

A discussion of information gathering techniques in consumer studies.

ZMET and Focus Groups

Target Media Group

- **What aspects of ZMET and focus groups are similar? How do they differ?**

Both techniques use small groups of 6 to 10 people in a controlled atmosphere. Both try to elicit the original thoughts from a person rather than pre-determined answers like on a multiple choice survey. Focus groups try to gather key word or reaction responses while the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique only seeks metaphors to describe the subject.

- **What particular features of ZMET could foster a richer understanding of consumers' motives than is typically achieved with focus groups?**

The technique used to elicit metaphors limits the respondent to selecting from other sources of stimuli like magazine clippings to generate the response. Unlike focus groups merely describing the subject with words eliminates the ability of one person in the group to dominate others. It also eliminates the ability for a respondent to tell a researcher what they think the researcher wants to hear. With the metaphor technique a respondent will have to search their feelings about a product to capture an accurate metaphor that describes the subject. Metaphors are thought to be one of the “most powerful and useful organizing and expressive structures of the human mind”

- **Explain how focus group research could lead to inappropriate generalizations about the preferences of the target audience.**

Since focus groups are so small their finding may not be indicative of a much larger audience. Focus group studies will have to be consolidated from multiple trials to reveal a general picture. Other group biases can also occur also arise as mentioned earlier.

Reference

O'Guinn/Allen/Semenik, Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion, 6th ed., Cengage Learning 2012