

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explained the methods were used by the researcher to complete this study. Each method in this section was explained in detail which consist of research design, scope of the study, sample and location, interview protocol, data collection and data analysis. The researcher used qualitative method by using the interview protocol entitle Interview about The Experience of Parenting on Muslim Single Father.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the “why” rather than the “what” of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives. Rather than by logical and statistical procedures qualitative researchers use multiple systems of inquiry for the study of human phenomena including biography, case study, historical analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology.

The three major focus areas are individuals, societies and cultures, and languages and communication. Although there are many methods of inquiry in qualitative research, the common assumptions are that knowledge is subjective rather than objective and that the researcher learns from then participants in order to

understand the meaning of their lives. To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, the researcher attempts to maintain a position of neutrality while engaging in the research process

3.2.2 Descriptive Phenomenological Study

The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology was developed by the American psychologist Amedeo Giorgi in the early 1970s. Giorgi based his method on principles laid out by philosophers like Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty as well as what he had learned from his prior professional experience in psychophysics. Giorgi was an early pioneer of the humanistic psychology movement, the use of phenomenology in psychology, and qualitative research in psychology, and to this day continues to advocate for the importance of a human science approach to psychological subject matter. Giorgi has directed over 100 dissertations that have used the Descriptive Phenomenological Method on a wide variety of psychological problems, and he has published over 100 articles on the phenomenological approach to psychology. Giorgi promotes phenomenology as a theoretical movement that avoids certain reductionist tendencies sustained by many contemporary approaches to psychological research.

According to the phenomenological psychological perspective espoused by Giorgi, researchers are encouraged to “bracket” their own assumptions pertaining to the phenomenon in question by refraining from positing a static sense of objective reality for oneself and the participants whose experiences are being studied. This allows the researchers to attend to the descriptions of the participants without forcing the meaning of the descriptive units into pre-defined categories. An important aspect of the descriptive phenomenological method in psychology is the way by which it distinguishes itself from those approaches that are strictly interpretative.

In this, Giorgi closely follows Husserl who proposes that “being given and being interpreted are descriptions of the same situation from two different level of discourse. As such, in the Descriptive Phenomenological Method there are both descriptive and interpretive moments, but the researcher remains careful to attend to each type of act in unique ways. Through a sort of empathic immersion with the subjects and their description. The researcher gets a sense of the ways that the experiences given by the participants were actually lived, which is in turn described.

During this process, however, theoretical or speculative interpretation should be avoided so as to flesh out the full lived meaning inherent to the descriptions themselves. Interpretation may then occur to various extents during other phases of the research process, but only as it relates to implications of the results rather than the lived meaning of the participants’ experiences.

3.3 Scope of Study

The scope of this study is focused on Muslim single father parenting experiences. This research was conducted around Peninsular Malaysia. The reason why the researcher chose to study on Muslim single father because the study focused on parenting experiences. Furthermore, in Malaysia, research on the topic related to single father is less compared to single mother. Thus, single father had been chosen as part of the study to fill in the research gap.

3.4 Sampling

In this study, the researcher employed two sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling and snowball 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.

On the other hand, snowball sampling is a method where research participants are enlisted to help identify and recruit other respondents who share similar criteria. This approach is typically used when it is challenging to locate potential participants through conventional means.

For this particular study, which aims to explore the experiences of Muslim single fathers, the researcher opted for purposive sampling. By using this method, the researcher can deliberately choose participants who meet the specific criteria of being Muslim single fathers, 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.

The participants for this study reveal the following characteristics:

- a. Muslim single fathers who were born and raised in Malaysia.
- b. Fathers who had become a single father for one year and above.
- c. Single fathers who are aged 40 and above.
- d. Become a single after through the death of spouse.

In conclusion, several participant criteria include Muslim single fathers who were born and raised in Malaysia, aged 40 and above had experience single parenting for one year and above and being a single father due to the death of spouse.

The sample of this study was two single fathers. The researcher had faced difficulties in identifying single fathers. This is because most of single fathers in

Malaysia had a high tendency to remarried after divorce of after their wife passed away due to cultural norms and expectations as well as to avoid social stigma (Muhammad Saad & Sali, 2019). Hence, the sample of the study was only limited to two participants only.

3.5 Data Collection

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 the 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 had conducted interviews with two single fathers at different times through online platform. Each interview was about 50 minutes to 90 minutes. The details of the length of the interview are as follows.

Table 3.1: The Length of Interview

No	Participants	Activity	Duration	Online Platform	May			
					1	2	3	4
1	Khai (not a real name)	Interview	90 minutes	Google Meet				
2	Lan (Not a real name)	Interview	55 minutes	Google Meet				

To summarize, the researcher had conducted both interviews in a month through online platform, Google Meet. Each interview was conducted individually.

3.5.2 Data Collection Procedure

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	Establish an interview protocol based on the research objective.	Conduct a pilot test.	Reach out to the participants in terms of time and date of the interview.
During	Distributed the informed consent (confidentiality, ethic, and others)	The researcher builds up a positive rapport with participants.	Gathered data using laptop and notebook.
After	Data from the interview session was transcribed.	Interpreting data (established codes and categories)	Validation process including member check with participants and expert.

Before The Interview

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher designed an interview protocol based on the research questions, following three steps: ensuring alignment between interview questions and research questions, creating inquiry-based questions, and validating the interview questions with an expert in family counselling. The validity of the protocol was confirmed by a senior lecturer at USIM.

After the interview protocol was prepared, the researcher had prepared the tools for the interview which includes stationeries such as pen, notebooks and papers. The researcher also had set up electronic device such as laptop that was used to conduct and record the interview. Moreover, the researcher also needs to find participants who are willingly to participate in this research. The method the researcher used was to disseminate is through WhatsApp and social media platform such as Instagram. As the result, through this process of dissemination, the researcher had acquired three participants who willingly to participate in this study. However, before the date and time of the interview was set up, one of the participants had cancelled his participation due to his hectic schedule and does not able to give his full commitment for the interview.

As a result, the total number of participants for this study was reduced to two participants only. Both participants resided in Selangor. The researcher had arranged an appointment with both participants based on their availability.

During The Interview

The interviews were conducted through Google Meet. Both participants joined the interview at their home. Hence, the environment during the interviews were conducted are comfortable, undisturbed and secure for both participants. By using a

laptop, the researcher recorded the interviews to capture important points accurately. Both interviews were conducted within 50 minutes to 90 minutes.

At the start of each interview, the researcher established rapport by seeking permission and building a connection with the participants. As a result, the participants felt at ease, leading to increased comfort and confidence in sharing their experiences. The researcher provided informed consent, which covered aspects such as interview duration, confidentiality, research objectives, and ethical considerations. Participants were assured that they had the right to refrain from answering any questions that made them uncomfortable.

During the interviews, the participants predominantly used the Malay language, occasionally incorporating English into their conversations. As bilingual individuals, they were cooperative, humble, and exceptionally helpful throughout the process. Their valuable insights shed light on the profound meaning of life, particularly within the context of marriage, offering numerous important lessons.

After The Interview

After completing the interviews with the participants over the course of approximately one month. The researcher had saved the recording in the laptop and to ensure data security, the researcher backed up the recordings on Google Drive. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed meticulously, maintaining the participants' words without altering or embellishing them.

Once the transcription was finished, the researcher proceeded to interpret the collected data. This involved organizing the data into meaningful codes and categories, which were then grouped into relevant themes. The themes encompassed the

participants' phrases, ideas, and expressions, providing a comprehensive understanding of the data collected during the interviews.

3.6 Instrument of Study

3.6.1 Demographic Data

The demographic data of the participants will be collected during the interview. The survey on demographic data will consist of name, age, duration of marriage, numbers of children and occupation.

3.6.2 Interview on the parenting experiences of Muslim single father

A set of interview protocol was used during the interview. The type of the interview questions is open-ended question. Brannan, Brannan and Tenny (2022) stated open-ended question during interview are important to help encourage the participants to share their experiences, opinions and thoughts in their own words. It also helps both researcher and participants to focus on the central themes or topics of the study. Consequently, with these questions. It allows participants to elaborate on their responses freely. The questions are arranged to answer the research questions and objectives. The question consists of three parts which include the 'ice-breaker' question, the main question and the probing question.

The purpose of ice-breaker question is to build rapport with the participants as well as creating a comfortable and trusting relationship and environment between the participants and the researcher. Brannan et al (2022) also stated that probing questions help the researcher to follow up on the participant's response to gain deeper insights and clarification. The researcher also used probing questions to ask participants for

specific example or anecdote to illustrate their points. The interview protocol for this study consists of eight main questions and 21 probing questions. The interview protocol was first constructed in English, and then translated to Malay to help the participants to have a deeper understanding of the questions. The interview protocol can be referred in the Appendix.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. Thematic Analysis is the analysis of textual material (transcript) manually and after analysing, written in through descriptive report. According to the Braun and Clarke (2006) mentioned there are six aspects of Thematic Analysis which are, familiarisation with the data, initial coding generation, searching for themes based on initial coding, review of the themes, theme definition and labelling and lastly, report writing.

3.8 Conclusion

The researcher already explains the methodology that will be used to conduct the research. The research will be a qualitative research design and descriptive phenomenological study. The study will be conducted at Peninsular Malaysia. Four Muslim single-fathers will be interviewed until saturation point achieved and the data will be analyse using thematic analysis.