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ABSTRACT

This paper will take a look at the past usage of the ARC method alongside our own research experiences and extrapolate out different techniques and approaches used within the method to ultimately create a tangible ARC model for others to use in the future. The ARC method is focused on targeting recruitment and participation for online research. ARC takes inspiration from traditional qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups while also taking advantage of the unique characteristics of an online platform. This online platform helps enable researchers to analyze populations that are often hard to reach due to multiple constraints, such as time, resources, and much more. The past studies we will be referencing in our paper focus on the populations of pregnant/new mothers [3] and those with rare diseases [2]. The community we used for our ARC method adaptation is those living with HIV. Each one of these studies has taken a different approach to the ARC method that aligned with their population set. In our paper we will be addressing how the ARC method can reach many different demographic populations and from this analysis we will create a general ARC method blueprint that can be used for all different population sets. This opens new doors to further explore bla and bla.

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INTRODUCTION

The Asynchronous Remote Community (ARC) method of qualitative research has only recently been proposed as an alternative to existing approaches [2]. An ARC study involves a group of participants in an online forum (past studies use Facebook for reasons discussed later on in the paper) completing regular activities individually and as a group. Activities include ice breakers to get the group comfortable with interacting, surveys, and structured discussions among others.

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This approach has many advantages over existing face to face (FtF) research methods, as well as its own unique disadvantages. MacLeod et al., outlined their experience conducting the study on patients of rare diseases, and provided recommendations for others attempting to adapt their methodology for their own research. Prabhakar et al., used these lessons to adapt the method to the population of pregnant mothers, and provided more recommendations based on their own experience [3].

While these papers provide the reader with a good overview of the individual experiences of the researchers, they do not provide a broad analysis of the ARC method independent of a specific study. This paper draws from the experiences with these two published studies (include citation of published work), and three more currently in the works. Our review will identify the ARC method's advantages and disadvantages, as well as the rationale behind the choices made in a study design.

RELATED WORK

This section will provide an overview of previous work in reviewing qualitative research methods, and the literature that exists on the ARC method already that this paper draws from.

Evaluation Metrics for Qualitative Research

There have been reviews of qualitative research methods similar to ours in the past [1] [4]. These reviews are valuable because they provide guideposts for researchers wishing to implement the methods, as well as educating researchers on the most important elements to report for others to fully understand the advantages and limitations of a study.

Previous ARC Studies

The first published ARC study focused on patients of rare diseases [2]. The activities that it introduced are what other iterations of the ARC method currently have to use as a template for their activity design. They also present a series of lessons from their research, with the goal of aiding others in evaluating the method.

The second ARC study was performed with pregnant women and new mothers as the participants [3]. The researchers made modifications to the original activities based on their population and lessons from the original ARC study. Prabhakar et al. also presented their own lessons based on the successes and failures from their study.

The lessons from both of these papers, as well as the experiences of the researchers working on the three ongoing ARC studies, form the pool of knowledge that this paper draws from to make its recommendations.

Original ARC Activities

This section contains the 11 original ARC method group activities. We will describing each activity as well as giving the pros and cons of each one dependent on the researchers given population set.

-*Diary*: In this activity participants are expected to keep track of their interactions with others and record the outcome. (Motivated by...).

-*Circles*: Participants are asked to draw a circle on a piece of paper with themselves or another main focus at the center. The farther away certain things are from the center circle the less meaning it has or the harder it is to conquer. (Motivated by...).

-*Questions*: A series of questions created by the participants about what they wish others would ask them or what they wish they could learn more about. (Motivated by...).

-*Problems*: Participants rank a list of problems that are contrived from posts and They are ranked in order of how much of a problem it was for them individually.

-*Photo Elicitation*: Participants are asked to take photos of the themes collected from the problems activity. Then they are asked to send them to the research team privately all at once. After the the research team approves the photos they are posted into the Facebook group and the participants are asked to comment on the post. (Motivated by...).

-*Solutions*: Using the themes from the problems activity participants are asked to come up with and discuss possible solutions.

-*Mad Lib*: Participants are asked to create a Mad Lib that focuses on the more humorous aspects of their conditions. (Motivated by...).

-*Movie Script*: Participants are asked to write a movie script about their life. The script focuses on a relationship between the participant and a friend or relative. (Motivated by...).

-*Rant Line*: A rant line is created for participants to contact at anytime during the day to rant about anything going on in

their lives. (Motivated by...).

-*Personas*: Fake personas are created and posted into the group; the participants than critique and discuss how they can relate to the personas. (Motivated by...).

-*Survey*: A debrief survey is sent out to the participants to discuss their experiences.

Overall Characteristics

Population Considerations

Activity Selection

Other Considerations

DISCUSSION

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