NAME: FASUBA BISOLA

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DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC HEALTH

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COURSE TITLE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROPOSAL IN PUBLIC HEALTH (PUH372)

ASSIGNMENT TITLE: DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. Highlight the importance of data collection to Public Health research.

2. Explain in-depth interview and role playing as a method of data collection.

1. IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH.

Data collection is the ongoing systematic process of gathering, analyzing and interpreting various types of information from various sources. In general, data collection is done for research purposes in order to understand the full picture of an area of interest and to build a foundation for decision-making.

Data is essential to reliable and valid public health research. However, data from studies will only be useful if used, analyzed, and applied in a timely manner. Data can be used to evaluate program impact, to determine appropriate public health interventions, to monitor progress, to determine populations to target for an intervention, to determine barriers to care, and to influence public policy.

1. Data for Evaluating Program Impact: Data is critical to evaluate the effect or impact of a program.

2. Data for Appropriate Public Health Interventions

3. Data Monitors Progress: Data is also needed and can be used to monitor progress towards a goal or target.

4. Using Data to Target Population-Based Interventions

5. Data Determines Barriers to Care and Reveals Patient Perceptions: In order to design interventions that will have the greatest impact, it is important to determine barriers to care and to assess patient perceptions.

6. Data and Public Policy: As demonstrated by needle exchange programs, data can be used to influence public policy and to demonstrate the need or potential impact of a policy

7. To provide information that can be used to monitor and improve the health of the populations.

8. Data from surveillance systems have been used to identify risk factors for complications that, once identified, have been modified through public health interventions. The effectiveness of these interventions can be assessed by continue surveillance, thereby assuring improvement in care of people.

9. They can be used to monitor disease trends over time and determine disease patterns in various populations but can also be used to guide planning and evaluation of disease control programs (e.g determine whether prevention, screening and treatment efforts are making a difference), help set priorities for allocating health resources and advance clinical, epidemiological, and health services research in these disorder.

1. ROLE PLAYING AS A METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Role playing is a technique commonly used by researchers studying interpersonal behavior in which researchers assign research participants to particular roles and instruct those participants to act as if a set of conditions were true.

A Role Play is a type of prototyping or simulation technique that can help in quickly eliciting the user experience for a product or service from the target audience. A role-play, just like prototyping can be used as a way to gather data, tweak and re role-play to gather more data from the activity. The participants in this method of research essentially play certain roles in a skit or a conversation.

Depending on the expected nature of the exchange or intended data to be gathered, a few participants are given the script in advance and a few are asked to either play themselves or specific roles based on instructions. The different scripts that the participants play out can be designed, as different scenarios where the participants are immersed in those scenarios to understand how each one would react in specific situations.

After each role-play exercise, the participants including the researchers reflect on the interaction and play out the other scenarios or re-play the same scenario with changes to gauge whether changes can alter the experiences of the participants. A variation of this exercise involves re-playing the same scenario with different participants or, changing the character profiles of the participants to understand how different users would act in the same situation.

Role-playing is regarded as a method to assist design ideation in research. As compared to other design ideation methods such as focus groups, dyads and triads, or brainstorming, role-play allows for much more spontaneous, natural and real insights. This may be because role-playing sessions create more number of scenarios than other ideation methods within an equal amount of time. Additionally, scenarios from role-playing provide richer insights with a lot more details giving the designers with many more recalibration possibilities.

**Advantages of Role-play**

1. Thought diversity and richer insights: Role-play is a far superior method to generate design ideas as it lets the participants act and react naturally as they work otherwise in a service interaction or a simulation exercise. One can get a large number of diverse ideas from different participants.

2. Quick idea generation: With more individuals involved in the activity, many ideas can be generated quickly.

3. Creative problem solving: Stimulates creative problem solving within the group. With a few variations, designers can also understand how the same users may react in different scenarios or different user experiences within the same scenario.

4. No fear of judgment: Participants usually participate in role-play without fear of any judgement as the activity of role-play is a fun activity.

**Disadvantages of Role-play**

1. Time Consuming: It is more time-consuming than a few other methods such as brainstorming and focus groups as well as more exhausting.

2. Innovation: May not result in unbiased innovative ideas from a single person. Again, new participants playing a role in the same scenario, and same participants playing different roles in the same scenario are different versions of role-play and must be tried to get richer insights from each session.

1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

Interviews consist of collecting data by asking questions.

• Data can be collected by listening to individuals, recording, filming their responses, or a combination of methods.

• There are four types of interview:

1. Structured interview: In structured interviews the questions as well as their order is already scheduled. Your additional intervention consists of giving more explanation to clarify your question (if needed), and to ask your respondents to provide more explanation if the answer they provide is vague (probing).

2. Semi-structured interview: include a number of planned questions, but the interviewer has more freedom to modify the wording and order of questions.

3. In-depth interview: In-depth interview is less formal and the least structured, in which the wording and questions are not predetermined. This type of interview is more appropriate to collect complex information with a higher proportion of opinion-based information.

4. Focused group discussion

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS**

**In-depth interviews** are a qualitative data collection method that involves direct, one-on-one engagement with individual participants. In-depth interviewing can take place face-to-face, or –– in some cases –– over the phone. However, for the latter to be effective and to deliver reliable information, the interviewer must be highly skilled to prevent data loss. In-depth interviews are sometimes referred as depth interviews, or by the acronym IDI. They can be used as a standalone research method or as part of a multi method design, depending on the needs of the research.

An in-depth interview can also be mentioned as a loosely structured interview that permits freedom for both the interviewer and interviewee in case of changing directions and also exploring additional points when required. In-depth interviews are varied from survey interviews where they are less structured.

This qualitative research method helps in finding an in-depth view of respondent’s experiences, feelings, and perspectives.

**How is an in depth interview carried out?**

In depth interviews are normally carried out face to face so that a rapport can be created with respondents. Body language is also used to add a high level of understanding to the answers. Telephones can also be used by a skilled researcher with little loss of data and at a tenth of the cost.

The style of the interview depends on the interviewer. Successful in-depth interviewers listen rather than talk. They have a clear line of questioning and use body language to build rapport. The interview is more of a guided conversation than a staccato question and answer session.

The interview is conducted using a discussion guide which facilitates the flushing out of the respondent’s views through open ended questioning. Projective techniques can be incorporated into the interview too.

**Types of in-depth Interviews:**

Usually, the in-depth interviews differ from formal conversations to informal conversations. Based on this process, in-depth interviews are characterized into 3 types, they are

1. Structured

2. Semi-structured

3. Unstructured

**Features of In-Depth Interviews:**

There are few features that need to be glimpsed through in an in-depth interview.

a. The main feature of an in-depth interview is the blend of flexibility with structure. Though the interview is much unstructured, few themes would be covered by the interviewer based on few topics or guides.

b. The second main feature of an in-depth interview is that it is interactive type. During the course of the interview, the material is produced between the interviewer and interviewee’s discussion.

c. The third feature is that the respondent uses many probing techniques, so that the insight to the answer is accomplished by means of exploration, penetration as well as explanation.

 d. The fourth feature discussed is that the interview is of generative type as new knowledge and thoughts are developed at some instance during the interview. Ideas and suggestions are put forward by the respondents or participants in the interview for a specific topic and also solutions are put forward for any issues raised for the same.

**Advantages of In Depth Interview:**

a. Obtaining information through surveys: With the help of surveys, a friendly scenario for people is developed where they are able to fill their ideas as well as thoughts and also the feedback and results are obtained in an accurate manner.

b. Interviewers have greater opportunity to ask follow-up questions, probe for additional information, and circle back to key questions later on in the interview to generate a rich understanding of attitudes, perceptions, motivations, etc.

c. Faster and quick process: It is believed that an in-depth interview is faster in its process. The recruiting and scheduling in an in-depth interview is quite faster when compared to others.

d. Rich data is gained: When an in-depth interview is considered, it helps yield data by the interviewers and the data obtained is mentioned to be rich data with enhanced insight and more of details

e. Direct interaction: An in-depth interview is a direct face to face interview and there is no media factors involved such as telephone, video etc. Group interaction is mostly avoided in an in-depth interview.

f. Relaxed atmosphere: Interviewers can establish rapport with participants to make them feel more comfortable, which can generate more insightful responses – especially regarding sensitive topics.

g. Sharing information: With the help of in-depth interviews, individuals are able to share their opinions where there is no bias from other participants. High quality of data is obtained from individuals as they are interviewed one to one and not by hearing from other participants.

h. Flexible and cost-effective: Since more information is drawn out from an in-depth interview, there is always high value for every participant. In this way, the return of investment is considered high when compared to focus groups. The budget is mainly utilized to collect data from respondents than to cover incidental costs for presenting focus groups. There are certain in-depth interviews that are conducted by phone and are considered flexible and cost-effective too.

**In-Depth Interview Disadvantages**

a. Time consuming: In-depth interviews are quite time consuming, as interviews must be transcribed, organized, analyzed, and reported.

b. A trained interviewer required: If the interviewer is not highly skilled and experienced, the entire process can be undermined.

c. Compiling notes: For those who take notes about the respondents in an in-depth interview method must be ready to make long compilation of notes. Though there is no requirement for notes to share with others, but still it is mandatory to review and put them in the right manner. It is quite tough to follow notes in an in-depth interview and organize them.

d. Tough to compare candidates: A comparison of candidates after an in-depth interview is quite tough when compared to structured interviews. When an in-depth interview is considered, the discussion of the candidates is completely in another direction which makes it tough to compare its abilities and skillsets. Participants must be carefully chosen to avoid bias, and this can result in a longer vetting process.

e. More chances for illegal questions: Since an in-depth interview is an opportunity to discuss more ideas. There are more chances for the interviewer to ask for illegal questions too, for example, a candidate can be asked about his college graduation and year, if the age is more than stipulated age questions may step forward for reason, then into age, ethnicity, reason, religion, beliefs, family, sexual orientation and lot more.

f. The process can be relatively costly compared to other methods. (However, telephone in-depth interviews vs. in-person can significantly reduce the costs.)