

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Understanding methodology is crucial in exploring the lived experiences of couples in adventure-based therapy through hiking. This study employed a qualitative research design with a narrative inquiry approach to capture the depth of participants' stories. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide meaningful insights. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews and document analysis, focusing on capturing detailed personal experiences. Ethical considerations and measures to ensure validity and reliability were integral parts of the research process, aimed at providing credible and trustworthy findings.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

Qualitative studies typically emphasise research problems that require assessment, which includes just a few people comprehend a specific topic or issues (Creswell, 2015). This study focusses on how socio-culture is passed down, interpreted, and understood throughout time (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008). In general, qualitative research seeks to interpret the meaning of an experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The researcher uses a basic qualitative design to recruit participants, gather data, analyse the data to develop themes, and then discuss the topics that emerge from the study (Creswell, 2015). As a result, this study emphasises a qualitative method to help the researcher

comprehend couples' lived experiences throughout their adventure-based therapy journey.

In the qualitative approach, a basic qualitative research design is a better fit for this study. This design seeks to investigate the significance of a person's life experience as described by the individual (Creswell, 2015). The foundation of qualitative design is a person's assessment of their experience, and their perspectives provide their own meaning. As a result, this approach can provide an accurate explanation of the events that the individual experienced (Morse & Richards, 2002). According to the explanation above, the researcher chose this design because it can express the relevance of understanding couples' feelings while hiking and what they learnt from their experiences.

Thus, this study uses a qualitative research design, namely narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry allows for the exploration of people's lived experiences, resulting in rich and thorough accounts of their tales. The study will conduct in-depth interviews with couples who have engaged in adventure-based therapy to acquire a full knowledge of how this therapeutic approach affects their relationships.

Open-ended questions have been used in qualitative interviews to provide participants more freedom to share their experiences and to ascertain how adventure-based therapy is applied in the field. Data were analysed and compared to see if there are any patterns in how therapy integrates with adventure to create adventure-based therapy programs. Participants can express their opinions in-depth regarding adventure-based therapy's status as an acknowledged mental health therapeutic practice through the open-ended questions. Participant opinions regarding the direction of the field can also be explored through the survey.

3.3 Researcher as the Primary Instrument

This study used a sampling method that includes people who are involved with the issues, actions, and activities under study. It is utilised to understand the subject of the study from the point of view or perspective of those who have hiked with their spouses.

Random sampling and non-random sampling are the two types of sampling procedures in research. Simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling are all examples of random sampling techniques. Simple, quota, purposive, and snowball sampling are all examples of non-random sampling (Creswell, 2015).

A qualitative study's framework comprises the researcher conducting interviews and acquiring information that clarifies the event under study in the field. The concept of the researcher as an instrument is common in qualitative research due to the researcher's constant intelligence in gathering information, attentive observation, and a highly developed ability to extract particular from respondents. This concept emphasises the researcher's expertise, perspective, and subjectivity as a regular part of data collection. This human instrument serves to mediate the research findings.

3.3.1 Location and Subject of the Study

The researcher used the purposive sampling method for this study because it centres on features and is appropriate for the study's objectives. Purposive sampling focusses on the researcher's intention to discover, determine, and gain a clear understanding of a topic (Merriam, 2009). As a result, the

sample must be drawn from people who have really gone hiking, ensuring that only couples who have been through adventure-based therapy are included.

This study's characteristics include the fact that the participants are common and experienced hikers who have always hiked with their spouses. The researcher determined that the selection of these features was appropriate since they can provide an overview of the event under study due to their experience of hiking. The researcher did not limit the study participants by age or gender, but she did consider numerous other characteristics, such as the duration of their involvement as hikers. These factors have been shown to have an influence on their field expertise and experience.

A qualitative study does not require an immense number of samples, nor does it demand a particular determination of the number of participants (Merriam, 2009 & Othman, 2017). According to McLeod (2001), a case study with fewer than eight participants is appropriate, whereas more than twenty individuals generate too much data to analyse. This condition will result in duplication of data collecting. A modest number of participants is sufficient for qualitative approaches, as the goal of qualitative research is to acquire data that provide a comprehensive and relevant picture of the event under study (Marohaini, 2004). Also, according to Creswell (2015), research carried out using the basic qualitative study design does not require a specific amount of sample.

In qualitative research, the amount of sample is not specified from the initial phase. To establish it, the entire sample size must be able to reflect the meaning of a limited number of people who participated in the event under study.

The sample will be selected until the study finds no new information or overlaps with previously collected information. This is also known as the saturation point. As a result, the researcher chose three couples who were experienced and well-known in their communities for their contributions and participation in national hiking levels. These couples indirectly reflect other couples that also participate in this hiking activity.

3.4 Data Collection and Procedure

Various collection methods are crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of the topic being studied. The variety of data collection methods aids in gathering a large amount of data and providing detailed explanations (Othman Lebar, 2017). However, this study only collects data using one method, a semi-structured interview. The researcher determined that it is appropriate and sufficient to answer the research questions and understand the study's objective.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are the primary data collection method utilised in this study for gathering comprehensive data. This interview method is appropriate since it can generate extensive data with explanations throughout the data collecting process (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008). Furthermore, this strategy allows the researcher to recognise participant remarks as well as ask direct questions about the topics being presented (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The semi-structured interview method allows the researcher to ask more open-ended

questions and explore the participants' responses naturally (Merriam, 2009). Before the interview, the questions are predetermined, and the responses to each question are open and can be developed (Othman Lebar 2017).

The purpose of employing semi-structured interviews is to look into the responses of the research participants to the topics presented. Using this approach, the researcher can assist participants in recalling their experiences with the subject matter under inquiry. At the same time, the researcher ask participants questions that are not part of the interview protocol to help her understand better about the couples' hiking experiences (Frost, 2011). This instrument allows participants' stories, emotions, and perspectives of their adventure-based therapy experiences to be explored. A recording device was utilised during the interview sessions, including voice and camera recording depending on the participants' agreement.

To prevent unstructured and ineffective interviews, the researcher conducted interviews with research participants using a pre-planned question process. The questions utilised are open-ended, requiring participants to answer subjectively and coherently (Silverman, 2010). To increase the credibility of the data, the words used by the study participants throughout their narrative were left in their original form without data cleaning (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). The researcher did not specify a maximum time for each interview. Most interviews go from forty-five minutes to an hour. This time constraints is contingent on the participants' willingness to share their experiences. In this study, a self-constructed questionnaire were created based on terms and subjects from previous researches.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important procedure. This is because all the data collected should be analysed in phases. Furthermore, the data analysis process considers both concrete data and abstract notions, as well as inductive and deductive reasoning (Merriam, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collecting method for this study. As a result, the researcher employs a systematic data management system to make the best use of data and provide profound meaning to the information gathered.

The gathered interview material was transcribed verbatim and thematically reviewed. This approach involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and common threads in the participants' narratives. Coding techniques such as open and axial coding were employed to organise and examine the data.

3.5.1 Data Management Process

The researcher began by creating separate files for each of the participants. To maintain anonymity, their original names have been abbreviated as couple (CP). They were given an informed consent form at the onset of the interview session, which was meant to keep the participants' confidentially. After gathering the information, it must be converted into an understandable form before proceeding with the analysis process. Each interview will be transcribed, organised, and coded to help researchers manage the collected data.

3.5.2 Transcription

After the interview, the researcher manually transcribes the data acquired. Data transcription covers everything the person says as well as nonverbal cues including emotions, body movements, and surroundings. This is crucial because it can provide profound meaning to what participants say. Once completed, the researcher returned the transcription findings to the interviewees to get their consent and confirmation as study participants. To make the research writing process easier, each amendment or modification to the transcription will be placed on its own page.

3.5.3 Organized Data

To make data retrieval easier, the transcribed interviews are organised into themes or categories. Each theme or category has been assigned a different colour to help the researcher organise all of the information gathered during the interview process.

3.5.4 Coding

Each transcript was categorised based on distinct themes or categories. On top of that, the names of study participants, themes, and data sources have been summarised and assigned codes to assist data analysis. This process repeats until all the data has been segmented. During the coding process, a master registry encompassing all codes developed and used in this study was

established. Each participant's name has been summarised using the acronym CP, which stands for Couples, with Couples One being coded to CP1 and so on. Each theme is coded using the pseudonym RO, which stands for the research objective. The first sub-theme's research aim has been coded as RO 1.1, and so on.

3.6 Rigor and Trustworthiness

Rigor is a technique used in qualitative research to instill trust or confidence in the outcomes of a study. It allows the researcher to keep to the same practices over time. Credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability are the most used approaches for establishing rigour in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

According to Creswell (2015), good communication between researchers and respondents makes it easier to collect valid information. To be completely accurate and reliable, the researcher must apply a variety of approaches and procedures. Rigour and dependability are required to resolve concerns about bias and equality during the data collection process, interpretation, and discussion of findings. Qualitative researchers hold the opinion that an investigation must be ethical and considered seriously.

Furthermore, member verification was carried out to strengthen the study's credibility and rigour. Participants can verify the transcribed data to ensure its accuracy and validity. Peer debriefing and researcher reflexivity may additionally assist in reducing potential biases and increase the study's credibility.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In terms of showcasing social research studies, the issue of not favouring any party is adequate. This is because ethical questions are a sensitive subject. However, putting this into practice is challenging. The hikers who were questioned must be committed and cooperative during the data collection process for this study. This is due to the researcher's requirement to devote some time to obtain data from their experience and skills. As a result, the researcher ensured that the interviewees were at ease throughout the process. Other than that, the researcher's prejudice and favouritism will have an impact on the study's analysis and reporting.

Informed consent is one of the ethical considerations that is addressed. The researcher notified the interviewed hikers about the research being carried out, their rights, and the confidentiality of each respondent's personal information. Although all of this information is already on the informed consent form, the researcher notifies them face-to-face to avoid future misunderstandings. The hikers have read and signed an agreement indicating their willingness to participate in this study. They were also given the option to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008; Merriam 2009). The researcher was also aware of any power inequalities between her and the respondents.

3.8 Validity and Reliability Issues

Validity and reliability are essential issues in all qualitative research, and they differ from quality assurance in quantitative studies (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The quality of a quantitative study is determined by its validity, reliability, and

generalisability, whereas the quality of a qualitative study is determined by its credibility, dependability, and transferability (Blomberg & Volpe, 2008). Credibility relates to whether the participants' perceptions correspond to what the researcher describes (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). For this study, credibility refers to the resemblance between the researcher's perception and the respondents' comprehension of adventure-based therapy.

The researcher conducts a review with a more qualified party to determine dependability, a procedure known as peer review (Merriam, 2009). Data and interview questions were presented and discussed with field experts. The viewpoints offered assisted the researcher in reducing bias during the interview process. Qualitative research is not a study that can be generalised. Other researchers, on the other hand, can see how successfully this study can be conducted in their setting based on the richness and depth of the data. The basic characteristics provided or gathered from research participants' experiences demonstrate the richness and thickness of the data. Furthermore, the diversity and extent of the data will be able to supply a more comprehensive and realistic picture of the event under study.

3.9 Conclusions

The methodology used ensures a comprehensive approach to explore couples' experiences in adventure-based therapy. The study aims to provide useful insights into the experiences of couples undergoing therapy, allowing for a better understanding of how this technique could influence relationships. The approach employed to answer the study's questions and objectives ensures that the findings are valid and reliable.