EABSS Workshop 2023

Co-Creation of Agent-Based Social Simulation Models

Running Focus Groups



Definition of a Focus Group

- What?
 - A carefully planned discussion
 - To obtain perceptions of a defined interest area
- Where?
 - In a permissive, non-threatening environment
- How?
 - Conducted by a trained interviewer (moderator, facilitator)





Definition of a Focus Group

- Do not confuse with
 - A debate
 - Group therapy
 - A conflict resolution session
 - A problem solving session
 - An opportunity to collaborate
 - A promotional opportunity
 - An educational session



Focus Group Members

- Who?
 - Small group with common characteristics relating to discussion topic
 - Usually 7-10 participants
 - Who are the relevant stakeholders?
 - Should they be organised in separate groups (by stakeholder type)?



Purpose of a Focus Group

- Why?
 - To collect qualitative data
 - To determine feelings, perceptions and manner of thinking of participants regarding products, services, programs or opportunities
 - Attitudes and perceptions are developed in part by interaction with other people
 - To promote self-disclosure (the process of passing on information about yourself to someone else) among participants
 - It's dangerous to take "people" for granted
 - There is a need to better understand their motivations and behaviour.



Limitations

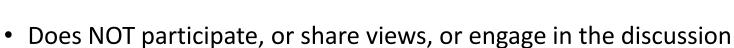
- What are the risks and limitations?
 - Risk of biases introduced by the moderator(s)
 - Domineering and/or passive participants
 - Usually does not provide depth of information compared to other methods, such as key informant interviews





Moderator's Role

- The moderator ...
 - Stays relaxed and sets tone
 - Introduces and guides the discussion
 - Actively and carefully listens



- Does NOT editorialise comments
- Promotes everyone's participation
- Is non-judgmental and respectful





Types of Questions

- Engagement questions
 - Introduce participants to and make them comfortable with the topic of discussion
- Exploration questions
 - Get to the meat of the discussion
- Exit question
 - Check to see if anything was missed in the discussion



Example: Dental Flossing Focus Group

- Engagement questions
 - What is your favourite toothpaste?
 - What do you notice when you look at other people's teeth?



- Who in particular has influenced your dental habits?
- What are the pros and cons of flossing your teeth?
- When you floss, how do follow through? When you don't, why not?
- How do you feel when told about possible damage caused by not flossing?
- How do you feel about yourself when flossing regularly? When you don't?





Example: Dental Flossing Focus Group

- Exit question
 - Is there anything else you would like to say about why you do or do regular basis?



How To Proceed?

Check out further information on focus groups



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Auf9pkuCc8k



Any Questions?



