CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

For years women in advertisements have been portrayed in stereotypical roles, such as the mother or the seductress. The changing social climate and the evolution of the role of the woman in the home and in the workplace have given rise to questions regarding the appropriate portrayal of women in the media today. Bailey (2006:99) asserts that consumers' perceptions of particular models (or characters), such as females, may be structured based on their portrayal in the media. This often leads to outdated stereotypes being promoted.

Consumers are exposed to a wide variety of advertising in different media every day, and from these exposures certain thinking patterns evolve. Ibroscheva (2007:409) holds that gender roles in the media are authenticated through regular exposures, and are then adopted by the public as the norm. An attitude of male supremacy and female subordination is propagated through gender differentiation (Serra & Burnett, 2007:147). Such gender discrepancies are then accepted as societal norms through consumer socialisation. According to Murray, Rubinstein and Comstock (in Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007:691), television commercials are major consumer socialising agents.

Studies focusing on advertising have found that women are not generally shown in powerful roles. Women in advertisements are usually represented as stereotypical nurturers or sex objects. These representations do not reflect the changes in society, such as women in important positions in the workplace (Razzouk, Setz & Vacharante, 2003:120). This is echoed by Koernig and Granitz (2006:92), who state that women are not depicted as important role players in the corporate setting. Additionally, women are less likely than men to be portrayed as authorities on products (Furnham & Mak, 1999:424). The woman may therefore be depicted as a product user, but not as an expert in the use of the product.

In advertising that features athletes, women are portrayed in provocative ways, rather than in ways that focus on their athletic skills (Grau, Roselli & Taylor, 2007:63). The sexual nature of women, rather than their capabilities, is often the focal point in magazine advertisements and television commercials. Women are often depicted in sparse clothing that emphasises their sexuality (Döring & Poschl, 2006:182). This limits the perceptions of women, since it does not reflect women's skills and the positions of power that they may hold in real-life situations.

Many studies illustrate the stereotyping of women in advertisements. In several studies, the themes related to the portrayal of women in advertisements are identified as: (1) stereotypical images of women in advertisements (Bolliger, 2008:46; Grau *et al.*, 2007; Hung & Li, 2006); (2) role portrayal of women in advertisements (Ibroscheva, 2007:409; Koernig & Granitz, 2006; Razzouk *et al.*, 2003); and (3) the relation between female portrayals and product/service categories (Furnham, Pallangyo & Gunter*,* 2001:23; Mwangi, 1996:210; Nassif & Gunter, 2008:755).

A large majority of all television commercials and magazine advertisements feature female characters. Marketers often use female role portrayals in advertising to reach magazine and television audiences. These role portrayals do not always reflect reality, and are often limited. Therefore, a need exists for research on the subject. In the study, a content analysis of the roles portrayed by women in the South African context will be conducted, using both magazine advertisements and television commercials.

The study makes three important contributions to the field of knowledge of role portrayal in advertising. Firstly, the study focuses on the state of female roles in advertisements in a South African context, which, as far as could be determined, has not been done since 1991. Secondly, the study included both print and broadcast media for a broader scope of female role portrayals. Thirdly, the study aims to identify new female roles that are relevant in current advertising depictions.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT, OBJECTIVES AND DELIMITATIONS

1.2.1   <u>Problem statement</u>

Several international studies on the portrayal of women in magazine advertisements, as well as television commercials, are available (refer to Chapter 4), but an extensive search of electronic databases (including EBSCOHost, Google Scholar, Proquest, Emerald and SABINET) have failed to indicate the existence of any current research on this topic in South Africa. A study by Rudansky (1991) was identified as the most recent South African study on magazine advertisements. This will therefore be included in the literature review.

As the aforementioned South African study was conducted before 1994, predating the ending of apartheid, a definite need exists to determine the extent of the current role portrayals of females in advertising. The apartheid era was characterised by limited opportunities for non-white ethnic groups in South Africa. In the post-apartheid era (post-1994) many social and economic changes have occurred, such as more black people (and women) in top posts in companies, as well as the growth of the black middleclass (Modisha, 2008:167). It is expected that such changes would have impacted on advertising practice in South Africa.

Studies completed in Africa are also included, as African countries share some cultural similarities, which make them comparable to the status quo in South Africa. It should be noted that the aim of the study is not to provide specific comparisons to previous research.

Some of the reviewed studies on magazine advertisements suggested analysing the contents of advertisements in other media as well (Hung & Li, 2006:23; Grau *et al.*, 2007:64; Koernig & Granitz, 2006:94). The current study aims to address this shortcoming by conducting a content analysis of not only magazine advertisements, but also television commercials. A recommendation made by Rudansky (1991:224) was that the role portrayals of women should be analysed a few years after the 1991 study, in order to determine whether the role portrayals have become more representative and reflective of social circumstances. The current study will attempt to address this recommendation. Döring and Poschl (2006:184) noted that research should be conducted on a wider variety

of product category advertising than mobile communications, and the current study will therefore include a variety of other product categories.

1.2.2 <u>Objectives of the study</u>

The primary objective of this study is to identify the roles portrayed by women in magazine advertisements and television commercials in the South African context.

The study field of advertising encompasses many aspects that are related to portrayals of characters in advertisements and commercials (such as different types of visuals and advertising appeals), and these aspects are covered in advertising theory and in previous research. Considering this, several secondary research objectives were set, namely:

- To establish the incidence of female models appearing in magazine advertisements and television commercials in relation to the overall number of advertisements in the sample.
- To examine the nature of the visual portrayals of female models in magazine advertisements and television commercials in terms of:
  - o the number of photographed depictions or real-life appearances in relation to the overall number of magazine advertisements and television commercials.
  - o the number of animated/illustrated depictions in relation to the overall number of magazine advertisements and television commercials.
- To examine the ethnic representation of women in magazine advertisements and television commercials in terms of:
  - o the frequency of representation of African, coloured, Indian and white women in the overall sample.
  - o the frequency with which multiple ethnic orientations are depicted in one advertisement/commercial.
- To determine the extent to which rational and/or emotional advertising appeals are used in magazine advertisements and television commercials.
- To investigate the number of portrayals of female celebrities in magazine advertisements and television commercials.
- To determine the frequency with which women are depicted in multiple roles in one advertisement/commercial.

- To determine the number and type of different product and/or service categories in the advertisements featuring women.
- To determine the product or service categories advertised for the various roles.
- To report on any new role portrayals which may evolve from the study.

1.2.3 Delimitations

The study is limited to the following contexts within South African advertising: adult female role portrayals depicted only in magazine advertisements and television commercials. The content analysis focuses on advertisements and commercials that run only in a limited time frame, as this will not be a longitudinal study.

Advertisements in magazines with circulation figures exceeding 500 000 (see Section 1.4.2.2) will be studied as these magazines represent the majority of the total magazine readership in South Africa. Specialist publications will be excluded, as the content of these are tailored to specific markets (for example retail club magazines such as *Edgars Club Magazine* that is only accessible to *Edgars Club* members). The focus of the current study requires magazines targeted to a mainstream audience.

Commercials in prime time on *SABC 1*, *2*, *3* and *e.tv* television channels will be studied. The specific channels have been chosen because they have the highest viewership exposure rates. *MNet* and *DStv* will be excluded, due to time constraints and the fact that according to the descriptions of Living Standards Measurement (LSM), the majority of the South African population does not have access to these channels (Cant, Brink & Brijball, 2006:93). The LSM is a uniquely South African segmentation tool.

Literature focusing on content analyses of advertisements and commercials will be consulted, as well as advertising and consumer behaviour theory.

1.3 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The current study includes the following key terms: *advertising, animation or illustrations,*

consumer, consumer behaviour, content analysis, emotional advertising appeal, ethnic groups, female celebrities, media, *model (female), photograph, product or service type, promotion, rational advertising appeal* and *roles.* These concepts, as related to the current study, will now be defined.

Advertising: Advertising is a paid, structured and non-personal form of marketing communication by an identified sponsor designed to reach a specific target audience with a persuasive message about a product, service or idea (Arens, Weigold & Arens, 2011:8; Wells, Moriarty & Burnett, 2006:5).

Animation or illustrations: Animation is defined as "the technique of filming successive drawings… to create a film giving an illusion of movement" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006:52). Illustrations refer to static depictions that are drawn (such as line drawings or cartoons) and exclude all real-life photography.

Consumer: A consumer is defined by Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:4) as a person who "… buys goods and services for his or her own use, for the use of a household, or as a gift for a friend".

Consumer behaviour: Consumer behaviour is defined as "the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services" (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:4).

Content analysis: Content analysis is a research technique that evaluates the content of communication messages, such as advertisements, in order to determine common themes and/or patterns in the messages (Riffe, Lacy & Fico in Neuendorf, 2002:10).

Emotional advertising appeal: This refers to an approach used in advertising that aims to influence the target audience's feelings by focusing on their psychological, social or symbolic needs (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006:737; Arens *et al.*, 2011:342).

Ethnic groups: For the purpose of the study, ethnic groups are defined as groups of people that share common cultural or national origins (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006:490).

This includes the four major South African ethnic groups, namely Africans, coloureds, Indians/Asians and whites, as classified by Statistics South Africa (2009:4).

Female celebrities: Female celebrities include well-known, successful, high-profile women in various fields, including entertainment, sport and business (Choi, Lee & Kim, 2005:85).

Media: The media are defined as those vehicles or channels commonly used to transmit advertising messages to a specific target audience, such as television and magazines (Ouwersloot & Duncan, 2008:9).

Model (female): A model is defined as a woman who poses for a specific purpose, such as art or photography, as often used in advertisements and commercials (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006:918). For the purpose of the study, the term "character" will be used interchangeably with the term model to indicate the female in the advertisement or commercial.

Photograph: A photograph is defined as a "still picture made with a camera" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006:1079).

Product or service type: A product or service is something that the consumer perceives will satisfy a need (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:19). For the purpose of the study, product or service types refer to the consumable category into which the product or service falls, such as food or household products.

Promotion: This is defined as the co-ordination of the various forms of marketing communication and marketing communication messages that aim to influence target consumers (Belch & Belch, 2007:15; Ouwersloot & Duncan, 2008:27).

Rational advertising appeal: This type of advertising appeal targets the practical or functional needs of the consumer (Arens *et al.*, 2011:342).

Roles: Roles are defined as the behavioural patterns suitable to and expected of an individual based on the individual's pertinent position from a societal perspective (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:138).

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in the current study includes a literature review as well as empirical research. The secondary research focuses on the existing literature that is relevant to the theme of the study. The primary research will examine advertisements and commercials, using content analysis as the research method.

1.4.1 <u>Literature review</u>

In real-life situations, women are expected to fulfil many roles, and researchers have attempted to identify these roles as they are portrayed in advertising. This section is dedicated to a review of the current literature on the promotional element of the marketing mix, the process of creating advertisements, as well as the female roles portrayed in advertising. The place of advertising in promotion and the relations between advertising, communication and consumer behaviour will also be described.

1.4.1.1 An overview of the promotional mix

Promotion forms part of the marketing mix of the organisation. The marketing mix of the organisation consists of the four Ps, namely: the *product*, *price*, *place* (distribution) and *promotion* of the organisation's offerings (Wells *et al.*, 2006:8).

The promotional element of the marketing mix is also referred to as the marketing communication or promotional mix, and includes various communication methods and activities aimed at the target consumer. The integration of the promotional elements is called integrated marketing communications, or IMC. IMC is described as the process of planning, co-ordinating, integrating and implementing the various forms of marketing communications needed to increase the impact on the organisation's consumers (Clow & Baack, 2010:32; Shimp, 2010:10).

As promotion is the main communication tool of the marketing mix, the role of promotion in the communication process will be described next.

1.4.1.2 Promotion as a communication tool

Promotion includes various forms of communication, such as advertisements, aimed at a target audience. The communication process includes different elements. These are the sender or the source of the message, the message itself, the communication channel or medium that is used to relay the message, and lastly, the receiver of the message. In practice, the sender is the organisation that wishes to initiate communication by sending an advertising message consisting of words, symbols and visuals (Belch & Belch, 2007:139; Koekemoer, 2004a:44). The medium is the magazine or television channel that hosts the advertisement or commercial, and the receiver is the target market of the organisation.

The sender encodes the message (sets it in words, visuals and structures it) and the receiver decodes (interprets) it. Feedback is then provided from the receiver back to the sender in response to the message. The sender aims to attain positive feedback, such as sales. The communication process may be interrupted or hampered by noise, which may distort the intended meaning of the message. Psychological noise (such as the non-interest of the audience) and physical noise (such as competing advertising messages) may hamper this communication process (Ouwersloot & Duncan, 2008:73).

The message element of the communication process is of particular interest to the current study, as the advertising messages in magazines and on television channels will be analysed. Advertising is an element in the promotional mix of the organisation and will now be discussed.

1.4.1.3 Promotion and advertising

Promotion is an important element of an organisation's marketing mix, as it is the main tool for communicating with the target audience. The elements of the organisation's promotional strategy include advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, events and sponsorships, as well as interactive marketing.

The focus of the current study is on advertising as a promotional element. The objective of an advertising message is to reach a target audience with a particular message on the organisation's products and/or services. The message can be placed in a wide variety of media. Advertising is described as a paid, structured and non-personal form of marketing communication by an identified sponsor designed to reach a specific target audience with a persuasive message about a product, service or idea (Arens *et al.*, 2011:8; Wells *et al.*, 2006:5). The sponsor is the organisation that initiates (and pays for) the advertising message.

The media that are used to communicate the advertising message include *inter alia* magazines (printed media) and television (broadcast media). These are the media on which the current study will focus. Wells *et al.* (2006:5) assert that advertising makes use of "…non-personal mass media – as well as other forms of interactive communication – to reach broad audiences".

The process of creating advertising messages will be discussed next.

1.4.1.4 Creating advertisements

The process of creating advertisements and commercials commences with the development of a message strategy. The message strategy is the plan for the actual production of the advertising message, and includes message objectives and methods of achieving advertising goals (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009:341). The objectives and tactics are outlined in a creative brief. This is a plan of what the organisation wants to achieve with the particular message.

The message needs to be executed via a particular framework, using the message objectives as a basis for execution. The executional framework is the message approach that will be used to communicate the brand message (Belch & Belch, 2007:267). An example of an executional style is animation, where the characters in the advertisements or the commercial are illustrations or cartoons. The current study will examine *inter alia* the incidence of illustrated female depictions.

Within the executional frame, an advertising appeal is used to express the message. Advertising appeals are generally divided, based on the rational (providing information; fact-based) or emotional (eliciting feelings) content of the message (Koekemoer, 2004a:146). The current study will examine the use of emotional and/or rational advertising appeals in advertisements and commercials featuring female models. Particular creative tactics are employed to develop magazine advertisements and television commercials.

a. Creative tactics for magazine advertisements

A printed advertisement, such as a magazine advertisement contains text in the form of display and body copy, as well as visuals. Display copies are the headings that aim to attract the attention of the audience, while the body copy accentuates the traits, advantages and utility of the product (Arens *et al.*, 2011:392). The visuals aim to attract attention and enhance the likelihood that the audience will read the body copy of the message.

The layout combines these elements to form a logical whole that will relay the intended message to the target audience (Belch & Belch, 2007:282). The current study will not focus on the copy, but on the visuals in the advertising message.

b. Creative tactics for television commercials

Television commercials share many basic similarities to printed advertisements, such as the copy. These all follow similar patterns to executional frameworks. In television the copy is supported by the visual and audio components, and unlike the print medium, television has moving visuals (video). This characteristic of television makes it a more captivating medium (Wells *et al.*, 2006:369). It is important for the components to be aligned so that they can run across a campaign.

The copy and audio instructions are described in the script of the commercials, while the visuals are presented in the form of a storyboard. The script and storyboard detail the complete contents of a television commercial (Blakeman, 2007:190). Other elements besides the audio and video include the props, the setting and the cast. The cast features

the characters (or models) used in the commercial. These should reflect the typical user of the product or service (O'Guinn *et al.,* 2009:437). The current study will include the female model, the setting and the props, as indicators of role portrayals. The female model in the advertisement or commercial should represent an image that target consumers can identify with.

The aim of marketing communication is therefore to link the organisation (sponsor) with the target audience in a manner to which the audience can relate. Advertising plays a very important role in communicating with the consumer and influencing the consumer's decision-making process. For these reasons, a brief summary of consumer behaviour is important.

1.4.1.5 Consumer behaviour

As stated previously, advertising aims to influence target audiences. These consist of potential customers or consumers. Consumers display behavioural patterns that are of interest to the organisation, as it wishes to provide a suitable product or service offering to the consumer; and this can only be achieved if the organisation knows the consumer. Consumer behaviour is defined as "the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services" (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:4).

The theory suggests that consumers (in most cases) go through the consumer decision-making process when buying decisions for products or services are made.

1.4.1.6 The consumer decision-making process

Consumers, when making a purchase decision, progress through the consumer decision-making process. This process consists of several stages, and in each of these advertising can play an influencing role. The discussion will focus on five decision-making stages, namely problem recognition, pre-purchase information search, alternative evaluation, purchase and post-purchase processes.

The consumer decision-making process commences with need recognition, where the consumer faces a consumption-related problem. This is followed by the pre-purchase

search for information that will provide alternatives that may satisfy the recognised need. After the consumer has identified viable product options, these alternatives are evaluated based on certain criteria and a purchase decision is made (Blythe, 2008:261).

The product choice is the alternative that the consumer believes will satisfy the identified need most satisfactorily. Following the purchase, post-purchase processes commence. The product is consumed and the performance of the product is evaluated, insofar as it has satisfied the need. If the consumer is uncertain of the wisdom of the decision, he or she experiences cognitive dissonance (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:264).

1.4.1.7 Influencing factors on the consumer decision-making process

The consumer is influenced by factors that are both internal and external to the individual. Various sources (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:5; Blythe, 2008:7; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:16) offer models of consumer decision-making, and in these models both psychological and external influences on consumer behaviour are described. Psychological factors include various influences that are internal to the individual consumer. These factors include the individual's motivation, perception, learning, personality and attitudes.

Motivation is the reason why people engage in consumption behaviour and perception is the personalised manner whereby people create a mental sense of stimulus (Arens *et al.*, 2011:160). Perception includes the learning process, as perceptions (and attitudes) are learned. The learning process involves acquiring the knowledge to apply to future consumer behaviour and acquisitions.

The consistent way in which someone responds to his/her environment is referred to as an individual's personality. Organisations develop brand personalities for their brands, and these are generally related to the personality of the target consumer. Attitudes are learned predispositions as regards behaving in a particular positive or negative manner towards an object.

External factors are influences outside the consumer, and comprise socio-cultural factors and the organisation's marketing efforts. The former includes the family; social class (divisions in society into which individuals are classified according to shared values, socio-

economic status and lifestyle factors); as well as culture (and subculture), which is a shared set of values, beliefs, customs and behaviours in a larger society (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:42).

The socio-cultural factors serve as broad indicators of the target consumers' values and how these will impact on their buying behaviour. The organisation's marketing efforts consist of the organisation's product, price, distribution and promotional efforts. These elements were briefly described in Section 1.4.1.1. As mentioned previously, the image projected by female models in advertising impact on the manner in which the target audience relates to advertisements and commercials. A discussion of female models as portrayers of specific roles in magazine advertisements will be provided next.

1.4.1.8 *Female role portrayals in magazine advertisements*

Various studies from around the world, including South Africa, have investigated the roles portrayed by women in magazine advertisements. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the identified roles and the sources of the studies.

Table 1.1   Female role portrayals in magazine advertising

Role portrayals	Sources
Sex object	Bolliger (2008:51); Döring & Pöschl (2006:184); Grau *et al.* (2007:63); Johnson, Rowan & Lynch (2006:8); Koernig & Granitz (2006:91); Monk-Turner, Wren, McGill, Matthiae, Brown and Brooks (2008:206); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417); Razzouk *et al.* (2003:122); Rudansky (1991:147).
Mother/nurturer	Bolliger (2008:51); Döring & Pöschl (2006:184); Hung & Li (2006:11) and Hung, Li, & Belk (2007:1039); Koernig & Granitz (2006:91); Rudansky (1991:144).
Physically attractive/decorative	Bolliger (2008:51); Döring & Pöschl (2006:182); Hung & Li (2006:13); Johnson *et al.* (2006:7); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417); Razzouk *et al.* (2003:124).
Working/career woman	Hung & Li (2006:13); Koernig & Granitz (2006:91); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417); Razzouk *et al.* (2003:124); Rudansky (1991:148).
Housewife	Bolliger (2008:51); Koernig & Granitz (2006:91); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417); Razzouk *et al.* (2003:122); Rudansky (1991:143).
Dependant	Döring & Pöschl (2006:184); Koernig & Granitz (2006:91); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417); Razzouk *et al.* (2003:122).
Mannequin	Razzouk *et al.* (2003:124); Rudansky (1991:149).
Product user	Johnson *et al.* (2006:7); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417).
Social being	Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1417); Rudansky (1991:146).
Non-traditional activities	Razzouk *et al.* (2003:124).
Romantic	Rudansky (1991:145).

The roles portrayed by females in magazine advertisements, according to Table 1.1, include: sex object, mother/nurturer, physically attractive/decorative, career woman, housewife, dependant, mannequin, product user, social being, non-traditional woman and the romantic role. These role portrayals will be briefly discussed next.

a.   Sex object

A sex object refers to a female character in an advertisement depicted in a sexually alluring manner. She is generally dressed in sparse clothes and her attitude is provocative. In the role of sex object, the sexually alluring female is purely decorative, and her presence and appearance are generally not directly related to the product in any way (Rudansky, 1991:147). The sex object has been identified as the most commonly depicted role in various studies (Grau *et al.,* 2007:62; Koernig & Granitz, 2006:91; Razzouk *et al.,* 2003:123). The woman as sex object will be included in the current study.

b.   Mother/nurturer

A popular (stereotypical) advertising role portrayal of women is that of the mother or the nurturer. This image is described as a woman who is domestic, nurturing and soft (Hung & Li, 2006:12). Twenty per cent of the advertisements in one South African study pictured the woman as a mother (Rudansky, 1991:144). This was the second most popular role portrayal, indicating a perception from advertisers in the nineties that this role was relevant to the woman of that era. In the mother role, the female is shown with one or more children in the setting, and her attention is focused on the child or children, or the product being advertised. The woman as a mother will be included in the current study.

c.   Physically attractive/decorative

The female as a purely beautiful object was prevalent in various studies, for example, the Chinese "flower vase", which is a role typified as carrying an image of glamour, charm, beauty; it combines both Eastern and Western ideals (Hung and Li, 2006:13). This woman celebrates her femininity, and does so through enhancing her physical beauty by using cosmetics, jewellery and different hairstyles. The physically decorative female is most

often used in advertising personal care products aimed at enhancing physical attractiveness. The current study will examine the link between such roles and the product type.

The physically decorative role was found in the majority of depictions in women's magazines and was the second most popular portrayal in Thai magazines (Döring and Poschl, 2006:181; Razzouk *et al.*, 2003:123). For the purpose of the study, the physically decorative role is typified by an image of attractiveness; and the role symbolises the physical ideal.

d. *Career woman (working woman)*

A diverse range of studies worldwide identify females in advertisements portraying a career or working role. The career woman is typically dressed in businesslike apparel and she is performing work-related activities in a working environment. A typical example would be a woman dressed in a uniform, typing in an office environment.

Most studies note the presence of a career role, but do not differentiate between any of the various working roles. In a South African study, the role of the career woman (or the working role) was separated into the following six categories (Rudansky, 1991:148):

- Teacher: the woman is illustrated in a teaching position, and the surroundings often include children or a child, and props that indicate a classroom setting.

- Nurse: here the female wears a nursing uniform and she is depicted in an environment related to the medical industry.

- Secretary: this woman performs secretarial tasks in an office setting.

- Office worker: this female is also in an office environment, but the situation and props (such as a uniform) show that she does not hold an important or secretarial position.

- The executive or professional: here the female is dressed in business attire and the background, props and activities engaged in are central to the role portrayal and they indicate a top position.

- Other: these are additional working roles that do not fit into the above mentioned categories.

According to various authors, women worldwide are active in the workplace. For example, around 63 per cent of contemporary Thai women work outside the home (Razzouk *et al.,* 2003:122). However, this is not reflected in advertising practice, as only 12 per cent of Chinese and Thai female advertising images depict career women, and less than one per cent of South African advertising images do so (Hung & Li, 2006:12; Razzouk *et al.,* 2003:122; Rudansky, 1991:162).

e.   *Housewife*

The housewife or homemaker is portrayed by a female character in a household setting performing household chores; and she is not depicted with children, as the presence of children indicates a mother role. She could be shown with household products or appliances that are related to housework (Rudansky, 1991:143). Ten per cent of Thai and one per cent of South African advertisements depict women as housewives (Razzouk *et al.*, 2003:123; Rudansky, 1991:162).

In the United Kingdom (UK), the housewife portrayal is also rare, as it occurred in only six per cent of advertisements (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1423). This role will be included in the current study.

f.   *Dependant*

The woman as a dependant person was identified by Razzouk *et al.* (2003:123) in eight percent of advertisement portrayals. The authors did not provide a clear definition and the assumption is made that this refers to women portrayed as dependent on men. In a recent study, less than four per cent of advertisements in the UK portrayed the woman as dependent (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1427). Dependency on a man was included in the coding descriptors for the "nurturer" in Hung and Li (2006:17). Therefore the nurturer is deemed a dependency role. The nurturer as dependant is typified as a gentle, kind, virtuous and domesticated woman – the ideal wife and mother.

As distinct role categories exist for housewife and mother and these include a degree of dependency, the dependant role will not be used as a separate role category in the current study.

g.   Mannequin

Women who portray no distinct relation to other people and/or who do not focus on external factors are often found in advertisements. This depiction signifies a mannequin role. The mannequin is also called the model girl, and her role is solely to exhibit or show off the product (Rudansky, 1991:149).

For the purpose of the present study, the term mannequin rather than model will be used to refer to this role portrayal. This will eliminate any confusion between the roles and the characters (models) in advertising. The mannequin is generally depicted as wearing or displaying the advertised product. The portrayal of the mannequin was used in 45 per cent of the South African advertisements, the most popular depiction (Rudansky, 1991:162). The mannequin portrayal will be included in the current study.

h.   Product user

In the role of a product user, the character is depicted as preparing to make use of or actually use the advertised product. This role was specified in studies on gender portrayals in computer and technological product advertisements. These found that although women are depicted as product users, they are seldom portrayed as experts. In the use of technological products such as computers, women are generally portrayed as passive, unsure and mostly ornamental (Bolliger, 2008:49; Johnson *et al.,* 2006:6). The portrayal of women as product users will be examined in the present study.

i.   Social being

The female as a social being is depicted with other people, who may include men, but the interaction is not romantic in nature (Rudansky, 1991:146). The social being's focus is on the other individuals present or on the activity that they are performing. It is a broad category that includes social activities such as sport, entertainment or parties. It was one

of the three most depicted roles in the previous South African study (Rudansky, 1991:162) and will be included as a role category in the current study.

j. Romantic role

The woman in the romantic role was identified by Rudansky (1991:145). In this role, the woman reflects positive emotion and is depicted with a male, or in contact with one. The background suggests love or romance, and excludes other people. The romantic role includes *inter alia* portrayals of women as wives and girlfriends, and this is another prevalent South African role portrayal (Rudansky, 1991:162); it will therefore be included in the current study.

k. Engaged in non-traditional activities

Women engaged in non-traditional activities (actions not traditionally associated with females) represented six percent of role depictions in Thai advertising (Razzouk *et al.,* 2003:123). These portrayals were not stereotypical depictions of women and were seldom used. None of the other studies identified women in non-traditional roles, and as the prevalence was low, it will be excluded from the current study.

In the next section, the roles portrayed by women in television commercials are described. As will be seen in 1.4.1.9, the television depictions show many similarities with magazine portrayals.

1.4.1.9 Female role portrayals in television commercials

As in magazine advertisements, television commercials also contain several distinct female role portrayals. The literature review identified several such role portrayals, which are summarised in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2   Female role portrayals in television commercials

Role portrayal	Sources
Work-related	Furnham and Mak (1999:424); Furnham *et al.* (2001:24); Ibroscheva (2007:415); Milner (2005:84); Mwangi (1996:210); Nassif and Gunter (2008:756); Valls-Fernández and Martínez-Vicente (2007:695).
Homemaker	Furnham and Mak (1999:424); Furnham *et al.* (2001:24); Ibroscheva (2007:415); Milner (2005:82); Mwangi (1996:210); Nassif and Gunter (2008:756); Valls-Fernández and Martínez-Vicente (2007:694).
Wife/mother	Furnham and Mak (1999:424); Furnham *et al.* (2001:24); Ibroscheva (2007:415); Milner (2005:82); Mwangi (1996:210); Valls-Fernández and Martínez-Vicente (2007:695).
Decorative	Furnham and Mak (1999:429); Furnham *et al.* (2001:25); Mwangi (1996:211); Nassif and Gunter (2008:756); Valls-Fernández and Martínez-Vicente (2007:694).
Product user	Furnham and Mak (1999:424); Furnham *et al.* (2001:24); Ibroscheva (2007:415).
Sex object	Craig in Furnham and Mak (1999:424); Furnham *et al.* (2001:24); Ibroscheva (2007:415).
Social being	Ibroscheva (2007:415)

Table 1.2 shows that academic researchers have found several roles that are universal, and can be found in various countries. The roles are parallel to the roles portrayed in magazine advertising (refer to Section 1.4.1.8) and will be included in the present study. A brief discussion of the roles in Table 1.2 follows.

a.   Work-related

Various studies have examined the occupational depictions of women in commercials. Women featured in more than half of South African commercials in a study that analysed gender roles in African countries (Milner, 2005:84). Specific work-related portrayals include classifications as professionals, labourers and office workers (Furnham *et al.*, 2001:24; Nassif & Gunter, 2008:756).

In other studies, occupational portrayals were classified specifically as occupational types, but not in any particular roles (Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007:695). The combination of autonomy as an indicator of an occupational role and location or setting of the image (such as the office) point to a work-related role portrayal (Ibroscheva, 2007:415).

b.   Homemaker

The homemaker (housewife) role is typified by a woman displaying some degree of dependence, and she is generally depicted in a household background (Ibroscheva, 2007:415; Nassif & Gunter, 2008:757; Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007:694). Females portrayed with household products are also classified as homemakers. Such portrayals were reported by Furnham *et al.* (2001:24), as well as by Mwangi (1996:210); and the homemaker is considered to be the same as the role of housewife that was identified in magazine advertisements (refer to Section 1.4.1.8).

c.   Wife/mother

The female as a wife or mother is often portrayed in commercials. Many studies combine the categories of housewife and mother (Furnham *et al.*, 2001:24; Ibroscheva, 2007:415; Mwangi, 1996:210; Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007:695). Generally, the woman portrayed as mother is considered to be a more traditional and gender-stereotypical depiction. This may explain its prevalence in television commercials.

d.   Decorative

Similar to the portrayal in magazine advertisements (refer to Section 1.4.1.8), the physically decorative woman is also linked to personal care products in television commercials (Furnham *et al.*, 2001:24; Mwangi, 1996:211; Nassif & Gunter, 2008:757; Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007:696). As mentioned previously, the physically decorative role is an image that typifies attractiveness and is seen as the physical ideal.

e.   Product user

Television is an excellent medium for demonstrating the use of a product; therefore people are often portrayed as product users in commercials. According to Furnham *et al.* (2001:24) and Ibroscheva (2007:415), women are specifically featured as product users in television commercials.

f.   Sex object

Women dressed in sexually suggestive clothing and/or in provocative poses have been identified as sex objects in studies done on television commercials. Similar indicators (such as sparse clothing) to those used in magazine advertisement studies were used to identify the sex object in commercials. The sex object was identified in commercials by Furnham *et al.* (2001:24), as well as by Ibroscheva (2007:415), and showed a relatively high prevalence.

g.   Social being

Although the role of social being was not specified in studies on television commercials, contact with other people was noted, and may be interpreted as indicating some form of social interaction. According to Ibroscheva (2007:415), women are often portrayed engaging in some form of physical contact, indicating that social portrayals of women exist in commercials.

All of the above roles will be included in the investigation of commercials in the current study. As stated earlier, the role portrayals in television commercials are similar to the portrayals in magazine advertisements. A summary of female role portrayals in both media is provided next, as these role portrayals will be used as a basis in the current study.

1.4.1.10   Summary of female role portrayals in advertisements and commercials

The following pertinent female role portrayals will form the foundation for roles that will be examined in the current study:

- Career woman
- Homemaker
- Mother
- Mannequin
- Physically decorative woman
- Sex object
- Social being
- Product user

- Romantic role

In a summary of the literature review, female characters in advertisements have the purpose of conveying the message of the advertised product or service to the target audience. The advertisement (that includes a character) is required to attract attention to the message, create interest in the offering and stimulate a desire to buy (Wells *et al.*, 2006:102). Various distinctly identifiable role portrayals of women exist in advertisements and commercials, and these will be examined in the current study.

The research design and method that will be used in the present study will be discussed next.

1.4.2 Empirical research: design and method

The research design, sampling method, data collection and data analysis of the current study will be detailed in this section. The measures for assessing the quality and rigour of the current content analysis are also outlined.

1.4.2.1 Description of research design

A pilot study will be conducted to clearly define the existing roles. The pilot study will also serve to define the research practice, to redefine the sample if necessary, and to refine the codebook and coding forms that serve as research instruments. After completion of the pilot study, a content analysis of magazine advertisements and television commercials featuring female models will be conducted.

A content analysis is defined by Krippendorff (2004a:18) as a research method that makes "…replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". Berelson (in Neuendorf, 2002:10) describes content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication".

Content analysis as a research method has an empirical, basic research design. The current study is a descriptive, cross-sectional study that is non-experimental and will draw

primary data from both magazine advertisements and television commercials. Textual data will be collected. Krippendorff (2004a:30) describes text as material that includes writing and visual imagery. The present content analysis will focus primarily on the visual images of women in the advertisements and commercials.

Various opinions exist on whether content analysis is by nature a qualitative or quantitative method. Many authors support the notion that content analysis includes both qualitative and quantitative elements. According to Harwood and Garry (2003:480), content analysis may be used in both qualitative as well as in quantitative research. Such research may be "qualitative in the development stages of research and quantitative where it is applied to determine [the] frequency of phenomena of interest".

This stance is supported by Krippendorff (in White & Marsh, 2006:35), who explains that the qualitative nature of content analysis focuses on the meaning of the content; whereas the quantitative aspect serves to draw conclusions from the content "to the context of [its] use." The present study employs quantitative content analysis as a research method because it focuses *inter alia* on the frequencies of particular role portrayals of women in advertising.

The content analysis research design is chosen because it is an appropriate method to determine the role portrayal of females in advertisements. It is also applicable for its wide use in research pertaining to communications (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991:243). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:142) hold that a content analysis is a methodical examination of material, in order to determine patterns, and is typically used for analysing communication forms. The current study's primary objective is to determine the roles that women portray in advertisements (marketing communications). This makes content analysis an appropriate design to reach this objective.

The sampling procedures that will be utilised in the present study are outlined next.

1.4.2.2 Sampling

a. Magazines

The sample of magazines will include all general interest, male and female magazines with readership figures of 500 000 or higher, as measured by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF)'s All Media and Products Survey (AMPS). Specialist publications, such as sport and motoring magazines, will be excluded, as the target audiences for these are too specialised. The current study will seek to benefit from data extracted from magazines with broader readership. The magazines in the sample will be chosen for high readership levels.

Table 1.3 reflects the AMPS 2008B figures of monthly and weekly magazines exceeding 500 000 in readership. These are listed in descending order.

Table 1.3   AMPS figures for magazines exceeding 500 000 in circulation figures

	Magazine	'000s	% of adult population
1	Bona	2218	7.1
2	True Love	2175	6.9
3	You	2139	6.8
4	Drum	2008	6.4
5	Huisgenoot	1835	5.9
6	Move!	1170	3.7
7	*Amakhosi*	1077	3.4
8	People	1031	3.3
9	*Car*	896	2.9
10	Men's Health	854	2.7
11	Cosmopolitan	823	2.6
12	Fair Lady	758	2.4
13	*Speed & Sound Mag.*	677	2.2
14	Rooi Rose	648	2.1
15	FHM	619	2
16	O' The Oprah Mag SA	616	2
17	Sarie	604	1.9
18	Reader's Digest	570	1.8
19	*Soccer Life Four Four Two*	537	1.7
20	*Auto Trader*	528	1.7

<u>Source</u>: South African Advertising Research Foundation (2008)

As stated previously, specialist publications (indicated in *italics* font in Table 1.3) will not be included in the sample; therefore *Amakhosi* (soccer)*, Car* (motoring)*, Speed & Sound Magazine* (motoring)*, Soccer Life Four Four Two* (soccer)*, Auto Trader* (motoring) will be excluded. Additionally, the sister publications, *You* (for English readers) and *Huisgenoot* (for Afrikaans readers)*,* were found on preliminary examination to have more than 90 per cent overlapping advertisements, and for this reason *Huisgenoot* will also be excluded.

From the sample of magazines, all full-page and double-page advertisements featuring at least one woman will be selected as sample units. These will be chosen, as a preliminary examination of magazines found that full-page and double-page advertisements are very prevalent and are considered able to attract more attention (Arens *et al.*, 2011:357). The sampling technique that will be used to select the magazines, from which advertisements will be drawn, is non-probability purposeful sampling. This approach is chosen because the magazines with the highest readership are required for the study.

It is not possible to determine in advance the exact number of advertisements that will be selected, as the number will only become clear when the actual data collection is in process. Preliminary investigations of a few magazines suggest an estimation of around 50 advertisements per issue. This is considered to be an adequate sample to answer the primary research question. The sample will consist of advertisements in monthly and weekly magazines selected in a time frame of two months. The first weekly issue of the month for each of the weekly magazines will be selected.

b. Television commercials

Advertisements featuring women aired on *SABC 1, 2* and *3*, and *e.tv* will be included in the sample. As stated in Section 1.2.3, the free-to-air channels have been selected, as the majority of the South African population have access to them. As there are practical and time constraints for the current study (and the most popular channels need to be selected), the sampling technique that will be used to select the television commercials is non-probability purposive sampling.

Due to practical constraints, only commercials in prime time (between 18:00 and 22:00) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays will be included. Using commercials aired in prime

time is in line with previous research practices (Ibroscheva, 2007:412; Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007:693). Fridays are included, as they represent a weekend day that may feature different commercials than weekdays. All the television commercials in the mentioned time frame (featuring female models) will be selected. It is not possible at this point to determine the exact number of commercials that will be analysed, as the number will only become clear when the actual data collection is in process.

1.4.2.3 Data collection

The advertisements and commercials will be analysed to isolate the role portrayals identified in the literature review (see Section 1.4.1). New roles that may be identified in the pilot study will also be included. Analysis will take place according to the requirements for content analyses, as set out by Berelson (in Kassarjian, 1977:9), namely objectivity, systemisation and quantification.

- Objectivity: To satisfy this requirement, the categories used for the analysis have to be defined so distinctly that, when they are applied by various analysts to the same content, the same results would be obtained. This means that the categories of roles used in the current study need to be defined clearly to comply with the requirement of objectivity. The current study will make use of independent coders to satisfy this requirement.
- Systemisation: This requirement demands that the analyses have to be relevant to the research problem. Holsti (in Kassarjian, 1977:9) states that the analysis categories need to be selected based on consistently applied tenets, thereby negating the use of categories that may be biased in favour of the researcher's opinions. The current study will be guided by current research practice and literature in this regard.
- Quantification: The quantification requirement implies that the data should be acceptable to statistical techniques, for the "precise and parsimonious" summation of results, as well as for the "interpretation and inference" (Kassarjian, 1977:10) thereof. Descriptive analysis will be conducted in the current study.

In order to identify the female role portrayals, as well as other aspects relevant to the research objectives, the content of advertisements and commercials will be analysed, and will focus on visual content or imagery. This procedure will collect primary, qualitative data

from the visual content of the advertisements. Data will be collected to reach the set objectives (refer to Section 1.2.2).

Physical access to the units of analysis may be hampered if the required magazines cannot be obtained or the television commercials cannot be accessed. To overcome these potential challenges, the magazines will be sourced from a wide variety of retail points, and sufficient pre-planning and preparation will be done to ensure access to the required television channels to facilitate the recording of advertisements.

The data will be collected by the researcher, utilising DVD or video recording equipment required for the recording and playback of television commercials. The data will be collected from commercials aired on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in prime time (between 18:00 and 22:00). The time frame will be one month. Therefore, approximately 192 hours of television time across the selected four channels will be examined; and all the commercials featuring females that are aired in that time will be selected for content analysis.

1.4.2.4 Data analysis

The data will be coded by the researcher for both the pilot and the final study. Apart from the researcher, two other trained coders will be used in the data analysis for the purpose of testing reliability. The researcher will code the entire body of content, and the independent coders will code a sample of the pilot and the final study to determine inter-coder reliability.

The coding process will include the classification of categories of female role portrayals, as defined after the pilot study. This will include the roles listed in Section 1.4.1.10, as well as any additional roles that may be identified in the pilot study.

1.4.2.5 Recording, storing and accuracy of data

The sample of magazines will be purchased as soon as they are available in the retail stores. The magazines will be acquired from various retail points, such as *CNA*, *Pick n Pay* and *Clicks*. A complete database or file will be kept of all the magazines used in the study.

The television commercials that will be included in the current study will be recorded and copies will be made as back-ups. The videos and DVDs will be stored in a secure environment.

To ensure that the data collected are accurate and complete, a meticulous record will be kept of all units; and two additional coders will be employed to ensure objectivity (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991:245).

1.4.2.6 Preparation of data for analysis: coding and analysis

Data collection forms and a codebook (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:416) will be used to facilitate the accurate recording and coding of data. The codebook and coding forms will include the nature of the visuals, the ethnicity of the female(s) in the advertisement or commercial, the advertising appeal used, whether the female is a celebrity or not, the product types advertised, as well as the female role categories.

As stated earlier, the data collected will be analysed quantitatively. This entails determining, among other factors, the frequencies of occurrence of the aspects on the data collection form.

1.4.2.7 Assessing and demonstrating the quality and rigour of the content analysis

The data on which a content analysis is to be based need to be reliable and valid in order for the data to be considered high quality (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:265).

- Reliability: Reliable data refer to data that will stay constant even if the measurement procedure varies (Krippendorff, 2004a:211). The current study will employ three coders for the purpose of ensuring the reliability of measurements. The reliability measures used to test reliability will be Krippendorff's *alpha* and the per cent agreement.
- Validity: This points to the degree to which a measurement process will reach the intended objective, and measures what was intended to be measured (Neuendorf, 2002:112; Saunders *et al.*, 2007:614). Measures of face and content validity will be used in the current study, and these will be described in Chapter 5.

To address the above issues, the analysis will be based on very clear and comprehensive descriptions of the variables (roles) to be analysed. Additionally, the coders will be trained, and guidelines will be provided to ensure consistency in the process of analysis. In content analysis where human coders are utilised, inter-coder reliability is very important. This refers to the level of agreement among multiple coders (Neuendorf, 2002:141). Reliability coefficients of 0.80 (80%) and higher are generally considered acceptable (Krippendorff, 2004a:429; Neuendorf, 2002:143).

Neuendorf (2002:148) makes various recommendations for reporting inter-coder reliability, including per cent agreement and Krippendorff's *alpha* (α). The current study will incorporate these two measures, as per cent agreement is applicable only to cases where Krippendorff's *alpha* cannot be used. Krippendorff's *alpha* takes into consideration the possibility of coincidental agreement between coders, and is a measure suitable to the purpose of the current study (refer to Chapter 5).

1.5   ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and background to the study, outlines the research objectives and provides an overview of the methodology that will be used to conduct the research.

Chapter 2 will supply an overview of the promotional mix, commencing with an outline of the marketing mix. Promotional strategy will be discussed, as well as the communication model and the elements of the promotional mix. The role of advertising in the promotional mix will be clarified, advertising media will be described, and the relationship between advertising and consumer behaviour will be explored.

In Chapter 3, an exposition of advertising creative message strategy will be provided. The components of message strategy and the processes involved in developing magazine advertisements, as well as television commercials will be discussed. The chapter includes an explanation of models in advertising messages, as well as the factors involved in model selection.

Chapter 4 will provide an overview of the different role portrayals of women, as found in the academic literature. The role portrayals identified in research on advertising in magazines and on television worldwide will be described. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the roles that are universally depicted in advertisements and commercials, as well as an outline of product categories related to role portrayals.

Chapter 5 will discuss the research method used in the study. It will provide an overview of the nature of marketing research, and the designs and methods used in marketing research. An exposition of advertising research as it pertains to the study will be provided, as well as a description of the method of content analysis, including the steps involved in the content analysis process.

In Chapter 6, the results of the study will be described in a systematic and objective manner. The outcome of the pilot study and the content analysis will be discussed. The findings of the content analysis of magazine advertisements and television commercials as conducted in the study will also be presented.

The thesis will conclude in Chapter 7 with a summary of the research results, as well as a presentation of the conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research.