

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Management



Bachelor Thesis

The Focus Group Method in Qualitative Research

Author: Veronika Kalivodová

Supervisor: Ing. Tereza Kadeřábková

© 2012 CULS

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis 'The Focus Group Method in Qualitative Research' by myself and I have used only the resources mentioned at the end of the thesis.

In Prague March 30th 2012

Acknowledgement

I sincerely would like to thank Ing. Tereza Kadeřábková for the supervision of this work. Further I would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this work.

The Focus Group in Qualitative Research

Focus Group v kvalitativním výzkumu

Summary

The Bachelor Thesis concentrates on qualitative research with special attention being paid to Focus Group method, which was selected by the author on the basis of her own experience and interest. The thesis starts by providing an overview of the history of qualitative research as well as its methodology, including the focus group method which is described in subsequent parts of the publication. There are several chapters devoted to the focus group method, they also provide a basis for comparing the theory and practice.

The second part of the thesis provides an insight into the focus group methodology from a practical point of view, the issues are structured in a similar way as in the first part of the thesis. A comparison of the first two parts of the thesis can be found in the final part of the text in which conclusions are drawn and comments are provided on the outcomes of the study. This thesis may serve as a useful tool for students of marketing and other disciplines by helping them to create a clear picture of the Focus Group method and giving them an insight into the ways in which the method is used in practice.

Keywords: Qualitative research, Method, Group, Focus Group, Interview, Recruitment, Respondent, Researcher, Facilitator, Moderator

Souhrn

Bakalářská práce se soustředí na kvalitativní výzkum trhu zaměřený na metodu Focus Group, kterou si autorka vybrala na základě vlastní zkušenosti a zájmu. V práci je nejdříve popsána historie kvalitativního výzkumu a jeho metody, následuje zaměření na metodu Focus Group. Tato metoda je rozdělena do několika kapitol, které později poslouží jako základ pro porovnání teorie s praxí.

Ve druhé části se autorka zaměřuje na Focus Group z praktického hlediska, kde rozpracovává problematiku do téměř shodných kapitol jako v první části. V závěru bakalářské práce se pojednává o daném tématu, jsou porovnány tyto dvě části práce, stanoveny jasné závěry a okomentovány výsledky. Tato práce může usnadnit nejen studentům marketingu pochopit problematiku metody Focus Group a pomoci si utvořit jasný obraz, jak je tato metoda v praxi aplikována.

Klíčová slova: Kvalitativní výzkum, Metoda, Skupina, Focus Group, Rozhovor, Rekrutace, Respondent, Výzkumník, Moderátor

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	5
2	Objectives of the Thesis and Methodology	6
2.1	Objectives of the Thesis	6
2.2	Methodology	6
3	Qualitative vs. quantitative research	7
3.1	History of qualitative research	8
3.1.1	History of qualitative research in the Czech Republic	11
3.1.2	Focus Groups in Historical Perspective.....	12
4	Qualitative research	12
4.1	Qualitative methods	13
4.1.1	Observational methods	13
4.1.2	The Individual interview.....	15
5	Focus Group.....	17
5.1	Types of Focus Groups	18
5.1.1	Self-contained, Supplementary and Multimethod	19
5.1.2	Conflict and Reconvened.....	19
5.1.3	Dependent and the psychodynamic group	20
5.2	Role sharing and facilitating of Focus Groups.....	22
5.3	Communication	23
5.4	What to do when things do not work out	24
5.5	Preparation of Focus Group	25
5.6	Recruitment	26
5.7	Process of Focus Group	26
5.7.1	Forming.....	26
5.7.2	Storming, norming, performing	27
5.7.3	Mourning	28
5.8	Size of Focus Group.....	29
5.9	Number of Focus Groups	29
5.10	Strengths and Weaknesses	29
6	Introduction to practical part.....	31
6.1	Agency	31
7	Qualitative research	31
7.1	Qualitative methods	32

7.2	Commissioning a Project, Terms of Reference.....	32
7.3	Observational methods.....	33
7.4	Individual interview	33
7.4.1	Types of interviews.....	34
8	Focus Group.....	34
8.1	Types of Focus Groups	35
8.1.1	Conflict and Reconvened.....	35
8.1.2	Self-contained, Supplementary and Multimethod	36
8.1.3	Dependent and the psychodynamic group	36
8.2	Role sharing and facilitating Focus Groups	36
8.3	Communication	37
8.4	What to do hen things do not work out	37
8.5	Preparation of Focus Group	38
8.6	Recruitment	38
8.7	Process of Focus Groups	39
8.7.1	Introduction.....	39
8.7.2	Thematic sections	40
8.7.3	Conclusion of Focus Groups.....	40
8.8	Size of Focus Groups	40
8.9	Number of Focus Groups	40
8.10	Outcome of Focus Groups	41
9	Summary.....	42
10	Conclusion	45
11	Resources	47
12	Supplements.....	48

1 Introduction

Although Focus Group has a long history, only a decade ago, were in marketing almost unknown. Now their use is vast and ever-growing. The fact is that focus groups are now much more widely practiced research method. It is caused by the times changing which results in significant variations in the field of marketing, market research in particular. The competition in the market is getting tougher, especially if related to qualitative research. With the help of this type of research companies manage to find solutions which help them to gain visibility in the market, to increase their sales figures. etc.

Focus Group (sometimes also referred to as focused groups, focus group discussion or in-depth group interview) represent one of the most broadly used methods of qualitative research used in sociology, social psychology, applied anthropology, psychotherapy, pedagogy, social work and with an ever increasing frequency also in the field of marketing and market research.

This method is generally perceived as one related to flexibility and creativity, as it is used for devising hypotheses, examining views, attitudes and values, testing the viability of new ideas, evaluation, diagnosing and discerning questionnaire items.

It is the very aim of marketing research to assess the situation, performance, verify a product among consumer, follow customer developments and trends, find out about the competitors, as well as the products and services they offer.

In practice, a combination of different methods and techniques is used the most often e. g. Personal questioning is complemented by observing the reactions of the respondent, analysis tends to be an integral part of experiments, and the observation of spontaneous behaviour of people can be later accompanied by questioning.

The Focus Group, however, remains to be the most important and most frequent research method and that is why it is given a comprehensive treatment in this bachelor thesis. The thesis draws inspiration from direct work experience as well as great interest in the field of qualitative research. The work provides both theoretical (in the first part) and practical point of view, the practical insight builds on and further develops the theoretical sections.

The main asset of this work is in providing a comparison of the two dimensions, the practical as opposed to the theoretical one, pointing to the areas where there are discrepancies between theory and practice and offering a possible explanation of such phenomena.

2 Objectives of the Thesis and Methodology

2.1 Objectives of the Thesis

The aim of the work is to provide an example of qualitative marketing research, specifically focusing on the method of Focus Group and subsequent comparison of compliance with the criteria of theoretical methods in real-situation research. The paper will explain what qualitative research is, the purpose for which it is used, how it is practiced, the methods used, the aim of choosing a particular method as well as the outcome of the research.

A specific objective is to determine whether each research project was conducted according to the criteria of the Focus Group method. If that turns out not to be the case the author looks at what deviations occurred and why.

2.2 Methodology

To achieve the goals of the work on the basis of theoretical knowledge and information obtained from literature, the thesis will be drawing on my own knowledge and experience in qualitative marketing research and referring to available. There will be also a literature review performed. Subsequently, in order to illustrate the findings using a practical example will be used to illustrate qualitative research projects from market practice, employing the method in question in projects in the course of last year in an Agency which does not wish to have its name mentioned.

Comparing theoretical literature search with specific hands-on research will make it possible to determine whether the criteria in the method were chosen appropriately, and whether there were any variations or deviations from the method selected.

To achieve the objectives of this work the thesis has opted for an observational method accompanied by face-to-face interviews with skilled workers engaged in the above-mentioned researches. Five focus groups will be subject of observation. On that basis and with the help of literature review the author will be able to identify the diversions from theory. For the purpose of guaranteeing data validity, there will be a discussion concerning outcomes with the moderator and the researcher - observer after the end of each group session. The results should cast light on the hypotheses put forward in this work, confirming or disproving the conclusions drawn as to the application of the criteria selected in the particular research methods.

3 Qualitative vs. quantitative research

In order to provide an introduction to qualitative research the author suggests to start from the other end of the spectrum, i.e. quantitative research. The table below features the main differences between the two approaches.

Qualitative	Quantitative
The aim is complete detailed understanding	The aim is to test validity hypotheses
A lot of in-depth information about the small number of individuals	Limited range of information about many individuals
Before the start of the project, the researcher may only have a rough idea of what he/she is looking for	Researcher knows clearly in advance what he/she is looking for
The design emerges as the study unfolds	All aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected
Researcher is the data gathering instrument	Researcher uses tools, such as questionnaires or equipment to collect numerical data
Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects	Data is in the form of numbers and statistics
Subjective - individuals interpretation of events is important ,e.g., uses participant observation, in-depth interviews etc.	Objective - seeks precise measurement and analysis of target concepts, e.g., uses surveys, questionnaires etc.
Qualitative data is more 'rich', time consuming, and less able to be generalized	Quantitative data is more efficient, generalized, but may miss contextual detail

Source: Author

Quantitative research requires a high degree of standardization. This high-degree of standardization is a guarantee of high reliability of the research project. A high degree of standardization, however, results in a strong reduction of information. The respondent can only make a single choice from a very small set of categories rather than describing their opinion in depth. This inevitability leads to a relatively low validity.

In qualitative research there is a low degree of standardization and that makes the reliability of qualitative research rather poor. Qualitative research with its commonly used format of question-and-answer sessions does not impose limitations on respondents. The level of standardization in qualitative research is generally very low. Therefore, the results of qualitative research can potentially have high validity.

The divergent aims of the two approaches or methods are fully determined by their logic which is totally different in each of them. The logic of quantitative research is deductive. One starts from a problem which exists either in theory or in social reality. This problem is converted into hypotheses. The hypotheses then serve as the basis for the selection of variables. The data collected throughout the research project are subsequently used in order to test the hypotheses made at the outset of the project. Quantitative research therefore provides a set of accepted or rejected hypotheses as its outcome.

Besides that, qualitative research uses the logic of induction. The beginning of research process is usually characterized by observation and data collection. Following on from that the researcher looks for regularity in the data, the meaning of the data and makes preliminary conclusions. The outcome can be formulating new hypotheses or a new theory. In quantitative research only the data needed to test a hypothesis are collected. This is in contrast with qualitative research where all data are collected by definition. Subsequently, all data are examined to find a structure or a regularity which may exist in them.

3.1 History of qualitative research

Qualitative research has a long tradition which begins in the real beginning of social sciences. One of the early lines is ethnography (the science describing the ways of life of humankind). The tradition of ethnography, which is based on qualitative methods of enquiry, extends from the ancient Greeks to 15th and 16th-century Westerners who attempted to understand the origins of culture and civilization by regarding 'primitive' people as living examples of 'the great chain of being' that linked contemporary culture with its pre-historic beginnings. The racial, cultural and moral diversity of peoples throughout the world posted a problem for post-Renaissance Europeans (Gordon, 1999).

Qualitative research has had a history in the human disciplines, particularly in anthropology where the work of Boas, Mead and Malinowski formed the foundation of the fieldwork method whereby an observer went into another culture to study the customs,

habits, beliefs and behaviours of another society. The decade of the 1920s saw the work of sociologists from 'the Chicago School' establish the importance for the role of qualitative research in understanding the group life of human beings.

Nevertheless during the development of psychology and sociology was preferred 'harder' experimental and quantitative method then 'softer' opened qualitative method. The strong critic of quantitative standardized research comes in the sixties (Gordon, 1999).

Denzin and Lincoln characterized qualitative research as:

...multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand (Gordon, 1999).

Objectivism and positivism have their roots in the Renaissance and developed through Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, Isaac Newton and others. There was a belief that the world can be understood and explained by fundamental laws, expressed as mathematical equations representing rational relationships.

The time from 1900s until World War 2 can be called The traditional period. This was the time when qualitative researches wrote objective colonialising accounts of field experiences that were reflective of the positivist scientific paradigm.

The Chicago school developed an approach which placed a narrative life history as the central text. This gave permission to the qualitative researcher to represent the story, using the language of ordinary people, as an example of objective truth.

In the United Kingdom at the time there was a notable scholar called Charles Booth who is generally credited with being the first person to develop a social survey which relied on qualitative interviewing methods.

As a father of 'motivational research system', i.e. what is a methodology designed to answer the more fundamental 'why' questions of human behaviour using quantitative and qualitative indirect questioning techniques, is considered Ernest Dichter. He was strongly influenced by Freudian psychology and regarded himself as a 'cultural anthropologist' and used qualitative interviewing (both group and individual interviews), as the basis form to make interpretations.

Motivational research is more about psychoanalytical interpretation, while qualitative research is more technique and methodology bound (Gordon, 1999).

After World War 2 till 1970s there was a phase characterised by an effort to formalise qualitative methods and to make its methods as rigorous as those quantitative research. Researches began to search for probabilities which could support arguments for conclusion of the study. Methods included combining open-ended and semi-structured interviewing (Gordon, 1999).

In the mid 1980s came a crisis of representation. Numerous questions were posed, such as whether the qualitative researcher can ever capture the lived experience, since the experience, it was argued, is created in the social text written by researcher (Gordon, 1999).

In the late 1980s qualitative research is a series of creative and interpretative acts. Qualitative interpretations are constructed. The researcher first creates a 'field text' consisting of notes, observations, records and documents, and moves from this to the creation of a 'research text' which contains the interpretations and notes based on the fieldwork. This is then recreated into a 'working text' which contains researcher's attempts to make sense of what he or she has experienced and learned. Finally the researcher produces the 'final text' that comes to the reader (Gordon, 1999).

The term 'motivational research' thus became a liability to those practitioners using qualitative methods very successfully for major clients who were marketing product and services to customers. The term 'qualitative research' took its place and, without the baggage of the past, qualitative research was embraced by marketing and advertising professionals as the most sensitive tool with which to develop marketing strategies and executions (Gordon, 1999).

'Motivational research' and 'qualitative research' are not synonymous. 'Motivational research' found by Dichter is an interpretation of material of the study based on an

understanding of human behaviour. 'Qualitative research' refers to a methodology (primarily focus groups and in-depth interviews) based on the data derived from the interview processes (Gordon, 1999).

Model of thinking (Gordon, 1999):

- Consumers are able to tell you what they do, feel and think [...]
- The role of the researcher is to encourage consumers to respond to various stimuli relevant to the client [...]
- Recruitment quality is very important [...]
- The research report – the written findings at the end of the project is objective

The popularity of qualitative research is best illustrated by the professionalisation of the discipline (Gordon, 1999).

3.1.1 History of qualitative research in the Czech Republic

The history of qualitative research in the Czech Republic is only very brief due to the fact that until 1989 there were stringent restrictions imposed by the governing totalitarian regime in the then Czechoslovakia. The ruling Communist Party banned all new all of the new methodologies, particularly those inspired by research in the West. Furthermore, one should note that the whole economy was subject to central planning and command system. The notions of the free market, competition or supply and demand were not only incompatible but virtually non-existent in the post-war Czechoslovakia, i.e. in the period between 1948 (the Communist takeover) and 1989 (the 'Velvet Revolution'). There was censorship of all publishing and if marketing research was ever mentioned in strictly technical economic literature, such texts had to be construed as severe criticism of the methods in question.

Recently there has been an increase in the use of qualitative methods. Professionals and theorists become more and more interested in marketing research methodologies and the number of companies and groups practicing in the field keeps on increasing as is the case of almost every other democratic state.

3.1.2 Focus Groups in Historical Perspective

Focus groups are not really new. Group interviews were applied in social research programmes during World War II, for example in testing effectiveness of training materials for the troops or studying factors that affected the productivity of work groups.

The focus group is believed to have originated in the USA and patrimony is most usually attributed to the sociologist Robert Merton. The term 'focus group' is generally assumed to have derived from the focused interview developed by Merton and his colleagues at Columbia University during the 1940s (Morgan, 1997).

About the same time, focus groups were transplanted into marketing research by Paul Lazarsfeld and others (Morgan, 1997). Focus groups in the advertising industry have been discovered in Britain by Mark Abrams. He was one of the first market researchers to publish a detailed account of the group discussion method and how it could be usefully employed for testing advertising copy and illustrations (Belk, 2006).

There was also criticism of focus groups, suggesting for example that focus group discussions were not taken particularly seriously by motivation researchers. Such criticisms, however, are no longer considered valid.

4 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry used in social sciences, market research and others. Some of the methodologists understand to qualitative research that it is only a supplement for quantitative research strategy. Glaser and Corbin (1989) said that qualitative research is any research for which result is not possible to use any statistical method or any other different kind of classification. On the other hand, many authors do not agree with that statement. They think absence of numbers in qualitative research represents one of its advantages, rather than disadvantage.

Qualitative research is defined by methodology, which is synonymous with the in-depth interview and group discussion (Gordon, 1999).

At a simplistic level 'Qualitative research' answers such questions as 'What', 'Why' or 'How' but it cannot answer question 'How many' and it is centrally concentrated with understanding things rather than with measuring them (Gordon, 1999).

4.1 Qualitative methods

There has been a growing trend over the last five years among both buyers and practitioners of qualitative research to search for more innovative and creative methodologies to crack complex marketing or business problems. There are two reasons for this. First, the disillusionment with conventional qualitative group discussion and in-depth interviews has led to search for new ways to reveal insight. Second, there is a mistaken belief that new methods have more power to 'delve beneath the skin of consumer', 'reveal the true needs and drivers of consumer behaviour' or 'reach the truth' (Gordon, 1999).

However innovation in itself brings the practitioner and end user no closer to the truth – because it would seem that there is no single truth to be found. Truth is a relative concept and the best what can be achieved as researchers is a multi-faced view of the problem from which is made the best interpretation (Gordon, 1999).

On the other hand Berg held view that innovation is necessary because the situation in the World is changing every day so the improvement and new thoughts about methodology are needed.

This part of the thesis reviews the qualitative methodologies that are in use today and offers criteria of evaluation.

4.1.1 Observational methods

Observation as well as interview represents some of the oldest methods of data collection. As far as qualitative research is concerned, observation is a strategy that helps researchers in the process of familiarizing themselves with an on-line or conventional setting by systematically and ethnically recording what they see and hear 'in the field'.

As a method of marketing communication, however, observation receives little credit. It tends to be used as an intrinsic part of other research methods. Regardless of whether there are interviews conducted or focus groups taking place face to face or via the Internet, they all subconsciously seem to take note of the research carried out. This makes sense of the data collected.

Observation is far more difficult than it appears. The researcher first needs to be familiar with the environment and types of behaviour, then he or she needs to notice patterns of

behaviour, particularly the most frequent ones, and then to validate the importance of these through talking to the people involved (Gordon, 1999).

There are two types of observation: 'Simple observation' and 'Participant observation' (Gordon, 1999).

In simple observation researchers take no part in the setting but employ a hidden approach, creating no impact on the situation at all. This mainly occurs when researchers employ a one-way mirror to observe focus groups. The main disadvantage of Simple observation is that it can be found out how people behave in a particular context or situation but not why they do so (Gordon, 1999).

Observation supplemented by interviews, studies of records or conversations with other experts is called Participant observation. This is defined as a process of research that *looks at social phenomena from the inside as well as from the outside* (*The Dictionary of Sociology*).

Participant observation involves establishing a rapport in a way that helps to watch, record and understand behaviour (Gordon, 1999). It is one of the most important methods of qualitative research.

There are four different roles for the researcher of observation:

- Complete participant (Participant observation)
- Participant as observer (Participant observation)
- Observer as participant (Participant observation)
- Complete observer (Simple observation)

Complete observer does not affect the behaviour of participants and he/she can validate data which were gathered in interview.

How many observations are needed to understand? There is no absolute answer but a few suggestions are: Enough to represent the target market that is being observed and enough to represent the changes in behaviour over time (Gordon, 1999).

The process of observing

At the beginning, observation aims to capture the broadest possible range of different situations. There are three types of observation: descriptive, focus and selective. Their

mutual relationship resembles a funnel. Observation becomes more and more concentrated on the selected aspects of situations.

At the outset, descriptive observation is employed. The aim is to provide a detailed description of the environment, people and events. Focused observation that follows on from that puts a particular emphasis on relevant processes and problems. Certain dimensions of data gradually become more or less important. Selective observation commences at the end of the research project. At that stage, data from other sources are sought in order to verify the second part of the observation and uphold or reject the hypotheses.

4.1.2 The Individual interview

Interview is usually defined simply as holding a conversation with a purpose, particularly with the aim to gather information. A more detailed and specific yet still simple to understand definition is needed. The individual interview is a conversation taking place between a trained qualitative researcher or depth interviewer and a respondent selected according to negotiated criteria (age, life stage, gender, social class, marital status etc.). The duration of such a conversation ranges from half an hour to two or more hours, depending on the nature of the questions posed.

In the UK particularly, practitioners prefer to recommend group discussions rather than depth interviews for the simple reason that, in terms of time and energy, they are more profitable (Gordon, 1999).

The standard depth interview takes approximately an hour and is carried out at the respondent's home, work or at another venue convenient for the respondent (pub, club,...). The venue largely determines the nature of the interview. The individual interview is considered appropriate for sensitive issues such as redundancy, medical problems or intimate hygiene products where gaining some detailed insight into the matter is of great importance.

Individual interview may be of assistance in restoring the decision making process.

Types of interviews

Some resources mention only two – namely, formal and informal, structured and unstructured etc. Gordon wrote in her book about four variations on the basic interview format:

Mini-depth interviews – they are short, about half an hour and are used to explore a very focused issue. For example they are used to alongside conventional quantitative survey research. A respondent who has already completed the questionnaire can be re-interviewed by a qualitative researcher in order to understand the responses in more depth.

Semi-structured interviews – they are usually conducted by trained qualitative field interviewers using an open-ended questionnaire. The interviewer is required to ask the question exactly as it is written. This kind of interview is used extensively in business-to-business research.

Pair and Family interviews – they are self-explanatory. A pair of respondents (best friends, employees, any family combination) are interviewed simultaneously.

On the other hand Berg divided types of interviews as follows:

The Standardized interviews, also called formal or structured, use a formally structured schedule of interview questions.

The Un-standardized Interviews, also called informal or non-directive, do not utilize schedules of questions and operate on a different set of assumptions. First, interviewers begin with the assumption that they do not know in advance what all the necessary questions are. Consequently, they cannot predetermine fully a list of questions to ask.

The Semi-standardized interviews, also called guided semi-structured interviews or focused, are located somewhere between the extremes of completely standardized and completely un-standardized. This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predominated questions and/or special topics. These questions are typically asked of the interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but interviews are allowed freedom to digress.

The Interview Schedule and its development:

In order to devise a schedule, researchers should know the type of information they want to gather. They should also be clear about the purpose, the aim and objectives of their research.

The process of making schedule consists of two stages. In the first stage, the researcher lists all categories that may be relevant to the study. In the second stage the researcher drafts sets of questions relevant to each of the outlined categories.

The choice of appropriate words is very important. The language used by the interviewer must be easy-to-understand to the respondents taking part in the interview. It is recommended that when asking questions the researchers use words and expressions which are familiar to the respondents.

5 Focus Group

There are many different variants of the group interview but the group discussion or focus group is the most commonly used method around the world. This consists of people who have been recruited according to a pre-determined set of criteria such as age, gender, life stage, social class, and product, service or brand usership (Gordon, 1999).

The distinction between the Focus Group and the Group Discussion is not easy as different authors have largely diverging views. Miovisky suggests that a Group discussion involves structured interview with more than three persons at a time following the pattern of question and answer and not using the group interaction or dynamics.

Focus Groups rank among the most progressive methods of qualitative research. Morgan concludes that a Focus Group as a significant research method to gather data emerging from a discussion on a topic which is set by the researcher.

Focus groups are generally more formal by nature than other group interviews. That can be explained by the fact that focus groups involve encouraging participants to take part in the discussion yet they also stress the distinctive role of the facilitator. Experts' opinions differ, however, as to the possibility of drawing a line between formal and informal group interviews in a way that defines some of the sessions as focus groups and others as sessions of some other format. The level of formal structure in each focus group session is in practice largely determined by the particular aims and objectives of the research project in question.

As regards other criteria when assessing and categorizing focus groups, those include size as well as the use of specialized facilities for asking questions. The general question that offers itself in this matter is who actually decides whether a group is too large or too small to be called focus group or when a setting is too casual to qualify for the format? There is no doubt that this matter, requires further research. The need to make specific decisions about data gathering strategies would fall under the heading of 'research design'. Different

research designs have either a higher or lower success rate in terms of making the research effective.

It is the researcher who establishes and communicates the focus on the discussion in line with the aim of the research project. The focus must be clearly determinate and easy to understand for all participants in the discussion. Focus Group has a very broad application it can be used as an alternative to individual interviews which some people may decline as they do not feel at ease.

Focus Groups are designed and managed by the researcher who defines and shapes the process of data collection. The practice of marketing research represents a highly pragmatic and liberal stream of thinking in which repeated experience and outcomes determine who is capable of using the method in practice. The use of psychological method should be reserved to those who have gained sufficient theoretical background and experience in their application. Most projects are working on the pragmatic stance that inexperienced researchers and facilitators who have not mastered the methodology pose a great risk not only to themselves and the participants but also to the project as a whole. As a result a lot of resources may be wasted if high quality and valid data can be extracted from such a research. Communication skills and strategies as well as the abilities to work with group dynamics are essential.

Moderators are trained to:

- guide the discussion over a number of topic areas that are of interest and relevance to the paying client.
- recognise important points of view and encourage the group to explore and expand on these
- deal with group dynamics effectively [...](Gordon, 1999).

5.1 Types of Focus Groups

One may classify the focus groups into different categories depending on the point of view. This thesis takes a closer look at the classification based on the type of the research, psychology of the group, and, by way of examples, at the classification based on the group content. The categories are described below:

5.1.1 Self-contained, Supplementary and Multimethod

In the self-contained uses, focus groups serve as the primary means of collecting qualitative data, just as participant observation or individual interviewing can serve as a primary means of gathering data. Using focus groups in this manner requires a careful matching of the goals of the research with the data that the focus groups can produce to meet these goals. Accordingly, the use of focus groups as a self-contained method often leads to an emphasis on research design (Morgan, 1997).

In supplementary uses of focus groups, the group discussions often serve as a source of preliminary data in a primarily quantitative study. For example, they can be used to generate survey questionnaires or to develop the content of applied programs and interventions. The focus groups could also serve as a source of follow-up data to assist the primary method. For instance, they might be used to pursue poorly understood survey results or to evaluate the outcome of a program or interpretation. In these supplementary uses of focus groups, the groups must be set up and conducted in ways that maximize their value for the primary method (Morgan, 1997).

In multimethod uses, focus groups typically add to the data that are gathered through other qualitative methods, such as participant observation and individual interviews. In these combined uses of qualitative methods, the goal is to use each method so that it contributes something unique to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study. The relative place of focus groups within this mix of methods would depend on the researcher's data needs, the opportunities and limitations, and so on (Morgan, 1997).

5.1.2 Conflict and Reconvened

The conflict group is designed to highlight the differences between people and to understand the core issue or to explore with the group if and how these differences can be resolved or negotiated (Gordon, 1999). For this type of group people with different viewpoints are recruited. For example, people who prefer European brands and people who support Chinese brands.

Reconvened group is one of the most useful and under-used variations of the group interview. A group is recruited for two sessions separated by one week. The first session covers some of the key topics, usually the main straightforward ones. During the interim week the group is asked to conduct a number of exercises. [...] At the reconvened session,

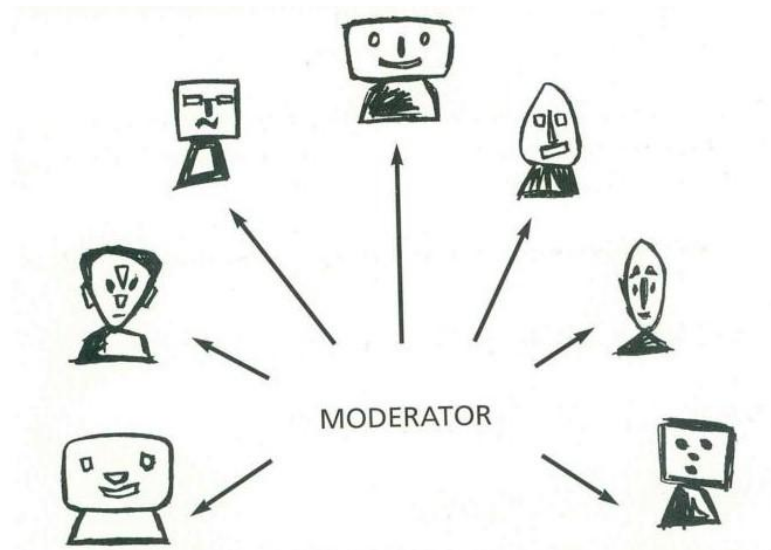
it is noticeable how much more involved people are with the subject and the aims of the research. (Gordon, 1999)

There may be even more variations than those discussed above. The underlying principle is the same: each variant has evolved in response to a particular limitation of the basic group discussion or focus group. None are the magic answer to greater truthfulness. In combination they provide a more colourful picture of the behaviour and attitudes of a target group. (Gordon, 1999)

5.1.3 Dependent and the psychodynamic group

A well run Focus Group looks easy – observation shows a relaxed facilitator and an informal chat between the participants. The participant can be every human. From the birth everyone belongs to a number of groups. Every single person brings emotional baggage to a group. Groups leaders would do well understand to this hidden baggage (Gordon, 1999)

There are two types of qualitative market research groups – the dependent and the psychodynamic group. The facilitator of a dependent group sets up a dialogue with each of the participants in turn, and has trained members to answer questions put to them and to wait until addressed before contributing to the discussion (Gordon, 1999). The picture below serves as an illustration of the phenomenon.



Source: Gordon, 1999

Dependent groups are often characterised by low energy and by silences until someone is asked [...] (Gordon, 1999).

In the psychodynamic group the key one is that the facilitator is part of the group and that all members are influenced by one another. The moderator sets up permission for the group members to address one another directly and to agree or disagree with any point of view being expressed (Gordon, 1999). Participants see themselves as part of the group rather than separate from it. There is no right or wrong way to conduct a group.

Focus groups as a qualitative method

At present, the two principal means of collecting qualitative data are participant observation, which typically occurs in groups, and open-ended interviews, which typically occur with individuals. As group interviews, focus groups occupy an intermediate position between those other qualitative methods. On the one hand, focus groups cannot really substitute for the kinds of research that are already done well by either individual interviews or participant observation. On the other hand, focus groups provide access to forms of data that are not obtained easily with either of the other two methods (Morgan, 1997).

Group members assume different roles as hierarchical integration develops during the groups session, including surrogate leader, moderator's ally, authoritative figure, diversionary, and so on. Recognition of these roles can help the moderator manage the group to ensure maximum productivity. Marketers have always given time to his qualitative work (Morgan, 1997).

Compared to individual interviews

The strong point of focus group session as an interview technique is the fact that they make it possible to observe interaction devoted to a certain a issue. Group discussions are the source of direct knowledge about similarities and differences in the participants' opinions and experiences. Nevertheless, individual interviews fare clearly better than focus groups when it comes to the amount of information gathered. In contrast with individual interviews focus groups make it necessary to pay special attention to the role of moderator. Furthermore, focus groups do not provide as much detailed insight into the opinions and experiences of any given participant as an individual.

5.2 Role sharing and facilitating of Focus Groups

Focus Group may differ depend on the level of structure where the facilitation may be unstructured, semi-structured and structured.

The researcher assumes several different roles in the framework Focus Group, he/she hold the ultimate responsibility for managing in the course of discussion. It is a person who communicates the most with the participants, he/she encourage them to take part and helping them to express their feelings. Rather that directing or judging, the facilitator actively supervises the compliance with the rules agreed. The facilitator is essential for the success at any Focus Group. His ability to gain the interest of participants to encourage them to benefit from his natural authority and to be able to make use of the group dynamics make the facilitator a key actor in Focus Group research.

Auxiliary facilitator provides assistance to the principal facilitator provides additions or acts as a substitute should the main moderator be tired. All of that has to happen naturally.

The internal observer sits in the circle participant and may but does not have to take part in the group discussion. External observer sits outside the circle he/she does not intervene only observes. External impartial observer follows the discussion from outside the room e.g. watching the section on video. The observer must be introduced to participants and the objectives of his/her observations must be properly explained.

In **unstructured** Focus Group there is no biding structure for the course of the discussion. Only the theme and time schedule are established in advance and communicated to the participants at the beginning of the section. The level of management as low and the facilitator only guides the discussion making sure that the participant does not digress from the topic.

Unstructured Focus Group makes it possible to monitor the interaction in a group among participants and the development thereof. That can be considered as an advantage. The disadvantage of the method, however, is the fact that Focup Groups on the discussing the same topic might yield significantly differed or even contradicting data which are difficult to analyse.

Semi-structured Focus Group has a more rigid structure but that may change in the course of discussion. Key topics as well as model questions are prepared in advance. The moderator, however, does not have to follow the exact wording or sequence of questions. More in-depth preparation and background study is required for this type of discussion.

The great advantage of this method is the fact that the moderator can maintain a certain standard of the discussion while giving the participants sufficient room for expression. It is a trade off between an unstructured and structured Focus Group, but the data are really difficult to compare.

Structured Focus Groups have a set of topics determined in advance as well as questions with exact wording and sequence. The facilitator cannot make any further changes or modifications and he uses the pattern of questions or answers. This type of Focus Group sections have a clearly independent time schedule which must be observed.

As the data are more standardized it is easier to process them and that can be considered as an advantage. All data and key answers to questions are well established. On the other hand structure Focus Groups are often criticized for their limitations as to the topic and passive role of participants who can only respond to facilitators questions.

5.3 Communication

Most authors agree that a good qualitative researcher would have excellent communication skills. Qualitative researchers are constantly interviewing people, who are different from themselves. It is necessary to remember that (Gordon, 1999) each person experiencing the same event or object can have completely different interpretations. If a researcher listen to others and truly accept that their point of view and experience is as valid as his/her own, he/she can begin to have a closer understanding about the experience of someone else. This is what qualitative research is all about. The researcher needs to use all possible communication tools to set up an open atmosphere, fanned within a different but equal human relationships. He/she needs to understand 'body language' (See Supplement no. 1) and to be sensitive to space what is a psychological construct referring to the physical distance. There are four distances:

- 1) an intimate distance - close relationships
- 2) a personal distance - family and friends
- 3) a business, social distance - impersonal transactions
- 4) a public distance - a speaker addressing an audience

5.4 What to do when things do not work out

When things go wrong no matter how experienced the moderator, human beings are not controllable (Gordon, 1999):

A respondent is mis-recruited

The first decision must be made quickly - how damaging to the group cohesion, confidentiality of the project will this person be? Age and demographic characteristics are less important. Usership mistake is a problem. The respondent is asked to leave the room and there the recruiter gives him/her the incentive in full together with apologies and any travel expenses incurred.

A respondent is drunk or behaves in an odd manner

The same procedure as that described above should be followed.

Late respondent

The first five minutes are not problem but more makes difficulty to the respondent be an equal group member.

Dominating respondent

A dominating respondent is the fault of the moderator and no one else.

Flight

The group avoids the topic for discussion or avoids the task. That subject should be introduced later when the group has formed better. Or the problem should be overtly expressed by the moderator or the moderator should coast along for a while and let the group pass through this phase. There are no right answers, either succeed or fail.

A quiet respondent

Sometimes, encouraging the respondent and showing the interest through body language can help, accompanied by special gestures such as passing biscuits or offering refreshment before the rest of the group. Addressing the individual by name can work in the same way. Another method is to ask the group to pair up and exchange views about a particular topic. When groups go wrong, it can usually be managed by a good and experienced moderator. The frequent comment that one hears from observers - 'that was a good group' or 'that was a difficult group' has nothing to do with participants end everything to do with the skill of the moderator.

5.5 Preparation of Focus Group

To prepare a Focus Group is a highly demanding task, the quality of arrangements made as well as the degree of organization in the process determine the overall success of the session. From a practical point of view this means arranging and booking appropriate venue in time before the session is due to take place. In the process of identifying the the staff to be involved one has to bear in mind the venue and time aspect, not forgetting that time is money. The session participants need to be given sufficient financial incentives in order to avoid no-shows. It goes without saying that the rights of respondents must be respected throughout the research project.

Qualitative researchers and their clients should not lie nor deceive respondents, should not abuse their confidentiality and should not coerce them into saying or doing anything in a group discussion that makes them feel uncomfortable. The rights of respondents take priority over the rights of clients and the identity of clients has to be revealed to respondents (Gordon, 1999).

High quality arrangements are required as to the venue where the sessions take place. Should be aimed to make the respondents comfortable, not only by providing some refreshments, such as beverages and biscuits, but also identify a suitable point in the room for placing the recording equipment. Creating a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in a comfortable setting can significantly assist the moderator in making the focus group session a success.

As there are usually three or more researchers working on each Focus Group, it is important that the role-sharing among them is well-defined prior to the start of the research in order to prevent any colisions.

An important part of any research is to prepare session guide which helps moderator to facilitate the group discussion.

Too many clients and researchers believe that a long guide will ensure that all the required information is gathered, this is not so. [...] The point is that the researcher needs to internalise the study objectives so as to ask the most relevant questions or introduce topics in a way that makes sense to participants (Gordon, 1999).

5.6 Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of selecting and finding participants to take part in a market research. The term recruiter refers to a person who is specially trained in this process. The precise sample definition should be discussed and agreed by client and agency before the recruitment process begins (Gordon, 1999).

When the guidelines are agreed they are given to a recruiter. These guidelines should be accompanied by a detailed briefing. The accuracy of all elements involved in recruitment should be verified (Gordon, 1999).

5.7 Process of Focus Group

Different authors refer differently to individual stages of Focus Group. Miovský distinguishes the process into the stages of Introduction, Opening Discussion and Motivation, Core and Conclusion. Hendl considers the opening part very important, he distinguishes the following stages: Welcome, Beginning, Key Rules, Key Issues, Personal data and Conclusion. In this work individual sections are identified using the terms introduced by Wendy Gordon, whose approach seems to reflect current practice the most closely.

5.7.1 Forming

At the beginning the participants have to be seated in such a way that prevents the forming of qualities. The facilitator and observer introduce themselves the study and their aims, objectives and explains the rules of group to participants.

Key rules:

- Only one person speaks at a time;
- no chattering among neighbours;
- all participants take an active part at the discussion;
- no one assumes the dominant role;
- everyone has a right to speak their mind;
- everyone has a right to comment on the views of others without judging or insulting them;
- everyone has the right to comment on the views of others, but must not in any way that would be disparaging or insulting in any way;

- everyone has the right not to answer a question if answering would be uncomfortable and no one should be forced to answer questions;
- everyone has the right to stop answering if they do not wish to continue;
- everyone has the right to withdraw their participation early in a group session;
- information gained by the participants in the course of the session is exclusively theirs and cannot be claimed by any other person;
- the participants address one another by name, they refrain from insulting forms of address;
- recordings and notes from the session are made exclusively for the purpose of research and all information and data are treated as confidential.

The next step is to introduce the members to each other and a simple and quick way to do this is to divide the group into pairs (Gordon, 1999).

Introductory discussion follows, it is usually referred to as warm-up or breaking the ice. The discussion should direct the group to its main focus. Questions are posed to relax the atmosphere, break the ice and get the discussion going. The strategy used here is referred to as 'the funnel' method – where the discussion gradually proceeds by narrowing down the topic step by step to get to the core issues. The participants should be encouraged throughout the discussion and given explanations as to why the research project is carried out and what are the final aims of the research.

5.7.2 Storming, norming, performing

The most important requirement in this part of the session is that the moderator makes the best possible use of atmosphere and group dynamics. Questions should be well-timed, the moderator should also take advantage of any silences or 'empty spots' in the discussion to drive the conversation closer to its main objective. One of the key indicators of storming is that someone makes a strong point about being different from the rest of the group. It is important that the moderator involves everyone in the discussion while making sure that nobody takes over. This is achieved through a strategy in which the moderator takes sides with every participant and encourages them to get actively engaged in the discussion.

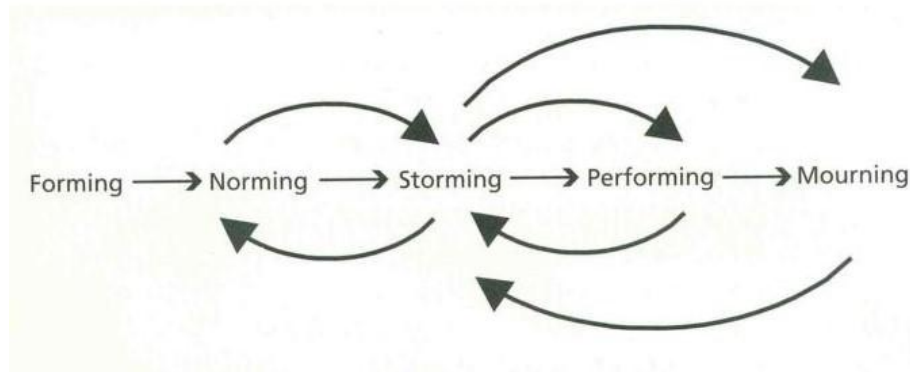
Someone may try to befriend the moderator. This is the classic 'teacher's pet' strategy. The individual tries really hard to be cooperative, calling the moderator by his or her first name, taking on tasks and attempting to show that he or she is better than others (Gordon, 1999).

Such situations truly reveal the ability of the moderator to manage the group.

If the group becomes stuck of storming then there is the next phase called norming. Norming comes as a relief. Participants have learned how to behave in relation one another and moderator have found out the roles of participants.

Norming quickly develops into performing, *the point at which group members begin to take responsibility, individually and corporately, for the group and its tasks, is the point where they are ready to perform* (Gordon, 1999). It is good time to break group into into smaller units to conduct 'brainstorm a problem-solution'. This phrase diagram shows the full contribution of group participants.

Storming, norming and performing can occur several times during the course of a group (Gordon, 1999).



Source: Gordon, 1999

5.7.3 Mourning

At the end of a Focus Group there is no new conversation started, rather the current discussion is let to evolve and draw to a close. Every participant gets an opportunity to comment on anything they did not have time to comment on in the course of the session, while the moderator makes it clear that at that it is not the time to start a new discussion but rather to complete and add to anything they have already said on the topic.

The final stage is called mourning and is often overlooked by moderators. At that stage it is appropriate to ask the participants for feedback, i.e. comments on how they felt about the session and whether they found it useful in one way or another.

5.8 Size of Focus Group

Miovský suggests the 4 participants as the minimum number which makes basic group interaction possible. This number is not ideal, however, as the pressure exerted on each participant is too high. It emerges from this that the most suitable number of participants is 6-10 allowing for the use of various complementary methods and techniques such as drawing, exercise, etc. The upper size limit is 18-20 participants, an even higher number would require special approach. The fewer the participants, the lesser the space and opportunity for each to make a statement.

5.9 Number of Focus Groups

The total number of Focus Group for each and every research project is determined by a number of factors. The number depends on the amount and quality of data needed as well as on the time and resources available.

Experience to date shows that whenever the Focus Group method plays the dominant role in a research or where Focus Group is the only way of gathering quality data the number of sessions needed is 3-6 Focus Groups.

5.10 Strengths and Weaknesses

In this respect, focus groups are comparable to other methods, qualitative or quantitative, there are instances in which they are preferred and others in which focus groups are not the method to be pursued.

Strengths

- a less intimidating environment than the individual interview [...](Gordon, 1999)
- a way of encouraging people to build on each others' views, expressing similar or opposing experiences, attitudes, thoughts and feelings within clearly defined parameters (Gordon, 1999)
- the ability to produce concentrated amounts of data on precisely topic of interest
- 'quick and easy' (Morgan, 1997)
- two eight-person focus groups would produce as many ideas as 10 individual interviews - given amount of time that would take not only conduct 10 interviews but also to analyze them, working with two focus groups would be clearly more efficient (Morgan, 1997)

- 'live' research which can be observed through a one way mirror or video relay system, by members of the client organization so that they can experience customer response, customer vocabulary, attitudes, accounts of behaviour, perceptions of the market and reactions first-hand (Gordon, 1999)

Weakness

- the presence of a group will affect what participants say and how they say it (Morgan, 1997)
- people have different levels of knowledge and understanding - 'expert' participants will intimidate those with less experience, making an unbalanced group (Gordon, 1999)
- intimate subject matter (sexual behaviour, sanitary protection, body odour, constipation), or personal financial situations (wealth management, insurance, pensions), where disclosure is potentially embarrassing in front of strangers or observers (Gordon, 1999)
- difficult to recruit respondents such as highly paid senior management, farmers, minority brand users

6 Introduction to practical part

So far, this work has focused on theoretical findings only. The reality is, however, often different in one way or another. Thanks to the kind attitude of an agency (here in after referred to as the 'Agency') which does not wish to be identified this work contains a description of qualitative marketing research as performed in practice. For the introduction of an analytical part of the thesis it is necessary to introduce the Agency mentioned before.

6.1 Agency

The Agency is a qualitative research agency based in Prague. It operates in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and countries of Central Europe. Leaders are senior qualitative research professionals with many years of experience in the field.

Typical research tasks:

- Product and service development and testing (market entry)
- Brand audits, market mapping, and exploratory research

Some key methodologies used:

- Group discussion (focus groups; mini-groups; conflict groups; etc.)
- Individual interviews
- Internal workshops
- Shopping observations, and product usage research
- Desk research

7 Qualitative research

As discussed in the earlier parts of this work, this type of marketing research in the Czech Republic only started to evolve after the political changes in 1989 referred to as the Velvet revolution. The same can be said of the agencies operating in qualitative marketing research here – that is only logical considering the fact that vast majority of the agencies operate as businesses in the market economy, which would not have been possible under the pre-1989 system. Qualitative marketing research focuses primarily on advertising, product development, consumer feedback on satisfaction with products services, an area which has been thriving over the last dozen of years.

7.1 Qualitative methods

Qualitative marketing research is very widespread and there are a number of methods which are used for gathering data. As confirmed by a researcher from the Agency, there are four most frequently used methods, as shown in the table below. The table provides an overview of the situation in practice, it demonstrates that there is a difference, albeit minute, between the theory and practice, particularly as to the number of respondents and their distribution. When comparing focus groups we see some striking differences.

Method	Number of respondents
Individual interview	1
Diad	2
Triad	3
Mini group	4
Focus group	6 - 8
Workshop	10 - 20
Observation	
Desk research	

Source: Author

7.2 Commissioning a Project, Terms of Reference

All projects are commissioned on an individual basis, each client has their own terms of reference and uses different modes of communication with the agency. Pursuant to the terms of reference there are two categories of clients. The first category of clients gives the agency a pre-defined 'hard' project design, this is usually the case of the service sector. This category of clients is often made of large companies with their own sales department which makes a choice of the winning bid out of several bids made in a tender which is called to meet the needs of a draft project. The 'hard' project design facilitates the comparison and choice in the tendering process, it is usually the cheapest bid that wins. Unfortunately, by proceeding in this manner the companies often do a disservice to themselves, as one cannot compete on quality and price at the same time. It often happens that the company representatives put in charge of choosing the cheapest bid have no idea of what marketing research is and what it involves.

The other client category gives the agency a free hand in designing the project. This category usually contains projects researching consumer goods. The agency designs the research projects itself, bearing in mind the nature of the problem. The degree of thoroughness in research largely depends on the situation of the client company. Qualitative research operates as business where the client determines how detailed and in-depth a project should be. The agency reports a price quote. If the client finds the project design too expensive, the agency reduces the price but also amends the project design (See Supplement no. 2) accordingly by, e.g. reducing the number of focus groups, which has undoubtedly its implications for project outcomes.

At this point, one might ask the question why, in such situations, the client chooses this particular agency rather than requesting the services of a competitor agency. The answer is easy, almost all projects are commissioned following a study design, timing, price, previous experience and a personal reference. i.e. the system operates as B2B.

7.3 Observational methods

Observation an essential part of every Focus Group, Individual interview, as well as other qualitative research methods. In practice there are two researchers involved in one Focus Group. One acts as the moderator, the other acts as an observer. They swap roles for each subsequent group. The reason for role-swapping is that as much information as possible is needed and it is virtually difficult to observe while facilitating a discussion. That is why the workload is shared by two researchers.

The researcher acting as observer is outside the room whenever possible and follows the session through one-way mirror. If a session takes place outside of the agency's own studio and such a separate room is not available, the observer sits in the room where the session takes place but mostly does not engage in any communication with respondents or with the moderator. His activity is solely one of observation.

The observer works on the basis of hypotheses which were established before the project started, thus he/she verifies them in the process of observation. Data analysis is performed after the sessions end, together with the moderator.

7.4 Individual interview

The individual interview method is applied to research projects concerning personal issues, i.e. lady hygiene products, personal loans, etc. The main reason is that in an individual

interview the respondent is not so shy and is willing to discuss the issues frankly with the moderator, as the setting makes him/her feel secure. In such a case, the individual interview can be seen as an alternative to Focus Group.

On the other hand, individual interview is also used in projects where it is very important that the respondents do not influence one another in the discussion. Only individual interview can prevent respondents from having their answers influenced by others. The typical representative of this type of project is case study.

7.4.1 Types of interviews

Individual interviews are always semi-structured. Full structuring is never achieved in qualitative research. It would bring the project to the realm of quantitative research. On the other hand, total absence of structure can make the interview chaotic and hard to manage.

As far as the formal vs. informal distinction is concerned, the formal mode is applied to research projects involving adults, whereas in sessions with children and teenagers the informal mode is preferred.

Wendy Gordon refers also to mini-interviews, pair and family. An interview with the Agency's researcher has revealed that mini-depth sessions are only used with people who cannot concentrate for more than half an hour, e.g. children or occasionally with adults for very specific and brief topics. Pair interview is usually held to discuss questions concerning issues like housing, choice of school for children, mortgages, etc. where the whole couple is needed as the decisions tend to be made by the two people together.

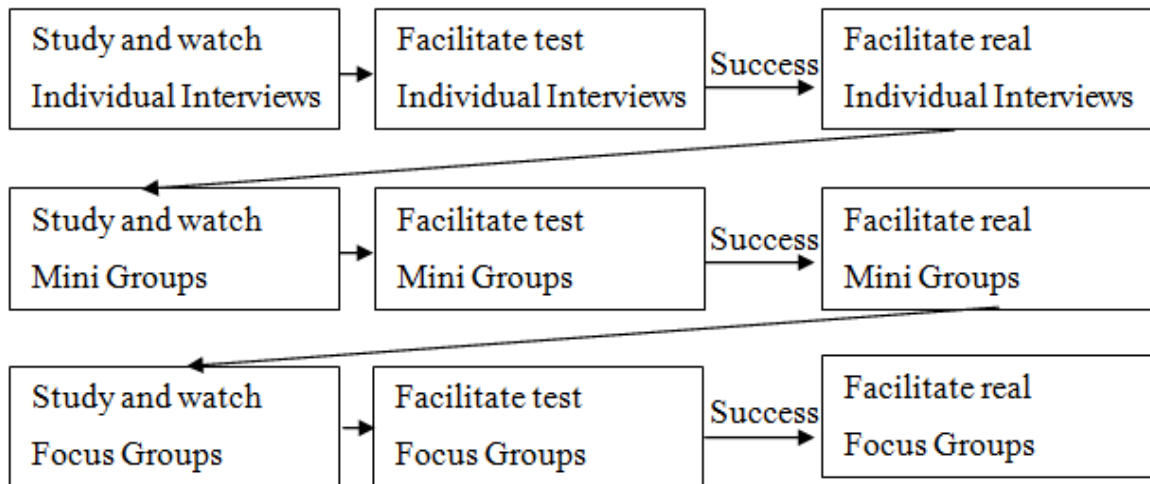
One has to bear in mind, however, that the method is very time-consuming. It generates great amounts of data and diversity of results. To illustrate the situation: two moderators are capable of conducting a maximum of 12 individual interviews up to one hour per day.

8 Focus Group

Focus group is basically the most efficient research method. It helps the agency to save time and it is economical in terms of the client's resources. The focus group method is fast, dynamic and provides an interesting experience to clients and respondents. To elucidate – one team of researchers is capable of managing three group discussions of 2 hours each per day, i.e. questioning approximately 20 respondents.

Focus groups are managed and designed by the researcher. Our Agency has grown since its inception by taking on new researchers. New members require training which takes

approximately one year, with individual variations. To describe the process of learning there is a chart showing the process in a form of a diagram. New Agency staff first learn to conduct individual interviews followed by small groups and only at the end of the learning curve they manage larger sessions with greater numbers of respondents.



Source: Author

8.1 Types of Focus Groups

There are all types of sessions held at the Agency, some of them more frequently, others less so, depending on the type of project. The most frequent mode is a classic heterogeneous group.

8.1.1 Conflict and Reconvened

In some research projects, there are also conflict or reconvened groups. They are an exception, however. Reconvened is a very demanding and specific type of group. It is used e.g. for researching a new product type, such as for example baby nappy-pants. Mothers using standard nappies for their children are invited, they are given nappy pants to take home. A week later the group is reconvened and the study tries to find out why some of the mothers stopped using the standard nappies while others stayed with the conventional product and some alternate the two product types. The aim of such reconvened group is to find out about ways to introduce a new product to the market.

8.1.2 Self-contained, Supplementary and Multimethod

The Agency usually holds self-contained Focus Groups or projects. Supplementary groups are sometimes organised, too. They usually take place when the client comes with eight advertising concepts, five are shortlisted in standard qualitative research groups and those concepts are further tested in quantitative research. There the one concept which is backed by the greatest number of respondents is then executed in practice. Multimethod use occurs only as a matter of exception, as it is very costly for the client.

8.1.3 Dependent and the psychodynamic group

It emerged from direct observation that it is almost impossible to distinguish between dependent and psychodynamic group. Moderator starts the group session as dependent and gradually tries to proceed towards psychodynamic. More precisely, the Group Introduction can be described as dependent while the following stages are a result of psychodynamics.

8.2 Role sharing and facilitating Focus Groups

As soon as the client commissions a project with the Agency, the Agency appoints a project manager who participates in all parts of the project, assigns work and assumes full responsibility for the project. Two researchers then work on one project, taking turns in facilitating group discussions and observation.

Focus Group taking place in this company are as a rule semi-structured. Although there is a detailed guide of almost eight pages featuring dozens of questions available to the moderator for a three-hour group session it is impossible to strictly follow it in the practice of facilitating group discussions. Discussion guides differ from company to company and country to country. Expensive Western agencies prefer what is referred to as the Free Guide, which has up to one page of text for a three-hours session. In France the discussion guide tends to be very detailed while in the UK it usually contains just the basic information. Such a discussion guide need not contain a single page of written text. The crucial thing is that the moderator clearly understands what kind of information is needed and is able to adapt the discussion to meet the main objectives. The guide (See Supplement no. 3) only serves as a tool for or getting answers and as reference for the client. Considering the fact that there are hundreds of focus group sessions organized in the Agency every year, every moderator has plenty of resources to get the information he/she needs.

8.3 Communication

Communication is a very important skill for a moderator. The moderator always adapts the language he/she uses to that of the respondents. In doing so s/he must be natural and never exaggerated to maintain the trust of the respondents. Such loss of trust would put an end to the group discussion as such.

It is essential that the moderator uses body language correctly. It is often easier to show or demonstrate something than just explain it. The moderator moves naturally and with ease.

8.4 What to do when things do not work out

In order to make things go according to plan, high quality recruitment is essential. Because there might be situations, however, when recruiting suitable respondents proves impossible, the 'Agency' does not take on such problematic projects.

A respondent is mis-recruited

Mis-recruited respondent is identified before the start of the session and is sent away. If the respondent is to blame for that (they were cheating in the recruitment process), they are sent away without compensation. If mis-recruitment occurred by mistake the respondent receives the remuneration.

If mis-recruitment is identified after the start of the session, the session proceeds as planned. Information provided by the 'wrong' respondent is filtered out and never used in the research. Such respondent is not sent away as that would disrupt the whole group session. The group can never be fully dissolved only in extreme case.

Late respondent

Late respondent is sent away without any compensation.

Dominating respondent

At the beginning of the session the moderator points out that he needs to hear from everybody. Those who speak less are encouraged to express their views more often. If someone tries to play a dominating role in the discussion the moderator tries to limit the statements made by such a respondent and gives room to others.

Flight

Flight is a clear mistake on the part of the moderator. If that happens it is important to come back to the issue.

A quiet respondent

It is essential to reiterate that, at the beginning of the session, the moderator makes it clear that s/he needs to hear everybody's views. If, despite of that, a respondent fails to speak, the moderator avoids general issues and asks very specific questions to which the respondent is able to react.

8.5 Preparation of Focus Group

The person in charge of recruitment is also responsible for arranging the venue as well as date and time of sessions whenever Focus Group's are held outside the agency's own studio. The same person is in charge of providing refreshments for sessions taking place in the agency's studio.

8.6 Recruitment

Recruitment is managed and coordinated by one person who has received the specifications (See Supplement no. 4) from the project manager. As soon as s/he receives the project specifications and relevant questionnaires s/he contacts the external collaborators and lets them know the criteria. External staff will arrange the potential respondents usually via classified advertising or through informal contact network.

It is essential to comply with the recruitment criteria and therefore the compliance is double checked by the Agency. As soon as the external contract worker provides the recruiter with contacts the recruiter checks each respondent's compliance with the criteria using a telephone questionnaire (See Supplement no. 5). Whenever non-compliance is detected, such a non-compliant respondent is excluded from the research and a substitute is looked for. As soon as a group is fully gathered respondents are again duly informed about the time and venue of the session and of the remuneration they are going to receive for participation. The only incentive the respondents receive for their participation is a financial one.

Before the start of the discussion the identity of respondents is verified (asking them to show their ID card). Respondents are asked to complete the same questionnaire (See Supplement no. 6) that they had answered by telephone but they are not aware of the fact that they are answering the same questions. This represents the last criteria compliance check. The task of the recruiter is thus accomplished.

8.7 Process of Focus Groups

Process of Focus Group is made of distinct parts, i.e. thematic sections as can be seen in the Guide example attached (See Supplement no. 3).

8.7.1 Introduction

Introduction has three parts, those have to proceed quickly in order to prevent a situation in which the respondents get bored. The risk of respondents getting bored is quite real as in the opening part of the session the respondents primarily listen.

1. Welcoming respondents, introducing the moderator, agency and research project; the respondents are told about the technology in the studio and the fact that the session is being recorded, as well as the fact that there is a one-way mirror and client, external observer and possibly an interpreter or another person involved in the project sitting behind it in an adjacent room.
2. Technical and housekeeping issues: the session will last two hours without a break. The participants may use toilets but should do so individually so that the group session can proceed without interruption. Mobile phones should be either switched off or put on silent ring (if the respondent needs to be available). Any telephone calls must be dealt with quickly and outside the session room.
3. Rules of Focus Group – explain how people should behave. There should be as few rules as possible.
 - Only one person should speak at a time.
 - Try to make sure that everybody participates.
 - There are no wrong answers, the moderator needs to hear all the views and impressions.

The clients often find this part of the session too long and unnecessary, it is however, the most important for the moderator. It sets the tone for the whole session, it is a time when the moderator can win over the trust and liking of the respondents. To do that each moderator uses his/her own tricks, a game, joke, ice-breaker or 'opener' (e.g. a moderator asks respondents about the colour of the carpet in the studio and with different answers coming he can demonstrate that each person may see the same thing differently).

Introductions by respondents, in the Czech Republic, respondents introduce themselves, in Slovakia they work in pairs.

8.7.2 Thematic sections

The thematic sections reflect the stages of focus group session depending on the product examined, as you can see in the session guidelines (Supplement no. 3). The stages which appear in the form of storming, norming, performing represent a theoretical models which may be applied to every thematic section, on practical terms it is often difficult to distinguish.

8.7.3 Conclusion of Focus Groups

There is no feedback procedure using final assessment or questionnaire in the Agency. The reason is that such a procedure would not provide any added value to the research project and would be unnecessarily time-consuming.

8.8 Size of Focus Groups

There are usually 6 to 8 respondents in a Focus Group. The exact number is determined by the nature of the research project. To carry out an assessment, evaluation project, a bigger group is recommended, i.e. 8 respondents. In such a situation a client wishes to assess 7 commercials with the aim to rule out two which are the least effective. The focus group not only identifies which are the least effective ones but also provides an explanation why. Following on from that, quantitative research is used in order to identify one commercial which is the most effective – that is based on the effectiveness criteria which had emerged from the qualitative research sessions.

Whenever the client needs to explore or research new ground, smaller size groups are more suitable, i.e. 6 respondents. The researchers can explore a number of issues, they can get beneath the surface and that is essential for successful exploration.

Again, the general rule is valid, i.e. the more people there are in a session the less time there is for each individual. Consequently, the Agency tends to use smaller group arrangement (6 respondents) more often.

8.9 Number of Focus Groups

There are usually different types of group sessions organized within one project, e.g. three Focus Groups and one Mini Group. The number of focus group sessions is determined either by hard design (see above) or through a discussion with the client at the stage of project design. This naturally brings us to the question what happens if the number of

sessions had been pre-defined and the moderator fails to get sufficient data to meet the aims and objectives of the project? Does the agency hold additional Focus Group's or does it seek an alternative solution? The answer is simple, such an instance never occurs, such a question is never relevant. The Agency is run by experienced researchers and as a result of that the project aim is always achieved in practice. The researchers draw on their knowledge and experience and are therefore capable of making a correct assessment as to the number of Focus Groups sessions needed. As the rules of business have it, all aspects of research projects are negotiated and agreed in advance.

8.10 Outcome of Focus Groups

The outcome of Focus Group means meeting the aim of the research, getting sufficient answers to moderator's or rather the client's questions. After each session the moderator knows what information had been gained and what is still missing, or, in other words what are the aspects on which one should focus in the following session. Thanks to Focus Groups the clients may find out a lot of interesting aspects which were not the part of the research objectives, yet may prove to be useful in the future.

9 Summary

The work features a broader range of issues than envisaged in both theoretical and practical sections there are insights into other methods, such as Individual Interview and observation. This is due to the fact that the methods of qualitative research are linked and interconnected by mutual dependencies, i.e. a focus group cannot function without observation.

The table below provides an overview of the results with a special emphasis being paid to Focus Group.

Focus Group			
Where is the difference	Theory	Practice	The reasons of differences in practice
Type of focus group	Reconvened – under-used Dependent, Psychodynamic Structured, Semi- Structured, Unstructured	Reconvened – used Dependent, Psychodynamic Semi-structured	researching a new product type used in one Focus Group, Dependent – Introduction, Psychodynamics - following Structured – quantitative Unstructured – too chaotic
Number of researchers	Three or more in one Focus Group	Two researchers in one Focus Group	One acts as the moderator, the other acts as an observer
New facilitators	a great risk to the project as a whole	no risk	Precise training
Auxiliary facilitator	auxiliary facilitator	no auxiliary facilitator	Would distract the respondent's attention
Observation of Focus Group	The internal, External, External impartial observer	External impartial observer	Does not interfere in the session, anylyses one's own findings with the moderator
Recruitment	all elements should be verified	all elements are verified	double checked

Mis-recruited respondent	is asked to leave the room	is not sent away as that would disrupt the whole group session.	Information provided by the 'wrong' respondent is filtered out and never used in the research.
Late respondent	The first five minutes are not problem	Sent away without any compensation	That would disrupt the group progress
Dominating respondent	The fault of the moderator	The moderator tries to limit his statements	Key rule: The moderator needs to hear everybody's views.
A quiet respondent	Special gestures	Specific question	Key rule: The moderator needs to hear everybody's views.
Process of Focus Group	Forming: many key rules	Introduction: 3 key rules	To prevent a situation in which the respondents get bored.
	Storming, Norming, Performing	Thematic sections	Adjusting to the issue researched - Storming, Norming, Performing is a theoretical model
	Mourning: feedback from respondents	Conclusion: no Feedback	Any added value to the research project, unnecessarily time-consuming.
Size	4 – 20	6 – 8	The more people there are in a session the less time there is for each individual.
Number	If the desired information is not collected, it is possible to add a group session	No sessions are ever added	It is a business, what the client ordered s/he gets.

Source: Author

As the table above indicates, there are indeed differences in many respects between theory and practice. The differences occur usually in order to increase the efficiency of the method applied and every such digression as its logical grounds., it can be explained e. g. by differences in the course of the session in question.

The theory refers to five distinct stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Mourning. In practice, however, there are only two stages observed: Introduction and Thematic sections. Comparing the two insights into Focus Group it emerges that Forming is almost identical as

Introduction. In the Forming stage, the respondents are seated as required by the moderator, they are briefed on the key rules, and they are introduced to one another. The Introduction comprises three stages, i.e. welcome and introduction, technical and housekeeping issues and 3 key rules.

The following theoretical parts referred to as Storming, Norming, Performing and Mourning should always be compared with the Thematic sections. The Storming, Norming and Performing referred to in literature is only a theoretical model the elements of which can be seen in each of the respective thematic sections, if the concentration is sufficiently high. Thematic sections are therefore created in order to structure the session depending on the issue studied (See Supplement no. 3).

The conclusion of a session or Mourning represents only a wrap up and goodbye, not a feedback which would be too time-consuming and would not be taken into consideration as it does not provide any information benefit for the project under way.

10 Conclusion

The main aims of this Bachelor thesis which involved studies through observations and individual interviews were fulfilled. As presumed, theory remains only theoretical and Focus Groups in practice must adjust to reality, this results in various digressions from theory. Those are illustrated and analyzed as literature research is compared and contrasted with practical observation.

The very specification / terms of reference of a project indicates that the role of the Project Manager who delegates tasks and oversees the whole research is very important. The Project Manager is fully accountable for all the activities involved in the project.

In practice, the Project Manager not only briefs the recruiter in details as described in theoretical studies, but s/he also drafts detailed terms of reference for the recruiter as well as questionnaires for respondents. By doing all that, s/he prevents potential misunderstandings which would result in incorrectly selected respondent. The recruiter strictly follows the rules and also performs double-checking, i.e. something that is not referred to in literature. If despite of that double-check there is an unsuitable respondent in the group session, such a respondent is not excluded from the discussion.

Excluding an unsuitable respondent would constitute a significant disruption in the proceedings of the group session and would also influence the discussion outcomes.

This problem is resolved by filtering out the information and views gained from that unsuitable respondent.

There are always two researchers cooperating on one

Focus Group. One researcher facilitates the Focus Group, while the other researcher observes the session and takes notes without intervening in the discussion. In practice it is impossible to have two facilitators for one discussion, especially as that would divert the attention of respondents.

The number of respondents per group also differs. In practice, there is a maximum of eight respondents per group, primarily due to the fact that larger groups become less efficient. While in theoretical literature the general view remains that there may be up to 20 respondents in a group, practical experience indicates that with growing number of respondents the time available for each of them diminishes. Bearing in mind that this is qualitative research, sufficient time is needed for each individual respondent. The number of focus group sessions is strictly determined from the very beginning of the project. The

question arising here is what happens if sufficient amount of information is not extracted. In theory, the project may be extended by adding several focus group session. This does not happen in practice, however. Focus Group in an area researched remains to be a matter of business and the client gets what s/he orders.

In conclusion one should note that the variations referred to cannot be seen as errors of shortcomings. Such variations stem from applying theory to practice which represents a certain adjustment to reality. The thinking behind is often aimed at facilitating work or making it more efficient.

11 Resources

1. GORDON, W. Good thinking – A guide to qualitative research, Great Britain: 1999, NTC Publications, ISBN 1 84116 030 X
2. BELK, R. W. Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing, Great Britain: 2006, MPG Books Ltd, ISBN 978 1 84542 100 7
3. BENS, I. Facilitating with ease! United States of America, California: 1997, Participative Dynamics, ISBN 0-7879-5194-3
4. BERG, B.L. Qualitative research methods for the social sciences, United States of America: 2001, Allyn and Bacon, ISBN 0-205-31847-9
5. DAYMON, CH.; HOLLWAY I. Methods in Public Relations and Marketing Communications, New York: 2011, Routledge, ISBN 0-203-84654-0
6. DISMAN, M. Jak se vyrábí sociologická znalost (How is sociological knowledge made), Praha: 2002, Karolinum, ISBN 978-80-246-0139-7
7. HENDL, J. Kvalitativní výzkum – základní metody a aplikace (Qualitative research - basic methods in and applications), Praha: 2005, Portál, ISBN 80-7367-040-2
8. MARIAMPOLSKI, H. Qualitative market research: A comprehensive guide, London: 2001, Stage, ISBN 0-7619-6954-3
9. MORGAN, D. L. Focus Groups as Qualitative research, United Kingdom: 1997, Stage, ISBN 0-7619-0343-7
10. MIOVSKÝ, M. Kvalitativní přístup a metody v psychologickém výzkumu (Qualitative approach and methods in psychological research), Praha: 2006, Grada, ISBN 80-247-1362-4
11. DE BONO, E. Simplicity Síla jednoduchosti (Simplicity Power of simplicity), Praha: 2009, Triton, ISBN 978-80-7387-309-7

12 Supplements

Table of Supplements

1. Body language
2. Research Design
3. Guide
4. Specification of recruitment
5. Recruitment questionnaire for a recruiter
6. Recruitment questionnaire for a respondent

1. Body language

- *Opening up* – moving back into the chair in a more comfortable position, expanding and opening the posture (legs stretched, legs apart, figure-four leg crossing), engaging other group members in smiles, eye contact or laughter.
 - *Closing down* – shrinking, folding arms or crossing legs, stillness, gaze avoidance.
 - *Interest* – leaning forward, touching the face, facial expressions to match the conversation, spontaneous involuntary movement.
 - *Lack of interest* – shrugging shoulders, examining hands, clothes, objects, the floor, folding arms, vacant staring, yawning, not listening.
 - *Evaluation* (undecided) – scratching ear or back of head, hand on or around chin or face, frowning, forefinger on lips, silence, slow or hesitant speech.
 - *Positive evaluation* – leaning forwards, slight head nodding, palms turned upwards, slight or full smile.
 - *Negative evaluation* – leaning back, side-to-side movements, palms down on lap, folding arms.
 - *Engaging eye contact* – reinforces behaviour, encourages a member to contribute, gently remonstrates if someone is being non-compliant, shows openness and interest. This can be combined with a ‘towards’ body movement.
 - *Breaking eye contact* – signals to the group member that his or her contribution is not wanted at that point or that it is taking too much of the group time. As above, this can be combined with an ‘away’ body movement which is an extremely effective way of ‘turning off’.
 - *Mirroring* – a technique of matching the behaviour patterns of another person in order to establish rapport, i.e. subtly copying gestures, facial expressions as though seen in a mirror. Mirroring the same vocabulary as someone else can be a powerful way of demonstrating empathy.
- [• *Pacing* – a means of achieving and maintaining rapport on both the conscious and unconscious level, by matching their behaviour both verbally and non-verbally.

Source: Gordon, 1999

2. Research design

project Energy Drink A (the exact brand cannot be named)

	<i>Primary Group (older people)</i>		<i>Secondary Group (younger people)</i>	
	<i>Preferents XYZ</i>	<i>Preferents competition</i>	<i>Preferents XYZ</i>	<i>Preferents competition</i>
City A	1 FG men 1 FG women	1 FG women	1 MINI men	
City B		1 FG men	1 MINI women	1 MINI women
City C	1 FG men		1 MINI men	1 MINI men
Details	<p>Everyone consumes the XYZ products at least once a month or more frequently</p> <p>Everyone has their favourite brand = consumes it the most often</p> <p>Target group A = XYZ brand.</p> <p>Target group B = XYZ brand; none of them rejects the above brand.</p> <p>Everyone go out regularly (clubs, discos, atd.).</p> <p>Some of them (at lest 2 per group) go in for sports.</p> <p>Most of them are single.</p>			

3. Guide

Project XYZ

Discussion guide for focus group sessions (version XYZ)

Date XYZ

A. Introduction

15 min.¹

- *The moderator welcomes the group discussion participants, introduces himself/herself, the company, this market research and ensures the respondents that there are no right or wrong answers in the discussion and that all opinions are welcome (opinions of all people present are needed).*
- *The moderator asks the participants to turn off their mobile phones, informs them about the one-way mirror, recording and other relevant information.*
- *The respondents introduce themselves: name, age, family, number and age of kids, and their names, personal hobbies, etc.*

B. Understanding of XYZ Category

45 min.

- *What comes to your mind when I say XYZ? Spontaneous associations - moderator lets the respondents speak as long as possible.*
- *In front of you there are pictures (collages). Vyberte mi prosím každý sám za sebe jednu z nich, která nejlépe vystihuje, co pro Vás znamenají XYZ Please choose one which represents what XYZ means to you. Respondents subsequently explain their choice.*
- *What are the things you like about XYZ rádi? What is the best about them?*
- *Is there anything you dislike? What? Why?*
- *What types of XYZ do you know? Which of them do you drink and which of them do you not drink? Why? The moderator writes down the XYZ brands using small notepad papers and lets the respondents sort those out into groups. A discussion about the small groups follows.*
 - *basic description of a group*
 - *differences from other groups*
 - *occasions for consumption*

¹ *The times referred to are valid for focus groups of 6-8 respondents. In mini-group discussions with 4 respondents individual sections are shorter, as is the session as a whole.*

- Let's make a list of all the occasions on which you drink XYZ, whichever it is.
Moderator lists the situations on a flip chart . For every occasion:
 - *description of the situation (when, where, with whom, what, why, how often the occasion arises*
 - *the reason for drinking XYZ + way in which it is drunk*
 - *which brand out of these is drunk the most often*
 - *which brand does not fit here and why*
 - *when, where and in what packaging was the beverage purchased*
- Are there any situations in which you do not drink XYZ, but you would like to drink it? What kind of occasions are they? Which XYZ beverage would suit such occasion – what should it be like?
- Are there any occasions in which you drink XYZ beverages, but you can imagine drinking them more often or in bigger quantities? What are those occasions? What XYZ beverage would suit the situation the most – what should it be like?
- Are you missing a beverage type that you would appreciate in the current XYZ range? Which? Why? For what occasion? For what reason?
- Has there been any change in your drinking of XYZ beverages over the past year or two? What kind of change? Do you drink different beverages than before? Why? Do you drink them on different occasions? Why?
- Where and when do you buy the XYZ beverages most often? What are the XYZ beverages that you buy there (brands, formats, flavours)? According to what criteria do you choose? Do you ever buy a different beverage than usual? Why? How often? Do you miss any type of XYZ? Which one? Why? The moderator looks at the role that is played by promotions, competitions, limited editions, etc.
- Are there any places where you would like to buy XYZ beverages, but they do not sell them? Which places? Which products would you be specifically interested in?

C. Brand perception

45 min.

- *In this part of the research we always test brands A and B, followed by C and D depending on their awareness / use in the given target group,*
- *Please tell me what comes to your mind when I say A? What else? What do you associate with the brand?*
- *Imagine that the brand turns into a human being. Who would it be? (appearance, behaviour, occupation, hobbies, character, values)? Do you find the person attractive? What would you have in common with that person?*
- *Have a look at the collages and imagine that they all represent some XYZ beverages. Choose one which represents brand A the best. Explanation of answers follows.*
- *Now let's come back to our world. Imagine that I am an alien and do not know the A brand at all. What would you tell me about it (characteristics, typical aspects, distinct from others).*
 - *What are the products by A that you know? Which of them do you use? Which is typical or the most distinct?*
 - *When do you usually drink the A product? Are there any occasions when you do not drink it? Why? What would have to change so that you would drink it on those occasions?*

- If I were to buy A how would I recognise it? What's the most typical of it?
- Can you remember any commercial advertising A? Which one and what was it about?
- Are you aware of any special event by the A brand? Which one? What do you think of it?

Other brands are discussed in the same way.

D. Current Communication of Brand A **10 min.**

- The moderator shows the respondents the winter campaign of the A brand and initiates a discussion:
 - *spontaneous associations*
 - *awareness of communication (when, where and how often they encountered it)*
 - *popularity*
 - *what the A brand communicates about itself, how they understand individual campaign aspects*
 - *clarity and attractiveness of promotional activities / events whether there was anything missing + what they would be interested in (in summer, in winter)*
 - *where else they would expect A would be advertised, why or what the communication should be about*
 - *responses to limited edition of the A brand*

E. Specific Questions on Competitor Brand F **10 min.**

- *This section is used only if samples of F products are available. The moderator displays the F product portfolio and discusses the points below:*
 - *Spontaneous associations as to packaging and communication*
 - *Popularity*
 - *What they would expect from such a product*
 - *What they would replace with the product, what occasions it fits and which brand is the closest to it nowadays.*

The moderator thanks the respondents and closes the discussion.

4. Specification of recruitment

NAME OF THE PROJECT:

LEADER OF THE PROJECT:

DATE AND PLACE

Date	Location	Time	Format	Target Group
22.3.	City A	4:00 p.m.	FG	Older men, target group A
23.3.	City A	2:00 p.m. 4:30 p.m.	MINI FG	Younger men, target group A Older women, target group A & B
24.3.	City B	2:00 p.m. 4:30 p.m.	MINI FG	Younger women, target group A & B Older men, target group B
25.3.	City C	2:00 p.m. 4:30 p.m.	MINI FG	Younger men, target group A & B Older men, target group A

CRITERIA

- Everyone consumes the XYZ products at least once a month or more frequently
- Everyone has their favourite brand = consumes it the most often
- Target group A = XYZ brand.
- Target group B = XYZ brand; none of them rejects the above brand.
- Everyone go out regularly (clubs, discos, atd.).
- Some of them (at least 2 per group) go in for sports.
- Most of them are single.

FEE

- Fee for participation: XYZ Focus Group
- Fee for participation: XYZ Mini Group.

NOTE

- Noone has workd in manufacturing, selling or distribution of food stuff or beverages.
- Noone has worked and study in health care.

5. Recruitment questionnaire for a recruiter

RESPONDENT DATA

Name and surname:..... Age:.....

Telephone no.:..... E-mail:.....

Time of the group discussion:..... Highest achieved education:.....

Profession: No. of children in shared household:.....

Marital status: Married – single – other

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

1. When was the last time you have participated in research which contained either group discussion or individual interview? Never or more than 6 months ago.

Month and year:.....

2. Do you personally or does any of your close relatives work in any of following professions?

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Answer</i>	<i>Work(s) as (only when yes)</i>
Media and journalism	Yes / No	
Psychology, human resources	Yes / No	
Advertisement, marketing, market research	Yes / No	
Manufacturing, selling or distribution of food stuff or beverages	Yes / No	
Health care	Yes / No	

3. Which one of the following beverages do you drink? At least once a month of beverage XYZ and at least 2 or 3 in every group I drink more than once a month.

	<i>How often</i>	<i>Which brands</i>	<i>Brand I buy most often</i>	<i>In what package</i>
Sweetened, carbonated beverages (e.g. Coca-Cola, Fanta, Kofola, ...)				
Bottled water				
Fruit juices				
Ice coffees				
Energetic beverages				
Sports drinks				
Ice teas				

4. Is there any brand XYZ which you try to avoid? Which and why? Nobody rejects brand XYZ.

5. How often do you go out for entertainment - bars, club, pubs, parties at you friends house and so on? At least once a week in average.

6. Do you do any sport? Which one? At least 2 of the group actively do sports (ski, bicycle,...).

6. Recruitment questionnaire for a respondent

RESPONDENT DATA

Name and surname:..... Age:.....

Telephone no.:..... E-mail:.....

Time of the group discussion:..... Highest achieved education:.....

Profession: No. of children in shared household:.....

Marital status: Married – single – other

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

1. When was the last time you have participated in research which contained either group discussion or individual interview?

Month and year:.....

2. Do you personally or does any of your close relatives work in any of following professions?

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Answer</i>	<i>Work(s) as (only when yes)</i>
Media and journalism	Yes / No	
Psychology, human resources	Yes / No	
Advertisement, marketing, market research	Yes / No	
Manufacturing, selling or distribution of food stuff or beverages	Yes / No	
Health care	Yes / No	

3. Which one of the following beverages do you drink?

	<i>How often</i>	<i>Which brands</i>	<i>Brand I buy most often</i>	<i>In what package</i>
Sweetened, carbonated beverages (e.g. Coca-Cola, Fanta, Kofola, ...)				
Bottled water				
Fruit juices				
Ice coffees				
Energetic beverages				
Sports drinks				
Ice teas				

4. Is there any brand XYZ which you try to avoid? Which and why?

5. How often do you go out for entertainment - bars, club, pubs, parties at you friends house and so on?

6. Do you do any sport? Which one?