

Bonus Table 6.D

Strengths and Weaknesses of Focus Groups

Strengths of focus groups

- Useful for exploring ideas and concepts.
- Provides window into participants' internal thinking.
- Can obtain in-depth information.
- Can examine how participants react to each other.
- Allows probing.
- Most content can be tapped.
- Allows quick turnaround.

Weaknesses of focus groups

- Sometimes expensive.
- May be difficult to find a focus group moderator with good facilitative and rapport building skills.
- Reactive and investigator effects may occur if participants feel they are being watched or studied.
- May be dominated by one or two participants.
- Difficult to generalize results if small, unrepresentative samples of participants are used.
- May include large amount of extra or unnecessary information.
- Measurement validity may be low.
- Usually should not be the only data collection methods used in a study.
- Data analysis can be time consuming because of the open-ended nature of the data.