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BLAB

HANDOUTS

UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER MODULE 2

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This handout is written by students with no intention of replacing university materials.

It is a useful tool for studying the subject, but does not guarantee preparation as exhaustive and complete as the material recommended by the University.





UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER 2

COURSE GOALS

1. Understand and critically utilize the epistemological approaches of **CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY (CCT)** in consumer behavior studies, also drawing on contributions from other disciplines (i.e., cultural anthropology and cultural psychology) -> in this course we study **CONSUMPTION**, after we decide what to do and purchase, we consume the product or service that we bought. Talking about consumption we have to talk about the cultural length, because, in order to understand consumption, is not enough to talk about the rational part of our behavior, but also all the social influences and cultural progressive that come from our environment on the decision-making process.
2. Explore the role of the **cultural variable** in specific areas of everyday consumption.
3. Learn and experiment with **qualitative research methodologies** typical of interpretative research and apply them to a **business project** with...

We need to understand the point of view of consumers, and we have to learn other people behavior.

Understanding consumer behavior is a journey, and it is important to do this journey because it allows us to know consumers within the concept of consumption -> when we do qualitative research we do not listen to consumers' voice from our desktop, but we have to go close to consumer and listen to their voice to understand their behavior and their position from their side.

We leave our desktop, and we go to their homes, within the places where they consume, because it is the best way to understand their behavior.

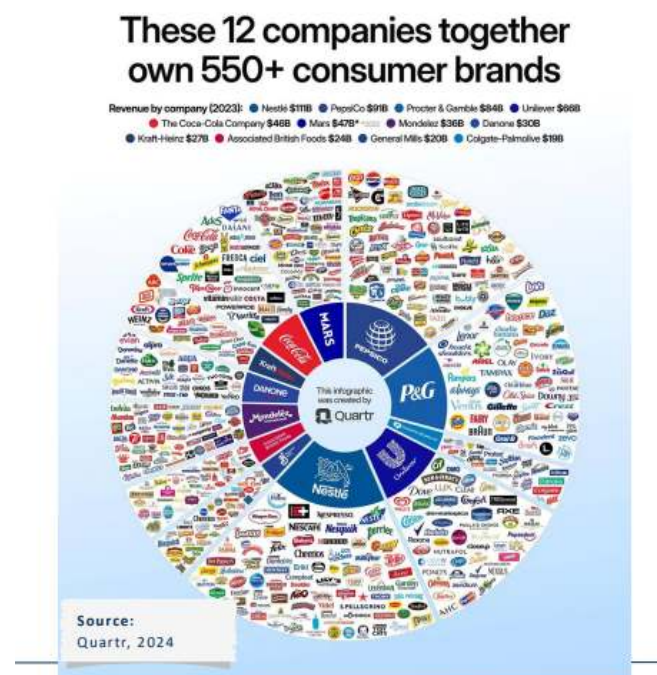
This journey is so important because companies need this kind of information; companies have power because they decide to trust consumer behavior, understanding them, in order to avoid big mistakes that can cost them a lot of money.

The power of company is the power of money invested; moreover, it is important to remember that consumers can perceive things differently => it is important to understand the power position of both firms and consumers and how this relationship is successful when company are able to understand consumer behavior and consumers insights.

This map represents the most powerful multinational company within the world. All those company are the ones who manage the market, and in order to grow they need to earn money because their investor ask them every year to increase their revenues and profits.

How can these company increase the market share, revenues and profits?

- a. Help their consumers to be more aware about their products and services by investing in advertising
- b. Increase the number of brands and products that they have in their portfolio-> innovate and explore new markets is the most requested action by investors
- c. Improving cost efficiency



What do reports about the successful of this new product launch tell us?

Nielsen company, which is a consultant company that collect data, providing consultant both primary and secondary data, thanks to the lot of research that they do about market share, the impact of advertising and so on, write regularly a report in which they investigate how many product that were launched in the market became successful or not -> what happens is that every year those company launched more than 30,000 of new products, that can be also new brands, but many of them are not successful at all. Only 40% of developed products reach the market, and of these 40%, only 60% generates value, while all the other ones are failure. So, after one year, or even before companies stop their production and distribution.

95% of new products launches fail; the main reasons are:

- a. Only 2% of closed companies that launched a new product did not solve any real customer problems
- b. "Lack of preparation" is a common problem in product launches.
- One of the main mistake that these company do is launch a product based not on real insight, but maybe on managers ideas or just based on desktop analysis -> they can think that will be a good idea to be where no companies are present in that space not realizing that maybe that segment is empty because there are no need to be fulfilled.



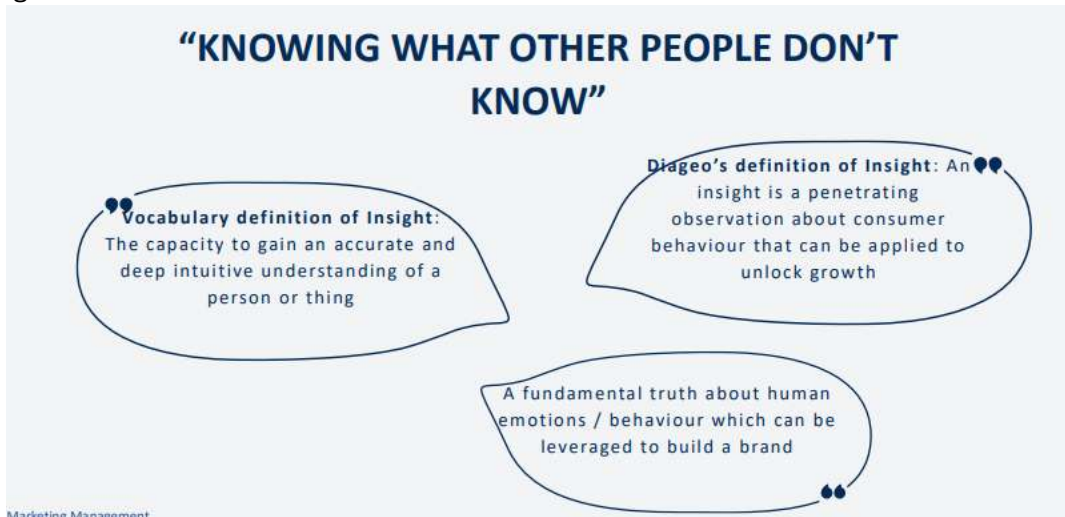
One of the critical success factors is understanding **consumer behavior** to generate **insights**.

Under a practical point of view understand and know consumer behavior means that we have to develop real insights -> once we study consumer behavior we develop a huge amount of knowledge in order to understand which are the insights in the middle of a large number of data, to **make the differnece**.

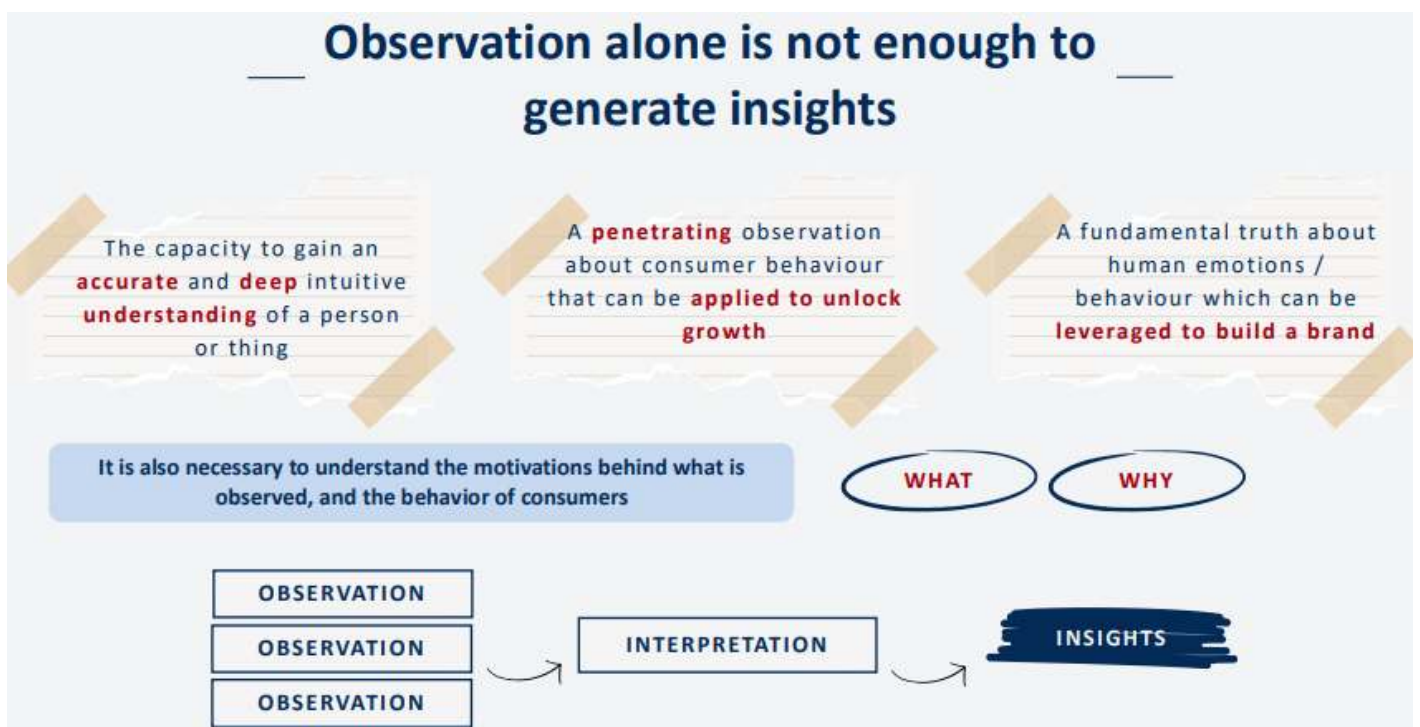
Not all the knowledge that we have about consumer is an insight.

What is an insight?

It is an insight that kind of knowledge that allows a company to be first mover, to better understand the reason why consumers behave in a given way.



Now that problem that the companies have is that they have a lot of data, but they are not always able to use those data in a smart way. In the last year, a lot of important companies, which have big data, are not able to interpret them properly -> what become very important is not only to have a huge volume, but it is important also to manage in a smart way data both quantitative and qualitative data that help companies understanding the meaning behind what people do and say -> we need to go beyond the words of people and the quantitative data that we collect.



Another thing that we need to be aware of is the behavior of contemporary consumers. Company need to invest more on communication and consumers awareness of our product, but we are already exposed to many different kinds of advertising every day and we don't pay attention to them anymore, we are no more impressionable by them. Young people are no longer watch tv, but a lot of firms are still investing a lot on tv advertising maybe because they are not their target.

Consumers are not waiting for YOUR company's products, curious, informed, competent, or benevolent WE NEED TO CATCH CONSUMERS.

Understanding Consumer 2

Another thing that we need to remember is that consumers, even people who belong to the same segment, are very **different from one another**. People sometimes say the same things, but they actually behave in a different way.

EX: People will say “I’m looking for quality”, but this idea of quality is very subjective, it is not the same for everybody. People are different for the age, the culture, the tastes, the background and so on.

EX: GenZ is not just one market, within this generation there are a lot of different segments. Sometimes company forget about that and think that we are all similar!

In their diversity, consumers have a stable point which is **their own habits** -> we need to understand not what people say or like, but what people **DO**, their habits, the way they do things, and they do not change because they are comfortable with that way of doing things.

Understanding consumers habits are very important because we are **overwhelmed by alternatives** -> people do not check all the alternatives, but they stick with one alternative, and they change it only if they are not satisfied, even though the alternative that we choose is not the best for us. It is fundamental for companies to make people to switch and to change their habits -> they have to do a lot of investments.

Moreover, we need to keep in mind that a lot of consumers are not competent (which is not necessarily a negative thing as we cannot be expert in everything) and are **often uninformed** (not knowledgeable) -> we are not really expert, we cannot be expert and so we rely on word-of-mouth, other past experience and it is due to the fact that we do not have technical knowledge about everything, we need to ask for other people opinion and sometimes we do not have the time to ask and check in order to become informed.

Consumers do not speak in scientific terms.



As of 2023, **10.5%** of 18- to 24-year-olds had attained at most a high school degree and then left the education and training system (early leavers).



The share of 25-34-year-olds with a **bachelor's degree** is **30.6%** (far from the European target (45%), significantly lower than the European average (43.1% in the EU27) and other major countries (51.9% France, 52.0% Spain and 38.4% Germany)).

Sometimes, however, consumers are extremely passionate and so involved and/or experts about some product categories investing a lot of energy and time becoming even more informed than the managers -> in fact, at the end of the day, in front of the shelves, the screen, at the table, or at the checkout, **they are the kings and the queens**.

So, *what does it mean to understand consumers?*

We need to understand and be aware that we consume all the time. It is important to understand the decision-making process, so how we make decisions about consumption, but then the largest part of our life is related to consumption, so what we do with what we bought.

Our life as consumers 24/7, 365 days a year...



Even if we are not really interested in fashion for example, we still decide everyday what to wear. In order to go to university, we need transportation means and so on... everything we do during a day is linked to products and services that we CONSUME. Consumption is relevant, we need to study what people do with their stuff, what people do with our brand and secondly, we need to understand what is **culture**, and why we use the cultural lands in order to study consumer behavior.

The value of the cultural perspective

Symbolic consumption is strongly influenced by **culture**, where culture is understood as:

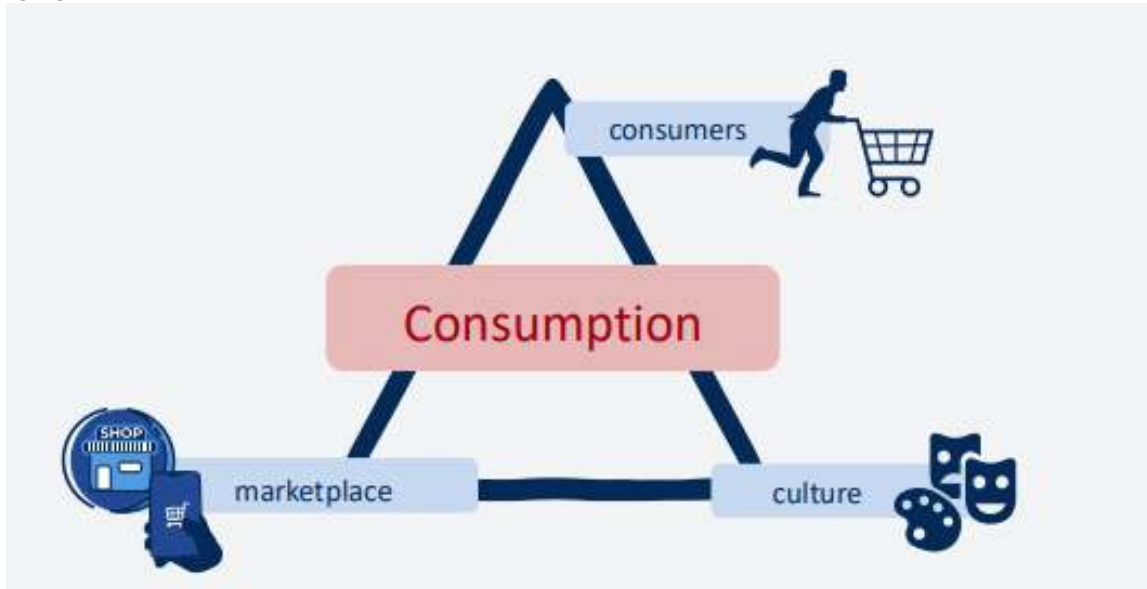
"The interconnected system of commercially produced images, texts, ideas, objects that people use to make collective sense of their environment and to orient their experiences and their lives"

Constructed meanings are ascribed by consumers to situations, objects, social roles, relationships

Culture is
"the very fabric of experience, meaning and action"
(Geertz, 1983)

N.B.: Not in a causal sense, but as orientation and improvisation

In anthropology culture is everything different from nature, everything that it is made by human kind and it is something in which we put our values. Culture is the interconnective system of images, texts, ideas, objects everything that is created by men and that people use to make collective sense of their environment and to orient their experiences and their lives.



So now we are going to study people as consumer, as we are not in an anthropology course, understanding how consumption is used by people to express their identity, their political ideas, ideology and so on. Traditionally the businesses focus was on production and the role of institution as important elements in order to shape our lives; on the other hand, in a cultural perception, we gave more importance to the individual dimension of consumption and social dimension of consumption -> what make us the people we are is not just influenced by companies, production and what they do, but also the way we consume. Our lives are not organized in a world of production, but consumption is one of the most important sides of our sense of self. When we use this approach, we need to study not in a very pragmatic way what people buy, but why people buy something in order to build their self image. It doesn't matter only the brand and the product that we use, but also the way in which we use the thing that we buy and how they build our self image. When we use also the cultural land, we also need to understand how people develop and understand consumption -> we need to learn how to consume (**consumer socialization**= the process that children develop in order to understand how to become consumer in the society. We learn the rules, how to behave, how to choose when we are children and then we change our mind when we grow up). Consumption is important because we use it in order to build our **sense of self**. We have different styles, sense of aesthetic, we appreciate different brand according to who we are and our values.

"CONSUMING" PEOPLE

Consumption is a key activity in the construction of our **individual identity**

Consuming People
From political economy to theaters of consumption
A. Fuat Firat and Nikhilesh Dholakia

- + Our life is not solely centered around work and production

- 👤 Every day, we contribute to the construction and maintenance of our **personal fulfillment** through **consumption and shopping**

- ↔ Not everyone uses the same **modes of self-expression**

Consumption & self-image

The "know how" of consumption

Moreover, we have different kind of selves -> we have personal image, we belong to specific kind of group, meaning by this that we have multiple selves -> the same person can experience different kind of selves.

Understanding Consumer 2

We change our behavior according to where we are -> consumption helps us to express these different kind of selves -> we do not wear the same clothes at university and with our friends or when we are supporting our sport team...

The consumer we are today is influenced by the tools and the toys that we used when we were children, the books that we read.

There are specific kind of brand that are strictly linked to childhood, such as Barbie, Lelly Kelly shoes, the shoes with the lights.

We were exposed to those brand that shaped the consumer we are today -> for example we were exposed to different toys according to our gender.

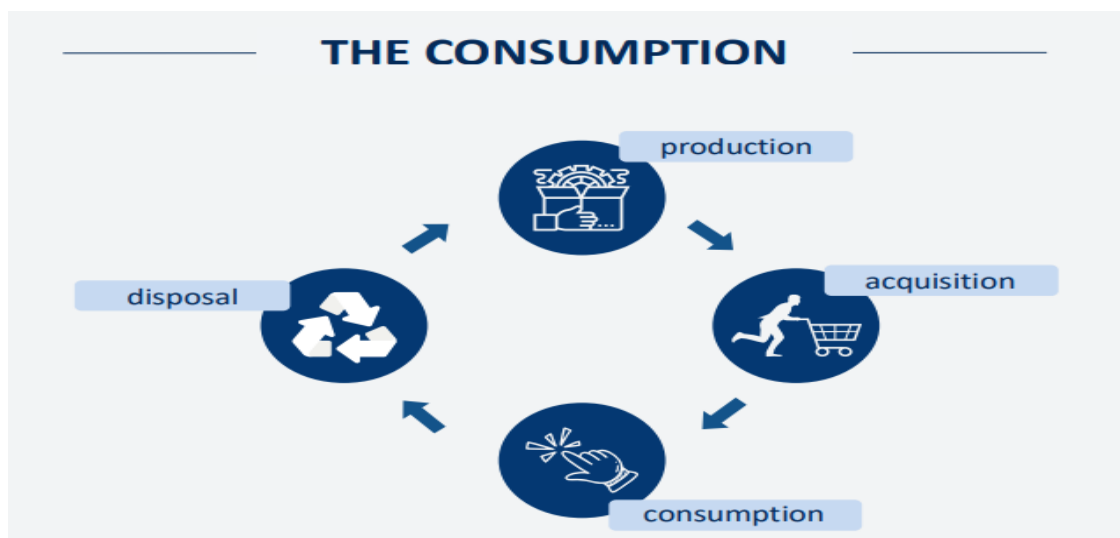


If we were overwhelmed with a certain product when we were children, we do not keep attention, as adults, on the advertising about those products and so become more difficult for firms to serve consumers -> we were spoiled by firms during childhood and now we are less interested in some products or services. That is way a lot of firms are doing research about GenZ.



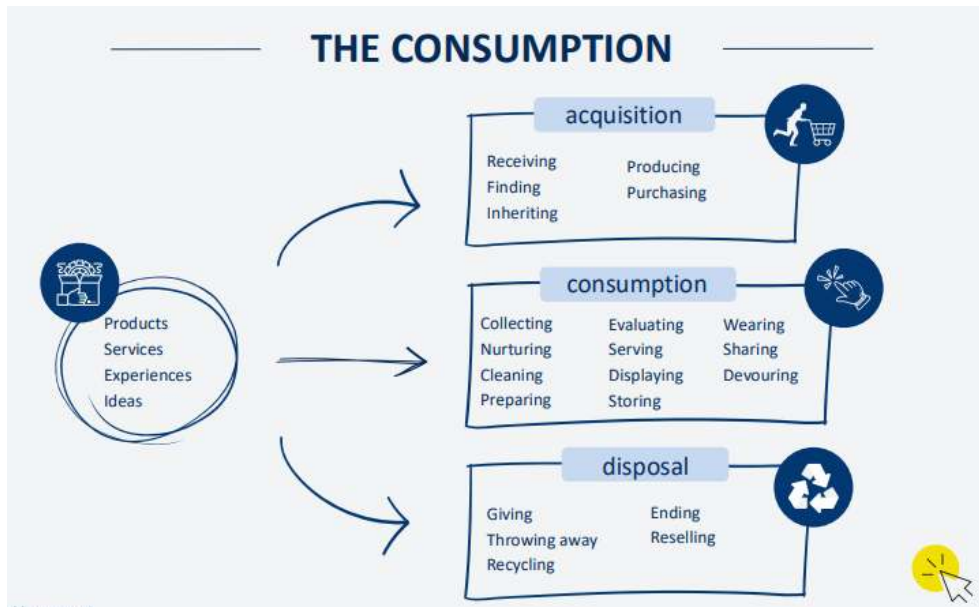
Culture is also in videogames. Nowadays videogames play an important powerful role in shaping culture, communicating values, allow children to understand what is good, bad, right, wrong, helping each other.

THE CYCLE OF CONSUMPTION



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The cycle of consumption is made of course about production, then there is acquisition, which traditionally coincide with purchasing, so decision-making, how people decide how to buy stuff and use them. A lot of literature and theories are concentrated on how to produce in the most effective way, to understand how people evaluate different alternative and desire. But this cycle is also made of two other activities -> what people really do after purchasing goods and services, and how people put in practice disposal strategies.



Let's try to unpack a little bit those dimensions related to consumers.

When we talk about **acquisition** (which is not purchase which is only one way to acquire new customers), we need to understand that acquisition can be divide into different part, understand to different way consumer can use in order to buy new products or services.

- **Receiving** -> the way of gift-giving changes a lot, and we need to understand what people do with the stuff that they receive
- **Finding** -> where, when at what of type of service we have to develop
- **Inheriting**
- **Producing**
- **Purchasing**



When we talk about **consumption** we mean a lot of things:

- **Collecting** -> the people who collect some kind of products have different consumption behavior than those who do not collect that product
- **Displaying** -> The impact of cooking shows on not only the way we cook, but also in the way we display what we are preparing.
- **Storing** -> how people store products, as tell a lot about our identity and tastes
- **Nurturing**
- **Cleaning**
- **Preparing**
- **Evaluating**
- **Serving**
- **Wearing**
- **Sharing**
- **Devouring**

Understanding Consumer 2



If consumer do not see the brand anymore, it is basically useless to advertising.

It is really common that consumer remember the name of some brands even though they are not the ones that they are actually using

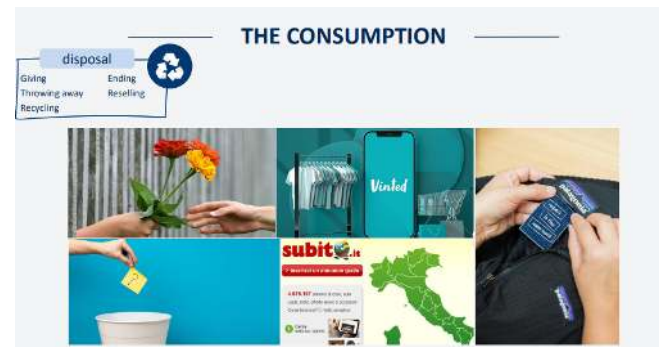
EX: Toothbrush brand -> consumer remember the name of some brands but not the one that they are using.

It is important to understand how people keep the products within their home, how they display

The **disposal** can be the final act of a product or sometimes a new beginning for the product.

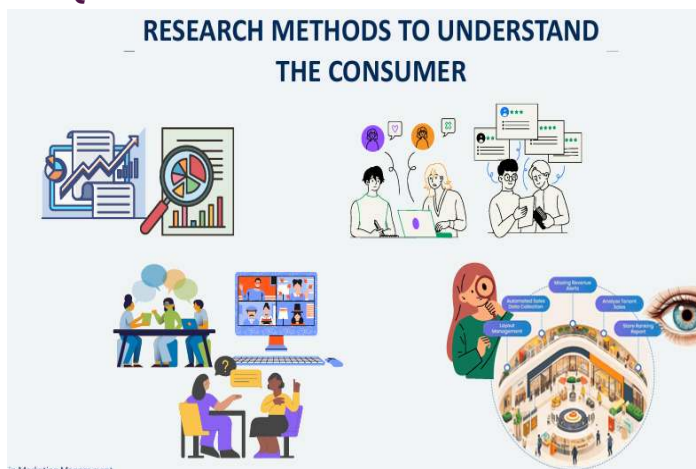
This means that when talking about disposal we must keep in mind these actions:

- **Giving**
- **Throwing away**
- **Recycling**
- **Ending**
- **Reselling** -> a lot of fashion brand are now selling second hand clothes.



Nowadays sustainability become a hot topic, and culture can influence the behavior according to the country in which we grow up (for example sustainability is not perceived as an issue but Chinese GenZ is more sustainable than GenZ people that declare to be sustainable in the western world).

THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS



Marketing research is based on a lot of different tools, methodologies and data collection both qualitative and quantitative.

If we want to work in marketing, it is very important to deal properly with the big data available and be able to recognize the issues and the difficulties linked to research.

practices, habits, rituals, discourses, meanings, ings, ethnography research

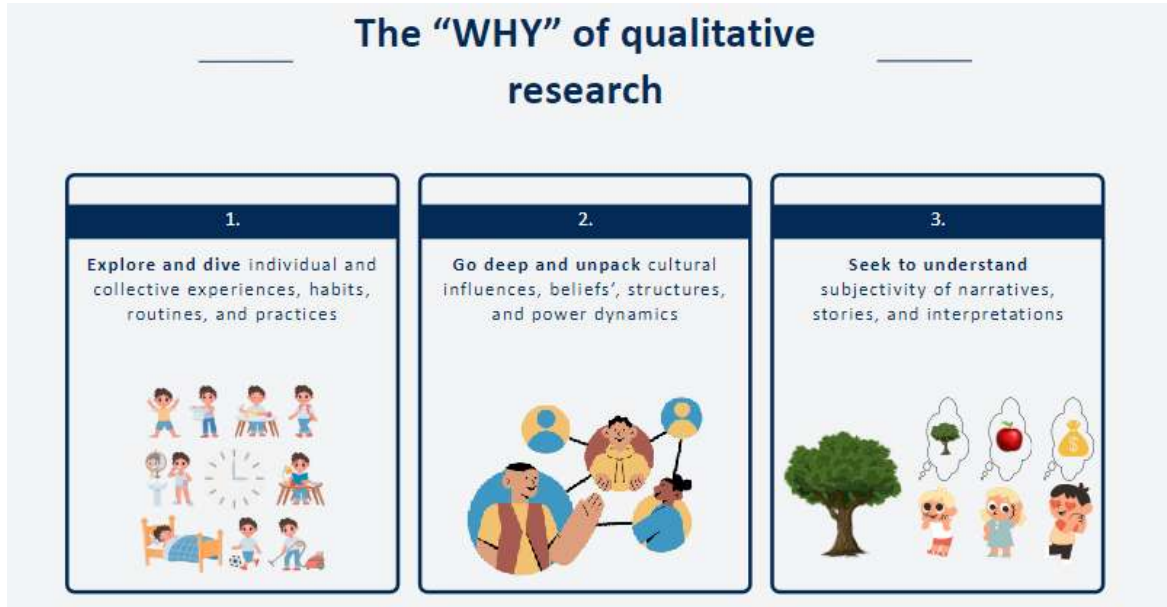
E: measurable aspects of behavior

- Quantity of food consumed of specific brands...
- Socio-demographic characteristics of the consumer

Understanding Consumer 2

When we study a phenomenon, we need both quantitative and qualitative data because each of them tells us something about consumer behavior. So, *why managers ask about a qualitative project?*

Because they need to explore and understand more the variety of behavior; of course, there will be some similarity and beyond people words and stories we will find some common trades, but what we have to understand how much the market outside is complex and made of different people with different perspective. Moreover, qualitative research allows us to understand habits, practices, those way of doing that are difficult to change.



When have to go deep and listen to people because sometimes people use the same vocabulary, but they are meaning different kind of things; other times we use some products, but we are not aware about them because we do not remember the brand or again, we are convinced that we have a certain brand but actually when we check it is another brand.

People see the same thing in different way, people have different starting point, people have different stories, different experiences and we need to understand how past experiences and mental model have an impact on reaction and perception of people.

It is fundamental to do face-to-face interviews as it is easier to understand consumer.

In order to avoid being trapped by our mental model it is advisable to not interview the people that we know, because we need to go in depth.

We need to listen to people voice, we have to talk with them in a very free and open way, not forcing them to say one thing or another and it is very important to observe also their behavior -> if we are lucky enough to interview people within their home we can observed them in their environment. In main cases what is more important data is not what people say, but what they reveal in other ways.

EX: people may say “I’m not into brand. For me logo is not important, is not an issue”, but them observing them we can see that they are wearing a lot of brand stuff with evident logo -> they say something, but they behave in a different way, maybe because they have an idea of brand different to mine.

If we can do interviews within people home let us have an idea about their tastes, about the things they like to be surrounded by, and we can ask them to show us things. If we can not do that, we have to think in advance how to collect this kind of information.



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Finally, it is important to study in depth the vocabularies, because people can use specific adjective, specific words and they have a rhetoric, but the way they tell things is very important. We also need to make comparison since people can use the same adjective, but they think about completely different kind of things -> The idea of beauty for someone is not the idea of beauty that I have in my mind; as well high quality can be perceived as different from the interviewer perspective.

We need to go in depth and understand what does it means to work with consumers, not use our own categories to understand all the meanings behind words and stories.



Qualitative research **can not quantify through number**, but it doesn't mean that we cannot use the range -> instead of asking how much they spend for sweater, we can ask why brand they usually buy and then check the price. Or again it is wrong to ask how many coffees a person have during the day.

We need to find other way to help people quantify somehow, even using gesture to quantify and give us an idea without using numbers.

We **cannot demonstrate the real WHY** people do or not do something, but we can identify different reason why behind these behaviors -> of course we cannot generalize our experience to understand the reason why people behave the way they behave.

We **cannot verify theories and hypothesis**, but we can provide evidence about consumer behavior anyway. can use other method to help us quantifying the quantity -> our goal is just identifying the different kind of behavior, and only in a second step we can check the impact of each behavior.

"The idea of interpretation is not agreement but understanding" Donal Davison



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EXPLORATORY RESEARCH: when there is a phenomenon that is very new, we have to explore and understand what to ask to people.

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH: the phenomenon is already known, but we need to take a picture of it, we need be able who are the different kind of consumers, which are the different segments and different kind of behavior -> we want to know how, when, where and what people consume, so it doesn't explain the why that is something that I can only suppose and identify through insights.

CAUSAL RESEARCH: we need to understand the causality and the relationship between marketing factors and research problems, try to find a way to demonstrate the why.

Sometimes we start with qualitative others with quantitative, so it really depends on the projects and their nature and the research questions that we have to answer to.

THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Researchers are "research tools" (Belk et al., 1989)

- 🔍 Culture and personal experiences influence what we see/can see. Our initial value system affects our interpretation and attribution of meanings
- 🔍 Human perception is highly selective. Different people will see different things
- 🔍 What we see depend on our prior knowledge, on our opinions, background and ideas




Another important thing that we need to remember when we do qualitative, but also quantitative, research is that as researchers we are tools because the research is based on our own perception, we have a huge impact on the research -> our own personal experience, our gender, age and anything that is related to our personal experience with the product category has an impact on our behavior and the way we research. If we are positive towards the category, we have a positive attitude and vice versa.

It is so very important to listen to the consumer voice and forget personal attitude towards a product to not be biased and be not able to identify the insights that we need, as we are not the entire market.

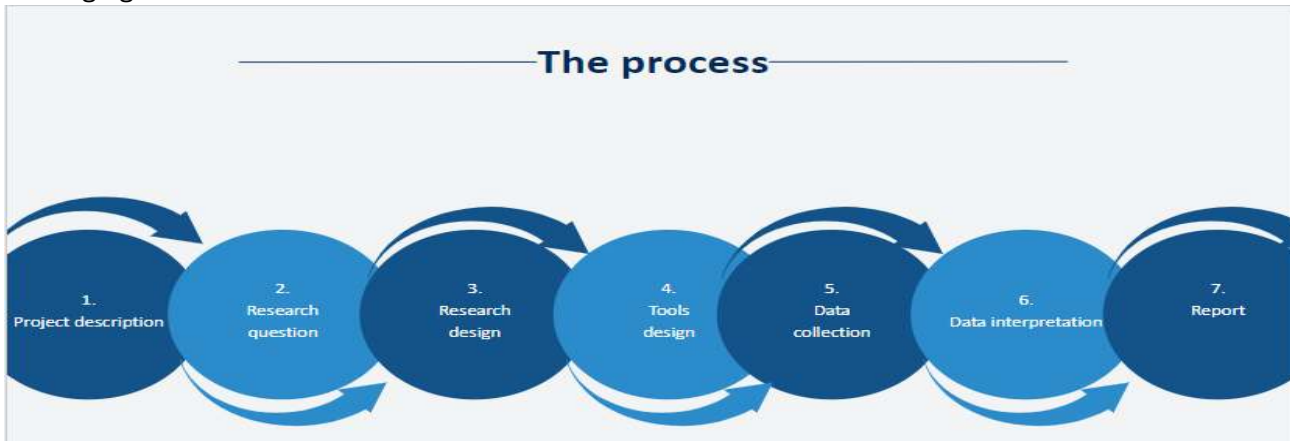
Qualitative research is not objective as quantitative research, so it is important to take into account those aspects and not judge or imposed our ideas to consumers -> we have to take this aspect into account when we design our research.

When we interview people...

Think that we understand everything

There could be a misunderstanding between different cultures when we interview people.

The people we are as research can have a huge impact.



1. **Project description** -> understand the issue, the main problem. Define the problem from the very beginning can be risk because make us a little bit blind, while describing it means that we are just providing the context

Focus: limit the problem or the phenomenon, defining the boundaries within which the project is positioned

Start with a **desk analysis** to gather existing data (databases, online netnography, etc.)

Stereotypes? Verify and eliminate a priori misunderstandings and implicit assumptions

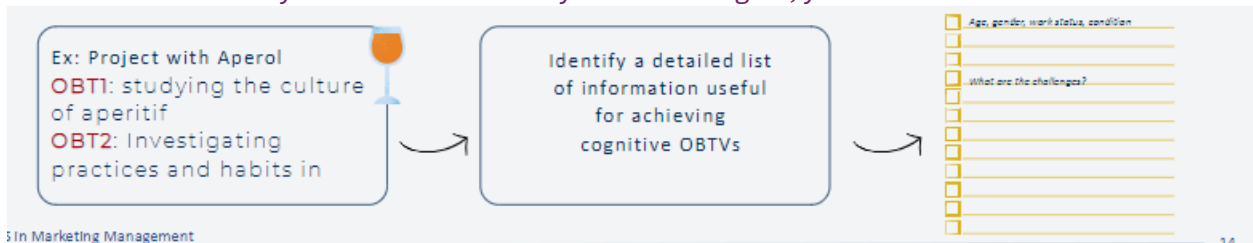
“What do we really need to know/understand?”

2. **Research question** -> identify research priorities, investigate consumers as a whole in order to understand why or why not the use a product. If not ask we can know information about our audience. It is a strategic moment, so it is important the define very clearly and in detail the information that we want to collect.

Research goals setting: identifying knowledge priorities

Key information: identifying, consequently, the information necessary to meet those research objectives

“If you do not know what you are looking for, you won't find it”



3. **Research design** -> identify the best way for data collection

- **Selection of methods**

Consistency: Since each research method has its strengths and limitations, the method(s) selected should be those that are most consistent with the identified informational needs

-> about some topics people can be shy and so focus groups are not the best solution


*(If the topic is **sensitive** – such as caregiving rituals, body image – it is better to **prioritize individual interviews** and avoid participant observation...)*

Feasibility: The definition of the optimal method should be compared with its feasibility (access to information, required time, necessary/available resources, researchers' expertise, etc.)

- **Sampling: number of people involved**

In qualitative research, not many people are involved; sometimes just a few dozen or even fewer in the case of ethnographic studies or tests (more when there is some form of heterogeneity)

Tool	N° people involved
<i>Interviews</i>	At least 15 for homogeneous groups, between 20 and 60 for heterogeneous groups (but even more if the research is extensive)
<i>Focus group</i>	Minimum 2/3 groups of 8/10 people
<i>Eyetracking</i>	Minimum 39 people
<i>Usability test</i>	Minimum 5-8 people

 Remember that in our course, we are conducting a small-scale research project. Typically, the groups are heterogeneous, so you wouldn't involve just 15 people (unless it's for in-depth ethnographic research)

With focus groups it is possible that people change their mind because the communication done by mates can be sometimes more effective than institutional communication.

It is really important to interview people in depth, otherwise even a 100 sample, if interviewed superficially, are not enough.

If the first 8 people are unhappy with a new product, we can be sure that also the population won't give us positive results, while if the first 8 people are happy and satisfy, we can be sure that we can start the quantitative research about the product.

- *Sampling: the ideal informant*

Structural characteristics: The first basis for evaluating an informant is the consistency between the informational needs/research objectives and the subject's structural characteristics (socio-demographic, psychographic, relationship with the product, etc.)

Willingness to share: Another criterion to consider is the willingness to collaborate

Ability to articulate: Finally, it's also important to assess the informant's ability to abstract, metaphorize, reflect, create associations, etc.

Sampling criteria (one or mix of the following apply):

- Max homogeneity VS. variety and contrast (Miles & Huberman, 1984)
- Existing theory/knowledge and past experience
- Intensity of relationship to phenomenon
- Snowballing
- Opportunism and randomness
- Negative cases -> people that can be potentially our target but that don't use the product, so it is important to understand why they do not use it

4. **Tool design**

Identification of necessary tools (what do we need to collect the data?): notebook, recording device (do we have enough memory, battery, charging cable, video camera, etc.),...

Consent forms (privacy information): prepare the forms for data processing authorization

Data collection tools: develop the protocols and/or grids for the interviews

Stimuli for projective techniques: newspapers for collages, photographs, etc

5. **Data collection**

Interruption in data collection: it depends on:

- When we have a broad and rich "representation" of the various possible cases (we might reflect the criteria of quantitative sampling even if we don't have the sample size)
- When the collected data no longer provides new insights (redundancy)
- When the constraints are insurmountable (end of available time, episodic nature of the phenomenon, lack of resources, etc.)
- I can anticipate the answer of my interviewees, that is when I can interrupt my research data collection

6. **Data interpretation**

Transcription: verbatim transcription of interviews, focus groups, netnography, field notes, etc.

Reiteration: repeated reading to identify recurring elements

Coding: assigning codes to these recurring elements

Thematization: grouping multiple codes into themes

Connecting themes to research questions

Triangulation: methodological, informant, member checking, etc

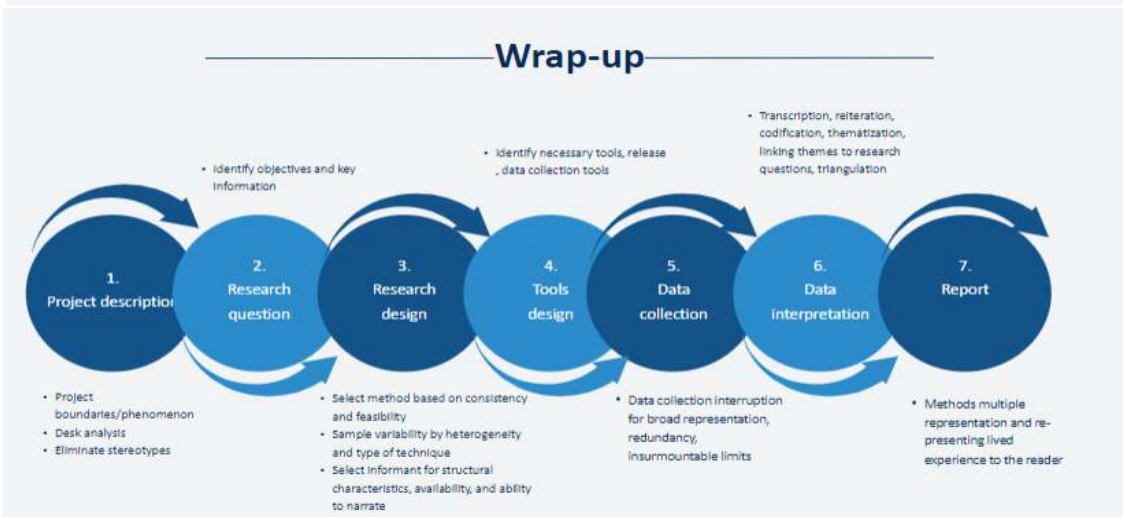
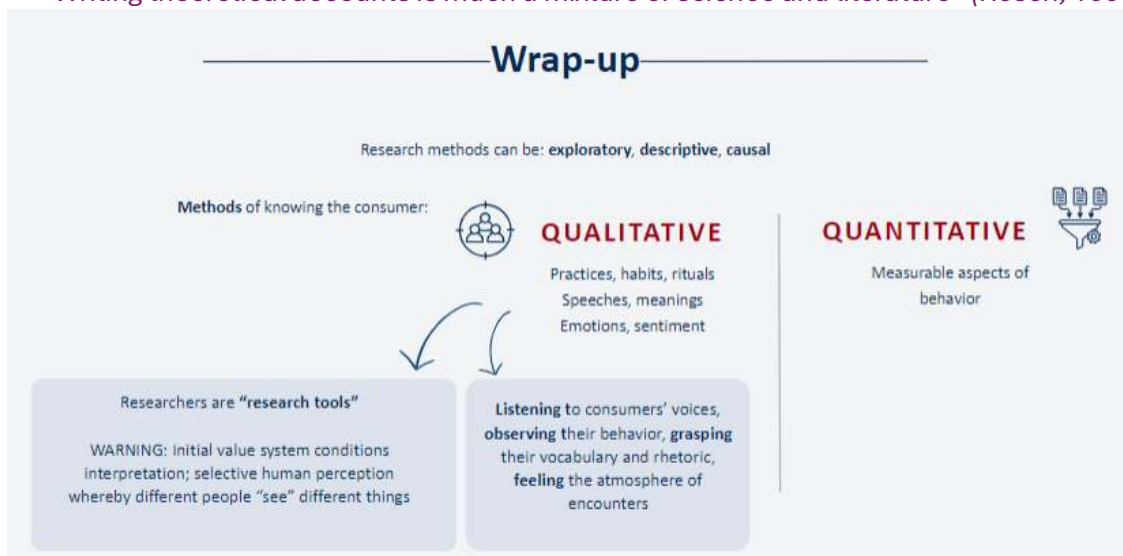
7. **Report**

Leveraging Data Richness

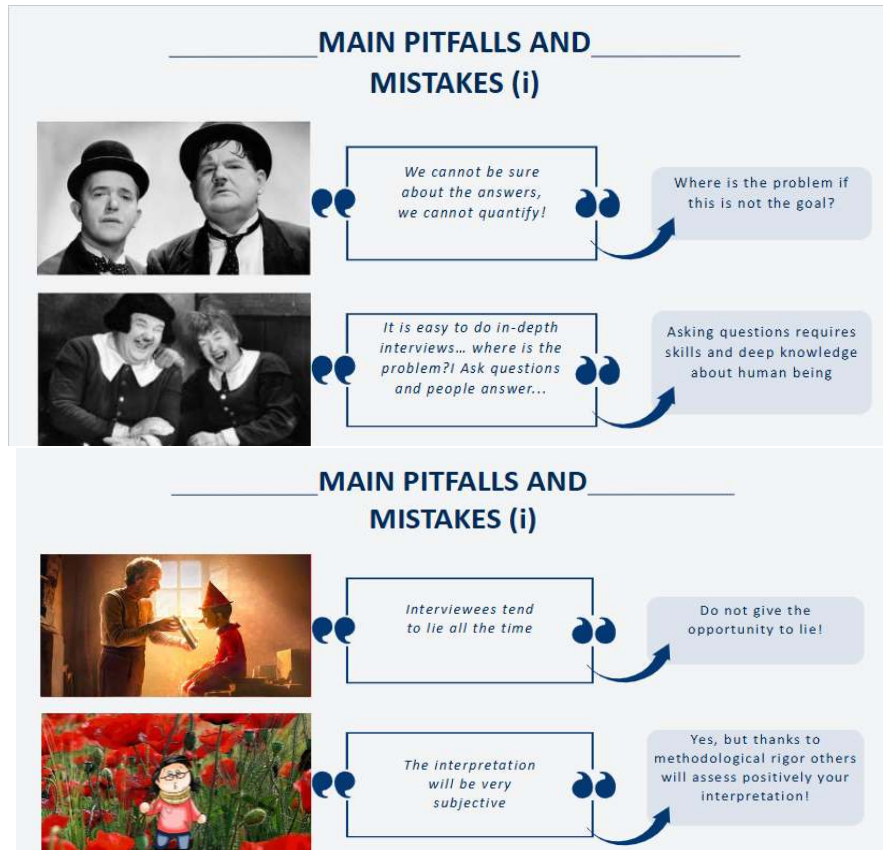
Use multiple representation methods when possible (selected video clips, photographs)

Aim to convey to the reader and listener the same experience that the consumer has undergone and that you analyzed firsthand

“Writing theoretical accounts is much a mixture of science and literature” (Rosen, 1991: 18)



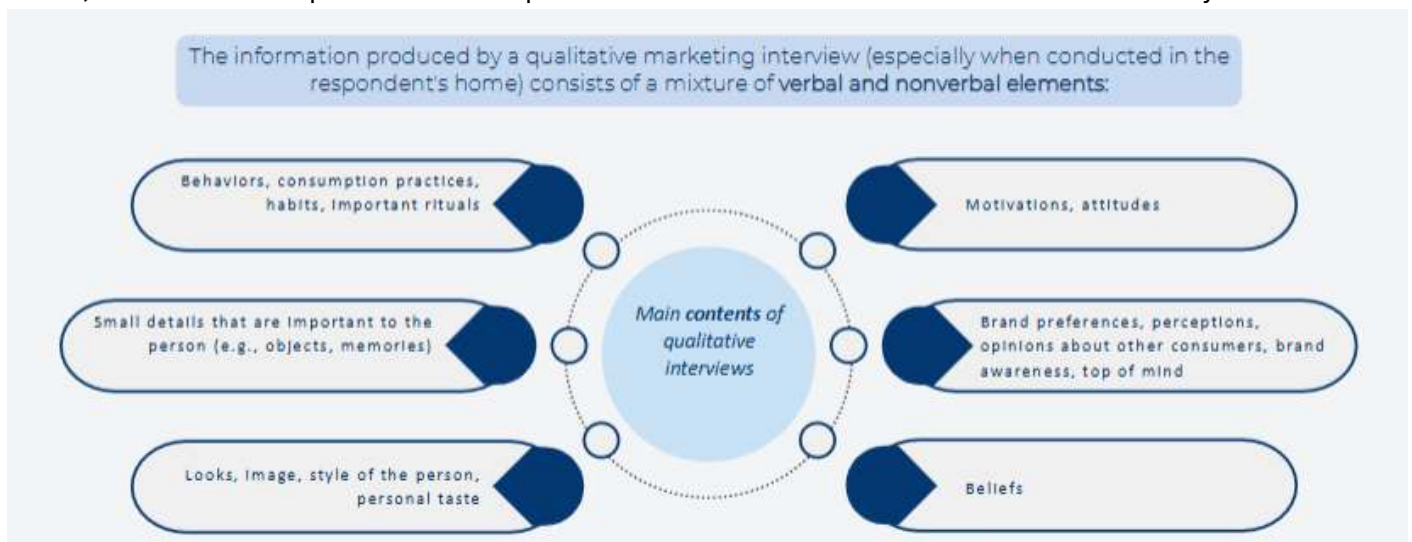
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS



The qualitative interview

Qualitative research is a **micro social relationship** (temporary relationship) whose effectiveness is determined by the interviewer’s ability to generate identification processes.

During the process the respondent and interviewer « **negotiate** » shared understanding of the « meanings » of questions and answers. The effectiveness of the negotiation depends on the content and the way questions are asked, and answers are perceived -> it depends on the skills of the interviewer and his/her ability to listen.



The in-depth interview

Not all the qualitative interviews can be defined as in-depth inter views...

Studying behavior in depth means not only «talking» with consumers but grasping their experiences, the **senses of their actions**, and the **roles of consumption in the construction of the self**.

The questions the interviewer asks are aimed at pushing the respondent **toward critical observation of self and one’s actions** and making explicit the outcomes of this reflection -> in-depth interviews, give consumers the opportunity to reflect about their life, since most of the time consumers do things automatically, just

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because there are used to behave in a certain way.

It often matters more to **observe** what **people do**, to be able to notice **inconsistencies** between what they state and how they actually appear.

YOUR GOAL: TO KNOW IN DEPTH PEOPLE...

Through in-depth interviews your goal is to know consumers, their demographic, **personal STORIES**, backgrounds, everyday life, aspirations, desires, needs, EVERYTHING!

You need to be guided by the interviewees into their habits, their world, their daily routines.

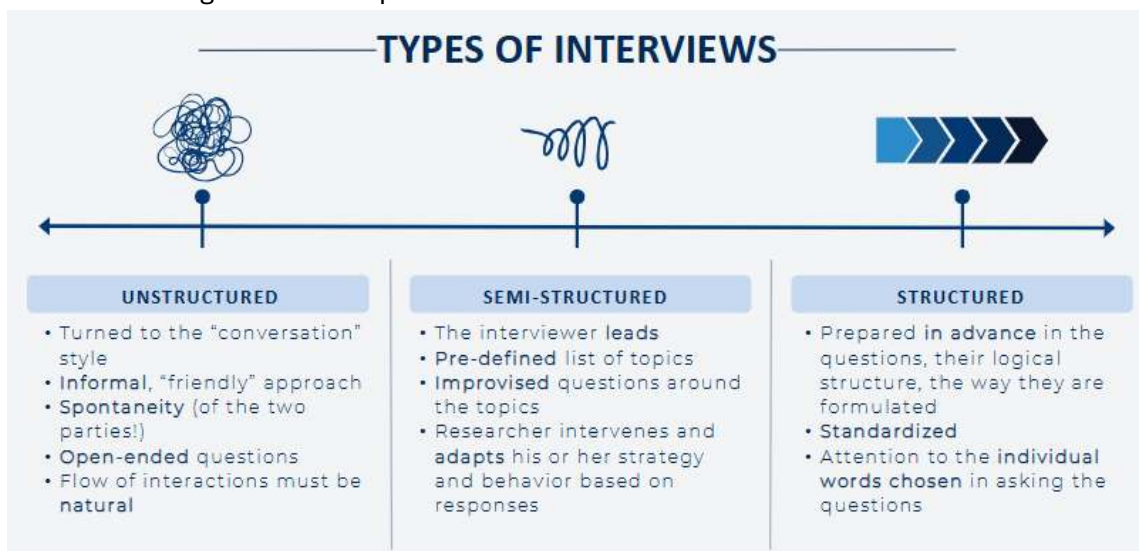
In addition to the central topic of the research (ex. probiotics), you must select **at least 3 or 4 other areas of consumption** that are useful for getting to know the informant as a "person." This will enable you to develop **consumer profiles (personas)**.

During an in-depth interview we can collect data about their behaviors of the interviews, what they do, what they consume, their lifestyle, how they feel their self-image and so on.

When we interview people within the homes, it is very useful because we can learn more about those people, because we see also the environment, so the design of the house, the objects they put in their rooms and so on.

Then it's important also to understand the motivation, general attitudes, and the preferences of our consumers. Finally, when we provide personas, we need to know everything about those people, not just age, gender, but we need to know their behaviors, their desires, their aspirations, their values. What they're looking for in the product category, their habits related to the product category-> we need to ask them about these topics since if we don't ask that information, we cannot invent them and usually we need very precise kind of data.

There are three main categories of in-depth interviews.



UNSTRUCTURED: very experienced researchers that are able to ask questions as an informal conversation

STRUCTURED: the research done online, when all the people have the same questions in the same order

SEMI-STRUCTURED: are in the middle since we have to be spontaneous, but with a prepared list of questions that can be asked, and are written in the proper way -> guidelines

The role of social and information sources

For the purpose of marketing research, it is important to know the **information sources** used by consumers (it seems obvious, but we forget to ask...).

What do they read? How do they inform themselves? What programs do they watch on TV or other platforms?

If people have **social profiles** study them, use them for the purposes of your knowledge. Observe what they post, how they present themselves (especially if it features the brand you are interested in!), who they follow, who they would never follow...

What we investigate in qualitative research is typically something new, that is emerging phenomenon and so it is important to have direct data from consumers.

WHERE AND HOW TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS




- ✓ The ideal place is **familiar spaces** for respondents, places where their imprint, style, tastes can be observed (e.g., home, office)
- ✓ The general rule is always to choose places where the informant can be **comfortable** (market research company headquarters, ad hoc rooms that are cozy and quiet)
- ✓ Quiet places are necessary to have **quality recordings** without any disturbing factors
- ✓ If possible video-record interviews to have video material to use in presentations (activating Teams or Zoom is useful to enable transcription already)

Guide to conducting: the grid

The first thing that we have to do when preparing an interview is create a very detailed list of information that we want to collect -> **N.B.** is it not important to have a long list, what is important is how the list is detailed.

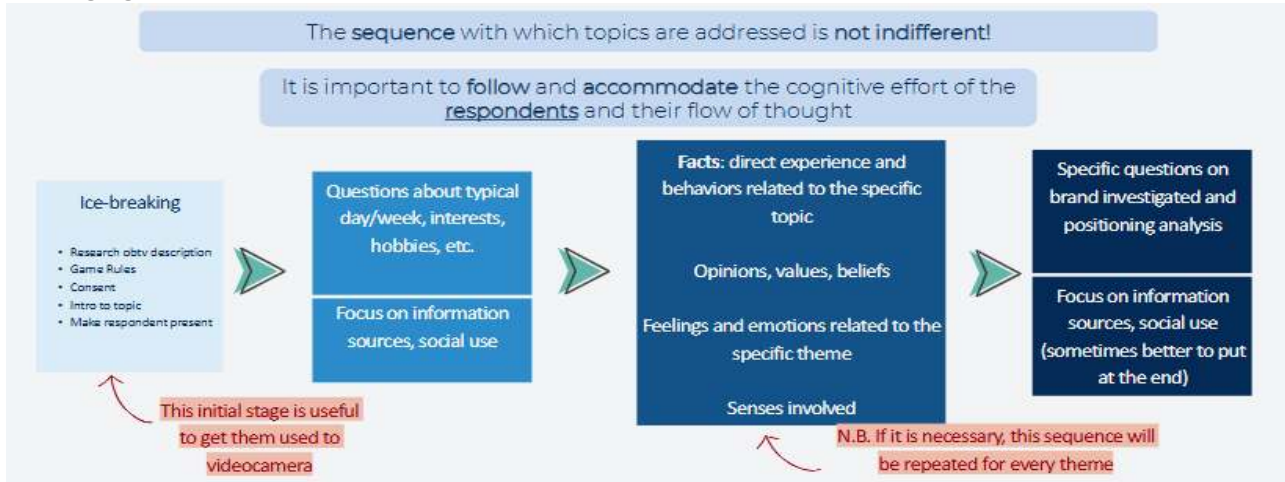
Then we have to organize all the information collected during the brainstorming phase and then to group them according to a logic flow.

Finally, we have to define how to transform the information, the item of the shopping list, into questions or project techniques to investigate the chosen topics.

STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR GRID	01	Topics	Create a list of topics related to the research questions to be addressed
	02	"Shopping list"	For each topic prepare a very thorough "shopping list" (i.e., ALL the data you need to collect around that topic)
	03	Logical groups	Organize the topics (4 or 5 normally) into logical groups useful not only for investigating the central phenomenon but for getting to know the person (see next slide) - NB: topics that may influence others should be postponed
	04	Questions / techniques	Turn these topics into direct questions and/or projective techniques, tasks for respondents to do

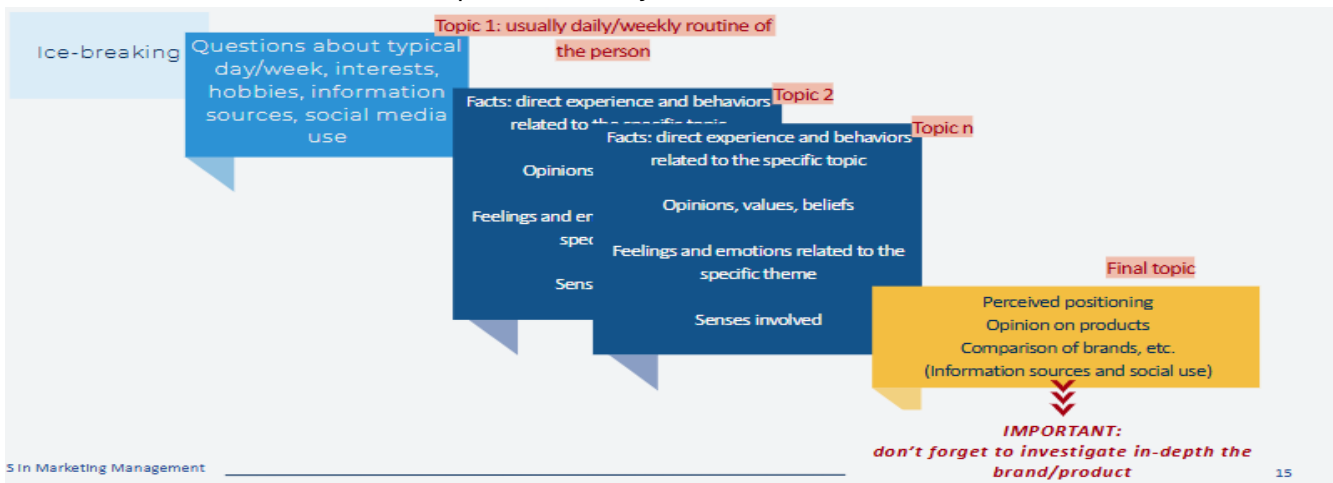
How to order the topics

Understanding Consumer 2



When doing an in-depth interview our goal is to make the cognitive work of the interviewee low as much as possible, since they do not have to feel fatigue. They have to be comfortable; they have to enjoy the time that they spend with us.

Talking about the sequence, we have to start with the simple topic, things that for the people are easy to deal with and then go to the more complex one towards the end because then people will be immersed in the topic and so will be able to answer to those questions easily.



Facts first and preferences later

Knowledge of facts, behaviors, practices, and habits are indispensable. It is essential to investigate opinions, preferences and attitudes but **WITHOUT** knowing what people buy, eat, do, use, consume, all data on perceptions lose usefulness.

Don't just ask what people like or purchase criteria...



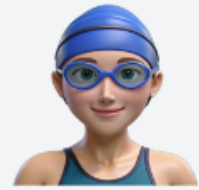


THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTS

Mara is 43 years old, a competitive swimming teacher, has 2 sons aged 8 and 12 who play basketball, a husband who is an accountant. In her limited spare time she enjoys cooking and gardening.

She dresses sporty (she buys everything online at Nike.com, Adidas.com, Zalando.com or at Decathlon) but when she can she loves to wear heels and vintage clothes that she buys at flea markets during vacations or away trips for her team's competitions (she is great at unearthing beautiful pieces that look good on her). For her family, she buys fresh fruits and vegetables at the neighborhood store, many products from the Viaggiator Goloso at the supermarket near her home, and for the rest she buys a lot online (from Esselunga or Carrefour or Amazon prime) because she has limited minutes. She loves having a clean and tidy house and is even willing to change brands of cleaners and appliances for this. She is currently enthusiastic about her Dyson vacuum cleaner and Dash's new caps.

When she can spare some time for herself she goes to Sephora and buys makeup from Chanel, Dior (although she hardly uses them she loves them) and perfumes of all kinds. She reads a lot and with her husband collects vinyls (they have more than 600 of them).



THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTS

Claudia is 38 years old, a divorce lawyer, single, works in Milan and loves fashion and design very much.

She always dresses in a refined and sophisticated way. She might even spend crazy money on a designer dress.

She loves to travel and discover new places, foods and cultures.

She prefers warm destinations and enjoying every comfort, branded and quality products because she believes it is important to pay attention to her purchases, what she eats and consumes in general.

She considers herself a person who keeps herself fit, up-to-date and informed.

She happens to buy supermarket groceries or fashion accessories online.



Do we know Mara or Claudia better? -> Mara

Facts matter in research! (but we may have already said that)

How to set up questions

General advice

The **flexibility** of the interview does not mean "improvise", rather it means that the interviewer has to be able to adapt to the respondents' behavior. Few guidelines help to overcome difficulties:

- Give little preliminary explanation, just the minimum to reassure and introduce the topic
- Be spontaneous
- LISTEN WELL TO ANSWERS, ASK FOR CLARIFICATION, ETC.
- Always ask for insights into what is being said, details
- **NEVER** ask **why** -> when we have to explain the reason behind our behavior we can feel judged; the reason why we can not ask why are mainly two: the first one is because when we ask people about their job and so on is to help them to open the box of memory and if we ask why, we ask people to switch to structure, we ask people to do a different kind of exercise, which is not the best thing. The second reason is that people maybe never thought about the why so they start invented an answer which is not the real one.

Understanding Consumer 2

- Encourage to continue, express interest (perhaps repeat last words said)
- Use pauses to make people think -> use also secondary questions in order to let people understand that we care about what they are saying
- Always ask at the end, “Do you have anything to **add** that I didn't ask you?”

WHAT TO ASK FOR: THE IMPORTANCE OF DETAIL

Check the details with the facts...



We should not make informants feel like liars (!) but help them reflect on **actual behaviors and practices**

Ask simple, clear and direct questions

- Start by asking the **FUNDAMENTAL** (and **OBVIOUS**) thing about the phenomenon to be investigated: **WHAT** do they consume? **HOW**?
- Then **gradually** try to figure out which brand, what they like, what they don't like, where they buy, etc., how they do things, what emotions they experience
- Don't ask “**leading**” questions (“Do you think brand or product X is...?” NOT GOOD, DIRECT THE ANSWER)
- Questions should always be like “Tell me about...,” “What if I told you now XXX what comes to mind...”
- Do not harness questions according to your categories or leading to simple “NO” (e.g., NOT “Do you drink a lot of coffee?... BUT “Let's talk about coffee...”)

How to manage social desirability bias -> the bias that rises when the interviewed do not say what he/she really does, but automatically, spontaneously, and without lying, he/she say what society expect from him/her. There are topics on which people instinctively tend to give an image of themselves that adheres to what society wants. Let's not encourage them even more!

A typical theme is behaviors related to environmental sustainability:

“Let's talk about the environment and sustainability...Are you aware of the environmental problems that have emerged in recent years?... If you are in front of a product with sustainability certification, do you buy it more willingly?”

Not the best question (it is also leading)... better to be told **what their practices are**, we are now obligated by many regulations to be sustainable...

Each question has a level of detail. After the first response **go deeper** by asking for details, examples...

Q: "Where do you do your shopping?"
A: "Usually in the store and sometimes online."

CAN YOU BE SATISFIED? NO... then carry on like this:

Q: "Interesting...which stores? And where online?"
R: "..."

If you don't have the data, you can't guess you...unless you can read minds (!)

FAVOR: CONCRETE VS. ABSTRACT


Do not ask **vague** questions such as "what is your relationship with technology?" WILL NOT LEAD TO HELPFUL ANSWERS.

Better to ask for details through questions that detect **concrete facts** or use **projective techniques**:


"What technological devices do you use? When do you use them? How, can you explain? Let's talk about it..."


In a case like this, ask for descriptions, use photos, etc. Observe their cell phone, etc.

"What is your relationship with food?" 


"Let's talk about nutrition-can you tell us what you usually eat? Let's start with breakfast..." - (or ask for pictures of their dishes for a week) 


HOW TO FOCUS ON FACTS AND NOT PREFERENCES

 "Do you prefer outdoor or indoor sports?"
"Do you prefer individual or group sports?"



>>> Is it okay as a question? So and so...It is risky, it might only bring out the wishful thinking, the "would like but can't" without the researcher realizing it

 "What sports do you play? What do you like about these sports compared to others?"
"I've been playing basketball since I was 6 years old, it's my life, I can't imagine myself without this sport."

 "You said you can't do sports but would like to. What would you like to practice?"

This way you have the double data...it is richer and more objective

>>> Attitudes and preferences need to emerge later in order to make comparisons between ideal and current self (and figure out what company can do to close that gap)

Do not impose a priori categorizations! It is important not to impose concepts and categorization **a priori** (unless they are part of the specific objectives of the research). Do not set the research based on your own preconceptions and prejudices...

Ex: Interview about SMART HOME

Ask consumers what **THEY** mean by Smart Home -
DO NOT set up a priori questions about concepts
of security, comfort, or any other benefit you
imagine is related to the concept.

After interviewees spontaneously bring up
meanings that are important to them go in depth
about their answers.


A: "For me, the technology I use in the home
must be safe, 100 percent."
Q: "What do you mean by secure? Can you
explain further?"

How to investigate the selection criteria?


If you have to investigate consumer preferences, how they evaluate products or services, the reasons behind their choices, the criteria they apply to evaluate them, etc., never IMPOSE or PROPOSE these factors.

This is not done in qualitative research. Our goal is to get into the minds of consumers and understand what THEIR criteria are, not impose YOUR criteria.

(Later, with QUANTITATIVE research - and NOT now - you will check for how many consumers the items that have emerged are widespread in the population)



"Now rate according to the following factors (quality, taste, price, and convenience) the coffee brands you see on this sheet"



THEY have to tell you the factors!!

How to avoid researcher bias?

Remember to construct the grid with **simple questions** that follow people's **consumption** process without starting from your pre-conceptions (e.g. On the importance of the time they spend performing actions or price they are willing to pay)



EX: "How much time do you spend on your daily meals. What about cooking?"

Not the best as a question...better to be told what their meals are like, where and how they eat them, what they eat...There is a **bias** here, it is assumed that it is important to investigate the value of time before even getting to know people (This question was asked by people who consider time important...but is it important to everyone?)



EX: "How much are you willing to spend on a pair of sunglasses?"

Start first by asking what are the factors based on which they choose glasses then gradually get to the price This should not be the **first question** to ask (unless it is a specific goal of the research) -> they are really sensitive questions, so they cannot be used as ice-breaker questions

Investigate quality -> what is quality for me is not necessarily quality for others

Almost always in research we talk about **quality**, value for money, referring to products, services...

This is one of the **vaguest** concepts and each person has **ITS** concept of quality in his head. We can NEVER assume that we interpret correctly what the person in front of us means; therefore, we have a **deontological obligation** to investigate it, to always ask the concept to which the person being interviewed refers with simple

Understanding Consumer 2
and concrete questions.

One of the main causes of dissatisfaction and failure in marketing is precisely because of this misalignment.

Ex: "You said you choose food for your baby based on quality; can you tell me what you mean? What are the elements that you evaluate? Can you give an example?"

"You mentioned quality...What makes an item of clothing quality and what does not? How do you figure that out? Can you show me examples? Can you name brands that are quality for you?... Which ones are not?"



Never think of doing small quantitative questionnaires based on factors that you have in your head...

The sensitive questions about budget...

Questions about available budget, income, average spending, etc. are always sensitive.

Never address them at the beginning of the interview, they can often be avoided in qualitative interviews if you see that people are embarrassed to touch the topic.

Proxy questions are used to collect hard data by always asking for detailed information about **consumption, purchases** and so on...

"Let's talk about Christmas gifts to friends...What do you usually give each other? Can you tell me what you gave your best friend last Christmas?"

"Where did you go on vacation last year? Tell....Interesting.... How did you choose the hotel? Can you describe it to me?"

Always investigate how they relate to products/brands being investigated in depth!

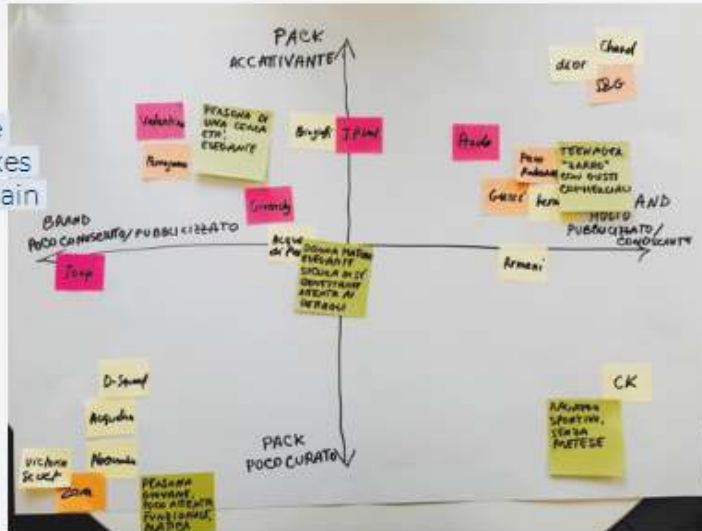
IMPORTANT: In all marketing research you must never forget to include questions or techniques that investigate in depth **commonly consumed brands, brand awareness, top of mind, analysis of perceptions and experiences of brands** in the market, perceived positioning and so on of the product/service/brand you are investigating and the competitors -> ask this kind of questions at the end of the interview so they do not influence their answer about their behavior towards the category.

Have everything done in a way that facilitates storytelling using **visual material**.

FIRST make consumers tell what they **KNOW** and **EXPERIENCE** and only then propose visual stimuli to test their reactions.

ALWAYS INVESTIGATE HOW THEY RELATE TO PRODUCTS/BRANDS BEING INVESTIGATED IN DEPTH!

They choose the variables on the axes and make you explain them!



It doesn't matter if in the end we don't have a 100% accurate map but we will have authentic data on their perceptions!

Wrap-up

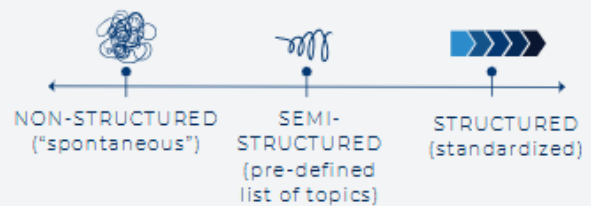
Qualitative interview: **micro social relationship** in which respondent and interviewer "negotiate" shared understanding of "meanings" of questions and answers.

The contents of the interviews are:
behaviors, practices, consumption habits, rituals, small details important to the person, looks, image, style, personal taste, motivations, attitudes, brand preferences, opinions, perceptions, brand awareness, top of mind, beliefs

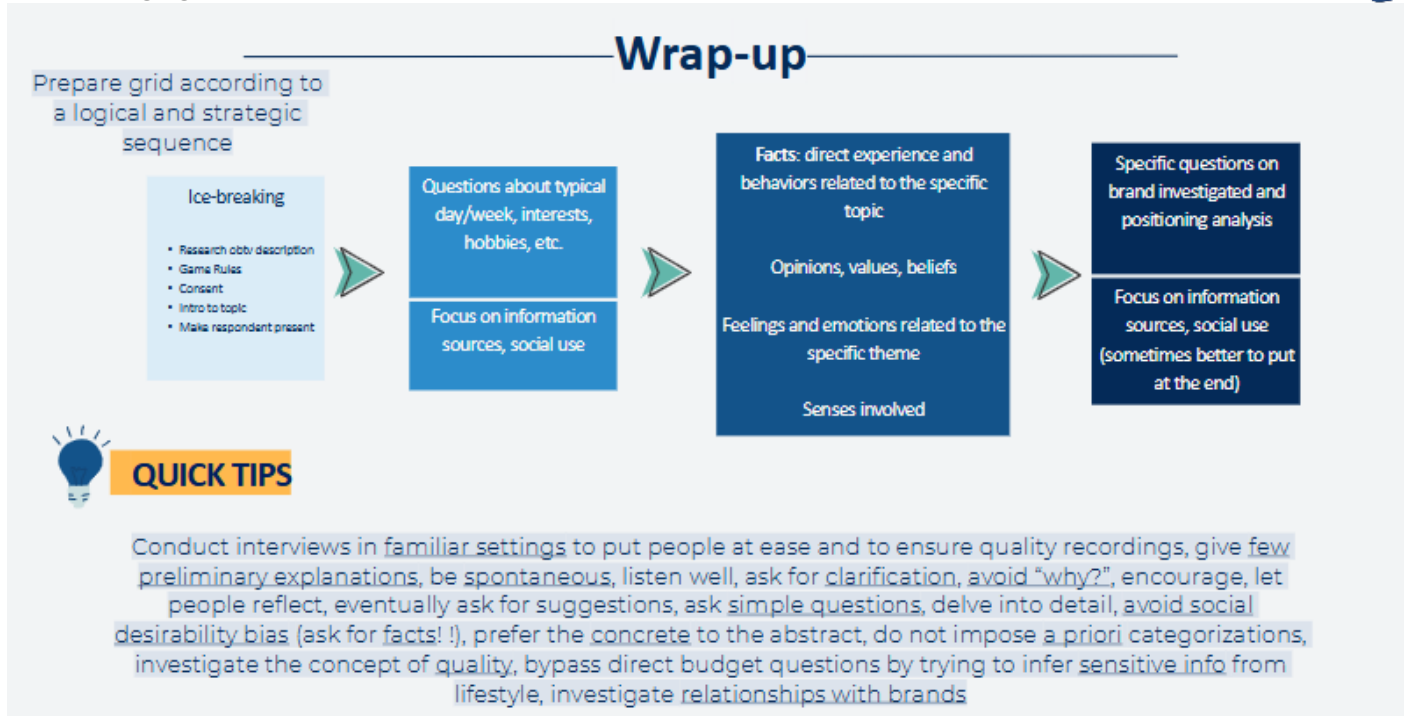
NOT all interviews are in-depth interviews

goal = to know people thoroughly

THREE TYPES OF INTERVIEWS



Don't focus on preferences: facts first!



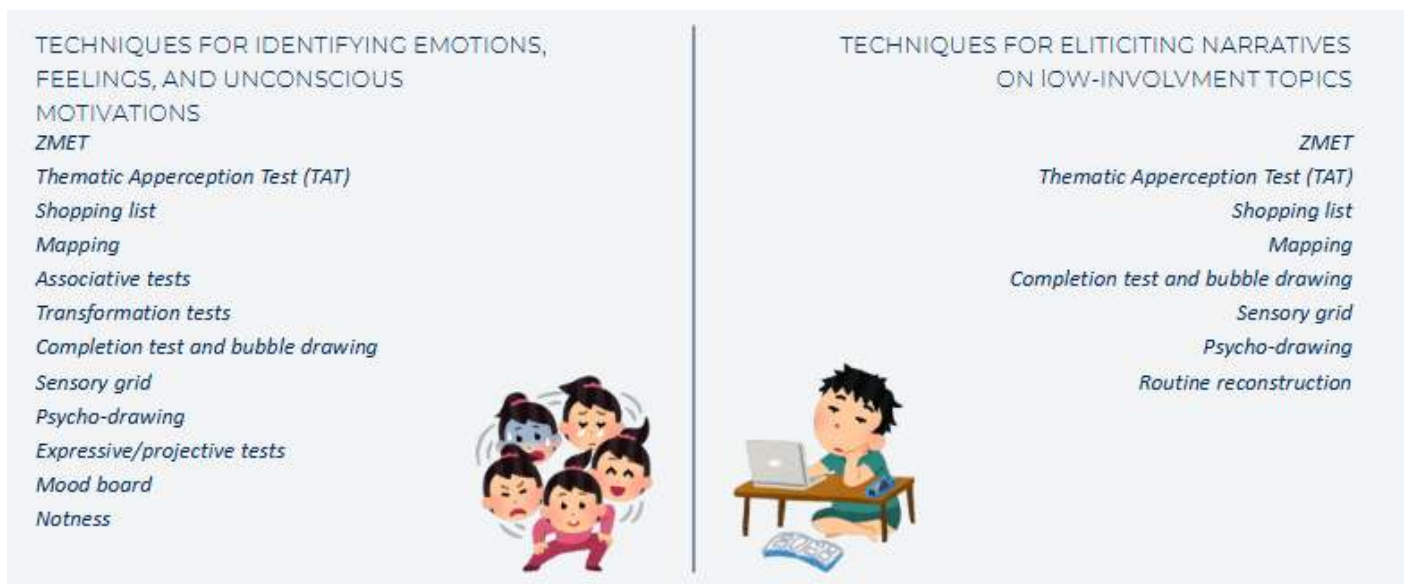
PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

The projective and elicitation techniques

Projective and elicitation techniques in marketing research are normally used for 3 objectives:

- identify consumers' unconscious emotions, feelings and motivations
- to help them talk about low-involvement things that constitute daily, mundane work or fatigue for them (e.g., laundry, household cleaning) that they are not used to thinking about
- to help respondents describe themselves

They are therefore useful and effective in in-depth interviews and should be prepared or even improvised during the interview itself.



Those techniques are important for people to introduce themselves in a better way.

THE Z-MET METHOD

The z-met method, whose name comes from Zalzman metaphor, is used to express ideas through images, since it is difficult for people to give precise definition.

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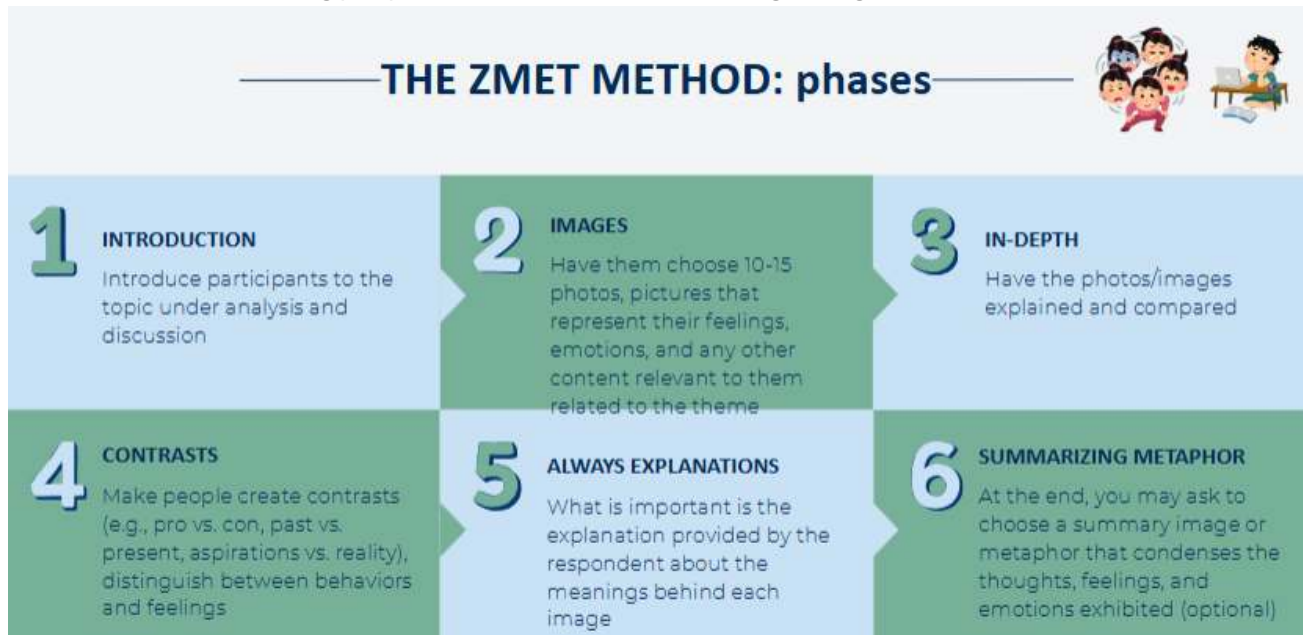
Core reasoning, since metaphors represent the method of basic thinking and communication -> use it for something really central in your research

Principles:

- Bringing to the surface the mental models and concepts/themes/constructs that guide the thoughts and behaviors of individuals
- Combine images and words (collage + metaphors) to bring out deeper meanings

Applications

- Used to understand how people experience complex and/or mundane and routine phenomena that they are not used to thinking about, to convey the emotions involved
- Also useful for making people describe themselves through images



The most important things for us are not the images per se, but the story that people tell us while describing the selected images.

The Z-MET method: warnings

MATERIALS: providing generalist magazines, people will easily find pictures (or words contained in titles) useful in transferring concepts in their heads -> pictures of objects, people, nature not just about a single topic

IMPORTANT: WE NEVER HAVE TO PROVIDE THE IMAGES OURSELVES

GOOGLE: yes, it is possible to have digital collages made (more so when people have to describe themselves) but it is strictly forbidden to grant direct google search of key concepts -> we need to be very careful, before firstly people have to think about the pictures that they want to use, and only then use Google

N.B. Let us not fall into the mistake of interpreting the images ourselves! Firstly because we are not psychologist, and second of all behind the reason why a person choose a picture can be different from one to another.



What desire means to consumers?

Talking about desire a lot of images come to our mind, and some of them can be very private questions that consumers do not want to share with others -> using the ZMET method we can understand better the consumers; we asked them to select the picture and to write a text describing the images so that people were alone by themselves, they didn't have to tell us about very private, intimate kind of things.

- Do not use Z-met for a second tire topic; instead, use it for a key topic in your investigation in your project, because it is so powerful that it's better to use it for something that is very central in your research project

THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST (TAT)

In this test we present to our consumer a drawing or photograph about a given situation and then we ask to explain what is happening in that situation, what is the topic of the image -> people do not have to invent anything, but they apply their personal experience and previous knowledge to what we are showing them This technique is very useful for **introducing sensitive topics** -> people start talking about other people rather than themselves and slowly we can shift from the others to the interview.

In this case we are not talking about brands, so our images should be broader; there is a huge variety of techniques that are used in order to understand brand personality -> **brand personality** is a concept that is related to the perception that people have about the brand and about the user of that brand.

SHOPPING LIST TECHNIQUES

This technique can be used in order to investigate the brand personality.

In this case we provide a list/basket of products to identify which is the one that they buy the most, our their attitudes toward a brand and so on.

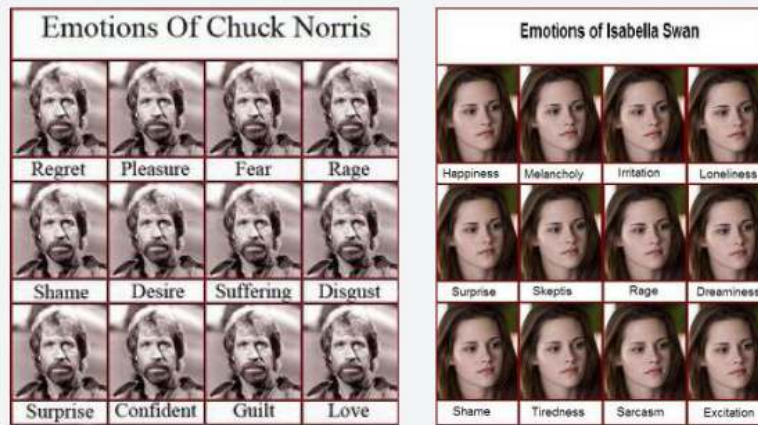
Broad family of techniques used to define consumers' perceptions of brand personality or to understand their preferences toward products, brands, or categories

or again, respondents can be asked to describe the characteristics of people who might buy certain product categories by writing a list of characteristics or we can ask the respondent to comment on a shopping chart imaging who can be the buyer of the items represented, or to build a sketch of the ideal/typical customer for one or more products.

BUILD SCENARIOS OR SHOW PICTURES

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Sometimes is not so easy to identify the exact emotion that we are feeling.



Be careful to use images that really represent the emotion that we are talking about.

To sum up, we use these techniques to verify the reality about what people do compare to what they say.

Wrap-up



Projective and elicitation techniques in marketing research are used for **three purposes**: to identify consumers' unconscious emotions, feelings and motivations, to help them talk about low-involvement topics they are not used to thinking about, and to describe themselves

Technique centered on the idea that **metaphors** represent the basic method of thinking and communication. Useful for:

- **Bringing to the surface** the mental models and concepts/themes/constructs that guide individuals' thoughts and behaviors
- Combining **images and words** (collage + metaphors) to bring out deeper meanings

← Among the many are:

- ZMET
- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
- Shopping list
- Mapping
- Associative tests
- Transformation tests
- Completion test and bubble drawing
- Sensory grid
- Psycho-drawing
- Expressive/projective tests
- Mood board
- Notness
- Routine reconstruction

Projective techniques are useful and effective in in-depth interviews and should be prepared or even improvised during the interview itself...

...and are useful to verify

THE FOCUS GROUP

A focus group is another way, another technique for collecting qualitative data. It is most popular than in the interviews for companies, especially small companies, medium companies, because in a less amount of time you have the opportunity to talk to more people.



It is a group of individuals:

- unknown to each other gathered together,
- in a particular neutral context,
- with the specific intent of discussing a topic, or responding to ideas or materials of interest to the research client (AQR – Association for Qualitative Research)

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OBJECTIVE

Information: gathering as much information as possible on a certain topic (product, service, concept, organization, and so on)

Interaction: it is important to observe how informants influence each other -> how people can change their mind just by confronting their own opinion with the ones of other people

FEATURES

Number of participants: from 8 to 12, in Italy also 6-10. Only 4-6 if the topic is very complex

Homogeneity among participants: participants are usually very similar based on pre-defined selection criteria (demographic, socio-economic characteristics, attitude towards the object of research, etc.) - “purposive” samples

Time for completion: usually ranges from 1.5 to 2 hours. Possibly think of a break if the group discussion is structured in several phases

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: relaxed atmosphere, no physical barriers, comfort, neutrality, good lighting, mealtime or evening time, etc.

RECORDING: you should record the audio and possibly video of the group discussion to gather nonverbal information and to accurately record group interactions

NONVERBAL: it includes proxemics, rhythms, tone of voice, pauses, body movement, which can be translated into the concept of “body language” or “group energy”

PROFESSIONAL RESPONDENT: avoid its use. Better to use individual in-depth interviews or the Delphi method

LEADERS: if performing leaders, curb them. If spontaneous leaders, observe how they are created and what arguments ground leadership and its expression

PLANNING



THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

The moderator must possess skills:

- of observation and “neutrality”
- of focus
- of relationship
- of communication
- of interpretation and synthesis
- of valuing the contribution of each
- of ethical guarantor

QUESTIONS AND TEST

Warm up (as ice-breaking of one-on-one interviews): questions asked in the warm-up phase, they are used to break the ice, explain objectives and rules of the meeting, and have participants introduce themselves

Direct (non-directive!) open-ended questions: these are the questions most typically used in group discussion

Tasks (exercises, worksheets to be complete), normally proposed before discussing a topic in plenary

Projective techniques (same as seen for qualitative interviews)

⇒ Similar path used for the interviews, but in this case we also want to investigate how people are influenced by the others and if they change their mind through the focus group

USEFUL TIPS FOR DRAFTING THE PROTOCOL

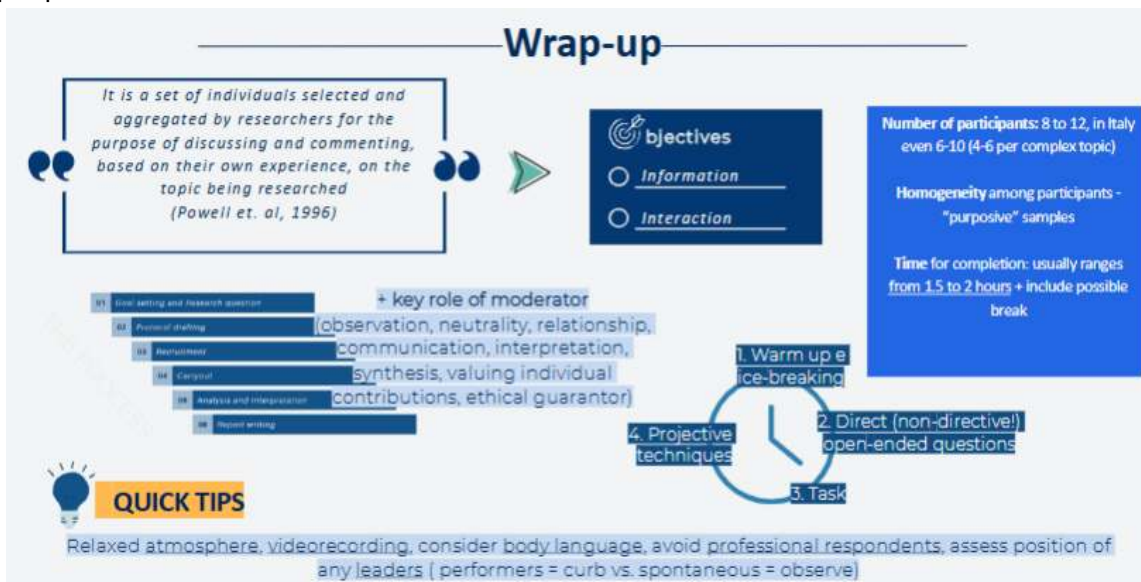
Anticipate the tests administered individually before discussing the topics in the group : this way the participants will give you information without being yet conditioned by the relations elicited in the group. After the confrontation, their opinions may change or not emerge, and in this way you would have very interesting data for marketing.

Still at the individual level use projective techniques to explore emotions and unconscious level before the group sharing takes place; then move to the group to investigate the more concrete and functional aspects, until you get to the strengths and weaknesses of products, brands, in details.

(if you do these online activities you can also ask them to do tasks before the focus itself: for example you can ask them to keep diaries of their daily activities, take photos of their looks to study their clothing style, have videos made of how they cook, and so on - then together in the group you can decide to share some of this data)

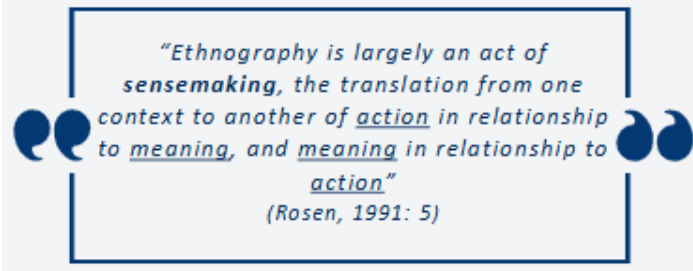
Whether individually or in groups, it is useful to have people do tasks so as to facilitate dialogue and reduce cognitive effort of abstraction or memory.

Making people build consumer-type identity, make placement maps, participate in blind tests, etc. are always a valuable support and allow them to collect authentic and rich data. Don't stop at the raw, visual data, always try to get people to comment on it.



ETHNOGRAPHY

The origins of the ethnographic method



It is the method of cultural anthropology, born in the 19th century, definable as the "**science of culture**", which with sociology and social psychology has traditionally been considered one of the pillars of the social sciences.

It studies modes of thought, social behaviors in their various modes of expression, peculiar to each

group and **subgroup** (**cultures** and **subcultures**). It is distinguished from other branches of anthropology (such as physical, social, criminal, etc.) by the **research focus** -> ethnography is the most important methodology when we want to study culture.

On the other hand, ethnography is very time demanding, and sometimes it's very difficult to be done, because we cannot observe everything -> that is the reason why we can apply this methodology with others such as in-depth interview and/or focus group.

- ⇒ Ethnography is important because through this methodology, we can observe behaviors while people are acting, while people are performing something. We can so observe the rituals, we can listen to their language -> ethnography also implies an interview, since we can interview someone and observing he/she, but the most important insights come from the fact that we stay in a corner listening and observing what people do with each other, how they behave with each other.

Possible applications for marketing

Drawing on numerous disciplinary contributions (e.g., archaeology, historiography, linguistics, semiotics) it is applied to study:

1. **Domestic consumption, rituals, etc** -> it is possible to understand and appreciate a ritual better if we experience it
2. **Shopping activities** (experiential and non-experiential) -> we can observe when they go to the grocery store, their gestures, what attracts their attention, how much time they spend in front of the shelves
3. **Relationship with products** (fashion, food, high-tech) - use and display -> we can observe if they check the packaging, the calories, the ingredients
4. **Brand loyalty and brand attachment**
5. **Diffusion of innovations**
6. **Familiar decision-making processes** -> children are more honest, they are genuine, they don't think about social-desirability bias -> they are very spontaneous
7. **Use of advertising**
8. **Place attachment** -> how people organized some spaces in their home through personal objects -> it is important to analyse also these aspects since they are the representation of how people organize also mentally their work and their thoughts
9. **Brand communities** (virtual and otherwise) -> usually these community are quite peaceful because they all share the same value and passion and so they support each other; on the other hand, in some cases, when we decide to study the negative side of brands, there could be very violent fight, even though they love the same brands
10. **Cool hunting** -> finding the new trends

How to observe

Carefully take note of daily actions/events, interactions between people, conversations, repeated or singular behaviors, use of objects/tools in time and space.

It is essential to use mechanical observation tools (video cameras, cameras) or take meticulous and detailed notes of what is observed -> observe means to detect, take notes, make videos or pictures, or even take notes of action and events that happens in the field under investigation.

Sometimes it is useful to prepare observation SHEETS with notes of what is to be observed (if working in groups

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it is useful for comparison but reduces the ability to see different things).

If participatory, this allows firsthand experience and allows you to assess spontaneity, feelings, involvement of people, not just the words spoken (and to capture sensations, feelings, thoughts that are difficult to communicate in words).

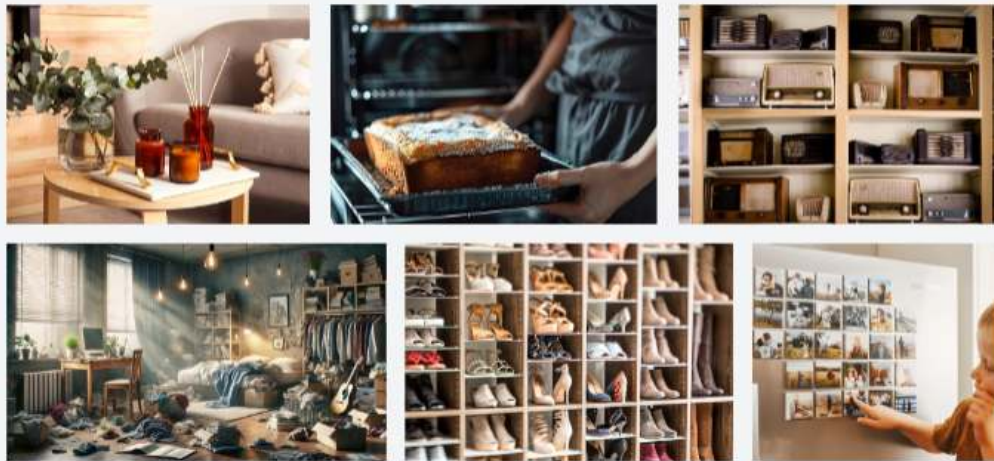
Use your senses as much as possible to remember to “capture” everything that happens in the observed environment.

Reconstruct through diagrams, flows and visual patterns what one observes -> this is especially useful when we are not able to videotape the phenomenon under investigation

Sometimes it is useful not only to memorize what one has observed but to understand the logic underlying consumption practices.

Objects are a bit like clues (people’s passions, family life, care, foibles, past, memories).

Be careful to respect the rules imposed by privacy in public spaces (you cannot film customers in stores...).



It is also important to understand how people organize their home and personal spaces.

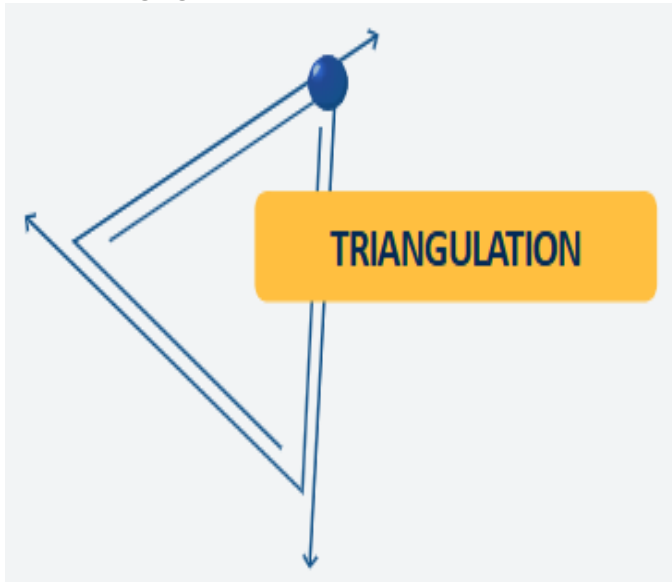
If direct observation is not possible, people can be asked to share memories or aspects of their daily lives through different forms of visual materials -> another way to act when it is not possible to directly observed is to ask people to make their own pictures and to make their own videos

Informants can provide photographs and videos of daily practices, snapshots of their usual, favorite looks, memory photos, vacation videos, illustrate favorite objects and brands, and so on.

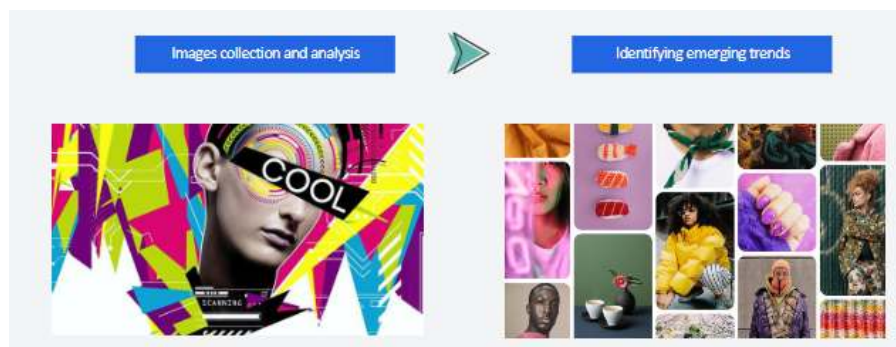
They can be asked to keep very simple diaries to fill out or send photos on specific consumption with some regularity (e.g., photos of the week’s meals, looks for going to work, etc.).

Pure observation can be complemented by **other modes of data collection**:

- **Tracking, shadowing**: the technique of following the people that we are interviewing is called tracking and shadowing. Shadowing is a technique used to observe and understand customers’ behaviors, habits, and needs by closely following them in their natural environment, such as stores, offices, or while they use products and services. The main goal of shadowing is to gain valuable insights directly from people’s interactions with a product, service, or brand, going beyond what they might reveal in surveys or interviews. This method uncovers implicit or unconscious behaviors that often go unspoken.
- **In-depth interview**
- **Paired interviews**
- **Coolhunting**



Coolhunting is a technique which was born in New York, but now it is really spread also in Italy. It is the observation of how local phenomena can become global trends. Through the use of photographs, information is gathered on people's styles, consumption habits, food preferences, cultural choices, places they visit, dynamics of city life, design, art, and anything else that becomes interesting for building future -> search for new trends



THE NETNOGRAPHY

Netnography: “*form of qualitative research that seeks to understand the cultural experiences that encompass and are reflected within the traces, practices, networks, and systems of social media*” (Kozinets, 2019) -> it is a practice almost identical to ethnography but done online

Four distinctive elements: cultural focus, social media data, immersive engagement, netnography praxis, immersive engagement.

Growing importance of consumers on the internet:

- “Consumer advocacy” in online brand communities can impact brand equity
- Innovative method to study consumers’ perceptions, shared ideas, behaviors and feelings online

The netnography: pros and cons

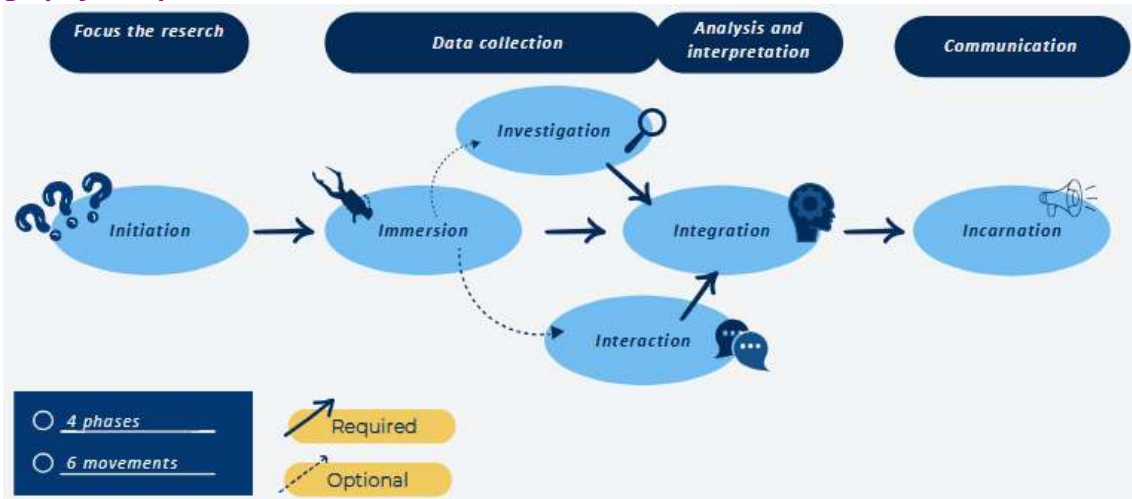
Compared with traditional ethnography, netnography is

- a. Less time consuming and less elaborate -> in a couple of days we have the possibility to analyze what people have published for months or even years
- b. Potentially non-intrusive (the researcher is invisible!) -> no social disability bias created by the researcher, because the data are already there.
- c. Less expensive -> most of the time we can simply start following influencers or the firm on social media to collect data

...but also, with:

1. Exclusive focus on online communities
2. Results not generalizable -> not all the people publish online, and also people do not publish everything

The netnography: the process



Initiation: to give the project its investigatory direction - the researcher is likely to think about many possible topics and approaches, and then to craft the research question that should include two major parts: topic (i.e., abstract subject or focus) and angle of inquiry (i.e., boundaries of the question) -> it is important to understand which are the proper platforms to use, the people and groups to investigate and so on

Investigation: to map out a bounded conceptual space of the project through search engines and automated means that seek and find traces that are relevant to the research

Immersion: to involve the researcher's inhabitation of the bounded conceptual space of the project. Immersion is data-centric and enacts data collection and indexing strategies: large amounts of data are examined and noted in research notes that called entries into an immersion journal

Interaction: to ensure explicit questioning or research engagement with online participants through more obtrusive forms of data collection (e.g., interviews, online participation, use of digital diaries)

Integration: to carry out an ongoing process of decoding, translating, cross-translating, and code-switching between parts and wholes, between data fragments and cultural understanding - almost from the initiatory moment when you decide on sites or topics

Incarnation: to communicate the research project through productions (e.g., conference papers, master's degree and doctoral dissertations) that are readable, accessible and interesting to the audience to reach

Wrap-up

ETHNOGRAPHY

It is the method of cultural anthropology ("science of culture"), which studies the ways of thinking, social behaviors in their different modes of expression, peculiar to each group and subgroup (cultures and subcultures)

QUICK TIPS

Use mechanical tools of observation (video cameras, cameras), take meticulous and detailed notes, prepare observation sheets, try firsthand experiences and evaluate spontaneity (if participatory), use all senses, reconstruct through patterns, flows, and visual patterns what is observed, consider objects as clues, consider rules imposed by privacy, have people share memories or aspects of everyday life (photographs and videos of daily practices, diaries)

TRIANGULATION

Other modes of data collection (e.g., tracking, shadowing, paired interviews, in-depth interviews, coolhunting - identifying emerging trends) can be added to pure observation

NETNOGRAPHY

Online research technique to derive consumer insights, distinguished by: cultural focus, data from social media, immersive engagement, netnographic practice, immersive engagement

THE PROCESS

○ 4 phases

○ 6 movements

DATA INTERPRETATION

The process of data analysis



Analyzing qualitative data means to do three different kind of steps. The idea is to transform the dataset in small and useful kind of information -> data have to become insight, and the way to do so is **data reduction**, delete the data that are useless.

The main steps are:

1. **Coding or categorization:** in this step is important to develop the vertical reading -> analyze one by one the data belonging to one person
2. **Comparison:** in this step we have to develop the horizontal reading -> compare the data along the same topic and along the same codes
3. **Integration process:** this phase is the one in which it is possible to develop new theories and useful insights to solve problems and answer to the research questions/goals

Vertical reading: how to proceed

Transcribe the interviews in Word with **your comments** always reporting at the beginning:

- a. place and date
- b. research objective
- c. interviewer's name
- d. very brief interview summary with focus on psycho-demographic data about the person (it is useful later for possible profiling)
- e. main data and additional info about the person that was also collected outside the interview (nonverbal, field notes, things deduced from observation of the person, home, etc.)
- f. leave a margin of about 5 cm so that you can write codes (this suggestion is a bit anachronist since we are not going to print anymore our transcript)

In the interviewee's file you can also include **pictures of projective techniques**, your comments to have everything together

Help with transcript

There are **Apps and software** on the market that help in transcribing audio files (as well as paid sites that offer the transcription service) - Speech to text. They are increasingly numerous and of varying quality.

Help also comes from the **transcription functions of software such as Teams or Zoom** that have built-in transcription (or dictation itself from Word).

Socio-demographic profile analysis

The first step involves the **construction of the respondent's socio-demographic identity** (from both individual interviews and focus groups).

Accurately summarize all data about the person (profession, lifestyle, family status, favorite brands, habits, places of purchase, sports played, attitudes, hobbies, and so on) that is important for understanding his or her **all-around consumption behavior** -> this is really important because we have a lot of informants and we need

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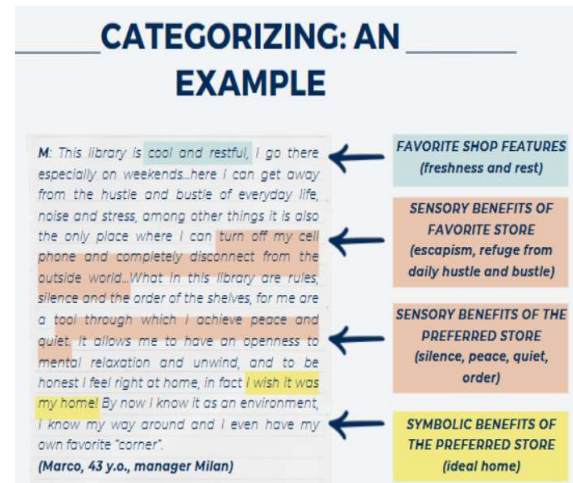
to pick up all the relevant information about a given kind of consumer.

This part will be used to interpret and make sense of his choices, to create profiles, and to motivate your suggestions in terms of managerial implications.

The vertical reading: triangulation

All data concerning an individual person should be **TRIANGULATED** (compared with each other) in order to **check confirmations or discrepancies, enrich the person's knowledge** (non-verbal language, products they consume, differences between what they say and do), or simply to better consider their point of view.

EX: Research related to commercial place attachments -> how people feel attached to commercial places



The process: coding/categorization

Developing "vertical" analysis means analyzing all data about a given consumer through a process of **categorization** using codes that reduces complex and rich data into simple and synthetic concepts (i.e. CODES and/or LABELS). The codes should be a happy way to summarize the main content and the concept that the person was telling us in that piece of an interview -> the codes are similar to the one that we can find in some textbooks, especially the textbooks that we used when we were in high school, that helps students to remember, which is the main topic of each paragraph. Moreover, coding is really important when we have to find a topic in the transcript by using Control + F we can't find anything, since the interviews did not mention directly the subject under analysis.

SUGGESTION: use words which are related to marketing, words that are very familiar for you, like brand loyalty, brand awareness, top of mind, habits, practices, attitudes over the brands because in this way also the rest of the group can interpret them very easily.

We can also use colors as codes if we are more comfortable with this tool and we can create different level of codes, for example the first one which will be very generic and a second one more specific because it can help when trying to build some emerging kind of findings or even to memorize and remember easily what people said when talking about a certain topic.

If multiple data collection methods have been used (interviews, observation, projective techniques, etc.). it is possible to **triangulate among these different data sources** to look for commonalities, see inconsistencies and so on.

EX: person declares himself to be a lover of sports but then analyzing his daily life and in generality all his experiences it becomes clear that he has not actually practiced it for at least 10 years

Remember that categorization is only an intermediate step, and the codes are working tools to **SYNTHESIZE** what the text of the interviews, focus groups, observations, etc. tells. **It is not yet the final interpretation.**

What does it mean to categorize with codes?

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Categorize: identify longer or shorter portions of text that deal with a specific topic by labeling them with CODES and LABELS and then dividing them into similar groups (horizontal reading).

Codes: codes can be chosen inductively especially at the beginning of the search process and later be replicated to facilitate comparison between similar parts of the dataset. Codes can be **words, very short phrases or even numbers** (less useful - in this case a code table with an explanatory legend is needed, so a redundant and somewhat unnecessary step). The same portion of text can be categorized with several codes at once because it is rich in cues, and likewise there may be parts of text that are not coded because they are not relevant. Because it is inductive, the list of codes can be enriched and modified as the search proceeds and knowledge of the phenomenon grows.

IMPORTANT!

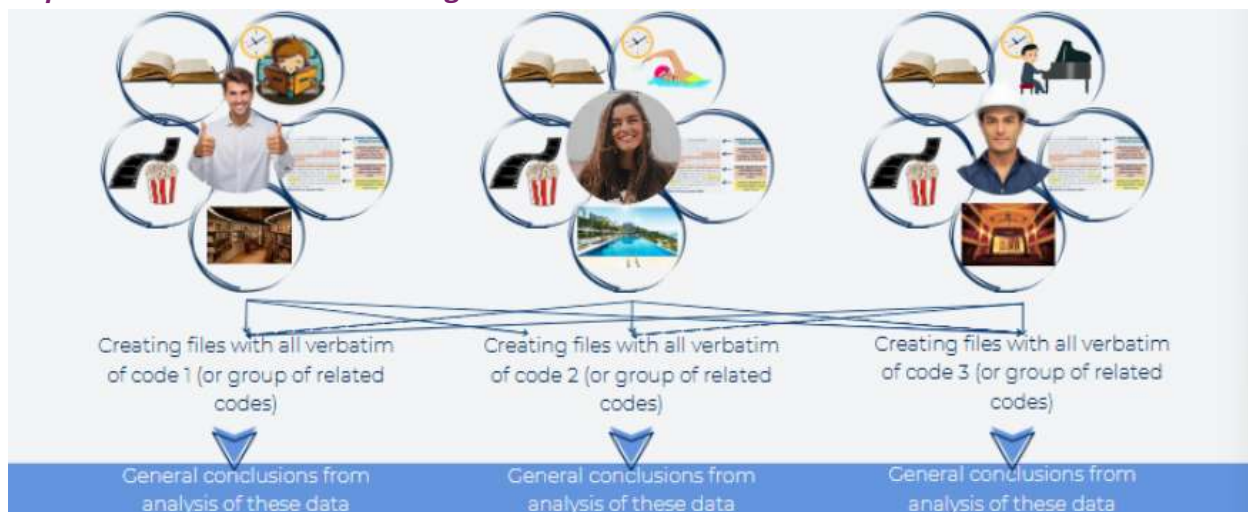
The codes serve ONLY to **speed up the process of vertical reading and subsequent horizontal analysis** and to **quickly find verbatim** that deal with the same theme/topic and to help you reflect on whether these themes/topics are more or less recurring. They are chosen emergently and subjectively by the research team or based on pre-existing knowledge and theories.

Thus, there are no codes that are more absolutely correct than others!

Coding can also be **done through specific software** that offers added value especially with full-bodied datasets (they allow for identifying relationships between codes, quantifying frequencies, effectively representing, archiving and optimally storing data, and so on). There are several with specific purposes. Remember that to capture consumer experiences, **the researcher MUST ALWAYS READ in person and analyze the stories.**



The comparison: the horizontal reading



If the vertical reading can be done by just some members of the team, it is really important that all are in charge when talking about the horizontal reading, since everybody can see, can understand, something that other people do not notice.

The comparison: how to proceed

Developing “horizontal” analysis means **comparing** the results of different interviews/observations/focus-groups/other data on common topics and identifying both **commonalities** and **discrepancies**.

In this there is a parallel with experimental research in which variables are manipulated in some groups and differences are tested with control groups.

Starting from the **verbatim organized by codes** (or groups of codes), one compares the different opinions,

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experiences of consumers and identifies **more general conclusions about the various themes**. Technically, you extract from the interview files verbatim coded with the same codes and analyze them together to identify both similarities and contrasts and understand **which consumers think the same or differently**, try to understand the origin of any differences, and so there.

Comparisons on the various topics must take place at different levels. In fact, the data must be analyzed in detail looking **for every nuance of diversity and parallelism**. For example, the commonalities (however told in different words) will serve to understand **similar needs**, the differences to seize new opportunities and/or to understand why some products are not as successful as hoped -> the variety in the answer is important to develop a better image of the market, where the heterogeneity is really strong.

DETAIL is the richness you need to capture -> in qualitative research, **differences** are important for understanding the **variety of perceptions and behaviors**

⇒ Reflection and comparison of individual code findings for generating insights

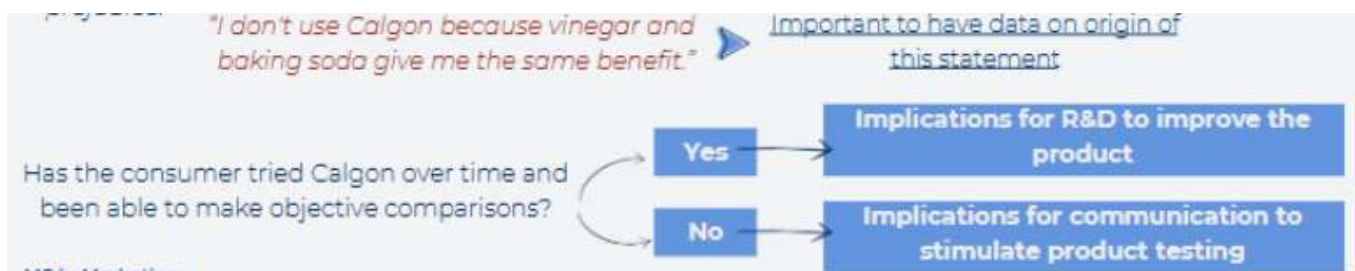
From data to interpretation

The final results of the analysis, organized according to a functional logical flow to answer the RQs, represent your interpretation: the **"THEMES"**.

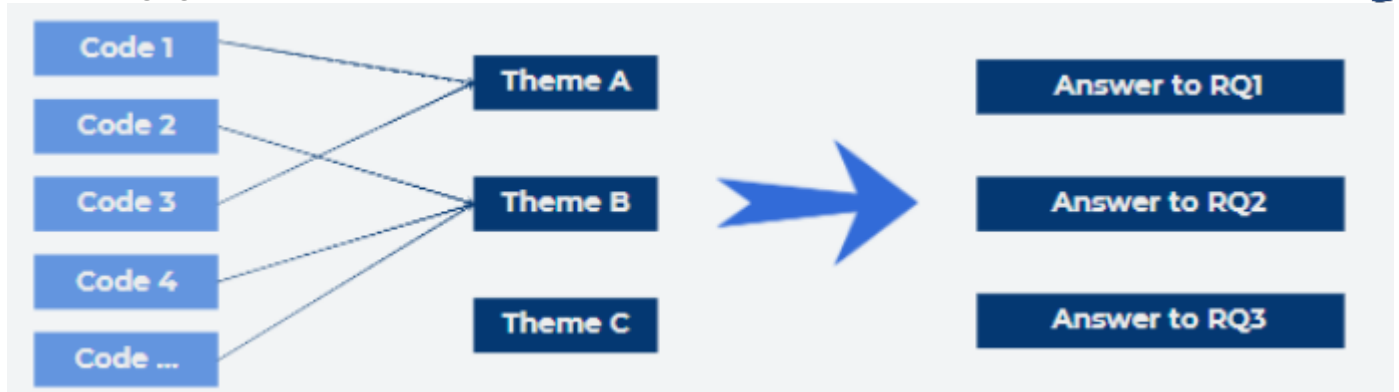
The most significant ones will be chosen as **insights** to focus on and will be the basis on which to work as managerial implications -> the data must be **triangulated**, compared with attention and analytical minuteness. Understand if there are connections, if there are relationships between the conclusion founded in different themes is really important and can be compared to what, in quantitative research, regression do -> this kind of comparison analysis, among all the different findings help us to basically have an idea of the why consumers behave in a certain, and it is possible to do only when we put all the findings together and we try to understand if there is a kind of relationship -> this is because very often consumers do not tell us in a very clear way the why of their consumption, but not because they do not want to share this information, but just because they are not always aware about they why since some actions are part of the routine and they are becoming automatism for the consumers.

Actions and practices are compared with statements (are they consistent?).

When consumers state that they do not use the products, it is important to **identify the causes**: are they due to dissatisfaction because there has been prior experience (Which one? For how long?) or are they just mental barriers due to prejudice.



Final check: with results do we respond to RQS?



When we are done with all the analysis and think that we have understood anything that were within the data, so when we have a clear idea about consumer behavior, we have to check if the final conclusion allow us to answer to the research questions or the research goals that the company take us.

The presentation of results

There are different forms of presentation. The most common outputs of modern qualitative research are:

1. **Executive report** (usually ppt)
2. **Videos** (editing of footage and photos + narrator's voice summarizing some parts and making connections between images and theory)
3. **Mix** of slides and videos
4. **Articles**
5. Others...

The structure of the report

- a. **Introduction** (definition of the phenomenon, boundaries) -> explain the reason why it was important to make that kind of research
- b. Presentation of **secondary data** (trends, competitors, any knowledge about consumer behavior, etc.) -> any knowledge that is important to demonstrate that it was important to do this kind of research
N.B. In our project this part has to be skipped due to space issues
- c. **Research question** / Research **objectives**
- d. **Research design** (choice of methods, table of informants, nature of dataset - number of transcript pages, photographs, hours of video, days of observation, etc.) -> explain the data collection technique used, interviews and focus groups, the nature of data set, the number of transcript pages, the average length of the interviews, and the one of the focus group, since we need to show the rigor of our research, how many projective technique collected, how many websites, Instagram pages or other social media pages we observed through the ethnography, the kind of hashtag that we use in order to collect this kind of information, and so on -> we have to quantify any kind of data that we have done, and explain the techniques that we have used in order to collect the data.
- e. Analysis of **results** and **interpretation** -> when we present our results, we have to remember that while doing the interview, we have to put in the shoes of the interviewees, so we have to make the cognitive workload low so people should feel relaxed while being interviewed by us. Then, when you present the report, we don't have to think about the consumers, but we have to think about the managers and the audience -> the order that we follow in presenting the data can be different compared to the order of the topic that we used during the interview, since the people we are relating to are different, and we have to understand what is important for managers and how we can guide them through the presentation of the data, so how can we convince them that our suggestions are based on important data.
- f. **Managerial implications**
- g. **Conclusions and limitations**

Presenting results: putting yourself in the shoes of the listener!

When presenting results, they should be **organized thematically** and always motivated by empirical evidence (e.g., verbatim, excerpts from the journal and researchers' notes, photographs, combination of secondary and primary data, video clips for Power Point presentations). The order you follow in the presentation must be functional to the listener, to his or her managerial problems (and not necessarily based on the logic used during interviews!). The reader must be able to understand the core of the topic and share your interpretation!

How to represent

We must learn to describe in detail the context, the environment, to place our observation temporally and spatially, to understand how the moment fits into the experience of the people we are studying.

We need to know **how to write stories** as in a novel or as if we were producing a film or documentary.

In describing the setting, **the rules are "almost" journalistic:**

WHO, HOW, WHERE, WHEN, WHY...

The essence and implications of the "story" and phenomenon represented must be **self-explanatory** (in other words, the "so what?" and themes must be **explicit** and not generic).

Clever use of headings, labels and definitions in the discussion of findings increases the effectiveness and appeal of the report, helps focus important messages (and stimulates more genesis of marketing ideas!)

Profiles, personas should be **minutely** described so that everyone can learn about lifestyle, unmet needs, consumption, etc.

IN THE END THERE MUST BE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE GENERATED, INSIGHT AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

How to represent personas/profiles

With qualitative research, one does not build clusters but **only profiles or personas**. Clusters are the result of quantitative research. To present profiles do not stop **ONLY** at the description of the consumption of the object under investigation but **go further**, also use the data you have collected on lifestyle, consumption strings, other brands, etc.

EX: if you study coffee consumption, it is not enough to explain the different profiles based on how much coffee they consume, how they choose brands; try to add information about their diet, lifestyle, etc.

In this example the profiles are simply focused on cinema consumption. We know nothing about who is behind it, so profiling is **USELESS**



How to write texts

When using slides the language should be **brief** and **not redundant** as in a Word document (which does not mean summarizing and losing substance) -> go directly to the topic



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EX: As it emerged from the interviews...”, “As emerged from the research we conducted...” YOU DO NOT USE THEM IN A PPT, you write the data directly!

Don't take things for granted, define what adjectives such as expensive, often, a lot, little...mean in concrete terms -> **EX:** define what informants mean by concepts such as soft colors (which ones?), delicate perfumes (which ones? examples?), and so on.

Report brands mentioned, specific data (e.g., criteria applied for choices, positive and negative aspects mentioned, etc...) -> **EX:** “Highlighter brand is always present in students' minds, followed by pens and notebooks.” OK, but what are these brands? These DETAILS matter!

For example, if we talk about what female consumers think about the packaging of a specific brand of shampoo, we have to describe it as precisely as possible, e.g.:

- The outer packaging is not sustainable due to excessive use of non-recyclable plastic -> it was one issue that one person mentioned
- The low, wide shape is not practical as it takes up too much space on shower shelves or by the side of the tub
- The nozzle protrudes too much and is easily broken
- Instructions are written in unreadable font

Use of self-explanatory (“talking”) titles

Research on “Women and Diet Products”

Key topics and findings: stereotypes of diets, relationship between frequency of the phenomenon and variety seeking, influence of beliefs and talismans, illusions, etc.

Examples of ineffective titles:

- Women and diets
- Choice of diet products
- Popular beliefs

Examples of effective titles:

- Diets: tried them all!
- Bars, supplements and herbal teas: they're all in the cart -> you are telling me that women buy many different kinds of products, not just one category
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Present the solutions

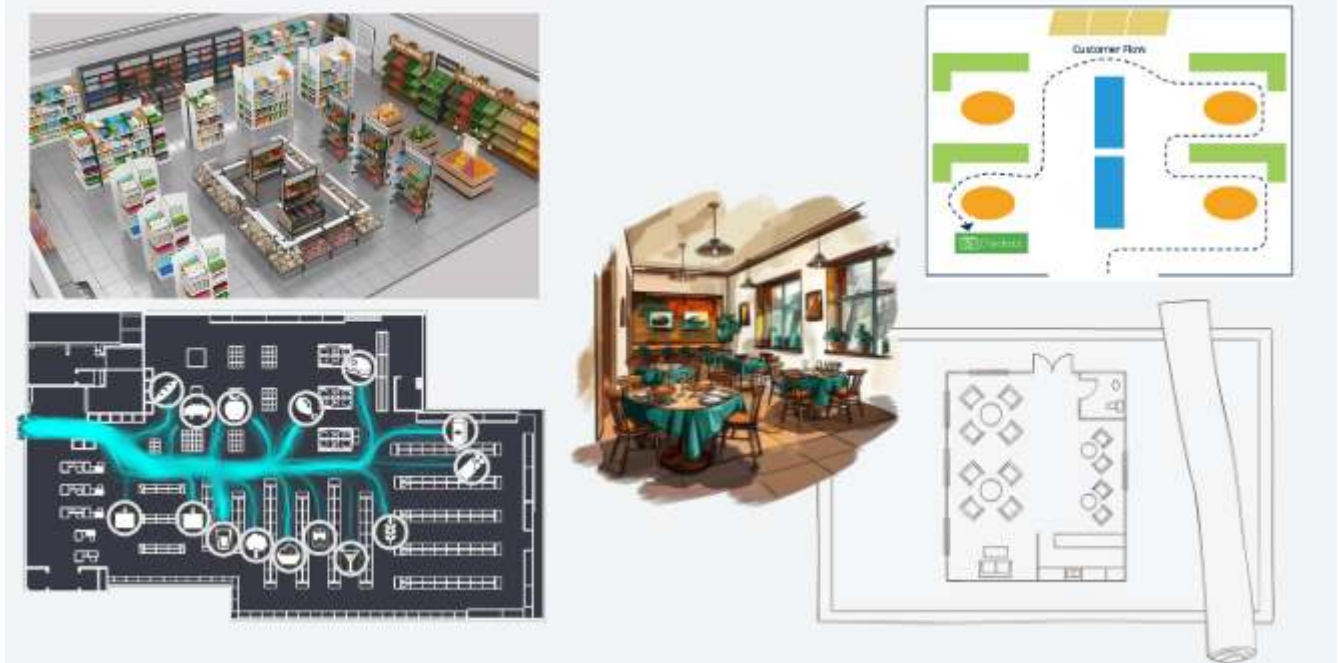
Make **connections between insights and proposed solutions** -> because people need to understand what an implication which is the insights that they are, you know, they are responding to. Motivate your suggestions with SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS WELL DETAILED and SUPPORTED by data.

In the headlines make the marketing leverage you are working on immediate -> do not stop on generic statements but provide **clear insights**, qualitative data also carries as much “weight” as a number.

FINAL CHECK: Ask yourself whether the solutions best solve consumer needs and support/increase self-esteem, self-efficacy, ...



INSIGHT	IMPLICATION (EXAMPLE)	
The Italian consumer appreciates rice of regional origin for...	Emphasize the regional rice offerings of its product portfolio	This is a too general implication, a second level of elaboration is needed
The Italian consumer appreciates rice of regional origin for...	Redesign product packaging to highlight this feature with map reiterating provenance	It is better, can be improved with specific pack proposal
Gen Ys like to know emerging designers to experiment with new identities	Organize events/shows with emerging designers in the concept store location	Propose names, ideas of specific events, ex. Happy Hour with Apnoea, etc.



Wrap-up

Data analysis process:

- Vertical reading = Coding/Categorization
- Horizontal reading = Comparison
- Integration = Theory building

```

graph LR
    C1[Code 1] --- T1[Theme A]
    C2[Code 2] --- T1
    C3[Code 3] --- T1
    C4[Code 4] --- T2[Theme B]
    C5[Code 5] --- T2
    C6[Code 6] --- T2
    C7[Code 7] --- T3[Theme C]
    T1 --> A1[Answer to RQ1]
    T2 --> A2[Answer to RQ2]
    T3 --> A3[Answer to RQ3]
            
```

Compare actions/practices with statements. are they consistent? > identify causes

QUICK TIPS

Essential info at the beginning of vertical reading (e.g., date, place,...), tools for transcription, construction of socio-demographic respondent identity, triangulation between single-person data, simple and synthetic codes formulated in an inductive process (or by software), verbatim triangulation of a single code (horizontal reading)

Forms of presentation of results: executive report, video, mix of slides and videos, articles,...

Report structure: Introduction, Secondary data presentation, Research question/objectives, Research design, Results analysis and interpretation, Managerial implications, Conclusions and limitations

QUICK TIPS

Organizing presentation by themes, describing context/environment in detail, clever use of labels and titles ("talking"), meticulous description of profiles and personas (i.e., going beyond mere consumption of the object under investigation), explaining meanings in the concrete, investigating and reporting brands

CONSUMPTION AND IDENTITY: Self-concept and extend self

The system of consumption

Consumption as a "spoken system" -> our consumer behavior, our consumption and also shopping activities are a mode of completion that consumers apply in order to build their: *"I shop, therefore I am"* (Halter, 2000) -> it would be better to say "I consume, therefore I am", because as we saw sometimes we consume without really buying things but simply using a specific kind of services or through gift giving and our disposal; so there are many ways to consume.

An individual's consumption system becomes his or her "spoken system" (Baudrillard, 1968) -> a kind of grammar of consumption, is a learning process that we develop from childhood to the older life and basically we never stop in order to learn how to use specific objects, how to use specific kinds of brands -> it postulates a knowing about how to consume. Basically, the spoken system of an individual is the system of all the goods, brands, objects and services that a person uses in everyday life but also in occasional situation in order to build their identity.

⇒ The difference between a vocabulary (**WHAT**) and a grammar (**HOW**) of consumption (Visconti, 2008).

Consumer identity

Cognitivist approach: is built by all those theories that are based on cognitive psychology, but also social psychology. They want to study the relation between specific individual features and characteristics and their behavior -> this approach is based on quantitative studies and on experiments so, this approach requires to use variables and dimension features of the individual that are stable within their life, otherwise it is difficult to predict their future behavior in terms of consumption.

Basically, this approach is based on the study and the comprehension of the personality of consumers or other stable traits that do not change a lot along our life during our life.

- **Personality:** associated with the concept of "personality traits", i.e., "the distinctive and enduring patterns of thought, emotion and

behavior that characterize each individual's adaptation to his or her life condition".

With respect to the notion of Self, it differs in:

- a. **innatist** versus constructivist view
- b. greater **stability** than variability
- c. greater **determinism** and **predictivity** about consumption

Conscientious	Dependable	Encouraging
Considerate	Depressed	Energetic
Consumed	Determined	Enraged
Contemptuous	Devoted	Even-tempered
Content	Different	Evil
Cool	Difficult	Exacerbated
Cooperative	Direct	Excited
Courageous	Disgusted	Experienced
Crafty	Dishonest	Extreme
Creepy	Disrespectful	Exultant
Critical	Distressed	Fair
Crude	Disturbed	Faithful
Cruel	Dizzy	Famous
Cultured	Doubtful	Fancy
Curious	Dutious	Fascinating
Cute	Dynamic	Fashionable
Cynical	Eager	Favorable
Uranty	Earnest	Heartful
Dangerous	Easygoing	Ferocious
Daring	Eccentric	Fidgety
Dark	Effective	Fierce
Dedicated	Efficient	Filthy
Defiant	Elated	Finicky
Delightful	Elegant	Fierce
	Embarrassed	Flexible
	Emotional	Filthious
	Empty	Foolish
	Enchanting	Fortunate

Constructivist approach

According to the constructive approach our identity is not only based on our own personality and our own ideas or values, but identity is culturally constructed, in life experiences, consumption, relationships → **BIOGRAPHY**. Self and identity are used as synonyms: self is what we refer to when we speak of “consumer identity”. Identity and cultural identity overlap.

The concept of self or self-concept

Self-concept includes a set of a person’s images, activities, goals, emotions, roles, traits and values
In psychology, a distinction is made between:



The I-self is something that we cannot observe because it is something that works within our mind -> when we use our past experience in order to interpret what is happening around us to make more rational decision we use the I-self.

The me-self on the contrary is what it is observed, so the person that we see in front of us -> the me-self is what everybody can see or observe, while the I-self is something that it is difficult to observe because we can observe only the outcome of the decisions that are taken by the I-self.

Those two level are the basic one, but are not the only one that have an impact on our behavior -> there is another level which is more sophisticated to be understood: the looking-glass self. The looking-glass self is the

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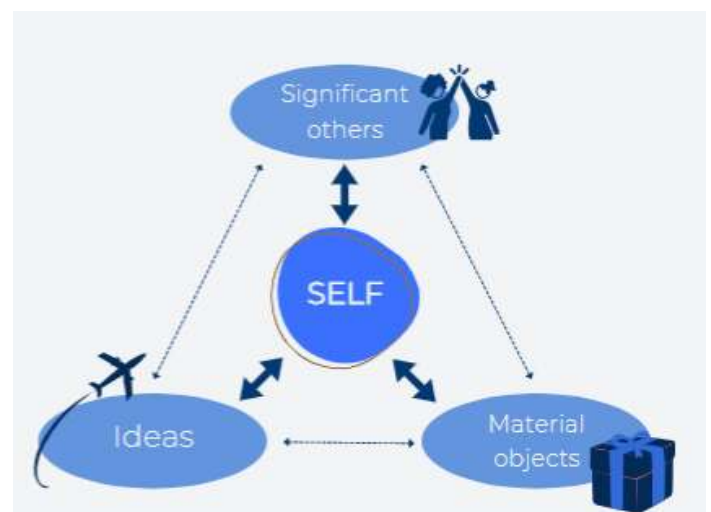
image that we build in our mind about ourselves -> is abstract, symbolic and not tangible because it is the system of the opinion and perception that we think that other people have about ourselves. It is called looking-glass self because it is not what we are, but what we see when we look a glass, that this is what other people are going to see about us -> this is a replication of the me-self, but with something more, because when we put ourselves in front of a mirror we don't just see an image, but also we tend to think about what other people are watching us.

Multiple selves (or multiple personas) refer to the different ways in which individuals interact with different situations and circumstances in their lives. For example, a person takes on these different interaction styles as an employee, as a passionate fan, as a friend, as a relative, etc -> in marketing what is relevant is to understand how consumer goods are important, to help consumer individuals to live the different selves in a very smooth way in a seamless kind of way.

The concept of extended self

Extended self-definition:

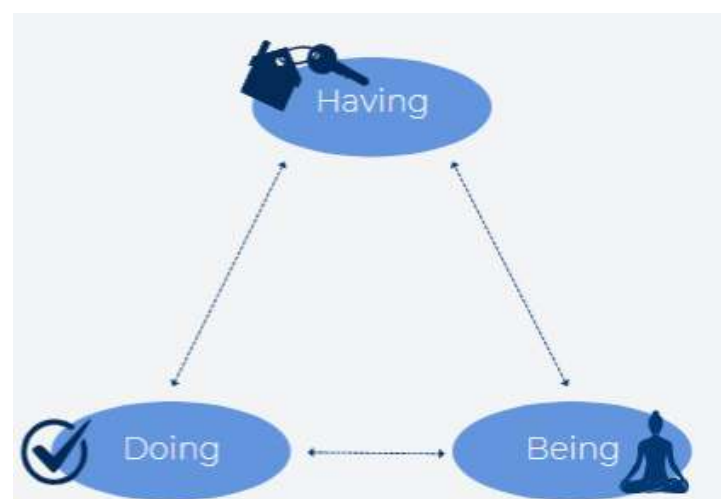
- our fragile sense of self needs support. We are what we have and what we possess (Tuan, 1980)
- A person's self is the sum of all that he or she can claim to possess (James, 1890)
- The extended self includes the body, personal properties, ideas, people, places, collective properties, etc. (Belk, 1988) -> the self was previously intended as the dualism of mind and body, or soul and body depending on the philosophical approach. Russell Belk did something that it is now simple: our sense of self is not just based on this dualism, but also on other elements that appear external to us.



Having: we own ourselves; we own our work; we own the fruit of our labor. Objects become part of us when we create/modify/know them. Our properties serve to know who we are (Sartre)

Doing: properties are functional to doing, necessary conditions for work (Marx)

Being: being is played out between having and doing. We possess and are possessed by objects

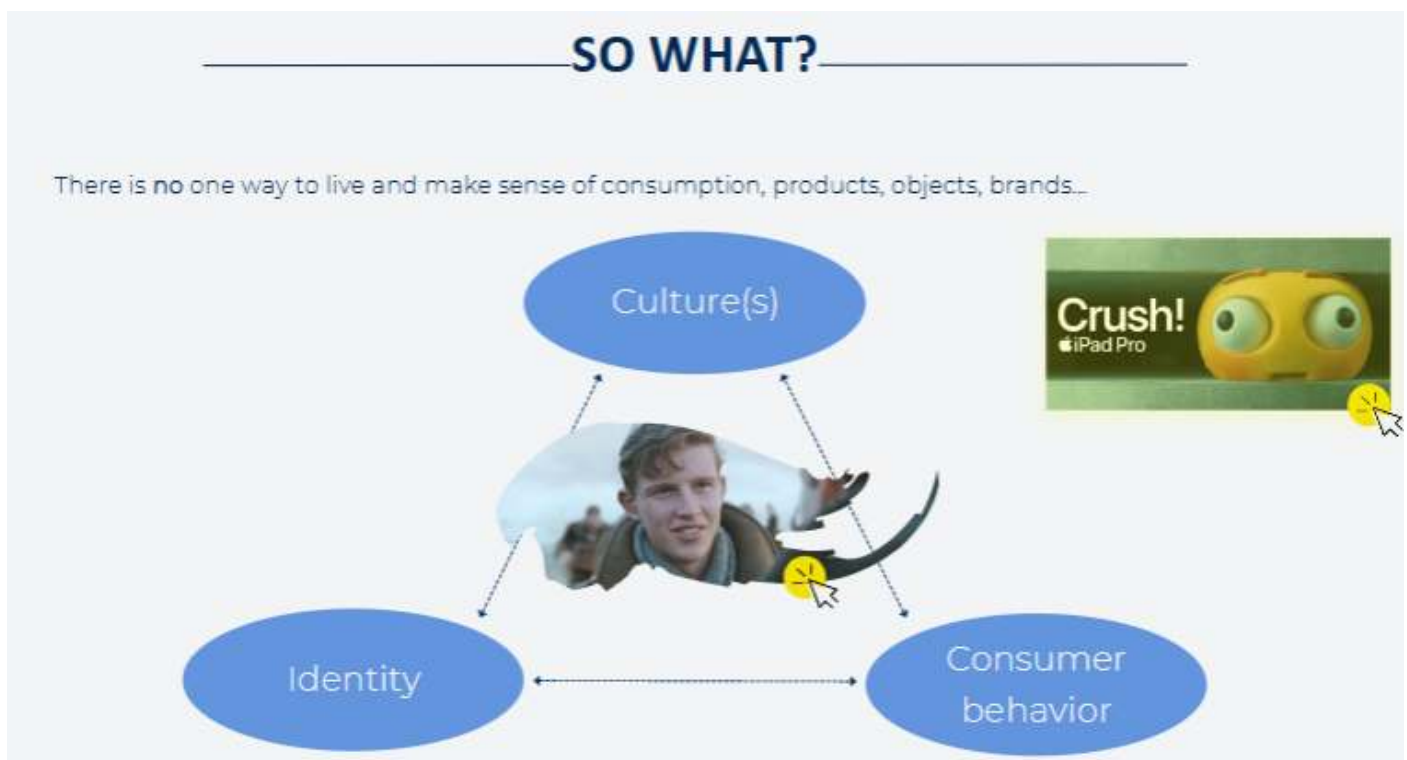
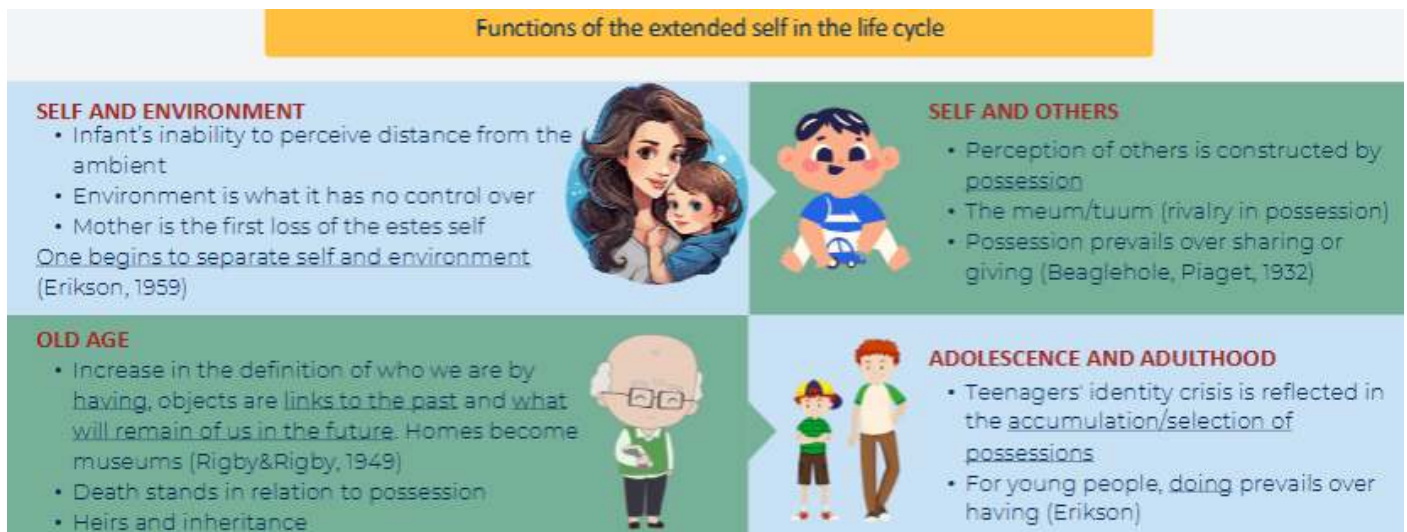


The reduction of the extended self

Traumatic "Lessening": hospital, barracks, nursing homes, monasteries, etc. lead to standardization of identity > *"Elimination of Uniqueness"* (Snyder & Fromkin, 1981) -> there are situations in our life where we cannot express ourselves 100% and so in these cases we have a sort of standardization of identity and that is what has been defined as "elimination of uniqueness"⁴ **Theft or Loss:** sense of loss, violation, invasion

Understanding Consumer 2

But also **Self-Restoration**: the loss of part of the extended self is sometimes experienced as an impetus for creativity and rebirth. Creativity is an attempt to extend the self again (Niederland, 1967)



Multiple kind of reaction for the same things; of course, company have in this way the chance to let people talk about them -> due to heterogeneity everyone had a different reaction towards this advertising. Even something that don't even touch values but touches objects, that can be important for our identity, can raise different reaction.

Definitions

The term culture usually refers to the set of behavioral patterns shared by members of a society or large-scale human group." (Fairchild, 1970).

And thus, culture includes (Holt, Arnould, Zinkhan, 2002):



VALUES: stable beliefs about desirable outcomes that transcend specific situations and shape human behavior -> **EX:** Ringo and Luis Vuitton advertising -> through our consumption activities we can learn values

NORMS: informal rules, often not verbalized, that guide behavior -> explicit vs. implicit norms
 These norms evolve with time, they are not stable. When studying people from the same subculture we need to analyze the way people behave

LANGUAGE: one of the cultural artifacts -> communicative vs. constitutive function (Vygotsky, 1978) -> **EX:** “Hands off the couches, hands up for...”

With the introduction of social media, we learned specific terms and, in a sense, a new language -> from the marketing point of view, those words, those languages are able to make something relevant, something that people do not really think before

OBJECTS: material artifacts, which define “material culture” -> repositories of culture vs. builders of culture. Culture can be objectified through products, can be materialized, can be communicated, conveyed through the aesthetics or the components of a project -> **EX:** Unicorn Frappuccino launched by Starbucks

MYTHS: stories, somehow legendary, that contain symbolic elements that express emotions and shared cultural values -> interconnect, give order, guide. **EX:** Generazione Fenomeni, the Italian male volleyball team

SYMBOLS: objects that represent beliefs and values, and that can be part of myth as well -> “collective” vs. “restricted” symbols, typical vs. atypical. Sometimes it is difficult to divide one dimension from the others. Some symbols are universal, global, others are important just for some groups. For some people these symbols have a positive connotation, while for others they have a negative emotional effect -> **EX:** McDonalds logo

RITUALS: behaviors that occur in fixed sequences and are repeated periodically. Individual rituals, institutional rituals -> **EX:** individual rituals linked to self care.

The meanings of consumption

To understand the relationship between consumption and identity, we need to understand which are the means that consumer ascribes to different products and services and brands. When we buy something, when we acquire something, it doesn't matter if it is a service, a product, an experience, very often, the basic meanings and benefits that consumers are looking for, are the utilitarian ones.

Utilitarian meanings: the perceived usefulness of a product in terms of its ability to perform a physical function or task:

- Performance
- Reliability
- Quality -> subjective; we need to unpack and understand what quality for each people is
- Durability
- Technical characteristics of products
- Price

Utilitarian meanings are considered important, especially for industrial products -> if we do not understand fully the different meaning we are going to fail, because we will be not able to attract people to us. Even though we are talking about utilitarian meanings, we can use an emotional voice.

Understanding Consumer 2

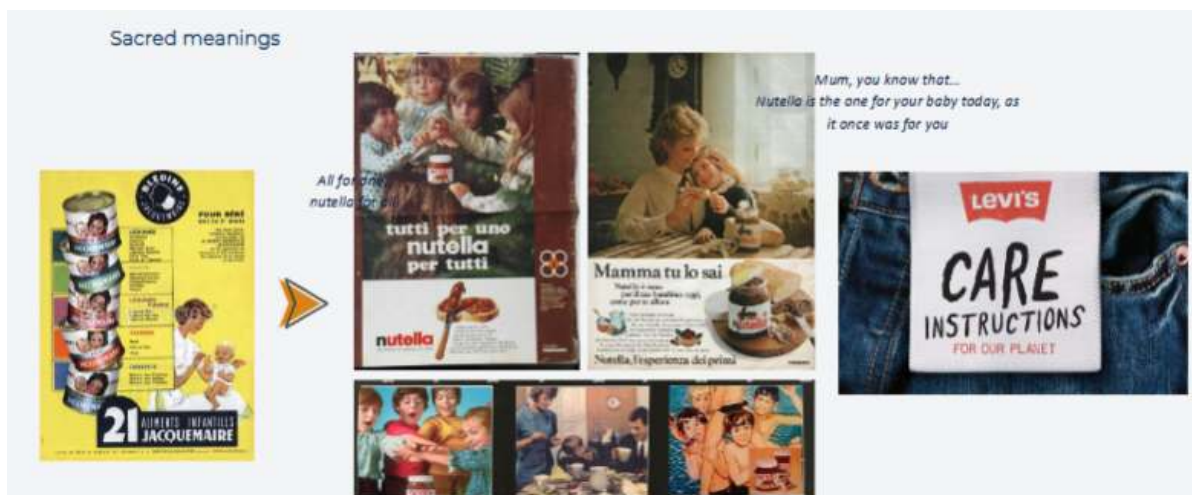
EX: Volvo truck -> even when we talk about utilitarian we can use emotion. Truck drivers have their own subcultures, they share the same habits -> this adv became so viral that it reached also people that are not in target and became so loved also by the general culture that it became part of the cultural myth.

Sacred to profane meanings -> the majority of time we do not consume products just for their utilitarian meaning, especially in welfare states. People have so many different alternatives that they can find the same utilitarian meanings, in many different products -> the reason why we choose one alternative instead of the other, is related to meanings that are more symbolic.

Sacred meanings are assigned to goods or living beings experienced as very important -> sometimes they are not related to brands, sometimes yes.

N.B. what is sacred for someone, can be profane for somebody else -> it is something very subjective related to:

- Places
- Times
- Tangible goods
- Intangible goods
- People or other living beings
- Experiences



Nutella, at the beginning, was advertising like: “Mothers if you want to feed your children with enough calories give them a spoon of Nutella”, nowadays is something that they cannot do anymore. Then in the 80’s were the needs were different they also changed they way they advertised Nutella: they started work on the memory of the mother about their childhood.

Levi’s are now considered one of the most sustainable jeans nowadays due the long-lasting materials used.

When we talk about sacred meanings, we have also to think about the profane meanings.



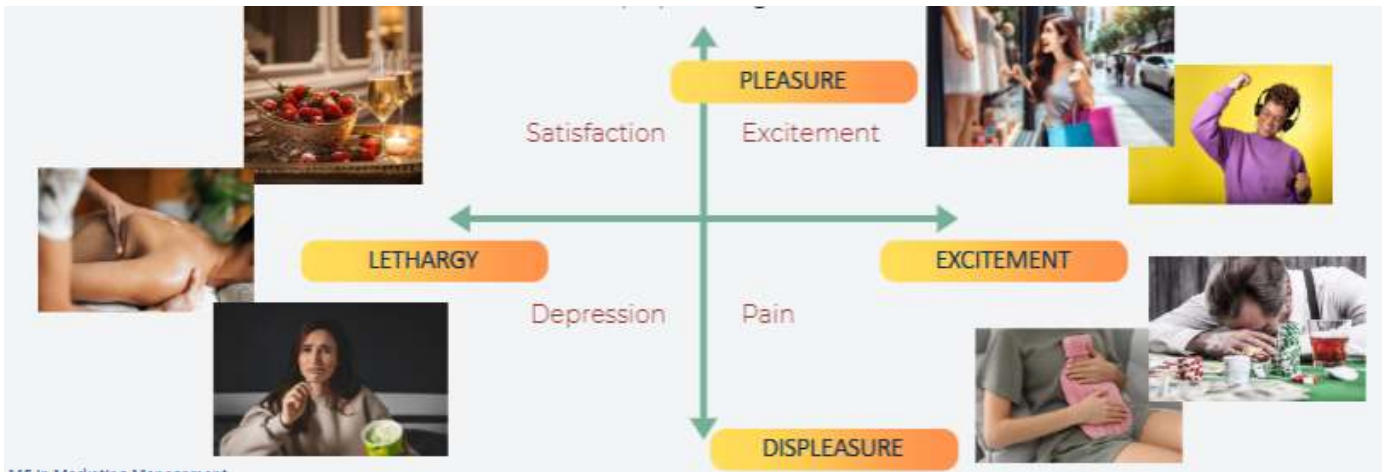
Self care can easily transform into profane advertising, because nowadays a lot of people do body modification. Same for guns, according to different culture we have different reactions and thoughts. Another example is this zoo, which through an advertising asked whether it is better to spend 7 dollars to see a real-life white beard or 28 for just a toy. For some people 7 dollars are less, but you are keeping an animal in cage, moreover the toy will last longer. Others feel themselves as too materialistic, so they decide to not buy the toy, while those who would prefer the zoo feel like they do not spend enough for their kids and so at the end they bought the toy. But then, other people would say, no, you're wrong, because it's exactly the fact that we buy a lot of stuff, we produce a lot of stuff that we are destroying the natural environment of the animals, so the zoo is protecting them, it's trying to prevent their extinction.



In this case, it was the church itself that decided to do an advertising, uses the symbol of Jesus Christ -> it was the church itself that used it, and it made irony. They wanted to make people, consumers, to reflect about the real values of Christmas; they didn't offend anybody in this case because people who do not belong to the church are not Christian. Moreover, from a semiotic point of view, they also use some specific gestures that were considered peaceful and important.

Sometimes when talking about to sensitive topics we can offend some groups if we decide to go with a too profane advertising campaign -> **EX:** condom adv

Hedonistic meanings -> goods acquire hedonistic meanings when they are associated with emotions and feelings by fixing and perpetuating them. Hedonic is everything, that we're looking for when in search for positive feelings, and positive emotions or when we want to feel pleasure, physical or mental.



We also need to understand the dark side. The dark side of hedonistic consumption, that leads to feel pain, depression and so on:

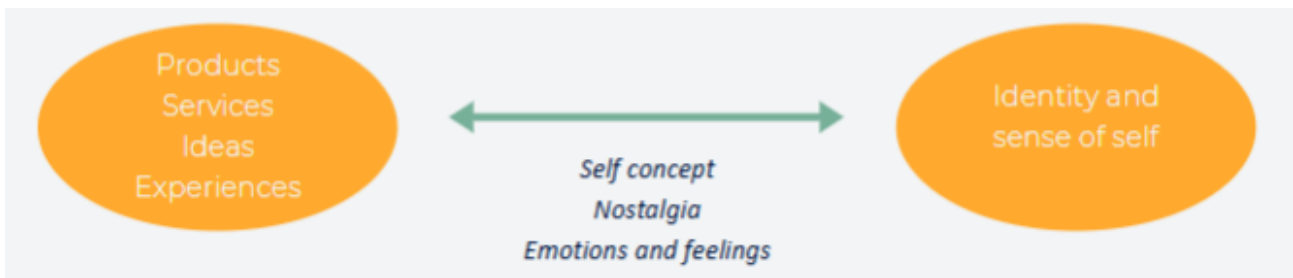
- Addiction
- Compulsive consumption
- Materialism for its own sake

The dark side of humor -> Bloomingdale's 2015 Christmas party advertisement that for consumers invited men to "daterape" -> Bloomingdale made public apologies and due to the negative impact of this message some people lost their job.

Social meanings -> in our society, consumers intentionally communicate through consumption their own image, the groups they want to identify with, and above all, seek to differentiate themselves from others -> help us to feel belonged to a certain group

More or less all consumption is symbolic

Finally, if we analyze our own behavior and the one of many consumers, we can state that, at the end of the day, even though sometimes the utilitarian meanings are very important, there are always other meanings that are intertwined with it that are more symbolic. Consumption products and activities can symbolize something about us and the relationships we have with other people. Consumption conveys multiple meanings.



...and fuels our identity projects (molto importante).

Elisabeth Blackwell, in the 80's, develop a theory useful to understand how people, you know, consumers relate and use objects to build their identity -> all consumption experiences constitute material, cognitive and cultural resources that support the dynamic process of identity construction

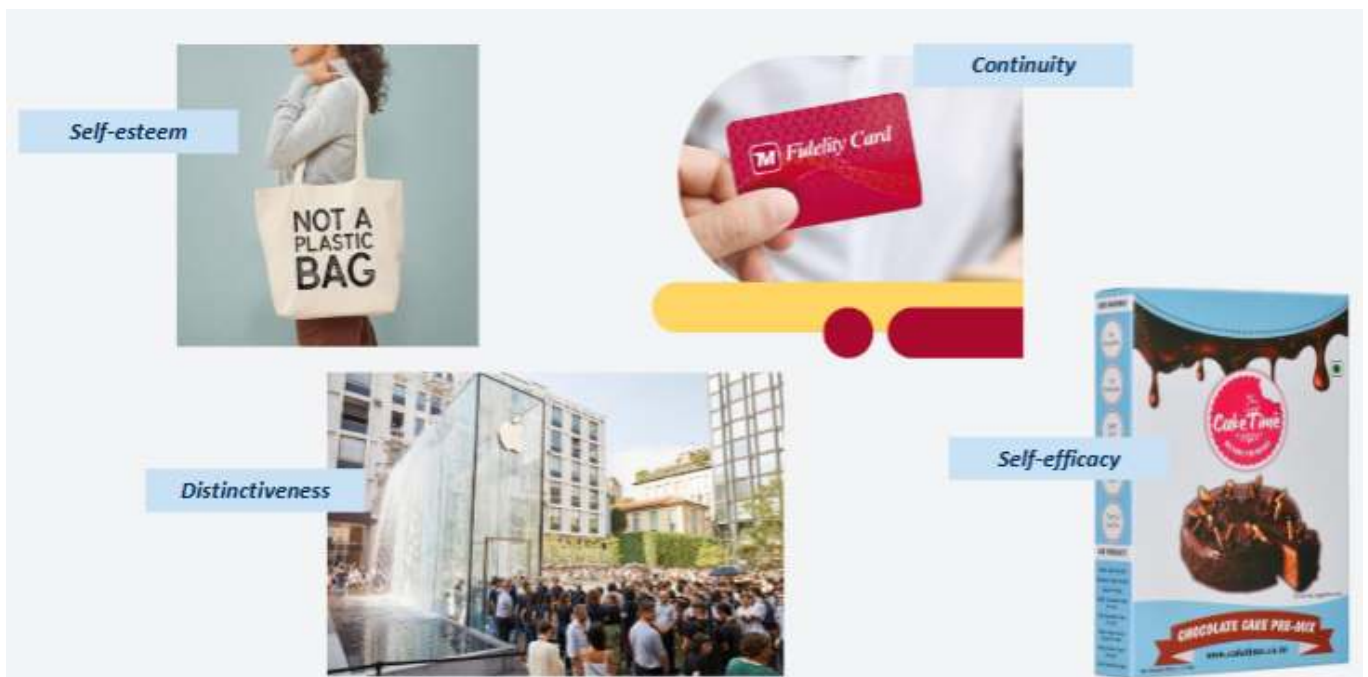


According to her, our life is constituted by a sequence of consumption experiences, because we need to acquire resources from the environment. She says that all our consumption experiences that we need to deploy to survive and to develop our own identity are made by three activities.

1. **Assimilation:** the moment where we acquire and we need for resources to fill in a gap, to satisfy a need or a desire -> what we usually consider acquisition, buying, etc., she calls assimilation.
 2. **Accommodation:** after we have these resources, very often we also have to change, to accommodate our practices, to adapt to the functionalities of those resources and we learn from that.
- ⇒ We always do these two steps; we assimilate, and we accommodate, in order to fulfill a specific kind of needs or desires.
3. **Evaluation:** after that we evaluate, assess what we used, consumed in order to understand whether we want to go on using these resources or not. So, we evaluate the alternatives that we have chosen and then we decide if we want to keep the same practice, the same habits or we need to change because we are not satisfied. What she says is also that, at the beginning of this process, what is important is our memory, because sometimes we choose what we already know that is satisfactory for us -> in this moment also the social and cultural context can have an impact.

When we make this final evaluation, to assess whether we have been satisfied or not, whether we want to go on with this kind of consumption, with choices, Blackwell said that there are four universal criteria that people apply in order to make this kind of assessment, this evaluation:

- 1) **Self-esteem**
- 2) **Distinctiveness**
- 3) **Continuity**
- 4) **Self-efficacy**



One of the criteria that we typically apply is continuity -> consumers want to keep what they like, it is difficult to convince them to change their mind.

Understanding Consumer 2

Other times, on the other hand, we want to feel distinctive, we want to feel different from other people.

⇒ These are the two basic criteria, universal, that everybody applies. But, the most important ones, are the other two, which are more unconscious.

Blackwell said that sometimes, consumers choose the option that, according to their perspective, according to their feelings, according to their reasoning, are able to make us feel that we are good problem solvers -> so at a third level we have self-efficacy: sometimes, we do not buy the best option available on the market, but we choose something, because, along the procedural process, we felt that we have been a good problem solver. Finally, why we need to feel that we are acting as a good problem solver? Because we need to keep the level of self-esteem always high -> what matter for the consumers are not the benefits per se, but the fact that through a decision process they are able to keep the level of self-esteem always high or at least in equilibrium.

Consumers are not always able to express what there are looking for, because they do not have a precise idea of what they need.

The response of business -> be close to the customer's way of thinking

Ikea's names have names of people, rivers, lakes and other well-known Swedish locations (but for the rest of the world unpronounceable or incomprehensible in logic) because when it was family-run one of the sons, who is dyslexic, could not remember the codes.

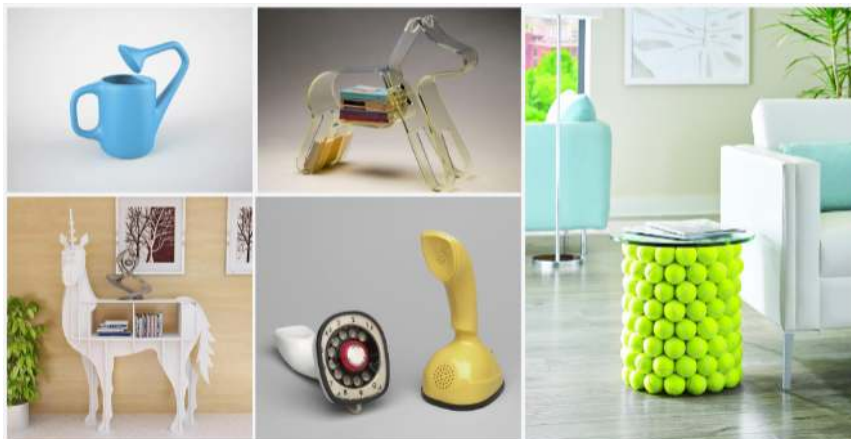
In 2016 to meet customer needs in the new communication campaign the names were changed and replaced by the most common words used by consumers during Google searches, when searching for a specific solution.

Emphasis on form and style

The symbolic and communicative power of goods and brands is linked to the construction of identity through social consumption. Nowadays there is a strong interest in the aesthetic, hedonistic, and playful dimensions of consumption.



Products as image drivers



Products and feelings



Consumer involvement



Wrap-up

Self-concept

"I shop, therefore I am" >> consumption system of an individual as its "spoken system" = grammar of consumption, which postulates knowing how to consume (HOW)

Cognitivist approach (focus on personality traits with innatist and determinist view) vs. constructivist approach (culturally constructed identity >> overlapping identity, cultural identity and self)

Culture = *set of behavioral patterns shared by members of a society or large-scale human group including: values, norms, language, objects, myths, symbols, rituals*

All consumer experiences =

- support the dynamic process of identity construction: **assimilation-accomodation-evaluation**
- nurture identity projects (self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy)

Psychology << = I-self + me-self + looking-glass self

CCT << = extended-self:

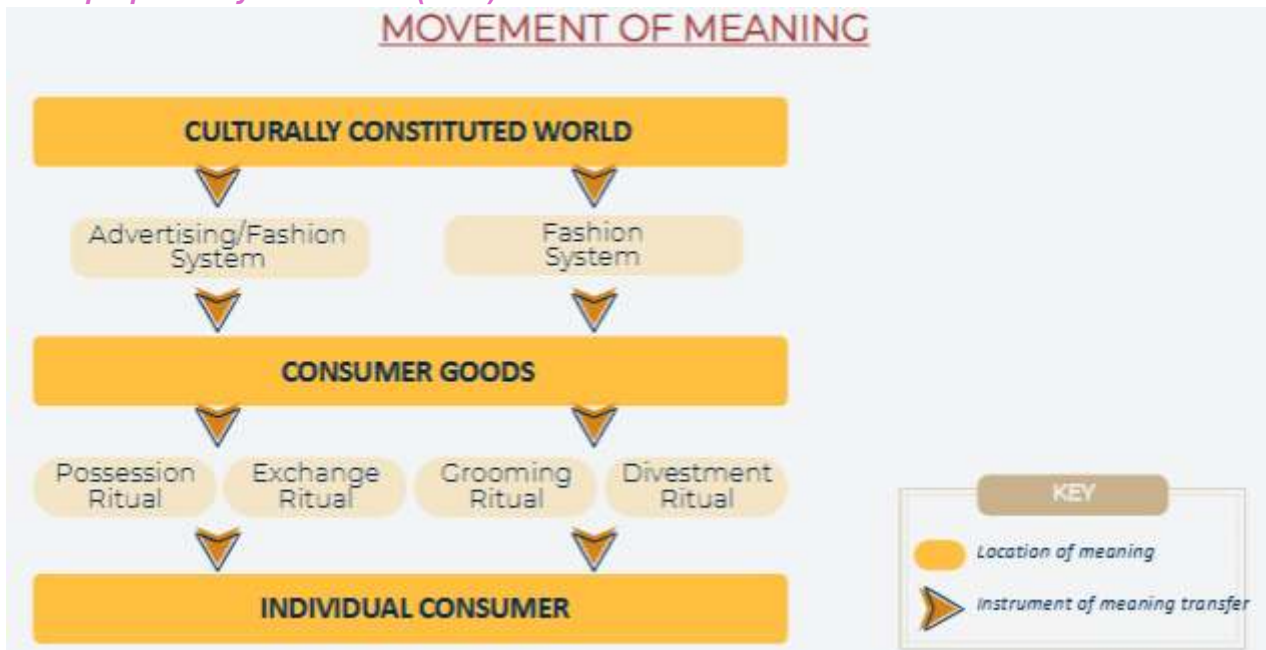
- sum of everything you can say you own (ideas, material objects, other people)
- sum of having, being and doing
- reduction of extended-self: traumatic "lessening", theft, loss >> **self-restoration**
- different functions along the life cycle

Meanings of consumption: **utilitarian** (fulfill physical function or task), **sacred and profane, hedonistic** (related to emotions and feelings), **social**

Companies << be close to the customer's way of thinking, value form and consider symbolic and communicative power of goods and brands (social consumption)

Marketing Management

RITUALS AND RITES



McCracken developed this model in order to explain how cultural meanings are spread and are inherited by consumers within a given society -> he wanted to explain the movement of meanings from company, from the social world to the individual consumers.

This model is made out of two elements:

1. Location of meanings
2. Instruments of meaning transfer

⇒ McCracken said that the company are inspired and bring the values that are related to a given society -> it is called a cultural constituted world.

PLACEMENT OF CULTURE

- The **world**: cultural principles and the resulting cultural categories, that are something created by human beings, by society
- The **products**: artifacts are expressions of material culture, and always incorporate cultural meanings (consciously or unconsciously)
- The **consumers**: consumers transfer cultural meanings to the goods they consume

The mechanism of transfer

1. From the culturally constructed world to products

This first level of transfer occurs:

- Through **advertising**, which creates connections between cultural categories and products -> this can be based either on constraining factors (detected through market research) or through creativity
- Through the **fashion system** (in a broad sense), which can in turn confirm, modify, or transform this symbolic cultural category - product equivalence -> role of product designers and opinion leaders

2. From products to consumers

One of the most important way to inherit and so, make ours, specific kind of values, according to the McCracken is based on rituals, because rituals are something that are perpetuated, repeated, constantly day after day, year after year -> through this continuous kind of consumption people learn out those values. This second level of transfer occurs mostly through the activation of **rituals**:

- **of exchange**: cultural transfer occurs as a result of the gift, its presentation which may depend on the spatio-temporal context (ex. Christmas, spontaneous gift, etc.) -> rituals are something that shape who we are; learned gift giving help us to understand gender
- **of possession**: related to the mechanisms of territoriality and appropriation, and thus linked to the sphere of personalization (ex. initials on the shirt, choice of optional extras in a car, etc.) -> when we customized something; can be also extended to significant others (dogs for examples, or bed furniture)

Understanding Consumer 2

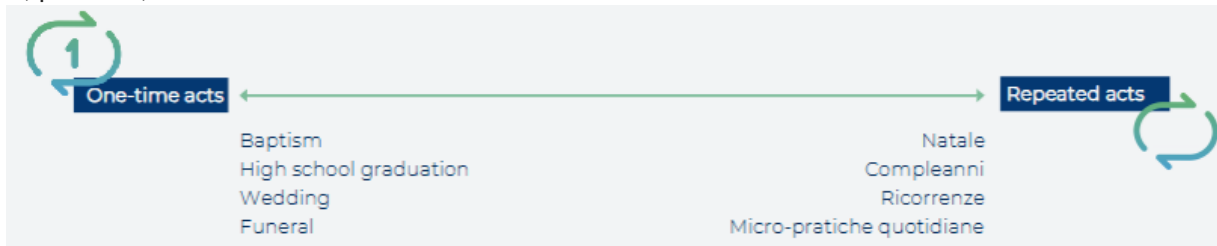
- **of grooming:** these are all rituals aimed at counteracting the perishable nature of products (ex. Spas, gyms, pre-exit preparation, car washing, shoe polishing, etc.) -> also put in practice to take care of ourselves and others; intertwined with ritual of possession
- **of divestment:** to change how a product is used or to part with it (ex. recycling, swapping, reuse, vintage etc.) -> rules that can be personal or imposed by the government. It is a matter of how people take care about the goods and things that they are no using anymore.

Digital rituals: a new level not mentioned by McCracken is the one of digital rituals -> rituals can also be experienced online through digital experiences

The ritual phenomena

Our consumer behaviors, our everyday life are punctuated with events, actions that are **perpetuated** over time almost invariably as rituals, which do not represent simple episodes repeated out of habit.

Rituals are personal, social, domestic or public behaviors that pervade different dimensions of human life: religious, political, individual and social.



Micro-practices: breakfast with a certain food, having shower before going outside, how we spend our time while going to work/class, running, gym

A definition of ritual

The term **ritual** refers to a type of expressive and symbolic activity, built on a multiplicity of behaviors manifested in sequences of fixed episodes, repeated over time. A ritual is defined, dramaturgically “written” and enacted with inherent formality, seriousness and intensity



The experience of ritual

The experience of ritual is normally built around a **sequence of episodic events:**

- a **religious ceremony** involves a succession of different acts, prayers, invocations, chants, readings, recollection...
- a **thesis defense** involves the candidate’s presentation, discussion, committee decision, proclamation...
- the **Christmas lunch/dinner** takes place according to the succession of acts of event preparation, reception, consumption in the strict sense, service, gift exchange...

Rite and rituals: definition

Rite: specific sequence of actions made special by virtue of their condensation, elevation or stylization. Rites are precisely distinguishable, socially recognizable by the procedures followed. They are often identified by a precise name, placed in special times and places -> an institutional force set up the rules

Ritual: set of general actions with specific characteristics and qualities (formalization, procedure, sequence, perpetuation over time, etc.) -> it is a way to experience a consumption activity; no external authorities that define how to experience the ritual.

- **Ritualization:** process that turns any activity that does not normally belong to this category into a ritual (e.g., cooking a special meal, canoeing, cleaning the house, bathing, watching the game, etc.).

Understanding Consumer 2

The experience of ritual -> how to study rituals?

Episodic events follow a **precise sequence** that **attaches specific meaning** to what precedes/follows an action.

Sometimes respect for the sequence, its existence as a stereotype confers legitimacy and sacredness.

There are **different and multiple levels of the value of the sequence**:

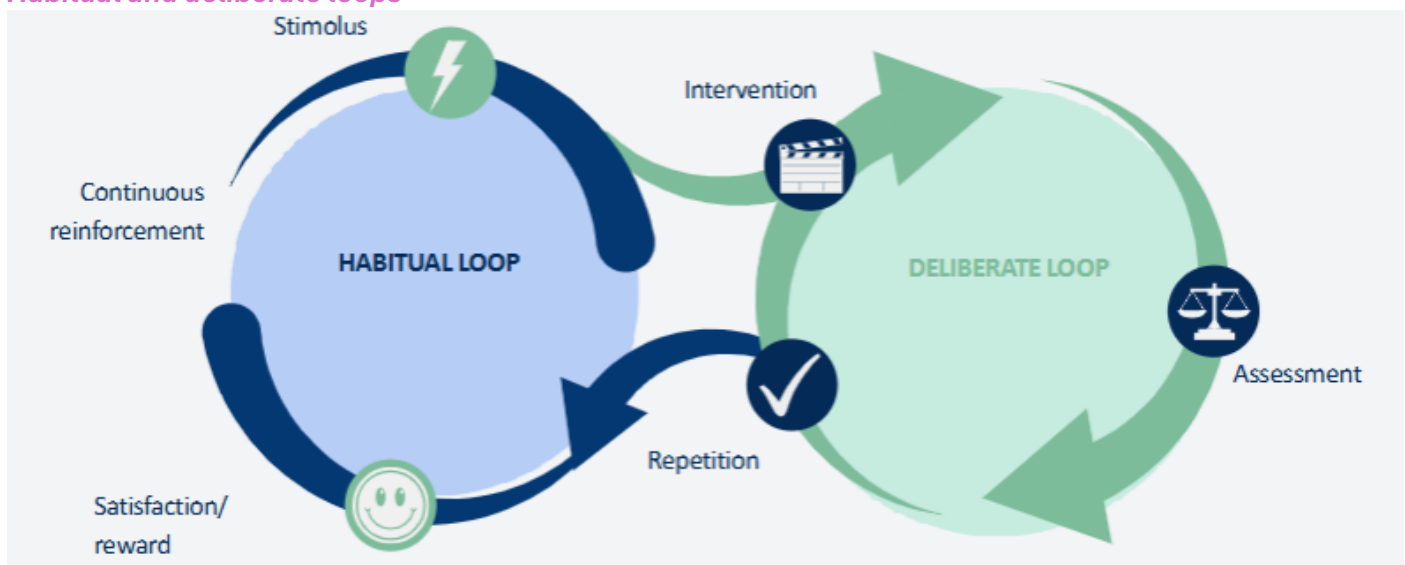
- The order of behaviors appropriate for a birthday party (when to open presents, etc.) or a dinner party may be more random
- Reversing the sequence of acts during a religious ceremony may be considered profane

A ritual exists because it is **repeated in the same way over time**; its events have a **mnemonic function** that elicits specific thoughts and feelings in the individual.

Similar feelings and emotions are generated each time it is enacted.

Partial variations in content or sequence may exist but this occurs rarely or meets with resistance -> similarity with habits

Habitual and deliberate loops



One of the main challenges that companies have to do is to convince people to change their habits.

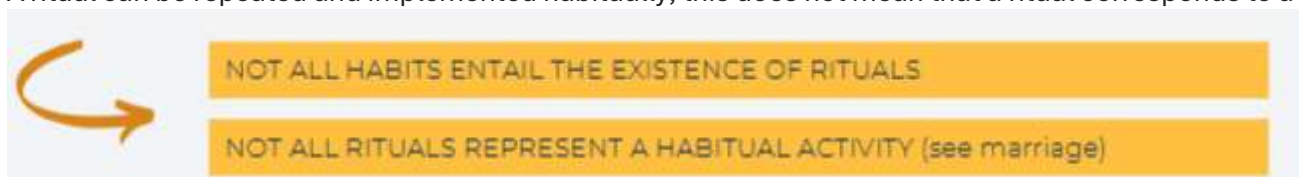
When creating habits and ritual we always start with the so-called habitual loop -> we go on repeating always the same choice, the same practice. The problem is that the company, if it wants to change our habits, needs to convince people to interrupt that loop and change and start a different kind of loop.

If we are enough good to convince consumer to stay within this new loop, basically, they will start with a deliberate kind of loop that maybe slowly will become the new habitual loop.

EX: it was not easy to introduce Alexa in everyday life -> kids, who has less constraint in long-lasting habitual loops, are those who asked for Alexa and then it became part of everyday habits and rituals of the whole family. The company made a huge mistake with the first Alexa's adv -> a mother started cook with help of Alexa, but when the dinner was ready now one arrived -> the message to deliver was "only Alexa is really listened to you"

Ritual and habits

A ritual can be repeated and implemented habitually; this does not mean that a ritual corresponds to a habit.



Generally, the ritual involves a more pluralistic experience in terms of the meanings and acts involved than a habit -> the real different is in the level of engagement, which is higher with rituals rather than with habits.

Understanding Consumer 2

Marketing implications

What is the difference between consumers' rituals and habits, routines?

Can we say that different consumers may use the same products/places in different ways?

How can we distinguish between habits and rituals?

Which are the best marketing strategies that we should apply in the two distinct cases?

EX:

- "Granarolo milk is part of our family rituals. Breakfast is a sacred moment for us. And Granarolo is part of it...". -> ritual
- "Milk is part of my diet...It is healthy. I usually drink Granarolo..." -> habit, it is simply functional

<p>Habits matter when we want to <u>save time and energy</u></p> <p>When consumption is related to habits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumers will be attracted by <u>new offers</u> more appealing in terms of price and visibility. • Promotions, free samples will convince consumers to change their mind. <u>Children</u> or <u>other influencers</u> will accelerate the process. 	<p>Rituals are relevant at a <u>symbolic and emotional level</u></p> <p>When consumption is driven by rituals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumers tend to be <u>more loyal to their favorite brands</u> as they are linked to them by a more complex and intrinsic experience in terms of meanings and acts involved
<p>Habits do not support <u>loyalty</u> effectively.</p>	<p>Rituals supports <u>loyalty</u> effectively.</p>

When rituals are involved is harder to change people mind and let them switch.

EX: Adv di burger king

The benefits of rituals and habits

Individuals have an unconscious need for stability and determinacy that habits and rituals can provide (Giddens, 1984) -> we need to know the outcome, the direct relationship between an input and an output; we need to know that if we do something we will get specific kind of results and we feel specific kind of emotions -> we have these unconscious kind of need, and rituals and habits are a way to fulfill these kind of needs.

Repetition of actions and practices, both individual and collective, provides orientation and meaning in our lives, helping to develop very concrete and stable knowledge during everyday life, as it allows one to relate to reality physically, emotionally, aesthetically and cognitively. Indeed, people feel confident when they perceive a sense of order about their world and the predictability of their role in this space. According to evolutionary psychology studies, children develop a sense of trust and security in family contexts based on widespread routines designed to develop such feelings. Anxiety is mitigated by the perpetuation of simple daily actions such as getting up at the same time, drinking coffee, reading the newspaper, etc.

Breaking routines can create emotional distress and different coping strategies.

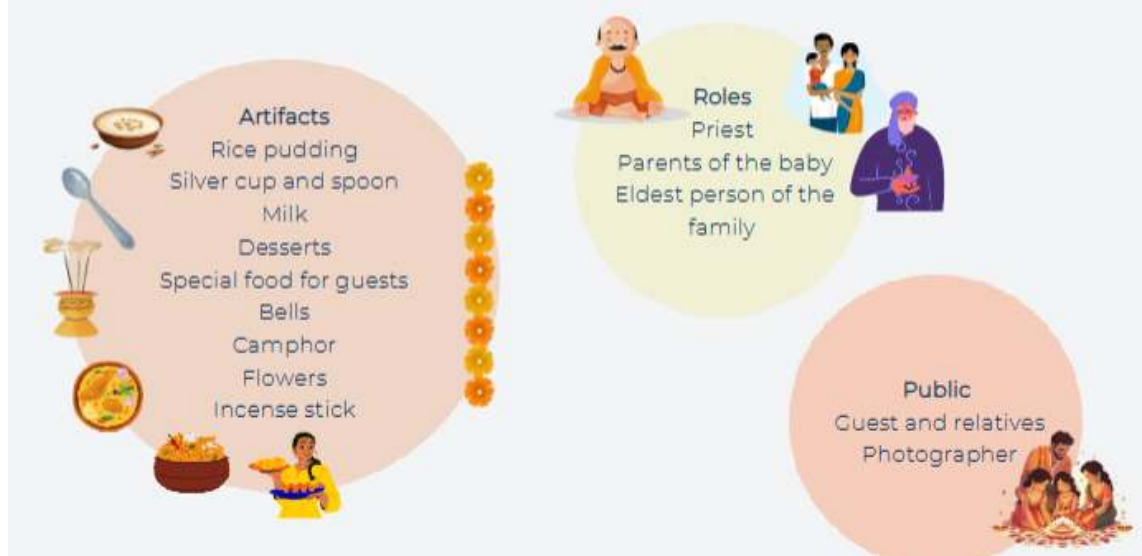
The essential elements of a ritual



ANNAPRASHAN (individual Indian ritual)



ANNAPRASHAN (individual Indian ritual)



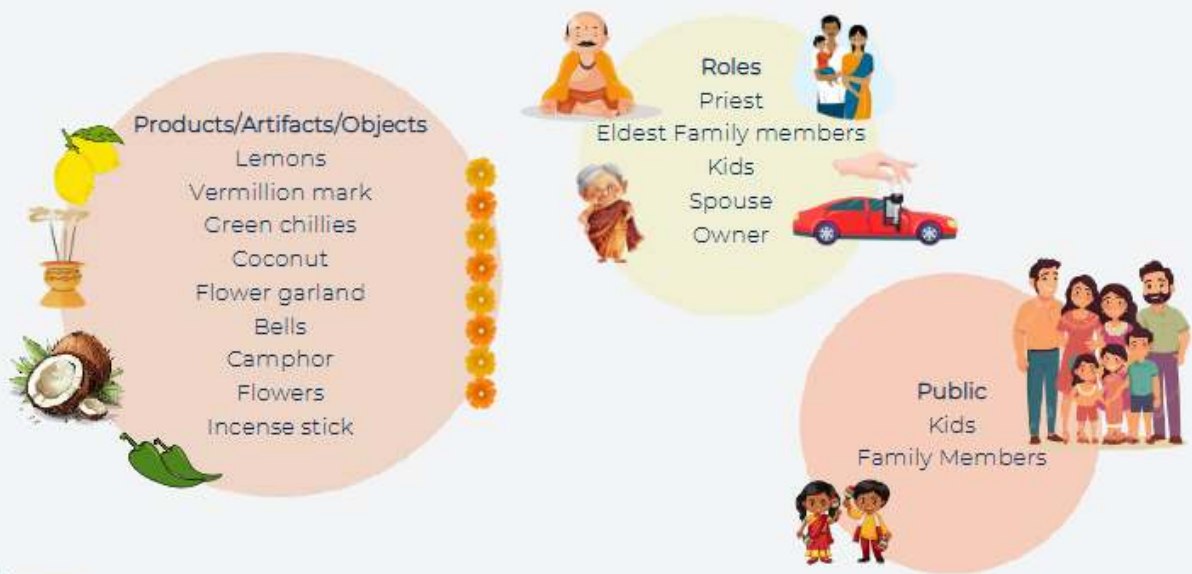
VAHANA PUJA (Indian institutional ritual)

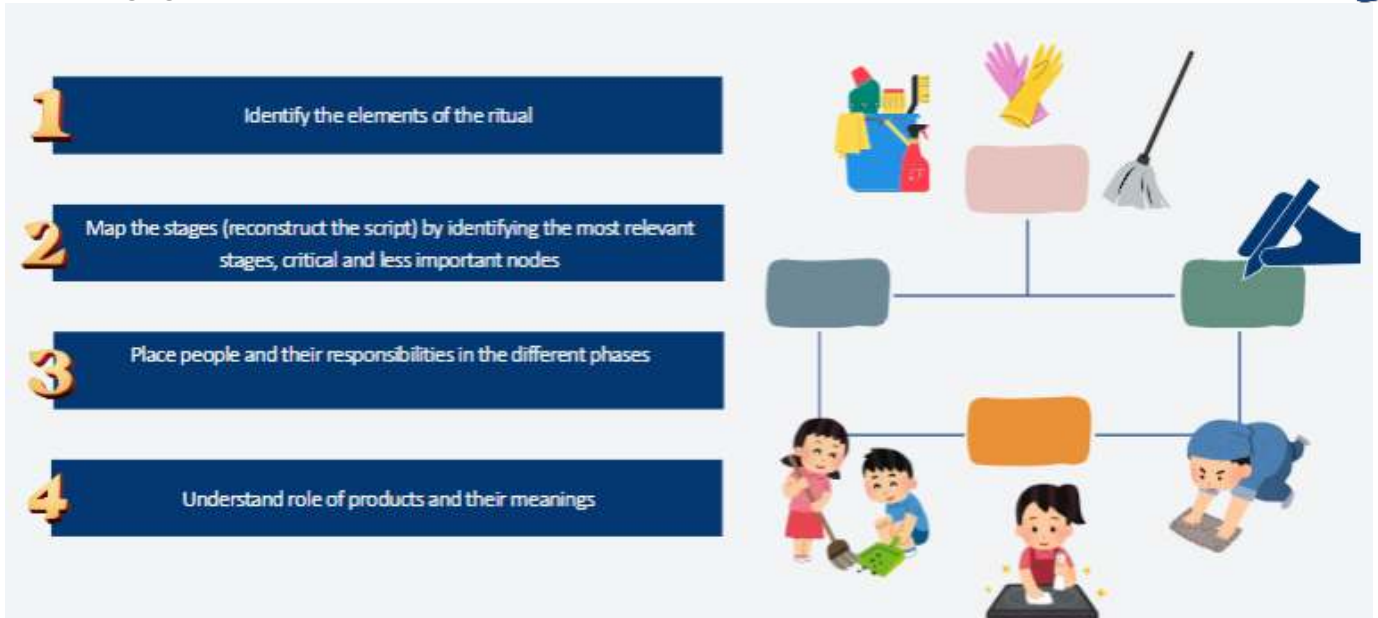
- After purchasing a car, the family goes to a temple to perform a certain ceremony
- The priest at the temple chants certain mantras and prayers for the well being of the car and to ward off the evil eye
- The Aarti (ritual) with incense sticks, flowers, sweets and bells is performed
- A coconut is cracked in front of the car and the coconut water is sprinkled on the car



- As a part of the prayer, a flower garland is tied, vermilion marks are applied and chilly and lemon are hung to the front of the car
- And finally, the car is made to crush lemons, as per the religious belief, this would prevent car accidents
- The family as a whole pay for the services of the priest
- Finally, the eldest member of the family sits in the front seat of the car for the first time

VAHANA PUJA (Indian institutional ritual)





Can rituals and their artifacts be modified? How and under what circumstances?

Yes, it is possible, but of course it is not easy -< in order to do this the company should provide all the tools needed to complete it.

EX: MOET and Don Perignon

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Rituals are relevant at a symbolic and emotional level.

Habits matter when we want to save time and energy.

HABITS	RITUALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps consumers save time! Reinforce the message that they are doing the right choice by focusing on the core value Don't change visual cues of products frequently Monitor competitors' attacks and react quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate consumers' personal or social rituals related to the product in your advertising campaign Provide additional ritual-related products or services (beer glasses, coffee mugs, etc.).

Wrap-up

MOVEMENT OF MEANING

Rituals =

- expressive and symbolic activity, built on a multiplicity of behaviors manifested in sequences of fixed episodes, repeated over time and pervading different dimensions of human life: religious, political, individual and social
- one-time vs. repeated acts
- sequence of episodic events
- Rite (sequence of actions made special by virtue of their condensation, elevation or stylization + socially distinguishable) vs. Rituals (general actions with specific characteristics: formalization, procedure, sequence, perpetuation over time, etc).
- Different and multiple levels of the value of the ritual sequence

1 Identify the elements of the ritual

2 Place people and their responsibilities in the different phases

3 Map the steps (reconstruct the effort by identifying the most relevant stages, critical and less important, notice)

4 Understand role of artifacts and their meanings

Wrap-up

Not all habits involve the existence of rituals
Not all rituals represent habitual activity

The ritual involves more pluralistic experience in terms of meanings and acts involved

- Habits important for saving time and energy vs rituals relevant on a symbolic and emotional level
- Habits do not effectively support loyalty vs Rituals effectively support loyalty

Disruption of routines can create emotional distress and different reaction strategies

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A RITUAL:

(a) Artifacts, products, brands; (b) Script; (c) The roles played during the event; (d) The public or audience

GENDER IDENTITY: Models of masculinity and femininity

Getting the concepts in order

Combining biological, psychological and social perspectives, **sexual identity** is considered a **multidimensional construct** consisting of distinct components, and different layers.

	<p>Biological sex: biological membership in male or female sex determined by sex chromosomes</p>
	<p>Gender identity: a person's primary self-identification as male or female and as permanent trait (usually established in early childhood)</p>
	<p>Gender role: set of expectations and roles about how men and women should behave in a given culture and historical period</p>
	<p>Sexual orientation: erotic and affective attraction to members of the opposite sex, same sex, or both (i.e., homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual)</p>

Gender identity and gender role

Gender identity:

- traces back to an individual's basic belief that he or she is either male or female;
- usually develops within the first few years of age, and is normally present when the individual begins to speak and relate to others

The process of gender identity development is **influenced** by both biological predispositions and individual experiences, social, historical and cultural context.

The gender identity traces back to our belief that he or she is either male or female and it is something that we generally understand when we are children, since we immediately realize if we feel comfortable with our biological sex.

Gender role:

- derived in part from gender identity, corresponds to everything a person does or says to signal to others or to himself/herself his/her rate of masculinity or femininity

Gender is based on a set of attitudes, rules of behavior, and other distinctive elements commonly associated with masculinity or femininity, defined by the **culture** to which one belongs.

Gender role is a set of expectations role about how men and women should behave. Those set of expectations are cultural-related, concept-related and historically related, meaning by this that they evolve over time.

GENDER THEORIES

Essentialist view

- gender and sex are one in the same

Constructionist view

- individual speaking, thinking, acting, and perceiving are viewed as formed with **culturally specific patterns of behavior** that develop over time
- understanding of gender as constructed and formed in social interactions

Gender theories vs feminist theories

- for gender theorists, one is not masculine or feminine but rather performs a **combination of many characteristics that could be understood as either or both masculine or feminine** depending on the context and relationships and purposes
- gender is not so much something one is, as something one does, something one performs
- discourse in particular serves as the capacity to produce what it names, including what is "normality" and "otherness" + (performativity, Butler 1990)
- like gender theories, **feminist theories** provide a critical analysis of the relationship between **difference** and **inequality**
- feminist theory takes a woman's experience as its starting point

Biological explanations to the difference in gender behavior

Numerous studies and theories based on **biology** have tried to explain the **differences between males and females**. Pre-, neo, and postnatal exposure to **gonadal hormones** can influence brain development permanently and thus the propensities people display (Hines, 2004).

Ethical considerations preclude manipulation of human exposure to gonadal hormones. Thus, much of our Chiara Tua

Understanding Consumer 2

knowledge of hormonal influences comes from indirect approaches.

Hormone exposure can produce assorted and complex **gender differences only during critical periods of development**, such as childhood.

The most convincing evidence that prenatal hormone exposure contributes to gender differences comes from studies of children's play (e.g., play with dolls or trucks, or rough and tumble play). **Results however are often controversial.**

Studies have shown that gender differences can favor males on some **specific cognitive abilities**, such as mental rotations, spatial perception, math problem solving, and math word problems. Differences also exist and favor females for **verbal fluency, vocabulary, math calculations, and perceptual or processing speed** (Hines, 2004; Roivainen, 2011).

However, findings are mixed or weaker concerning these as well as **other gender-related characteristics.**

Theories based on the structure of the brain (brain lateralization theories) explain differences based on the different times at which girls and boys **develop skills** related to the two hemispheres of the brain:

Males (females) tend to be more locally efficient in their **right (left)** hemisphere networks (Tian et al. 2011). Strong evidence also indicates that males' hemispheres are more lateralized (i.e., functionally specialized) than those of females

Males' brains displayed **greater neural connectivity from front to back** and within a single hemisphere, a pattern likely to benefit males' performance on tasks requiring both astute perception and coordinated action. In contrast, females displayed **greater connectivity between the two brain hemispheres**, seemingly advantageous for females when cognitive tasks require bilateral or interhemispheric processing, as often occurs during multitasking (Verma et al., 2014)

The superiority of females in verbal skills is high in the early years of schooling but later the differences diminish. Although some studies show that in growing up males appear better in science subjects such a difference has been explained in terms of interest in such subjects due to gender identity...

To make a long story short... although there are biological motivations, the obvious differences we notice are likely to have multiple origins.

Evolutionary explanations to the difference in gender behavior

Theories based on the evolution focus on the impacts made by **mechanisms that humans developed** to adaptively address environmental challenges faced by their ancestors.

The main idea is that natural selection spawned a human brain designed with assorted programs, each specialized to solve a recurring problem faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors (Tooby & Cosmides, 2005)

<p>Research has confirmed several basic premises about the genders' mating and sexual activity, such as males' versus females' desired number of sexual partners and the characteristics each gender desires in choosing mates (Smiler, 2011).</p>	<p>Mating theory may explain males' greater aggressiveness and proclivity toward risk taking.</p>
<p>Other theories propose that certain female superiorities evolved from females' comparatively greater responsibility for child-rearing. Child care requires superior speed and accuracy at recognizing others' facially communicated emotions, and accordingly females display such an advantage.</p>	<p>Evidence supports the theory that gender differences in navigational strategies evolved because of early males' (females') role as hunters → orientation strategies in space</p>



With this advertising, they wanted to make a comparison between the rituals that men and women perform before going out for a date -> when men have to go out they think very easily let's go out and have a beer with my friends or with somebody else, while the decision process of women seems more uh complex, because they have to define since they have different alternatives according to what they are going to drink: they have to understand how to combine the different kind of fashion items and accessories according their outlook.

In the 1960s and 1970s, theories based on **social learning** argued that we **learn from an early age to relate to our peers and adhere to the standards attributed to our gender.**

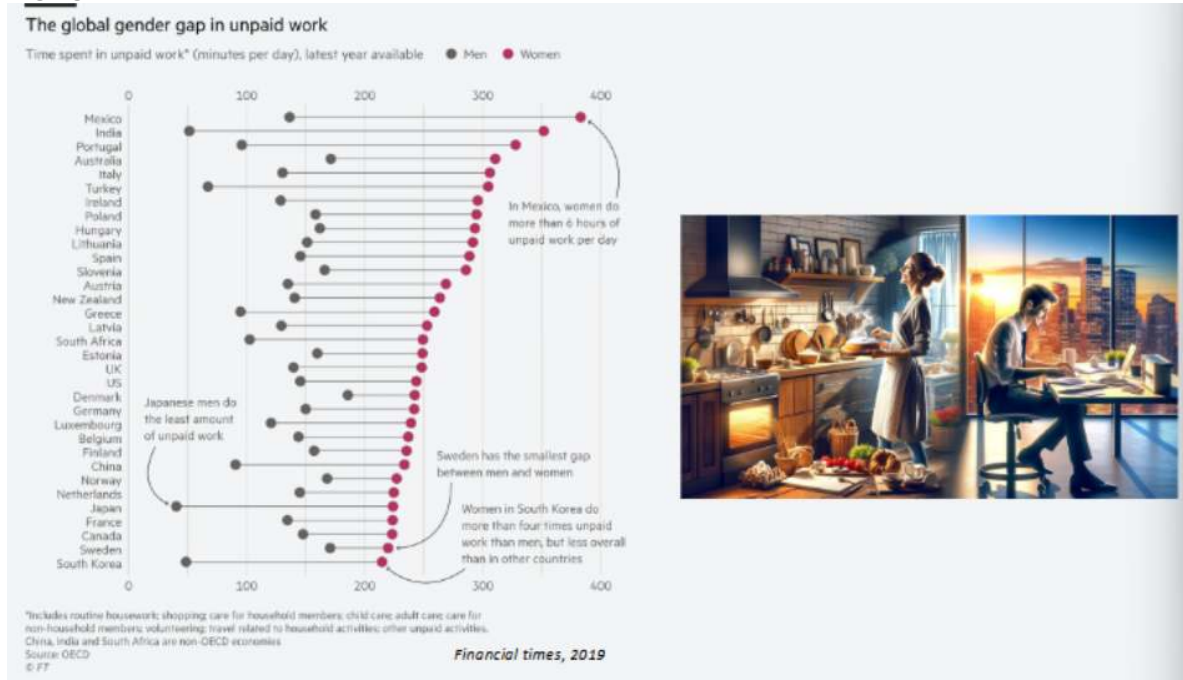
This would explain why:

“Men are more achievement-oriented (McClelland, 1975) and women are more oriented toward association with others” (Bakan, 1966; Bem, 1974)

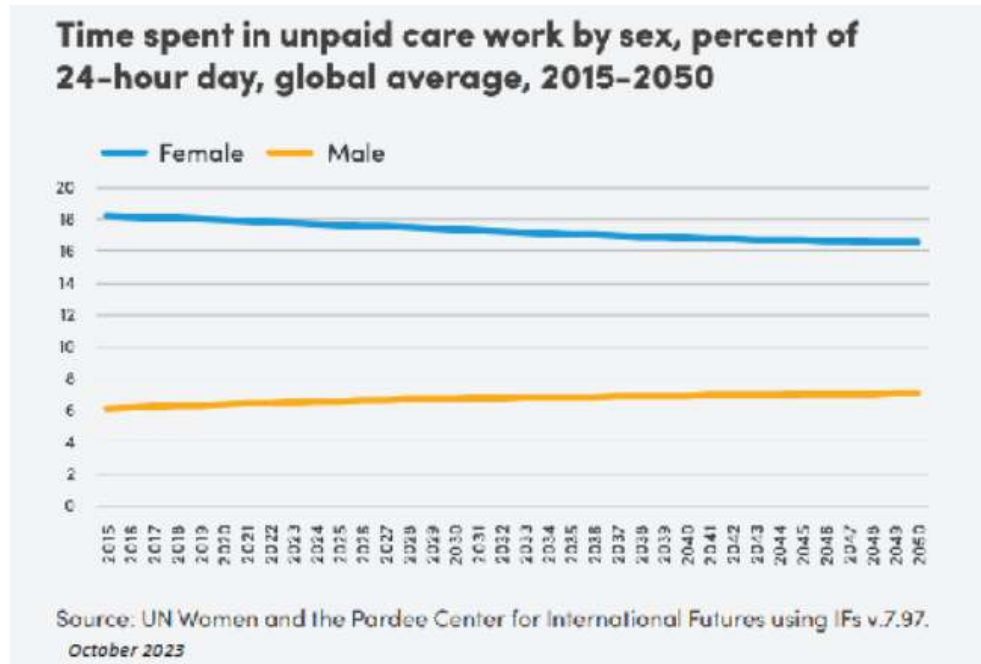
“Men are shown to be more independent of others’ judgments while women’s judgments appear more variable and subject to persuasion” (women would be more willing to use information processed by others; Meyers-Levy, 1988)

Social Role Theory: suggests that the division of labor has historically defined **expectations in terms of gender roles** and has also caused differences in information processing and personality -> impact on the way we behave and the way we gather information. This theory has some similarity with the evolutionary theory. Other studies show that each individual depending on situations brings out **male or female traits regardless of biological sex** (Bem, 1974)

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A turnaround in the models? Time use



The **Socialization-based model** states that men and women learn their roles through communication and exposure with socializing agents (peers, parents, and media), and this stimulates both the **emergence of specific interests** toward certain topics/products and the **ways in which they seek and process information** -> social influences with an impact on children; this model give a strong explanation to the role of social media.

Current regulations in the United Kingdom

Advertising communication inspired by gender stereotypes now banned by Advertising Standards Authority UK

- Forbidden to run commercials suggesting that a specific activity is inappropriate for girls or vice versa
- Forbidden to run commercials in which the family gets dirty, and the woman/mother is solely responsible for cleanliness
- Forbidden to run commercials in which the man is incapable of completing simple household or caring tasks

Cognitivist explanations and implications

Selective interpretation theory: men (**selective processors**) are interested in the general concept of the message, women (**comprehensive processors**) are interested in the details -> this theory is important in order to understand how women and men interpret advertising

Gender role impact

Item-specific vs relational processing theories:

- men benefit from **nonverbal reinforcement** (music, figures, etc.) in advertising messages and better process messages with a key, simple message
- women favor **verbal** and information-rich messages about the category

Gender marketing: warnings for use

We understood that marketing has a huge impact in perpetuating specific stereotypes and specific gender roles. If companies want to do something effective, they need to understand which are the different kind of implications that their communication can have in society -> it would be important to be always updated about the evolution of gender roles.

When marketing activities are gender-based, it is important to take into account **all the underlying causes** of differences in male and female behavior:

- biological
- cultural and social
- cognitivist

Gender marketing must always be contextualized historically, geographically, and culturally.

Although biological differences are stable, they offer few useful references. Behaviors, on the other hand, evolve faster and faster because of **evolving role identity reference models**.

From theory to practice -GENDER CONTAMINATION AND BRANDS: when is it successful?

Models of femininity

Models evolve and are influenced by numerous **cultural factors**. The main agents are media, practices, and the perpetuation of stereotypes. They materialize in physical appearance, attitudes, etc.

In the last year, we are more interested in understanding the representation of men in advertising, because where we can see more innovation, more changes in the representation of men, not so much on women representation.

MODELS OF FEMININITY IN THE MEDIA

The woman next door

The Perfect Real Body

The unachievable model

The sexy bombshell

The WOMAN OF SUCCESS model.

MODELS OF MASCULINITY

The breadwinner

THE GOOD-LOOKING MODEL

THE REBEL MODEL

THE GENIUS MODEL

BREADWINNER: the traditional man, who works to sustain the family and so on

MODELS OF MASCULINITY

THE TOUGH MODEL

THE HERO MODEL

THE MODEL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

THE MYSTERIOUS MODEL

This model emerged mainly on social media.

NEW MODELS OF MASCULINITY



Men who decide to talk about children health are basically high profile -> doctors, experts and so on
 Stereotype linked to heterosexual /homosexual should be taken into consideration when we decide to keep a promotional tool in other countries -> we can not keep elements that are not congruent with a certain culture, otherwise we can develop negative attitudes toward our company.

Wrap-up

Biological sex: biological membership in the male or female sex determined by sex chromosomes

Gender identity: a person's primary self-identification as male or female and permanent trait (usually established in early childhood)

Gender role: set of expectations and roles about how men and women should behave in a given culture and historical period

Sexual orientation: erotic and affective attraction to members of the opposite sex, same sex, or both (i.e., heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual)

When marketing activities are gender-based, it is important to take into account all the underlying causes of differences in male and female behavior: biological, evolutionary, cultural and social, cognitivist

Although there are biological reasons, the obvious differences between males and females that we notice have multiple origins

Social Role Theory = division of labor has historically defined expectations in terms of gender roles and caused differences in information processing and personality

Socialization model = men and women learn their roles through communication and exposure with socializing agents (peers, parents, and media)

Selective interpretation theory: men (*selective processors*) = general concept of the message vs. women (*comprehensive processors*) = details

Models evolve and are influenced by many **cultural factors:** media, practices, perpetuation of stereotypes. They materialize in physical appearance, attitudes, etc.

THOUGHTS ON CONSUMPTION AND DESIRE

How can we define desire?



It is difficult to define desire; when we think about desires we can have different kind of images that come to our mind: seduction, dreams, escapism, attraction, passion and so on.

N.B. Marketing never creates needs, it creates desires!

Desire and needs

Needs are related to utility maximization and rationalization choices -> needs are basically already there and people are not aware about this; moreover, needs are related to functional meanings, utilitarian benefits.

Desires are related to a multitude of meanings: impulsive buying, transcendence, sacralization, game passion, hedonic experiences, dreams, magic, fantasies and myths, ritualization and intensification.

Needs and desires are **two categorically different concepts** (Belk et al., 2000):



Need manifests as a **physical tension** that generates a state of discomfort and restlessness that, after the object capable of satisfying it has been identified and consumed, ceases, not to manifest again until the next physical tension (Freud, 1975) -> gap between our condition (real situation) and the condition that put us in equilibrium (ideal situation).

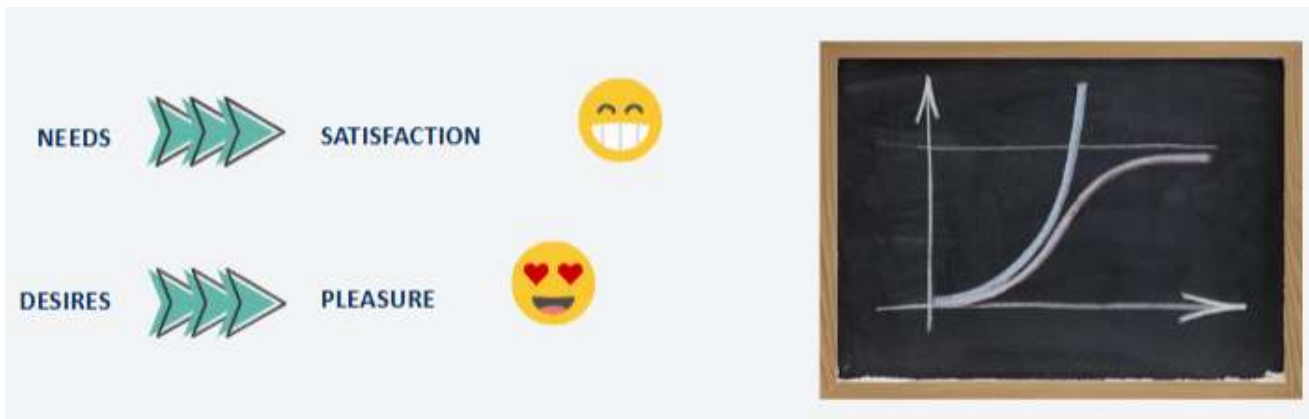
Desire has **fewer material roots**; the individual does not desire what is objectively necessary, but what **seduces him or her on a mental level** (Belk et al., 2000) -> related to our nature; in order to survive we always need to desire something. We are attracted and seduced by some particular things -> institutional forces can make us desire something or not, that is why marketing has a such huge impact on they evolution and creation of desires.

Desire does not have an object inherent in it, capable by itself of satisfying it (Ciaramelli, 2000) and, unlike need, can be satisfied in different ways (Fabris, 2003) -> in order to survive we need to desire something!

...BUT...among the **alternatives** the individual chooses a **precise object** on which to direct all his desire, and that object becomes in his mind irreplaceable...

A consumer does not want a car, but that precise model of car, of that precise color, with precise options (Belk

When faced with a multiplicity of objects that could potentially represent the object of an individual's desires, he elects only one and only that one will be desired



Phenomenology of desires

Imagine we are a young man who desires a motorcycle...a specific motorcycle...with a specific name and model: Ducati's DesertX Rally. What does the DesertX Rally represent to him?

A "physical", "embodied" passion (**somatization of passion**). The materialization of a desire for socialization (relational/ mimesis). The desire for diversity, distinction.

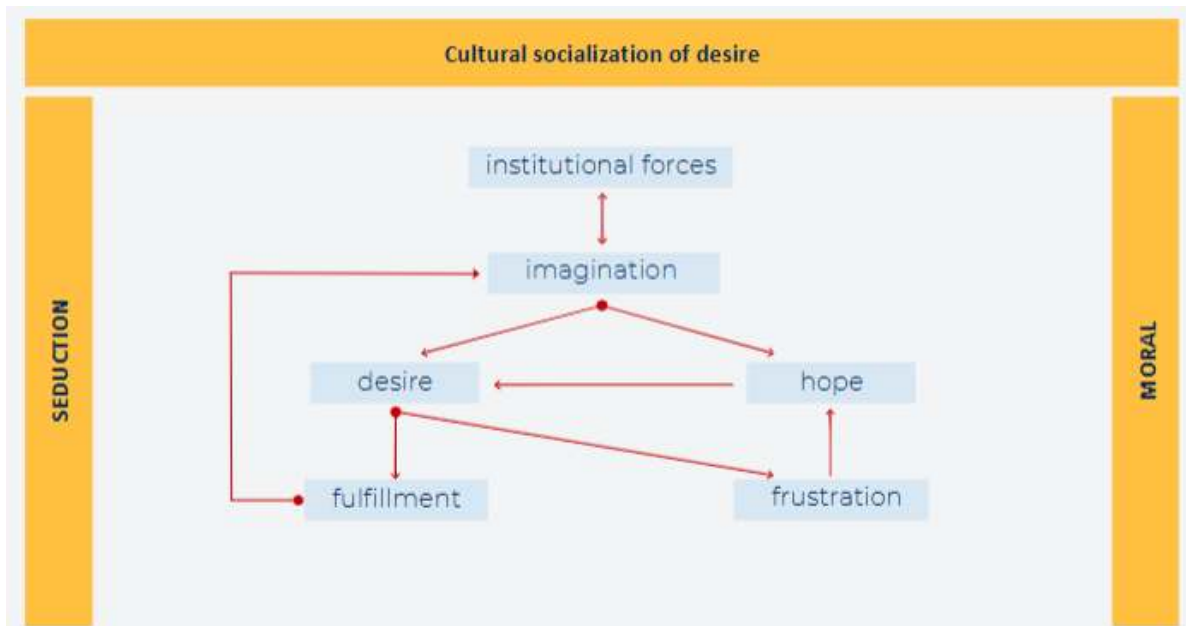
But when we study desire, we have to remember that it is not the only side, the only dimension, because desires bring also a dark side, because when we desire something so strongly, we can also have kind of negative feelings -> immorality...guilt, danger, inaccessibility, distance -> we can experience depression, but every time we are going to see the object we will be attracted to it

The cycle of desire



At the beginning, so the first step is called self seduction; it means that we are almost ready to desire something new, because we need to desire something all the time -> both material and immaterial. So, the first step is finding something that stimulates us -> with the self-seduction we are seduced by something. And then while we are dreaming of getting that object, there is a moment of longing, yearning, when we feel positive kind of sensation, because we dream about that desire. These positive feelings increase till the top, the maximum level, until we finally get the object of desire. But the positive feelings that we experience after a while start to decrease slowly or suddenly according to the person characteristics or the attributes of the object, and we reach again the bottom level -> the cycle start again because we need to start desiring something new. If there are no desire, there is something wrong -> depression or other kind of problems.

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Another important issues about the cycle of desire it's the identification of the forces that have an impact on our desire; those forces can also explain why we have different desires -> desire is based on imagination because a major part of the pleasure that we feel is before the acquisition of the objects, it is what we feel while we are waiting for that. The imagination is important since the opportunity to start a new cycle of desires is higher since we are overwhelmed by the stimuli around us.

Institutional forces are companies, media and social media, movies, other cultural institutions/services, advertising and marketing actions -> they provide us food for imagination, they show us new products, new styles, new services, new opportunity for escapism.

Then we have two different outcomes:

1. We can fulfill the desire so get the object of our desire
2. We are not able to get that object so to fulfill the desire. In that cases we can have frustration -> some people do not give up and maybe can change a little bit the object of desire or maybe they can find different strategies to transform their desire into hope

Sometimes, imagination simply provide us resources to hope, and then one day we will transform that hope into a desire.

Other elements that are really important for uh the understanding of the cycle of desire are the additional forces that can have an impact on our imagination and desires -> they make the desire more or less intense.

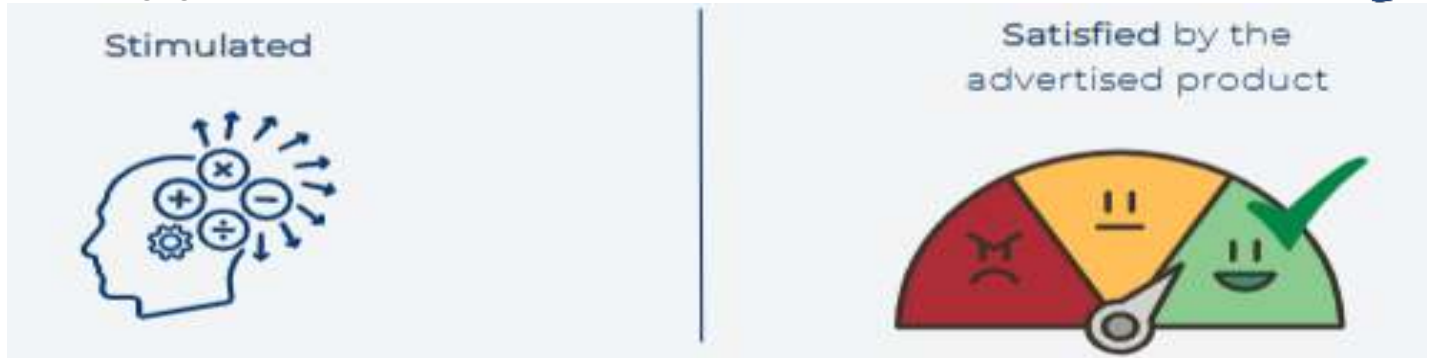
Finally, we need to take into consideration the cultural and historical context -> what we used to desire last year maybe is different to what we're going to desire this year and next year. This is why we say that marketing does not generate new needs, but marketing can generate the desires.

There is also the process of the seduction because some people are easily seduced by some items, while other are less easily seduced -> also seduction has a role: some people can be self-seduced every day by different kind of things, while other people have a different kind of relationship with consumption, so it is more difficult to attract them.

Moreover, we are influenced by morality -> according to our personal ideologies, according to other political ideas, according to our values we may have or not moral constraints. Morality can provide us sort of borders that we don't want to cross because we are taught that there are specific kind of values -> we are influenced by morality and then maybe we can feel some people do not desire specific kind of things because for them those things are immoral, so this is why they are not seduced by those objects.

Desire and advertising

The **strategies** traditionally used in advertising are of two types and based on different ways in dealing with desire which can be:



At first a create a desire, then we have to satisfy this desire through our products.

The products as a stimulus

Rule: an equation is created in which the product fits into a relationship between man and woman by stimulating mutual desire

Pre-post design: without the product there would be no desire -> that is what consumers have to think at the end of the advertising.

Implicit assumption: the viewer identifies with the story and is motivated to “buy” the product even if only symbolically.

The product that satisfies

Desire is represented metaphorically by symbols semiotically related to desire (flames, sexual desire, etc.) and the product is referred to as the only **object that can fulfill it**

EX: Magnum always tries to seduce

The cultural dimension

To use the **desire lever in advertising**, it is essential to take **cultural differences** into account.

The cultures in which it has the greatest impact are **European** and **American** cultures and therefore effective in countries where consumers are exposed to advertisements from these cultures

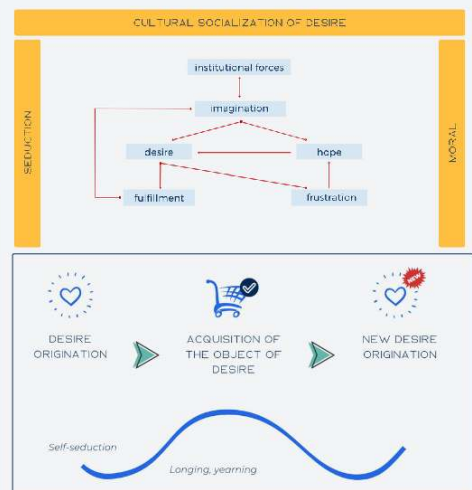
Wrap-up

Needs

- related to **utility maximization** and **rationalization choices**
- **biological** drive
- arise **independently** of social context
- manifest as a **physical tension**

Desires

- linked to a **multitude of meanings**: impulsive buying, transcendence, sacralization, play, passion, hedonistic experiences, dreams, magic, fantasies and myths, ritualization and intensification
- **psychological/social** drive
- coexist with **imagination**, indeed this represents a necessary condition
- have fewer material roots related to a **mental level seduction**
- can be satisfied in different ways, but among the alternatives one chooses a **specific object** on which to direct all one's desire, and this object becomes irreplaceable



Strategies traditionally used in advertising based on **different ways** in dealing with desire: **stimulated** or **satisfied** by the advertised product

To use the leverage of desire in advertising, it is essential to take **cultural differences** into account

Understanding Consumer 2

KIDS AND MARKETING: Practical challenges and ethical implications

First rule: ethics -> they are not able to distinguish the ironic side, but they start behaving as in the advertising.

Second rule: children come first even than results -> always remember the implications.

The role of children in consumption processes

“Kids today are customers, buyers, spenders, shoppers, consumers” (McNeal, 1992)



They consume, they will become the consumer of the future and they are going to keep consuming what they love during childhood.

Consumer socialization

Consumer socialization can be defined as the process of “socialization of children” (Ward 1974; Roedder-John, 1999) that is, the stages through which children develop the knowledge and attitude necessary to behave as consumers (Chattopadhyay, 2000).

Note: Being a consumer is not just about buying, but first about **gathering information** about how the market works in order to understand the logic and dynamics -> **the WHAT and HOW of consumption**

The three categories in which consumer socialization is developed:

- a) Capabilities (of information processing, decision making, evaluation, etc.)
- b) Consumption preferences
- c) Consumption attitudes

Kids spend a lot of time in front of the tv, but also social media -> sometimes they prefer adv for adults rather than the ones for kids... they do not want to be perceived as stupid by adults.

Consumer socialization and Piaget’s cognitive process

STAGE/LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Stage 1	<p>Sensorimotor stage (0-2 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 stages through which the child develops primarily motor knowledge, of interaction with the environment • by 18 months begins to "Imagine" effects of actions
Stage 2	<p>Pre-conceptual stage (2-4 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language development and conceptual learning through play (and imitation)
Stage 3	<p>Intuitive thinking stage (4-7 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased participation and autonomy, interaction with multiple authorial figures
Stage 4	<p>Concrete operations stage (8-11 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transition from logical to inductive skills
Stage 5	<p>Formal operations stage (11-14 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of abstract reasoning skills, hypothetical-deductive in nature

Criticism to Piaget's model

More recent research criticizes the hypothesis that children's cognitive development proceeds by age stages (Pine and Veasey, 2003; Siegler, 1996) for several reasons.

Some scholars prefer theories that see other factors underlying cognitive development:


1. Freud's intra-psychological crises
2. Learning based on observation of others (Bandura, 1977 and 1986)
3. The enhancement of the ability to perceive one's surroundings (Gibson, 1966) and the ability to discriminate between stimuli, selective attention, etc.; and the improvement of the ability to perceive the environment (Gibson, 1966).


Others believe that not all children have a cognitive development process that respects Piaget's stages because they are conditioned by their environment and cultural context.

Theories in marketing studies

Two perspectives predominate in marketing theories:

Cognitivist: children are targets for marketing and therefore of them we need to understand how they process information at different stages





Cultural (CCT): children live in a consumerist world and develop their consumer ideologies by consuming advertisements and using goods in the process of constructing their own identity; of them we need to study not only how they process information but how they incorporate it into everyday life to become (!) agents of consumption and not just targets

For further discussion, please refer to the presentation "We want a better world where all kids can have branded stuff" by Mauri e Borghini






Codes of behavior

Comply with all **existing regulations** (legislation, codes of ethics, etc.) and verify that the following **conditions** exist:

- Is their **privacy** (name, address and photo) assured?
- Are the **goals (and desired outcomes) clear** to the point where **parents** (or their designee) can give **participatory consent**?
- Are the children protected from any **negative influences** from our research? Are we sure that they will not be influenced by the fact that we are perceived to have a higher power?
- Are we sure that participation in the research will **not change their value and belief systems**?

Moreover, kids are not able to understand when they have to stop talking when talking about family behaviour. Finally, we can talk about the social desirability bias, which is a type of response bias where individuals provide answers, they believe are more socially acceptable or favorable rather than being truthful. This occurs because they want to conform to societal norms, avoid judgment, or present themselves in a positive light.

Instructions for use: the research tools

	Creative methods (storytelling, drawings, collages, etc.): these are the best methods to combine with narratives/explanations of what they have created
	Interviews: OK to have content explained by creative techniques but be careful not to touch sensitive topics where children may tell about private family matters
	Group discussion: useful as above and to stimulate the shyers, but beware of group dynamics if you are not experienced
	Acting and role playing: help bring out children's perceptions and points of view without necessarily bringing out private information
	Observation and ethnography: useful for observing use of objects, games, dynamics

Final note

Understanding Consumer 2

Remember to:

- NEVER SHOW BRANDS, ADVERTISEMENTS TO CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION (and in any case, do not do so when collecting data online, at school or anywhere else where they are not under the close supervision of their parents)
- DO NOT USE VIDEO CAMERAS, CAMERAS
- RECORD **ONLY THE VOICE** AND ANNOUNCE ONLY NAME INITIAL LETTER, SEX, AGE AND ANY OTHER DATA USEFUL FOR SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES IF STRICTLY NECESSARY (e.g., favorite store, favorite food, etc).

Wrap-up

Rules

- Ethics
- Children come first, even than results

Children constitute 3 markets in 1:

- primary market
- market of influencers
- future market

Nag factor & pester power

Two dominant perspectives in marketing theories:

- constructivist (children as targets)
- cognitivist (children immersed in a context of goods and advertising > process of evolving into future consumer agents)

Consumer socialization:

- process of "child socialization" = stages through which children develop the knowledge and attitude necessary to behave as consumers (i.e., also able to inform themselves as well as buy) > The WHAT and HOW of consumption
- Categories in which consumer socialization develops: capabilities, consumption preferences and attitudes

RESEARCH TOOLS

Creative methods (storytelling, drawings, collage, etc.),
Interviews, Group discussion, Acting and role playing,
Observation and ethnography.

NEVER SHOW BRANDS, ADVERTISEMENTS TO CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL PERMISSION / DO NOT USE VIDEO CAMERAS, CAMERAS / RECORD ONLY THE VOICE

STAGE/LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Stage 1	<p>Sensorimotor stage (0-2 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It starts through which the child develops primary motor knowledge of interaction with the environment by 18 months begins to "negotiate" effects of actions
Stage 2	<p>Pre-conceptual stage (2-4 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> language development and conceptual learning through play (and imitation)
Stage 3	<p>Multiple thinking stage (4-7 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation and autonomy; interaction with multiple authority figures
Stage 4	<p>Concrete operations stage (7-11 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transition from magical to inductive skills
Stage 5	<p>Formal operations stage (11+ years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of abstract reasoning skills; hypothetical/inductive in nature

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TEACHING DIVISION



OUR PARTNERS

700+
CLUB



ETHAN
SUSTAINABILITY

DELIVERY VALLEY

NO GENDER KITCHEN

LA PIADINERIA

