

Focus groups (focus group interviews) take place in a group setting.

- not recommended for studying sensitive topics that people will be reluctant to discuss in public.
- A key characteristic is the interaction between members of the group.
- typically consist of 8-12 people (ideal 4-8), with a moderator who focuses the discussion on relevant topics in a nondirective manner.
- The smaller the group, the less information we gather, >10 make it crowded and difficult for all members to participate and interact.
- Multiple focus groups should be conducted in order to gather sufficient amount of data, opinion, and views on the study.

advantages

□Convenience □Time and expenses savings.

□less researcher bias than in individual interviews, because researcher (facilitator or moderator) takes a less active role in guiding discussion.

Sample on paper utilized interviews and focus groups

- Surgeons' aims and pain assessment strategies when managing pediatric post-operative pain: A qualitative study (Interview study).
- "I couldn't even talk to the patient": barriers to communicating with cancer patients as perceived by nursing students (Focus group study).

Observation: (unobtrusive method) 'non-reactive' or 'indirect' methods.

- "going into the field" describing and analyzing what has been seen.
- one of the oldest and most fundamental research methods approaches.
- has been extensively used in social sciences (psychology & medical settings).
- seeks to find out "what is going on"
- Data collected in observational studies can be qualitative, quantitative or both.
- Observation involves collecting data using one's senses, especially looking and listening in a systematic and meaningful way.

**When using questionnaires and interviews sometimes a social desirability approach impacts on participants' responses, where they say what they think the researcher wants to hear rather than what they actually believe or do. hard to find out what is really happening in practice.

• Unobtrusive measures allow for data collection and analysis to be completed without the researcher intruding in the research context.

advantages: do not disturb the naturally occurring processes (the subject of the research), because the informants are not aware of the research that is going on, their behavior and self-descriptions are not modified by the researcher's presence.

- The research setting for participant observation is the study informants' own daily environment rather than a setting assigned by researchers.
- Observation provides an enormous amount of data to be captured and analyzed.
- One approach to helping with collection and analysis is to digitally record observations to allow for repeated viewing. it is more than just recording of data from environment, when we observe, we are active, not passive collectors of data like a tape recorder.

Why Use Observation to Collect Data?

- They provide researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities.
- allows researchers to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews, observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share.
- Help researchers observe situations informants have described in interviews, thereby making them aware of distortions or inaccuracies in description provided.
- collect different types of data. Being onsite over a period of time familiarizes the researcher to the community, thereby facilitating involvement in sensitive activities to which he generally would not be invited.
- It helps to develop Qs that make sense in the native language & culturally relevant.
- It gives the researcher a better understanding of what is happening in the culture.
- Enables the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data surveys & interviews.

Two types of observations

- **Non participant:** observer/researcher (Observers adopt a detached role) Researcher is not part of the activity taking place, only observes so he may not gain complete understanding of the event.
- **Participant:** observer participates in the activities, community or organization being observed. He may alter events.
- systematic description of events, behaviors & artifacts in study social setting.
- Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation under study
- A process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating.
- "The process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day to day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting"
- Becoming a firefighter. Enrolling in flight training school . Working/patient in a mental hospital.

In both types, the researcher attempts to learn about **context in which behavior takes place:**

- Physical surroundings.
- Other people in the setting.
- The interactions among different people in the setting.
- social, cultural, political, or economic and why it occurs

Researchers record what they see, hear, smell, and taste using:

- Field notes:** Written record of what is observed, impressions, reactions, and hypotheses about what has happened.
- Photos of people and setting** may be added to analysis.
- Audio tape and video tape.**

Styles of observation

2) **Unstructured observation:** describing what occurs. most common type
 Researcher usually doesn't have a preconceived idea about what would occur.

Uses researcher's words for thick description of phenomena or events .

1) **Structured observation:** Start with operational definition of what you want to measure and counting only behavior/ situation that "fits" .

Uses a template to record tabulations of specific behaviors that can be measured and analyzed statistically.

3) **Mix of both unstructured and structured**

Types of naturalistic observation:

- 1- Based on researcher participation: participant and non.
- 2- Based on whether researcher is known: covert and overt.
 - Overt: participants know they are being observed and aware of the purpose of the study.
 - Covert: participants are either unaware of being observed or that the observer conceals the real observing reason.

| Research method | advantage | disadvantage |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Participant | Observer can be part of the process see & experience what is going on. | Can be dangerous for observer |
| Non-participant | Observer remain safe | Observer cannot get a feel of what is happening |
| overt | Ethical | Observer effect (may act differently) |
| Covert | Respondents act normally | unethical |

How Does One Conduct an Observation?

a variety of considerations for the researchers:

- Ethics
- Establishing rapport
- Selecting key informants.
- conducting observations.
- Keeping field notes
- Writing up one's findings.

Ethics

- The researcher must take some of the field notes to reinforce that what he is doing is collecting data for research purposes.
- When the researcher meets community members for the first time, he should be sure to inform them of the purpose for being there, sharing sufficient information with them about the research topic. constantly introducing oneself as a researcher.
- preserve anonymity of participants in final write up and in field notes.

Maintaining ethics in naturalistic observations:

- Not undertake this type of observation if another research method is possible to investigate the problem.
- Take complete permission of those in the research environment, who are not a target of the research (concerned authorities, schools parents) in the least and at least inform others who may be affected.
- Explain to the people observed, after observation why it was necessary to carry out the research, why they couldn't be told about the observation, how valuable their contribution and address their doubts.
- Assure the target observed that their confidentiality would be maintained.

| Ethical issues | Consideration |
|---|--|
| Covert versus overt data collection | Covert: involve deception, with researchers pretending to be someone they are not, now considered unethical because it violates individuals' right to autonomy and their ability to decide whether they want to be observed. Nowadays participants are normally told what the purpose of the research is. |
| Gaining consent | If collecting data in a hospital setting some researchers recommend gaining informed consent from all individuals present on the ward on a regular basis. Collecting data about a specific patient informed consent should be obtained. For other people within the general area a simple explanation that you are collecting data for a study along with obtaining their verbal consent, may be adequate (REC: Research Ethics Committee will determine the approach). |
| What will you do if you see poor practice? | Observation of practices that require improvement but are not dangerous or harmful, without intervening would not be considered unethical. |
| What will you do if you see dangerous practice? | REC approving an observational study will expect a researcher to have identified the steps they will take if they observe dangerous practice. For example, researcher may arrange to discuss any dangerous practice she observed with the ward manager who would then take any necessary action. |
| Protecting anonymity | Anonymity maintained by referring to participants using identifying codes. |

Gaining Entry and Establishing Rapport

- A key strategy in minimizing the effect of the researcher's presence on behaviors is to establish rapport before starting data collection.
- To assist in gaining permission from the community to conduct the study, the researcher may bring letters of introduction to ease entry, such as information about one's affiliation, funding sources, and planned length of time in the field.
- **may need to meet with the community leaders. For example, when one wishes to conduct research in a school, permission must be granted by the school principal and, possibly, by the district school superintendent.
- For example, if the study involves observing nurses, a first step might be to attend team meetings or ward handover on several occasion as a way of getting to know the potential participants and building a relationship with them.
- "Hanging out" a process in which researcher gains trust and establishes rapport with participants, involves meeting and conversing with people to develop relationships over an extended period of time.

•Three stages to the hanging out process.

1. Moving from a position of formal

- The researcher is a stranger who is learning the social rules and language, making himself known to the community, so they will begin to teach him how to behave appropriately in that culture.

2. Ignorant intruder to welcome. "Acquaintance" stage

- Researcher begins to merge with the crowd and stand out less as an intruder.
- The language becomes more familiar to , but still may not be fluent in its use.

3. Knowledgeable intimate. "intimate" stage.

- The researcher has established relationships with participants to the extent that he no longer has to think about what he says.
- It sometimes involves the researcher's working with and participating in everyday activities beside participants in their daily lives.

Tips for collecting useful observation data

- Become familiar with the setting before beginning to collect data.
- Keep the observations short at first to keep from becoming overwhelmed.
- Be honest in explaining to participants what he is doing not too technical/ detailed
- Pay attention, shifting from a "wide" to a "narrow" angle perspective, focusing on a single person, activity, interaction, then returning to the overall situation;
- Look for key words in conversations to trigger later recollection of the conversation content.

Challenges of observation

- Methodologically, the act of being observed may change the behavior of the participant ('Hawthorne effect'), impacting on the value of findings .
- most researchers report a process of habituation: after a relatively short period of time, those being observed revert to normal behavior.
- As participants grow accustomed to the observer's presence, their behavior will more closely resemble normal, everyday behavior .
- dependability of the process on the observer understanding and judgment.
- The observer may miss a critical moment while notes have been taking, or being distracted by another factor in the setting

Each observation should provide you with answers regarding :

- Who do you observe?
- What do you observe?
- Where does the observation take place?
- When does it take place?
- How does it happen?
- Why does it happen as it happens?

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An example of a research design using observation

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Research Questions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do members of operating teams interact and communicate? 2. What contributes to the communication climate in different operating theatres? 3. Do interprofessional values exist in theatre teams. If so, how do they impact on the behaviour and interactions of operating theatre team members? |
| Research Site | Operating theatres in general, vascular and orthopaedic surgery, compare one metropolitan and one regional hospital site. |
| Participants | surgeons, registrars, nursing staff, train leaders, theatre technicians, patients |
| Other key personnel | Director of clinical services; director of medical services; theatre manager; patient admissions manager; admissions staff; train/leaders of each |
| Methods of data collection | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observations (approximately 60 hours in theatre across the two sites); 2. Field notes; 3. Informal conversations with staff in the theatre and/or theatre suite (e.g. Change rooms, staff rooms, corridors etc) 4. Conduct semi-structured interviews to follow up and clarify findings from observations (include questions about medical jargon, differences in procedure amongst team leaders etc) |
| Data analysis | Coding of observation notes; field notes (which includes details of informal conversations with staff); analytic memos; recording of personal experiences, context; thematic analysis |