

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology is discussed in this chapter to explain how the study was carried out. This chapter also includes a description of the methods used, data collection, data analysis, sampling design, research design, and research methodology. First, the data collection method used to assess drug experience in Malaysian cases is described. Then, the research analysis would use a qualitative approach to interview five respondents with their own experience to meet the research objective. The chosen approach will be clarified by the research design, and the questions will be interview five of respondents. The findings will be analyzed and reviewed at the end of this section.

3.2 Research Design

As Creswell and Poth (2016) stated, the research design is the entire process of exercising data collection, analyzing, and report writing based on the problem statement mentioned. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) defined research design as a framework or plan for the compilation, computation, and investigation of data to explain the research questions. Study oriented at evaluating subjective context or the social production of problems, occurrences, or practices by obtaining non-standardized data and analyzing text and pictures rather than figures and statistics by Flick (2014) writes of qualitative research. The focus of this explanation is on how different people interpret a given phenomenon. Non-numerical analysis and interpretation of observation to unearth underlying meanings and patterns of

interactions is what Dantzer and Hunter (2000) call qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to provide a rich description and explanation of significant, contextual, and illuminating material (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). A lot more art than science goes into qualitative research. The findings' significance and societal relevance might be investigated by the readers (Mandal, 2018). For a deeper comprehension of the phenomenon and the ability to make meaningful evaluations of social action, qualitative research is important (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that qualitative researchers place a focus on the fact that reality is socially created, on the fact that inquiry is shaped by contextual factors, and on the researcher's personal connection to the phenomenon under study. Such scholars highlight the value-laden character of investigation. They are interested in questions about the construction and interpretation of social experiences.

The qualitative research design for this study is phenomenological studies. In phenomenological research, the focus is on the accounts of real individuals and their actual experiences. The term "lived experience" is used to describe such instances. Studies from the phenomenological perspective seek to characterize the significance of experiences from the perspective of the individual subject. This kind of inquiry is typically employed in studies of previously unexplored topics (Donalek, 2004).

Research using a phenomenological approach involves having participants describe their experiences in their own words. Even if they do put pen to paper, interviews are usually the best way to learn about a person's experiences. As a researcher, you must consider your own values and emotions in order to see the world through the eyes of your topic. Researchers use a technique called bracketing in

which they consciously set aside assumptions about what they would find. Seeing the phenomenon through the eyes of the individual who has lived through it is impossible unless the researcher sets aside her or his own preconceptions about the phenomenon.

It is recommended by Parse, Coyne, and Smith (1985) that researchers "stay with the subjects' accounts in silent contemplation" when analyzing data from such investigations (p. 5). The researcher then endeavors to understand the significance of each participant's life experience. Data is examined for underlying themes and patterns. There is no lag time between gathering data and analyzing it. Research techniques in the field of phenomenology diverge greatly from those employed in the realm of quantitative analysis. Phenomenology, according to Mariano (1990), can be challenging to grasp, especially for those with a shallow understanding of philosophy. Although phenomenological research has been labeled "soft science" in the past, Streubert and Carpenter (2002) argued that it is in fact a rigorous, critical, and methodical approach to the study of human experience. They recommended that the novice researcher find an expert in phenomenological research to serve as a guide. Researchers benefit greatly from taking this approach because massive amounts of experience and information could be acquired from such a significant number of people in a short period of circumstance and at a reasonable expense.

3.3 Research Methods

A research method for this study is by interview. Qualitative data can be collected using a variety of methods, and multiple methods may be used throughout

the data collection phase of a single qualitative study. Thus, researchers can conduct in-depth, face-to-face interviews with participants. This allows them to gain insights from the participants to best understand their experience. According to Qutoshi (2018), phenomenological research is conducted to analyse the phenomenon under study and to look at the fluidity of experience from the point of view of those who are immersed in the phenomenon. By doing so, the researcher not only gains a more holistic perspective on the topic or case being studied, but also comes to terms with his or her own nature and introduces transition on an own level (Qutoshi, 2018). Bracketing and reflexivity help the researcher develop an objective perspective and a heightened capacity for self-reflection and sensitivity to the nuances of social activities (Qutoshi, 2018). Bracketing is a strategy for increasing the reliability of a study by keeping in abeyance any assumptions or presuppositions that could otherwise be made (Holloway, 2005). Bracketing, as defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2013), is the practice by which a researcher suspends judgment regarding the topic under study. This indicates that researchers are not attempting to repress their own opinions and assumptions but rather testing them to set them aside so that they do not clash with the information provided by participants.

3.4 Sampling

The sampling design refers to the framework or method of selecting the right individuals, items, or events as the appropriate representations of the entire population and the factors for obtaining this analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Sampling design may also be defined as obtained to understand the population because it is generally impossible to observe all population members (Wills, Roecker & D'Avello, 2020). In simple terms, sampling is selecting a small number of elements from a wide population (Fowler, 2009). Sampling designs are necessary to achieve the successful outcome of this research in the conduct of this study. However, examining the sample rather than the population as a whole is often likely to yield more reliable results that are important in any research study.

Other than that, there are numerous advantages to the implementation of sampling design, so that it can save the researcher time to a large extent by reducing data volumes (Sekaran & Bougies, 2016). The researcher is not going through every single object. However, sampling also has certain drawbacks when performing a sampling design, such as incorrect sampling techniques, which can cause the entire process to disintegrate. Apart from that, probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two types of sampling designs. The population elements have a known, non-zero chance or probability of being chosen as sample subjects in terms of sampling probability. In non-probability sampling, the elements have no fixed or known probability of being chosen as subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The basic goal of sampling, according to Whitehead and Whitehead (2016), is to locate enough appropriate people to do enough research on the topic at hand. Successful sample collection is an integral aspect of the research design step for any type of study. A set of measurements taken from the population of interest is what Strydom (2011) calls a sample. The sample size is determined by the researcher's objectives, the risks involved, the potential rewards, the practicality of the study, and

the constraints of the available time and funding (Denscombe, 2010). In addition, there are no hard and fast rules for determining the size of a sample in qualitative research. Rather, they involve a wide variety of choices, not just the number of people to be included in the study and the method of identifying them, but also the criteria under which this selection should take place (Omona, 2013). When there is sufficient data for a replication but no way to collect any more information, we say that we have hit data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

3.4.1 Sampling Design and Size

Qualitative research use a more selective sample size to gather data that sheds light on a phenomenon's essential qualities like its complexity, range, and significance. In contrast, large sample sizes are necessary for quantitative research to produce results that are statistically representative of populations (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbin, 2015).

According to studies, there is a difference between probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The difference between probability sampling and non-probability sampling is that the former relies on randomization while the latter does not (Schmidt & Brown, 2019). Due to the low likelihood of selecting every member of the population, the researcher opted for non-probability sampling (Strydom, 2011). The researcher should use the sample to get insight into the lived experiences of drug mules in the modern world. The various sample strategies used in this research are discussed below. Both systematic random sampling and snowball sampling were used. Final participants included 5 drug mules from prison Sungai Buloh, Selangor.

The sample size was enough because the study was qualitative and designed to elicit detailed responses from the participants. The number of interviews used to determine the sample size was also contingent on reaching a point of data saturation. In addition, the study's sample size was established based on the accessibility and participation of the identified offenders.

3.4.2 Purposive Sampling

According to Oppong (2013), the researcher decides what needs to be known and aims to find 60 participants who can and are willing to provide the information based on experience and knowledge. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is typically used to define and select the information for the best use of accessible resources (Oppong, 2013). This includes identifying and selecting groups of individuals who are well informed on the phenomenon. In this research, the researcher was purposive in selecting participants based on specific criteria, which best suited the study. The population from which the sample was drawn comprised drug mule offenders sentenced for dealing in drugs, particularly drug mule. After the DCS provided the researcher with the list of offenders that were sentenced and categorised as dealing in drugs, the researcher, with the assistance of a correctional official, filtered the list to ensure that the identified offenders were specifically convicted for being drug mules.

3.4.3 Unit of Analysis

Units of analysis, which are "people or things whose features are observed, recorded, and explained by social researchers," are classified into several categories

by Rubin and Babbie (2008). People, communities, and institutions are all examples of social artifacts. Most research projects have a relatively obvious unit of analysis since the selection of the unit of analysis occurs automatically during the problem identification stage (De Vos et al, 2011). Prisoners who are involved in drug mule at prison and who had been convicted of drug-related offences and sent to Sungai Buloh Prison, a correctional institution, served as the study's unit of analysis. Since questioning defendants in jail while they wait for trial would violate their right to be presumed innocent, only convicted felons participated in the study.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection procedures are detailed here. To derive meaning from a phenomenon, qualitative data collecting use methods like observation and interviews in its natural environment (Flick, 2018). Data were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews in this study.

3.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews, as a qualitative research approach, involve the utilisation of a predetermined set of open-ended questions and the opportunity to delve deeper into themes or responses (Barclay, 2018). Data can be acquired through conducting interviews with individuals who possess a high level of knowledge and expertise in the specific area of inquiry (DePoy & Gibson, 2008). Researchers often

construct and utilise a timetable, guide, or procedure to conduct interviews in a standardised manner, hence reaping several benefits (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). In the context of a semi-structured interview, researchers may employ techniques such as encouragement or probing in order to elicit further information or explore intriguing aspects of the interviewee's responses (Barclay, 2018). As per Newton (2010), an interview can be characterised as a regulated exchange of dialogue, wherein the effectiveness of the conversation is contingent upon the interviewer's aptitude in effectively and succinctly communicating information. In order to foster an environment conducive to open and uninhibited communication during interviews, it is important to possess the requisite competencies as outlined by Newton (2010). The researcher must possess the capacity to articulate questions with clarity, have attentive listening skills, employ appropriate pauses, checks, or prompts, and create an environment that encourages interviewees to express themselves freely. According to Barclay (2018), employing this approach provides the researcher with increased flexibility to seek further elucidation from the respondent. During the process of conducting semi-structured interviews, participants are afforded the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions openly and spontaneously on a wide range of topics. According to Barclay (2018), the utilisation of a semi-structured interview is deemed the most efficacious approach when the interviewer is faced with the challenge of addressing various themes within a short time frame, and when there is a potential involvement of multiple interviewees.

Upon obtaining the necessary authorization from the University and Sungai Buloh prison, the researcher commenced the process of conducting interviews for the study. The subsequent section of this chapter looks further into the ethical considerations that emerge. The researcher conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with each participant, following a planned schedule of open-ended questions. By virtue of the researcher's ability to engage with the participants in a face-to-face setting, the occurrence of misunderstandings was effectively mitigated. The improvement in response to enquiries led to enhanced clarity. The research methodology employed in this study is the utilisation of semi-structured interviews.

3.6 Data Analysis

The term "qualitative data analysis" refers to a variety of methods by which collected qualitative information is processed and interpreted to provide insight into the phenomena under study (Sunday, 2011). According to Henning et al. (2004), to analyses implies to "smash data into small fragments". Results, conclusions, and suggestions are derived from the raw data after it has been organized or updated. In this study, we used thematic analysis, coding, and categorization to look at information culled from the interview guides.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, as explained by Braun and Clarke (2006), provides a systematic way to organize and provide context for a body of research knowledge.

According to Lapadat (2010), theme analysis is an effective tool for reducing and managing massive datasets while preserving their original relevance. Field notes, memoranda, interview transcripts, video files, journals, diaries, and photographs are just some of the types of data that can be analyzed using theme analysis (Lapadat, 2010). According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), a thematic analysis seeks to explain the research or make a statement about the topic by identifying themes (interesting or significant data trends). It does far more than simply summaries the facts; instead, it provides a robust thematic interpretation of the information and clarifies its significance. The following is a detailed account of the 12 steps of the Lennie, Lennie, Kojarala, Wilmore, and Skuse (2011) procedure that were adhered to throughout this study's data processing and interpretation. As Lennie et al. (2011) point out, researchers may engage in smaller cycles of doing analysis, and the stages are not always completed in a linear fashion.

3.7 Research Procedures

With this new knowledge in hand, the researcher adopted the eight procedures from Lennie et al (2011). The methodology was most applicable to the present investigation.

Step 1: Note Taking and Data Recording.

The researcher was able to preserve a clear and complete record of all the data collected with the use of documentation, which included detailed notes and transcripts (Lennie et al, 2011: 5). Notes taken during research should be as thorough and comprehensible as possible so that the information can be used effectively.

Step 2: Data Management

The data was arranged for easier analysis by the researcher. This indicates that the data were properly labeled so that it was clear how and where each piece of information was gathered. Electronic data was maintained in a password-protected archive with backups kept in a Dropbox folder (only accessible by the researcher) for redundancy and ease of retrieval. The researcher had a lockable closet in his office where he kept the hard copies of his study.

Step 3: Evaluation on the Purposes of the Study

The researcher reevaluated the study's aims, which aided in narrowing the scope of the analysis and arranging the collected data.

Step 4: The Coding Process.

The researcher thoroughly reviewed the field notes and the transcripts of the interviews. Possible patterns, flaws in the data, and topics were also discussed in the margins using various colored pens to kick off the coding process. The process of rigorously analyzing the data, discovering its meaning and underlying structures, begins with coding.

Step 5: Conclusion, Rating Contributions, And Restating the Overall Picture.

The researcher put the findings of the data analysis in context by comparing them to the study's initial aims, the research questions that guided the investigation, and the relevant literature.

Step 6: Extract Key Points and Themes

For classifying the collected data, the researcher established an initial set of codes and associated meanings. The findings were summarized into their primary topics later to aid in their comprehension.

Step 7: Write the Findings and Make Suggestions as Well As Write Out A Report Draft.

When the study's major findings were established, the researcher might draw conclusions and offer suggestions.

Step 8: Disseminate the Results

After complete themes have been established, a report can be written as the last step in a thematic analysis. In addition, as pointed out by Braun and Clarke (2006), the report itself needs to provide sufficient data extracts to illustrate the occurrence of the themes in question.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In any study involving human participants, it is crucial to follow established ethical guidelines to ensure their safety. Due to the comprehensive character of qualitative research, ethical considerations take on a unique significance. An increasing number of ethical concerns arise when conducting in-person interviews with a population that is particularly diverse or vulnerable. This is because they can

feel anxious about revealing their true feelings throughout the interview (Roshaidai & Arifin, 2018). Due to the nature of the research, a few moral concerns arise that would not be raised in, say, a chemistry or physics lab (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

3.8.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

The parties' full understanding and cooperation are ensured by the written agreement. Individuals must be given enough information in the permission form to allow them to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the study. This information should explain the study's goals and methods in sufficient detail so that participants can draw their own conclusions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2005). In this study, invitations to participants followed the guidelines. Each participant was informed of the study's goals and given the assurance that they were in no way compelled to take part in the research. Further, participants should be given another chance to reaffirm their consent to the study if the research conditions alter. The researcher ensured that the participants felt safe, open, and at ease with the method and the study by conducting the interviews in a professional and ethical manner. In addition, the researcher and each participant signed and dated a consent document outlining the nature of the study and the commitment expected of them.

According to Roshaidai and Arifin (2018), it is incumbent upon the researcher to ensure that study participants provide informed consent, safeguard the confidentiality of participants' personal information, and disseminate research findings transparently and truthfully.

3.8.2 No harm

Pain of any kind, whether physical or mental, is considered damage by Babbie and Mouton (2007). Never cause any kind of physical or emotional harm to a participant. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), it is the researcher's ethical duty to minimize the potential for any negative psychological effects of the study on the participants. It was a sensitive study, but the researcher made sure no one was put in danger by not disclosing any material that could make the volunteers feel uncomfortable or put them in danger. The participants were informed by the researcher that they did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uneasy and that they might end the interview at any time if they so desired.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research methodology and design, sampling size, data collection method, data analysis method and demonstration of trustworthiness of the research data were described. In the following chapter, data analysis, interpretation and deduction are discussed.