

# Focus Group Interview: Data Collection

Saloma Pawi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Zabidah Putit<sup>2</sup>, & Jane Buncuan<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Adjunct to our previous article *Challenges in conducting Focus Group: Moderators' experiences*, authors thought it would be fair to further discuss about the procedures/steps in data collection during focus group interview. These include the interview guide, composition of the group, number of focus group, sample size, role of moderator and recording the data.

## Introduction

Focus group interview is one of the methods used for collecting qualitative data. As a strategy to collect data, focus group interview is used to identify everyday language and constructs, with the intention of incorporating the findings into an instrument to measure quantitatively. Focus group interview is being useful for reflecting the social realities of a cultural group through direct access to the language and concepts of participant's experiences. It provides a rich understanding of the participant's knowledge. As such, data collected are a rich source of information due to participant interaction with each other. This method of data collection distinguishes itself from others to generate data ([Merton, Fiske & Kendall 1990](#)).

There are several types of focus group and usually, it is according to the type of knowledge that they generate. Calder (1977) classifies two types of knowledge – everyday knowledge which stems from the terms and language people use to give meaning to their everyday world – phenomenological and scientific knowledge involves using numerical measurement to test constructs and hypothesis. The latter is supported by Wilkinson (1998) who noted that within the framework of phenomenology, people's experiences, meanings, understandings, attitudes, opinions, knowledge and beliefs are being extracted from the participant's understanding of the issues under question.

[According to Patton \(1990\)](#), focus groups interviews are essential in the evaluation process especially at the end of the program or even months after the completion of a program to gather perceptions on the outcome of that program. It is also done as part of a needs assessment when a program is proposed. Experiences showed that while conducting research using focus group is a major component of data collection, several issues were noted. Among those are the interview guides, questions, group, sample size, moderator, recording of data and data analysis.