

Methodological Issues in the Use of Focus Group Discussion as a Data Collection Tool

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KEYWORDS Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Methodology. Critical. Definitional. Discourse

ABSTRACT This paper discusses the use of FGD as a qualitative method in social science research. It analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of its use in research. However there are a number of methodological issues, which still need to be addressed so that we can further develop the method. There are only a few methodological studies evaluating the validity and reliability of the procedures. With the potential of FGD to enrich social science research, there is a need for social scientists to undertake experimental studies to evaluate the appropriateness or otherwise of FGD. Such a study will help to strengthen social science methodology. Unless this is done, indiscriminate use of focus groups will cause more harm than good.