Qualitative Study with Trans and Male Bisexual Populations

Focus on Segmentation

Nicaragua
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Qualitative Study with
Trans and Male Bisexual Populations

PSI / PASMO Nicaragua
2009

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Introduction

Program Description

USAID is entrusting PSI with resources to do research and interventions to prevent HIV/AIDS and STIs and improve the health of high risk populations in Nicaragua. These resources will enable PSI/PASMO to learn about these populations and serve them from their own perceived needs. We are currently focusing on increasing condom and water-based lubricant use among these populations to reduce their risk of infection.

Approved funding will cover the expenses of this particular research with Trans\(^1\) (travesty, transsexual, transgender) and bisexual male populations and the particular ways in which they interact. In this way PSI will be better equipped to develop adequate future interventions.

Study Rationale

Designing the concept for a social marketing activity requires familiarity with the target audience and the context in which behavior change takes place. The purpose of this study is to provide information that can be used to develop messages and material to reach the Trans\(^1\) and male\(^2\) bisexual populations in Nicaragua.

As literature has pointed out, the Trans\(^1\) and bisexual populations are highly segregated and discriminated (Mercer et al., 2009)\(^3\). This translates into the inexistence of health services tailored to their specific needs and the lack of political willingness to make interventions specially designed for these populations. Lack of opportunities leads some Tran’s individuals to depend on sex work and to increase their risk of HIV transmission. Regarding the male bisexual population, strong stigma against bisexual men (especially those with a heterosexual identity) may be a barrier for condom use (Diaz, 1998).

It is also important to consider the findings on an original paper by Bockting et. Al. that states that their most important findings are that Latino MSM who have sex with transgender persons were 2.9 times more likely to have unprotected sex and over 4 times more likely to be HIV-positive than were Latino MSM who did not report having had a transgender partner.

On this account, PSI and its local affiliate, PASMO-Nicaragua, seek to gain an in-depth understanding of Trans and male bisexual populations, their identity formation and

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\(^1\) The term *trans* will be used to make reference to any of the following categories: travesty, transgender and transsexual.

\(^2\) Bisexual: men who are attracted and have sex with women and men.

\(^3\) Conseguir bibliografía
the interaction that may exist with each other. Being populations affected by HIV/AIDS, PASMO-Nicaragua is interested in developing adequate interventions to reach these populations. No TRaC study has been conducted with these specific groups and little is known about them in Nicaragua, in terms of risky behavior, and their opportunity, ability, and motivation (OAM) for condom and water based lubricant use. PSI will use the results of this FoQus on Segmentation study to develop future interventions that may include branding a new behavior change communication intervention. With that purpose the research team will collect information about these populations using qualitative approaches.

**FoQus on Segmentation**

FoQus on Segmentation is the process of discovering and refining an idea into a complete description for branding a product, service or behavior. It uses qualitative research to facilitate more effective social marketing activities and give voice to the target audience.

FoQus on Segmentation is conducted when no segmentation results are available through quantitative research (TRaC studies). In some cases, the descriptive table produced through the FoQus on Segmentation process will serve as a surrogate for a quantitative segmentation “dashboard” table. In other cases, FoQus on Segmentation results will be used as input into a TRaC study design and questionnaire.

The seven-step process listed below is used to design “the concept” (See Appendix B for entire Framework). The first step serves as the “segmentation” component where potential predictors of product/service use or behavior are identified. For steps one through four, qualitative methods are used to generate insight and understanding relevant for designing social marketing communication activities. The last three steps involve application of these findings to create specific social marketing outputs.

1. Identify beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change
2. Build a person profile by:
   a. Creating a character archetype for each population.
   b. Characterizing the context in which Trans and bisexual people live.
   c. Identifying successful strategies used to behave.
3. Understand the current brand position and personality of condom and water based lubricant use.
4. Describe the target group’s opportunity, ability, and motivation to process information
5. Identify the frame of reference, the competing product, service, or behavior that prevents the archetypes from adopting the use of condom and water based lubricant.

6. Write a positioning statement that reflects the new personality for the brand, campaign, or message and how it differs from competing behaviors or brands.

7. Develop a marketing strategy

    Through this process, PSI aims to develop a common language and set of tools for prioritizing intervention areas and developing concepts. FoQus on Segmentation will enable country programs to learn from the target audience, build capacity to develop concepts based in evidence, and ultimately develop brands, campaigns, and messages that are consistently effective at influencing health-related behavior.

    This document describes the objectives, methods and anticipated outputs relevant for the steps described above.

**Research Objectives**

This study aims to gather information useful for designing future interventions in terms of sending messages about prevention that reach trans and bisexual male populations:

Specifically, the study objectives are to:

a. Identify beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change related to condom and water-based lubricant use with different types of partners (clients, friends, lovers, etc.)

b. Build one or more character archetypes for each population studied.

c. Identify current strategies used to behave, either by the target audience members themselves or positive deviants.

d. Understand current perceptions on condom and water-based lubricant use.

e. Describe target audience members’ opportunity, ability, and motivation to process HIV-prevention and STIs communications

**Timeline**

**For Trans Population**

The research process will take over two months (See appendix A). During this period, one week will be spent looking for and interviewing candidates for field supervisors. Once the field supervisors are hired by PASMO-Nicaragua, these people
will look for PEER researchers in the case of Tran’s population, which might take another week. When the team is complete, a workshop will be conducted on the third week by PASMO’s Regional Program research department. During this workshop participants will be trained on the PEER methodology and interview guides will be developed by the PEER researchers on coordination with PASMOS research and CCC teams.

When all methodological and ethical aspects are covered, PEER researchers, will practice with each one on how to conduct interviews. The following week (fourth week) PEER researchers will conduct the first round of interviews and supervisors will visit them to collect the data. When the three rounds of interviews (one week each) are completed, a second workshop on week seven will take place with the whole PEER and supervisor’s team. During this workshop the team will work on developing the archetypes and drawing some conclusions. After this process, the second part of the workshop will take place. In this second part, PEER researchers will not participate, only field supervisors and PASMO’s staff from Nicaragua office and Regional Program.

By week nine or ten, results and report should be in process. Final report should be submitted on the twelve or thirteen week. (See Appendix A for additional details.)

**For bisexual men**

The research process will take over a month and a half. During this period, one week will be spent looking for informants. Meanwhile, the semi-structured interview guide will be fully developed and pre-tested. Once the instrument is validated the interview process will begin. Each interview will last approximately ninety minutes.

Interviews will be transcribed and coded for the analysis. The interview process will be conducted during the same time frame as the Peer research. (See Appendix A for additional details.)

**Methodology**

**Study Type**

Between February and April of 2009 PSI / PASMO-Nicaragua will conduct a FoQus on Segmentation study to gather information in the above mentioned areas. PEER research will be used to collect data about Tran's population and in-depth interviews will be used to collect information about bisexual men. These methods were chosen considering the characteristics of each population: the existence of a social network among Trans population, but not among bisexual men.

Participatory ethnographic evaluation and research (PEER) was selected for the study with Tran’s population because it is specifically designed for use with hard-to-reach populations that are likely to have limited or no “voice” within the larger society.
and require a substantial period of time to build trust and rapport with outside researchers. PEER is also appropriate for researching sensitive issues and when researchers (and marketers) are looking for an insider’s perspective on issues related to risk behavior.

In this sense PEER research was chosen for Trans because social networks have been identified facilitating the work with this methodology. It also lets the researcher obtain in depth narratives about social aspects difficult to address with quantitative methods. PEER research not only encourages, but also depends on the local participation of the members of the target population as researchers, contributing with an insider’s perspective to the study.

The research consists of detailed interviews to Tran’s individuals made by their own peers (another trans members of the social network). The PEER researchers participate in developing the interview guides, interviewing and helping to analyse part of the data. This is a relatively quick way to get in depth information about sensitive issues among difficult to access populations. This type of research constitutes a valuable opportunity for marginal groups to make their voices be heard. To learn more: [www.options.co.uk/peer-about-articles/the-peer-approach](http://www.options.co.uk/peer-about-articles/the-peer-approach).

For male bisexual population, in-depth interviews were the methodology decided on, considering the difficulty on reaching this population and finding functional networks. Because of the secrecy that bisexual men maintain about their sexual interests and practices, no networks have been found yet. Information provided by a bisexual man in the first stages of this study design indicates that at least early in a relationship no bisexual man will expose himself to others, so looking for peers could be difficult. For this reason in-depth interviews could be a better way to conduct research with this population. Even though these interviews are not done by peers, they will produce rich data about daily life and life stories.

**Study Population**

This study will be conducted among Trans and bisexual men in Nicaragua, two populations that have risky sexual conducts for HIV that may interact in some sexual contexts.

**Sample size and sampling strategy**

*For the Peer study with Tran’s population:*

Fourteen Tran’s people will be recruited and will serve as peer researchers, by interviewing peers from their social networks. The study location will be Managua, the capital city of Nicaragua.

PSI/PASMO Nicaragua will receive the help of affiliated community organizations to recruit peer researchers. The recruitment criteria for peer researchers specifies that they should: have no previous involvement with PSI and no direct exposure
to any existing behavior change interventions run, other than mass media communications; be members of the target group; be available for training and to conduct conversational interviews with their peers over a three to four week period; and be willing to take part in the peer research.

For in depth interviews with bisexual men:

Ideally fourteen bisexual men will be recruited in Managua. Study participants will be friends or acquaintances of the two MSM researchers. Inclusion criteria are: self identification as bisexual and have no previous involvement with PSI, and are willing to take part in the research.

Data collection

For PEER research with Trans:

Data will be collected during a 3 to 4 week period. Peer researchers will conduct three interviews with three Trans in their social network. They will ask interviewees to tell them about what other Trans say on pre-selected topic areas. Peer researchers will attend debriefing sessions with supervisors at least on a weekly basis. Supervisors will collect detailed notes about the peer researchers’ interview narratives, taking care to accurately record words and phrases used by the peer researchers. At the end of the research process peer researchers will be debrief by a social scientist who will conduct in-depth interviews, with the support of the supervisor and supervision notes.

For in depth interviews with bisexual men:

Data will be collected during a 3 to 4 week period. Each study participant will be interviewed at least two times using a semi-structured interview guide (where possible, we will conduct three interviews with each participant). They will then be asked to describe their different sexual partners and the dynamics of those relationships. Spontaneous and anticipated probes will be used to collect as much detail about each of the relationships as possible.

Data collection tool.

For the PEER study with trans:

Discussion prompts will address the following components of the FoQus on Segmentation framework: beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change; archetype characteristics; strategies used to behave (or those used by positive deviants); the current brand personality; and Tran’s opportunity, ability, and motivation to process information about condom and water based lubricant use.
Prompts will be developed during two workshops: one with program staff and a second with peer researchers. The programmers will suggest themes and sub-themes (e.g. sexuality, relationships, social networks, family/friends, work life, etc.) and questions or prompts to be used. This information will be further modified after a similar meeting with peer researchers where they suggest sub-themes that they think are important as well as prompts that can be used to ask about these sub-themes. At the end of their workshop the peer researchers will conduct a field test to practice using the prompts they developed. They will then meet for half a day to further modify the guide and discuss and resolve any difficulties they had during the interviews. Data collection tools will be written in Spanish.

For in depth interviews with bisexual men:

Researchers will prepare the discussion guide in collaboration with marketers. It will contain simple prompts and probes and will address the following components of the FoQus on Segmentation framework: beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change; archetype characteristics; strategies used to behave (or those used by positive deviants); the current brand personality; and women’s opportunity, ability, and motivation to process information.

The guide is not intended to direct the interview or dictate the order of questioning. Priority is given to storytelling, allowing participants to provide information at their own pace and using probes to elicit additional detail. Moderators will refer to the guide only to remind themselves of the topics to be addressed. (See Appendix E for a copy of the discussion guide).

The guide will be tested during the first two interviews and modified as necessary for the remaining interviews.

Data Analysis

For the PEER study with Trans:

Permission will be requested to use a digital recorder. Because of the nature of the issues, informants may say no. If that happens, notes will be taken during the interview and will then be hand coded. Coding will be verified by assigning the same codes to all the researchers. The social scientist will also have notes from his/her interview with each of the peer researchers about the three interviews they had with their three peers. The notes from the supervisors will be used for a synthesis workshop among the peer researchers. The notes taken by the social scientist along with any additional information resulting from the synthesis workshop will be coded, synthesized and analyzed.
For in-depth interviews with bisexual men:

Permission will be requested to use a digital recorder. Because of the nature of the issues, informants may say no. If that happens, notes should be taken during the interview and will then be hand coded. Coding will be verified by assigning the same codes to all the researchers. In FoQuS on Segmentation, coding uses the 8 components of the framework to sort the data. For beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change, additional codes will be assigned to emergent themes. Once coded by hand, electronic chunks of code will be stored in Word files or in an Excel spreadsheet. The research team will verify their coding scheme with the regional researcher and modify coding as necessary.

A common narrative will be developed by using recurring themes identified during data analysis. This narrative will be presented to marketers and used to ground additional data analysis that will take place during the interpretation session.

Data Interpretation

For PEER research with Trans:

The first step will be to conduct a two-and-a-half day workshop with peer researchers. The first two days will be spent synthesizing data and developing participatory methods for presenting study results to programmers, such as role plays and collages. Peer researchers will then present results to programmers during the morning on the third day. Their presentations will provide an overview of study findings and ground the rest of the data analysis and interpretation process. All members of the marketing team and the Country Representative will attend this session.

The peer researchers will be dismissed mid-day and the interpretation session with programmers will begin (the Country Represented should attend if available). Coded portions of transcript text will be presented in a manner that allows session participants to analyze it individually. After each participant has had an opportunity to review the emergent themes, the group will synthesize data through a sign-up process: each individual will write a summary for each code on a corresponding piece of large paper (labeled with the code). The group will then prioritize the themes and narrow the focus for the rest of the interpretation process.

On the final day, researchers, programmers, and the Country Representative will complete the dashboard instrument. They will start by creating an archetype based on the common narrative, visual, and study transcripts. The remaining 7 components of the dashboard will reference the archetype by name. The next step will be to identify the beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change according to the emergent themes analyzed. Once all beliefs are listed, the facilitator will assign codes to them according to PSI’s behavior change framework.
Note: During the Peer study, spoken narratives and a photo collage might be requested. If so, they will be presented during the peer workshop. The research team will complete the dashboard document during the session or shortly thereafter.

For in depth interviews with bisexual:

Two days will be spent with all members of the marketing team and the Technical Director interpreting data and completing the FoQus on Segmentation dashboard. The Country Representative will participate during the last half of the second day.

Coded portions of transcript text will then be presented in a manner that allows session participants to analyze it individually. After each participant has had an opportunity to review the emergent themes, the group will synthesize data through a sign-up process: each individual will write a summary for each code on a corresponding piece of large paper (labeled with the code). The group will then prioritize the themes and narrow the focus for the rest of the interpretation process.

On day two, the team will complete the dashboard instrument. They will start by creating an archetype based on the common narrative, visual, and study transcripts. The remaining 7 components of the dashboard will reference the archetype by name. The next step will be to identify the beliefs to reinforce and beliefs to change according to the emergent themes analyzed. Once all beliefs are listed, the facilitator will assign codes to them according to PSI’s behavior change framework.

The research team will complete the dashboard document during the session or shortly thereafter.

Appendix A – Timeline for FoQus on Segmentation study using spoken narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Person responsible</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare study design</td>
<td>February 16 - 20, 2009</td>
<td>Research Manager Regional Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify interviewers</td>
<td>February 23 - 27, 2009</td>
<td>PASMO Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train interviewers</td>
<td>March 2 - 6, 2009</td>
<td>Researcher PASMO Regional Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>March 9 - 27, 2009</td>
<td>Supervisors and Peer researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription and translation</td>
<td>March 9 to April 4, 2009</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis and create narratives</td>
<td>April 13 - 17, 2009</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for interpretation session</td>
<td>April 20 - 24, 2009</td>
<td>Supervisors, PASMO Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Session</td>
<td>April 27 -30 , 2009</td>
<td>Research Manager, Regional Researcher PASMO Nicaragua Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize dashboard and session documents</td>
<td>May 4 - 8, 2009</td>
<td>Research Manager, Regional Researcher PASMO Nicaragua Staff</td>
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Appendix B
FoQus on Segmentation Framework
Appendix C - FoQus on Segmentation Dashboard Instrument (sample)

Input: PEER interview transcripts, role plays, collages, archetype narratives, synthesized data

Desired behavior: ____________________________________________________________

1. Archetype (ARCH):
   - Statements that describe the personality and circumstances of target audience members
   - Demographic facts
   - Habits
   - Values
   - Aspirations
   - Needs
   - Worries
   - Fears

2. Beliefs to Reinforce (B2R):
   - Statements by target audience members that express the benefits of desired behavior
   - Statements by target audience members that express positive attitudes toward desired behavior
   - Drivers of desired behavior

3. Beliefs to Change (B2C):
   - Statements by respondents that express the costs/disadvantages of desired behavior
   - Statements by respondents that express negative attitudes toward desired behavior
   - Barriers to desired behavior

4. Strategies to Behave (S2B):
   - Techniques or tactics that members of the target audience use to overcome barriers to desired behavior (which include purchasing and using products, enacting desired behaviors, and utilizing services)
   - Three elements are necessary: intent to behave; an obstacle; an action to overcome the obstacle
   - Examples of such techniques include locating social support, managing peer pressure, accessing money, or juggling schedules

5. Acquisition Stories (AqS):
   - How members of the target audience acquire (buy or receive) products or services under study
   - This includes how non-behavers acquire alternatives to the desired behavior
   - There do not need to be any particular obstacles to acquisition (as with S2B)

6. Openings (O):
   - When and where we can reach target audience members
   - How we can communicate to them effectively (channels and media preferences)
   - Who target audience members listen to and trust (trusted referents)
7. Knowledge/Sophistication (K/S):
   - Statements by target audience members that indicate their ability to distinguish between the
     behavior and competing behaviors (comparisons between behaviors)
   - Statements that reveal the level of sophistication target audience members have about the
     desired behavior
   - For example, do they understand the mechanism through which a product functions; the
     biological facts of a health problem; the purpose of a service?

8. Category Experiences (CatEx):
   - Target audience members’ past experiences of the desired behavior
   - Target audience members’ past experiences with competing behaviors

9. Brand Associations (BA):
   - Consumers’ emotional attachment to a brand (or behavior)
   - Consumers’ ideas and attitudes about the brand (or behavior) as it exists today
Appendix E – Sample Discussion Guides (Prompts) for PEER Study and in depth interviews with bisexual men.

This sample Discussion Guide Prompts will be used to generate discussion among participants. During the Peer training, the Peer researchers will work on this guide, and modify it from their own perspective.

1. **Daily Life and**
   - Daily routine
   - Work/job
   - What things are more important for them?
   - What are their worst worries?
   - What has the highest value in their lives?

2. **Health issues**
   - Appearance
   - Health
   - Prevention

3. **Social Networks**
   - Relationship with family.
   - Interaction with friends.
   - Sexual partners and romance (sexual contexts, interactions and prevention)