

Chapter Four – Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to provide a description of the methodology used for this study, the data gathering process and the analysis. The aims of the research are revisited in this chapter to demonstrate the compatibility of the methodology with the objectives of the study. Furthermore, a detailed description will be provided of the nature of qualitative research in general, as well as the steps of thematic analysis that were followed to transform the raw data from the focus group discussions into workable results. Limitations of the study will also be presented.

4.2 Aims of the Study

As discussed in Chapter 1, the aim of this research study is to explore South African smokers' perceptions of anti-smoking advertising, with the incorporation of fear-appeal. Subsequently, the objective was to use a qualitative approach and apply this to the research design, data gathering and analysis in order to address the aim.

The motivation for conducting this research programme was to help guide the National Council Against Smoking (NCAS) with regards to the genre of advertising used in their campaigns, in order to assist them in reaching higher levels of efficacy amongst their target audience.

4.3 Research Approach

This study is qualitative in nature, which provides the opportunity to describe a certain experience from the respondents' points of view.

Broadly defined, qualitative research can be described as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.17). The relative value of both qualitative and quantitative inquiry has been long debated by researchers (Patton, 1990), but this value is patently dependent on the nature of the study.

When highlighting the main differences between qualitative and quantitative research, it is evident that where quantitative researchers search for causal determination, prediction and generalisation of findings, qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding and extrapolation. Therefore, the results obtained from a qualitative analysis will result in a different type of knowledge than that obtained from a quantitative analysis (Hoepfl, 1997).

Features that distinguish qualitative research from quantitative research include the fact that qualitative research is more concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of the individuals. Qualitative research was selected to make it possible to explore the existing perceptions that smokers have of anti-smoking advertising, to attempt to answer the ‘why?’ questions.

This study is of a qualitative nature, and is therefore concerned with the development of explanations of a certain social phenomena, namely smoking. In other words, this study will help us gain a better understanding of the perceptions that exist amongst smokers regarding anti-smoking advertising.

4.4 Aims of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research seeks to answer questions (Hancock, 2002) relating to the following:

- Reasons for certain types of behaviour
- The process of attitude and opinion formation and why these are formed
- How individuals are affected by certain events around them
- How and why cultures have developed in the way they have
- The differences that exist between social groupings

Qualitative research also aims at “describing social phenomena as they occur naturally. No attempt is made to manipulate the situation under study as is the case with experimental quantitative research” (Hancock, 2002, p.2). It is for this reason that focus groups were selected as methodology, as they would help the researcher gain an understanding through a holistic perspective. In turn, the data collected during these focus groups can be used in the development of concepts and theories, to aid in increasing an understanding of this specific phenomenon.

The type of research conducted can be identified as market research, as the researcher is studying a specific market, which is comprised of only smokers, investigating the perceptions that exist amongst this market regarding an anti-smoking campaign that flighted on South African television.

4.5 The Benefits of Qualitative Market Research Techniques: Focus Groups

Qualitative market research can be defined as “small scale research”, where the consumer is recruited and questioned about their usage of, attitudes, imagery, feelings, beliefs and motives related to a specific behaviour (Robson & Foster, 1989).

As stated previously, focus groups remain a very popular method utilised in the field of market research, they provide a platform from which to explain consumer behaviour patterns within a framework that enables the researcher to relate to both psychology and social behaviour.

Qualitative market research is usually informal and semi-structured, which allows respondents to freely contribute and share their views and feelings in a conversational setting, without the constraints of a structured questionnaire development (Robson & Foster, 1989).

4.6 Data Collection and Generation: Focus Groups as the Research Method

Many definitions of focus groups exist. Familiar words such as organised discussions (Kitzinger, 1994), collective activity (Powell, Single & Lloyd, 1996), social events (Goss & Leinbach, 1996) and interaction (Kitzinger, 1995) all identify the contributions that focus groups make to research.

Powell et al. (1996, p.499), define a focus group as “a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment, from personal experience, on the topic that is the subject of the research”.

4.7 Focus Groups vs. Other Qualitative Methodologies

When considering which methodology to use for this study, it was recommended that the researcher define what type of study this is going to be. Subsequently, this study was identified as an exploration of the perceptions that smokers have of anti-smoking campaigns – therefore encouraging further research to take place. Based on literature, the researcher decided the most effective way to gain access to smokers' perceptions of anti-smoking advertising was to run a set of focus groups, consisting of participants who are smokers (how smokers were classified for this study can be found in the recruiting questionnaire-Appendix A) – ranging from social smokers to heavy smokers. Focus groups are under-used in social research, although they have a long history in market research (Morgan, 1988) and more recently in medical research (Powell & Single, 1996).

According to Krueger (1988), focus groups can be used in the exploratory or preliminary stages of a study. This stage may help in assessing the impact of the anti-smoking campaign for instance, as well as generating further avenues of research. For example, a quantitative research program would be beneficial in that it would help quantify the results obtained in the qualitative phase, as well as add validity to the results by being able to generalise the results to the population as a whole. Qualitative research also informs and enriches the process of questionnaire for the potential quantitative phase.

Focus groups are a high value technique for any research project, which requires the depth, detail and richness of subjective data that a qualitative technique provides. Focus groups are used extensively for pre and post testing of advertising campaigns, brand image development and product/service testing.

Focus group research is mainly concerned with understanding rather than measuring. It yields a wealth of in-depth information, gathered in a manner, which enables respondents to communicate their feelings, thoughts and opinions freely without feeling restricted or intimidated in any way. In order to help facilitate communication between the participants, groups are designed in such a way to enhance the levels of interaction between selected respondents. For example, two focus groups consisted of respondents aged 25 to 34, and within these groups the races were mixed (Black, White, Coloured and Indian). It was decided to segment the groups in this way, as younger respondents are expected to interact more comfortably in a mixed racial situation than those from the older generation.

Focus group research aims to draw on the feelings, attitudes, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a such manner as would not be possible when using any other method. For example, these attitudes and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting, but are more likely to be exposed by the social gathering and interaction that a focus group entails. Compared to individual interviews that aim to obtain data about individual beliefs, attitudes and feelings, focus groups elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context.

Focus groups provide insight into the individual and the group psyche of participants, which undoubtedly has the power to reveal pertinent information that could enable the researcher to make informed decisions. For example, without having moderated the groups for Project Smoke, the researcher would never have realised how “emotional” smoking actually is.

Given the fact that the groups were relatively small, consisting of 6 to 8 participants, data from the focus groups could not be generalised to the South African smoking population as a whole. However, five focus groups were conducted with participants from a homogeneous target group (smokers); this provided an indication of the reliability of the results obtained.

The nature of focus groups enables the researcher to select and recruit suitable respondents beforehand. Focus groups have the further advantage that respondents have committed beforehand to be interviewed at a specific time period, set to suit all respondents. Respondents are thus willing to give full and well-considered answers to questions. Generally, the recommended number of participants per group is 6 to 10 (McIntosh, 1993). A moderator facilitates the discussion process and ensures that the correct questions are asked.

Kitzinger (1994, 1995) has argued, like countless others, that the most central feature of any focus group is the interaction between respondents. This interaction has the power to highlight the respondents' views of the world, the language that may be used to talk about a certain issue, as well as values and beliefs held about a certain situation. Interaction between participants gives them the opportunity to question one another, as well as to re-examine and review their own understandings of their experiences.

Secondly, focus groups induce information in a way which allows the researcher to find out why a certain issue is significant, as well as what is significant about this issue (Morgan, 1988). As a result of this, the gap between what people say and what they do can be better understood (Lankshear, 1993). Relating to Project Smoke for instance, explanations could be obtained about why respondents carry on smoking when they are well aware of the health risks associated with cigarette smoking; if numerous attitudes and explanations of their behaviour are eagerly expressed, numerous meanings and understandings are thus revealed.

Another important constituent in focus groups is the issue of trust. If the focus groups work well from the beginning, a relationship of trust develops between the moderator and the respondents, and this enables the respondents to explore solutions to a particular problem as a unit (Kitzinger, 1995), rather than as individuals. Of course, not everyone will experience this benefit, as focus groups can be intimidating to some respondents, especially those who are shy or inarticulate; a limitation of focus group research.

Lastly, it should not be assumed that the individuals in a focus group are expressing their own definitive individual view. Researchers need to take into consideration the fact that respondents are set to express themselves in a specific context, within a specific culture, therefore making it more of a challenge to identify individual messages. For example, while conducting groups for Project Smoke, the researcher felt a very strong sense of community among smokers, who clearly displayed the attitude of a very strong sub-culture. The rest of the group usually backed up any opinions that were voiced by one respondent. This construct has been identified as 'group think' and will be discussed in more detail in the results chapter.

4.8 Research Structure and a Description of the Sampling Method

This can be defined as the plan according to which information is gathered (Smith, 1994). It should be emphasised that this methodology was selected as the best possible way suited to the researcher and the objectives of the study.

The researcher identified a gap between what anti-smoking campaigns were conveying and how smokers were relating to these messages. It was felt that organisers of such anti-smoking campaigns needed to be informed of smokers' perceptions of these advertisements, in order to aid in increasing the level of efficacy of these campaigns.

Following the identification of this need, it was necessary to select a methodology that would be compatible with the objectives of the research, thus it was decided to employ a qualitative methodology, making use of focus groups to aid in data collection and thematic analysis in data analysis. In order to obtain the most valid and representative results, a thorough sample selection procedure was conducted. This process was structured as set out in the table overleaf (also refer to Appendix A).

Table 4.1: Research Stages

STAGE ONE: Identifying the correct target sample
'Which respondents were recruited'
<p>Exclusion criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respondents should not be employed in the tobacco industry ▪ Respondents should not have participated in a focus group during the last 6 months ▪ Respondents should be fluent (able to communicate and understand) in English ▪ Respondents should be between the ages of 25 – 49 years ▪ Level of education: Grade 12 (Matric) or higher ▪ Personal monthly income: R4 500 to R12 000+ ▪ Respondents should be smokers: a spread was recruited between 'heavy' and 'light' smokers – classified according to how many cigarettes are smoked per day.
STAGE TWO: Recruitment
'How respondents were recruited'
<p>Respondents with the profile as set above were professionally recruited by a leading South African market research company using a recruiting questionnaire specially designed for this stage.</p> <p>(Appendix A)</p>
'Where respondents were recruited from'
<p>This study was set to be conducted in Gauteng only, therefore respondents were recruited from Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Gauteng.</p>

4.9 Protocol for Focus Group Structure, Self-Completion Questionnaire and Analysis of Advertising Campaign

When designing this research project, a lot of thought and consideration went into the issue of 'how best to optimise the interaction between the respondents in groups'; an insight in the nature of the results that could potentially be obtained based on the design of the focus groups. 5 focus groups were conducted in total, structured as follows:

- Group 1 (6 respondents): 25 to 34-year olds; male and female; all races
- Group 2 (6 respondents): 25 to 34-year olds; male and female; all races
- Group 3 (6 respondents): 35 to 49-year olds; male and female; all races
- Group 4 (6 respondents): 35 to 49-year olds, male and female: white
- Group 5 (6 respondents): 35 to 49-year olds, male and female: black

The design of this study was approached in such a way as to obtain a sample that would be representative of the South African population.

Groups 1 and 2 consisted of respondents from all racial backgrounds; these groups were structured in this specific way, as the researcher felt that younger respondents would not feel uncomfortable interacting in a group consisting of people from diverse backgrounds, also taking into consideration that younger respondents would all be sharing similar life stages.

In order to generate diverse responses to certain issues, it was decided to take respondents out of their comfort zones and have one older group (Group 3) with respondents from mixed backgrounds. Although the objectives of this study are not focused on racial and age differences, but rather the perceptions of these advertisements, it should be acknowledged that there are differences in the perceptions held by the different age groups – to be addressed in chapter 5.

Groups 4 and 5 were structured in such a way as to allow exploration of older respondents' perceptions of anti-smoking advertising without added discomfort, in racially homogeneous groups.

Table 4.2: Focus Group Matrix

FOCUS GROUP MATRIX	
5 GROUPS IN TOTAL COMPRISING 5 – 6 RESPONDENTS PER GROUP	
Explanation for the specific breakdown of these groups	
2 Groups of all races (25 to 34 yrs)	These specific age and race breaks were selected to aid in maximizing the amount of interaction between respondents, as well as to obtain different data from each group in order to be representative of different age and race groups in the South African population. For example, to find out if any cultural differences existed between the perceptions of smokers, respondents were separated into a white group and a black group.
1 all race group (35 to 49 yrs)	
1 white group (35 to 49 yrs)	
1 black group (35 to 49 yrs)	

4.10 Focus Group Proceedings

Most of the respondents for each of the focus groups arrived before the commencement of groups, therefore allowing them some time to interact with one another before the start of the groups.

Once in session, the moderator introduced herself and explained all the ethical issues surrounding the methodology of focus groups. The conversation began with the moderator introducing very general topics (see discussion guide for further elaboration – Appendix C).

The diagrammatic flow chart on the next page best describes the proceedings followed for each of the 5 focus groups.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria approved of the nature of this investigation in 2005. None of the respondents required a legal guardian's consent, as all of them were of consenting age and legally competent. A consent form was designed for the purpose of his study (See Appendix D), but it was deemed unnecessary for the respondents to complete this and respondents were informed verbally of their confidentiality rights by the moderator at the start of each focus group.

It was explained by the moderator that any person was entitled to withdraw from the study at any stage and that this would have no repercussions for the individual. Furthermore it was made clear that if the respondent was uncertain of anything, he/she should not hesitate to ask the moderator. Respondents were also informed that they information shared with the moderator during the focus group sessions would remain strictly confidential.

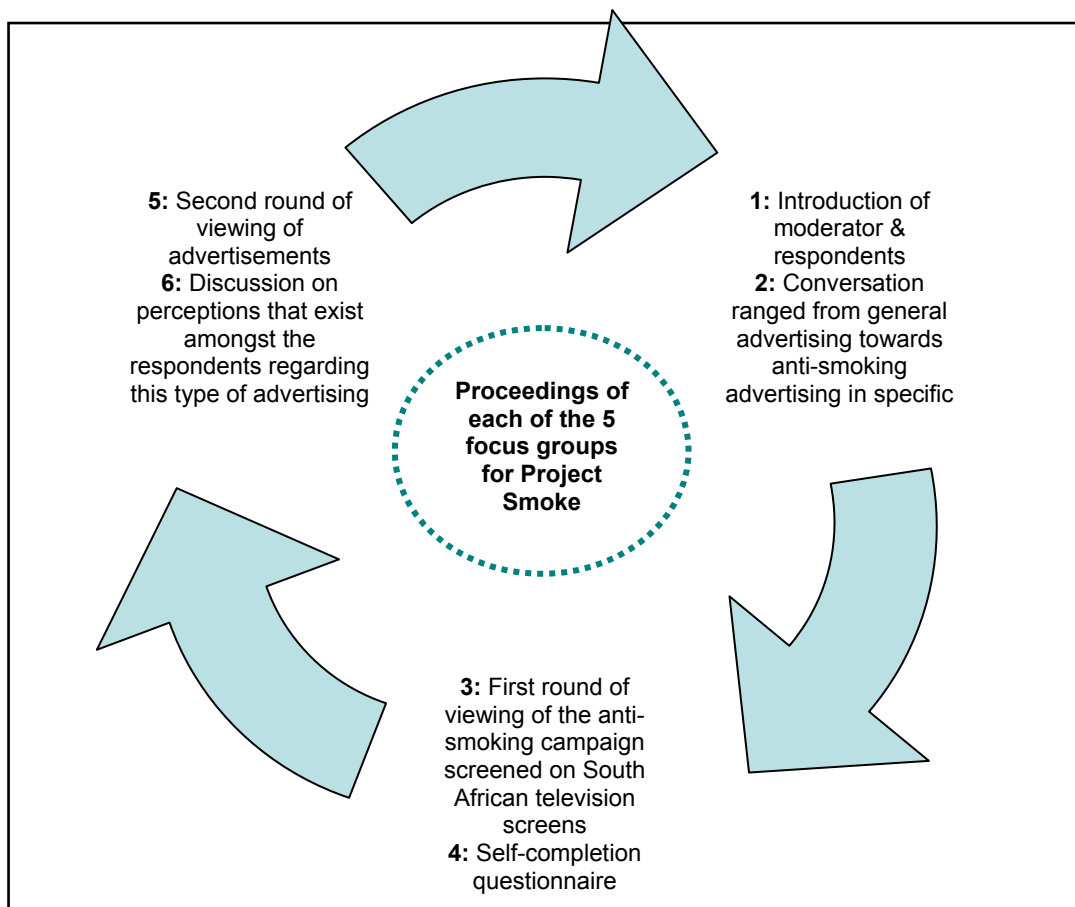


Figure 4.1: Diagrammatic depiction of proceedings of focus groups

4.11.1 Self-Completion Questionnaire

A structured self-completion questionnaire (see appendix B) was handed to respondents during focus groups, preceding the second round of the viewing of the advertisements. This self-completion questionnaire was designed to capture a basic 'measurement' of the respondents' immediate recall of all six advertisements, focusing on the efficacy of these advertisements.

4.11.2 Advertisements Used in the Study

A series of six advertisements were used for this study, and these were selected bearing in mind the frequency which each of these advertisements may have been flighted on South African television. It was decided that a few advertisements be selected that had already been flighted and some advertisements be selected that haven't been flighted, to ensure that the reactions to advertisements remain spontaneous.

The basic focus of this study is the level of emotional appeal that each of these advertisements contain – with the emphasis on fear and humour.

4.12 Analysis of Series of Advertisements used in Project Smoke

4.12.1 Advertisement 1: Don't Jump

This advertisement's story line is about a young 26-year old, Jonathan. He is standing on the edge of a very high building. His friend is begging him not to jump, by keeping on saying: "Jonathan, don't do it, please don't do it..." as if Jonathan is about to jump off the edge of the building.

The advert concludes when instead of seeing Jonathan jumping off the edge of the building, he lights up a cigarette, and the disappointment on his friend's face is very clear.

Final message of the advert: SMOKING CAN KILL YOU – LITERALLY

Target group: Ages 16 to 30

Music: No music

Emotional value: Serious, more emotional than factual, dark humour content at the end of the advert

Shock value: Medium, borders more on the (dark) humorous side

4.12.2 Advertisement 2: Suzy Q

This advertisement is set at a house party; and there are people from all cultures (representative of the South African population) at this party. There is music playing in the background – a song called 'Suzy Q' – and the people at the party are dancing, lazing around and chatting in a smoke filled room.

The camera closes in on a tall blonde girl, and there are two young guys busy watching her every move. They are totally in awe of her beauty, but they are puzzled by her next action: she begins picking her nose. At first these two guys cannot believe what she is doing?! They look at one another and are very confused, but assume that if she is doing that, then it must be COOL, so they begin doing the same thing, until eventually the entire party of people are picking their noses and wiping their fingers off in the ash trays.

The final message of the advert is: WHAT IS SO COOL ABOUT A FILTHY HABIT?

Target group: Ages 16 to 25

Music: The song 'Suzy Q' used in this advertisement set the mood for the audience as well as the actual advertisement.

Emotional value: Humour, self-conscious teens, also touches on the issue of health/hygiene

Shock value: Medium, bordering on the absurd

4.12.3 Advertisement 3: Children Against Smoking

This advertisement is set in a forest, with 6-year old twin sisters playing the leading roles. The music for this advertisement seems very aggressive, attempting to reflect the sisters' rebellion against their parents' smoking. They speak about washing your hands after having had a cigarette, smoking outside instead of inside, and the fact that they want their parents to still be around when they are older, hence their aggressive attitudes towards smoking.

The message towards smokers is basically that they should behave responsibly towards their children. At the same time, this advert gives children a chance to voice their opinions about their parents' smoking habits.

Final message of the advertisement: AS CHILDREN, WE HATE THE FACT THAT OUR PARENTS SMOKE!

Target group: This advert is definitely targeted at young parents who smoke, as well as the older generation of parents

Music: Very aggressive music, in total contrast to the setting (peaceful forest)

Emotional value: This advertisement has the ability to make the audience (smokers) feel guilty about their smoking habits around their children, it also aids in increasing awareness among parents. This advertisement has a high emotionally arousing value.

Shock value: Low

4.12.4 Advertisement 4: Chemical Facts

This advertisement is totally devoid of any emotional content. It is very scientific and factual; a man is talking about all the various chemicals present in cigarettes. There is no music in this advert, no people, no emotion.

Final message of the advertisement: CIGARETTES CONTAIN DEADLY SUBSTANCES

Target group: Applicable to all ages

Music: No music

Emotional value: No emotional appeal in this advertisement, only factual information is given

Shock value: Low

4.12.5 Advertisement 5: Lung Runs Away

The advertisement starts with a young guy sitting in a restaurant early one morning. There are no other people in the restaurant, and he orders breakfast from the waitress. As the waitress approaches the young man, he begins coughing profusely, until eventually his lung emerges from his mouth and falls onto the table in front of him. The waitress cannot believe her eyes and neither can the young man! His lung literally jumps off the table and runs out the door of the restaurant.

Final message of the advertisement: GET YOUR LUNGS BACK

Target group: This advertisement could potentially apply to all groups of smokers due to the high shock value

Music: No music in this advert, but highly realistic sound effects

Emotional appeal: A considerable amount of humour is present in this advert, but it is surely hard-hitting at the same time

Shock value: High

4.12.6 Advertisement 6: Inside-Out

This advertisement is set in a forest, the camera pans in on a very attractive young woman, with a cigarette in her hand. She slowly takes the cigarette towards her mouth and inhales, the camera then pans past her and a tree blocks out her face for a few seconds. When her face comes into view again, it is distorted, resembling the inside of smokers' lungs.

Final message of the advertisement: IF SMOKING DID TO YOUR OUTSIDE WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR INSIDE, WOULDN'T YOU QUIT?

Target group: This advertisement is generally targeted at all age groups; to anyone who considers themselves a smoker

Music: Instrumental music

Emotional value: This advertisement gets the audience thinking, and is emotionally appealing

Shock value: High

4.12.7 Data Collection

The data collection was executed by making use of tape recording and transcriptions.

4.12.7.1 Tape Recording

It was essential to tape-record the focus groups in such a way that all the respondents' responses were clear and audible, in order for the transcriptions to be comprehensive. A note-taker was also present; this process was incorporated into the focus groups, to ensure that everything that was said during the groups by the respondents was captured, including components such as ambience, social interaction and other elements that cannot be recorded using a tape recorder.

4.12.7.2 Transcriptions

Transcriptions were made from the audio recordings obtained from each of the groups. Suppositions about the nature of smokers' perceptions could already be drawn from the information available on the tapes. Furthermore, listening to the tapes gave the researcher the opportunity to start structuring the data, to determine the patterns of responses occurring across the sample as a whole, and therefore helping to decide on a framework within which the data could be analysed and interpreted.

4.13 Data Reduction

The process of data reduction included adhering to certain procedures of qualitative research, namely thematic analysis and interpretation.

4.13.1 Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis and interpretation stage is of a very subjective nature, and therefore each individual researcher's approach to this stage will vary a great deal (Robson & Foster, 1989). According to Robson and Foster (1989, p.94), analysis can be defined as "the resolving or separating of a thing into its elements or component parts" and "the tracing of things to their source, and so discovering the general principals underlying the phenomena".

These two definitions draw attention to two aspects of analysis that are very important. Firstly, it is imperative that the researcher pays very close attention to the detail of what happened during the specific research project. By paying attention to the detail, but at the same time not being swamped by the detail, an understanding should

be reached of why certain issues were raised and what the implications thereof could be.

Analysis is therefore about discovering a meaningful framework within which to order the data, reviewing it regularly; this allows not only the freedom to interpret the results according to the data produced, but also room to incorporate interpretations of the issue at hand, based on the researcher's own experience of the research subject. Thematic analysis was selected as method of analysis used in the process of data reduction.

4.13.2 Thematic Analysis

The title of this study guided the researcher in selecting thematic analysis as the method of choice: Cigarette smokers' perceptions of anti-smoking advertising. The word *perception* directed the researcher, due to the fact that these perceptions needed to be explored, in order to grant a deeper understanding of their meanings amongst smokers. In order to gain this deeper understanding, a total of 5 focus groups were conducted amongst smokers. Thematic analysis was selected as the qualitative data analysis method to explore the data.

Most qualitative methods of data analysis share similar analytic processes. These processes encompass the researcher's reading, examination and annotation of the data and in doing so identifying objects or issues of interest. This process is referred to as coding ([Charmaz, 1995](#)):

“The first major analytic phase of the research consists of coding the data. In short, coding is the process of defining what the data are all about. Unlike quantitative coding, which means applying preconceived codes (all planned before the researcher even collects the data) to the data, qualitative coding means creating the codes as you study your data.” ([Charmaz, 1995](#)):

The steps or processes followed when performing a thematic analysis on qualitative data could be set out as follows:

As stated previously, the first step is to collect data. This could be in the form of tape recordings or transcribed conversations, as was prescribed for Project Smoke (Spradley, 1979). The transcriptions are then used to identify patterns of experiences, which are then listed by direct quotes or by simply paraphrasing common threads.

The qualitative method of coding is creative and interactive at all stages of analysis. Once many codes or common threads have been accumulated, the researcher begins

to sort these into themes. This embodies a movement from the particular (line-by-line codes) to the general (patterns within those codes) ([Charmaz, 1995](#)):

For example, one of the themes that surfaced was that smokers considered themselves to be addicts and there was nothing that they could do to change their situation, no matter how aware they were of the health risks associated with smoking. Smokers also expressed their views on the implementation of the smoking legislation. These views included both positive and negative ideals held by respondents.

The next step in the process of thematic analysis involved combining and cataloguing related patterns into sub-themes. These themes have been defined as units derived from patterns such as 'conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings and feelings' (Taylor & Bogdan, 1989, p. 131).

Themes are identified by "bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone" (Leininger, 1985, p.60). Themes that emerge from focus groups were then pieced together to form a comprehensive matrix of their collective experiences and perceptions of anti-smoking advertising. While gathering the sub-themes to obtain a complete view of the information, it was easy to see a pattern emerging. Constat (1992, p.258) reiterates this point and states that the "interpretive approach should be considered as a distinct point of origin".

The final stage of the process of thematic analysis involved the development of an argument for choosing the selected themes to work with; the only way this could be done was to refer back to literature, which allowed inferences about the information gathered. Once the themes were collected and the literature studied, theme statements were ready to be formulated in order to develop a story line. In order to validate the information, literature was interwoven with the findings. This developed 'story line' helps the reader to comprehend the process and understand the motivation behind the discussion guide ([Aronson, 1994](#)).

4.13.3 Fieldwork Events

The following events did not have any impact on the research itself, but are seen rather as developments in the NCAS' pledge to aid in the reduction of smoking prevalence in South Africa through various mediums. These events play an important role in shaping the future of smokers as well as non-smokers in South Africa.

On 14 July 2005, British American Tobacco's (BAT) illegal and irresponsible advertising came to light in a media release written by Peter Ucko, the Director of NCAS (14 July 2005), republished with permission below:

BAT's Illegal and Irresponsible Advertising

14 July 2005

ASA rules BAT adverts were 'criminal'

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has ordered British American Tobacco (BAT) to immediately stop distributing a set of Peter Stuyvesant brochures, saying 'they amount to a criminal activity'

The ruling followed a complaint by a member of the public about the brochures, which BAT maintains are only to inform customers about the new Peter Stuyvesant packaging and was not an advertisement. However the ASA found that the material was indeed an advertisement and as such in breach of the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 12 of 1999.

The ASA added that "the advertisement amounts to a criminal activity" by BAT.

The National Council Against Smoking (NCAS) plans to lay charges against BAT with the police. The fine for a breach of the ban on advertising is R200 000.

"This ruling confirms that BAT is prepared to act illegally in trying to reach young people with their advertising and promotions" says Peter Ucko, director of the NCAS. "This industry is desperate to addict a new generation of youth. Common industry practices include giving away free cigarettes to Technikon and University students and holding illegal parties for teenagers to promote smoking as an exciting, fun and socially acceptable activity.

BAT claims to be a responsible company, but its actions are highly irresponsible. An article in the internationally acclaimed IATH Bulletin (2005) soon followed, which reflects the opinions set out in the above e-mail: its intention to inform the public of such illegal advertising operations. These allegations highlight the emphasis placed on the laws that have been set in place with regards to advertising that promotes cigarette smoking.

4.14 Summary

The research design and methodology employed for this study were discussed. The appropriacy of the choice of methodology as well as the choice of respondents was justified.

The data gathering and analysis stages of the research process were explained. An outline of the limitations of the study was also provided as well as some information on external events, which although not directly affecting the results of the study, are considered important in the context of this study.