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Focus Groups

This study examines three different research projects, in order to assess the strengths and challenges of the focus group as a research method. In addition, it discusses basic issues in organising a focus group study.

Qualitative Research, 9 (1): 31–59 (2009):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/9/1/31>

Using focus groups: lessons from studying daycare centers, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina

Lori Peek, Colorado State University, and Alice Fothergill, University of Vermont

This examines the focus group method as a tool to study violence in youth residential care. The authors present some important reflections on the ways in which the institutional and situational context and the very form of focus groups affect how people talk.

Qualitative Research, 8 (1): 73–89 (2008):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/8/1/73>

Focus groups and the study of violence

Tarja Pösö, University of Tampere, Finland; Päivi Honkatukia, National Research Institute of Legal Policy, Helsinki, Finland; Leo Nyqvist, University of Turku, Finland

This excellent paper argues that there is a need for more attention to how we analyse focus group data. It is suggested that focus group data (like other types of qualitative data) are understood as social interactions. It shows how we can analyse focus groups as interactions using four different but related methodological tools of analysis:

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- Goffman-inspired interaction analysis
- conversation analysis
- discourse psychology
- positioning theory.

The discussion is illustrated by focus group data/material from a study on how Danish women cook and relate to normative issues in cooking.

Qualitative Research, 10 (1): 71–89 (2010):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/10/1/71>

Focus groups as social enactments: integrating interaction and content in the analysis of focus group data

Bente Halkier, Roskilde University

This trailblazing paper analyses commercial focus groups as interaction.

Qualitative Research, 4 (3): 285–309 (2004):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/4/3/285.short>

Repeat receipts: a device for generating visible data in market research focus groups

Claudia Puchta, University of Applied Sciences, Lueneburg, Germany; Jonathan Potter, Loughborough University, UK; Stephan Wolff, University of Hildesheim, Germany

PODCAST

www.themarketresearchpodcast.com/podcasts/b2b_podcast_13b.mp3

This is an account of how focus groups are used in market research.

METHODSPACE

David Morgan on Research Methods 9.41 minutes

www.methodspace.com/video/david-morgan-on-research

This is an interview with David Morgan on focus groups: practical tips on carrying them out, from recruitment to moderating.