

Nothing Beats a Family Holiday: Analysing the Emotional Appeal of Package Holiday Advertisements.

By

Roisin Lambe

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for MA in Public Relations & Digital Communications (QQI)**

**Faculty of Journalism & Media Communications
Griffith College**

August 2025

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in [Public Relations and Digital Communications], is all only my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not used any form of 'artificial intelligence' or related software, nor copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: ___Roisin Lambe___

Dated: ___06/08/2025___

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I'd like to thank my advisor Alessandra Vetti for her advice and help throughout the dissertation writing process.

I would like to thank my family. To my parents for their support throughout my academic journey. Thank you for always believing in me and always funding me! To my brother Ken who never fails to make me laugh, thank you for always making me think deeper about the world and for reminding me to relax and have fun too.

A big thank you to my classmate and friend Lorna Gilligan who has been a constant source of fun in the middle of a very difficult year. Our laughs in lectures and lunch time gossip made even the most stressful days manageable. You're a star.

Finally, the biggest thank you to my partner Stephen Young, without you this dissertation would still be a blank document. Thank you for being a constant source of fun throughout this year, and for somehow being more excited about my assignments than I was. Thank you for your endless patience, perfectly timed pep talks, your unwavering belief in me and the constant supply of lifts and coffee. Your support over the last year has meant everything and I genuinely couldn't have done this without you.

ABSTRACT

I. Research Focus and Questions

This study investigates how family is represented in contemporary package holiday advertising, with a particular focus on the visual and linguistic strategies which are used to evoke an emotional appeal. The research is guided by the following questions:

1. To identify how nuclear family structures are visually represented in package holiday advertisements.
2. Analyse the use of settings and activities in constructing a positive image of family life.
3. To examine the emotional language and storytelling devices used to support family-oriented narratives.
4. To determine the specific emotional responses these adverts aim to evoke in parents with young children.
5. To apply Stuart Hall's encoding decoding model to explain how audiences may interpret or resist these family representations.
6. To provide practical recommendations for marketers on how to use family imagery more effectively to enhance consumer engagement and brand trust.

II. Research Design and Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach, analysing twenty specifically selected adverts from leading holiday brands, TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland. Both visual and linguistic elements were examined, including group composition, setting, body language, taglines and voiceovers. The analysis is framed through Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, enabling a critical reading of how emotional and cultural meanings are constructed and potentially received.

III. Key Findings and Insights

Findings reveal that adverts largely depict nuclear, white, heteronormative families engaging in idealised leisure and holiday activities, framed within warm, aspirational settings. Emotional appeal is driven by themes of togetherness, nostalgia and escapism. However, the relationships are often limited in diversity, often excluding single-parent, extended or non-traditional families. The research also found a lack of representation of race, LGBTQ+ and families with disabilities. Audience interpretation is likely to vary, with dominant readings supporting the emotional narrative and oppositional reading identifying the lack of inclusivity.

IV. Implications for Policy and Future Research

The study highlights the need for more inclusive representations of family in tourism marketing. It suggests that brands could enhance consumer engagement and trust by reflecting the diverse realities of modern family life. Future research could expand cross-cultural comparisons or examine audience reception directly through interviews or surveys.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	7
1.1 Overview	7
1.2 Research purpose	8
1.3 Significance of the study.....	9
1.4 Aims and Objectives	9
1.5 Methodology	10
1.6 Structure of the study.....	11
2. Literature review	12
2.1 Theoretical Framework.....	12
2.2 Emotional appeal in advertising	14
2.3 Representation of family in advertising	16
2.4 Tourism and holiday marketing	20
2.5 gaps in literature and justification of study	25
2.6 Conclusion	27
3. Methodology and research design	30
3.1 Overview	30
3.2 Research philosophy and approach.....	31
3.3 Research strategy.....	32
3.4 Collection of data	34
3.4.2 Sources.....	36
3.5 Approach to data analysis	37
3.6 Conclusion	39
4. Presentation and discussion of findings	41
4.1 Overview	41
4.2 Overview of representations of family	43
4.3 How mothers, fathers and the family are portrayed:.....	46
4.4 Analysis of the role of children in holiday advertisements	48
4.5 Visual tropes of escapism.....	51
4.6 The representation of family diversity (race, age, gender, class).....	53
4.7 Analysis of the emotions encoded to connect family with brand loyalty.....	55
4.7 Conclusion	57
5. Concluding thoughts on the contribution of this research, its limitations and for further research	59
5.1 Implications of findings for research questions	59
5.2 Contributions and limitations of findings.....	60
5.3 Recommendations for practice.....	62
5.4 Recommendations for further research.....	63
5.5 Final conclusion and reflections	65
Bibliography:	67

1. Introduction

Advertising has become more and more prevalent in an era of online connectivity, where targeted brand content reaches consumers through social media, websites and online videos. With advanced algorithms designed to capture an audience's attention and maximise engagement, ads are now seamlessly integrated into our daily digital experiences, but just how representative are they? This research looks to explore package holiday advertisements and their reflection on society's ever changing concept of 'the family.'

1.1 Overview

This field of research explores how advertisements are strategically constructed through visual and narrative techniques which are used to evoke emotional responses from viewers in order to affect consumer behaviour. However, there is an overall lack of research regarding the effects of these marketing strategies within the context of family package holiday advertising (Liu, et al 2024)

This research aims to analyse the role of family representations in the emotional appeal of package holiday ads, in order to explore the relationship between family representation and consumer engagement.

This chapter will provide an introduction to the study by first discussing the significance and context, followed by the research aims, objectives and question, the methodology and finally the structure of the study.

1.2 Research purpose

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate how family representations are strategically used in package holiday advertisements to create emotional appeal and influence consumer behaviour. In contemporary marketing, emotional storytelling has become a key part of effective advertising. Brands no longer rely solely on promoting a product or service, they are now selling experiences, values and lifestyles. For the travel and tourism industry, particularly within the context of family package holidays, this emotional framing is more significant.

This study seeks to critically examine the construction of such representation and the emotional mechanisms behind them. It considers the visual and narrative strategies used to present nuclear family structures, including parents and children and the activities they are engaged in. These representations often go beyond imagery to incorporate storytelling aspects. They incorporate music, setting and language that together form a carefully created emotional narrative. This research will explore how these advertisements frame the concept of the 'perfect family holiday' and how these scenes work to emotionally resonate with their target audience.

A key aspect of this analysis involves not only how these ads are constructed by marketers but also how they are potentially received and interpreted by viewers. In order to analyse this aspect of the advertisements, the study will use Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model as a theoretical focus. This model allows for a nuanced understanding of the communication process in advertising.

The study aims to identify whether these emotionally driven portrayals contribute to the reinforcement of traditional or idealised family norms and what implications this may have for

inclusivity in current and future advertising. The purpose of this research is to provide a deeper academic understanding of the emotional power of family representations in advertising and to offer practical recommendations for marketers in order to create emotionally impactful campaigns.

1.3 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is both academic and industry based. It addresses a notable gap in advertising and media research by focusing specifically on the emotional appeal of family representations in package holiday advertisements. While there is extensive literature in emotional branding and consumer psychology, few studies have examined how depictions of family life function as emotional drivers within the context of tourism marketing.

The findings of this research will offer valuable insights for marketing professionals seeking to improve audience engagement. By understanding the elements of family representation resonate most effectively with audiences. This study will help brands seeking to align their advertising with the changing dynamics of family structures in contemporary society.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to analyse the role of family representations in the emotional appeal of package holiday advertisements, looking into the specific elements of family representations

such as imagery, language, and storytelling that resonate with the viewers on an emotional level, with the objective:

1. To identify how nuclear family structures are visually represented in package holiday advertisements.
2. Analyse the use of settings and activities in constructing a positive image of family life.
3. To examine the emotional language and storytelling devices used to support family-oriented narratives.
4. To determine the specific emotional responses these adverts aim to evoke in parents with young children.
5. To apply Stuart Hall's encoding decoding model to explain how audiences may interpret or resist these family representations.
6. To provide practical recommendations for marketers on how to use family imagery more effectively to enhance consumer engagement and brand trust.

1.5 Methodology

This study will be conducted through a qualitative content analysis approach to examine how family is represented in TV and online package holiday advertisements. The focus is on both the visual elements, such as group composition, setting, activities and facial expressions, and linguistic components including; voice overs, Tag lines, and on-screen text. A select sample of advertisements from major holiday brands will be selected based on relevance and reach to ensure the material selected reflects current marketing strategies.

The analysis will be guided by Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, which offers a theoretical framework for understanding how media messages are constructed by producers and interpreted by their audiences. This theoretical aspect will help explore how idealised family images are intertwined with emotional cues and finally, how these might be received or resisted by viewers. This theory will be discussed further in the literature review.

1.6 Structure of the study

This study is structured into five main chapters. Chapter One introduces the research topic, outlining the background, aims, purpose and methodological approach. Chapter Two presents a critical review of relevant literature, including key theories and previous representations. Chapter Three details the research methodology, including data collected and analysis. Chapter Four presents the findings and discussion supported by the content analysis. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the implications of these findings, offers recommendations for marketers and suggests future research.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In order to carry out this study a theoretical approach will be adopted. Stuart Hall's audience reception theory emphasises the active role played by the audience in interpreting media texts. As John Fiske states, "both text and subjectivity are discursive constructs and both contain similar competing or contradictory discourses. It is out of these contradictions that the polysemy of the text and the multiplicity of readings arise" (Fiske, J., 1998), meaning both texts and individual subjectivities are shaped by language and discourse but because they are formed by multiple, often conflicting discourses, they naturally contain contradictions. These contradictions give rise to many possible meanings of a text.

Through this media theory, Hall emphasises that both media texts and individual people are shaped by complex and conflicting cultural forces. As a result, texts are inherently open to multiple meanings and people therefore interpret them depending on their own subjectivities.

Stuart Hall's Encoding and Decoding model of communication essentially states that the meaning of a message is encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver and that these encoded meanings may be decoded to mean something else (Martin, 2007). In package holiday advertisements for example, the brands producing the ads act as the sender who is encoding a message and the viewers of the ad are the receivers who then decode the message. Hall's theory challenges the idea that media texts have fixed meanings or that audiences are passive, instead he highlights how audiences actively interpret content based on their cultural background and social context. In this contemporary media-saturated and highly personalised environment this theory is more relevant than ever. There may be an objective, empiricist reality

out there, but there is no universal, objective way of perceiving and making sense of it (Fiske, J., 2010).

The encoding/decoding model assumes a single encoded or preferred meaning which exists before decoding (Ross, S., 2011) but in practice it's often based on what the researcher thinks is the encoded message. Hall himself later acknowledges that while the preferred meaning is present in the text, it requires relatively objective analysis to identify, and even then certainty is elusive (Hall, S., 1994). This meaning is usually an abstract summary of the text's overall message. It's also possible to identify multiple preferred readings at different interpretive levels, which may coexist without conflict. In the context of family advertisements, this model helps us to unpack the emotional appeal often encoded within such texts.

In order for a media message to be effective, it must first be produced within the rules of both language and discourse (Hall, S., 1994). This introduces a stage where these formal rules dominate. Before the message can even have any impact, such as meeting a need, being used or producing an effect, it must be understood as a meaningful discourse through decoding. It is this decoded meaning that ultimately influences, entertains or persuades the audience through complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional or ideological processes (Hall, S., 1994). In this study of advertisements, the ultimate message being portrayed and the potential discourse and outcome of the message is what drives the research.

The media often frame events in terms of the "national interest" or global politics, even if these connections are simplified or distorted. A hegemonic viewpoint is what shapes the perceived limits of meaning in society and appears natural, inevitable or taken for granted. Decoding from a negotiated position involves both acceptance and resistance. It recognises the dominant definitions as legitimate but partially challenged or adapts to them (Hall, S., 1994).

2.2 Emotional appeal in advertising

The use of emotional appeals has long been established as a persuasive strategy in advertising industries, particularly when the product benefits are not as easily articulated through logic or tangible evidence. Keshari and Jain (2014) define emotional appeal as, “an attempt to stir up either negative or positive emotions that can motivate purchase.” This definition seeks to demonstrate the psychological basis of consumer decision making. This approach is especially common in product categories where rational benefits are either ambiguous or sometimes difficult to demonstrate, as emotional messages can fill this gap by creating effective connections with consumers (Panda, et al., 2013). Consumers are motivated to purchase or discuss a product based on the overall emotional drive of the accompanying advertisement, whether these emotions are positive or negative. It’s an important strategy for consumers to understand as it can be seen across all forms of advertising today, especially through social media advertising where emotional responses help the advertisement to gain views and discourse.

Consumer purchasing decisions are often driven by a desire to experience positive emotions or to elicit them in others (Cavanaugh & Fredrickson, 2010). In this context, emotional advertising does not simply convey the features of a product; it constructs scenarios or narratives in order to generate a psychological need for the product (Rizwan et al., 2013). In package holiday advertisements, the product being sold is more than just flights and accommodation, the brands are also trying to sell an experience and the best way for them to do that is through emotionally driven advertising. This technique is achieved by embedding the product within relatable or emotionally charged situations that will resonate with viewers’ personal experiences. Davies (1993) suggests that the emotional appeals often aim to secure a positive emotional reward or to help consumers avoid a negative emotional consequence.

As a result of this advertising tactic, emotional appeals can be categorised by their valence, whether they are positive or negative (Taute, et al., 2011). Commonly used negative emotions include guilt, fear, and shame (Keshari & Jain, 2014), while positive emotions may involve happiness, love or nostalgia. In this particular study's focus on emotion appeals in family package holiday advertising, the use of these emotions is key to understanding the overall consumer experience.

As social media becomes increasingly saturated and fragmented, the effectiveness of traditional advertising, particularly television and newspapers, has declined significantly (Trusov, M., et al, 2009). This has led advertisers to adopt more dramatic and emotionally charged messages to capture the consumers attention, cut through the noise and make an impact. As Panda, et al., (2013) states, these messages are designed to "shock the emotions and make the brain itch," pointing out the purposeful attention grabbing and provocative nature of advertisements. These characteristics are not only meant to be memorable but they are also used to prompt emotional responses that can lead to deeper brand engagement.

Research has also explored how emotional appeals interact with different types of services. In a study by Panda, et al., (2013) it was found that consumers evaluating experience services such as hospitality or tourism, responded more favourably to emotional appeals. Consumers perceived these ads as more trustworthy and formed more positive brand attitudes. In contrast, credence services such as legal or medical services, which rely heavily on perceived expertise and long term trust were more effective when promoted through rational or non-emotional appeals. This distinction suggests that the efficacy of emotional versus rational advertising appeals is context dependent and should be specifically tailored to the nature of the product or service that is being advertised.

Despite the widespread use of emotional appeals in advertising, recent literature has pointed to a lack of theoretical grounding in many studies, (Yousef, et al. 2023). This highlights the importance of examining emotional advertising not only through a psychological or consumer behaviour lens, but also within a broader socio-cultural and media context. In the case of family package holiday advertisements, emotional appeals serve a dual function, they create an affective bond between the viewer and the brand while also promoting a specific vision of family life tied to consumption and pleasure. These ads do more than just persuade the audience, they construct idealised emotional worlds in which happiness, connection and fulfillment are made attainable through the purchase of an experience. Therefore, emotional appeal should not be viewed solely as a tactic for engagement, but as a narrative device that also shapes both individual desire and collective social values.

2.3 Representation of family in advertising

The legitimate definition of family is based on a variety of words such as, house, household and home, which all seem to describe a social reality but in fact work to construct it (Bourdieu, 1996). The concept of family has long been central to society existing both as a social arrangement and an idealised institution. As Pierre Bourdieu argues, terms like house, household and home are not just descriptive but they actively contribute to the construction of social realities that they describe. As a result of this, family is not just a static entity but a dynamic construct by cultural and historical societal forces.

This perspective suggests that the family is not a natural creation but a product of social and symbolic construction that give it meaning. The nuclear family consists of a household composed of two parents and their children (Locke, A., Capdevila, E., and Lazard, L., 2022) and this image has been culturally enshrined in many societies as the ideal family structure despite

this ideal varying across history and culture. This nuclear ideal can be reinforced across modern languages, education, media and advertising.

The representation of family in advertising has long been a powerful and frequently employed theme, yet it often reflects static, outdated and traditional narratives that may no longer align with contemporary family structures. As the media evolves at an unprecedented pace, shaping new themes, ideals and cultural constructs, it also plays the dual role of both reflecting societal values and actively shaping them. Pembecioğlu (2018) highlights this transformation, observing that media is becoming a distinct, strategic domain that influences not only cultural aesthetics but also people's attitudes, expectations, and lifestyles. In this environment, the portrayal of family in media becomes an important site for analyzing how traditional values are maintained, challenged, or redefined.

Despite the media's dynamic nature and its capacity to engage social connectivity and togetherness amid growing individualism, advertising often lags behind in how it represents certain institutions, including the family. Pembecioğlu (2018) argues that while society becomes increasingly individualised and increasingly marked by greater personal autonomy and diverse household makeups, the media plays a major role in the reflection of these changing societal roles through its advertising. The family as an institution provides both privacy and community, serving as a foundation for social learning, identity and early emotional development. As such, representations of the family in advertising are more than just symbolic, they also carry deeper cultural significance.

However, the depiction of family in advertisements frequently relies on nostalgic and idealized images rooted in traditional values. Pembecioğlu (2018) argues that most ads continue to draw on conventional models of family life, portraying nuclear families with clearly defined gender roles and conventional parenting dynamics.

These constructs also shape power dynamics within the families as the predetermined roles, responsibilities and expectations. Traditional gender roles are emphasised including fathers as the household breadwinner and mothers as caregivers (Schmidt, E., Declieux, F., and Zartler, V., 2024) While these are not universal truths, they are socially constructed norms that perpetuate the concept of family. These roles are often visible in modern advertising across media.

Thomas Cook, one of the pioneers of the travel industry, played a significant role in shaping the concept of family holidays and package travel. Cook founded his travel agency in 1841 and began organising railway excursions across the UK (Hamilton, J., 2005) Eventually the services were expanded to include international travel.

By the early 20th Century, the company had recognised the growing demand for family vacations and package deals, a concept that was rapidly growing in popularity among middle-class families in Europe. Cook's introductions of organised package holidays made travel more accessible to wider audiences. This innovation allowed families to enjoy convenient travel at affordable prices, thus creating the idea of family holidays as a mainstream social activity.

Modern society is made up of a diverse range of family units, including shift in gender roles, rise in single parent and blended families, and same-sex partnerships. These family dynamics further challenge the traditional constructs of family and emphasise the fluidity of the concept and its implications on broader social change.

Family is a central theme across advertising, used to portray emotions that resonate with wide audiences by reflecting shared values, cultural traditions and aspirations. In package holiday advertisements, families are often depicted enjoying an idyllic holiday with family unity, happiness and the general escape from everyday stress as central themes. These ads are often

underpinned by nostalgia, positioning the family as a unique selling point by evoking memories of childhood or the past.

Nostalgia is a powerful tool in advertising, utilising the longing for a romanticised past to create emotional resonance and strengthen consumer identification with brands. In the 19th Century nostalgia was regarded as a psychiatric disorder symptomatic of sadness and anxiety (Sedikides and Wildschut, 2022). It was not until the beginning of the 21st Century and the introduction of homesickness, that nostalgia was viewed in a more positive light.

Through family advertising, nostalgia often reinforces traditional constructs of unity and togetherness, framing products such as these package holidays as opportunities to recreate the idealised experiences. By making use of these family moments and pulling on the nostalgia, advertisers position holidays not just as recreational activities but also as opportunities to create lasting family memories together.

The use of nostalgia is also evident in Christmas advertisements which evoke collective memories of family gatherings, childhood and special family traditions. These ads rely on an emotional response from their audiences to encourage them to buy their products. Although there are more Christmas advertisements than package holiday advertisements, the same use of nostalgia can be seen, with family togetherness, traditions and childhood also being at the centre of these seasonal advertisements.

Cultural values play a significant role in shaping the representation of family in advertisements. In western cultures, the emphasis tends to be on the nuclear families and individual fulfilment. However, advertising in western cultures privileges the white, middle class, heterosexual ways of doing family (O'Donohoe and Gram, 2023). Gender roles also intersect with family portrayals

with mothers frequently depicted as caregivers and organisers of family life. In contrast, fathers are portrayed as protectors or fun loving, reflecting the societal expectations placed on parental roles and the role advertising plays in perpetuating or challenging these stereotypical family structures.

These representations across holiday advertising reflect cultural norms and societal ideals in order to sell the holidays to their audiences. Advertising and the media has an impact on an array of users' perceptions, attitudes and behaviours, as well as contributing directly to brand related attitudes and behaviour of consumers (Middleton and Turnbull, 2021). Family focused advertising often draws upon cultural narratives to present family as a symbol of stability, love and connection.

From an ideological perspective, advertisements do more than sell products, they also sell values and reinforce lifestyles. Many scholarly papers argue that there is a distinct opportunity to build on the strength of advertising to portray positive and inclusive representations of other marginalised groups in society for example, based on race, age, sexuality, disability and those living in poverty (Middleton and Turnbull, 2021). Similarly, in package holiday advertising, the representation of the marginalised groups could help to challenge these stereotypes and along with other forms of advertising, reshape societal values and beliefs.

2.4 Tourism and holiday marketing

Tourism and holiday marketing has undergone a significant transformation over the last decades. It has been constantly shaped by the increase in globalisation, digital innovation and changing consumer values. As travel becomes more accessible to a growing middle class around the world, marketing strategies in the tourism industry have had to evolve at a quicker

pace in order to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse consumer base. Research into this area of tourism studies has contributed to this evolution by analysing consumer motivations, marketing strategies, branding efforts, emotional engagement and the role of sustainability in travel promotion.

Research by Dolnicar and Ring (2014) highlights the globalisation of tourism consumption, noting that more people worldwide can now afford travel, particularly due to the rising middle class populations across the globe, with a specific focus on countries such as India and China. This demographic shift is not only expanding the overall size of the tourism market but also changing its geographic make up. As more and more consumers from the global south enter the tourism economy, marketers must adapt their strategies to cater for new cultural values, travel behaviours and ideals and service expectations. This research importantly highlights the rise of these new consumer groups, marking a greater need for market segmentation and culturally nuanced messaging in holiday marketing campaigns.

A foundational area of tourism marketing is in the construction of destination image, which plays a central role in influencing consumer choices. The destination image is made up of a combination of functional attributes, such as; natural landscapes or built attractions, as well as psychological attributes, including atmosphere, hospitality and emotional resonance (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). This research was further researched by Tasci et al. (2007) with the addition of a theoretical framework. The creation and management of a compelling destination image has become increasingly competitive as destinations compete for attention in a saturated global market place. In the same way, tourism and travel agencies are also competing in a saturated market to display the best tourism package holiday in order to attract larger consumer attention. In order to stand out, marketers are now relying on more than just traditional brochures and

advertising, but also on immersive, impactful storytelling and user-generated content to shape travelers perceptions.

Understanding consumer motivations to book a holiday is another critical area of marketing in this sector. Early work by Crompton (1979) identified a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors that influence travel decisions, such as the desire to escape, explore new cultures or to simply relax. Later research by Pearce (2005) further developed the Travel Career Ladder, a model that connects travel motivations to certain life stages and personal development. The model, which is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, suggests that travelers progress through different stages, beginning with basic needs and moving towards more complex motivations as they gain more travel experience. These motivational frameworks allow marketers to better understand their audiences and craft tailored campaigns that resonate with different traveler needs, from young adventurous couples to a relaxed family holiday.

In Dolnicar's paper it also emphasises the growing importance of emotional and nostalgic connections in tourism marketing. Shoemaker and Bowen (2003), cited by Dolnicar, outlines these emotional dimensions as critical areas for future research, particularly in relation to customer loyalty. In this way, emotional branding helps to create long term relationships with consumers by making the travel experience personally meaningful. For example, nostalgia driven campaigns often reconnect travelers with memories of their own childhood vacations or past cultural experiences, which therefore creates a deeper sense of belonging and attachment to a holiday destination or the desire to return back to these happy memories. This strategy is particularly effective in repeat visitation and word of mouth marketing, both of which are vital for the tourism businesses operating in competitive environments (Alegre, J., & Garau, J., 2009)

In terms of strategic marketing, Riege and Perry (2000) propose three key approaches for tourism marketers: the consumer oriented approach, the competitor oriented approach and the trade oriented approach. Firstly, the consumer oriented approach focuses on understanding and meeting the needs of individual tourists, potentially through differentiated marketing strategies. The competitor oriented approach involves analysing and responding to the actions of competitor companies. Finally, the trade oriented approach focuses on building relationships and collaborating with other tourism businesses and intermediaries. Each aspect of the strategy requires important consideration of the destination's position within the broader tourism market, as well as the available resources and brand identity of the destination or service provider.

One of the most transformative forces in recent tourism marketing is the importance of digital technology. With the rise in power of social media, the marketing industry has moved away from a top down messaging approach to more interactive and participatory communication. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) demonstrated that travelers increasingly rely on digital sources, particularly user generated content and peer reviewed brands, when planning trips. Travel agents are used less and less and are being replaced by TikTok trends and viral destinations. Social media platforms now play a crucial role in destination marketing organisation strategies. They allow for real-time engagement, influencer partnerships and highly targeted advertising. These social media platforms allow for both organic brand building and paid promotion allowing destinations to reach specific audiences and continually changing the way advertisers create their content.

Branding strategies remain central to tourism marketing's success. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) argues that building a compelling destination brand involves more than just a logo and a slogan. It requires a consistent identity that runs through all aspects of the marketing mix and visitor experience. TV ads and brochures are not enough to engage consumers. A strong online and social media presence is needed, possible partnerships and sensationalised forms of

advertising are now necessary to make an impact in an oversaturated field. A strong brand helps to differentiate one destination from others while creating an emotional connection with consumers. In a competitive global market, where many destinations may offer similar physical attractions, brand personality and emotional resonance often make the difference.

Finally, while tourism marketing has expanded in complexity and reach, there are ongoing challenges regarding theoretical foundations in tourism research. Yousef, Rundle-Thiele and Dietrich (2023) note that many empirical studies in tourism marketing lack a strong theoretical base, echoing earlier critiques by Pitt et al. (2005). As the field continues to grow, integrating robust theoretical frameworks, such as social exchange theory or social cognitive theory can help provide more meaningful insights and improve the design of marketing interventions.

Tourism and holiday marketing is a dynamic and ever changing field, which is influenced by global consumption patterns, technological innovation, emotional engagement and social media trends. As Dolnicar outlines, rising middle-class populations in countries like China and India are reshaping the global tourist base, requiring more inclusive and culturally diverse marketing approaches. Emotional and nostalgic appeals are proving essential for creating brand loyalty and meaningful consumer relationships, while digital technologies have revolutionised how destinations engage with travelers.

Taken together these developments illustrate how tourism marketing has evolved into a highly complex and multi layered domain. It merges emotional, cultural and technological strategies to remain relevant in a globalised and increasingly digital consumer landscape. The growing diversification of the tourist base alongside the decline of traditional media and rise of social platforms has pushed marketers to become not only storytellers but also cultural translators, crafting messages that resonate across identities, geographies and emotional boundaries.

Emotional branding, destination image construction and motivational segmentation now function as core tools in an industry that must continually adapt to shifting experiences and expectations, consumption patterns and socio economic realities. These trends reflect a broader societal shift toward experiential consumption where holidays are no longer just products to be advertised but emotionally narratives and experiences of identity, memory and aspiration.

2.5 gaps in literature and justification of study

Despite the growing interest in consumer behaviour and the use of emotional appeals in marketing, there remains significant gaps in the literature that this study aims to address. One major gap lies in the limited attention given to the representation of families in marketing communications. As Borgerson (2005) outlines, although the family plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decision making and marketing strategies, few studies have examined how families are portrayed in advertising content. The dominant marketing narratives often rely on stereotypical or generalised depictions of family units, which may not always reflect the diversity and complexity of a modern family structure. This oversight limits the effectiveness of marketing campaigns that target family-oriented consumption and ignores the evolving dynamics of contemporary households. A more nuanced understanding of family representation is essential for creating relevant and resonant marketing messages that align with the realities of society. While there is research into the representation across Christmas advertising, the overall impact of this aspect of advertising studies in other industries lacks enough research (Pownall, M., Eyles-Smith, E., & Talbot, C. V. 2022)

A second gap in the literature relates to the narrow focus on emotional appeals, particularly the dominant use of fear and humour. As Yousef, Rundle-Thiele and Dietrich (2023) emphasise, that while these emotions have been extensively studied, there is a significant lack of research

on the use and impact of a wider variety of emotions in advertising. Emotions such as anger, disgust, guilt, love, joy and pride all remain under explored, despite their potential to influence attitudes and behaviours in meaningful ways. For example, guilt appeals may encourage pro-social behaviour, while a prideful ad could reinforce identity and sense of self in positive or negative ways. The absence of comprehensive studies investigating these emotions limits our understanding of how diverse emotional appeals can be strategically employed to achieve different behavioural changes. Nostalgia plays a huge role in family advertising and it is an emotion which has been researched in the area of christmas marketing. Its effect on consumer behaviour in other contexts and extended emotional outreach remains a key area of research across all forms of emotional appeal advertising.

The justification for this study stems from the need to address both of these gaps concurrently. By examining how families are represented in marketing messages and how a broader range of emotional appeals are being employed, this study seeks to offer a more in depth understanding of emotional marketing in family related contexts, with the specific focus on travel companies package holiday advertisements. Addressing these gaps not only looks to contribute to further academic knowledge but also offers practical implications and suggestions for marketers who are aiming to create more inclusive, effective and emotionally resonant campaigns. By broadening the scope of emotions considered and including a more accurate portrayal of diverse family structures, marketers can better engage wider audiences and drive meaningful consumer behaviours.

While the existing body of literature on tourism and holiday marketing provides valuable insights into consumer behaviour, branding and digital engagement, there are several other gaps remaining that justify the need for further research which will not be fully developed in this specific research paper. Firstly, the underrepresentation of non-western and developing

destinations in holiday marketing. Most tourism marketing literature disproportionately centers on western or highly developed tourism destinations, such as Europe, North America and parts of Asia-Pacific. In contrast, developing countries and lesser known destinations are often overlooked. These locations face a number of challenges, such as limited infrastructure, restricted marketing budgets and issues related to safety and political stability. While holiday advertising can't directly solve these issues, the representation of the underrepresented groups is extremely important. Families are not all white, and people travel all over the globe, meaning there is a greater need for diverse representation from travel brands.

There is also an insufficient focus on post pandemic consumer behaviour. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted global tourism, altering traveler priorities, risk perceptions and planning behaviours. While some recent studies have addressed pandemic recovery strategies, there is still limited longitudinal research on how these shifts are influencing holiday marketing effectiveness in the long term. While this paper will not focus on consumer behaviour post pandemic, it has impacted the search for sources. There is a noticeable gap in ads or change in advertising material from 2020-2022 as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature on tourism and holiday marketing paints a picture of a dynamic and rapidly evolving field, shaped by shifting consumer demographics, advances in technology and increase in social media and wider audiences. Across the various sections of research reviewed, one common theme emerged: effective tourism marketing is no longer simply about promoting destinations, it is about creating meaningful, emotionally resonant and ethically conscious experiences that align with the changing values and motivations of an increasingly diverse travel population.

One of the most significant forces in reshaping global tourism marketing is the emergence of new consumer markets, particularly in countries like China and India, where growing middle-class populations now have the resources and desire to travel more and more (Dolnicar, 2014). This shift is altering not only the volume of international tourists but also the cultural composition and expectations of a larger global travel base. As a result tourism marketers must move beyond Eurocentric, Western or traditional assumptions and embrace a culturally diverse marketing strategy that accounts for a segmented market and global diversity.

The literature also emphasises the importance of consumer psychology and emotional engagement in tourism marketing. Emotional and nostalgic appeals, as highlighted by Dolnicar, (2014) and by Shoemaker and Bowen (2003), have emerged as powerful tools for building customer loyalty and repeat visitation, These emotional dimensions are critical in a saturated market where destinations must differentiate themselves not only through physical offering but also through emotional storytelling and brand connection.

Digital transformations have also been a game changer in the industry. As travelers increasingly rely on digital platforms for inspiration, planning and reviews, tourism marketers have shifted towards content driven, interactive and discursive communications strategies. User generated content, the use of influencers in marketing and social media engagement are now essential components of any successful destination marketing plan (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). These tools not only increase visibility but also allow for greater personalisation and responsiveness to consumer needs. Branding and destination image continue to be fundamental, with researchers such as Echtner and Ritchie (1991) and Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2011) underscoring the importance of clear, consistent and emotionally resonant destination identities. A strong brand

helps destinations stand out and connect with tourists on a deeper level, particularly when supported by authentic and memorable experiences.

Finally, while the field is rich in insights, scholars have also noted a lack of consistent theoretical grounding in much of the existing research (Yousef, et al., 2023; Pitt et al., 2005). While there is a growing academic interest in emotional marketing and consumer behaviour, key gaps remain that this study seeks to address. Notably there is limited research on the nuanced representation of families in advertising and an overreliance on a narrow set of emotional appeals, particular sectors outside of seasonal campaigns like Christmas. These oversights restrict both scholarly understanding and practical application in marketing strategies aimed at diverse and evolving consumer groups. By focusing on how travel companies portray families and utilise a wider range of emotions in package holiday advertisements, this study aims to contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of emotional marketing in family oriented contexts. As tourism marketing continues to grow in complexity, there is a clear need for more theory-driven work that can provide deeper explanations for consumer behaviours and guide more effective practices.

3. Methodology and research design

3.1 Overview

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in this study to examine the emotional appeal of family representations in package holiday advertisements. The research aims to explore how visual narrative strategies are used to construct idealised images of family life and to assess how these representations influence consumer engagements. In order to achieve this, the chapter will present a detailed account of the research philosophy, strategy, data collection methods and the analytical approach used to investigate the selected advertisements.

The research question involved in this study gives an interpretive nature, therefore a qualitative research design was adopted to enable an in-depth investigation into the meaning, symbolism and emotional resonance within advertising content. Specifically, the study adopts a qualitative content analysis method to systemically examine both visual and linguistic components of selected TV and online advertisements. This qualitative approach facilitates the identification of recurring themes, representations and emotional cues that contribute to the construction of the 'family holiday' narrative.

This chapter will begin by outlining the research philosophy and the stance underpinning the study. This will be followed by an explanation of the research strategy and rationale for adopting a qualitative approach. The data collection process is then described, including the criteria for selecting advertisements and the sources from which they were collected. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis method, informed by Stuart Hall's encoding

and decoding model, which provides the theoretical foundation for interpreting audience engagement and the meaning.

3.2 Research philosophy and approach

This study is based on an interpretivist research philosophy, which is appropriate for understanding how meaning is created and communicated through advertising and the general media. Interpretivism assumes that reality is not fixed or objective, but instead is shaped by individual and cultural perceptions. This philosophy approach emphasises the importance of qualitative data as a means of gaining knowledge (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). At its core, this approach focuses on understanding the distinct characteristics of specific situations (Chowdury, M.F, 2014). In this context of advertising, this means that the messages we see, such as the representations of family life in holiday adverts, are not neutral or purely factual. They are carefully constructed in order to reflect certain values, emotions and ideals. The goal of this research is to explore how these meanings are being created and how they might be understood by audiences as well as their reflection of societal values.

Because of this focus on meaning and interpretation, a qualitative approach was chosen.

Qualitative research is well suited to the studies that aim to explore how people understand and experience the world around them. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research allows for deeper exploration of language, images and emotions. This is especially useful when studying advertisements, where the main aim is to influence viewers feelings and perceptions rather than providing factual information.

Within this qualitative approach, the study uses qualitative content analysis as the main method. This involves closely examining the content of selected package holiday advertisements to identify patterns, themes and emotional strategies. Both visual elements such as images, settings, activities and body language will be looked at. Linguistic elements such as voiceovers, taglines and dialogue will also be analysed to understand how they work together to build an idealised image of family life and travel.

As previously mentioned this approach is also informed by Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, which will help to analyse the relationship between media producers and audiences. According to Hall, media creators 'encode' messages with intended and purposeful meanings, but viewers may 'decode' these messages in different ways depending on their own background, cultural behaviours and experiences. This theory will help act as a guide for this research. It will be used to help the interpretation of how family holiday advertisements might be received and understood by different audiences.

3.3 Research strategy

The research strategy that has been adopted for this study is based on the qualitative framework, specifically qualitative content analysis. Given the aim of the study, to explore how family representations are constructed and emotionally framed in package holiday advertisements, a qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate for unpacking the media content under review. Unlike quantitative methods that focus on numerical data, qualitative strategies allow for a deeper and more nuanced interpretation of meaning and audience perception particularly in the advertisements.

The use of qualitative content analysis allows for a systemic yet flexible method of analysing both visual and linguistic elements in advertisements. The strategy involves identifying recurring themes, emotional cues and symbolic representations across a selected sample of advertisements from major holiday brands. These themes are not predetermined but have emerged through iterative engagement with the material. This approach aligns with an inductive reasoning process, whereby theory and insights are drawn from the data alone rather than being imposed or predetermined before the research begins, in order to remain unbiased. Inductive reasoning uses existing knowledge to make predictions about new situations, but these predictions are also based on probability (Hayes, B.K., et al., 2010). The analysis is also guided by Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, which offers a useful theoretical lens for exploring how media messages are constructed by producers and potentially interpreted or negotiated by their audiences.

The strategy also incorporates purposive sampling, which allows for the deliberate selection of advertisements that are most relevant to the research questions. Advertisements were selected based on specific criteria such as their focus on family package holidays, their visibility or reach, for example, campaigns run by widely recognised holiday providers, and their publication within the last five years to ensure contemporary relevance. Brands such as TUI, Jet2holidays, Disneyland and Centre Parcs were chosen for their prominent positioning in the family holiday market. These companies routinely produce multimedia campaigns that showcase idealised visions of family life, making them suitable subjects for this particular type of analysis.

Another important aspect of the research strategy is the multi-modal nature of the data. Since television and online advertisements involve a combination of moving images, sound, language, and narrative structure. The strategy accounts for the interplay between these elements. The research in this study will focus on advertisements that have been shown on TV rather than

online or social media campaigns. By analysing both what is shown and what is said within these TV advertisements, the study captures the full emotional and representational impact of the advertisements.

3.4 Collection of data

LeCompte (2000) argues that while high-quality qualitative data aims to be as objective as possible, the reality is that data collection is shaped by human involvement. Researchers naturally make choices based on their interests, perspectives and what they find meaning or relevant, which can influence what is being recorded and observed (LeCompte, 2000). This is why an unbiased approach has been crucial to this research and the advertisements chosen were based on brand relevance and timeliness of their adverts.

The data collection process for this study focused on gathering a relevant and purposeful sample of holiday advertisements that depict family life within the context of package holiday marketing. A purposive sampling strategy was used, selecting advertisements based on specific criteria such as content focus on family oriented messaging. The platform on which the advertisements appeared, all ads in this study were shown on TV. Brand prominence and recency were also taken into account during the selection process. Advertisements from 4 popular travel brands over a 10 year period were chosen for this analysis. This ensured the materials reflected contemporary marketing strategies and visual trends in family holiday promotion.

A total of twenty ads were selected from leading travel and tourism brands who have a specific focus on family oriented holidays. These include five ads from TUI, Jet2Holidays, Centre Parcs, and Disneyland over an 8 year period, from 2018 to 2025. The adverts were accessed via

official brand YouTube channels and company websites to ensure the reliability of the sources. These are all advertisements that were made for TV. Each ad had a clear thematic focus on family togetherness, emotional engagement and the overall achievement of promoting family package holidays which align with the study's research aim and objectives.

Both visual and linguistic content elements were collected and recorded for the analysis. This included scene structures, characters, settings, colour schemes, facial expressions, activities and body language, as well as accompanying voiceovers, taglines, subtitles, and on screen text or calls to action. Each advert was viewed multiple times and annotated to identify recurring visual and verbal patterns. Each individual ad was then compared to each other in a final analysis of all 20 advertisements.

No primary data from human participants such as surveys were required, thus eliminating the need for formal ethical clearance. However, ethical research practices were maintained throughout the study, through transparent sourcing of material, proper attribution of media content and respect for copyright and intellectual property.

Secondary sources were also used for the analysis section of this research, including industry reports, academic articles, and previous studies on advertising, family, representation and emotional marketing, were also used to further contextualise these findings. These sources provided a foundation for understanding how the chosen adverts align with or diverge from the broader industry and cultural trends. They were analysed in the literature review as well as throughout the course of this study, in order to understand the role and composition of these advertisements. These secondary sources offer a comprehensive base for examining the emotional and symbolic construction of the family in holiday marketing across a selection of brands' TV ads.

This selection of advertisements is a carefully curated data set which forms the foundation of the qualitative content analysis and allows for the in-depth exploration of family representation, emotional appeal and cultural reflection and meaning making within commercial advertising.

The subsequent sections detail how these materials were analysed in order to gain an understanding of their messaging, which will be discussed in chapter four.

3.4.2 Sources

The sources selected for this study consist of a sample of twenty television advertisements from well established travel companies known for promoting family package holidays. The brands and their advertisements chosen for the study are listed below:

Tourism Union International (TUI)

- Live Happy - Television ad 2022
- Discover Your Smile - Television ad 2018
- Nothing Compares to Quality Time Together - Television ad 2021
- Television ad 2019

Jet 2 Holidays

- Package Holidays You Can Trust - Television ad 2018
- Package Holidays You Can Trust - Television ad 2019
- Package Holidays You Can Trust - Television ad 2020
- Time Together - Television ad 2021
- Hold on to that Holiday Feeling - Television as 2024

Centre Parcs UK

- Cherish Every moment - 2025 television ad
- I am... series - 2018 television ad
- Epic Family Time - 2019 television ad

- Family Fun is Back - 2018 television ad
- Bears - 2015 television ad

Disney Land

- Ads from 2018-2024 were researched

3.5 Approach to data analysis

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, allowing for a detailed exploration of the symbolic, emotional and narrative elements within the selected advertisements. Content analysis was chosen due to its flexibility and sustainability for identifying patterns, themes and meanings in visual and linguistic texts. The analysis in the study focuses on how families are portrayed, how emotional responses are constructed and how these elements serve marketing objectives.

The adverts were analysed initially using an open coding technique, followed by thematic categorisation. At first the recurring motifs such as smiling family members, shared activities, parent-child relationships or bonding and picturesque holiday settings were coded.

Open coding is an initial stage in analysing qualitative data and involves breaking down the material such as text, visuals and transcripts into manageable parts for closer analysis. In this process, the data is reviewed line by line or segment by segment to identify and highlight elements that seem significant, are repeated or emotionally charged. Each of these elements was then labelled with a code, which is done using a short code word or phrase that captures the essence of what is being observed. These codes are not drawn from a pre-existing list but are developed freely and inductively, based on what emerges from the data itself (Khandkhar, S.H., 2009).

This approach allows for greater flexibility and responsiveness to the content, making it particularly useful for these exploratory studies. For example, when analysing a family package holiday advertisement, these codes such as: 'family bonding,' 'sunny destination,' 'child excitement,' or 'parent, child activity' to specific scenes of moments. These initial codes serve as the foundation for deeper analysis, helping to identify patterns, meanings and emotional cues across the dataset. Open coding is therefore a helpful step in qualitative content analysis, as it begins the process of translating raw media content into meaningful insights that align with the study's larger research aims and objectives.

Linguistic elements such as the use of emotive language for example, the words together, memories or unforgettable as well as inclusive pronouns like 'you,' 'we,' or 'your family.' were identified and further categorised. Once the codes were established, they were grouped into broader terms and themes. For example: idealised family life, emotional appeal, aspirational messaging and representation or lack thereof.

The analysis was guided by Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, which has provided a framework to interpret how meaning is encoded by advertisers and potentially decoded by audience. This theoretical model was particularly useful in identifying where the adverts promoted a dominant or hegemonic reading of family or allowed for negotiated or oppositional readings by more diverse viewers. Barthes' semiotic concepts of myth and connotation were also lightly applied to decode symbolic meanings in visual cues (Hatam, S., et al, 2021).

This methodology has enabled a layered analysis that goes beyond surface level interpretation and accommodated a full theoretical and academic study of the advertisements to be conducted to highlight how emotional storytelling and family imagery work together to influence consumer

perception. The findings were manually recorded and organised at a final time to ensure clarity and consistency across the data points, which will be fully presented in the following chapter.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework employed in this study, detailing the research design, data sources and analytical approach. A qualitative content analysis was selected as the most appropriate method to explore the complex and layered representations of family in package holiday advertising. By focusing on both visual and linguistic elements this study is able to examine not only what is being represented but how these representations are emotionally charged and culturally framed.

The use of purposive sampling ensured that the advertisements chosen were relevant, recent and targeted towards a family audience. The decision to analyse ads that appeared on TV was chosen to keep a level of consistency in target audience in mind. The collected data which consisted of imagery, language and symbolic elements offers a rich base from which to understand the construction of family and emotional appeal within this brand of marketing.

The analytical process was grounded in Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, which allowed for a critical examination of how meanings are created by advertisers and interpreted by the audience. The inclusion of semiotic analysis, drawing on the ideas of Roland Barthes, further supports the nuanced reading of symbolic content and underlying cultural myths. Together these frameworks have allowed for a deeper interpretation and analysis of the adverts that accounts for both intended messages and their intended impact.

Ultimately, the chosen methodology provides a strong foundation for answering the research aim and objectives. It supports the investigation of not only what is being communicated by family holiday advertising, but looks at why these messages resonate or fail to leave an impact with audiences. The following chapter will present and interpret the results of this analysis in detail, demonstrating how family imagery and emotional narratives function in the context of commercial persuasion.

4. Presentation and discussion of findings

4.1 Overview

Firstly to restate, the aim of this research is to analyse the role of family representations in the emotional appeal of package holiday advertisements, looking into the specific elements of family representations such as imagery, language, and storytelling that resonate with the viewers on an emotional level, with the objective:

- To identify how nuclear family structures are visually represented in package holiday advertisements.
- Analyse the use of settings and activities in constructing a positive image of family life.
- To examine the emotional language and storytelling devices used to support family-oriented narratives.
- To determine the specific emotional responses these adverts aim to evoke in parents with young children.
- To apply Stuart Hall's encoding decoding model to explain how audiences may interpret or resist these family representations.
- To provide practical recommendations for marketers on how to use family imagery more effectively to enhance consumer engagement and brand trust.

This chapter presents and discusses the key findings from the qualitative content analysis of selected package holiday advertisements, focusing on how family is visually and linguistically represented to evoke an emotional appeal. The analysis was conducted using a total of twenty adverts across five leading travel brands, examining both visual and linguistic elements. These findings were interpreted through the theoretical lens of Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model.

The discussion is structured around the core research questions: How are families depicted in these adverts? What linguistic and visual strategies are used to reinforce these family oriented themes? What emotional responses are these representations designed to evoke? And how might these appeals influence consumer perception and engagement. In order to answer these questions twenty ads were chosen from five brands and were qualitatively analysed. The ads that were chosen were from TUI, Jet 2 Holidays, Brittany Ferries, Centre Parcs and Disney Land. A selection of ads spanning the last decade were watched and analysed numerous times to ensure every element was taken into account.

Throughout this chapter key themes emerged from the ads that reveal a consistent pattern of idealised nuclear family portrayals characterised by warmth, happiness or togetherness, often set against aspirational holiday settings. Emotional appeals largely centre on notions of nostalgia, joyful bonding, quality time together, designed to resonate strongly with parents and reinforce aspirations for the 'perfect' family holiday.

However, alongside these dominant themes that emerged, the findings also highlight a notable gap or limitations in diversity, with few representations of non-traditional or multicultural families. While there has been a slight shift towards diversity in more recent ads, it still raises the important questions about inclusivity and the broader social implications of such portrayals.

The chapter concludes with reflections on how these findings align with the existing literature on emotional marketing and family representation, as well as their implications for consumer engagement and advertising effectiveness. Overall, the analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how package holiday advertisements construct or communicate emotional narratives around family, influencing both cultural perceptions and consumer behaviour.

4.2 Overview of representations of family

Across all the advertisements studied, family is consistently portrayed as happy, emotionally connected and united, reinforcing idealised notions of familial harmony. In particular, TUI's holiday campaigns rely heavily on visual montages of family experiences, presenting travel as a space for emotional bonding and personal transformation. In the earliest ad examined, TUI's 'Discover Your Smile' (2018), this narrative is especially clear. The commercial follows a mother and her young daughter on a holiday, where the daughter initially appears disengaged and reluctant. However, as the ad unfolds and the two share meaningful moments together, their relationship begins to improve and by the end, both appear more joyful and emotionally bonded. This emotional progression is an example of the overarching narrative found throughout TUI's advertising, where holidays are framed not only as leisure and time out from everyday life, but also as a means of deepening family relationships.

The TUI 2021 advertisement, “Nothing compares to quality time together,” consistently portrays the family as happy, united and emotionally connected, closely aligning with long standing ideals of familial harmony. The ad features a white, nuclear family engaging in shared holiday experiences, reinforcing a strong sense of togetherness and emotional warmth. Through carefully selected imagery such as laughing children, affectionate parents and shared activities like playing at the beach or pool or just lying in the sun, the commercial builds a visual narrative that romanticises family life. The voice over throughout the ad supports this portrayal with emotive lines like, “*nothing compares to the warmth of the sun on your skin, to the feeling of sand between your toes and making memories you’ll cherish forever,*” emphasising both the emotional intimacy and the influential power of family bonding.

The TUI advertisement reinforces traditional values of family harmony and leisure activities as a site of emotional bonding by depicting the family holiday as a privileged space for reconnection and collective well being and happiness. Through its idealised portrayal of a white nuclear family engaging in joyful and uninterrupted fun, the advertisement evokes a plethora of cultural narratives that position the family as the core emotional unit of society. Visual cues, such as affectionate interactions between parents and children, shared activities in idealised settings and a lot of shared laughter, serve to construct a cohesive image of family unity and emotional intimacy.

These elements work together to reinforce traditional values, such as family unity and quality time together as a source of joy and emotional well being. At a deeper level, this portrayal functions as aspirational encoding, with advertisers presenting a lifestyle that is not only desirable but ideal: the perfect family holiday becomes symbolic of a well balanced, emotionally fulfilling life. In doing so, TUI taps into consumer desires not just for travel, but for a sense of

belonging and emotional richness, which the brand therefore suggests that buying a holiday is a pathway to achieving the ideal family experience.

Across TUI's advertising campaigns from 2018 to 2025, there is a consistent thematic focus on family unity, emotional connection and the power of relaxation and leisure, which collectively reinforce traditional ideals of family unity. Whether it's through the portrayal of young children playing, parents sharing intimate moments, or families engaging in fun activities together, TUI's marketing strategy repeatedly constructs the holiday as a site for emotional growth and relationship intimacy. Ad campaigns such as "*Live Happy*" (2018), "*We Cross the T's, Dot the I's and put U in the Middle*" (2019), and "*Holidays Bring us Closer*" (2023) all rely on familiar tropes such as: smiling children, affectionate gestures, sunset backdrops, in order to depict the family as emotionally fulfilled and harmoniously bonded through travel.

This imagery is supported by voice overs that emphasise themes of escapism, memory making and togetherness overall framing the vacations as more than a luxury. It is presented as a necessary investment within family life. The 2021 ad, with lines such as, "*nothing compares to a real holiday, to giving yourself time to relax and recharge, to waking up somewhere completely different,*" emphasises this emotional narrative. Across the time period studied, TUI consistently encodes holidays as a form of aspirational consumption, where the purchase of travel is positioned as an opportunity to achieve idealised emotional outcomes. In doing so, TUI not only markets destinations, but perpetuated a broader cultural ideology that equates family closeness with holiday and leisure based consumption, reinforcing traditional values within a consumer framework.

From 2018 to 2025, Jet2holidays' advertising campaigns have also consistently reinforced traditional values of familial harmony and emotional connection through leisure, through the use

of vivid imagery and upbeat narratives to construct an aspirational ideal of the family holiday. Across multiple campaigns, such as “*Package Holidays You Can Trust*” (2018-2020), “*Time Together*” (2021), and “*Hold on to that Holiday Feeling*” (2024), Jet2holidays repeatedly depicts families in carefully curated moments of joy and relaxation, often featuring smiling children, playful scenes by the pool or beach and affectionate interactions between family members. The visuals are supported by energetic voice overs and soundtracks that compliment the emotional power and positivity of the holidays being portrayed. Particularly in the “*Time Together*” campaign, the emphasis on shared moments reflects a broader cultural narrative that positions holidays and leisure as necessary for sustaining emotional connectivity within the nuclear family. These ads frame holidays not simply as escapes, but as opportunities to strengthen relationships, build memories and reaffirm family unity. Jet2holidays thus encodes its brands with aspirational meaning, promoting the idea that purchasing a holiday is synonymous with investing in emotional well-being and idealised family life in the same way TUI have encoded the same meaning into their advertisements. By consistently presenting travel in this way, Jet2holidays contributes to a wider advertising discourse that normalises the association between consumerism, emotional fulfillment and traditional family values, positioning the family holiday as both a cultural ideal and a commercially accessible experience.

4.3 How mothers, fathers and the family are portrayed:

Across the advertising campaigns of TUI, Jet2Holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland from 2018-2025, the representation of mothers and fathers generally adheres to traditional gender roles within a default nuclear, heterosexual family structure. Mothers are frequently depicted in caregiving organised roles, shown comforting children, packing bags, applying sunscreen or overseeing activities. In some Jet2holidays the mother is behind the camera filming the

activities. The fathers in the ads are more often cast as playful providers, engaging in light hearted and fun interactions such as splashing in pools or the sea, playing sports and games or lifting children in the air.

This dynamic reinforces longstanding traditions around gender roles: women as emotional nurturers and logistical coordinators, and men as the fun oriented parent figure who temporarily joins in during leisure time. For example, Centre Parcs ads often depict mothers preparing meals in the lodge or managing the family activities, while fathers take a lead role in the outdoor activities or physical play time. The ads have improved significantly in recent years, a Centre Parcs ad as "*Memories Start Here*" from 2011, depicts a mother reading on her own while watching the father and children play in the distance. Similarly, in Jet2holidays and TUI campaigns, while both parents are shown participating in leisure, it is the mother who often watches over or tends to the children with visible care, reinforcing maternal responsibility. Disneyland ads also commonly portray mothers as emotionally attuned and responsible, while fathers are cast in more spontaneous and humorous roles, often reacting with child-like wonder and amazement to the experience too. While some of their ads do show minor shifts, such as fathers involved in moments of care or domesticity, these are framed as exceptions rather than the norm. Collectively these portrayals do uphold conventional gender roles and hierarchies and maintain the nuclear family as the default, rarely depicting alternative family structures (e.g. single parents, LGBTQ+ families or extended families), thereby narrowing the scope of familial representation in mainstream holiday advertising.

A notable pattern across the advertising campaigns of TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland between 2018 and 2025 is the consistent emphasis on white, middle-class nuclear families as the default representation of package holiday ads to portray familial happiness. The overwhelming majority of these advertisements centre on white parents and their children

engaging in emotionally rich and idyllic holiday experiences, constructing whiteness as both normative and aspirational within the context of family travel. While occasional attempts at ethnic inclusion can be observed, such as the presences of secondary background families, or diverse groups of friends to include visual diversity, there remains a significant absence of interracial families, and non-white families who are rarely placed at the narrative centre of these campaigns. This lack of meaningful racial diversity contributes to the disproportionate representation of multicultural realities, reinforcing narrow ideals about who belongs in spaces of leisure, relaxation, holiday making and the family bonding that comes with it.

This consistent portrayal of white families enjoying sun soaked beaches, elaborate theme parks or forest retreats subtly encodes white nuclear family structures as the standard of emotional fulfillment and social success. In doing so, these brands limit the visibility of non-white and mixed race family structures, perpetuating a homogenised and exclusionary vision of both family and consumer identity. Such representations not only fail to reflect the racial and cultural diversity of modern families but also risk alienating audiences whose identities or lived experiences fall outside these narrow and repetitive depictions.

4.4 Analysis of the role of children in holiday advertisements

Throughout the advertising campaigns of TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland, children play a central and symbolic role across all of the ads, functioning as emotional devices, sources of nostalgia and wonder and representations of future hope. Their presence in these ads accounts for more than the depictions of family units; it actively validates the quality of the holiday experience, bringing new meanings and significance to the package holiday experience. Recurrent images of smiling children, wide eyed faces looking around in awe, laughing and

playing while splashing in pools or reacting joyfully at the beach or waterpark. These act as powerful emotional cues that frame the holiday as successful, meaningful and worthwhile.

These reactions are not incidental, they are carefully planned to reassure parents and viewers that the product delivers emotional and developmental value for the whole family. In this sense, children become the barometers of happiness, and their joy is depicted as the ultimate proof of a holiday's worth. Additionally, their centrality in the narrative helps to naturalise family travel as a necessity rather than a luxury. By portraying holidays as spaces where core childhood memories are made, advertisers construct travel not only as an optional indulgence, but as a crucial part of modern parenting and family life. Particularly in Disneyland's campaigns, children are framed as the imaginative heart of the experience, with their wonder positioned as both a goal for parents to aspire towards. Across all four brands, the use of children is not only to reinforce traditional family structures but also to commercialise parental responsibility and guilt, suggesting that providing joyful, memorable experience through travel; is an essential part of being a 'good' parent.

The depiction of children in these campaigns subtly shifts the framing of holidays from pure escapism to an added sense of duty. Holidays are no longer solely about relaxation for adults but about fulfilling an unspoken promise to one's children. The emotional resonance created through imagery of delighted children positions these holidays as a form of parental responsibility and care. Their laughter, happiness and playful curiosity are used to endorse the destination itself, as if the landscape or resorts gain legitimacy through the child's happiness and approval. These expressions serve two purposes; at a glance they entertain and charm the viewer but on a deeper level they function as endorsements of quality, childhood enrichment and emotional development.

In the campaigns from TUI and Jet2holidays, for example, the recurring motif of a child running into a parents arms on a sunny beach or looking at all the fun there is to experience at a hotel emphasises the idea that these experiences are milestones in a child's development. It's not about having fun; it's about growth, bonding and giving your child the best experience you can.

This strategic centering of children also reinforces the idea that family travel is a routine or even expected part of modern life. Their presence renders the act of travelling less about luxury and more about fulfilling familial obligations in order to appear 'ideal'. Every summer the family is expected to embark on their yearly family holiday for a time of uninterrupted bonding and escape from their everyday lives. The implication is clear: to raise well-rounded, happy children and in order to achieve this a parent must expose them to these curated and happy experiences. In this context, not taking these holidays might subtly be framed as a failure of parenting. These ads play an important role in instilling guilt into parents who can't afford to bring their children on holidays. As nuclear white families are primarily featured it also raises the question of what types of family make ups these particular brands are aiming to advertise to.

Moreover, children also help to bridge the gap between fantasy and reality in advertising. In Disneyland's campaigns especially, the child's perspective becomes the narrative lens. Viewers are invited to see the parks not just through marketers eyes or scenic shots, but through a child's ecstatic reaction to a character meet and greet, firework display or simply being told they are going to Disneyland. These moments of pure joy and emotional immersion, allow parents to vicariously experience the holidays success before even booking it.

Ultimately, the child is not merely present, they are pivotal to the advertisement's resonance.

They act as narrative devices, emotional validations and symbols of aspirational parenting.

Their joy becomes a visual reminder for quality assurance when booking a holiday. Their central

role in the story subtly redefines travel as an essential family investment, emotionally, socially and even morally.

4.5 Visual tropes of escapism

The visual language of holiday advertising relies heavily on recurring tropes of escape such as pools, the beach, oceans and immaculate resorts. These visual elements serve as reminders of the relaxation, luxury and temporary release from the pressures of everyday life that are available on a holiday. Within the context of a family oriented campaign from TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneylands, such imagery is not only aspirational but also deeply moralised. The act of escape becomes framed as part of the parental duty as stated in the previous section; giving you children access to joy, sunshine and relaxation is equated with responsible and sociable parenting.

This framing reinforces a common narrative, that truly “magical” childhoods are those marked by wonder, freedom and unforgettable memories that are often marked by holidays. These are not just built at home, but also through travel experiences made possible by financial investments. Parenting therefore, in this particular narrative, becomes deeply entwined with consumption. The implication is not only that children deserve these experiences but that parents should strive to provide them. This moral imperative is strengthened through the imagery that frames these holidays as transformative, not just a break but a gift of an experience from parents to their children.

However, hidden within these images are clear ideologies of privilege and western consumerism. From a consumer's perspective, family holidays have become a way to display

success, happiness and status. This evaluation aligns with Passini (2013) who argued that while historically insatiable desire was seen as morally problematic or a marker of elite status, in modern consumer culture it is considered normal and even necessary for sustaining the economy. This western culture thrives on constant dissatisfaction and the endless pursuit of new experiences, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of production and consumption. These ads construct a consumer fantasy grounded in Western ideals of success and family.

These representations often rely on idealised depictions of family life where access to leisure, international mobility and disposable income are assumed rather than questioned. Such portrayals implicitly reinforce a narrow vision of the 'good life,' one predicated on consumption and affluence, therefore marginalising those who cannot participate in the modern economy of desire.

The fantasy of the locations is also distinctly western, even when locations are international, they are filtered through a western gaze. The images in these ads emphasise comfort, safety and familiarity while stripping away cultural complexities. Activities shown take place in the hotel or at the beach in familiar settings. In Disneyland's case, the fantasy is also literalised; magic is sold as a product, one that blends childhood imagination with branded experiences. Yet this magic is only available to those who can afford the extravagant trip and associated costs, in this way the wonder itself becomes a commodity.

The visual tropes of escape in these campaigns do more than sell a package deal or a destination, they also sell a worldview in which good parenting is synonymous with purchasing and providing happiness. While the imagery in the ads is emotionally resonant in a positive light, it also perpetuates a consumeristic logic where love is demonstrated through spending and where family worth is measured in experiences that are by design, exclusive.

4.6 The representation of family diversity (race, age, gender, class)

Across the holiday campaigns of TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland , there is a notable lack of consistent family diversity. While some of the more recent ads have made advances towards inclusivity, featuring families of colour or hinting at non-traditional family structures, the overwhelming visual narrative continues to center around white, middleclass, able bodied, heterosexual nuclear families. These portrayals are often idealised or fantasy-like, including smiling mother and fathers, two children engaging in activities in picturesque settings. This limited representation subtly reinforces the dominant cultural value about what a 'normal' or 'desirable' family looks like.

Although a handful of campaigns, particularly in the later half of this study's timeframe, have started to incorporate more racially diverse casts, these efforts often appear tokenistic rather than transformative. Families of colour are usually still placed within the same middle-class heterosexal framework, suggesting a surface level commitment to diversity without disrupting the core ideal. In the majority of the TUI ads, for example, racially diverse friend groups or couples are depicted but very rarely entire families. LGBTQ+ and individuals with visible disabilities remain significantly underrepresented or altogether absent despite their presence in wider society. LGBTQ+ families remain underrepresented but there is a significant increase in inter-racial or LGBTQ+ couples being represented.

The lack of genuine diversity, which appears more like a tick the box exercise for marketers means that such advertising rarely reflects the spectrum of social realities. Blended families,

single parent households, same sex parents and families with neurodivergent or disabled members, these are marginalised in the holiday marketing landscape. Instead, the ads present a narrow and aspirational version of family life that is more aligned with traditional consumer values rather than with lived social realities and complexities.

In the context of family holiday advertising, Wilson and Gutierrez's findings indicate that the inclusion of Black models does not provoke negative affective or cognitive responses from consumers. Consequently, there is a strong rationale for increasing the representation of Black individuals and families in such advertisements. Continued underrepresentation may therefore be indicative of systemic bias within the advertising industry itself, rather than a reflection of consumer attitudes. (Wilson, C., and Gutierrez, F., 2003)

From a theoretical view, Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model offers a useful lens to understand how different audiences might interpret these messages. The dominant hegemonic or preferred reading would involve viewers accepting the representation at face value: seeing the white middle class nuclear family as the default and interpreting the holiday as a universally desirable experience. In this reading the ads are effective, representative to the people represented in the ads and emotionally persuasive.

However, a negotiated reading may arise from viewers who see elements of themselves represented but remain aware of what's missing. For example a person of colour might appreciate the presence of diverse actors but feel frustrated by the absence of deeper cultural representation or more varied family structures. Oppositional readings, meanwhile, may come from viewers who feel completely excluded from the narrative, such as LGBTQ+ parents, disabled individuals or those from working class backgrounds who see the portrayed version of

family life as unattainable or unrelatable. For these viewers, the ad may evoke alienation rather than aspiration.

As a result of these narrow and idealised images of family these campaigns risk reinforcing outdated social and familial hierarchies under the guise of a harmless holiday fantasy. While they sell the experience of joy, togetherness and escape, they do so through a lens that often excludes those who do not fit the normative mold. As Hall suggests, meaning is not fixed; it is produced in the encounter between viewer and text. These campaigns, therefore, are not just selling a product or experience, they are shaping, limiting and negotiating ideas about who gets to belong in the story of the 'perfect family holiday.'

4.7 Analysis of the emotions encoded to connect family with brand loyalty

Joys is the most obviously used emotional driver throughout the package holiday ads that were studied. The ads are saturated with images of children laughing, parents smiling and many moments of shared family fun. These particular scenes are often edited in slow motion to further amplify their emotional weight, making the joy seem timeless and meaningful. The use of slow motion is not accidental, like any element of advertising, it allows the viewer to stay in the moment, to imagine themselves within it and to feel the happiness that's created through a family holiday. The slow motion feature enhances how much viewers enjoy content by making it feel easier to process and makes the process more fluent (Stuppy, A., et al, 2024).

Brands and competitors influence each other through marketers analysis of market conditions and consumer traits. While many factors affect consumer behaviour, marketing strategies, such as nostalgia, play a key role in shaping it directly (Aytakin, P. and Ayaz, Y.Y., 2018). Nostalgia is

another key emotional device in these holiday ads, particularly in the campaigns by Disneyland and Centre Parcs. Voiceovers frequently recall “the magic of childhood” or “the moments they’ll never forget,” appealing to the parents' own childhood memories and positioning the brand as the creator of the next generations' treasured moments. This layered emotional appeal awakens personal memories while offering a future return, connecting the past to the present and to the future through these brands.

Nostalgia also plays a crucial role in the advertising strategies of both TUI and Jet2Holidays, serving as a powerful emotional appeal that reinforces the desirability of the package holiday. These adverts frequently evoke an idealised past through imagery and narrative structures that resonate with collective memories of simpler and happier times, particularly childhood holidays or family traditions.

Visual cues in a handful of these ads ,such as retro styled outfits or decor, vintage filters or scenes of classic beach games subtly return the viewer to their own sentimental past. The voiceovers often use warm reassuring tones that echo parental familiarity and storytelling. This nostalgic framing is not merely aesthetic, it constructs a sense of continuity between the past and present, suggesting that emotional availability and joy of precious holidays can be rekindled through contemporary travel. In this way, nostalgia operates as both a memory trigger and a persuasive tool, inviting views to reclaim a lost sense of togetherness and timeless happiness by ultimately booking a holiday with them.

From a consumer behaviour perspective, this emotional encoding aligns with theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly the levels of belonging and love, as well as safety and security. By positioning holidays as a way to meet these emotions; needs, brands elevate themselves beyond transactional value. These holiday ads aim to humanise the brand,

encouraging consumers to develop a relationship with it, not unlike the relationship they have with their loved ones.

Ultimately, emotional branding in these campaigns is about association, they don't just showcase emotions, they become emotional proxies for the brand itself. Booking a holiday becomes framed not only as a financial decision but also as an act of love. In this way, nostalgia is used to bring the parents back to a time of happiness and appeal to those core memories in order to persuade them to provide the same happy memories for their own child.

4.7 Conclusion

The representation of family in the TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland advertisements plays a strategic and emotional role in reinforcing the company's brand identity as a facilitator of joy, stress-free and meaningful holidays. TUI, for example, is one of the world's leading tourism groups, often constructs family as a central narrative device to evoke trust within their brand and create aspirational ideals in its advertising campaigns.

This study has critically examined the emotional and representational strategies used in package holiday advertisements, with a particular focus on how the family, especially the nuclear, white and middle class family, is constructed and encoded as the ideal consumer unit. Through this qualitative content analysis of twenty ads from leading travel brands including, TUI, Jet2holidays, Centre Parcs and Disneyland, key themes emerged around traditional gender roles, limited diversity and the central role that children play in driving emotional resonance.

These campaigns consistently portray the family holiday as a site of emotional connection, joy and personal transformation. Emotions strategies such as nostalgia, slow motion imagery and

aspirational storytelling are used not only to sell a product but to symbolise good parenting, family success and emotional well being. Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model provides a useful framework to understand the varied audience responses, ranging from acceptance to resistance, depending on the viewer's identity and lived experiences. While many read these ads as aspirational and emotionally persuasive, others may feel alienated due to the exclusion of non-traditional, multicultural, LGBTQ+ or working class family structures.

The recurring imagery of happy children, loving parents, and dreamlike fantasy destinations encodes a moralised consumer fantasy, where love and good parenting are closely tied to financial ability and leisure consumption. In doing so, these ads not only reflect but also shape cultural narratives about family, success and happiness in a western consumer driven society. Despite some recent progress in inclusion, the representation in advertising remains largely static in its portrayal of family life, reflecting more about the advertising industry's assumptions rather than actual consumer diversity.

To conclude, this research reveals the need for more inclusive and socially responsible advertising practices. By broadening the scope of family representations and diversifying the emotional narratives attached to holidays, marketers can not only reflect the realities of their audiences more accurately but also foster deeper brand trust and engagement. As families evolve, so too must the stories we tell them about, especially in spaces that hold as much emotion and nostalgia and cultural symbolism as the family holiday.

5. Concluding thoughts on the contribution of this research, its limitations and for further research

5.1 Implications of findings for research questions

The findings of this study have important implications for the research question posed from the outset, which centred around how family is visually and linguistically represented in package holiday advertising, the emotional responses that these portrayals are designed to evoke and how they may influence overall consumer perception. Through qualitative content analysis of twenty selected advertisements, it became evident that these campaigns consistently rely on highly curated images of nuclear families, usually composed of two parents and two children, engaged in idyllic and carefree activities in aspirational destination settings. The use of holiday activities, joyful facial expressions and emotionally rich voiceovers all contribute to the portrayal of the 'ideal family holiday.'

These findings confirm that advertisers encode dominant cultural narratives about what constitutes a fulfilling family experience, using emotionally resonant imagery to influence consumer desires and behaviours. The emotional response to targeted emotions such as nostalgia, aspiration and a longing for togetherness and bonding are deeply rooted in collective memory and social values, particularly among parents of young children. This supports the notion that family holiday adverts serve not only as a commercial purpose but also a cultural one, reinforcing social ideals about ideal family life and childhood happiness.

However the implications also extend to the exclusivity of these portrayals. The lack of diversity in family structure, ethnicity, socio-economic status and ability representation means that many

potential consumers may not see their realities reflected in the advertising content. From Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding perspective, this opens space for negotiated or oppositional readings, where audiences either interpret the message to suit their context or reject the advert's vision altogether.

In conclusion, the implications of these findings reveal that while emotionally driven family representations in holiday adverts can effectively capture audience attention and influence decision making, their limited inclusivity may hinder broader engagement. This raises questions about the ethical and strategic elements of marketing practices, pointing to a need for more inclusive representations that resonate with the diversity of modern family life. Advertisers who fail to consider this risk not only limit the market reach but also perpetuate narrow cultural ideals that exclude significant portions of their audience and society.

5.2 Contributions and limitations of findings

This study offers several contributions to both academic research and marketing practice in the fields of advertising, media representation and emotional branding. By focusing specifically on family representations in package holiday advertising, the research provides a deeper understanding of how emotional and symbolic content is strategically deployed to resonate with target audiences, particularly parents. One of the most important and valuable contributions lies in the application of Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, which allowed the analysis to move beyond simple message delivery and explore the layered relationship between message construction, intended meanings and audience interpretation. In doing so, the research bridges theoretical frameworks with practical advertising strategies, offering insight into how cultural norms and emotional triggers are encoded into visual media and marketing.

Another important contribution is the integration of both visual and linguistic content within the analysis. Rather than focusing solely on image or text, the study demonstrates how these elements work together to create a complete emotional narrative. This approach enhances our understanding of how meaning is constructed in contemporary advertising. Additionally, the findings raise critical questions about representational diversity, highlighting a continued reliance on the nuclear, white, middle class family ordeal and the absence of more inclusive portrayals. This insight contributes to ongoing conversations around diversity and inclusion in media and marketing.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size, twenty adverts, while sufficient for a detailed qualitative analysis, does limit the generalisations of the findings. The sample was also geographically constrained to primarily UK and Ireland based brands, which may reflect a culturally specific representation of family that does not account for regional or international differences in family structures and values.

Additionally, while the study applied Hall's framework to explore potential audience responses, it does not directly investigate audience reception through direct methods such as interviews, focus groups, or surveys. As a result, assumptions about viewer interpretations are theoretical rather than data driven. Including audience perspectives directly, would offer a more complete and rounded picture of how these ads are actually received across different demographic groups.

In conclusion, while this study provides theoretical and practical contributions to the research field, it also details areas for future research that could be built upon and the finds here expanded upon, particularly by incorporating a more diverse sample and engaging directly with audiences.

5.3 Recommendations for practice

Based on the findings of this study, several important recommendations can be made for marketing practitioners, particularly those working within the tourism and travel industry. While the use of emotionally driven narratives and idealised family imagery has been shown to be effective in capturing consumer attention and evoking feelings of nostalgia, togetherness and aspiration, this approach also contains its limitation, especially in terms of representational diversity and cultural relevance. To improve both ethical responsibility and marketing effectiveness, brands should consider adopting more inclusive, realistic and culturally realistic strategies in advertising.

Firstly, broadening the overall portrayal of family structures is essential. The over reliance on nuclear, heteronormative family models overlooks the reality of modern family life, which is increasingly including single parent families, blended families, extended families, LGBTQ+ parents and parents of different ages and ethnic backgrounds. Including a greater variety of family configurations would allow more consumers to see themselves represented in the advertising, thereby increasing emotional resonance and potential brand loyalty.

Secondly, advertisers should move beyond surface level or tokenism in diversifying their ads, and focus on creating authentic narratives that represent the full scope of family experiences. For example, stories of intergenerational travel, shared challenges during trips or everyday moments of connection can be just as emotionally powerful as idealised images of perfection. These stories offer more relatable and grounded content which can help to build trust and even deepen consumer engagement.

Additionally, marketing teams should integrate audience feedback and engage with real consumers in the creation of campaigns, through methods such as focus groups, user-generated content or community conversations and consultations. This participatory approach not only enhances relevance but also helps the brands to remain sensitive to changing societal values and expectations.

From this research it is also advisable to adopt a more globally aware lens, especially for international travel brands. Representations should be adaptable to different cultural norms and family dynamics in various regional markets. Customised campaigns rather than one size fits all messaging can also help to create more meaningful connections across broader audience bases.

In conclusion, while emotional marketing remains a powerful tool, its success depends on representational inclusivity and cultural authenticity. By adapting these strategies to reflect the diversity of modern family life, brands can enhance their ethical standing, expand their reach and cultivate deeper and longer lasting relationships with consumers.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

While this study offers insights into the emotional and symbolic construction of family within package holiday advertising, it also highlights the multiple areas where further research is possible that could build on and expand these findings. The limitations of this project, particularly the small sample size, the UK centric focus and the absence of direct audience engagement, present opportunities for future scholarly work to explore the topic from broader and more diverse perspectives.

One of the most immediate recommendations is to conduct audience reception studies. While this research used Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model to infer possible readings of family portrayals, it did not empirically measure how different groups interpret these messages. Future studies could use interviews, focus groups, or surveys to capture the lived responses of various demographic groups, including single parents, LGBTQ+ families, and individuals from different ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds. This would provide a more concrete understanding of how emotional appeal and representation function across diverse audiences.

Another area for exploration is the cross cultural analysis of family advertising. Family values, structures and emotional triggers differ significantly across cultures; therefore, extending this study to include international campaigns could reveal important insights about how brands adapt, or fail to adapt their messaging to more targeted groups. For instance, comparing Western portrayals of family with those in Southeast Asia or South America could develop different uses of emotion, tradition and identity in advertising.

There are also opportunities for examining the role of digital and social media platforms, which often feature more interactive and user driven content. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are increasingly used by travel brands and influencers to market holidays, sometimes offering more diverse and authentic portrayals of family experiences than traditional TV campaigns. Future research could explore how these platforms reshape emotional marketing and influence family related travel decisions.

Lastly, future studies may benefit from engaging with intersectional frameworks, combining media studies with sociology, gender studies, or cultural studies. Such approaches can more deeply unpack how family representations intersect with issues of race, class, gender and ability, offering a more rounded and critical lens on advertising practices.

To conclude, there is significant potential for further research to extend, challenge or refine the findings presented in this study. Broader methodological approaches and more diverse perspectives will be essential in fully understanding the evolving relationship between family, emotion and marketing.

5.5 Final conclusion and reflections

This study set out to explore how family is represented in package holiday advertising, with particular focus on the visual and linguistic strategies used to evoke emotional appeal and influence consumer engagement. Through qualitative analysis framed by Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding theory, the research has demonstrated that contemporary holiday advertisements predominantly depict an idealised, nuclear family engaged in joyful and aspiration holiday activities and experiences. These advertisements have little to no ethnic diversity or differences in family composition. These portrayals effectively harness emotional themes such as nostalgia, togetherness and happiness to appeal to target audiences, in particular parents seeking family oriented holidays.

Reflecting on the findings, it is clear that while these ads successfully use emotional storytelling to capture attention and encourage consumer brand loyalty, they also maintain a limited and somewhat exclusionary view of what a family should look like. The absence of these diverse family structures, ethnicities and socio economic backgrounds suggests a persistent reliance on traditional cultural norms within advertising narratives that remain hegemonically white and heterosexual. This not only restricts the inclusivity of the messaging but may also alienate significant portions of the market whose lived realities differ from the dominant portrayal.

From an academic perspective, this research has outlined and analysed the complex relationship between media, culture and consumer behaviour. It has highlighted the power of advertising as both a commercial tool and a cultural force that shapes societal ideals and expectations. The application of the theoretical framework provided valuable insights into the layered process of encoding and decoding meaning from these ads, revealing how emotional appeal is carefully constructed yet open to varied interpretations.

This project has also revealed the importance of expanding representational diversity in marketing not only as an ethical imperative but as a strategic opportunity to engage broader, more varied audiences. Brands that embrace inclusivity and authenticity in the family portraits are likely to build more strong emotional connections and increase customer trust in an increasingly diverse and socially aware marketplace.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of how family is represented in package holiday ads through the use of family imagery and emotional narrative. Through a sample of ads from selected leading brands a need for more inclusive practices within this industry was discovered. Future marketing research and strategies should continue to explore and reflect the evolving realities of family life in an attempt to remain relevant and reflective of our ever changing society.

Bibliography:

- Alegre, J., Garau, J. 2009. The Factor Structure of Tourist Satisfaction at Sun and Sand Destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(1), pp. 78-86.
- Aytekin, p. And Ayaz, Y.Y., 2018. Nostalgia in Advertising: A semiotical analysis of nostalgia themed and nonnostalgia themed print ads. *Journal of International Social Research*, 11(59).
- Barnes, S.J. 2024. Smooth talking and fast music: Understanding the importance of voice and music in travel tourism ads via acoustic analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 63(5), 1070-1085.
- Borgerson, J.L., Isla, B., Schroeder, J.E., and Thorssen, E., 2006. Representation of Gay families in advertising: consumer responses to an emergent target group. *European advances in consumer research*, 7, pp. 143-152.
- Bourdieu, P., 1996. On the family as a realised category. *Theory, Culture, Society*, 13(3), 19-26.
- Byun, J., Jang, S, C., 2015. Effective destination advertising: matching effect between advertising language and destination type. *Tourism Management*, 50, 31-40.
- Cai, R., Leung, X.Y., Lu, L. 2025. When the future feels closer than the past: An experimental research of nostalgia versus forestalgia in destination ads. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 0(0).
- Chowdhury, M.F., 2014. Interpretivism in aiding our understanding of the contemporary social world. *Open Journal of Philosophy*.
- Crompton, J.L., 1979. Motivations for Pleasure Vacation. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 6(4). Pp. 408-424.
- Dolnicar, S., and Ring, A., 2014 Tourism marketing research: Past, Present and Future. *Annals of Tourism research*. 47, pp. 31-47.
- Echtner, C.M., and Ritchie, J.R.B. 1991. The meaning and measurement of the destination image. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*. 2. P. 2-12.
- Fiske, J., 1998. *Culture, ideology, interpellation* (p. 1268). Na.
- Fiske, J., 2010. *Television culture*. Routledge.
- Grigaliunaite, V., and Pileliene, L., 2016. Emotional or Rational? The determination of the influence of advertising appeal on advertising effectiveness. *Scientific Annals of Economics and Business*. 63(3).

- Hall, S., 2012. Encoding/decoding. Media and cultural studies. *Keywords*, pp. 137.
- Hamilton, J., 2005. Thomas Cook. The History Press.
- Haram, S., Muwafaq, I., Ghabra, A. 2021. Barthes Semiotic Theory and interpretation of signs. *International Journal of Research in social sciences and humanities*. Pp. 470-485.
- Hayes, B.K., Heit, E., and Swensen, H., 2010. Inductive Reasoning. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews, Cognitive Science*, pp. 278-292.
- Liu, J., Zhao, J., Wei, W and Yang, T., 2024. Captivating the crowd: Unraveling sentiments in tourism short video for effective destination marketing on social media. *Current Issues in Tourism*. Pp. 1-8.
- Kaplan, B., Maxwell, J., 2005. Qualitative Research Methods for Evaluating Computer Information Systems. 4(2) pp. 30-55.
- Katz, Elihu & Paul F. Lazarsfeld. 1955. Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications.
- Keshari, P., Jain, S., 2016. Effect of age and gender on consumer response to advertising appeals. *International Journal of Research*. 10(1).
- Khandkar, S.H., 2009. Open Coding. *University of Calgary*.
- Kim, S., Chun, H., Petrick, J. 2005. Positioning analysis of overseas golf tour destinations by Korean golf tourists. *Tourism management*, 26(6), 905-917.
- LeCompte, M.D., 2000. Analysing qualitative data. *Theory into practice*, 39(3), pp. 146-154.
- Locke, A., Capdevila, R., Lazard, L. 2022. Digital Families: Gendered relationships in online spaces. *Feminism and Psychology*, 32(3), 310-317.
- Middleton, K., Turnbull, S. 2021. How advertising got 'woke': The institutional role of advertising in the emergence of gender progressive market logics and practices. *Marketing theory*, 21(4), 562-578.
- O'Donohue, S., Gram, M., Marchant, C. 2023. Grandparenting Relations in Advertising Familial Fictions. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 23(4), 798-808.
- Panda, T.K., and Mishra, K., 2013. DOes emotional appeal work in advertising? The rationality behind using emotional appeal to create a favourable brand attitude. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, 10(2).
- Passini, S., 2013. A Binge consuming culture: The effect of consumerism on social interactions in Western societies. *Culture and Psychology*, 19(3), pp. 369-390.
- Pearce, P.L., and Lee. U., 2005. Developing the travel career approach to tourist motivation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(3). Pp. 226-237.

- Pembecioglu, N., 2018. Concept of family presentation and representation of family in commercials. *European Journal of Educational Studies*.
- Ross, S., 2011. The Encoding/decoding model revisited. *Annual Meeting of the international communication association*. 26(30).
- Schmidt, E-M., Decieux, F., Zartler, V. 2024. Mothers and others: how collective strategies reproduce social norms around motherhood. *Journal of family issues*, 0(0).
- Stuppy, A., Landwehr, J.R. and McGraw, A.P., 2024, The art of slowness: slow motion enhances consumer evaluations by increasing processing fluency. *Journal of marketing research*, 61(2), pp. 185-203.
- Trusov, M., Bucklin, R.E., and Pauwel, K. 2009. Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: findings from an internet social networking site. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(5), 90-102.
- Wilson, C.C., and Gutierrez, F., 2003. Advertising and people of colour. *Gender, Race and Class in Literature*. Pp. 283-292.
- Yousef, M., Rundle-Thiele, S., and Dietrich, T., 2023. Advertising appeals effectiveness: a systemic literature review. *Health Promotion International*. 38(4), pp. 204.

