



UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

Faculty of science and medicine

REFLECTION ESSAY

SGG.00486: Advanced Social Research Methods

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Introduction

ma-terre is an association in the canton of Geneva (Switzerland) which promotes healthy and sustainable food in the canton. It organizes didactic workshops "from field to plate" for the benefit of teenagers and young adults (from 12 years old) to raise awareness on the challenges related to healthy and sustainable food.

Through the course entitled "Advanced Social Research Methods", I am interested in studying the effects of these didactic workshops on the food consumption habits of the participants. This study has an academic objective of applying the social research methods studied during the course.

Different aspects will be studied during this research, such as :

- for the students: i. what are the criteria that justify the food consumption choices of adolescents and young adults after their participation in the didactic workshops? ii. what is the sensitivity of adolescents and young adults regarding waste sorting? iii. how do these adolescents and young adults perceive the usefulness of the "from Field to Plate" didactic workshop?
- for ma-terre staff : how sensitive are teenagers and young adults to issues related to sustainable food as noted during their participation in the didactic workshops?

1. Methods

1.1. Focus group

Social research uses different types of methods depending on the type of research, the objectives or the target of the study: "not all research methods are possible and acceptable with regard to the ethics of scientific research" (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2016, p.4). On the other hand, more the research is interested in the people affected by the issue of the study, better is: "for example, if the researcher is interested in why some people commit suicide, ideally he/she would talk to people who would have committed suicide if it were possible." Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2016, p.4). This

reason justifies the choice of the focus group to conduct the present research in order to directly interview the beneficiaries of the didactic ma-terre workshops and many students at the same time (up to 10 participants) as opposed to the individual interview (Powell, R. A. and Single, H. M. 1996, p.503). The focus group also has the advantage of maximizing the collection of high quality information and allows for interaction among participants (Acocella, I. 2012, p.1127).

The present research uses a homogeneous focus group due to the homogeneity of the target. The target studied is homogeneous (Claude, G. 2021) for most of the homogeneity analysis criteria that we took into account including age range, professional status and region of residence. Such a homogeneous discussion group avoids any situation that could cause inhibition and discourage conversation among students (Marbach 1982, p. 246 cited in Acocella, I. 2012, p.1127). Most importantly, since students already know each other and according to their everyday mingling at school, students will feel equal, potentially helping them to express their thoughts more spontaneously (Acocella, I. 2012, p.1127).

Participants sample

This study includes a total of two (02) focus groups with participants identified in two different classes. A random and simple sampling will be carried out among all the students of the two classes that participated in the didactic workshops. The choice of this type of sampling is based on the following criteria :

- random sampling because the total number of adolescents and young adults who have benefited from the didactic workshops of ma-terre is defined ;
- simple sampling because the target is homogeneous as mentioned above.

1.2. Interviews

In order to compensate for the difficulties we encountered in conducting the focus group (described in section 3 the difficulties), the present research was reoriented to a study on the sensitivity of adolescents and young adults regarding issues related

to sustainable food that the staff of ma-terre noted during the participation of students to the didactic workshops. Two interviews were conducted with Sara de Maio (*Secretary General of ma-terre*) and Lucile Mougeat (*Facilitator of ma-terre workshops*).

These were two semi-structured interviews, each of thirty minutes duration, using an Interview Guide with a certain degree of predetermined order of questions, but addressed with some flexibility to the informants (Burgess, 1982c).

2. Procedural and ethical considerations

In order to conduct this research with the students of the Cycle d'Orientation de Budé (canton of Geneva) who participated to the didactic workshops of ma-terre, we have obtained the research authorisation from the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Obligatoire (DGEO) which is necessary for any research carried out in the public schools of the canton of Geneva (see attached authorisation letter).

Informed consent, which according to Davies (1999) is one of the three main ethical considerations in scientific studies, shows the need to obtain parental authorization from the students who will participate to the focus group before conducting the present research. Due to the short time we had from the date of the final authorization for the conduct of the research (12.12.2022) and the end of year holidays that followed, the focus groups were not conducted as we had expected.

The process of organization of the focus groups, which provides audio recording of the group discussion, integrated in the request for research authorization, the information to the stakeholders that the recording of the discussions is strictly for academic purposes. This contributes not only to the informed consent of the people involved in the research, but also to avoiding disappointment during the research process.

3. Data analysis

Issues related to healthy and sustainable food concern all ages and it is important to understand how teenagers and young adults who participated to ma-terre didactic workshops are sensitive to food-related issues. The interview conducted with ma-terre staff showed that teenagers and young adults are fairly informed about these main issues related to sustainable food. More specifically, when awareness-raising aspects of sustainable food are discussed during the didactic workshops, some students spontaneously answer showing that they are sufficiently aware of issues such as the importance of waste sorting, composting and the challenges of meat consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and the consumption of local products... However, not all students who participated in these workshops have the same level of knowledge on these issues depending on the different social groups and sensibilities from which these students come.

"There are some students who are already extremely knowledgeable and others who have never cooked in their life or who don't know how a strawberry grows, so there are very different levels of knowledge. This diversity is interesting and shows the importance of these workshops in readjusting the level of knowledge within the students independently of their socioeconomic background." Sara de Maio.

"In general, I find them quite knowledgeable on many questions we ask them about sustainable food; they give relevant answers. Not all of them, but some of them raise ecological issues, dietetic issues, and they are also sensitive to the issue of eating less meat despite the fact that they are not necessarily happy about it because they like meat. These notions are still making way in their heads because they say it themselves before we talk about it ". Lucile Mougeat.

The interest of these workshops is on the one hand to promote equal access to information on sustainable food for students and on the other hand to develop a playful and practical system of access to information.

"These workshops promote more have more equality and it shows that access to knowledge is more democratized as possible and the issues related to sustainable food can reach all students." Sara de Maio.

"I find the workshops to be helpful in the sense that it reinforces the practicality of sustainable food issues and makes the learning environment fun. It gives them a practical and tangible understanding." Lucile Mougeat.

4. Difficulties and lessons learned

The implementation of research in public educational contexts requires authorization, and the time required for administrative procedures is not insignificant. In this particular case, the guidelines for getting information on the administrative structure in charge of delivering the research authorization took time because very little information is available on the contact persons of these administrative structures. The request for authorization seems to be particularly challenging due to the administrative complexity procedures for educational research involving minors and in the field of nutrition. Many departments are concerned by the research authorization and they have to successively and in turn examine the request, which requires considerable time. This type of research, whose average duration can be estimated at three months and more, according to our experience, shows that in the context of a university teaching for a semester of study, the time required for this research is insufficient.

We can summarize as lessons learned the process of implementing research project in the public educational sector, involving minors and in the field of nutrition. It all starts with the principle agreement to be obtained with the school or the Orientation Cycle that is going to host the research, which is highly recommended in order to have a clear idea about the classes, level, age and approximate number of students that are going to participate to the research. This will be followed by the submission of the research request to the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Obligatoire (DGEO) in the case of research at the Cycle d'Orientation level in the canton of Geneva. Then, the implementation of the research also requires informed consent

of the research participants and, as minors are involved in this case, an authorization from the parents of the students is required.

Conclusion

Scientific methodology is a crucial instrument in social research. Through this essay, we understand the importance of choosing the right, favorable and practicable method to produce knowledge or observations that are useful for understanding behaviors or changes in society. Not limited to choosing the right method, the implementation of the research may require time constraints that are essential to incorporate into the research implementation plan.

On some scale, this study has noted the sensitivity of some adolescents and young adults to issues related to sustainable food. They are somewhat more knowledgeable about these issues than we can imagine. Conducting a focus group to question students on how they practice certain sustainable food behaviors would have given us a better vision of the level of eco-responsible commitment of students after their participation in the didactic workshops or, if necessary, to understand the difficulties and limits they have encountered in this area. However, this academic learning of applying social research methods has provided very essential knowledge and lessons for the rest of our master's degree course.

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Annexes

1. Informations générales et questionnaire du focus group

i. Informations générales

N°	Informations	Critères
1	Méthode de recherche	Qualitative
2	Types d'entretien	Focus group
3	Type de focus group	Homogène
4	Technique d'entretien	Questionnement de groupe
5	Ecole souhaitée	Cycle d'orientation de Budé
6	Caractéristiques des élèves pouvant participer	Elèves filles et garçons ayant suivi les ateliers didactiques d'alimentation durable "du champ à l'assiette" proposés par ma-terre
7	Nombre total de focus group à tenir	02
8	Nombre d'élèves participants par focus group	10 à 12 élèves volontaires toutes classes confondues
9	Nombre total d'élèves participants souhaité	20 à 24 élèves
10	Période	Entre le 08 et le 19 décembre 2022
11	Type de classes souhaitées	9 ^e , 10 ^e ou 11 ^e
12	Durée du focus group	1 heure par séance

ii. Eléments et Questions et de discussion

- a. Présentation introductive de la recherche (03 minutes)
- b. Déroulement de la discussion de groupe (50 minutes)

N°	Rubriques	Questions
1	Choix de consommation alimentaire et arguments justificatifs (20 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lorsque vous allez acheter une banane ou une pomme par exemple, faites-vous souvent attention à l'origine du produit ? Pourquoi selon vous faudrait-il ou pas faire attention à l'origine des produits alimentaires qu'on achète ? 2. Entre différents sandwichs, l'un "végan", l'autre "bio" ou le dernier "ni vegan, ni bio", lequel préférez-vous acheter et pourquoi ? <p><i>Préliminaire à cette question : bref rappel de la différence entre produits alimentaires dits : "vegan et bio" aux participants.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Entre un "coca avec sucre" et un "coca zéro", lequel préférez-vous acheter ? Pourquoi ?
2	Gestion et tri des déchets (15 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pensez-vous que le tri de ses déchets à la maison ou dans les poubelles publiques est une bonne chose ou pas ? Pourquoi ? 2. Quelle(s) action(s) proposerez-vous mettre en place pour que dans votre école, vos camarades respectent davantage le tri des déchets ?

3	Utilité de l'atelier didactique (15 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qu'est-ce que vous avez appris d'intéressant et d'utile durant l'atelier d'alimentation durable de ma-terre ? 2. Selon vous, est-ce qu'il y a des thématiques qui ont manqué dans ces ateliers? Lesquelles? (ex : <i>connaissance approfondie des fruits et légumes de saison, enjeux des aliments transformés ou ultra transformés, l'éco-citoyenneté des adolescents et jeunes adultes pour une alimentation saine et durable ...</i>) ? Pourquoi ? 3. Qu'est-ce que vous n'avez pas aimé dans ces ateliers didactiques auxquels vous avez participé ?
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c. Questions éventuelles des participants et réponses (05 minutes)

d. Conclusion du focus group et remerciements (02 minutes)

NB : Enregistrement audio du focus group destiné exclusivement aux objectifs de la recherche

2. Informations générales et guide d'entretien

i. Informations générales

N°	Informations générales	Critères	
a. informations sur la méthodologie de recherche			
1	Sujet de recherche	Sensibilisation des adolescents et jeunes adultes du canton de Genève sur les enjeux de l'alimentation saine et durable au moyen des ateliers didactiques « du champ à l'assiette » organisés de ma-terre	
2	Méthode de recherche	Qualitative	
3	Type d'entretien	Entretien semi-structuré	
4	Type d'outil de questionnement	Guide d'entretien	
5	Approche d'élaboration des questions du guide	Approche pyramidale	
b. informations sur le rendez-vous d'entretien			
6	Date de l'entretien	19.12.2022	
7	Lieu d'entretien	Bureau ma-terre : Chemin Moïse-Duboule 2, 1209 Genève	
8	Horaire du rendez-vous	09H30' – 10H30'	
9	Durée de l'entretien	30 minutes	
10	Intervenants	Personne interviewée	Sara de Maio (Secrétaire Générale – SG de ma-terre ¹)
		Intervieweur	Viako Amour Lokossou (Etudiant en Master ESH/UniFr) ²

ii. Etapes de l'entretien

N°	Etapes	Contenus
a. introduire l'entretien		
1	Présentation : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • des intervenants ; • du cadre de la recherche ; et • du sujet de la recherche (02 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervieweur : Bonjour Madame la Secrétaire Générale, Interviewée : Bonjour Monsieur Amour Lokossou, ii. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervieweur : Veuillez-vous présentez s'il vous plait ? Intervieweur : [Présente son titre] iii. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervieweur : [Présente le cadre de la recherche] iv.

¹ Maison de l'Alimentation du Territoire de Genève

² Master in Environmental Sciences and Humanities/University of Fribourg

		Intervieweur : [Présente le sujet de la recherche]
b. adresser les questions du guide de l'entretien		
2	Dérroulement des questions du guide <i>(25 minutes)</i>	Intervieweur : [Adresse chacune des questions du guide] Intervieweur : [Formule des éléments de réponse] 1. Depuis combien de temps a été créée la Maison de l'alimentation du territoire de Genève (ma-terre) et quels sont : son statut juridique, sa mission et ses activités ? <i>(03 minutes)</i> 2. Quelle est la problématique constatée ayant découlé à la genèse des ateliers didactiques « du champ à l'assiette » organisés par ma-terre au profit des jeunes et adolescents ? <i>(02 minutes)</i> 3. Quels sont les contenus proposés au cours de ces ateliers didactiques « du champ à l'assiette » et combien de jeunes et adolescents ont déjà participé à ces ateliers ? <i>(02 minutes)</i> 4. Quels sont les effets attendus auprès de la cible après leur participation à cette activité ? <i>(04 minutes)</i> 5. Quelle auto-évaluation pourrez-vous faire de la mise en œuvre de cette activité du point de vue de l'implication des élèves au cours des ateliers et de leur sensibilité par rapport aux questions liées à l'alimentation saine et durable que vous aurez constaté pendant leur participation à cette activité ? <i>(05 minutes)</i> 6. Quelles sont les difficultés et défis rencontrés de l'expérience de la mise en œuvre de ces ateliers didactiques ? <i>(04 minutes)</i> 7. Quelles sont les perspectives en matière d'amélioration de la mise en œuvre de cette activité ou de diversification de l'offre thématique proposée en l'endroit de cette cible ? <i>(05 minutes)</i>
c. conclure l'entretien		
3	Formulation des éléments de conclusion : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • étapes à suivre de la recherche • mot de la fin de la SG ma-terre • remerciements <i>(03 minutes)</i>	i. Intervieweur : [Présente les étapes à suivre de sa recherche] Interviewée : [Commentaire au souhait] <i>(01 minute)</i> ii. Intervieweur : Quelle serait votre mot de la fin ? Interviewée : [Commentaire si nécessaire] <i>(01 minute)</i> iii. Intervieweur : [Formule des mots de remerciements à l'endroit de la SG de ma-terre] <i>(01 minute)</i>

NB : Enregistrement audio de l'entretien destiné exclusivement aux objectifs de la recherche

3. Research authorization



REPUBLIQUE ET CANTON DE GENEVE
Département de l'instruction publique, de la formation et de la jeunesse
Direction générale de l'enseignement obligatoire
Service de la direction générale

Enseignement obligatoire /
DGEO
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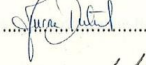
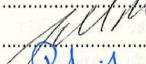
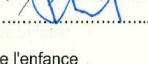
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N^{réf.} : ES/ pm
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Onex, le 12 décembre 2022

Concerne : Recherche N° 728 : **Quels sont les effets des ateliers didactiques organisés par ma-terre sur les habitudes de consommation alimentaire des adolescents et jeunes ayant participé à ces ateliers ?**

(Espace réservé aux instances chargées de traiter les demandes)

Demande	Date	Signature
• enregistrée au SRED le	29.11.2022
• approuvée par le SRED le *	07.12.2022	
• transmise à la DG concernée le	07.12.2022
• approuvée par la DG le	12.12.2022	
• renvoyée au demandeur le	12.12.2022	

* selon préavis positif du Pôle promotion de la santé et prévention (Office de l'enfance et de la jeunesse - OEJ) reçu ce 07.12.2022.
M. Pascal Freydier (pascal.freydier@etat.ge.ch), directeur du pôle est intéressé à recevoir les résultats de l'étude.