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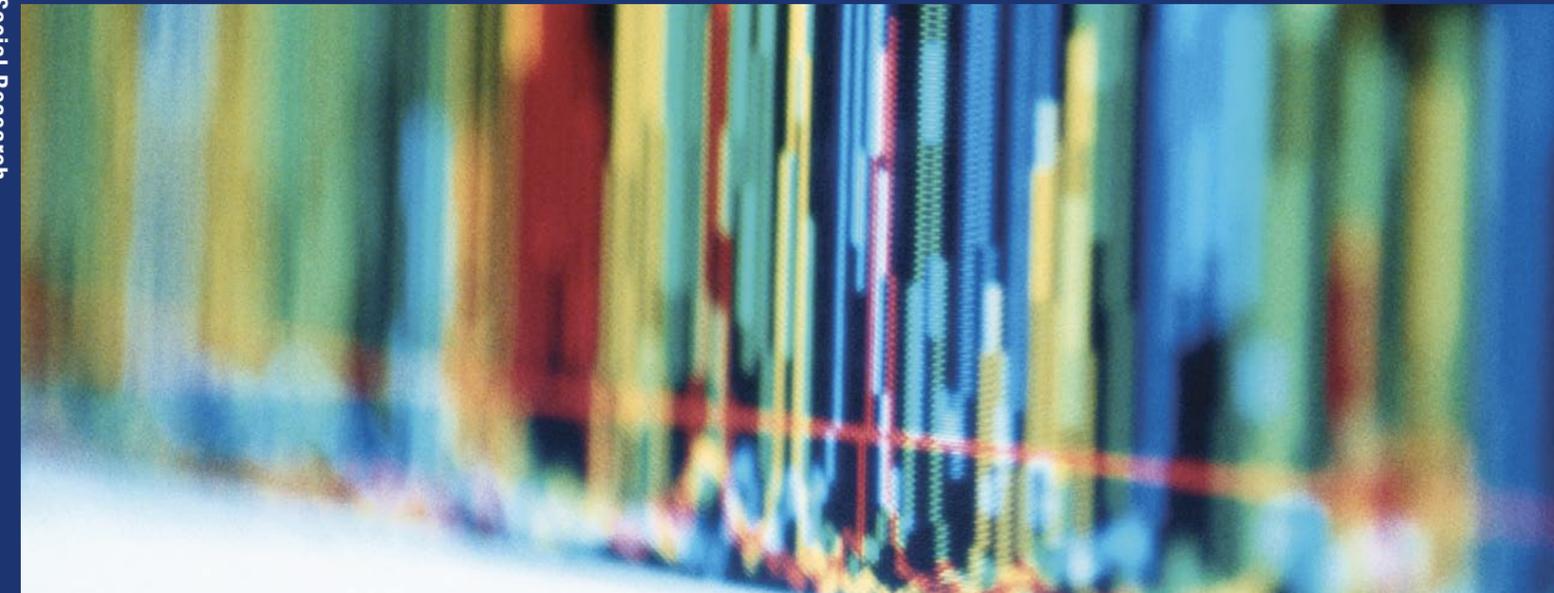
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CONTENTS

Are Projective Techniques Actually Projective or Are Market Researchers Wasting Their Time? Clive Boddy	Page 5
The Effect of Item-Order-Effect on Juster Scale Estimates Mathew Parackal	Page 19
Focus Group Discussions and Brainstorming Sessions: What's the Difference? Clive Boddy	Page 27
Book Review	Page 37

AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL OF MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH

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AJMSR – Editorial

This current issue of *Australasian Journal of Market and Social Research* contains papers that cover a range of topics. In one of Boddy's two papers, he examines the question of whether projective techniques are really relevant and valid in a market research context, using evidence from the market research and psychology literatures. He calls for further research into this important question.

Boddy's second paper in this issue provides a very thorough review of the similarities and differences between focus group discussions and brainstorming sessions. This should be of interest to all qualitative researchers, and probably others as well.

Parackal investigates the question of the impact of item-order on the forecasting capability of the 11-point Juster scale. He finds that item-order is quite important and provides suggested solutions.

Finally, Southgate has written an insightful review of *The Advertising Research Handbook* recently (2005) published in the US.

Lester W Johnson, Editor

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Are Projective Techniques Actually Projective or Are Market Researchers Wasting Their Time?

Clive Boddy

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Abstract

This paper looks at the important area of whether projective techniques are actually projective or not, i.e. whether or not the responses evoked from using projective techniques are projections of the personalities of the respondents. If projective techniques are not projective then market researchers are wasting their time in using the techniques to try and understand what motivates consumers. In the absence of much market research literature on this subject the paper looks at the evidence for projection within the market research literature and the psychological literature. The paper finds that there is multiple evidence for the projective hypothesis and multiple but relatively weaker evidence for the reliability and validity of projective techniques. The relevance and validity of the techniques they use should arguably be of some concern to market researchers as a profession and the paper, in line with other recent papers on this subject, calls for further research by market researchers into this area.

Introduction

Projective techniques are research techniques that gather responses to ambiguous stimuli, where those responses are deemed to be projections of the respondents' personalities, and so are deemed to reveal something about them and their hidden motivations (Cooper & Rorison 2000; Ligas 2000). This claim is central to their usefulness and is described as being the projective hypothesis. The projective hypothesis is thus the hypothesis that people do project their own characteristics onto de-personalised characters or other projective stimuli. An assumption of this hypothesis is that people project more of their own deeper characteristics onto de-personalised characters or other projective stimuli than they exhibit when answering direct questions about themselves. The projective hypothesis is then the essential idea behind the use of projective techniques in market research. It is anticipated that people will reveal in their responses to projective techniques the things they would otherwise be unwilling to admit to either because they don't want to, or because they are unable to admit to as they are not conscious of that aspect of their personality. If this assumption is incorrect, and respondents are not projecting

their own personalities and feelings when they respond to projective techniques, then market researchers are wasting their time in using them. This paper seeks to answer the important question of whether projective techniques are actually projective or not.

Although very widely used in qualitative market research (Donoghue 2000) since the 1950's (Haire 1950) in such areas as brand image research (Boddy 2004a) little research in market research has addressed whether projective techniques are actually projective and are valid and reliable, despite calls for such research by practitioners and academics. A search for evidence for whether projective techniques are actually projective was therefore made in the psychological literature as well as the market research literature and the findings from this search are presented below.

In this paper projective techniques are first defined and their origins explained, then a way of classifying them is presented, criticisms of their use are reported and then evidence for projection is presented from the somewhat limited market research literature on the subject. After this, evidence for projection is presented from a reading of the

literature on psychology, including on bullying and narcissism. Finally some ways to maximise the validity and reliability of projective techniques in use in market research are presented and some conclusions drawn.

Projective Techniques

The American Marketing Association defines a projective technique as: “a psychological method of uncovering subconscious material within subjects”. (Anonymous 2007a). Projective techniques are defined in a bit more detail by Blackwell’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of Marketing (Greatorex 2005) to be;

“a group of qualitative research methods which are useful when it is felt that a typical direct questionnaire may not be appropriate in providing the information sought. Projective techniques include word association tests ... sentence completion and story completion where it is felt that respondents will give revealing answers as they relax their conscious defence...”.

Some emotions, feelings and conflicts are hypothesised to be too socially unacceptable or undesirable or too hidden from the self to be expressed directly and so can only be accessed using projective techniques (Brody & Carter 1982). They are said to be techniques which allow research to be carried out without the distorting effects of the personal biases of respondents intruding on the results (Sargent 1945).

Projective techniques have been described as being the offspring of psychiatry and academic psychology and were first called projective methods starting in 1939 since when they have been extensively used in clinical psychology (Sargent 1945). Their development was based on the work of Freud who first coined the term projection to describe a minor mechanism of conflict resolution whereby the ego, unable to accept ownership of certain thoughts or wishes or characteristics, attributes these instead to outside objects or persons (Sargent 1945).

In qualitative market research they became

popular after successful market research into the barriers affecting the acceptance of instant coffee was published in the *Journal of Marketing* (Haire 1950). These coffee studies are discussed further below. Projective techniques in market research were thus originally borrowed from clinical psychology and psychiatry by motivational market researchers and the idea behind using them is to present a respondent with a scenario which causes the respondent to unknowingly reveal some of the respondent’s personality characteristics by projecting them onto the scenario presented (Williams 1994).

Projective techniques have historically been used to investigate respondents’ unconscious thoughts and feelings and are reported to have the special ability to reveal aspects of motivation and personality that are not necessarily consistent with respondents’ own self-concept (Shulman, McCarthy & Ferguson 1988) and which would be correspondingly very difficult or impossible to access using direct questioning techniques (Boddy 2007).

Projective techniques are used to get at consumers underlying motivations and feelings towards such things as gift giving and advertising (Aaker & Stayman 1992; McGrath 1995). They are therefore deemed to be techniques that are good at taking researchers outside the bounds of rational-science objectivity (Jones 1985) and at examining the more emotional areas of personality.

They also allow researchers to get at the more emotional and less rational aspects of consumer attitudes and this is especially important to understand where buying behaviour encompasses emotional choice criteria (Hofstede et al. 2007). Examples of projective techniques include Thematic Apperception Tests, sentence completions and word associations. In Thematic Apperception Tests a respondent is shown pictures or photographs of a scenario that is open to different interpretations. Respondents are assumed to

identify with one of the characters in the scenario and to discuss the character with reference to their own feelings and thoughts and so reveal these feelings and thoughts more openly than they would otherwise be willing to (Williams 1994).

In word association a respondent is asked to give a single word response to each word presented by the researcher. Some words presented are neutral and others are associated with a particular product or brand or other scenario. The reactions to the word association provide an insight into how the respondent really thinks about the product or brand or scenario (Williams 1994). Sentence completion involves respondents finishing off partially pre-constructed sentences according to what they think is happening in the scenario presented to them.

In collage, research participants, perhaps in a focus group discussion, are asked to collect and bring photographs or other visual images in to the group discussion, or to cut pictures out of a varied range of magazines that are presented to them within the discussion, in order to, for example, illustrate what type of person

would buy a particular brand or product. Research participants are then asked to explain their choice of pictures and to describe the personalities of the people in the pictures that they have chosen to represent each type of brand or product purchaser. Such information would be useful to advertising agencies in developing advertising that addressed the emotional reasons, for example, car purchasing, rather than just the rational reasons.

A fuller classification of the different types of projective techniques is made below.

Types of Projective Techniques

Linzey (1959) suggested a classification of projective techniques for psychologists which was based on differences in type of response. This classification has since been adopted by market researchers (Gordon & Langmaid 1990). Linzey recognised that some overlap between different types of projective techniques exists in the classification but presented it as a convenient way to conceptualise them.

Table 1 summarises the different types of projective techniques as classified by Linzey.

Table 1: Classification of Projective Technique (Linzey 1959)

Characteristics of technique		Examples of technique
Association	The subject responds to the presented stimuli with the first word, image or idea that springs to mind.	Word association. Picture association.
Construction	The subject is asked to create or construct from scratch, something such as a story or picture. The story is deemed to be meaningful and personally relevant to the subject. Construction goes beyond mere association because it requires a more complex response.	Story construction. Collage. Photograph taking.
Completion	The subject is asked to complete stimuli that have been partially completed. To finish off a sentence for example.	Sentence completion. Bubble drawings. (Thematic Apperception Tests)
Choice ordering	The subject chooses from a given set of possible responses or arranges items along given criteria such as relevance or attractiveness.	Qualitative brand mapping along given dimensions.
Expression	The subject is required to combine or incorporate stimuli into some kind of production.	Role playing. Personification.

Criticisms of Projective Techniques

Projective techniques have long been criticised for being unsubstantiated in terms of proof of their validity and the high degree of interpretation needed from the researcher to analyse the data (Williams 1994; Boddy 2005a; Anderson 1978). This holds true for their use in market research as well as in clinical psychology (Jensen 1959). Their reliability as well as their validity has been questioned (Jensen 1959) and defended (Ramsey, Ibbotson & McCole 2006). Reliability in research is important because it is the degree of accuracy an instrument has in measuring what it claims to be measuring. Statistically reliability is defined as the proportion of non-error variance in test scores, and a test has a degree of reliability ranging from 0 to 1 as estimated by the reliability coefficient (Jensen 1959). Reliability is necessary for effective discrimination between the different things that are being measured and so is also a measure of the potential effectiveness of the techniques being used.

It is in terms of their reliability and validity that projective techniques are criticised in psychological research, and psychologists report that tests such as the Rorschach (known as the ink-blot test, and probably the most open-ended of all projective tests) have no scientific basis for their use and should not, for example, be admissible as reliable evidence in legal proceedings (Garb et al. 2002). These same researchers report that sentence completion tests in psychology are much more reliable and validated. However these criticisms are specific to psychology and psychiatry where the implications for misdiagnosis are life changing for the subjects concerned and can involve such things as imprisonment, institutionalisation and revocation of licence to practice a profession (Garb et al. 2002).

The use of projective techniques in market research does not have implications for the individual subjects of research except in so far as noting that certain advertis-

ing messages or product images may be developed for large groups of similar consumers based on the research findings. Projective techniques in market research therefore only have to be valid and reliable in aggregate use, not individual use, and the standards of validity and reliability can therefore be lower than in forensic or clinical psychology. The evidence for projective techniques explored in this paper must be read in this light as far as market researchers are concerned. This evidence is presented in the next few pages of this paper.

Evidence for Projection from Market Research

In line with their use in psychology, projective techniques are generally used in market research studies to uncover findings in areas where respondents are thought to be likely to be reluctant to express themselves openly, or unable, for some reason, to access their thoughts and feelings via more straightforward questioning techniques (Gordon & Langmaid 1990). Projective techniques are thus deemed useful when researchers need some way of accessing these un-expressible or un-accessible thoughts and feelings from the minds of respondents (Kay 2001; Gordon & Langmaid 1990). Market researcher commentators have long advocated a greater appreciation of the potential for projective techniques and how they may be used in research projects to elicit rich information about consumer perceptions of brands and products and about the characteristics of respondents themselves (Levy 1985).

However there is not a great deal of evidence from market research that projective techniques are actually projective, especially from recent studies. However, some of the evidence that there is from market research is presented below.

The first market research project involving the use of projective techniques to be written up as a journal article (Fram & Cibotti 1991)

was Haire's famous report on the then novel and new idea of buying instant coffee (Haire 1950). This piece of new product launch research used the projective device of two almost identical shopping lists; these were shopping lists of identical consumer goods apart from the inclusion of instant coffee in one list and of ground, non-instant coffee in the other. A sample of target consumers was drawn and then split randomly into two. Both halves of the sample were asked to describe the purchaser of their shopping list.

The type of housewife buying the shopping list containing the (Nescafe) instant coffee was more commonly described as being lazy and sloppy (she couldn't be bothered to make 'proper' coffee) whereas the housewife reported as buying the shopping list containing the (Maxwell-House) non-instant coffee was more commonly described as being thrifty and a good housewife. The findings were reported to have given a very useful insight into the origins, types and levels of consumer resistance which could be expected towards instant coffee. Marketing communications and advertising were then devised to address and overcome these types of consumer resistance, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Haire went on to conduct two further research studies to examine the phenomena in more detail. In the third of these studies he found that negative projections of the instant coffee housewife were correlated with non-instant coffee purchase (via a pantry check: a pantry check is literally a check of the respondents' pantry and kitchen cupboards to see what brands are there). Haire concluded from his research studies that some consumer motives, because they are socially unacceptable, exist below a level that can be easily verbalised but that these motives can be accessed if approached indirectly, via projective techniques. The additional research illustrated that housewives who projected negative characteristics onto instant coffee

buyers were largely not buying instant coffee themselves. This is important as it corresponds with the projective hypothesis (i.e., what the housewives were projecting onto others was mirrored in their own behaviour). The study showed that these negative stereotypes had to be overcome if instant coffee was to become successful in terms of achieving large scale sales to consumers.

This series of three studies by Haire acted as one of the original catalysts for the popular use of projective techniques in market research. The studies remain a major source of support for the use of projective techniques in market research because they demonstrated that the use of such techniques could generate market and consumer insights that would otherwise not have been evident. Even further support for the projective hypothesis, as it applies to market research, comes from Fram and Cibotti who report that a number of studies have replicated and validated Haire's findings since 1950. They report that these replications have generally supported the validity and reliability of the use of projective techniques in market research (Fram & Cibotti 1991). In more recent times in market research, where projective techniques are still very commonly used, commentators have expressed surprise that few modern market researchers have taken up the challenge (Boddy 2005a; Boddy 2005b) to critically examine the methodology of projective techniques in more detail (Hofstede et al. 2007).

However one group of researchers who have done this, used two projective methods to discriminate between the brand personalities and images of four different beer brands in the Netherlands (Hofstede et al. 2007). The first technique was to ask research participants to make photo-collages representing each of the beer brands and the second was to ask them to associate different jobs with each of the beer brands. Analysing the results quantitatively, the researchers found high levels of correlation (from 0.89 and $p < 0.05$ to 0.96

and $p < 0.005$) between the two different methods indicating the congruent validity of the two projective techniques.

The researchers reported that the two techniques produced similar results and that these results had face validity as they appeared to reflect the actual images as displayed in advertising, of the four beer brands.

In market research a number of projective techniques are often used in any one project and the results compared against each other for drawing conclusions. Griggs in his paper on analysing qualitative data, says that a classical method of verifying findings is for researchers to show that independent measures of the same phenomenon give rise to the same conclusions (Griggs 1987). This sort of cross-checking or data triangulation as academics call it, is reported to be used frequently in market research (Zober 1955) by the comparing of results from the use of one technique with those results obtained from using another technique. This is what Hofstede and colleagues did in their research and this method is said to provide a measure of the reliability of the research undertaken (Boddy 2004b; Boddy 2005a).

Another group of market researchers sought to investigate the perceptions of small business owner-managers in New Zealand and Ireland towards government support for e-business developments. They used projective techniques, including word association, to understand these perceptions and for example found that the majority of respondents had negative associations with the level of help and support provided to them by their government and had a lack of trust in the ability of government bodies to make sound and relevant judgements (Ramsey, Ibbotson & McCole 2006). The researchers were of the view that the use of projective techniques allowed respondents to give deeper answers than they would otherwise have been able to, with one respondent even apologising for his rude answer but saying

that that was how he really felt about it! The researchers took this as evidence that the use of projective techniques had circumvented the conscious defences of respondents to get at the real issues involved and that their use provided valuable insights (Ramsey, Ibbotson & McCole 2006).

Another market research project involved the use of a bubble drawing to find out what teenagers felt about spots and blemishes (Piiro 1990). A picture of a person who had a spot was shown to teenagers and they were asked to describe the person and how they felt about themselves. The teenagers projected an image of different-ness and social isolation onto the picture of the person with the spot and the researchers concluded that this is how the teenagers would feel themselves. This finding would have been difficult to uncover from teenagers using direct questioning. The director at the advertising agency involved said that such information would not have been obtained using more direct questioning techniques. This finding corresponds with what Morrison and colleagues say about projective techniques, which is that they are especially useful for uncovering honest information about topics that might be embarrassing or sensitive (Morrison et al. 2002).

Although what research there is supports the projective hypothesis in market research the main studies are dated and confirmatory research by market researchers in this area is arguably overdue. Market researchers should not be just content to draw ideas and techniques from other disciplines but should also be prepared to contribute to the further understanding of those same techniques. With the relative lack of evidence from market research itself concerning projection, a search for evidence for projection from the psychological literature was also made and is presented below.

Evidence for Projection from Psychology

Some evidence for projection comes from psychologists studying how people per-

ceive others. Psychologists tell us that people tend to see others as they see themselves and that this holds true across a variety of traits. Psychopathic individuals for example tend to assume (Mahaffey & Marcus 2006) that other people are just as ruthless and cold-hearted as they are themselves. This supports the projective hypothesis because it looks like people just project their own personality traits onto others. Mahaffey and Marcus (2006), in their literature review, cite other research evidence that reportedly shows that aggressive people impute aggressive intent to others and that an assumed similarity between projecting respondent and 'others' appears to be the rule for most personality traits. This again supports the projective hypothesis.

Other evidence for projection comes from psychologists who used a projective technique, called the Apperceptive Personality Test, in a sample of sixty-three undergraduates and compared the results with the simultaneously tested personality dimensions of the undergraduates (Cooper & Rorison 2000). They found that extraverts tended to view the characters in the projective stimuli used, as happy leaders; whereas neurotic people in the sample tended to view the characters in the projective stimuli used as being unhappy, unsuccessful and unkind. The researchers concluded that some personality traits do influence responses to projective tests and that this is in line with the projective hypothesis (Cooper & Rorison 2000). As described earlier the projective hypothesis is the hypothesis that people do project their own characteristics onto de-personalised characters or other projective stimuli.

Psychologists have also found, in experiments involving nearly identical research tests (tests that were identical apart from being in impersonal, projective form or in personal, direct or non-projective form) that the projective version of the tests took less time for respondents to complete than the direct version of the tests did. This suggests that impression management was

taking place or that the giving of guarded or socially desirable responses, which take longer to formulate, was taking place in the direct version of the tests whereas more unguarded or honest responses were taking place in the projective version of the tests (Wood 1969). Wood undertook a similar study, using one personal and two impersonal versions of the same test and concluded that when the need to express personal feelings was removed from the test (in the impersonal versions), responses were less influenced by social desirability bias (Wood 1969). These findings are again in line with the projective hypothesis and support the validity of using projective techniques in research.

Another study that supports the projective hypothesis is again from the psychological literature on projective testing and this was a research project that looked at the attributions of emotional content made by seventy-two children to a number of stories (Brody & Carter 1982). Drawing from the literature on the development of social desirability, the researchers noted that the expression of negative emotions such as anger, sadness and fear is less socially acceptable than the expression of positive emotion such as happiness.

They therefore designed an experiment where children were presented with different stories, designed to elicit an emotional response, to see whether children would self-censure any intense negative emotions attributable to themselves as opposed to being attributable to other characters (Brody & Carter 1982). Where stories were presented with the child themselves being the person in the story the self-censuring of intense negative emotion was evident. Where stories were presented with another named child being the person in the story the censuring of intense negative emotion was not evident. It was found that children attributed a greater number of sad and scared responses to ambiguous characters than they did to themselves, and a greater number of happy responses to

themselves, in stories that were otherwise identical. The researchers concluded from this that their experiment strongly supported the projective hypothesis in relation to children and that children do self-censure their own responses but will project their underlying feelings onto others (Brody & Carter 1982).

One of the earliest writers on projective tests in psychology reports that in one study she examined it was shown that results from a study of university students was in line with the projective hypothesis and that for example, students who were rated by their fraternity peers as being stingy, rated themselves as being less stingy but rated others as being more stingy than most students did. The conclusion was that they were projecting their own stinginess onto other students and were simultaneously unaware that they themselves were stingy, as rated on average by their peers (Sargent 1945). The effects of projection in this study were thus in line with what would be predicted by the projective hypothesis and this is therefore further evidence for projection from the psychological literature.

In a review of the reliability and validity of projective techniques in psychology, one researcher noted that projective techniques do not have a standard method of administration, scoring or interpretation and that scoring and interpretation can be subjective and dependent on the skills and qualifications of the psychologist involved (Jensen 1959) but that often experts do not agree with one another in interpreting projective test results. This may be because projective tests in psychology can be so open-ended as to be open to widely differing interpretations whereas projective tests in market research are generally much more focused on a definitive problem and so less open to widely different interpretations (Boddy 2007; Boddy 2005b).

This is supported by evidence that the more definitive projective techniques in

psychology, such as sentence completion tests, do have higher levels of test/retest reliabilities and higher levels of inter-scorer agreements than other projective tests do, with one such study reporting average inter-scorer agreements of 78 percent and test/retest reliability scores of .79 (Jensen 1959). Factors said to affect reliability are the differences between the researchers using the techniques, the differences in the conditions of the research (e.g., where and when), the differences in the ability and experience of the subjects or respondents, the differences in the ability and experience of the researchers interpreting the findings and the quantity of projective material produced by subjects or respondents (Jensen 1959).

Evidence for Projection from Research into Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is defined as the repeated unfavourable treatment of one person by another in the workplace including behaviour designed to belittle others via humiliation, sarcasm, rudeness, overworking a person, threats and even violence (Dierickx 2004; Djurkovic, McCormack & Casimir 2004). Bullying is reportedly undertaken to maintain the power of the person doing the bullying (Dierickx 2004). Researchers into bullying are clearly of the opinion that projection is evident in the behaviour of bullies who are reported to project their inadequacies, shortcomings and behaviours on to other people to avoid facing up to their own inadequacies and to create distractions to divert attention away from their own behaviour (Anonymous 2007b).

Projection is reported to be achieved through blame, criticism and allegation. Researchers say that once that it is realised that projection is taking place, then every criticism and allegation that a bully makes about their victims can be read as an admission or revelation about themselves. It is reported that this knowledge can be used to perceive the bully's own misdemeanours; for example, when the allegations by a bully about someone else are of financial or

sexual impropriety, it is reported to be likely that the bully has actually committed these types of acts (Anonymous 2007b).

It is also reported to be a key identifying feature of a person with a personality disorder or psychopathic personality that, when called to account, they will accuse the person who is unmasking them of being the one with the personality disorder or psychopathic personality from which they (the person with the personality disorder) suffer. If so then this is again evidence of projection.

Evidence for Projection from Research into Narcissism

Other evidence for projection comes from a group of academic psychoanalysts and psychologists who developed a projective technique to see if narcissists could be identified by using the technique (Shulman, McCarthy & Ferguson 1988). The concept of narcissism comes from the myth of Narcissus, a beautiful young man who, spurning the affection of various nymphs was fated by a goddess to fall into unrequited love. He did this with his own reflection in a pool of water, where, unable to draw himself away from his own image, he died of starvation and turned into a white and purple flower (Holme 1981). Since then a narcissist has been regarded as being someone who loves themselves too much for their own good (Kansi 2003). Like other work in psychology, research into narcissism is said to suffer from a lack of conceptual clarity (Kansi 2003). However, psychologists generally differentiate between people with narcissistic traits, which are deemed to be commonly present in a normal population and those who suffer from Narcissistic Personality Disorder. These are people who are narcissistic in an extreme and maladaptive manner and who therefore fulfil the criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Narcissists are concerned with displaying and acknowledging their own talent and brilliance and have a desire to be admired and acknowledged to the exclusion of others around them (Goldman 2006). People

with high narcissism are arrogant, self-centred, duplicitous and self-enhancing and have a sense of superiority over others (Nathanson, Williams & Paulhus 2006).

Narcissists have grandiose but unstable self-concepts, an inflated sense of entitlement and a tendency towards establishing superiority (Cale & Lilienfeld 2006). They can have fantasies of ideal love and be exhibitionist.

Shulman and his colleagues developed a projective instrument to identify narcissists and identified these people as having the characteristics of; being grandiose, with fantasies of ideal love, perfect beauty or unlimited or unrealistic success; idealising or devaluing other people; having a sense of entitlement or displaying interpersonal exploitativeness; having a lack of empathy; being oversensitive to criticism and having a need for attention or admiration (Shulman, McCarthy & Ferguson 1988).

They identified high scoring narcissists from a sample of students and used two Thematic Apperception Test cards as the projective stimuli together with a story telling exercise. Three researchers, who were blind to the identity of narcissists in the sample, then assessed the narcissism content of the projective techniques used by each respondent. A high degree of inter-researcher agreement was evident. There was also a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) and a classification agreement of 84.6% between narcissism as judged by the projective techniques and narcissism as judged by a clinical interview. This research illustrates that even in use in clinical psychology projective techniques can be shown to be valid and reliable research tools.

In the research reported on above, narcissism was projected onto projective techniques by respondents who were themselves strongly narcissistic, this is research evidence which is in line with the projective hypothesis and so supports it.

Evidence for the Face Validity of Projective Techniques

Psychologists state that as a general rule the most crucial test of reliability in psychology is the end product of the psychological test itself (Jensen 1959), in other words whether it appears to make intuitive sense, has face reliability and face validity. That projective techniques are still so widely used in market research (Boddy 2005a; Nancarrow, Barker & Wright 2001) is evidence that they are seen as producing a good end product in terms of giving useful insights into marketing research problems and so this is evidence that market researchers think of projective techniques as having good face validity.

A research study into the meanings surrounding gift giving found that the use of projective techniques illuminated a great level of emotional depth and psychological complexity involved in the choosing and giving of gifts that direct questioning failed to uncover (McGrath, Sherry & Levy 1993). The researchers used the projective techniques of sentence completion, expression of dream fantasies and story-telling in relation to pictorial stimuli presented to research participants. Compared to the responses elicited from direct questioning, the responses from the use of projective techniques revealed socially unacceptable and unconventional responses; gift choosing and giving was revealed to entail such emotions and feelings as pain, frustration, stress, fear of rejection and interpersonal bonding.

The researchers stated that the subtlety, depth and range of the answers obtained from using projective techniques would not otherwise have materialised, enabling the emergence of thoughts and motives that would otherwise have remained opaque to researchers and respondents alike (McGrath, Sherry & Levy 1993). This type of research arguably has enormous face validity because the psychological processes involved and uncovered are intuitively those that are involved in experience but are those that would be uncom-

fortable to face or to verbalise and would not be evident from the results of direct questioning techniques.

Another project that used projective techniques successfully, involved exploring the consumer behaviour and attitudes of children using a child-centric approach to research, where the views of the children from their own point of view were sought (Banister & Booth 2005). A quasi-ethnographic approach was adopted and projective techniques were used within this approach, these projective techniques involved developing, colouring and writing on outline drawings (modified Thematic Apperception Tests) and taking and then talking about twenty-four photographs. The study explored how children learn to give negative meanings to brand and products through socialisation and the researchers expressed the conviction that the use of projective techniques was enjoyed by the children, utilised creative abilities like drawing and colouring that were familiar to them and provided useful insights into how children learn to react to products and brands (Banister & Booth 2005).

Such case studies as this in the marketing literature provide evidence for the face validity of projective techniques. However studies in market research that specifically look at the areas of validity and reliability are somewhat lacking.

Other academic disciplines, besides psychology and marketing, seemingly acknowledge the existence of the projective hypothesis without necessarily calling it that, or even necessarily being aware of its existence. For example in studies of literature it has long been assumed that authors project aspects of their own personalities into their characters, and academics in the area have noted that students often incorporate personally significant material into their work (Sargent 1945). This again is evidence of the face validity of projective techniques.

Some Ideas on How to Maximise the Reliability and Validity of Projective Techniques in Market Research

Market researchers can take steps to help ensure the internal validity and reliability of using projective techniques in their projects and some of the easy ways of doing this are discussed below.

Comparisons between interpreters and other judges are said to be the most useful ways of ensuring the reliability of qualitative material (Sargent 1945) and so one way of ensuring that results from projective techniques are reliable is to show the results to colleagues and see if they draw similar conclusions. If they do not then the reliability of the interpretation is questionable. Such an exercise could easily be undertaken in most market research companies and the results written up for the benefit of others in the field.

To test the internal validity of the results gained from the use of projective techniques the findings can be compared to other criteria and other findings gathered from the research to see if a level of correspondence is evident. Also different projective techniques and different research techniques can be used within the same project to triangulate the results and compare them for consistency. Similar results from different techniques argue for a high level of internal consistency and validity and for confidence in the findings. Finally, post research follow up studies can compare any predictions made from the use of projective techniques with the situation in the market to see if a level of predictive success is evident. If evident then this again demonstrates a good level of validity that can be reported on to the benefit of other researchers.

Conclusions

Projective techniques are not without their critics, especially when used in clinical and forensic psychology and in psychiatry, where their use can have significant implications for the subjects of the research. Qualitative market researchers are frequent users of projective techniques but ironically have conducted little published research into their reliability and validity. However a search of the psychological literature reveals that multiple evidence exists which supports the projective hypothesis. In particular the evidence from psychology is that the more structured the projective technique used, the more reliable and valid is the technique concerned, and that the most open-ended techniques like the ink-blot test, which is not used in market research anyway, are the least reliable and least valid.

Given the relatively huge resources that market research companies have, compared for example, to academic researchers, then it should easily be possible for market research companies to design and undertake research to establish that projective techniques are actually projective. This will thereby help to establish the reliability and validity of projective techniques in market research once and for all and so end the continuing questions over the use of such techniques.

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The Effect of Item-Order-Effect on Juster Scale Estimates

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Abstract

This paper reports the results of a study that investigates the item-order-effect introduced by listing test products or items one below another in Juster Scale studies. The results show that the item-order-effect affects the performance of the Juster Scale. The effect was substantially large for items placed at the start and end of the list. The difference in forecasts for WAP-capable mobile phones (the key test product) observed in the alternative lists was 100%. The results suggest that item-order-effect affects the forecasts made using the Juster Scale and consequently its performance. The paper recommends implementing the Juster Scale on one test item at a time. If concurrent implementation cannot be avoided then the item-order-effect must be controlled for using appropriate methods.

Introduction

The Juster Scale is an 11-point scale (0 to 10) developed to collect probabilistic measurements of future behaviours (Juster 1966). The scale has been successfully tested to assess customer loyalty (Garland 2002; Riebe *et al.* 1998; Danenberg and Sharp 1996; 1999), collect data for choice modelling (Rungie and Danenberg 1998), estimate repeat purchases using the Dirichlet model (Wright, Sharp and Sharp 2002) and to segment markets (Riquier, Luxton, and Sharp 1997). More recently, its application has been extended to measure social issues such as uptake of full-time employment (Sharp and Riebe 2000) and consuming alcohol during pregnancy (Parackal *et al.* 2007). The scale is used frequently in commercial research in Australia (e.g. Ryan and Huyton 2000; Ryan and Huyton 1998) and New Zealand (e.g. Wright, Lees and Garland 2002) to estimate adoption rate.

While the Juster Scale is well used and recommended, there is concern about its accuracy. The forecasting error reported for the scale has been as high as 245% (Day *et al.* 1991; Gan *et al.* 1986). An earlier article in the *Australasian Journal of Market & Social Research* (Parackal and Garland 2006) raises the issue of the context of the Juster Scale as a major

contributor to its forecasting error. The article identifies item-order-effect, question-order-effect and question wording as factors that alter the context of the Juster Scale and that they, in turn, affects its accuracy. The research reported in that article observed that the Juster Scale along with its question was successful in collecting probability data in a purchasing context for, at least, the test item used (WAP mobile phone). Parackal and Garland's (2006) study standardises the context of the Juster Scale to allow for future investigation into the three factors - item-order-effect, question-order-effect and question wording as factors. The study reported in this article builds on this literature by investigating the affect of item-order-effect on Juster Scale estimates. Firstly, an overview of the item-order-effect is provided. The methodology and results of the study are then presented.

Item-Order-Effect

The term 'item-order-effect', in this article, refers to the bias introduced when items that require Juster estimates are listed one below the other in a questionnaire. This is a common practice in many Juster Scale developmental studies (e.g. Brennan, Esslemont and Hini 1995; Brennan and Esslemont 1994; Seymour, Brennan and Esslemont 1994; Hamilton –

Gibbs, Esslemont and McGuinness 1992; Day *et al.*, 1991; Gendall, Esslemont and Day 1991; Gan, Esslemont and Gendall 1986; Gabor and Granger 1972; Clawson 1971; Gruber 1970; Stapel 1968; Juster 1966). To expose the potential problems arising from the item-order-effect, three comparable studies (Day *et al.* 1991; Gan *et al.* 1986; Clawson 1971) are discussed in this article. They have tested the Juster Scale on similar product categories (durables, services and fast-moving products) using a similar survey method.

The forecasting error these three studies report ranges from -17% to +245% (Day *et al.* 1991; Gan *et al.* 1986; Clawson 1971). While the forecasting error varies for all of the categories, it is substantial for the durable category. The mean absolute error for this category in Day *et al.* (1991) is 90% and in Gan *et al.* (1986) 121%. Clawson (1971) do not report the error, instead provides the R-square value produced by regressing the Juster Scale scores to the actual behaviour for one durable as an example (buying a TV set), which is 0.0018. The mean absolute error for durables across the two studies that report errors (Day *et al.* 1991; Gan *et al.* 1986) is a substantial 46%, raising a concern about the scale's reliability. While it is not possible to know whether item-order-effect is a factor in these studies, it is a plausible contributor to at least some of the forecasting errors. The literature includes Juster Scale studies that report satisfactory results for durables. For example, one study reports an absolute forecasting error of 5% (Urban *et al.* 1997). This study uses the Juster Scale to forecast the purchase rate of a single item (camera). The absence of item-order-effect in this study perhaps contributes to the better result when compared with the three studies mentioned above.

In a questionnaire setting when items are presented one below the other, the relevance respondents have to the first item sets the context and the tone of response to subsequent items. This could result in respondents giving responses for items

further down the list that fail to reflect their actual behaviour. Researchers have failed to recognise this problem when testing the Juster Scale concurrently on different product categories, and as a consequence have failed to control for item-order-effect.

The item-order-effect has been investigated in a different context, in applications where the Juster Scale is used to estimate demand schedules. An earlier study observes a strong item-order-effect on the Juster estimates produced for different price points (Brennan 1995). A subsequent study replicating Brennan (1995) observes that the item-order-effect is present even when the order is reversed (Wright and Lees 2003). While this item-order-effect is of a different kind to the one discussed in the current article, the truth remains that when items are presented one below the other there is the possibility of item-order-effect coming into play. The study reported in this article verifies whether the item-order-effect resulting from listing test items one below the other in a block affects the forecast produced. This study's research objective is now outlined, followed by an explanation of the methodology used. The results are then reported and discussed.

Research Objective

This study investigates the extent to which item-order-effect influences the forecasts produced by the Juster Scale. To achieve the study's objective, quantitative data was collected in separate treatments that presented test items in different orders. The following hypothesis was proposed for statistical investigation:

H1: Forecasts made on the Juster Scale varies as the order in which test items are presented varied.

Test items

As mentioned, Parackal and Garland's (2006) study tested the Juster Scale for contextual requirement. Juster scores were collected for WAP-capable mobile phones in separate treatments with and without providing additional context. In the

treatments that provided context, respondents were asked to experience a purchasing environment before indicating their purchase probability scores on the Juster Scale. The Juster estimates produced in these treatments were compared with a control treatment that asked respondents to indicate their purchase probability scores on the Juster Scale without experiencing any type of purchasing environment. Results showed that the mean purchase rates produced in the alternative treatments were similar. The study concluded that, at least for WAP-capable mobile phones, the Juster Scale collects probability data in the desired purchasing context.

The current study used WAP-capable mobile phones as the key test item to investigate the affect item-order-effect has on Juster Scale estimates. Other items that made up a list were new or old car, ticket to travel overseas, digital camera, house, outdoor furniture and laptop. Two versions of the list were made by altering the position of WAP capable mobile phones. In the first version, WAP capable mobile phones was placed at the start of the list and laptop - also belonging to the information communication technologies category - was placed at the end. This list will be referred to as "WAP @ the start". In the second version, the positions of these two products were swapped while the positions of the remaining items were kept constant. This list will be referred to as "WAP @ the end".

To generate the data required to test the above hypothesis, the two lists were made into questionnaire versions so they could be implemented in separate treatments. Student's t-test was used to investigate whether altering the position of the key product affected the purchase rate produced.

Survey Method

The two questionnaire versions were implemented in a hybrid survey approach (Parackal 2003, Schonlau, Asch and Du 2003), comprising of an Internet and mail survey. The survey was carried out on a random sample of 2000 individuals selected from the New Zealand electoral roll. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the two questionnaire versions. A covering letter asking recipients to take part in the survey was mailed out to all respondents. The letter provided respondents with unique usernames, passwords and the URL of the survey site. Respondents who did not want to participate online were offered a paper version of the questionnaire. One reminder letter was also sent to increase the response rate. The survey produced a response rate of 42%.

Results

To ensure the sample was relevant to the key test item (WAP-capable mobile phones), analysis was carried out using the responses of respondents who indicated that they owned mobile phones (WAP @ the start: n = 248; WAP @ the end: n = 333). The mean Juster score for the WAP capable mobile phones, when the item was placed at the start of the list, was 0.08 and 0.16 when placed at the end. The probabilistic nature of the Juster scores allows these aggregate scores to be interpreted as 8% and 16% respectively. The Student's t-test produced a *t* value of 3.954 with 424 degrees of freedom, which was significant at the 0% level ($p = 0.000$). This result confirms that the mean scores in the two treatments were statistically different, thus providing support for H1. The result of this analysis is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Comparisons of mean scores of WAP-capable mobile phones

	Treatment	N	Mean	t	df	Sig
WAP capable mobile phone	WAP @ the start	248	0.08	3.768	424	0.000*
	WAP @ the end	333	0.16			

* Significant at the 0% level

The mean Juster scores for the laptop - the item that swapped position with the key test item - in the two treatments were 0.15 (WAP @ the start) and 0.09 (WAP @ the end). The Student's t-test for this item produced a t value of 2.8 with 412 degrees freedom, which was significant at the 1% level ($p = 0.005$). This result confirms that the mean scores produced in the two treatments were statistically

different, providing support for H1. As for the items (new or old car, ticket to travel overseas, digital camera, house, outdoor furniture) for which the positions were maintained in the two lists, the significance did not reach the rejection level ($p > 0.05$). The results of the Student's t-tests for these products are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparisons of mean scores for other test items

	Treatment	N	Mean	t	df	Sig
Laptop	WAP @ the start	248	0.15	2.83	412	0.005**
	WAP @ the end	333	0.09			
New or old car	WAP @ the start	248	0.21	-0.79	579	0.432
	WAP @ the end	333	0.23			
Ticket to travel overseas	WAP @ the start	248	.038	0.52	579	0.601
	WAP @ the end	333	0.36			
Digital camera	WAP @ the start	248	0.17	0.56	579	0.579
	WAP @ the end	333	0.15			
House	WAP @ the start	248	0.12	1.56	579	0.119
	WAP @ the end	333	0.90			
Outdoor furniture	WAP @ the start	248	0.14	1.31	579	0.192
	WAP @ the end	333	0.11			
Going to the movie	WAP @ the start	248		0.152	476	0.14
	WAP @ the end	333				

** Significant at the 1% level

Discussion

This study investigates the item-order-effect that is introduced when test items are listed one below the other in Juster Scale studies. The results show that the mean Juster Scale scores for the two items whose position in the list are altered (WAP-capable mobile phones and laptop) are different in the questionnaire versions. The difference observed for WAP-capable mobile phones, the key test item, when placed at the start and at the end of the list is 100%. A similar difference is observed for laptop. As the current study focuses on investigating item-order-effect, it does not include validation, but one could envisage the estimates for the two items produced in the two questionnaire versions resulting in different forecasting errors. This explains at least some of the forecasting errors observed in studies that apply the Juster Scale concurrently on a variety of products.

Mean Juster Scale scores for all other items for which the positions are maintained are similar. This does not suggest that these items are unaffected by item-order-effect. A possible explanation is that the magnitude of item-order-effect for these items may be similar; hence, it is not noticeable. The true affect of item-order-effect for these items can only be known through validation of the estimates. This could be a topic of investigation for future researchers. As for the items placed at the terminal ends of the list, the affect of item-order-effect on the estimates is severe.

The performance of the Juster Scale for durables in the literature is satisfactory (Brennan, Esslemont and Hini 1995; Pickering and Isherwood 1974; Clawson 1971; Heald 1970; Juster 1966). In the studies mentioned, durables are included with other categories, hence, they may be

subjected to item-order-effect. This could be one reason for the poor performance of the Juster Scale for the durable-category. Perhaps the Juster Scale needs to be re-tested to establish its performance in relation to durables.

As a consequence of item-order-effect, as illustrated in this current article, Juster Scale studies that use concurrent testing might not be true replications. When assessing the reliability of the Juster Scale, it is advisable to place less reliance on such studies, as they could lead to the wrong conclusion. It could well be that more replications in the form of tests on individual item is needed for the Juster Scale.

Conclusions

The results of this study suggest that the item-order-effect has serious implications on the performance of the Juster Scale. Some of the variations in forecasting error observed in the literature could be because of item-order-effect. To establish its true reliability, the Juster Scale may need re-testing for items (e.g. durables) where it has produced less satisfactory results. When doing the re-tests, it is suggested that the scale be tested taking one test item at a time.

Of note to practitioners is that this study highlights the importance of avoiding using the Juster Scale concurrently on multiple items. In instances where this cannot be avoided, it is recommended that item-order-effect be controlled. One way to do this is to rotate the order, in which items are presented to respondent, in separate random sub-samples. This would require the research design to be carefully constructed so as to accommodate the different order in the questionnaire versions.

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Focus Group Discussions and Brainstorming Sessions: What's the Difference?

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on the technique of Brainstorming and to compare this with focus group discussions. Market researchers who run focus groups are sometimes asked by their marketing clients to run Brainstorming sessions as opposed to focus group discussions with the assumption that the skills needed are the same or at least very similar. However, moderators need to note that there are some key differences between the aims, objectives and methods employed in Brainstorming compared to those employed in qualitative market research using focus group discussions. Brainstorming sessions, for example, have common rules and objectives that are known to all participants. An aim of this paper is to highlight the key differences to moderators, qualitative researchers and marketers so that they know what is expected when they are called upon to run Brainstorming sessions. The paper is original in that it highlights the key differences between focus group discussions and Brainstorming sessions.

Introduction: What are Focus Group Discussions?

Focus groups are a well established and increasingly popular (Stokes & Bergin 2006) way of conducting qualitative market research and these groups can be classed (Boddy 2005a) as UK style focus group discussions or US style focus group interviews. Focus group discussions as opposed to focus group interviews have been described and defined with some precision (Boddy 2005a). A focus group discussion is defined as a group of usually 4 to 8 people who typically do not know each other (unless for example it is thought necessary to have participants who do know each other such as married couples in the groups). They are brought together to participate in the discussion of an area of interest (Gordon & Langmaid 1990). The focus group discussion aims to provide an environment in which all members of the group can discuss the area of investigation with each other. A successful focus group discussion has the group members involved as participants in discussing the area of interest. They may (Morgan & Scannell 1998) argue with each other, try to persuade each other of their point of view, agree or disagree, ask each other

questions and generally discuss the topic in an open and usually friendly manner. This results in a broad breadth of discussion (Zikmund 2003) as well as discussion in depth. The direction of interaction is between each group participant (including the moderator) and each of the other group participants individually or collectively. The moderator is there (Goodyear 1998; Gordon & Langmaid 1990) to gently guide the discussion and keep it on track. The moderator, acting as first among equals, intervenes (i.e. moderates) only to keep the topic of discussion on the area of interest or to introduce new elements of the area of interest or to probe for deeper understanding of statements made by group members or to gain explanations for differences of opinion held. Participatory discussion is maximised. The moderator in a focus group discussion mediates between group participants and settles disputes in terms of trying to explore and understand different points of view or to explain differences in opinions.

With focus group discussions the moderator has the freedom to change the order of questions and to move onto different areas that appear to be important to group

participants whether or not these areas were expected by the client. The moderator does not expect to be interrupted at all during the course of the group. Counting exercises are not present (Boddy 2005c) (although they may be in focus group interviews). Perceptual mapping and projective techniques (Boddy 2005b; Catterall & Ibbotson 2000; Donoghue 2000) might be used and the aim would be to develop an in-depth understanding of the marketing problem from the group participants' point of view. Indeed this would be seen as the whole essence of taking a market lead approach to market research rather than a product lead approach. The researcher is seen as being there to discover and understand what is important to the customer or user rather to get answers to questions which are seen as being important by the manufacturer or supplier.

What are Brainstorming Sessions?

Brainstorming was an idea originally developed by Alex Osborn (Hale 2001) as a way of generating multiple ideas creatively and quickly. Sessions are usually comprised of employees of the same company and may include employees from their advising agencies (marketing consultants, market researchers, advertising agency personnel, management consultants, accountants) who are working together on a project aimed at solving a particular problem the organisation is facing.

Sessions are structured (Morgan 1997) and the aims and rules re-explained at the beginning of each session. The rules include that people are told what the aims of the session are before they come to it so that they can start to think about possible contributions to the problem under discussion and that no criticism or praise of an idea is allowed (Morgan 1997). During the session itself people are encouraged to enjoy themselves and not take it too seriously. People can write down their ideas if they want as well as tell the others about them.

In terms of idea generation academic research has shown that working alone

generates more ideas than working in groups but in terms of collecting and then assessing ideas this may take longer. A barrier to idea generation in groups is 'group-think' or peer pressure where people in the session are reluctant to share ideas for fear of ridicule. One of the rules of Brainstorming attempts to overcome this by stating at the outset that no evaluations are allowed during the actual Brainstorming itself although an evaluation or idea ranking stage may take place immediately afterwards. The facilitator may even say that silly ideas are welcome because they sometimes contain the grain of a good solution, and that quality of ideas often goes together with quantity of ideas. An advantage of Brainstorming (Eckerson 1988) is said to be that it allows people with multiple areas of expertise to come together with the effect that the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts. Solutions may present themselves in such an environment that would not be evident to individuals working alone on the same problems.

Brainstorming sessions have two distinct stages to them (Hartman 2005), the 'brain dump' of rapid idea generation and then when all possible ideas have been exhausted, a structured evaluation of the ideas takes place. In the first stage the idea is to generate as many ideas as possible and to this end the facilitator may state that silly, expensive, whacky and impractical ideas are all welcome. There may even be a small prize for the silliest idea to try and stimulate idea generation and give people permission to speak out. This is to try and prevent the usual self-censorship that takes place when people discuss things. No evaluation takes place at this stage of the Brainstorming session because it hampers the flow of ideas (Sloane 1998) and slows down idea generation. Numerical targets may be set for the number of ideas wanted but there is no quality target. Within this stage some further structure may be evident and the facilitator may first (Bachman 2000) ask people in the session to list all the reasons why they are there. This aims to reiterate

the problem that needs to be solved and gain a fuller understanding of it and of why the problem exists and what contributes to the problem. A further stage may be to have the Brainstorming session participants list all the objectives that they want to aim for in overcoming the problem. This catalogues all the benefits expected from solving the problem and helps everyone to understand the nature and scope of the problem. Another stage may be to develop a list of all possible sources of solutions to the problem under consideration. This can include looking at similar organisations that do not seem to have the same problem or have already solved it. This can also include looking at totally different organisations to see if their example can provide any ideas for solving the problem.

The second major stage of a Brainstorming session is the evaluation of ideas. This can be in terms of expense, workability, practicality and feasibility given the resources available. If the session participants are charged with implementing the ideas generated then a further stage may be to list ideas as to how the ideas can be turned into methods, policies and plans for implementation and to identify what resources will be needed to do this.

The Rules of Brainstorming

A frequently stated rule of a Brainstorming session is that ideas generated are commonly owned by those in the session as contributors, this is to try and prevent politically motivated disputes afterwards. It also helps prevent issues to do with individual egos getting in the way of discussion. If the group owns the ideas then suggestions to changes (Beaubien 1997) or modifications are easier to make at the evaluation stage of the session because no individual's feelings are hurt. Brainstorming session members should be encouraged (Falstein 2004) to critique ideas and not individual people so that people do not become disheartened by the process. People are also encouraged (Schwartz 1991) to modify and add to the ideas presented to develop them further as the session continues.

In terms of where and when to hold Brainstorming sessions they are said to work best on neutral territory, away from the distractions of everyday work (Bashford 2004) and at times when people are not under stress or when they want to be elsewhere. This means not on Mondays or Friday afternoons if possible and not immediately after a heavy lunch.

A relaxed and informal atmosphere (Schwartz 1991) is best so as to avoid formality and encourage participation. Ideas are commonly written on a paper flip chart the pages of which are stuck to a wall as they are filled up. The time taken for the Brainstorming session depends on the nature and strategic importance of the problem to be discussed. It can thus take from a hour to a few days but the time envisaged is made clear in advance so that everybody knows their expected time commitment.

Ideas generated are listed and are evaluated at the second stage of the Brainstorming session and a rating or ranking agreed on according to pre-agreed criteria. Ideas with the highest scores are put forward for consideration for implementation. Alternatively session members may be asked to choose their three favourite ideas and the collectively most commonly chosen ideas are considered for further development. This development will often be by an implementation team that will often be of a different makeup compared to the members of the Brainstorming session. For example it may be the job of an internal project team or of management consultants to take the ideas forward. Brainstorming is often described as a way to generate creative ideas to solving particular problems. In market research Brainstorming is said (Novak 1997) to be useful in generating ways to catch unusual or uncommon samples of respondents or to solve research problems. A study is described by Novak in which details were wanted on how people store goods and the research firm came up with the idea of sending disposable cameras to respondents which enabled accurate details to

be recorded and also increased response rates because the activity of taking pictures involved people more than other research techniques do.

An advantage of Brainstorming is said (Eckerson 1988) to be that it brings people from different departments together and fosters a team spirit among employees who may not otherwise see each other that often. It is also said to produce well rounded ideas such as products in new product development that are not only marketable but also feasible and reliable and economical. It is said (Morais 2001) to be able to spark strategic insights into problems and creative ideas and to put forward ideas for further market research.

Similarities between Brainstorming and Focus Group Discussions

Like what happens in focus group discussions the facilitator in Brainstorming should attempt to break the ice among participants as much as possible to create a relaxed atmosphere to allow the free flow of ideas. Commentators (Hartman 2005) usually recommend that Brainstorming session members should be encouraged to have fun.

Moderating skills and the approaches to focus group research are learnt, at least by market researchers, on the job (Rook 2003) depending on the employing research or advertising companies' usual ways of conducting research. Professional bodies such as the Australian Market and Social Research Society and the Association of Qualitative Researchers also provide training on moderating and qualitative techniques. Similarly the art of running Brainstorming sessions is learnt by management consultants in their workplaces and at professional development training sessions. Both focus group discussions (Chrzanowska 2004; Carey 1994; Stokes & Bergin 2006) and Brainstorming sessions can run into problems of participants being inhibited to contribute freely and openly.

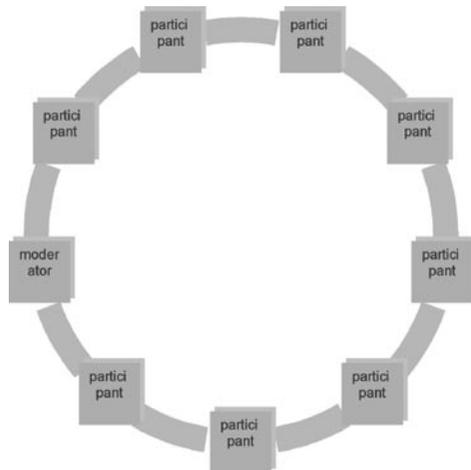
Dissimilarities between Brainstorming and Focus Group Discussions

In focus group discussions participants are rarely told in advance what the subject will be as the top-of-mind opinions are often what are wanted. In Brainstorming it is the opposite and everyone knows why they are there and what is to be discussed. This is because as many ideas as possible are sought and thinking about them beforehand is thought to help maximise these ideas. Also in focus group discussions participants are usually of similar background and status as they have some common behavioural characteristics that are wanted to aid discussion. They may for example, be all recent buyers of nappies for 18 month old babies if nappy buying and using habits are being researched. This participant similarity usually helps the group to form as a group and bond together because they all have something in common.

Brainstorming sessions on the other hand frequently contain people of unequal status and dissimilar background, such as employees and managers, engineers and marketers or clients and agency personnel. This can pose problems of deference to those seen as of higher status as well as problems caused by social desirability bias (Fisher 1993) which is the bias introduced in answers in order for the speaker to portray themselves in the best, most socially desirable, light. Attempts have to be made to overcome this barrier to the expression of ideas by telling people that rank is to be totally forgotten during the Brainstorming session and that all ideas are to be given equal status.

Focus group discussions are marked by a free flowing discussion of the areas under investigation around the group. The moderator is first among equals and everyone has the chance to participate in the research and contribute to the understanding of the area under discussion. Diagrammatically this may be shown as a circular flow of discussion as below.

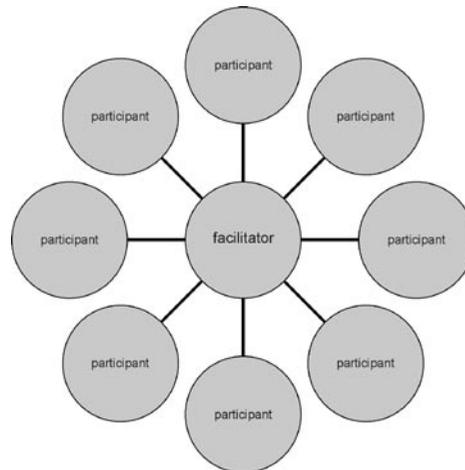
Figure I: Focus group Discussion Shown Diagrammatically



Focus group discussions are thus a good opportunity to get an in-depth understanding from people (participants) talking in their own time and in their own language (instead of that of the advertising agency or manufacturer) and in terms of what is really important to them as consumers. This is often to a level of understanding that quantitative surveys alone would never manage. The market researcher is then constructing reality from the group participants' point of view. An effective focus group discussion is described (Robinson & So 1990) as being one marked by how little the moderator had to direct and prompt discussion in the group and by how much the group went into 'auto-pilot'.

With a Brainstorming session the facilitator has more of an enforcement and leadership role in maintaining the no-criticism rule and later in leading those involved in the Brainstorming session in a structured evaluation of the ideas generated and the flow of ideas is more between the participants as shown in Table 1 on page 32.

Figure II: Brainstorming Session Shown Diagrammatically



Brainstorming sessions are a good opportunity to pool the collective intelligence and experience of diverse members of an organisation and its advisers in order to generate ideas to solve marketing or other business problems. The synergistic benefits of such teams working together can be impressive in terms of identifying workable solutions.

The key differences between focus group discussions and Brainstorming session are outlined in Table 1 on page 32.

Qualitative Research Techniques Which May Be Useful in Brainstorming

Market researchers recognise that participants in focus groups may feel inhibited (Stokes & Bergin 2006) and have developed a range of techniques to overcome this and to get people to talk. Some of these market research techniques may be useful in Brainstorming to help in overcoming the reluctance of people involved in Brainstorming sessions to speak. These are the techniques used in market research which give 'permission' to group participants to talk openly by de-personalising what they say and these techniques are called enabling and projective techniques.

Table 1: Key Differences between:

Focus Group Discussions	Brainstorming Sessions
Research Process	Brainstorming Process
Group members are participants, moderator is first among equals.	Session members are often of different status but told to act as if they are equals.
Run by a moderator who mediates the discussion between participants.	Run by a facilitator who facilitates the generation of ideas by participants.
Moderator gently guides discussion and keeps it on track.	Facilitator keeps the idea generation on strategy and on track.
Research Process <i>continued</i>	Brainstorming Process <i>continued</i>
Moderator uses a typically short discussion guide to make sure the key areas of concern in the research are covered.	Facilitator may use a list of rules and a statement of the problem to be solved which everyone can see. Apart from that there is no discussion guide.
Moderator can go with the flow of discussion and does not need to ask questions in any particular order.	Facilitator imposes some structure and allows ideas to flow within that.
Moderator typically has substantial authority to decide when enough discussion has taken place to understand the areas of concern in the research.	Facilitator takes a more enforcement and leadership role in reminding participants of the objective and rules of the exercise.
Discussion is maximised across and around the group.	Idea generation is maximised.
The flow is relatively unstructured.	The session is structured into at least two parts the brain dump and the evaluation.
Group members interact freely with each other on a group basis.	Session participants also interact freely with each on a group basis.
Participants' statements may be verbally played back to the group members to stimulate further responses or to clarify meanings or differences.	Session participants' statements may be verbally repeated to the session members to stimulate additional idea generation and idea modification and enhancement.
Suitability	Suitability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for exploratory research in-depth. • For understanding non-rational motivational factors. • Exploring the answers to 'why' people do things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for generating a range of ideas in a short time from multiple areas of expertise and aimed at solving a specific problem. • Good for focusing people on one problem and generating an unexpected breakthrough.

Projective techniques are often used in market research (Boddy 2004) to help uncover findings in areas where those researched are thought to be reluctant or unable to expose their thoughts and feelings via more straightforward questioning techniques. Projective techniques facilitate the articulation of otherwise repressed or withheld thoughts by allowing (Boddy 2005d) the research participant or subject to 'project' their own thoughts onto someone or something other than themselves. Projective techniques are thus techniques which enable research participants or subjects to respond in ways which they otherwise would not feel able to respond in. Respondents are asked to respond to stimuli and the hope is that they will project aspects of their own thoughts or feelings via the use of the stimuli.

Market researchers (Chandler & Owen 2002) define projective and enabling techniques succinctly and in a manner many qualitative researcher practitioners (Gordon & Langmaid 1990; Goodyear 1998) would probably agree with.

"Classically, the idea of a projective technique relates to a device that allows the individual research participant to articulate repressed or otherwise withheld feelings by projecting these onto another character. The idea of enabling techniques relates to a device which allows the individual research participant to find a means of expressing feelings, thoughts and so on which they find hard to articulate."

Enabling techniques are held to be the simpler (Will, Eadie & MacAskill 1996) of the two techniques as they just help people to talk. Will et al. make the useful distinguishing point that while all projective techniques may be enabling not all enabling techniques involve projection. Other researchers (Lysaker & Bradley 1957) make the point that even pictorial devices which do not function as projective techniques (i.e., devices researchers would nowadays refer to as enabling techniques) may still have utility in generating responses. Market

researchers (Gordon & Langmaid 1990) pragmatically state that the use of projective as opposed to enabling techniques is a false distinction in market research as the aim of both techniques is to facilitate deeper understanding.

At a practical level then, Brainstorming facilitators could say things like "I realise that some of you in this session are too sensible to make the sorts of silly suggestions that we hope may be the catalyst to other ideas. Therefore please imagine that you are not yourself but are person in the organisation with the silliest imagination – no names please – and then tell me the ideas they would come up with". This should help enable people to put forward their ideas with no fear of being negatively evaluated.

Conclusions

There are obvious similarities between focus group discussions and Brainstorming sessions but also some key differences. Brainstorming is more structured than focus groups; has specific rules and the objectives are known in advance by the participants.

The most common rules are that there must be no initial evaluation of comments made or ideas put forward, all ideas are welcome, the aim is quantity not quality, building on the ideas of others is allowed, the group owns all ideas generated and all ideas are written down.

At the evaluation stage of the Brainstorming session all participants in the session take part in the evaluation of the ideas whereas with focus group discussions the market researchers and marketers evaluate the ideas discussed in the groups after the group members have gone.

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The Advertising Research Handbook

By Charles E. Young, published by Ideas in Flight, Seattle, Washington 2005

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Overview

The aim of this review is to share with the industry a book filled with knowledge, perspectives and insights on advertising research.

The introductory chapters focus on the developmental history of advertising research and the debate on the most effective measure amidst inconsistencies in terminologies.

While the first section covers constructs which seasoned researchers and creative directors may find familiar, the middle section engages the readers with some new perspectives. Dramatic involvement, emotional branding and filming tips were discussed.

The concluding chapters provide valuable recommendations on effective advertising, research strategies and collaboration amongst the team of researchers and creatives.

Ch 1 A Short History of Television Copytesting

Young described the history of television copytesting as woven by four general themes:

1. quest for a valid single-number statistic to help management make a go or no go decision
2. development of diagnostic copytesting identifying creative opportunities to save and improve executions
3. development of non-verbal measures which may be operating below the conscious level and difficult to be verbalised e.g. emotional impact
4. moment by moment measures to describe the internal dynamic structure of the viewer's experience

The first stage of development was marked by the initial popularity of DAR (Day After Recall) in the 50s and 60s. However this measure was later found to be invalid in predicting sales and was then superseded by the pre-post measure of persuasiveness in the 70s and 80s. Other measures including purchase intent, recognition, attention, brand linkage and overall effectiveness index were also developed.

The logic behind the second stage of diagnostic development was clearly explained in this comment:

"From an agency perspective, pre-testing research provides value only if it delivers an understanding of why a commercial scores the way it does and insights into how to improve an ad's performance."

The third stage of development saw the use of physiological measures and later the Ameritest Picture Sorts method in the 90s.

The latest stage of development holds the view that there is a flow of experience to a commercial and hence the measures of flow of attention, emotion and meaning.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of future trends:

1. emergence of global research standards for global brands
2. more advertising measurement
3. copytesting moving to the internet
4. filtering and optimization of ad concepts (research can play a crucial role in this process)
5. new emphasis on non-verbal measurement
6. new heuristic models across media
7. new mathematical approaches to model advertising effects

Ch 2 Advertising Models

"No form of research is more fraught with barriers of learning." The author proposed that sharing a mental model with the client will help overcome the anxiety and learning barriers for researchers to convey the research outcome.

The Ameritest's Heuristic Television Advertising Model was recommended, combining various measures to bridge the divide between the report card system and the diagnostic system. The ultimate goal is in-market performance, a function of three key variables – attention, brand linkage and motivation.

The proposed model provides a structured approach to advertising research and its analysis. I would encourage readers to think laterally across constructs and beyond the model in their applications.

Ch 3 Report Card Measures from Different Pre-testing Systems Attention and Recall

Based on published research and the author's own research experience, attention is a better measure of breakthrough, rewarding executions that are interesting, involving and unique. Recall appears to reward ads where the brand is cued early and often and the focus is on communicating rational product features and benefits.

The same construct is measured differently by different organisations in terms of variables such as post air hours for measuring recall, simulated program environment, database size and category for norm/ benchmark comparison.

Branding

The author translated four possible roles of the brand in a television commercial from a filming perspective - star, supporting actor, producer and director; with the belief that such consideration can help inspire creative guidelines for producing well-branded commercials.

As in the case of attention and recall, there were different measures of branding to the extent that they were found to be uncorrelated. Further, recommendations varied by company:

- Ipsos ASI - an early and often rule in terms of brand exposure to achieve a high branding score
- Ameritest - a single minded branding moment, a peak visual moment where the attention of the audience is focused clearly on the identity of the brand
- Millward Brown - the importance of the audio component on branding

Motivation and Persuasion

The relative importance of rational thought and emotion varies by a product lifestage, weighting towards the rational approach for new products and towards the emotional approach for established brands. "Power brands" dominating in their market share would use an approach to "hold their category empire together".

Details were given on how various companies measured motivation and persuasion. Overall, purchase intention was found across measures.

Composite Measures

Composite measures, combining the results of several key factors into a single number measure, have been used to provide a "headline" for an ad's performance. Various composite measures include Ameritest Performance Index, Millward Brown Awareness Index, Ipsos-ASI Copy Effect Index and Millward Brown Effectiveness Index.

Liking

- a measure found to be strongly correlated with attention and motivation but not recall

Recognition vs recall

The chapter concludes with the importance of considering recognition as a measure of ad effectiveness and that the internet now provides a viable alternative for visual prompting.

Ch 4 Leading Audience Attention

The author started the chapter by introducing the work of Malcolm Gladwell, and Walter Murch. Gladwell, a renowned science journalist, wrote about the new science of rapid cognition, the role of the unconscious mind in decision making. Two important learnings from Gladwell's work for film making and indeed commercial making:

1. The eye actively filters and processes images.
2. The mind "*thin-slices*" information with the unconscious having the ability to "*find patterns in situations and behaviour based on very narrow slices of experience.*"

Editing is crucial to the audience experience. Murch has suggested some criteria for a good cut, including "*it is true to the emotion of the moment*", "*it advances the story*", and "*it occurs at a moment that is rhythmically interesting and right*".

The film experience was also compared to rhythm and beat in music, crucial to the commercial's breakthrough effectiveness:

"...in film the visual beat is the emotional or informational transaction between the filmmaker and the audience... Research shows that the number of peak moments, or visual beats, is the single best predictor of a TV commercial's ability to break through clutter."

Further, there was evidence that such peak moments work through to the long term memory of the audience.

Ch 5 Four Dramatic Structures of Emotional TV Advertising

“Good storytelling, which unites ideas with emotions, lies at the heart of advertising effectiveness.”

The author identified four dramatic structures in effective commercials based on his pretesting work:

1. The Emotional Pivot where the brand is introduced as the star at the moment when negative emotions flip over to positive emotions
2. The Positive Transition where the brand is a supporting actor introduced to raise a low level positive state to a higher level positive state
3. The Build where the brand comes at the end of the commercial when positive emotions climax – the brand is described as the narrator/ director
4. Sustained Emotion with a consistently high volume of positive emotion throughout the ad – the brand is described as the producer

More complex structures may evolve from these basic structures but all in all, the timing when the brand is introduced and good storytelling are crucial to advertising effectiveness.

Ch 6 Film Tips for Branding TV Commercials

The author proposed that brand linkage is crucial to advertising effectiveness, growing the brand's share, and not just the size of the category which may happen with ads of low brand linkage.

Based on a study of the flow of viewer attention, a comprehensive collection of filming tips to enhance brand linkage was compiled with the notion that the viewer plays an active role in filtering and processing the visual information. A sample selection is listed below:

- **Visualisation:** Visualise the brand identity, not just verbalise it in the copy
- **Framing:** Establish the category frame of reference as soon as possible, so the viewer is in the right frame of mind to process the information
- **Continuity:** Create a unified selling proposition:
 - o Category, brand, then sales message sequence
 - o problem – solution
 - o montage with multiple brief images to express a single meaning or brand emotion
- **Focusing:** Make sure the brand is in a single-minded focal point of viewer attention at least once in the ad
- **Transition:** Lead the viewer's attention to the brand, consider the viewer's expectations and rhythm of ideas before and after
- **Tempo:** Register the brand on the beat of the editing tempo (refer to Ch 4 synopsis)

In this chapter and the two prior, the author has succeeded in providing a divergent view to ad effectiveness by introducing a filming perspective to research. Acquiring such knowledge could potentially facilitate the communication and collaboration amongst researchers and the creative team.

Ch 7 Finding Ideas that Travel: What to Look for in Advertising Global Brands

The chapter opened with four potentially competing business objectives:

1. Brand building by speaking with one voice
2. Economies of scale in creative production
3. Maximizing local effectiveness
4. Speed of implementation

“The challenge of managing international advertising is to make the correct trade-offs between in-country customization versus cross-country efficiency.”

To meet this challenge and achieve a balance in the four objectives, the author suggested finding ideas that work globally - “ideas that travel”.

This concluding comment coincides with my observation through years of advertising and values research:

“Advertising that focuses on ideas or universal stories dealing with real human values, pays off in the long run... it requires genuine insight into the human experience.”

Ch 8 Five Research Strategies for Improving Advertising Productivity

Given the high investment in creative development and on-air time, the author advised bringing research discipline to the creative process by using five strategies:

1. Test the advertising creative with a valid performance standard - use a firm action standard and avoid spending on average ads
2. Rehearse the creative in a rough form – test the concepts using a rough production of animatics or ripomatics, screen ideas and gather input to improve ideas
3. Experiment with creative alternatives – test multiple options, statistically increasing the chance of having a successful concept
4. Optimise the creative with diagnostic insights – utilise the results to save average commercials which have the potential to be improved through editing
5. Learn from the competition – do competitive advertising research and find out what works

Ch 9 How to Have a Successful Research Meeting with the Ad Team

If we accept the bell-shaped curve of probabilities, chances are that 40% of the time, we will be in the “Zone of Conflict” having to present findings of mediocre ads to the clients. Such meetings would often be infused with emotions and defences all forming barriers to communication and learning.

To overcome such barriers, the author suggested the use of a facilitator approach, taking on the skills of a focus group moderator, setting the tone and allowing all participants to take part in the discussion.

The author concluded the chapter with a list of sources of failure and signs of a successful meeting which I would extract as useful reminders for researchers involved in advertising research:

Sources of Failure:

- Lack of agreement on objectives
- Confusing data
- Doubts about data validity
- Questions focused on research methodology
- Emotional issues: creatives' pride and esteem being diminished
- Lecture and expert approach from researcher
- Researcher playing the creative director

Signs of a Successful Meeting:

- Active involvement from each participant, particularly creatives
- All points of views listened
- Focus on learning
- Positive emotions created
- Clear understanding of results and opportunities

Conclusion

The Advertising Research Handbook is an excellent read for researchers, creatives and clients alike. It is an engaging book filled with practical tips. It brings in new perspectives and encourages collaboration for excellence.

