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Focus groups: A practical guide for sport education research

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of this article, in the context of sports education research, is to present a practical approach for focus group interviews, one of the data collection techniques used in qualitative research. In the research, document analysis method was used. An extensive research was carried out to provide a broader understanding about the background and theoretical basis of the focus group interview, in the context of sports education. A frame was formed for focus group interviews in sports education research. Primarily, answers were sought about how focus group interviews were used in sports education research. Secondly, the titles that show the correct and consistent ways to solve the problems encountered in focus group interviews were presented. The open concerns for the focus group interview (writing, reporting, coding of the questions) were also dealt. The research will provide a deeper understanding about the nature of the focus group interview for academicians who will do research in the context of sports education.

Keywords: Focus-group interviews, Sport education, Qualitative data analysis

INTRODUCTION

More and more research started to point out that focus group interview is one of the most common methods for collecting qualitative data in the academic field (Liamputtong, 2011; Vaughn et al., 1996). Qualitative research patterns in education (action research, phenomenology, case study) may differ. All these studies are conducted through various data collection techniques (interviews, focus groups, observations, texts) (Harding & Whitehead, 2013). "Focus group interview", a popular data collection technique used in qualitative research, was initially defined by Merton & Kendall (1946). Then, it started to be used frequently in the educational context.

First of all, education and training applications have been an area where qualitative paradigm methods are used frequently. The use of learning tools related to students' learning tools (James et al., 1997), the evaluation of their knowledge and attitudes about curriculum subjects (Pugsley, 1996), and the development of scales in the field of education are some of the areas and subjects studied. At the same time,

it has been used in many different areas such as school development, student attitudes, student cooperation, teacher empowerment and professional development (Chan & Cruz, 2006).

Even though focus group interview is among the most common data collection techniques in educational research, it is a technique that is generally poorly understood (Stalmeijer et al., 2014). Focus group interview is a data collection technique that has aspects beyond discussions that need to be understood more.

Focus groups are groups of interacting individuals gathered by a moderator or interviewer who lead groups and their interactions to make them learn about a specific research topic. This interaction is at the individual level in the discussions (Michell, 1999). At the same time, even determining when, how, where and how focus group interviews will take place depends on certain criteria. In other words, all the processes of the data to be collected differ from the interviews at certain points (McLafferty, 2004). In other words, all the processes of the data to be collected differ from the discussion in certain points (McLafferty, 2004).

In educational research, focus group interviews are very important, because they build an area of interaction among participants, as well as being suitable for a number of research approaches used in sports education (Vaughn et al., 1996). When the body of literature is examined, it is seen that there are many qualitative researches related to sports education researches. Among these, there is a considerable amount of research using focus group interviews (MacPhail & Kinchin, 2004b). For example, Wahl-Alexander et al. (2017) examined the moments of a considerable number of sports education terms over a five-year period with focus group interviews. As a result, it was shown that participation in sports education leads to a stronger sense of fair play and well-developed student role. In another study, Linda Rikard & Banville (2006) examined the attitudes of high school students towards fitness and sports activities learned in physical education and the effect of the physical education curriculum on improving their fitness and skill levels. As a result, when the relevant body of literature is examined, it is seen that many researchers use focus group interviews in sports education research (Hastie & Sinelnikov 2006; Fittipaldi-Wert et al., 2009). At the same time, when sports education researches are considered in more detail, it is seen that there are studies in which focus group interviews are used with other data sources. Chan & Cruz (2006) used researchers' field notes, student reflective logs, individual and group interviews in their research as data sources. In addition, focus group interviews were carried out on different sample groups (Hastie & Curtner-Smith, 2006). For example, Gould et al. (2008) examined, in the sample of coaches, the role of parents in the sportive success of students who received tennis training. All these studies indicate that focus group interviews are suitable for a range of research and data collection approaches. Nevertheless, because of these discussions' features such as conducting them within the framework of predetermined guidelines, prioritizing the subjectivity of the interviewees, in accordance with the logic of this method and drawing attention to the discourse of the participants and the social context of this discourse, the realization of these discussions contains many difficulties.

When the related body of literature is examined, it is seen that although the focus group interviews are generally discussed in the context of education (Williams & Katz, 2001), in particular, it is considered in contexts such as nurse education (MacIntosh, 1993) or medical education (Stalmeijer et al., 2014), but not sports education. This research was conducted for this reason.

Literature Review

Focus group interview in sports education research

Sports education model is a model developed by Siedentop (1987) in order to find solutions to problems encountered in physical education practices. After the development of this model, sports education research has become an area that focuses on new research questions and where studies are initiated in new contexts (Hastie et al., 2011; Evangelio et al., 2018). It was found that among sports education research,

there are studies in which focus group interview technique is used to scrutinize this model (Brock et al., 2009; Wahl-Alexander et al. 2017).

By 1990s, sports research in general and sports education research in particular, began to use the qualitative paradigm (Carlson, 1995; Grant, 1992). After the 2000s, the use of qualitative paradigm methods has increased in sports education research (Hastie et al., 2011). The increasing penetration of the qualitative paradigm in the sports literature brought along different data collection techniques. One of them is focus group interviews. Over time, focus group interviews started to create a unique attraction within sports education research, as in other scientific fields.

When the body of literature is examined, it is seen that sports education research are in the fields of motor skills, tactical knowledge and performance, fitness, personal & social development, student attitudes and values (Wallhead and O'sullivan, 2005). Qualitative and quantitative paradigms were adopted while carrying out these studies, and different data sources were used (Hastie et al., 2011). One of these utilized data sources is the focus group interview. Focus group interviews were used in many publications in the context of sports education research. Table 1 includes some features of research based on focus group interviews in sports education.

In sports education field, research based on focus group interviews were conducted in different branches (basketball, football, baseball etc.) and different data sources were used beside the focus group interviews. It is also seen that quantitative and qualitative (combined) methods are used together in some studies. In Table 2, information about some studies in which focus group interviews were applied at some point are presented.

Despite all these, in sports education research where focus group interviews are used as data source, the problems encountered include not conducting the focus group interviews properly, not preparing the questions about the research problem appropriately, not reporting in accordance with the qualitative paradigm, not coding and the matizing in accordance with the theoretical and conceptual framework, and not using qualitative programs. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to present a guideline for the proper conduct of focus group interviews especially for sports education research.

METHOD

Research goal

In this research, document analysis method was used. Document analysis method was applied to collect the required data where an educational phenomenon is tried to be explained in depth within its own context (Özkan, 2019). Document analysis is a systematic process used to examine or evaluate both printed and electronic materials (Bowen, 2009). This method was primarily utilized to seek answers

about how focus group interviews are used in sports education research. Secondly, the titles that show the correct

and consistent ways to solve the problems encountered in focus group interviews were presented.

Table 1. Research based on focus group interview from sports education research

| Author(s) | Data sources | Sport(s) | Participants/Context |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Hastie & Sinelnikov, (2006) | - Videotaping of Lessons - Survey to Students - Group Interviews | Basketball | 37 sixth-grade students |
| D'Elia, (2020) | - Document Review - Group Interviews | - | Teachers |
| Başkonuş & Soyer, (2020) | - Document Review - Group Interviews - Survey with teachers | - | Teachers |
| Brock & Hastie, (2007) | - Researcher's Field Notes - Videotaping of all lessons - Individual Interviews - Group Interviews | Football | 10 students |
| Sinelnikov & Hastie, (2008) | - Videotaping of all Lessons - Researcher's Log - Interactive Student Journals (Daily) - Group Interviews | Basketball | 42 students |
| Brock et al. (2009) | - Videotaping of all Lessons - Researcher's Log - Lesson Plans - Small-Group Interviews - Individual Interviews - Interviews with the Teacher (After Each Lesson) - Student Journals | Football | 10 students |
| Fittipaldi-Wert et al. (2009) | -Researcher's Log - Individual Interviews - Group Interviews - Sports Camps Evaluation Instrument | Baseball, bocce and goalball | 28 students with visual impairment |
| MacPhail & Kinchin, (2004b) | -Student Drawings - Group Interviews with Students | Team invasion game with a large ball | 46 students |
| Chan & Cruz, (2006) | - Researcher's Field Notes - Student Reflective Logs - Individual Interviews - Group Interviews | Football | 28 students |

Table 2. Focus group interview matter in sports education research

Example: Program Evaluation

Hastie & Sinelnikov (2006), in their research in which they implemented focus group interview at some point, examined the students of 6th grade, in which a sports education model in basketball was applied for 18 lesson hours from two teachers in Russia, one experienced and the other novice. In the interviews made during the research, the students stated that they enjoyed being a student coach and developed important team relationships (Hastie & Sinelnikov, 2006).

Example: Program Evaluation

Brock & Hastie (2007) examined the fair play understanding of the students of 6th grade in America who were applied the sports education model in football during 26 lesson hours in their research in which they also applied focus group interviews at some point. The results showed that students' understanding of fair play has changed (Brock & Hastie, 2007).

Example: Program Evaluation

Sinelnikov & Hastie (2008) also examined the reactions of 9th grade students in Russia to participation in sports education model practices during 18 class hours in their research in which they also applied a focus group interview at some point. As a result of the research, it was seen that some students who had problems in their social lives stated that this model was a different form of entertainment, while some students stated that it was a way to develop team relationships and reach goals that were not possible before in physical education (Sinelnikov & Hastie, 2008).

Example: Program Evaluation

Brock et al. (2009) aimed to discover the social interactions and feelings of students aged 11-12 during the application of football sports education model during 26 lesson hours in their research in which they conducted a focus group interview at some point. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the economic level, attractiveness, athletic participation and personality traits of students affect their social interactions (Brock et al., 2009).

Example: Program Evaluation

MacPhail et al. (2004b) examined the results of a 16-week sports education model application to 5th grade students in the UK in their research, in which they also applied a focus group interview. As a result of the research, it was determined that being in touch with a team is an impressive feature that physical education brings (MacPhail & Kinchin, 2004b).

Example: Program Evaluation

Bulca et al. (2012) examined the opinions of physical education teachers about the efficiency of the teacher training program in their research, in which they also applied a focus group interview at some point. At the end of the research, the teachers stated that they were unqualified in terms of how to transfer the lessons of theoretical field knowledge to practice, and it would be beneficial if these lesson contents were reviewed and the curricula of the Ministry of National Education and the university was in parallel (Bulca et al., 2012).

Data Collection

Document analysis method has limits as well as all data collection methods. According to Bowen (2009), choosing data that will serve the purpose of research rather than evaluating all documents constitutes the focal point of document analysis. Instead of analyzing the content, basic information that would serve the purpose of research was included in both sports education research using focus group interviews and research related to focus group interviews. According to Silverman (2000), this method is used in document analysis.

RESULTS

What is focus group interview?

In recent years, focus group interviews are widely used as a qualitative data collection tool in educational sciences as well as in social sciences (Vaughn et al., 1996). Despite this trend, analysing qualitative data constitutes an impediment for most researchers, especially in the context of focus group interviews (Rabiee, 2004).

The focus group interview has been defined by many researchers. Kroll et al. (2007) used the expression “group interviews with group interaction” while defining the focus group interview, while Bowling (2002) expressed these interviews as “group interviews in which individuals interact with each other”. In addition, some researchers have described the focus group interviews as unstructured interviews (Bowling, 2002). Freeman (2006), in his definition, highlighted the context of the focus group interview that “pays special attention to the interaction between participants”.

The most underlined point when defining focus group interviews is the importance of group interaction. At this point, focus group interviews differ from interviews. The interaction of individuals in the group with each other is the dynamic that stimulates more extensive discussions and new ideas (Parker & Tritter, 2006). Details such as being able to benefit from the effect of group dynamics, obtaining in-depth information, unstructured interviews, and small groups give clues on how to conduct a focus group interview (Bowling, 2002). As a result, focus group interviews can be defined as a qualitative data collection technique in which the participants are selected for a certain purpose, performed according to a predetermined order, a specific group is sampled, and the characteristics of the interviewees are prioritized.

No matter what scientific context is used, the participants in focus group interviews should be selected from those who have experience on the subject being researched, can talk about that subject, provide detailed information when appropriate and be interacted easily (Vaughn et al., 1996). These participants should be brought together in a non-threatening atmosphere and the interview should be planned carefully (Krueger, 2014).

The point that distinguishes focus group interviews from individual interviews is group dynamics. The data obtained from the group would be deeper and richer thanks to social interaction. In other words, in focus group interviews, the subject studied can be learned from all aspects (Vaughn et al., 1996). While individuals may express many common statements about a subject in focus group views, there may also be differences of opinion among group members (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013).

Why/When to use focus groups?

The aim of focus group interviews is to get in-depth, detailed and multidimensional qualitative information about the participants' perspectives, lives, interests, experiences, tendencies, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, attitudes and habits on a specified topic (Gibbs, 1997; Powell & Single, 1996; Morgan, 2002). When the related body of literature is examined, it is seen that the opinions about why focus group interviews should be preferred are based on general rules, whereas these rules point to situations where other qualitative methods (standard interview) may also be appropriate (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). The primary reason for using focus group interviews is the group dynamics factor (Rosenthal, 2016). The mutual communication between the participants and the moderator not only provides an opportunity to present experiences but also prepares the conditions in which meaning can be constructed (Rabiee, 2004). Focus group interviews are also suitable for research on new, poorly understood or poorly defined topics (Kitzinger, 1995). As a result, it can be argued that focus group interviews are particularly suitable to conduct exploratory research.

When are focus groups used?

When the body of literature on focus group interviews is examined, it is seen that there is a lot of information about when, why and how focus group interviews will be used. MacPhail and Kinchin (2004a) conducted group interviews during one lesson season. Hastie and Sinelnikov (2006) conducted the interviews in the middle of the season and at the end of the season. This is an example of how focus group interviews can be conducted before, during and after the research. When the sports education studies are examined in detail, it is seen that there is information about how the focus group interview will be applied and when it will be used (Hastie and Sinelnikov, 2006; Brock and Hastie, 2007; Fittipaldi-Wert et al., 2009).

Sampling

Sample selection and what the minimum sample size will be is a constant problem in focus group interviews as well as in qualitative research. Even the use of the word sample is criticized in qualitative research. In quantitative studies, it is stated that working with small samples generally fails to achieve the purpose of the research. However, in qualitative research, it is emphasized that an appropriate sample size is determined by whether to answer the research question sufficiently (Marshall, 1996). For this reason, it is stated that it

would be more convenient to meet with suitable people rather than with many people in focus group interviews (Trotter II, 2012). This situation has led to the emergence of new concepts in qualitative research such as the saturation point. Saturation point can be defined as the repetition of concepts that might be the answer to the research question (West, 2001). Despite the fact that the size of the appropriate sample in qualitative research is associated with the extent to which the purpose of the research is met, choosing the appropriate sample in interviews is critical for the success of focus groups (Kroll et al., 2007).

Theoretical sampling

In quantitative research, sampling is related to the representation ability of the population. However, when choosing a sample in qualitative research, it is important to be able to associate it with the characteristics of the group rather than considering the ability to represent (Barbour, 2008). Theoretical sampling is done to revisit the steps and follow a new path when there are unconfirmed categories and newly emerging, incomplete ideas (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

When viewed in the context of sports education research, what should be done if there are uncertain or temporary categories in a research, in other words, if the categories and characteristics cannot be determined clearly? The answer to this question is to collect more data, in addition to the categories and attributes created. This strategy is theoretical/ hypothetical theoretical sampling.

In other words, while sampling criteria are determined before the research in purpose sampling, in theoretical sampling, it occurs as data collection progresses (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). In theoretical sampling, data collection continues until the uncertain categories are made certain. In addition, this sampling type brings along systematic checks and revisions (Stalmeijer et al., 2014). In short, theoretical sampling is associated with the theoretical and conceptual development of analyzes (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

Purpose sampling

In purpose sampling, researchers determine the participants by searching for the most suitable features for the study. Participants are chosen through including people who can speak about the purpose of the research and excluding those who are not fit for the purpose. In other words, previous experiences or their knowledge about the subject studied play a determining role in the selection of the sample (Barbour, 2008). In this sampling method, the main point is that the participants are selected due to their qualifications (Etikan et al., 2016).

In a study on the use of teaching styles by experienced physical education teachers, the inclusion of physical education teachers who worked for a certain period of time in the focus group interview can be considered as an example of sports education research. The aim is to create a more accurate theoretical framework (Bernard, 2017). This implies

that a specific number is not needed in sample selection. In qualitative research sampling, the aim is not to reach a certain number, but to find individuals who can provide the required information (Etikan et al., 2016).

Number of people to be interviewed

In focus group interviews, participants with mostly the same demographic characteristics (age, socio-economic level, profession, etc.) come together under the direction of a moderator and the subject of the research is discussed in a group environment (Vaughn et al., 1996). However, there are different opinions about group size in focus group interviews. In the focus group interview, there are researchers who argue that the number of people in the group will be less than that of adults, especially if the audience to be interviewed consists of children (Heary & Hennessy, 2002). In addition, there are different opinions about how many people the group will consist of.

When the relevant body of literature is examined, it is seen that the appropriate number of participants is 6-10 according to MacIntosh (1993), 4-9 according to Kitzinger (1995), 8-12 according to Byers & Wilcox (1991), 15 according to Goss and Leinbach (1996) and 6-12 according to Gibbs (1997). Therefore, there is a consensus that the interview should be between 4 and 10 people. According to Edmunds (1999), having more than 10 people in the group can weaken the dynamics of the group, reduce the effect of the interaction between the participants, and thus the control of the group can become more difficult.

Preparing for focus groups

First of all, if it is decided that the most appropriate method to achieve the research objective is the focus group interview, then the data collection phase can be started. Determination of Questions: Krueger (1997) divided the questions in focus group interviews into five stages according to their categories:

Opening questions: These are the questions asked to focus group interview participants to let them introduce themselves in a very short time. At this stage, personal information is asked, not attitudes and ideas. Example: How many years have you been a physical education teacher?

Introductory questions: These are the questions that the research topic is introduced, and the focus group participants can reflect on. Questions are open ended.

Example: What do you think are the important characteristics of the teaching profession?

Transition questions: These are questions that go into more detail than the questions at the introductory stage. At this stage, it moves from the general conversation stage to questions focusing on the main issues.

Key questions: These questions are the main questions of the focus group. In other words, they are the questions that guide the research. A minimum of two and a maximum of five questions are optimal for this phase. The moderator leading

the discussion should allow enough time to answer these questions. Especially at this stage, the moderator must be someone who has a good command of the subject so that the participants can learn the core of the research sufficiently. Example: Could any of you explain the developmental stages you think students go through during a term as they gain game skills?

Ending questions: Participants are allowed to say their last sentences. The moderator provides a summary of the questions asked for the purpose of the research and asks the participants if they have any thoughts they would like to add.

The classification of the interview questions used in the focus group interviews is structured, semi-structured or unstructured questions to be applied in the same way in personal face-to-face interviews.

Structured questions: The questions of the subject to be researched are pre-determined and standardized. Options are presented to the interviewee. In-depth information cannot be obtained, the information obtained is only related to the given options (Rogers, 2018). These questions are often used as introductory questions to learn about the group's personal details (age, gender, etc.).

Semi-structured questions: Unlike structured interviews, it is possible to examine the subject investigated in depth with these questions. There are standardized and non-standardized questions (Longhurst, 2003).

Unstructured questions: It is the type of interview that consists of open-ended questions and aims to learn the subject with all the details regarding the purpose of the researcher (Longhurst, 2003). Open-ended questions are questions that require explanation as an answer. Unstructured interviews consist of these questions (Kallio et al., 2016).

In focus group interviews, the questions should be easily understandable by the participants, reflect the research purpose and can be answered easily (Krueger, 1997). As focus group interviews are mostly studies that use group dynamics, they should be able to reveal the purpose of the study with certain expressions.

Running a focus group

The role of the moderator

The role of the moderator in focus group interviews is to manage the focus group interview in a predetermined order (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The moderator must have certain qualifications in order for the research to work in order. Being a good listener, having an optimistic disposition towards the participants, and being able to respond to discourses are among these qualifications (Redmond & Curtis, 2009). Krueger (2014) states that the moderator has general duties such as welcoming participants, and special duties such as explaining the research purpose, and providing an overview for the research. Being able to make the research work in an order depends on the duties of the moderator

before, during and immediately after the interview (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

The moderator should be familiar with the concept or subject being researched and should play a role in conducting the research in accordance with the group participants and enabling the participants to share their experiences. The researcher acts as a moderator in most educational research. Even so, knowing the duties of the moderator is an important factor to conduct sports education research properly.

The role of the observer

An observer should be present to assist the moderator in the focus group interviews. The main task of the observer is to observe the session and take notes. At the same time, any signs people show in qualitative research is important. Therefore, the observer should take note of the situations of body language, even if this is a nod without saying anything (Stalmeijer et al., 2014). In other words, non-verbal details can be missed by the moderator. The observer notes opinions and additional observations and contributes to the proper conduct of the research (Gibbs, 1997).

Execution of focus group reviews

Focus group interview is a data collection method that allows to understand the participant's perspective on a subject through qualitative paradigm approach and to learn about that subject with all its details (Sánchez-Gómez & Martín-Cilleros, 2017). The realization of this goal is related to certain tasks that need to be done before, during and after the focus group interviews (Kitzinger, 1995). The preparation of name badges, the preparation of the environment for the interview and the preparation of the devices to record the conversation can be given as examples of these tasks. Making these preparations is to prevent the focus group interview from being interrupted for various reasons (Çokluk et al., 2011).

Quality of focus group research

Good qualitative research should be able to meet certain qualifications. This is related to the reliability and verifiability of qualitative research.

Reliability

The reliability of the research is determined according to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Credibility is related to how reliable and persuasive research findings are for others (Stalmeijer et al., 2014). Transferability is about what extent findings can be adapted to other contexts. Reliability means reaching the same findings with the same participants in the same context. Confirmation is to show that the findings are derived from the experience and thoughts of the participants, not the researcher (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility: According to Merriam & Tisdell (2015), the equivalent of internal validity in positivist paradigm is credibility in qualitative research. Several techniques have

been suggested in the body of literature to provide credibility. One of these techniques is inter-coder agreement.

Inter-coder agreement: The main point of this technique is whether encoders use similar codes for the same data pieces. The number of codes that are independently agreed and disagreed on the codes in the two coder datasets is critical in the results of inter-coder agreement (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019; Sevilmiş & Yıldız, 2021). Also, the agreement between coders can be calculated by means of certain programs (MAXQDA).

Analyzing focus group research

In focus group interviews, analysis should be given as much importance as collecting data. Especially in order to achieve the aim of the research, creating appropriate categories and assigning appropriate codes to them are of great importance in focus group interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The primary stage in the analysis phase is the coding stage. Coding stage is the stage where data is dissociated, classified, and synthesized. Coding refers to data slicing and labels that describe what each of these slices are (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007). In the focus group interview, the dissociation made by reading the data with all its details will ensure full compliance with the categories. Codes are components of the created category. Harmonization of code and category, in other words, assigning the code to the correct category is the most important step of the analysis.

Using qualitative programs in analysis

In focus group interviews, it is easily detected who is speaking at what point thanks to the use of audio and imaging devices (video). Afterward, what participants point out during their speech can be understood better through gestures and facial expressions. At the same time, this data can be analyzed more easily through the features of qualitative data analysis programs (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019; Sevilmiş & Yıldız, 2021).). For example, in the interface of the MAXQDA, which is a qualitative data analysis program, focus group transcriptions are imported with a different reasoning than standard interviews. In standard interviews, each participant takes place in a separate document system, while focus group interviews are included in a single document (MAXQDA, 2020).

For example:

Moderator: How satisfied are you with your health?

Max: I am pretty happy...

Robyn: I am relatively happy...

Joanna: Overall I am pretty happy with my mental....

As seen in the example above, when the focus group interview is transferred to the MAXQDA program, the statements are automatically coded with the names of the speakers. If the focus group transcriptions contain time stamps (e.g. video and audio recording), it can be coded over the video and audio recording and the analysis options can be expanded further.

Another convenience provided by qualitative programs is that the encoded data can be brought back easily. For example, assume that 20 codes are assigned to the X theme in a research on sports education, these codes can be viewed quickly, and their contents can be read. Another feature in qualitative programs is that coding options can be visualized in detail. The occurrence of two or more codes together (associated codes) is visualized in one section. In addition, citations of related or unrelated coding can be presented in qualitative programs with all their details and many different options (MAXQDA, 2020).

Reporting

The systematic writing of the answers to the questions about a scientific research, why the research was conducted, which hypotheses were tested and what kind of research technique and statistical analysis were used in the research, and what the research includes is called a research report (Çokluk et al., 2011).

The methods of reporting qualitative research are diverse. For example, whether the research is a thesis or an article also changes reporting. For example, when it comes to an article, some journals highlight frequencies, while some journals want the densities to be visualized (Saban & Ersoy, 2017). Despite these differences of opinion, all qualitative reports must meet features such as justification, procedural carefulness, representativeness, interpretative carefulness, carefulness about presentation and evaluation, and transferability (Kitto et al., 2008). In addition, it is important how the differences in the thoughts revealed individually and as a group in focus group interviews are presented (Kitzinger & Farquhar, 1999).

DISCUSSION

Focus group interviews can be defined as a qualitative data collection technique that is conducted within the framework of predetermined guidelines, prioritizes the subjectivity of the interviewees in accordance with the logic of this method, and draws attention to the discourse of the participants and the social context of this discourse. In addition, focus group interviews are a qualitative data collection technique that aims to learn the reasons behind their behavior by using group dynamics features. Conducting sports education researches with appropriate qualifications depends on learning the knowledge of focus groups that can reflect them such as emotions, thoughts, experiences, tendencies in accordance with the research purpose.

In this context, the researcher should first decide whether the research objective is suitable for focus group interview. Deciding when to use or not focus group interviews, depending on the appropriate criteria, is also important for the reliability of the information to be obtained in research (Morgan & Krueger, 1993).

The second issue is related to sample selection. Theoretical sampling should be used if there are uncertain,

temporary categories, while purpose sampling should be used if the categories are determined. It should not be forgotten that a second data will be collected if a decision is made on the theoretical sample. Because in such a case, there will be uncertain categories.

If purpose sampling is to be used, attention should be paid to whether the participants have the appropriate qualifications for the study. In other words, the participants' previous experiences and knowledge on the subject should be enough (Barbour, 2008). In the purpose sampling, rather than the number of people to be interviewed, it is important to select individuals who are suitable for the research purposes and who will not weaken the dynamics of the group. It was decided that the number of people to be interviewed should be between 4 and 10 people (Byers & Wilcox, 1988).

In the focus group interview, the questions are asked in four stages: introductory, transition, key and ending questions. Key questions are the main questions for the focus group. At each stage, the participant is given a certain amount of time and these questions can consist of structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions (Longhurst, 2003).

A good focus group interview should meet the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability criteria for the reliability of the research (Stalmeijer et al., 2014). At the same time, creating appropriate categories in focus group interviews and assigning appropriate codes to these categories are important in achieving the aims of the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to discuss the basis of focus group interviews in sports education research. It was carried out to answer the most frequently asked questions about focus group interviews done for this purpose by researchers who conduct research in the field of sports education.

Individual and focus group interviews have been generally evaluated as the same data collection tool until now; however, there are some features of focus group interviews that cannot be ignored. These features are discussed in the research.

There are some features that distinguish the focus group interviews from individual interviews. While there is an individual interaction with the members in individual interviews, in focus group interview, group members also interact with each other. This interaction comes with some research benefits. An idea expressed by a member can be developed by other members so that more detailed information about individuals can be obtained. For this reason, focus group interview is a qualitative research technique that can be preferred in some studies (such as grounded theory), especially if rich information is desired to be provided in the context of research.

Recommendations

This research, which discusses problematic areas that need improvement in data collection methods used for focus group interviews, also has certain limitations. First of all, although a comprehensive search was made, some information may not be included in this study, considering the different resources related to the focus group interview that could not be reached. This research reveals how specific research questions can be applied by explaining the basic research methods of focus group interviews.

Limitations

The research titles were shaped by the related body of literature. For this reason, it is recommended that future studies should address each title in a broader framework and provide more detailed and specific information.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this paper.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Approval date: 22.02.2021, Approval No: E-95728670-100-4708)

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