**Project Update 2**

**Expanded Annotated Bibliography for Literature Review on Focus Groups**

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**Asbury, J. (1995). Overview of focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research, 5*(4), 414-420.**

**As the title suggests, this article presents a short, high-level overview of focus groups. It discusses the historical evolution of its use in research, and then presents something of a cook-book type “how to” / “dos and don’ts” guide – including such topics as recruiting participants, determining how many groups and how many participants are needed in a given case, preparing for and conducting the session, and analysis of the data.**

**Balch, G. I., & Mertens, D. M. (1999). Focus group design and group dynamics: Lessons from deaf and hard of hearing participants. *American Journal of Evaluation, 20*(2), 265-277.**

**Authors present from their experience as a business consultant and professor of education respectively their reflections on “lessons learned” in conducting focus groups so as to “…more effectively ‘listen’ to people in all focus groups – particularly those that don’t intentionally include people with a hearing loss.” Emphasis is on considerations of physical environment, and having an experienced facilitator/ moderator and simply being sensitive to “invisible communication difficulties” of participants.**

Barbour, R. S. (2005). Making sense of focus groups*. Medical Education, 39*, 742-750.

Discusses “ethics and practicalities” of using focus groups in research and provides guidance in design and implementation of focus groups. Specifically discusses some misconceptions around focus groups, largely associated with the varied fields in which they are employed. Author posits that “most problems stem from researchers ignoring the central assumptions which underpin the qualitative research endeavor.”

**Brüggen, E., Willems, P. (2008). A critical comparison of offline focus groups, online focus groups and e-Delphi. *International Journal of Market Research, 51*(3), 363-381.**

**This piece presents the results of a study comparing “offline focus groups, online focus groups and e-Delphi\* with respect to depth, breadth, efficiency, gropu dynamics, non-verbal impressions and attitudes of respondents.” (\*e-Delphi is an online version of a marketing forecasting tool, Delphi.) Results indicate that “offline focus group results have highest depth and breadth, and are most efficient, leading to high-quality outcomes”, while “e-Delphi discussions provide very elaborate and relatively deep outcomes that give a good impression of respondents’ feelings and attitudes” and the results from “online focus groups remain rather superficial” but are still valued for spontenaiety of response/ reaction and interactiveness as well as efficiency.**

**Drury, V., Chiang, P. P., Esterhuizen, P., Freshwater, D., Taylor, B. (2014). Researchers’ experiences of focus group dynamics in Singapore, Australia and the Netherlands: Troubling multicultural assumptions. *Journal of Research in Nursing, 19*(6), 460-474.**

**The authors discuss cultural sensitivity in conducting focus groups. They “deconstruct focus group utility” in describing their own experiences, and then offer strategies for conducting focus groups in populations diverse to our own. In particular, the authors “reinforce that understanding out own multicultural assumptions and biases, being reflexive and mindful (when facilitating) focus groups in different cultures may prevent researchers from adopting essentialist cultural stereotypes.”**

Farnsworth, J., & Boon, B. (2010). Analysing group dynamics within the focus group. *Qualitative Research, 10*(5), 605-624.

Authors posit that greater attention must be paid to one particular key feature of focus groups – group dynamics. Managing group dynamics is important in eliciting better group participation. Presents results of a study to demonstrate that “orientation to group relations is essential to expanding the method’s (focus group’s) sensitivity as an effective research procedure”

**Grant, J. L. (2011). Storytelling, group dynamics and professional cultures: Lessons from a focus group study. *Planning Theory & Practice, 12*(3) 407-425.**

**This article provides an analysis of seven different focus groups to highlight the way(s) in which the different professions of the participants can influence their narrative during the group. In reviewing and discussing these differences (for example, participants in a profession focused on “planning” – such as business, law, public policy etc. – were seen to be more pessimistic and negative towards their profession than their counterparts in the “recreational” professions, which tended to be much more positive about the profession and community) it provides a means for those in the “planning” professions to perhaps rethink how they communicate about and within their profession “…in order to avoid undermining confidence in their work and their potential to contribute to meaningful community transformation.”**

**Greenwood, N., Ellmers, T., & Holley, J. (2014) The influence of ethnic group composition on focus group discussions. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 14*, 107.**

**Authors present the results of a study challenging the conventional thought that focus groups should be homogeneous. They suggest that “it cannot be assumed that data derived from the more homogeneous groups [were] more valuable than the data from the more heterogeneous groups. Rather the approaches provided different perspectives.” Also, other commonalities (in their study, everyone was a care-giver) may override differences resulting from the group’s ethic composition.**

**Holmes, L. (2011). Gender dynamics in group therapy. *Group, 35*(3), 197-207.**

**Author presents a psychology-based discussion of group dynamics and the influence of gender on the interactions between and among participants – as well as influence on the group leader/ facilitator approach/ style.**

Ivey, J. Focus groups. *Pediatric Nursing, 37*(5), 251.

Provides a brief introduction to the structure and uses of focus groups in research.

**Kemeny, B., Boettcher, I. F., DeShon, R. P., & Stevens, A. B. (2004). Postintervension focus groups. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 30* (8), 4-9.**

**This article presents the results of a study conducted with long-term care medical professionals (administration, nurse-mentors and nurses) to “investigate the therapeutic effect of person-centered care” in working with long-term care patients (in this case, dementia) both to the patient and to the medical staff/ caregivers and, in particular, person-centered mentoring for direct caregivers Focus groups were used to investigate the “staff’s” perceptions of their own behavior change (after mentoring) and that of their colleagues, as well as their feelings as to whether the change was sustainable long-term.**

**Kidd, P. S., & Parshall, M. B. (2000). Getting the focus and the group: enhancing analytical rigor in focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research, 10*(3), 283-308.**

**This piece attempts to fill what the authors see as a gap in the literature concerning focus groups: There is, they say, much discussion around how they are conducted and conducted, and on issues concerning the benefits of focus groups derived from group dynamics, but very little discussion around analysis of the collected data. This article discusses various analytical challenges in focus group data – especially how “…differences between group and individual discourse impact the analysis and interpretation of focus group data”, and “approaches for enhancing the rigor of analysis and the reliability and validity of focus group findings.”**

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research: Introducing focus groups. *British Medical Journal, 31*(7000), 299-302.

Article presents a high-level overview of focus groups – what they are, when they are used, advantages/ disadvantages of this particular technique. Provides a bit of historical background on how focus groups have developed and the various areas in which they have been used.

Krueger, R. A. (2006). Analyzing focus group interviews. *Journal of Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society 33*(5), 478-481.

Author presents a number of “FAQ” he has received concerning analysis of focus group/ group interview data. These questions include fundamental questions such as “how do I get started”, to logistical questions such as “how much time should be allocated for analysis”, and “how do I capture data”.

**Lee, J. J., Lee, K. P.(2009). Facilitating dynamics of focus group interviews in East Asia: Evidence and tools by cross-cultural study. *International Journal of Design, 3*(1), 17-28.**

**Authors discuss and describe a study carried out with the purpose of examining how focus groups function in cultures with differing normative behaviors in communication and interaction. The study compared focus groups in the Netherlands with focus groups in South Korea, and found “passive participation and poor member-to-member interactions from Korean participants.” These results facilitated the authors’ creation of specific “tools” (such as ice-breaking activities, game-show style format) to “facilitate the group dynamics of focus group interviews” – specifically in East Asia, although these tools would in themselves seem to perhaps have broader utility (i.e. in cultures other than S. Korea, but which nonetheless experience the same communication issues). Finally, the authors present results of a further study conducted specifically as to the utility of the tools they developed.**

Morgan, D. L. (1996). Focus groups. *Annual Review of Sociology, 22*, 129-152.

Compares focus groups and surveys/ individual interviews, emphasizing the element of group interaction unique to focus groups and the importance of the role of the facilitator. Discusses the need for further development of standards for reporting results from focus groups, additional methodological study in this area, better attention to data analysis issues raised by focus groups, and, finally, more “engagement” with the participants to address their needs and concerns.

Packer-Muti, B. (2010). Conducting a focus group. *The Qualitative Report, 15*(4), 1023-1026.

A useful discussion of how the author managed the “learning curve” of conducting focus groups, including useful tools and techniques employed. Includes references to materials the author found particularly useful and a break-down of her own institution’s “learning by doing” approach in adopting focus groups as a research methodology.

Powell, R. A., & Single, H. M. (1996). Focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care, 8*(5), 499-504.

Discusses the advantages of focus groups versus other qualitative methods, and when a focus group may be most effectively employed. Issues of group composition and other management/ logistical issues are also discussed, as well as the analysis of results.

Quible, Z. K. (1998). A focus on focus groups. *Business Communication Quarterly, 61*(2), 28-38.

Article starts from a business-side model of focus group usage, and goes on to demonstrate the utility of focus group in various other research problems.

**Rabiee, F. (2004) Focus group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society, 63*, 655-660.**

**Author uses results from some of her own studies to demonstrate the concept and application of “framework analysis” in the context of focus group interviews and data, presenting it as “another approach to qualitative data analysis.”**

Reid, D. J., & Reid, F. J. M. (2005). Online focus groups: An indepth comparison of computer-mediated and conventional focus group discussions. *International Journal of Market Research, 47*(2), 131-162.

This paper reports on a study conducted comparing face-to-face (F2F) focus groups with focus groups conducted using computer-mediated communication (CMC) modes (i.e. chat/ IM; Twitter) Results suggest that “more ideas and answers were generated in CMC … discussions”. Conclusion is that CMC would seem to be a “viable alternative” to F2F groups in certain instances.

**Seal, D. W., Bogart, L. M., & Ehrhardt, A. A. (1998). Small group dynamics: The utility of focus group discussions as a research method. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 2*(4) 253-266.**

**Authors present the results of a study conducted to “…demonstrate the utility of focus groups as a research method,” with findings discussed through the lens of theories of small group dynamics. Results of focus group interviews are compared with individual interviews, and while similar conclusions were arrived at by each approach, the authors conclude that while individual interviews “produced a greater range and richness-depth of themes”, these “…advantages were offset by the insights produced by the dynamic interactions of the group setting.”**

Walden, G. R. (2014). Informing library research with focus groups. *Library Management. 33*(8/9), 558-564.

Author states specifically that the purpose of this paper is “to demonstrate alternative strategies to enhance participant interaction in library focus groups.” This paper not only focuses on focus groups as used in LIS research, emphasizing the interaction between and among participants as a key component of the success or failure of the exercise, it also suggests a number of techniques that may be employed to increase and enhance participation (paper discusses 7 in detail, but a number of others are also listed).

Wilkinson, S. (1999). Focus groups: A feminist method. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 23*, 221-244.

Discusses the use of focus groups in feminist research. Provides a brief description of their purpose and mechanics. Specifically, details “three key ways” in which focus groups seem to overcome feminist critiques of other qualitative (and quantitative) methodologies as applied to that discipline (artificiality, decontextualization and exploitation).