

# Outline and evaluate the use of one qualitative method



Outline and evaluate the use of one qualitative method in the academic study of sport. Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) believe that qualitative research is guided by 3 principles: assumptions, values and beliefs. These work against, alongside or within positivist and post-positivist models. Quantitative research is the use of numerical measurements and analysis that involves measurable 'quantities' by Gratton and Jones (2004). Quantitative data is collected through closed questions as it is in place to provide facts.

While qualitative data, on the other hand, predominantly uses open styled questions to gain more information through follow up questions, extensive answers and debates. There are many differences between the two paradigms with the researcher being objective, and 'detached' from the subject under investigation within quantitative data said by Gratton and Jones (2004). Moreover, qualitative research is rather the opposite, with the researcher being in place to gather more information from the participants in question.

In addition to the previous, Morse, Swanson and Kuezel (2001) believe a quantitative research requires the researcher to carefully define variables that may be quantified with numbers. On the other hand, qualitative research is a more holistic perspective rather than a hypothesis confirmation. Berg and Latin (2008) believe qualitative research allows an open-ended and flexible approach to assessment. Within the qualitative paradigm there are several different data collection methods such as open questionnaires, interviews, observation, visual and textual analysis.

I will be outlining and evaluating the use of interviews within the academic study of sport; this will be focused mainly on focus groups. Culver (2003)  
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states that interviews are undoubtedly the most common method for collecting qualitative data within the study of sport. Pettigrew (1990) and Pettus (2001) also state 'interviews offer a depth of information that permits the detailed exploration of particular issues in a way not possible with other forms of data collection'.

Within this type of research method there are 4 different types of interviews; structured, semi-structured, unstructured and focus group. Structured interviews are face-to-face (researcher & participant), consist of closed and pre-determined questions in addition to the structure being formal. Semi-structured interviews can be altered so that the participant(s) in question can either clarify or elaborate on a particular topic/statement. The approach to data collection is flexible, with probes being used to gather additional information.

Unstructured interviews have a set theme with the respondent leading the interview. The questions are developed throughout, as they are not pre-determined. These questions are open and flexible. A negative point to this interview structure is that there's a chance the interview will lack focus. Focus groups lean towards being semi-structured with a discussion thesis being used within an open environment; focus groups consist of more than one person. John Amis (2005) believes 'focus groups allow members to challenge each other, develop positions of consensus, and build on each other's ideas'.

In addition to this previous statement, Gratton and Jones (2004) believe that this can become a negative point if the researcher doesn't keep the participants on topic, stating that 'participants may be tempted to provide

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false data to make an impression upon others in the group'. This can be potentially avoided if you use either a random, or stratified random sample which has a divided population. Furthermore these participants won't know one another. Within focus groups there is a large quantity of strengths; participants are able to elaborate on the particular subject(s) especially when the researcher uses probes.

In conjunction to this Yin (1994) notes that the interviewer ' provides perceived casual inferences' from the actor's, rather than the researcher's point of view. As a focus group is generally unstructured or semi-structured it enables participants to reveal certain insight into their attitudes and behaviours in addition to important themes and unexpected data to emerge, Gratton and Jones (2010). Focus groups are more flexible as you can also gain visual and vocal information; for example body language, laughter, silence or careful consideration, their tone of voice, or even simply what particular participants are saying.

This can lead to the researcher probing as certain participants will be more passionate about certain themes/topics. Moreover you are able to gain a relationship with your participants, which can lead to them being more open and true to the information they give within the group. In conjunction with this, participants are informed that everything discussed is kept confidential, therefore this will relax and ease participants so they're able to engage fully within the discussions. Interviews require more resources in comparison to questionnaires.

This could be in terms of time consumption or travelling, as a consequence resulting samples can be small, Gratton and Jones (2010). Particular <https://assignbuster.com/outline-and-evaluate-the-use-of-one-qualitative-method/>

participants could take control of the interview therefore becoming dominant; researchers must then put particular probes into practice ensuring other group members get involved to gain a more diverse collection of data. On the other hand, participants could find focus group environments intimidating and/or off-putting; which can lead to the participant(s) in question feeling under pressure to agree with the dominant participant. Evalued[online]) Analysing data can also be difficult in addition to recording the interview. John Amis (2005) states that it is irrespective of the type of interview, that the way data is recorded should be established prior and it is standard procedure to record the interview on audio tape. The researcher must also ensure that the data gathered is reliable. Gratton and Jones (2004) believe that this can be represented with the equation; 'reliability = number of agreements/(number of agreements + disagreements)'.

Psychological Qualities of Elite Adolescent Rugby Players is a research study extension on Holland and colleagues' (2010) study into required psychological qualities of young talented rugby players, Woodcock et al (2011). Focus groups were completed following Kruger and Casey's (2000) recommended size of 6 to 8 participants, ensuring that you don't exceed 10. One group broke this guideline with 2 participants participating within SAS (Sports Administration Staff), which could hinder studied data with the chance of agreement being likely and information being limited.

Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook (2007) warn that fewer than eight participants can lead to a narrow discussion biased toward the views of a few individuals. Focus groups were held in familiar and comforting environments in addition to neutral locations for parents, which was in place to make

participants feel more at ease. The focus group was semi-structured with the moderator using probes to gain a more in-depth insight into their views and beliefs. Furthermore the moderator gained a relationship with the participants on entry so that they'd feel comfortable along with this method aiding them to participate within group discussions.

Through using focus groups Woodcock et al (2011) founded 5 new subgroups within the 11 higher order themes identified by young players in Holland et al, (2010). These 5 subthemes were: off pitch communication, reflection on their abilities in an objective manner, taking information and reproducing it as a physical action, dealing with injuries as well as attitude towards injuries and that players need to be problem solvers, able to adapt and overcome challenges.

Parents and coaches supported development of individuals, not just in their rugby involvement but within other areas of life. Furthermore they discussed interactions that reinforced development within professional and performance environments. SAS highlighted within the study that the under-16 rugby programme was designed specifically to gradually challenge players and foster development of certain psychological qualities Woodcock et al (2011). This focus group helped gain further knowledge and insight within the psychological side of elite adolescent rugby players.

Furthermore the ways in which parents, coaches and the SAS develop these players' psychological in general day to day environments. A large majority of the research gathered corresponds Holland and colleagues (2010) study.

Gender perception of Wrestling is a case study in place to gain research on whether or not wrestling is a sport primarily for male athletes. This focus  
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group consist of eight participants from both genders (stratified random sample), which was also semi-structured.

Sports managers and administrators for wrestling are presented with the opportunity to encourage women to take part. For this to take place sports managers and/or administrators need to understand how women perceive the sport. Pfister, (2010) and Ward, (2010) state that there is a growing number of women participating in sports with some women competing successfully in traditionally masculine sports. Data collected from the focus group was substantial, with views from each gender being different; this therefore made the study stand out more due to its hypothesis.

The focus group underlined that they perceived wrestling to be more violent than other sports such as judo and taekwondo as self-defence wasn't an explicit objective, Leng (2012). Participants also reviewed the physical attributes of a wrestler, as of this they clearly stated wrestling was a sport for athletes who possess more physical attributes. Moreover, participants didn't regard wrestling as a sport favouring the participation of a particular gender.

To conclude this case study qualitative data collected via participants within the focus group were views which outlined gender beliefs. It is clear to see that focus groups are irreplaceable when accumulating qualitative research data within the academic study of sport. Gibbs (1997) states that the purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions. Focus groups gather a whole source of information that cannot be obtained without debates and different views.

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When structured correctly the researcher is able to gain rich data that he can then press forward to either make changes or put different methods in practice. Focus groups are best used when gaining data on something meaningful to the participants and/or collecting data for something that affects a large majority of people. Something else gathered from this is that when the moderator/research gains a relationship with the participant it is easier to gain more in-depth information. Bibliography • Andrews, D. L. , Mason, D.

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