

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in the study. It begins by discussing the qualitative research design and the descriptive phenomenological approach adopted for the study. This chapter elaborates on the scope of the study, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. The focus is on understanding the marital satisfaction of involuntarily childless Indian women in Ipoh. The chapter details the steps taken to ensure the research's accuracy, reliability, and validity, including the use of semi-structured interviews, the preparation and implementation of an interview protocol, and the thematic analysis of the collected data.

#### 3.2. Research Design

##### 3.2.1 Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is a kind of investigation that aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena by studying them in their natural environment. It emphasizes the underlying reasons behind social occurrences rather than the specific

details and relies on the firsthand experiences of individuals as they assign meaning to their daily existence (Bhandari, 2023)

Qualitative researchers employ many methods of inquiry, such as biography, case study, historical analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology, to examine human phenomena, instead of relying on logical and statistical procedures. The three primary areas of attention are persons, societies and cultures, and languages and communication. While qualitative research encompasses several inquiry methodologies, it is based on the fundamental premise that information is subjective rather than objective, and that researchers gain understanding of participants' experiences by learning from them. In order to ensure the highest level of accuracy and reliability, the researcher strives to maintain an objective and impartial stance throughout the study process (Bhandari,2023)

### **3.2.2 Descriptive Phenomenological Study**

The descriptive phenomenological technique in psychology was created by the American psychologist Amedeo Giorgi during the early 1970s. Giorgi derived his method from the concepts established by philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as well as from his previous professional involvement in psychophysics. Giorgi played a significant role in the early development of humanistic psychology, the use of phenomenology in psychology, and qualitative research in psychology.

Even now, he remains a strong advocate for the significance of adopting a human science approach to psychological topics.

According to (Giorgi,1970), phenomenological psychological perspective, researchers are advised to "bracket" their own assumptions about the phenomenon

under investigation. This means refraining from assuming a fixed and objective reality for oneself and the participants whose experiences are being studied. This enables the researchers to focus on the descriptions provided by the participants without imposing predetermined classifications on the significance of the descriptive units. A key characteristic of the descriptive phenomenological technique in psychology is its differentiation from simply interpretative approaches.

Giorgi's perspective aligns closely with (Husserl, 2001), as both suggest that "being given" and "being interpreted" are two distinct representations of the same situation, but from separate levels of discourse. In the Descriptive Phenomenological Method, there are distinct descriptive and interpretive phases, and the researcher is diligent in addressing each type of action in distinct manners. By engaging in a form of empathetic immersion with the subjects and their descriptions. The researcher gains insight into the actual lived experiences of the participants, which are then recounted.

Throughout this process, it is important to refrain from engaging in theoretical or speculative interpretation to fully elucidate the inherent lived meaning embedded within the descriptions. Interpretation may occur to different degrees during subsequent stages of the study process, but solely in relation to the implications of the results rather than the actual significance of the participants' experiences.

### **3.2.3 In- Depth Interview**

In-depth interviews are a qualitative research method designed to gather detailed insights into participants' perspectives, experiences, and feelings on a specific topic through intensive, one-on-one interactions. Unlike other qualitative methods, in-depth interviews employ a conversational format with open-ended questions, allowing researchers to spend significant time with each participant to encourage open sharing of

thoughts. This approach is discovery-oriented, aiming to uncover new insights and understand the meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). In-depth interviews are particularly valuable in media psychology for exploring complex topics and are often used in multi-method research designs. However, they have limitations when used as a standalone method, particularly concerning generalizability, due to the focus on a small number of participants (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020).

### **3.3 Sampling**

In this study, the researcher employed two sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific criteria, thoughts and knowledge relevant to the research. It is particularly useful when the researcher aims to gather information from individuals who possess certain characteristics or experiences that represent the target population.

For this study, which aims to explore the experiences of Indian involuntarily childless women, the researcher opted for purposive sampling. By using this method, the researcher can deliberately choose participants who meet the specific criteria of being Indian involuntarily childless, thereby ensuring the sample is most relevant to the research objectives. This strategic selection of participants with a high level of knowledge and experience optimizes the use of available resources and enhances the depth of insights gained from the study.

### Inclusion Criteria

These are the characteristics that participants must have to be included in the study:

1. Involuntarily childless Indian women who were born and raised in Ipoh, Perak.
2. Women who have been married for more than 10 years.
3. Involuntarily childless.
4. Happy with their marital life.

### Exclusion Criteria

These are the characteristics that would disqualify potential participants from the study:

1. Women who are not Indian or were not born and raised in Ipoh, Perak.
2. Women who have been married for less than 10 years.
3. Women who are not involuntarily childless.
4. Women who are unhappy with their marital life.

In conclusion, the participants in this study exhibited the following characteristics: they were involuntarily childless Indian women who were born and raised in Ipoh, Perak, had been married for over 10 years, and reported satisfaction with their marital life. This focus was selected to address the gap in research concerning the experiences of childless Indian women in long-term marriages and their perceptions of marital happiness. The choice of this demographic aims to provide insights into marital satisfaction among women who face the challenges of involuntary childlessness while

maintaining a positive view of their marital relationships (Muhammad Saad & Sali, 2019).

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

#### **3.4.1 Demographic Data**

The interview will be used to gather the participants' demographic information. The demographic survey will ask questions on name, age, length of marriage, education, and occupation.

#### **3.4.2 Interview Protocol**

During the interview, a series of interview protocols were followed. The nature of the Open-ended questions is asked during interviews. According to Brannan, Brannan, and Tenny (2022), open-ended interview questions are crucial for motivating participants to express their ideas, opinions, and experiences in their own words. Concentrating on the main ideas or subjects of the study is also beneficial to the participants and the researcher. As such, with these enquiries. It gives participants the freedom to freely expand on their answers. The questions are set up to address the goals and research topics. The question is divided into three sections: the main question, the probing question, and the "icebreaker" question.

The goal of an icebreaker question is to establish a personal connection with the participants and foster an atmosphere of ease and trust between them and the researcher. According to Brannan et al. (2022), asking follow-up questions allows the researcher to get more in-depth information and clarification from the participant's response. The

interview protocol outlined in the document provides a comprehensive framework for exploring marital satisfaction among involuntarily childless Indian women in Ipoh. It focuses on understanding participants' happiness in their relationships despite societal stigmas. The interview is structured into sections that include background information, marital satisfaction, coping with childlessness, dealing with societal stigmas, sources of happiness and fulfillment, reflection, and advice.

To get a concrete example or narrative from the participants to support their arguments, the researcher also employed probing questions. There are eight primary questions and twenty-one follow-up questions in the interview protocol for this study. To aid the participants in comprehending the questions more thoroughly, the interview procedure was first created in English and then translated into Tamil. You can find the interview protocol in the Appendix.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

#### **3.5.1 In-Depth Interview**

In this study, the researcher employed the in-depth interview method to gather participant data. According to Creswell (2018), an in-depth interview is a process wherein the researcher engages in face-to-face or indirect conversations with participants. These interviews can be conducted individually or in groups, and the questions are open-ended, following a structured, semi-structured, or unstructured approach. Unlike direct observation, which involves merely observing interactions, the primary aim of the in-depth interview is to delve into the interviewees' thoughts and perspectives regarding the specific phenomena of interest (Trochim & Donnelly, 2015).

In the interview process, the researcher opted for semi-structured interviews, which combine elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. According to Houser (2015), a semi-structured interview involves using predetermined questions as a framework, but it also allows the interviewer the flexibility to explore topics in more depth with the participants.

Similarly, Merriam (2009) describes a semi-structured interview as a middle ground between structured and unstructured interviews, where the interviewer follows clear guidelines but maintains openness to genuine and spontaneous responses from the participants. To facilitate semi-structured interviews, the researcher employed an interview protocol, as described by Creswell (2018). An interview protocol is a planned set of questions and guidelines that the researcher uses during the qualitative interview to ask questions and record the participants' responses.

Additionally, Jacob and Furgerson (2012) define the interview protocol as a helpful procedure or guideline that aids the researcher in navigating the interview process effectively. By using semi structured interviews and an interview protocol, the researcher can strike a balance between maintaining some structure to ensure essential topics are covered and allowing for more natural and insightful discussions with the participants.

Nevertheless, the interview protocol is crucial in aligning with the research objectives to enhance the research's overall quality, as highlighted by Ismail, Ismail, and Hamzah (2018). Therefore, the researcher aimed to establish a dependable interview protocol, which involved three distinct processes. Firstly, the researcher

ensured that the interview questions were directly relevant to the research questions, thus maintaining a strong connection between the protocol and the study's objectives.

Secondly, inquiry-based questions were developed, allowing for in-depth exploration of the topics and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives. Lastly, the interview questions were subjected to validation by experts to ensure their appropriateness and suitability for engaging the participants effectively. This validation process was implemented to verify that the interview questions were well-suited and aligned with the participants' needs and characteristics.

In this study, the researchers conducted interviews with two single fathers at different times through an online platform. Each interview was about 40 minutes to 60 minutes. The details of the length of the interview are as follows.

**Table 3.1: The Interview**

No	Participants	Activity	Duration	Online Platform	July
1	Mrs.K	Interview	60minutes	Google Meet	1st
2	Mrs.L	Interview	60minutes	Google Meet	7th
3	Mrs.R	Interview	60minutes	Google Meet	14th

The stages that follow is the clarification of the data gathered from participants during the interviews. This includes the technique for gathering data. To acquire a better grasp of the data-gathering technique, the researcher presents the table below.

**Table 3.2: Outline of Data Collection Procedure**

Before	Create an interviewing procedure based on the goal of the study.	Conduct a pilot test	Inform the interviewees of the time and date of the meeting.
During	informed consent was distributed (confidentiality, ethics, and others)	The researcher builds up a positive rapport with participants.	collected data with a notepad and laptop.
After	Data from the interview session was transcribed.	Interpreting data (established codes and categories)	Process of validation that involves member verification with experts and participants.

### **Before The Data Collection**

To create an interview protocol based on the research questions, the researcher first created an inquiry-based set of questions, validated them with a family counselling expert, and ensured that the interview questions and research questions aligned. This process took place prior to the interviews. One prominent academic at USIM affirmed the protocol's legitimacy.

Following the preparation of the interview protocol, the researcher set up the interview equipment, which included paper, pens, and notebooks. Additionally, the researcher had set up an electronic device—a laptop, for example—that was used to conduct and document the interview. Additionally, the researcher must locate volunteers for the study who are eager to take part.

The researcher employed social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp as a means of dissemination. Consequently, the researcher was able to recruit three willing

participants for the study using this dissemination strategy. Nevertheless, two of the participants cancelled their participation before the scheduled date and time of the interview was announced since they were unable to commit fully to the interview due to their busy schedules.

The researcher had ready the interview equipment, which included pens, notebooks, and paper, after preparing the interview protocol. In order to conduct and record the interview, the researcher also put up an electronic equipment, such as a laptop. Additionally, the researcher must locate subjects who are open to taking part in the study. The researcher employed WhatsApp and social media sites like Instagram as a means of dissemination.

As a consequence of this diffusion approach, the researcher was able to enlist three willing individuals for the study. But three of the participants terminated their participation before the scheduled day and time of the interview because they indicated on their Google form during the intake interview that they were unhappy with their marriage. zero marital contentment.

Consequently, the study's overall participant count was reduced to three individuals. Three individuals were residents of Ipoh. Based on their availability, the researcher scheduled appointments with three subjects.

### **During The Data Collection**

Google Meet was used to conduct the interviews. At their homes, both participants showed up for the interview. As a result, both participants experienced a secure, pleasant, and undisturbed setting during the interviews. The researcher used a laptop to record the interviews in order to precisely capture key topics.

The interviews took place in sixty minutes.

Before beginning any interview, the researcher made a connection with the participants and asked for permission. The participants felt more relaxed and confident in expressing their experiences as a result of feeling at ease. Informed consent was given by the researcher, and it included information about the length of the interview, confidentiality, the goals of the study, and ethical issues. It was made clear to participants that they might choose not to respond to any questions that caused them discomfort.

Although they occasionally spoke in English, the participants spoke Tamil most of the time during the interviews. They were amiable, modest, and very helpful throughout the procedure despite their bilingualism. Their insightful observations provide many insightful lessons and illuminate the deeper meaning of life, especially in relation to marital satisfaction.

### **After The Data Collection**

Upon concluding the interviews with the participants over a span of approximately 3 weeks. The researcher stored the recording on the laptop and, to guarantee the safety of the data, made a backup of the recordings on Google Drive. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed with great care, ensuring that the participants' remarks were accurately recorded without any modifications or additions.

After finishing the transcription, the researcher moved on to analyzing the collected data. This process involved organizing the data into meaningful codes and categories, which were then grouped into relevant themes. These themes represented the participants' words, ideas, and expressions, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the information gathered during the interviews.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to explore the data collected from personal interviews. This method involves a detailed examination of textual material, such as interview transcripts, and results in a descriptive report of the findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six key steps in thematic analysis: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes based on these codes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and finally, producing a report. For this study, the process began with recording and transcribing the interviews, followed by a thorough reading of the transcripts to uncover significant themes. These themes were then organized into main and sub-themes, and patterns across different respondents were identified. Thematic analysis is praised for its ability to provide a deep understanding of participants' experiences and to highlight both similarities and differences (Tuffour, 2017).

Semi-structured interviews facilitated flexible and real-time discussions, allowing the exploration of new and emerging topics (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The resulting themes, derived from interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis, were presented in graphs, offering a comprehensive view of the study's findings and effectively addressing the research questions.

### **3.7 Summary**

The chapter has provided a detailed account of the research design and methodology adopted for the study on marital satisfaction among involuntarily childless Indian women in Ipoh. By employing a qualitative research design with a focus on the descriptive phenomenological approach, the study seeks to uncover the lived experiences of these women.

The selection of purposive sampling ensures that participants possess the specific characteristics required for the study, thereby enhancing the relevance and depth of the findings.

The data collection process, primarily through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, allows for a comprehensive exploration of the participants' perspectives. The meticulous preparation of the interview protocol and the rigorous data collection procedure highlight the researcher's commitment to ensuring the reliability and validity of the data. The use of thematic analysis further facilitates a structured and nuanced interpretation of the data, enabling the identification of key themes that reflect the participants' experiences and perceptions.

Overall, the research design and methodology outlined in this chapter provide a robust framework for investigating the complex and deeply personal issue of marital satisfaction among involuntarily childless Indian women. This approach not only ensures the collection of rich, meaningful data but also respects the participants' unique voices and experiences, thereby contributing valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on this topic.