

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology highlighted by the researcher. It includes research design, which is a qualitative study, research sampling using purposive sampling methods, data collection methods through the interview process and document analysis, and data analysis process. The explanation also focuses on ethical considerations and issues of validity and reliability in this study.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative studies tend to highlight research problems that involve exploration, that is, only a few individuals understand a particular problem or phenomenon (Creswell, 2015). This study focuses on the socio-culture that is passed, translated, and understood in a certain time (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008). The objective of qualitative research generally focuses on interpreting the meaning of an experience (Denzin & Lincoln; 2003). By using a basic qualitative design, the researcher selects participants, collects data, analyses the data to form themes and then discusses in general the themes resulting from the study (Creswell, 2015). Thus, a qualitative approach has been highlighted in this study to help researchers understand the experiences of Malaysian athletes regarding to the abuse of drugs and illegal substances.

In the qualitative approach, basic qualitative study is a design that is more suitable for this study. This design aims to explore the meaning of a person's life experience as explained by the individual concerned (Creswell, 2015). The basis of qualitative design includes a person's perception of their experience, and their views give their own meaning. Therefore, this design can give a true explanation of the events that the individual went through (Morse & Richards, 2002). Referring to the explanation above, therefore the researcher has chosen this design because it is able to describe the importance of understanding drug abuse by Malaysian athletes and the methods used to overcome this problem from continuing to plague the Malaysian sports industry. Using semi structured in-depth interviews, the analysis of research findings is more focused on identifying the effectiveness of understanding and exploring the causes and effects of PEDs by Malaysian athletes.

3.3 Researcher as The Primary Instrument

This study uses a sampling method involving individuals who are related to the issues, actions and activities being studied (Frost, 2011). It is used to understand the subject of the study through the view or perspective of officers and military personnel who have been involved in peacekeeping operations abroad. Research sampling has two sampling methods, namely random sampling, and non-random sampling. Random sampling includes simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling. Non-random sampling includes simple sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling (Kothari, 2004). A qualitative study's framework involves the researcher conducting interviews and gathering information that clarifies the phenomenon being researched in the field. Due

to the researcher's continual intelligence in acquiring information, careful observation, and a highly developed ability for drawing out specifics from respondents, the idea of the researcher as an instrument is prevalent in qualitative research (Barrett, 2007). This idea highlights the researcher's expertise, viewpoint, and subjectivity as a normal role in data collection. The research findings are mediated by this human instrument.

3.3.1 Location and Subject of The Study

For this study, the researcher has chosen the purposive sampling method because it focuses on certain characteristics and fits the focus of the study. Purposive sampling is based on the notion that the researcher wants to explore, determine, and obtain a clear perception of a matter (Merriam, 2009). Thus, the sample needs to be selected among those who are experts and skilled in the field. The characteristics set in this study are that the participants are athletes under the auspices of the Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Sports. The researchers found the selection of these characteristics to be accurate because they can give an overview of the phenomenon being studied because they have knowledge about PEDs. In this study, the researchers did not put age and gender limits on the study participants, but the researchers took into account several other factors such as the duration of involvement as an athlete. These factors are seen to be able to influence participants facing the issue of performance – enhancing drugs using among Malaysian athletes.

The number of samples in a qualitative study does not require a large amount of sampling and, a specific determination of the number and total number of participants for a qualitative study is also not required (Merriam, 2009 &

Othman, 2017). According to McLeod (2001), the number of participants less than eight people is suitable for a case study, while more than twenty participants tend to be too much data to be analyzed. This situation will cause duplication of data collection. For qualitative methods, a small number of participants is sufficient considering that the focus of qualitative research is to obtain findings that can provide a holistic and meaningful picture of a phenomenon being studied (Marohaini, 20004). According to Creswell (2007), research carried out using the basic qualitative study design does not require a specific sample size.

In qualitative research, the sample size is not determined from the beginning. Therefore, to establish it, the main thing is that the total sample size taken must be able to reflect the meaning of a small number of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being studied. The selection of the sample will continue until the study does not find new information or overlap with the information that has been obtained before. This is better known as the saturation point (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, the researchers took five athletes who were under the auspices of Ministry of Youth and Sport (KBS) had represented Malaysia at the international level. All these athletes indirectly represent other Malaysian athletes.

3.4 Research Procedures

To understand this study more deeply, various methods of data collection are very critical. The variety of data collection methods helps in obtaining a lot of data and rich in explanations (Othman Lebar, 2017). Therefore, this study uses two methods of

data collection, namely, the semi-structured interview method, and the document analysis method.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are the primary data collection method used throughout this study to obtain specific data. This interview method is suitable because it has the potential to produce dense data with explanations throughout the data collection process (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008). In addition, this method also gives the researcher the opportunity to identify the statements of the participants in addition to being able to ask directly about the issues raised (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Through the semi-structured interview format, the researcher can ask open-ended questions that are more flexible and explore the participants' answers naturally (Merriam, 2009). Before the interview is held, the questions are determined in advance, and the answers to each question are open and can be developed (Othman Lebar, 2017).

The aim of using semi-structured interviews is to explore the responses of research participants to the questions that were raised. Through this technique, the researcher can help the participants to recall their experiences on the issue under study. At the same time, direct questions to participants using questions that are not in the interview protocol to increase the researcher's understanding of Malaysian athletes' experiences (Frost, 2011).

To avoid undirected and useless interviews, the researcher interviewed the study participants based on the prepared interview question protocol. The form of questions used is an open question that requires the participants to answer subjectively and clearly (Silverman, 2010). The selection of words used by the

study participants throughout their narration was also maintained in its original state without data cleaning in order to strengthen the credibility of the data (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). The researcher did not set a maximum time limit for each interview. Most interviews take from forty-five minutes to an hour. This time limit depends on the participants' willingness to share their experiences. In this research, a self-constructed questionnaire will be developed based on the keywords and themes from the previous literature.

3.4.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis is one of the data collection methods (secondary data) other than interview and observation methods. This method refers to existing data sources that are easy to find (Merriam, 2009). Documents are sources of data that can be physically proven (Lee, 2000). Forms of documents that can be used as data sources are official records, letters, newspapers, songs, poems, autobiographies, diaries, pictures and videos. According to Merriam (2009), documents can be divided into two forms, namely public documents, and private documents. Public documents are all official documents that have been issued by certain parties. These documents are proof that something really happened, and its existence is recorded such as birth certificates, police records, agency records, mass media association manuals, government documents and so on (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Public documents are also important as stimulation to the questions that will be discussed in the interview (Patton, 2002).

Personal documents refer to anything that is updated by an individual to tell his experiences, actions, and beliefs. Personal individual sources include

diaries, letters, scrapbooks, journals, photos, and autobiographies (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Personal documents act like detailed observations in documents that give the researcher a picture of what the study participants think is important from their personal perspective. According to Merriam (2009) personal documents are an authentic source of data because such documents can provide the researcher with an implicit meaning to the experiences, actions, and beliefs of the participants.

In this study, researchers obtained documents such as articles, journals, and data from the official website, the Library of the University of Islamic Sciences Malaysia (USIM), the Library of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the National Archives. In addition, some documents and evidence have been obtained from the athletes who were interviewed. The method of document analysis in this study involves two forms of documents, namely public documents, and private documents.

3.5 Data Analysis

The process of analyzing data is a critical process. This is because, all the data that has been obtained should be analyzed through several stages. In addition, the data analysis process involves consideration between concrete data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning (Merriam, 2001). This study involves two methods of data collection, namely through semi-structured interviews and document analysis and observation. Therefore, researchers use a systematic data management system to maximize the use of data and give deep meaning to the data obtained (Creswell, 2008).

3.5.1 Data Management Process

As an initial step, the researcher prepared a different file for each participant. Their original names have been changed to the abbreviation of research participants (RP) to protect confidentiality. At the beginning of the interview session, they were given an informed consent form that aims to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Once the data has been collected, the data needs to be transferred into a readable form before continuing with the analysis process. Each interview will be transcribed, organized, and coded to make it easier for researchers to manage the data obtained.

3.5.2 Transcription

After completing the interview process, the data obtained should be transcribed manually by the researcher. Data transcription includes everything the participant says as well as non-verbal cues such as emotions, body movements and environment. This is because it can give deep meaning to what the participants say. Once completed, the researcher returned the transcription results to the respondents who were interviewed to obtain consent and confirmation from the study participants. Each amendment or improvement to the transcription will be placed on a different page to facilitate the research writing process.

3.5.3 Organized Data

The interviews that have been transcribed are then arranged according to themes or categories to facilitate the retrieval of the data. Each theme or

category has been marked with a different color to make it easier for the researcher to organize all the data obtained from the interview process.

3.5.4 Coding

Each transcript was coded according to certain themes or categories. In addition, the names of study participants, themes, and data sources have also been summarized and given specific codes to facilitate the data analysis process. This process is carried out until all the data has been segmented. During the coding process, a master list containing all codes formed and used in this study was created. Each participant's name has been summarized according to the abbreviation RP which stands for Research Participant. Each theme is coded using the pseudonym RO, which is the research Objective. For the first sub-theme research objective one has been coded to RO 1.1 and so on.

3.6 Rigor and Trustworthiness

In qualitative terminology, rigor is a technique for building trust or confidence in a research study's conclusions. It makes it possible for the researcher to stick to the same procedures throughout time. The most popular methods for achieving rigor in qualitative investigations are credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Creswell & Miller (2000), strong communication between researchers and their respondents makes it easier to get accurate data. However, the researcher must use a range of techniques and procedures to be thorough and reliable. Rigor and dependability are necessary to address concerns of bias and equality in the data gathering process, interpretation, and discussion of findings. According to qualitative researchers, an investigation should be ethical if it is to be taken seriously.

3.7 Triangulation

In a qualitative approach, triangulation is an important data validation step for establishing the validity, applicability, and trustworthiness of the research findings (Cummings et al., 2019). Interviews and document analysis were the two data gathering techniques used in this study. The data gathered has been reinforced using two separate data collection techniques. To confirm new discoveries, the triangulation method makes use of numerous data sources or different data collection techniques. According to Merriam (2017), one tactic for validating the research results is to use a variety of data collection techniques. As a result, qualitative research's validity and reliability can be improved. Additionally, adopting a wide range of approaches permits researchers to get more thorough results (Merriam, 2017).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In highlighting studies that are social research, the issue of not favoring any party is an ideal thing. This is because ethical considerations are a sensitive matter. However, this is difficult to implement. The data collection process for this study requires good commitment and cooperation from the interviewed athletes. This is because researchers take some of their free time to get data from their experience and expertise. Thus, the researcher ensured that the interviewed participants felt comfortable during the interview process. In addition, the researcher's bias and favouritism will affect the analysis and report of the study.

Among the things that are given attention regarding ethical considerations is the issue of informed consent. The researcher informed the interviewed athletes about the research being conducted, their rights and the confidentiality of the personal information of each respondent. Although all this information has already been written

in the informed consent form, the researcher still informs them face-to-face to avoid misunderstandings in the future. The athletes have read and signed it as an agreement that they are willing to be participants for this study. Apart from signing the confidentiality form, the researcher also reminded the respondents face to face to avoid misunderstandings in the future. They were also allowed to withdraw from participating in the study if they felt uncomfortable (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Researchers also need to be sensitive to any power imbalances that exist between the researcher and the respondents.

3.9 Validity and Reliability Issues

Issues of validity and reliability are important issues in every qualitative study and are different from quality assurance in quantitative studies (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In quantitative studies, the quality of the study is assessed according to the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study, but for qualitative studies, the quality of the study is assessed according to credibility, dependability, and transferability (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008). Credibility refers to whether the participants' perceptions coincide with what the researcher describes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, credibility is the similarity between the researcher's perception and the understanding of the use of prohibited substances by Malaysian athletes.

For the concept of dependability, researchers do a review with a more knowledgeable party and this technique is known as peer review (Merriam, 2002). Data and interview questions were shown and discussed together with experts in the field. The views presented have helped the researcher reduce bias during the interview session. Qualitative research is a study that cannot be generalized. However, other researchers can see how well this study can be conducted in their place through the

richness and thickness of the data. The richness and thickness of the data can be seen from the basic aspects that can be shared or obtained from the experiences that RP has gone through. Furthermore, the wealth and thickness of the data will be able to provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of the phenomenon being studied (Bailey, 2007).

