

*Original Paper*

Justification of a Qualitative Methodology to Investigate the  
Emerging Concept: The Dimensions of Religion as  
Underpinning Constructs for Mass Media  
Social Marketing Campaigns

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***Abstract***

*This paper explores the justification of using a qualitative research methodology under an interpretive paradigm to investigate the emerging concept of the relationship to use the dimensions of religion as underpinning constructs for mass media social marketing campaigns. To create convergence and corroboration and to eliminate the inherent biases from using only one method within the research, it is recommended that two (2) research methods be used to gather and analyse data. This approach allows the weaknesses and limitations of textual analysis to be complemented by the strengths of in-depth interviews to bolster any findings or emerging themes through distilling, exploration, enhancement, elaboration, clarification and validation. Under this research methodology, it is the aim to confirm any links that allows for the connection of two (2) or more pieces of knowledge that were previously thought to be unrelated and report them and their potential to influence both theory and professional practice.*

***Keywords***

*interpretive paradigm, qualitative research, methodology, in-depth interviews, text analysis, emerging concept, dimensions of religion, social marketing, mass media social marketing campaigns*

**1. Introduction**

When dealing with an emerging concept (Van Esch et al., 2013), the challenge for any researcher is how to select a suitable research paradigm and corresponding methodology for the research (Table 1). Wrestling with such a challenge, particular questions may be raised by the researcher:

1. What is the crux of the social phenomena under investigation?
2. Are human minds creating the social phenomena or is it part of reality and objective in nature?
3. What forms the basis of knowledge that corresponds to social reality and how best to capture and disseminate such knowledge?
4. What is the correlation between an individual and their environment?

From the abovementioned questions, the researcher will identify if the research questions and/or propositions relate to the positivism paradigm, interpretive paradigm or critical theory. Once ascertained, the particular paradigm will align with an appropriate research approach (Table 2).

**Table 1. Comparison of Research Paradigms**

Research paradigms	Research approach	Research methods
Positivism	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Surveys</li> <li>* Longitudinal</li> <li>* Cross-sectional, correlational</li> <li>* Experimental</li> <li>* Quasi-experimental and</li> <li>* Ex-post facto research</li> </ul>
Interpretive	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Biographical</li> <li>* Phenomenological</li> <li>* Ethnographical</li> <li>* Cast study</li> <li>* Text analysis</li> </ul>
Critical Theory	Critical and action-orientated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ideology critique</li> <li>* Action research</li> </ul>

Source: Dash (1993).

**Table 2. Comparison of Quantitative, Mixed and Qualitative Approaches**

Research	Quantitative approach	Mixed approach	Qualitative approach
Scientific method	Deductive or "top-down" Test hypothesis and theory with data	Deductive and Inductive	Inductive or "bottom-up" Generate new hypotheses and theory from data collected
Most common research objectives	Description Explanation Prediction	Multiple objectives	Description Exploration Discovery

Focus	Narrow-angle lens Testing specific hypotheses	Multi-lens	Wide and deep-angle lenses examine the breadth and depth of phenomenon to learn more about them
Nature of study	Study behaviour under artificial, controlled conditions	Study behaviour in more than one context or condition	Study behaviour in its natural environment or contact
Form of data collected	Collect numeric data using structured and validated instruments (close-ended survey items, rating scales, measurable behavioural responses)	Multiple forms	Collect narrative data using semi or unstructured instruments (open-ended survey items, interviews, observation, focus groups, documents)
Nature of data	Numeric variables	Mixture of numeric variables, words and variables	Words, images, themes and categories
Data analysis	Identify statistical relationships	Statistical and holistic	Holistically identify patterns, categories and themes
Results	Generalizable findings General understanding of respondent's viewpoint Researcher framed results	Corroborated findings that may be generalizable	Particularistic findings In-depth understanding of respondent's viewpoint Respondent framed results
Form of final report	Statistical report including correlations, comparisons of means and statistically significant findings	Statistical findings with in-depth narrative description and identification of overall themes	Narrative report including contextual description, categories, themes and supporting respondent quotes

Source: Adapted from Johnson and Christensen (2004).

### 1.1 Research Setting

When considering the research design (Table 1 and Table 2), the following four (4) categories were used to frame and set the parameters of the proposed research study:

1. Research arena: social science
2. Research approach: qualitative
3. Research type: exploratory
4. Research paradigm: interpretive.

#### 1.1.1 Research Arena – Social Science

Social science is considered the science of people or assemblies of people (i.e., economies, groups, organisations and/or societies) and their individual and/or collective behaviours. Social sciences can be classified into disciplines including: economics (i.e., economies, markets and organisations), psychology (i.e., human behaviours) and sociology (i.e., social groups) (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Furthermore, there appears to be little agreement and considerable uncertainty on how to solve social science problems due to characteristics of being less accurate, deterministic or unambiguous; all of which can lead to a high degree of measurement error. Bhattacharjee (2012) states that when studying the social sciences, researchers “must be cognizant of and comfortable with handling higher levels of ambiguity, error and uncertainty that come with such sciences, which merely reflects the high variability of social objects”.

#### 1.1.2 Research Approach – Qualitative

Bhattacharjee (2012) describes qualitative analysis as the analysis of data (e.g. data from interview transcripts) and “heavily dependent on the researcher’s analytic and integrative skills and personal knowledge of the social context where the data is collected” whilst quantitative analysis is “statistics driven and largely independent of the researcher”. However, in qualitative analysis, rather than explaining or predicting; sense-making must be the emphasis in order to understand the experience. For researchers using qualitative analysis, it is imperative to have a creative, ethical, investigative and participant-in-context attitude (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

#### 1.1.3 Research Type – Exploratory

Bhattacharjee (2012) highlights that exploratory research is often conducted in new areas of inquiry and aims to:

1. Scope the magnitude or extent of a particular behaviour, occurrence or problem
2. Generate some initial ideas and/or ‘hunches’ about that occurrence
3. Regarding the occurrence, test the feasibility of a more extensive study.

#### 1.1.4 Research Paradigm – Interpretive

Bhattacharjee (2012) believes that employing an interpretive paradigm is the more productive way to study social order and that it is achieved through “subjective interpretation of participants involved, such as by interviewing different participants and reconciling differences among their responses using their own subjective perspectives”.

## 2. Research Paradigm and Justification

In the most common use of the concept of research paradigm, two paradigms in social science research are the interpretive and positivist approaches (Perry, 1995: 22; Veal 2005: 24). This view is linked to similar dichotomous views of associated research methodologies that include quantitative and qualitative methods, deduction and induction and experimental and non-experimental methods (Perry, 1995: 22-23; Veal 2005: 25).

The intent of the research is to understand if the dimensions of religion are evident in mass media social marketing campaigns (Van Esch et al., 2013) and if social marketing practitioners would consider the application of the dimensions of religion. Such intent fits with the intentions, philosophy and strategies of the interpretive research paradigm which is based on the epistemology of idealism. Bullock and Trombley (2000: 279) define epistemology as “the philosophy and theory of knowledge, which seeks to define it, distinguish its principal varieties, identify its sources, and establish its limits” whilst Higgs (2004) defines idealism as “knowledge is viewed as a social construction and encompasses a number of research approaches, which have a central goal of seeking to interpret the social world”. Crotty (1998) suggests that within the interpretive paradigm, human beings construct meanings in unique ways, which are dependent on context, experiences and frames of reference of the world they are trying to interpret. Crotty (1996) first identified this as the notion of multiple realities that have been constructed.

With this type of research, Creswell (1998) suggests that as findings emerge due to the interactions between the researcher and the participants (i.e., social marketing practitioners); the research also progresses because subjectivity is valued. This acknowledges that the research participants are human and incapable of total objectivity because their reality is constructed by subjective experiences within certain situations. Therefore, the values held by the researcher, the questions asked of the participants and the generated and interpreted findings all allow the research to be value-bound. In choosing the interpretive paradigm, certain assumptions and perspectives need to be accepted. Communication and interpretation are considered cognitive and interactive processes that can be tacit and subconscious whilst occurring within a specific context. If reduced to quantitative measures, such processes would not be capable of maintaining their embedded and essential features.

Both communication and interpretation are considered to be complex and involve multiple purposes and strategies and therefore, there is no exact, right or perfect approach to such reasoning. Furthermore, such processes could be considered contextually bound (i.e., frame of mind, health, people involved, social setting and the situation) and what is deemed useful, meaningful and relevant ultimately depends on the situation as captured at a particular moment in time. Attempting to isolate or measure the reasoning behind the communication and interpretation as specific in practice, causes the complexity, consequences, framing, reality and themes of such activities to be ignored.

The interpretive paradigm was deemed the most suitable for the research due to its potential to generate new understandings of an emerging concept in the social science arena, such as the concept to be

investigated in this research. Because the practical knowledge that is embedded in the world of human interaction and meanings was sought, it was further justified and appropriate to investigate under an interpretive paradigm.

### 2.1 Justification for Adopting the Interpretive Paradigm

The research will be based on the interpretive paradigm, which advocates from a theoretical viewpoint the study of a research participants experiences which are taken at face value. Behaviours that stem from the experiences help describe reality.

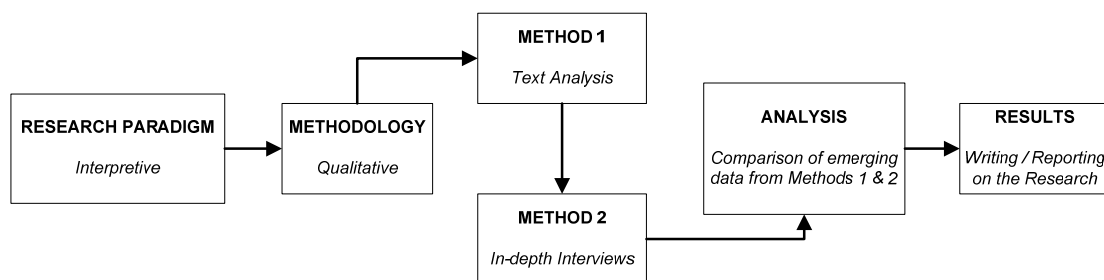
The interpretive researcher sees each experience and situation as unique with its meaning being an outcome of the circumstances as well as the individuals involved. Furthermore, the researcher should “abstain from making suppositions, focuses on a specific topic, freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives findings that will provide the basis for further research and reflection” (Moustakas, 1994: 47). The interpretive researcher should hold a view that a descriptive, diagrammatic or verbal model can be acceptable (Remenyi, et al., 1998: 34) and is constructed socially and given significance by people (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 24).

Moustakas (1994), under an interpretive paradigm, identified seven common qualities. These are:

1. Focusing on the wholeness of an experience instead, rather than its objects or parts
2. Formulating questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, interpersonal and personal commitment of the researcher
3. Obtaining first person accounts of experiences through (in)formal discussions and interviews
4. Putting value on qualitative designs and methodologies, are approaches to human experiences
5. The day of experience is imperative to understanding human behaviour and can be used as evidence for scientific research
6. Searching for underlying meanings of experiences rather than simple measurements or explanations
7. Experience is integrated and an inseparable relationship between subjects, objects either in part or whole (Moustakas, 1994:21).

### 2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Using a qualitative research methodology under an interpretive paradigm, Figure 1 highlights the diagrammatic representation of the research methodology.



**Figure 1. Research Methodology**

The above figure illustrates the broad theoretical base for the study and therefore the lens through which the researcher will analyse and interpret the research results.

### 3. Research Approach

Qualitative research was chosen as a suitable approach for the research and is informed by the work of Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2000) and Van Maanen (1998). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) consider qualitative research to be a multi-method type of research that uses an interpretive and realistic approach towards its subject matter as well as an emphasis on the qualities of entities (i.e., processes and meanings occurring naturally) (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 8). Furthermore, qualitative research is used to study an occurrence within the environment in which it naturally occurs and supported by social meaning from the individuals who were subjected to the occurrence (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 2). Van Maanen (1998: xi) describes qualitative research as “particularly difficult to pin down” due to its “flexibility and emergent character” because it is usually being designed at the same time as it is being done and requires “highly contextualised individual judgements” (Van Maanen, 1998: xi). Therefore, due to unanticipated events; holistic portrayals of reality should not be reduced to just a few variables. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3) note that qualitative research can be used to address questions relating to how social experiences are created and/or given meaning, which then creates illustrations of the experience within a specific environment and makes that experience visible.

Schutz (1973) suggests that “qualitative research employs the meanings in use by societal members to explain how they directly experience everyday life realities” and that such social science constructs are built from the socially constructed nature of reality created from its members. Emphasising situational details that have occurred over time allows qualitative research to describe processes because such work is highly descriptive through recounting what was said: to whom, how, when and why. Furthermore, qualitative research has a humanistic and inherently literary focus and even though talks and texts have meaningful representations, they generally start from and return to words. Such words help with the description and understanding of the values, meanings and processes from real-life settings that include actual human interaction (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative research can provide robust insights from actions that have occurred in a real-life context and preserves the intended meaning which forms an understanding of underlying social processes and meaning in a business/management environment and further, can provide memorable examples of important issues that enrich the business management field. All of which would be difficult to produce from a quantitative research perspective (Van Maanen, 1998). A final benefit of qualitative research is that because it has the ability to highlight the underlying human interactions, meanings and relationships among variables in the experiences, it has the potential to humanize the theory that is often researched in the field.

#### 3.1 Justification of a Qualitative Approach for the Research

Often, results from qualitative research have a caveat of being ‘only preliminary’ and implies research

should contain “random samples, standardised instruments, statistical tests and precisely calculated levels of significance” (Kirkman, 2002: 34). However, Polkinghorne, (1988, 1989, as cited in Kirkman, 2002:34) argues that “narrative research, by retaining an emphasis on the linguistic reality of human existence, operates in an area that is not limited by formal systems” and therefore has more rigour. The hermeneutic approach is holistic which allows complex situations to be easily explored through the ability to be applied across the context of the study as well as all propositions under investigation, all of which achieves similar results to those that come from positivistic research.

Ultimately it is the research paradigm that drives and leads towards the type of research methodology selected. The research will use a qualitative research methodology under an interpretive paradigm, with non-reactive measurement (i.e., creators of the content did not know if anyone would analyse it) of mass media social marketing campaigns.

### *3.2 Justification of Text Analysis as the Qualitative Technique Used in This Research*

Text analysis is referred to as content analysis (i.e., when quantitative) and hermeneutics (i.e., when qualitative). Text analysis is used in social science research for analysing textual data and involves “drawing inferences from data by systematically identifying characteristics within the data” (Clatworthy and Jones, 2001: 317). Text analysis is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying special characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1968: 608) from bill board advertisements, brochures, magazines, newspapers, photographs, radio advertisements, TV commercials, video-tapes, websites or any other medium that can be turned into text.

Seminal work in text analysis (Table 3), born from literacy criticism has led to theories in hermeneutics that are used in management and organisational research. They include semiotics (Barley, 1983) and narrative analysis, both with the intention to offer a methodical insight and understanding of texts (Boje, 2001).

**Table 3. Seminal Definitions of Text Analysis**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Berelson (1952: 55)	Text analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.
Lasswell, Lerner and Pool (1952: 45)	Text analysis will not tell us whether a given work is good literature; it will tell us whether the style is varied. It will not tell us whether a paper is subversive; it will tell us if the contents change with party line. It will not tell us how to convince the Russians; it will tell us what the most frequent themes of Soviet propaganda are.
Fearing (1954)	Latent content as well as manifest content may be examined by text analysis, a series of judgements or descriptions made under specifically defined conditions by judges trained in the use of



objectively defined criteria.

Barcus (1959, as cited in Holsti 1969: 3)	The term “text analysis” is used here to mean the scientific analysis of communications messages... The method is, broadly speaking, the “scientific method”, and while being holistic in nature, it requires that the analysis be rigorous and systematic.
Kerlinger (1964: 544)	Text analysis, while certainly a method of analysis, is more than that. It is... a method of observation. Instead of observing people’s behaviour directly, or asking them to respond to scales, or interviewing them, the investigator takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of the communications.
Budd, Thorpe and Donohew (1967: 2)	Text analysis is a systematic technique for analysing message content and message handling – it is a toll for observing and analysing the overt communication behaviour of selected communicators.
Paisley (1969: 133)	Text analysis is a phase of information-processing in which communications content is transformed, through objective and systematic application of categorization rules, into data that can be summarized and compared

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Source: Kassarian, (1977).

Text analysis is considered general, objective, scientific and systematic and continues to be a dominant method (Craig et al, 2010:1) for the analysis of stand-alone social and environmental information (Laine, 2009) and websites (Campbell and Beck, 2004). Kassarian (1977: 10) demonstrates that text analysis has been used in an attempt to answer numerous questions in relation to consumer behaviour and marketing.

Neuman (2006: 322) and Veal (2005: 134-135) suggest that traditionally, textual analysis has not been widely used in management studies and although not common, the approach is attracting increasing attention in business research. Such examples include but are not limited to:

- Carty’s (1997) qualitative study of Nike’s portrayal of women in its advertising
- Cerulo’s (1989) content analysis of national anthems
- Chavez’s (2001) content analysis of the covers of major American magazines that dealt with the issue of immigration into the Unites States
- Dukes et al., (2003) content analysed the 100 most popular songs in the United States
- Eschholz et al., (2001) study of the social content in American films
- Ganahl et al., (2003) content analysis of stereotypes in television commercials

- Magana and Short (2002) a qualitative study of the social construction of Mexican and Cuban immigrants by politicians
- Okazaki and Rivas (2003) content analysis of website marketing by Japanese multinationals in different countries.

Whilst the above researchers highlight the distinguishing characteristics of text analysis being objective, systematic and qualitative; Merkl-Davies et al., (2011) argue that the aim of text analysis is to achieve scientific objectivity and “in order to ensure rigor, text analysis is carried out according to strict procedures”. Weber (1990) and Krippendorff (2004) note that whilst procedural approaches differ; they all contain seven (7) key steps:

1. Establish research questions and formulate hypotheses
2. Determine sampling unit
3. Establish coding categories
4. Define recording unit
5. Pre-test coding on a sample of text and assess reliability and validity. Revise the coding rules and repeat pre-testing until sufficient reliability is achieved
6. Code all the text and assess the achieved reliability and validity
7. Analyse, interpret and report the results.

When conducting analyses on mass media social marketing campaigns, text analysis should analyse three major components: the audience, the message and the sender (Holsti, 1969; Carney, 1972). With an important factor of text analysis being that it is virtually unobtrusive (Webb et al., 1981), it allows social constructs to be formulated by not just sociology itself but from the fields of education, nursing and psychology. All of which allow the formulation of logical constructs which stem from the breadth and depth of experiences, interpretation and observations to give local meanings to broader social scientific ones and is based on the assumption that “the social world is determined by people, rather than by objective and external factors (Chua, 1986) and that there are multiple realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005)” (Merkl-Davies et al., 2011). In addition to text analysis being virtually unobtrusive, Babbie (1998) highlights further advantages of text analysis to include:

- Overall, it is cost-effective
- Generally, the materials are easily accessible
- A means to study processes that occur over longer periods of time or that could reflect trends in society.

Alternatively, Merkl-Davies et al., (2011) argue that text analysis “is conceived too widely as any qualitative text analysis approach, regardless of its underlying philosophical and epistemological commitments” (Neuman, 1997; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996)”. Furthermore, they identify another major weakness of text analysis in that it may be difficult to “locate unobtrusive messages relevant to the particular research questions”. Text analysis, as with any analytical method must be weighed against the advantages and disadvantages of alternative research strategies. However, text analysis is “a

particularly beneficial procedure for assessing events or processes in social groups when public records exist” (Merkl-Davies et al., 2011). This constitutes an approach which “relies on non-quantitative (or non-statistical) modes of data collection and analysis about the nature of social or organisational reality and the production of knowledge” (Prasad and Prasad, 2002: 6) and allows the constructs of the social world to be deduced subjectively through reflection and interpretation (Merkl-Davies et al., 2011). In an attempt to understand how social order is produced and reproduced, the research allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the interpretive paradigm by choosing the text analysis technique. Such immersion “enables the ability to understand how organisational actors inter-subjectively experience the organisation and its environment” (Merkl-Davies et al., 2011), which is then supported by the emerging data that comes from the specific experience under investigation.

### 3.3 Justification of In-Depth Interviews as the Qualitative Technique for the Research

In-depth interviews are used as a qualitative research technique, to conduct individual interviews to explore experiences, ideas, perspectives, views and situations with a small number of respondents (i.e. individuals from a sample population). In-depth interviews are often used in addition to other qualitative research techniques to provide context and understanding to new emerging data and/or results (i.e., outcome data), offering a broader picture through exploring an individual’s behaviours, experiences, opinions or thoughts. Furthermore, it is also used when wanting to explore new issues or refine questions for further research. Seminal work in interviews (Table 4), particularly Mead (1928) and Redfield (1930), used local key informants during an unstructured interview process because often, an information gatekeeper or informant was considered as ‘an interview’ rather than a mere respondent of a sample (Bingham and Moore, 1931; Fry, 1934). Early versions of in-depth interviews were initially used in marketing research and created the chief data source for early researchers like Edmund Husser and the sociologists from the Chicago School (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

**Table 4. Seminal Work in Interviews**

Source	Description
Mead (1928, 1968)	Coming of Age in Samoa
Redfield (1930, 1941, 1960)	Mexican Village of Tepoztlan
Whyte (1943, 1955, 1981, 1993)	Street Corner Society
Freeman (1983)	Margaret Mead and Samoa

Source: Platt (1996)

Thinking about interviewing has changed over time (Table 5), however; a constant *held is the view that* an in-depth interview is interactive between a researcher and a research participant and explores in great detail the individual’s experiences, thoughts, opinions, perceptions and views in relation to a particular research matter(s) under investigation (Malinowski, 1932; Miller and Crabtree, 2005; Warren,

2002).

**Table 5. How Thinking about Interviewing Has Changed over Time**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>
1929	Howard W. Odum and Katharine Jocher, <i>An Introduction to Social Research</i>
1939	Pauline V. Young, <i>Scientific Social Surveys and Research</i>
1953	Charles F. Cannell And Robert L. Kahn, <i>The Collection of Data by Interviewing</i>
1965	Selltiz, Jahoda, Deutsch, and Cook, <i>Research Methods in Social Relations</i>
1968	Gideon Sjoberg and Roger Nett, <i>A Methodology for Social Research</i>
1984	Steven J. Taylor and Robert Bogdan, <i>Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods</i>

*Source:* Platt (1996)

This led to a change in methodological writing about in-depth interviews as researchers conducted analyses on interviewing (Table 6) as to its suitability as a technique to collect data (Atkinson, 1998; Cicourel, 1964; Denzin, 1989a, 1989b; Douglas, 1985; Fontana and Frey, 1994; Geertz, 1988; Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Lofland and Lofland, 1984, 1995; Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Spradley, 1979; Wax, 1971).

**Table 6. Analyses on Interviewing**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>
1947	Hadley Cantril, <i>Gauging Public Opinion</i>
1954	Herbert H. Hyman, <i>Interviewing in Social Research</i>
1965	Stephen A. Richardson, B. S. Dohrenwend, and D. Klein, <i>Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions</i>
1969	Raymond L. Gordon, <i>Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques and Tactics</i>
1974	Jean M. Converse and Howard Schuman, <i>Conversations at Random</i>
1979	Norman M. Bradburn and Seymour Sudman, <i>Improving Interview Method and Questionnaire Design</i>
1981	Charles F. Cannell, P. V. Miller, and L. Oksenberg, <i>Research on Interviewing Techniques</i>
1982	W. Dijkstra and J. van der Zouwen, <i>Response Behaviour in the Survey-Interview</i>
1984	Charles Turner and Elizabeth Martin, <i>Surveying Subjective Phenomena</i>
1990	Lucy Suchman and Brigitte Jordan, <i>Interactional Troubles in Face-to-Face Survey Interviews</i>

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- 1991 Paul P. Biemer, R. M. Groves, L. E. Lyberg, N. A. Mathiowetz, and S. Sudman, Measurement Errors in Surveys
- 2002 Douglas W. Maynard, H. Houtkoop-Steenstra, N. C. Schaeffer, and J. van der Zouwen, Standardization and Tacit Knowledge: Interaction and Practice in the Survey Interview
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Source: Platt (1996)

To create an affinity between the researcher and research participant, in-depth interviews are especially suitable to facilitate frank, honest and open responses as well as maintaining privacy which in turn may alleviate any fear of reprisal from any articulated opinions, views and/or statements. As with every data collection technique and/or method; in-depth interviews have advantages and limitations.

The primary advantages of in-depth interviews include:

- Ability to provide detailed information outside of other data collection methods
- Provides for a relaxed atmosphere to collect data in a one-on-one situation
- Ability to provide valuable information when used to supplement other data collection methods

The primary limitations of in-depth interviews include:

- A prone to bias can occur when interviewees have an invested stake in the research project under investigation
- Can be time and labour intensive due to the requirements to make contact, conduct, transcribe and analyse the interviews
- The interviewer must be appropriately trained in interviewing techniques to be able to extract rich, non-biased data from the research participants
- The results are not generalizable because generally, smaller samples are chosen and random sampling methods have not been used.

In-depth interviews are generally conducted face-to-face and seek to learn about individual behaviours, experiences, opinions, perspectives or thoughts on a specific issue under investigation and commonly occur once with a research participant and can take 30 minutes to several hours to complete. For reaching either isolated and/or difficult research participants, online formats (e.g. Skype) can be used as an alternative method to obtain the data (Germain, 2001). With the availability of different interview genres (Table 7), in the health care industry, in-depth interviews are used to understand interviewee opinions, perceptions and views of industry related events as well as their own experiences which are captured through basic research questions that are designed to have a narrow focus for a moderately homogenous group in relation to a specific topic (Miller and Crabtree, 1999). Therefore, the research proposition(s) under review act as the first interview question(s), however, 5 to 10 more specific and narrowly focused questions will probe and investigate the different aspects of the research issue under investigation (Johnson, 2002).

**Table 7. The Genres of Interviews in Research**

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Practitioners	Garrett, <i>Interviewing: Its Principles and Method</i> (1942)
Polling and market research practice	Gallup, <i>A guide to Public Opinion Polls</i> (1944); American Marketing Association, <i>The Technique of Marketing Research</i> (1937)
Social science methods	Goode and Hatt, <i>Methods in Social Research</i> (1952)
Instructions to survey interviews	University of Michigan, Survey Research Centre, <i>Manual for Interviewers</i> (1954)
Critiques of method, general or particular	Christie and Jahoda, <i>Studies in the Scope and Method of "The Authoritarian Personality"</i> (1954); Cicourel, <i>Method and Measurement in Sociology</i> (1964)
Empirical work discussing its methods	Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, <i>Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male</i> (1948)
Qualitative research	Denzin and Lincoln, <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (2000)
Monographs on special groups, novel approaches	Dexter, <i>Elite and Specialised Interviewing</i> (1970); Douglas, <i>Creative Interviewing</i> (1985)
Philosophical/theoretical discussion	Sjoberg and Nett, <i>A Methodology for Social Research</i> (1968)
Reports of methodological research	Hyman, <i>Interviewing in Social Research</i> (1954)

Source: Platt (1996)

In-depth interviews are intended to be highly interactive to allow the research participant to describe and identify concepts and sub-consciously direct the course of discussion into broader related areas that the researcher may not have considered. The researcher must be responsive to the language, body language and concepts raised by the research participant to allow the rich data to be extracted from the interview (Klockars, 1977). As a data collection instrument, in-depth interviews may be referred to as a *discussion guide* and will generally use 1 to 2 very broad questions to explore in great detail the research topic under investigation. In addition to the broader questions, the researcher will use clarification and explore concepts and details to elicit and extend themes emerging from the interviewees' narrative (Reiman, 1979). For this to occur, the researcher requires specific skills to build rapport with the research participant(s), have flexibility with discussion guides and the ability to use passive listening skills combined with non-judgemental verbal communication to follow-up questions in order to probe and extract extended and detailed responses. In addition to the skills required, the

researcher must also have the ability to control the data gathering process through exploring and ensuring the right questions are asked as well as giving feedback through both verbal and non-verbal means (Malinowski, 1932).

#### 4. Data Collection

##### 4.1 Research sample

In qualitative research studies, there are numerous factors that can determine a sample size and the literature is limited as to what a sufficient sample size is (Mason, 2010). Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006: 59) suggest there is "little practical guidance for estimating sample sizes for robust research prior to data collection". From the literature, seven (7) sources provide practical guidelines for sample sizes. Table (8) highlights the association with the type of research and the recommended sample size(s).

**Table 8. Type of Research and Sample Size**

Source	Type of research	Sample size
Morse (1994: 225)	Ethnography/ethno-science	30-50
Bernard (2000: 178)	Ethno-science, grounded theory	30-60
Creswell (1998: 64) 20-30; Morse (1994: 225)	Phenomenology	30-50
Creswell (1998: 64); Morse (1994: 225)	Qualitative research	5 to 25; at least six
Bertaux (1981: 35) adapted from (Guest et al., 2006)	Qualitative research	15 is the smallest acceptable sample
Charmaz (2006: 114)	Qualitative research	25 is adequate for smaller projects
Ritchie et al., (2003: 84)	Qualitative research	<50

Source: Mason (2010)

Furthermore, Mason (2010) analysed the respective 'types of research' (i.e., outlined in Table 8) from a study conducted by Tesch (1990) on qualitative studies and found the following:

- 80% met Bertaux's (1981) guideline
- 45% met Charmaz's (2006) guideline
- 85% met Ritchie et al's., (2003) guideline
- 33% used sample sizes of 20 or less, irrespective of the methodology.

#### 4.1.1 Sample – Text Analysis

The sample target identified is five (5) (Miller, 1956) Australian government and/or not-for-profit created/funded mass media social marketing campaigns that had national distribution (i.e., all Australian states and territories) between the years 2005-2010 and where the campaign material is published and easily accessible via the public domain (e.g., the internet). The random sample of campaigns will come from mainstream categories of mass media social marketing campaigns: (1) Child abuse (2) Health (3) Skin cancer and (4) Smoking. In terms of mass media, the sample(s) will include but not be limited to: TV advertisement, radio advertisement, print advertise (i.e., brochures, flyers, posters, newspaper and magazine articles) and outdoor advertisement (i.e., bus shelters, shopping trolleys).

#### 4.1.2 Sample – In-Depth Interviews

The sample target identified is five (5) (Miller, 1956) mass media social marketing practitioners. In exploratory and interpretive research, the researcher collects data from sources directly related to or individuals that have had the experiences under investigation (Creswell, 1998: 54). The intent is to describe the essence of the experiences through the thoughts, opinion or experiences of a small group of people. Characteristically, the sample size should be between one and ten subjects (Creswell, 1998: 122). In-depth interviews will be held with practitioners who are identified from government and/or private agencies located in Australia that specialise in the design, creation and evaluation of mass media social marketing campaigns. The five (5) social marketing practitioners, who give their signed voluntary consent, will form the sample. The in-depth interview format will be one-on-one and either face-to-face or face-to-face through an electronic medium (e.g. Skype). In terms of formality and structure, each interview will be flexible in its approach. Meaning:

- An in-formal approach to be adopted in the delivery
- During the interview, questions will be either omitted or used in a different order dependent on the direction of the dialogue
- Probes will be at the discretion of the interviewer
- The interviewer will answer questions and make clarifications
- The style of language will be adjusted when necessary
- The wording of questions will be flexible.

One-on-one, face-to-face interviews have the advantage of allowing the researcher to appropriately prepare the sample group, which in turn achieves quality outcomes from the interview, and the data collected is rich due to a high level of personal interest and response to the research from the interviewees.



## 5. Data Analysis Procedure

The approach to the data analysis in the research will involve:

Analysis method 1 (text analysis):

1. Coding the data
2. Looking for emerging themes and categorising the data
3. Further distilling the data to identify any abstract themes that could be understood holistically

Analysis method 2 (in-depth interviews):

4. Coding the data
5. Looking for emerging themes and categorising the data
6. Further distilling the data to identify any abstract themes that could be understood holistically

Comparison:

7. Comparison of emerging themes from analysis methods 1 and 2
8. Comparison of abstract themes from analysis methods 1 and 2
9. Conclusions, implications and inferences.

### 5.1 Coding the Data

Considering that there is visible, surface content in a text as well as the underlying, implicit meaning in the content of a text, both manifest and latent coding techniques will be used (Neuman, 2006). Manifest coding will be used to capture the frequency of words, sentences, phrases and actions that appear in the text. However, because manifest coding cannot take the connotations or context of a phrase or words into account, latent coding will be used to capture particular themes, moods, context and implicit communication within the same text (Neuman, 2006: 325-326). Neuman (2006:326) further adds, "A researcher can use both manifest and latent coding. If the two approaches agree; the final result is strengthened". Computational software (e.g. Nvivo) will be used to code the data, therefore; for the manifest coding, a list will be loaded into the software that includes specific words, actions, adjectives and phrases. For the latent coding component, rules to guide judgments' will be loaded into the software. For both the manifest and latent coding techniques to take place, the list and rules about actions, symbols and themes will be based on the identifiers from the dimensions of religion (Table 9).

### 5.2 Textual Analysis

The first research method to be used will be textual analysis. This type of analysis is referred to as content analysis (i.e., when quantitative) and hermeneutics (i.e., when qualitative). The collected data (i.e., mass media social marketing campaigns) will be analysed using computational software (e.g., NVivo).

This non-reactive research will be used to identify within the campaigns any predetermined words, symbols, themes, concepts, actions, representations and/or any implicit, hidden or underlying meanings based on the seven (7) dimensions of religion. Table 9 highlights, but is not limited to, the identifiers for the dimensions of religion.

**Table 9. Identifiers for the Dimensions of Religion**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Identifiers</b>
Practical and ritual	Practices and rituals of different traditions and cultures, preaching, prayers, ceremonies, meditation, worship, spiritual awareness, ethical insight, communities re-enacting their myths and stories to confirm and express beliefs through action.
Experiential and emotional	Evoking religious feelings, direct experiences of the divine, visions, enlightenment, security, comfort, awe, inexplicable presence, mystery, ecstasy, dread, guilt, awe, devotion, liberation, inner peace, bliss, assurance of salvation, brilliant emptiness, an expanded sense of identity, accumulation of religious knowledge and experiences and unconscious, super-conscious and/or neurologically induced events of a higher reality.
Narrative or mythic	Myths or sacred stories, systematic or complete interpretation of god(s), the nature of humans and their place in the universe, historical accounts, hagiography, oral traditions, authority from the divine.
Doctrinal and philosophical	Doctrines, systematic formulation of religious teachings and beliefs, sacred texts, the nature of divinity, ultimate reality, the relationship of humans to an ultimate, real, divinity. Religious narrate, reflection, structured beliefs beyond the symbolic aspect of myths, faith, and values of a tradition, worldly views and salvation.
Ethical and legal	Laws, rules, guidelines or behavioural precepts for conduct according to which the community, employees, employers, consumers, producers and citizens at every level of existence judge a person, conformity, a supernatural realm and higher being of a particular faith.

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Social and institutional	Tradition, belief system, social organisation, shared and implied attitudes practiced by individuals or the group, community membership, participation in public, exemplary individuals, buildings, works of art, cities, symbols, idols, other creations and places of worship, formally organised, a sense of normative values, group bonding, functioning society and a community to live in.
The material	Ordinary objects or places that symbolise or manifest in material form that help connect the believer to the sacred, supernatural or the divine, religious artefacts, religious capital, sacred objects, sacred tourism, pilgrimage and sacred areas and/or places.

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Source: Adapted from Smart, 1996; Van Esch et al., 2013.

When using text analysis, text is anything spoken, visual or written that serves as a medium for communication; whilst the content refers to ideas, meanings, pictures, symbols, themes, words or any message that can be communicated. Despite text analysis being originally used to study the meaning of religious texts, it has evolved and can also be used to analyse: advertisements, articles of clothing, books, broadcasts, films, internet sites, letters, magazine articles, manuals, musical lyrics, newspapers, official documents, paintings, photographs, speeches, statues, videos, works of art and any other type of written, printed or visual documents/texts (Neuman, 2006: 322; Veal 2005: 134). As with any method, textual analysis contains limitations and it is considered that any generalisations that researchers make “are limited to the cultural communication itself because such analysis cannot determine the truthfulness of an assertion or evaluate the aesthetic qualities of literature. It reveals the content in text but cannot interpret the contents significance” (Neuman, 2006: 324). Furthermore, Holsti (1968: 602) warns that textual analysis “may be considered as a supplement to, not as a substitute for, subjective examination of documents”. To further complicate matters, visual text becomes even more difficult to analyse because images can have mixed messages containing multiple layers of meaning and communicating such messages and/or emotional content is conducted indirectly through images, metaphors and symbols (Neuman, 2006: 326). For the research, to adequately overcome the abovementioned limitations, in addition, in-depth interviews will be used to bolster the analysis and findings of the textual analysis and further distil any emerging or present concepts and/or themes.

### *5.3 Analysis: In-Depth Interviews*

In-depth interviews will be used for two purposes: (1) to bolster and probe further into the findings of

the textual analysis and further distil any emerging or present concepts and/or themes and (2) explore and probe more deeply into the question ‘what reception, understanding, openness to consider, do managers of social marketing campaigns have to a clearly articulated description of the application of the dimensions of religion?’ (Van Esch et al., 2013). The in-depth interviews will be less structured than a questionnaire based interview and allow respondents to talk at length, ask questions and explain their answers to previous responses, all in their own words. The interviews may vary from interview to interview and with each one, requires focus on the part of the researcher (i.e., interviewer) to ensure that all the relevant topics are covered. Even though the topics will be covered in different orders and in different ways during the different interviews, this allows each interview to become a story in its own right. The unique nature and structure of each story will be of significant interest, as they will be used to guide the research propositions.

To mitigate the laborious task of transcribing interviews, the researcher will record the interviews, with interviewee consent. This will allow for the ability to produce complete verbatim transcripts of interviews. Verbatim transcripts from the in-depth interviews will be subjected to text analysis to assist, expand, clarify or discount any emerging concepts, themes or conclusions drawn from the in-depth interviews. Recording allows the cessation of taking notes and permitting the researcher and interviewee to be more focused on the task at hand. Again, methodological limitations exist and with in-depth interviews, they include but are not limited to:

1. Recording interviews could inhibit respondents
2. High costs (i.e., including personal cost), training, travel and supervision
3. The location, appearance, voice tone and question wording of the interviewer are all issues that may affect the respondent (Nueman, 2006: 301).

#### *5.4 Final Analysis: Comparison*

Intentionally using more than one method of gathering and analysing data, this approach allows the individual methods to complement each other through clarification, elaboration and enhancement from one set of results to then help and/or assist the other. Because the sample of campaigns is relatively few in number and the information obtained from each campaign may vary considerably and in complex ways; in-depth interviews will be used to synthesise the data. Finally, a comparison will take place on the emerging and abstract findings from both the textual and in-depth interview analyses. Results from the comparison will be used to triangulate the findings and add validity in drawing meaningful conclusions and implications.

#### *5.5 Verification and Triangulation*

To eliminate the inherent biases from using only one method within the research, triangulation was achieved by intentionally using more than one method of gathering and analysing data (Crump, 2008; Denzin, 1988a, 1988b; Greene et al., 1989). From a single study perspective and to gain a broader understanding of the issue(s) under investigation, the use of more than one research method will be used so that the weaknesses and limitations of textual analysis will be complemented by the strengths

of the in-depth interviews. Of the four (4) different ways that triangulation can be used in research (Duffy 1987:131), the triangulation of theory is achieved through the interpretation and analysis of the data in more than one way, coming via each theoretical perspective to address the different aspects of the research propositions. Veal (2005: 39-40) suggests that it “is when the different data/methods address the same question that true triangulation can be said to have occurred”.

#### *5.6 Approaches to Linking to the Literature*

Considering that there is limited literature on the emerging concept; findings, inferences and implications drawn from the research will be linked back to those highlighted from a literature review from both the seminal and ongoing works in each field. These, of course, include the seminal works such as: those of Lenski (1961), Smart (1971), Kotler and Zaltman (1971) and Kotler (1975). In the field of dimensions of religion: those of Smart (1989; 1996). In the field of mass media social marketing campaigns: those of Wiebe (1951), Lazer and Kelley (1973), Kotler and Roberto (1989) and Kotler, Roberto and Lee (2002) (Van Esch et al., 2013). Any confirmed links, allows for the connection of two (2) or more pieces of knowledge that were previously thought to be unrelated (Swanson, 1988). Therefore, it is the aim to find such relationships and report them and their potential to influence both theory and professional practice.

#### *5.7 Method of Drawing Conclusions and Implications*

Findings from the comparison from both the textual and in-depth interview analyses will be used to draw meaningful conclusions and implications. However, due to research limitations and the type of research to be conducted, the findings may be limited to potentials rather than exacts that are often attributed to the outcomes of quantitative studies (Van Esch, 2009: 139). Nevertheless, the approach, method and reflection provide a “logical, systematic and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and synthesis needed to arrive at essential descriptions of the investigation” (Moustakas, 1994: 47). It will be the rigour of the method(s) deployed which the reader can rely for a sense of assurance in the findings. Finally, it is recognised that the recommendations for professional practice will be extensions of the essential findings that are based on the experience, imagination and interpretation of the researcher. Therefore, the reliability and validity of those recommendations will be subject to the judgement of reasonableness on the part of the reader.

### **6. Delimitations of the Methodology**

As with any research study, there are limitations imposed by the methodology adopted. The following limitations have been identified but are not limited to:

1. A lack of literature on the emerging concept of the relationship between the dimensions of religion and mass media social marketing campaigns
2. During data collection, the resilience on language to explain thoughts, views and opinions to explicate and synthesize the data
3. Ethical considerations relating to the research

4. Inferences made from the analysis of non-reactive data
5. The adeptness of the researcher in learning the language, skills and underlying philosophy of the methodology, and in applying that methodology in a competent fashion
6. The researchers ability to use computational software (e.g. NVivo)
7. There are no automatic checks to ensure the flow of the threads of meaning has been unencumbered by previous suppositions, assumptions and lack of rigour.

## **7. Ethical Considerations in the Research Methodology**

The research will involve human participants, with consideration including that of the researcher; the following ethical considerations for the research include but are not limited to:

- The creation of a 'Code of Ethics' specifically relating to the research
- The creation of rules to guide judgements
- The creation of rules for coding decisions
- The creation of rules to ensure that the researcher does not exploit the subject
- The creation of rules to ensure that the researcher does not personally gain in a commercial context
- Research records and data sheets stored in either hard or soft copy will be kept securely for seven years in a locked cabinet in a locked office
- Gaining voluntary informed consent from interviewees to: participate in the research, for the audio-taping of the interviews, transcribing and analysing interview transcripts and presenting the results
- Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity by providing a confidentiality, consent, withdrawal and information sheet pertaining to the research. Ensuring individual participant written permission to release any confidential material
- Risk to participants. The risk to participants is expected to be minimal due to the themes to be explored in the interview, which are unlikely to cause negative reactions post-interview.

## **8. Conclusion**

This paper attempted to justify the use of a qualitative research methodology under an interpretive paradigm to investigate the emerging concept of the relationship to use the dimensions of religion as underpinning constructs for mass media social marketing campaigns. It commenced with an overview of the research design, research setting and research paradigm, including justification for the research paradigm chosen and was followed by a distilled view of research approaches, including justification for the research approach adopted as well as justification for the specific techniques adopted for the study. Finally the data collection, data analysis, delimitations and ethical considerations of the methodology were discussed. Therefore, it is intended that the study of the emerging concept will be performed under the guidance of the proposed qualitative methodology.

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