda esille ajatuksia.

Ice-breaking

Otetaan aluksi lyhyt esittäytyminen. Jos kerrot vaikkapa etunimesi ja kerro lisäksi mitkä 2 tai 3 asiaa, jotka tulevat sinulle mieleen sanasta mainonta? Ihan ensimmäinen vaikutelma.

(tai: mikä mainonnassa on sinun mielestäsi kiinnostavaa? tai Millaisia ajatuksia sana *mainonta* sinussa herättää?)

Aloitussaihe

Jos ajattelet viimeaikoja, niin millaisiin mainoksiin olet viimeaikoina kiinnittänyt huomiota? Tekikö joku kenties muistiinpanoja mainoksista? Kerro vapaasti ajatuksia ja kokemuksia niistä mainoksista joita näit.

Kosmetiikkamainokset

Voitte valita siitä pöydältä jonkin lehden ja katsella niistä kosmetiikkamainoksia. Kun näet tällaisen mainoksen, niin minkälaisia ajatuksia tällainen mainos sinussa herättää?

Vaihtoehtoisia kysymyksiä

- Mitä tässä mainoksessa mielestäsi tapahtuu?
- Millaisia ajatuksia herää näistä mainostetuista tuotteista?
- Mitä ajattelet näistä mainostetuista tuotteista?
- Millaisia kokemuksia sinulla mahdollisesti liittyy näiden mainostettujen tuotteiden käyttämiseen?
- Millaisia ovat ihmiset näissä mainoksissa?
- Millainen on tämän tuotteen ostaja ja käyttäjä? Millainen henkilö ostaa tai käyttää tätä tuotetta?
- Miten nämä mainokset liittyvät sinun elämääsi?
- Miten nämä mainostetut tuotteet liittyvät sinun elämääsi?
- Jos sinun pitäisi kuvailla kolmella laatusanalla tätä mainosta, niin mitkä sanat tulevat ensimmäiseksi mieleesi?

Mainonta vs toimituksellinen

Jos ajattelet vaikka nyt tällaisia lehtiä niin mikä näiden lehtien sisällössä on sinun mielestäsi mainontaa?

Yleistä

- Millaisia haittoja mainonnasta voi olla?
- Entä millaista hyötyä mainonnasta voi olla?
- Millaisia ajatuksia herää siitä että nähdäkseen mainoksia kuluttaja joutuisi maksamaan jotain?
- Mitä se tarkoittaisi mainonnan sisällön suhteen = miten mainonta muuttuisi?
- Mitä vaikutuksia sillä voisi olla mainoksien sisältöön?
- Jos ajattelet tilannetta että olisi täysin mainosvapaa, siis ilman mainoksia julkaistava lehti, niin millaisia ajatuksia se herättää?

Viimeistään klo 19.25:

Kirjoitustehtävä: Katsele esimerkkinä olevaa mainosta. Pyydän Sinua nyt täydentämään tämän mainoksen kertoman tarinan. Kirjoita vapaamuotoisesti siitä millaisia ajatuksia Sinulle tästä mainoksesta herää. Millainen tarina tässä mielestäsi on? Mitä on tapahtunut ennen tätä mainoksen kuvaamaa tilannetta? Tai mitä tapahtuu tämän jälkeen?

Olen kiinnostunut juuri Sinun ajatuksistasi, joten älä turhaan välitä siitä mitä mainostaja on mainoksellaan ehkä tarkoittanut.

Älä myöskään jää pohtimaan liikaa, vaan kirjoita vapaasti ensimmäisestä ajatuksestasi eteenpäin. Anna mielikuvitukselle tilaa! Oikeakielisyys ei ole tässä tärkeää. Otetaan tälle noin 15 minuuttia aikaa.

Lopuksi

Jos ajattelet itseäsi, niin millä tavalla tai menetelmällä sinulle olisi luontevaa ja helppoa pitää päiväkirjaa näkemästäsi mainonnasta?

Päätös

Kiitän tästä mukavasta ja antoisasta keskustelusta teitä jokaista. Jaan ne palkkiokuoret jokaiselle. Ja lisäksi ottakaa kaksi lehteä ja pakkari tuolta sivupöydältä. Ne joiden kanssa ei ole vielä sovittu haastatteluaikaa niin voitaisiin katsoa sopivaa aikaa ja paikkaa.

APPENDIX 9 The discussion guide for the interviews.

Henkilökohtaiset haastattelut, runko

Tarkoituksena on syventää fokusryhmässä keskusteltua ja laajentaa mediakäytön ja kulutuksen alueelle. Mainonnan kokemuksia suhteutetaan myös niiden tuotteiden kulutustottumuksiin, joiden mainonnasta eniten keskustellaan (todennäköisesti pukeutuminen ja kosmetiikka?).

Millaisia lehtiä lukee ja millaisissa tilanteissa?

- + televisio
- + radio
- + internet
- + suoramainokset, katalogit
- + asiakaslehdet
- + muut mediat

Mainonta vs toimituksellinen aineisto: Mikä sinun mielestäsi on mainontaa näissä lehdissä?

Mitä Sinä ajattelet tästä mainonnallisesta sisällöstä?

Kerro minulle ostoksilla käynneistäsi?

- + Miten shoppailee vaatteita, kenkiä, laukkuja, kosmetiikkaa?
- + Millaisia ovat vakio-ostopaikat?
- + Mitä ajattelet herätehankinnoista?
- + Mihin hankinnat liittyvät (pitääkö olla jokin meno tms?)
- + Miten etsiminen tapahtuu, onko mielessä selkeä kuva siitä mitä hakee vai kiertääkö katselemassa?

Käydään läpi lehdissä olevia mainoksia

Millaisia ajatuksia niistä herää?

Name: Haluaa uskoa

Description: Haluaa uskoa mainontaan vaikka tietää että mainonta liioittelee, kaunistelee tai vääristelee

<Internals\Fokusryhmä\ 26_2_08> -§ 5 references coded [13,25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0,67% Coverage

...: Tota, (.) mä voisin sanoa tähän nyt sillai et se mitä mä sanoin äsken et mä etsin niit vikoja ((mainoksista)) mul on semmonen olo et jos mainostetaan niin sit mainostetaan, sit se pitää niinkun olla kans hyvä. Et mä en kestä niinkun huonoo mainosta, ja sit mä ihan paljastan senkin et siis mähän en sanonut et mä en olis niinkun mainonnan uhri, sitähän mä en sanonu, et samat voiteet on niilläkin, ihan menee, mitä sielt tulee ja, ja tota (.)

Reference 2 - 1,47% Coverage

...: Hyvännäkönen mummo, semmonen joka on Dove-mainoksissa vois olla siinä. ((naurahtelua))

...: Mulla on täs just Dove-mainos. Pro age dekolteevoide kaulan ja rinnan iholle. [mmm] [joojoo] [olen kokeillut] ja tota niin ((naurua)) mä oon tykänny näist mainoksista kun tulee teeveestä, siellä niinkun tiedätte on erinäköstä ja kokosta naisihmistä ja nyt niinkun tää, tää pro age niin siinä on sit vanhemmalle iälle, aikuiselle iholle, niin tota, must tää on niinkun "kauneudella ei ole ikärajaa", niin must tää on niinkun positiivinen mielikuva mikä siit syntyy, ja siis semmonen tunne okei, mä voin uskoa ton asian käyttämättä tota voidettakin että siis, (.) kauneudella ei oo ikärajaa, mä haluan niin mä voi uskoa sen ilman et mun tarvii hankkia tuota tuotetta ja käyttää sitä, mut että tää on sillä tavalla (.) mmm, (.) positiivisessa mielessä, et sit kun tuon purkin näkee niin sen ottaa mukaan, kaupassa.

U: Mmm

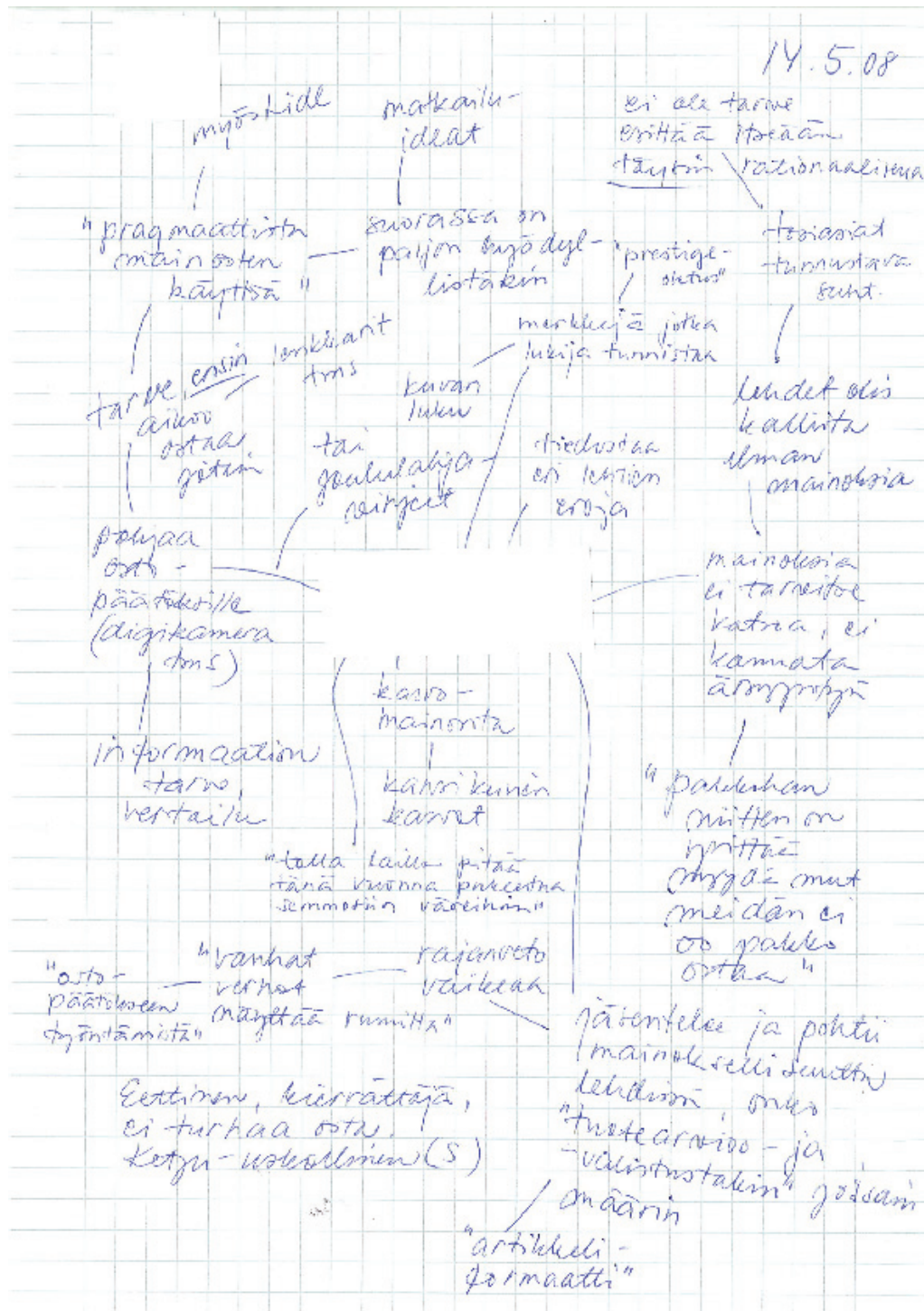
U: Kyllä

...: Et en mä ton kanssa ainakaan huonommaks mee. ((naurua))

Reference 3 - 2,19% Coverage

...: se on yks niitten kampanja koska sitä ennen niillä oli semmonen kampanja jossa eri kokoset, eri lihavammat ja laihemmat ja ((paljon päällekkäisiä kommentteja)) [ai joo] niinkun yleensä kaikkien pitää olla hirveen laihoja, ja se kampanja niillä (Dovella) oli sitä ennen ja mä olin juuri silloin tuolla Kauneus- ja terveystessuilla kun oli se kampanja, ja musta se oli aivan hurmaavaa kun ne myi sellaisia t-paitoja joissa luki Ihana tytär ja Ihana äiti. Mä en ostanu itelleni sitä ihana äiti mut tytölle ostin kyllä sen ihana tytär (.), niil oli jotenkin niin kauheen (.) [joo] [positiivinen] hyväksyvä ja positiivinen ja [mmm] hurmaava ja ne tekee uskottavaksi sen takia kun ne niinkun hyväksyy meidät [mmm], siin oli jotakin sellaisia kuviakin, (.) niis oli tällasia niinkun tää tällanen henkilökuva niil oli sellaisia niinkun arpisist vatsoista [mmm] ja ryppysistä [mmm] raskausarvista, [mmm] ja kaikista sellasista mitkä kuuluu elämään.

...: Ja sitten niin tota, mäkin oon nähny tuli joku dokumentti tai joku tai jossain ohjelmassa näist naisista jotka on ollu tässä [mhm] ja muutama niist niinkun sit jotain avautui et toiset ei halunnu et kuvat on nyt otettu mut ei mitään puhuta. Niin, et siin tuli siin vielä enemmän et mäkin jouduin monta kertaa tostkin naisest kattomaan et onks toi se sama nainen joka oli siinä et hyvänen aika niinkun et ne ja ne oli paljonkohan se oli se vanhin niistä, mä en nyt muista. Itse asiassa se ei kyllä kuulukaan tähän asiaan.



APPENDIX 12 The list of preliminary titles

The empirical material of *one focus group* was tentatively classified by two basic questions aiming at eliciting emerging themes and not confining to theoretical constructs of the study: "How females describe the meanings of advertising to them" and "How females describe their experiences of advertising". The preliminary titles below illustrate the emerged themes.

1. Wants to believe in advertising although realizes that advertising exaggerates (does not care)
2. Does not herself believe in advertising since realizes that advertising exaggerates
3. Assumption how advertising influences on other consumers. The other consumers believe in ads since they do not understand that ads often exaggerate or they do not care about it
4. Advertising is harmful
5. It is difficult to understand the idea or purpose of advertising
6. Advertisements are useful
7. An issue related to the consumer's context/ Familiar with the professional terms and language used in advertising industry
8. Intrinsic visual value/ the ad is experienced as fine and of good quality
9. Buying intentions/ reinforcing buying intentions
10. There is a clear distinction between commercial ads and editorial content
11. There is not a clear distinction between commercial ads and editorial content
12. Advertising constitutes an important part of the media content (for instance the ads are experienced as a part of the luxuriousness in the Gloria magazine)
13. Other experiences or notices related to the advertisements
14. Image is an important part of advertising

APPENDIX 13

The index of master-codes and sub-codes

The text in parenthesis describes the nodes' main relations to the theoretical constructs of the study.

MEANINGS AND EXPERIENCES OF ADVERTISING (Antecedent conditions, motivations, activation, value and benefits)

1. Image as an important part of advertising
2. Buying intentions: has paid attention to advertising related to products intended to buy; advertising has influenced on her purchases or reinforced post-purchase evaluation
3. A purchase has resulted from advertising effects: she has bought a particular product after seeing the ad
4. Wants to believe in advertising although realizes that advertising exaggerates, embellishes and distorts
5. Does not herself believe in advertising since realizes that advertising exaggerates, embellishes and distorts
6. Advertising has harmful influence on other consumers: the other consumers believe or may believe in ads since they do not realize that ads often exaggerate, embellish and distort, or they do not care about it
7. Low quality advertising: advertising in general has low quality since the ads are poorly designed or mindless
8. Prejudicial advertising: ads are unethical tempting to unnecessary consumption
9. Hard to understand a purpose or an idea on an advertisement
10. Is conscious of the advertising's intentions to influence on consumers
11. Advertising is entertaining: has an experience of entertaining or visually beautiful ads although the product would not be meaningful. The ad is experienced as elegant or skilfully made.
12. Advertising is acceptable because of its ethically oriented content
13. Advertising is experienced as valuable for herself
14. Sources of influence for purchasing: what gets her inspired

OPINIONS RELATED TO ADVERTISING (Motivations)

15. Approvingly disposed towards advertising in general
16. Neutrally disposed towards advertising in general
17. Unfavourably disposed towards advertising in general

CONSUMPTION: Experiences related to consumption of tangibles or intangibles (Antecedent conditions, consumers' socio-cultural resources, motivations)

18. Services: the participant consumes services
19. Purchase on demand: seeks products when having an event or as the need arises

20. High quality brands: seeking high quality and branded products for her own consumption needs
21. Critical consumer: is critically and skeptically disposed towards product renewals and recurrent new product launches.
22. Home furnishing and decoration: Consumption related to the participant's home.
23. Recycling and ethical consumption: supports recycling and ethical choices of consumption
24. Conscious of prices: low price is important
25. Impulse purchase: sometimes makes impulse purchases
26. Freak purchases: buying some products often or buying for collecting purposes or brand loyalty
27. Does not favour shopping: Experiences shopping and stores laborious and uneasy

MEDIA USE: Experiences related to the participant's use of different media (Semantic context, consumers' socio-cultural resources, motivations, activation)

28. Magazines
29. Television watching
30. Direct mail
31. Radio listening
32. Newspapers
33. The internet and online shopping: use of the Internet and experiences of shopping via the Internet
34. Customer magazines: reading of customer magazines and loyalty for retail store chains

CONTEXT: MEDIA CONTEXT OF ADVERTISING (semantic context)

35. Descriptions of the participant's own context
36. Advertising is approvingly experienced as an assimilated part of the content
37. There is a clear distinction between commercial ads and editorial content
38. The boundary between advertising and editorial content is unclear.

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