

Combining Focus Groups with Surveys to Enhance Cultural Validity

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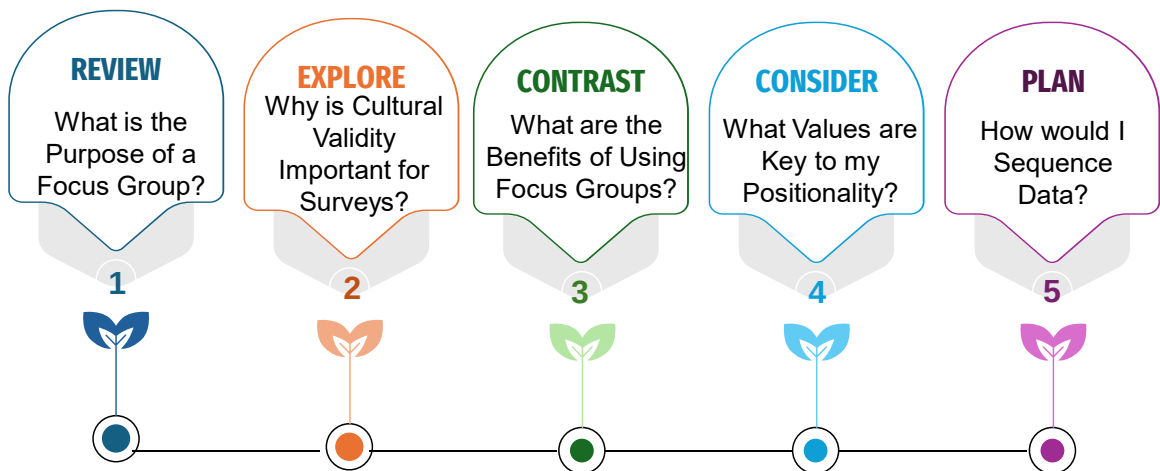
Keywords: Focus groups, surveys, cultural validity



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Our Webinar Today



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Welcome! Our Poll

Question #1

- Have you ever conducted focus groups?

Question #2

- Have you ever designed a survey from scratch?

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WHY use focus groups?

- **Our Research Context Today:** W.E.I.R.D. (Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, Democratic) samples using college students (Aiello, Bismat, Casanova, Casas, Chang, Chin et al., 2020)
- Important to study samples that accurately represent world populations (Gurven, 2018)

- **Focus Groups:** People talking in groups to generate insight into perspectives & experiences as a qualitative source of data
- Under-rated compared to interviews and free-response written data on surveys or assessments
- The development of focus group methods: leading questions on questionnaires foster passivity in study participants (Rice, 1930)
- Digging deeper into the psychological construction of thought WHILE talking AND the social interactional process of thinking THROUGH discussing
- Military psychologists used FG to look at boosting army morale (WWar II) (Berg, 2004)
- Grouping people with certain knowledge (Merton et al., 1956)

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REVIEW
Purpose of
a Focus
Group

1



Flower Metaphor



Think of a **blooming flower** as a *metaphor* for the **focus group** process. It can be a challenge to help people to open-up about their experiences, so talking in groups can help. Though participants may be influenced by others when expressing their views, one clear benefit is that social turns of talk can help elaborate and extend this process. This session will explore focus groups in tandem with surveys to enhance **cultural validity**.

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CONTRAST
Interviews
Versus
Focus Groups

3

Which Qualitative
Method is Better
for Enhancing
Cultural Validity in
Survey
Development?

Interviews



Individuals

Opportunities
to develop
rapport & trust
and speak
with
individuals



Attitudes,
Perspectives,
Opinions, Beliefs

Yes



Depth

No



"I don't have
enough time."

Focus
Groups



Groups

1 chance to
speak to a
special group
(critical
historical
occurrence, or
a unique place-
based event)



Experiences &
Perspectives as a
Comparatively
Broader Basis for
Behavior

Yes



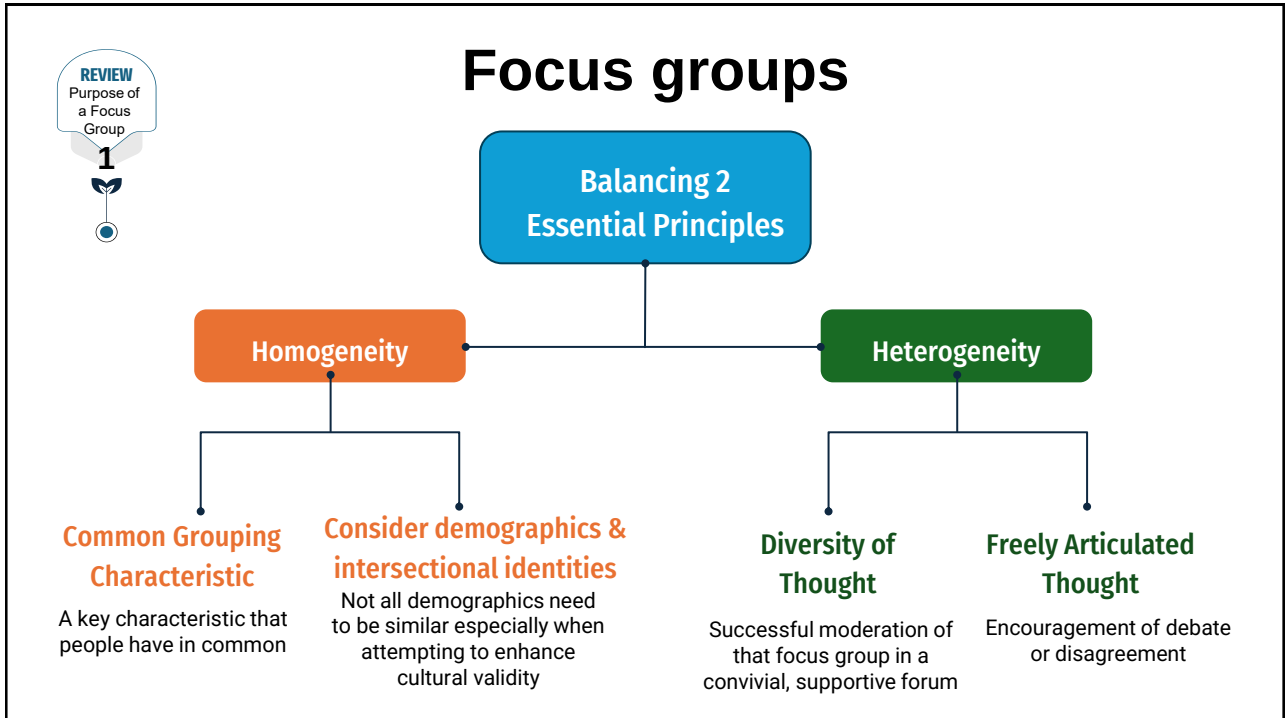
Breadth

No



"I need deeper
stories, un-
influenced beliefs."

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EXPLORE
Cultural Validity
2

What is cultural validity?

- **Culture:** shared ideas, beliefs, values, including a possibly common heritage, set of experiences or identity(ies)
- **Culture specific:** individual experiences and the understanding of those experiences in a situated context
- **Cultural co-construction:** Participatory, dynamic dialogue and co-construction of cultural and other forms of knowledge across class, ethnic, cultural and other boundaries affecting research incl. intervention design, implementation & evaluation (Nastasi & Hitchcock, 2016)
- **Cultural validity:** how people interpret language in assessment to produce understandings of what is being asked and how that assessment accurately represents culture
- **Culturally anchored research:** facilitated by **focus groups** (Hughes & DuMont, 1993)

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CONSIDER

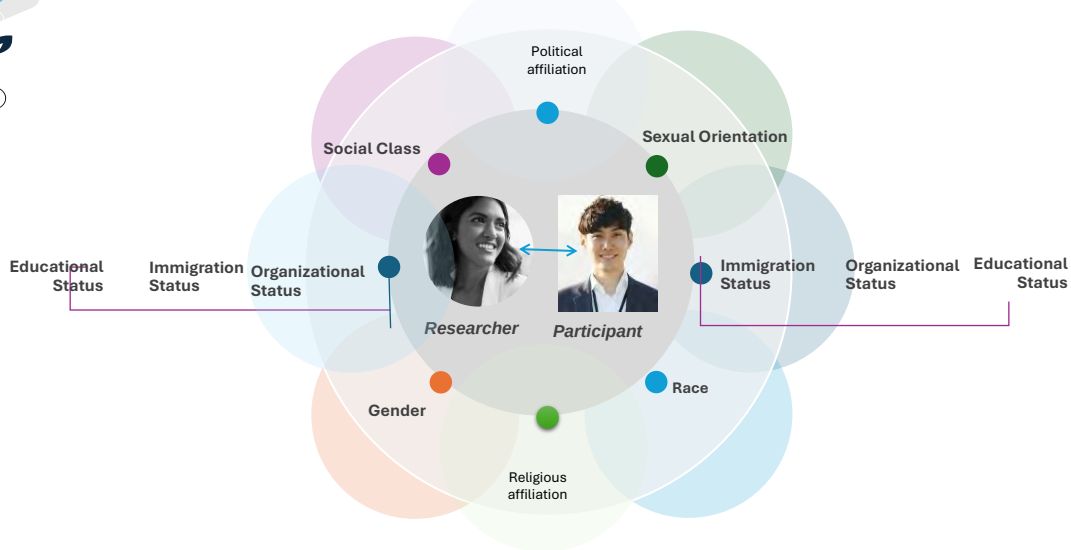
Positionality

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Positionality-scientific values-research design link

-Articulating and disclosing the relationship of one's identity or multiple identities, power, and status vis a vis one's research goals with research teams and with research participants (see Katz-Buonincontro, 2022).
 - In quantitative analysis, regression can be used to explore interaction effects of intersectional identities using each identity as an IV or Bayesian analyses, but that can run counter to qualitative approaches which look at interactional aspects of identity (APA, 2016).



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11 Ways to Combine Data

PLAN

Sequencing Data

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Research Purpose	Data Sequence		Potential Benefits of Data Combination
	First	Second	
Discuss sensitive topics	Focus Groups OR Interviews		Allow for participant to specify preference to incentivize participation Foster community inclusion Schedule flexibility Location preference
Deepen discussions	Focus Group	Interviews	Develop trust and rapport Enhance authenticity of data
Group compatible people	Interview	Focus Group	Increase comfort level of participants
Develop new survey items (*)	Focus Group or Interview	Survey	Establish cultural validity Strengthen construct validity Avoid specification error
Pilot survey	Survey	Focus Group or Interview	Increase reliability
Explain survey results	Survey	Focus Group or Interview	Refine the qualitative research question Determine purposive sample Craft the interview/f.g. protocol Enrich the explanation of results
Test a tool	Focus Group	Survey	Examine the usability of a new tool, curriculum, software Provide iterative feedback at multiple stages Elicit expert opinions of stakeholders about tool
Identify a new observation site	Focus Group	Observation	Increase site access Develop liaison relationships to the sites
Member-check results	Observation	Focus Group	Increase validity Confirmatory
Develop interventions	Focus Group	Intervention	Develop buy-in Recruit and enroll community members
Provide feedback across treatment and control groups	Random Control Trial Intervention (two-armed)	Focus Group	Compare experiences Enhance successful impact Refine future interventions Understand barriers to delivering interventions

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PLAN Sequencing Data  7 Steps for Enhancing Cultural Validity of Surveys: Agans, R. P., Deeb-Sossa, N., & Kalsbeek, W. D. (2006). Mexican immigrants and the use of cognitive assessment techniques in questionnaire development, <i>Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences</i>, 28 (2), 209-230.		
#	Steps	Example (Agans, Deeb-Sossa & Kalsbeek (2006))
1	Reflect on positionality of self and research team and how that corresponds to questioning assumptions, scientific values and research aims.	The implicit assumption is that cognitive techniques work equally well in any population. We question this assumption and argue that special considerations must be made when applying cognitive techniques to immigrant populations (Agans, Deeb-Sossa & Kalsbeek, 2006, pp. 210). Research aim to gauge the gestational age of a fetus better via surveys to understand the lower rates of preterm delivery among Mexican Americans compared to other Hispanic populations.
2	Review survey items to see if they cover the concepts to be measured. Avoid narrow survey construction to prevent possible consequences like specification error when variables are missed in a regression model, for example. As a result of this potential omission, the estimators will be biased in terms of direction and in terms of magnitude.	Lack of Spanish-language instruments. Social pressure for women to conform.
3	Examine survey items regarding their prospective relevance to cultural norms, beliefs and practices. [Discuss project with community partners.]	Original items were perceived as culturally insensitive, too rigid, confusing and brief.
4	Convene focus groups to understand more deeply the direct equivalence of the cognitive meaning and linguistic interpretation of words. Build extra time into the process.	Participants discussed menstruation experiences, abuse, medical misdiagnosis due to racism. Childcare support was provided, and a comfortable social environment using aliases without the presence of husbands.
5	If necessary, engage in translation and back-translation process.	A hired translator chose the best Spanish verbs based on expressions used by the focus group participants.
6	Pilot survey items in a 2 nd focus group or cognitive interview. Ensure items can be comprehended by a wide range of respondents.	Drafted new items for an accurate scale reflecting the domain under investigation.
7	Examine the psychometric properties of the survey factors and reliability.	No difficulty found understanding the new scale items.

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PLAN

Sequencing Data



1: Reflect on positionality

Principle

Question assumptions about the very nature of research.

Reflect on positionality of self and research team and how that corresponds to scientific values and research aims.

Example

The implicit **assumption** is that cognitive techniques work equally well in any population. We question this assumption and argue that special considerations must be made when applying cognitive techniques to immigrant populations (Agans, Deeb-Sossa & Kalsbeek, 2006, pp. 210).

Through such **critical engagement** we also aimed to reposition the power grant to us as White Europeans with university affiliations via passionate solidarity and informed empathy with protagonists "struggling from the margins" (Lykes, 2013) (Esposito, Ornelas, Briozzo & Arcidiacono, 2019).

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PLAN
Sequencing
Data



2: Review survey items

Principle

Review survey items to see if they cover the concepts to be measured.

Avoid narrow survey construction to prevent possible consequences like specification error when variables are missed in a regression model, for example. As a result of this potential omission, the estimators will be biased in terms of direction and in terms of magnitude.

Example

Lack of Spanish-language instruments.

Social pressure for women to conform.

(Research aim: to gage the gestational age of a fetus better via surveys to understand the lower rates of preterm delivery among Mexican Americans compared to other Hispanic populations.)

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Sequencing
Data



3: Examine survey items

Principle

Examine survey items regarding their prospective relevance to cultural norms, beliefs and practices.

Discuss project with community partners.

Example

Original items were perceived as

*culturally insensitive,

*too rigid,

*confusing and

*brief.

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Sequencing
Data



4: Convene a focus group

Principle

Convene focus groups to understand more deeply the direct equivalence of the cognitive meaning and linguistic interpretation of words. Build extra time into the process.

Step:

Focus Group Participants discussed menstruation experiences, abuse, medical misdiagnosis due to racism. Childcare support was provided, and a comfortable social environment using aliases without the presence of husbands.

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Data



5: Consider translation processes

Principle

If and when necessary, **engage in translation** and back-translation process.

Step:

A hired translator chose the best Spanish verbs based on expressions used by the focus group participants.

In qualitative research, linguistic expressions are sometimes referred to as "**in vivo**," or living terms or key turns of phrase that mark particularly important concepts or capture colloquial terms.

Backtranslation: Pilot items translated into the secondary language can then be given to a person to translate back into a dominant language.

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Data



6: Pilot survey items

Principle

Pilot survey items in a 2nd focus group or cognitive interview. Ensure items can be comprehended by a wide range of respondents..

Example

Drafted new items for an accurate scale reflecting the domain under investigation.

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Sequencing
Data



7: Examine psychometric properties

Principle

Examine the psychometric properties of the survey factors, and reliability in addition to testing with target population.

Example

No difficulty found understanding the new scale items (Agans, 2006).

Validity indicators (Creswell, 2008):

Content validity-Item typology
Criterion validity
Construct validity

Reliability indicators (Wilson, 2005):

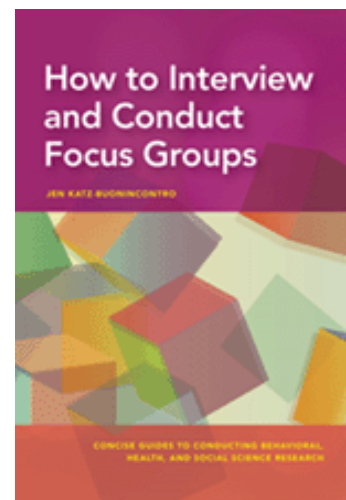
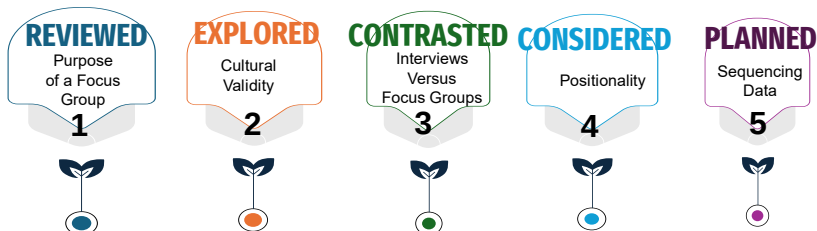
Internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha, Kuder-Richardson);
Separation Reliability
Test-retest correlation
Alternate forms correlation
Exact agreement proportion

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PLAN Sequencing Data 7 Steps for Enhancing Cultural Validity of Surveys: include name of the article		
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7	Examine the psychometric properties of the survey factors and reliability.	No difficulty found understanding the new scale items.

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Thank you!



Katz-Buonincontro, J. (2022). *How to interview and conduct focus groups*. Concise Guides to Conducting Social, Behavioral, and Social Science Research. American Psychological Association.

Disclaimer: Royalties are received as author of this book.

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Images

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