

A Guiding Framework for Streamlining the Choice of Method and Planning in Focus Group Research in South Africa

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Lack of guidelines for selecting focus groups as the appropriate method and planning for research projects was identified as a major quality challenge in South Africa, with implications for the misuse of focus groups, thus rendering research quality control difficult. The study sought to uncover the challenges that impede the quality of focus group research planning, and choice of method thereof, and to develop a set of guidelines for redress by stakeholder organisations. A guiding framework was developed and its scientific viability and relevance were confirmed through in-depth qualitative and quantitative research studies, using a mixed method approach. A systematic probability sample of 600 respondents was drawn from identified clustered organisations. A CATI approach was used for data collection. The proposed guidelines on the scientific approach to focus group choice and project planning will require education of practitioners and supervised enforcement in order to improve quality control.