

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology plays a significant role in conducting a research study. This chapter describes the population and sampling frame, research instrument, data collection and analysis of data method to be used for the study. Comprehensive descriptions focusing on the reasons for selecting particular methods over others will be explained.

An exploratory qualitative research methodology was used for this study. This research approach derived the data from patients/clients of their level of satisfaction from their experience at Lanka Hospitals.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted on Maldivians, both male and female aged between 20-60 years who have sought medical assistance from Apollo Hospitals, Colombo within the last two years. This age group was chosen for this study as it is believed this age group is more likely to be financially stable to travel abroad for medical care. Respondents were selected from the capital city - Male' as one third of the nation's population lives this city. Potential respondents were approached at the coastal areas surrounding Male' and asked if they would like to participate in the research once they confirmed they have sought medical assistance from Lanka Hospitals within the last two years.

According to Griffin and Hauser (1993), to uncover 90-95 percent of customer needs, 20-30 in-depth interviews are necessary. Thus, Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to 25 respondents. A purposive sample approach was used to select respondents for the interviews.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview questionnaire based on SERVQUAL was used for this study. The interview questions were adapted from a questionnaire that was developed by Han and Beak (2004) that was used to measure service quality in online banking. The semi-structured method to interviewing represents a concession between standardization and flexibility. Thus, it provided an opportunity for personal responses of respondents. An interview guide was used which acted as a checklist of the issues to be explored during the interviews.

The interview questions (Annex i) were structured to obtain relevant information concerning demographics, experience of service quality at Lanka Hospitals and patient/client satisfaction. Questions relating to perceived problems and as well as possible strategies that could be adopted to enhance service quality and patient/client satisfaction at Lanka Hospitals were asked during the interview session. There was no set order to the interview questions. The interview was more like a conversation. Nevertheless, before concluding the interview with the respondents, it was made sure that all in the checklist have been covered in the conversation. Any questions that were missed out or not yet covered were then addressed.

After the interview questions were developed, they were checked by an advisor and an expert. After that a pilot study was conducted with four respondents to ensure that the respondents are able to provide their own responses to questions and recognize possible problems which may arise from interview questions in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study. In addition, to enhance reliability of this study, data triangulation was done. The research used difference sources of information such as literature, experts and respondents interviews to ensure reliability of research.

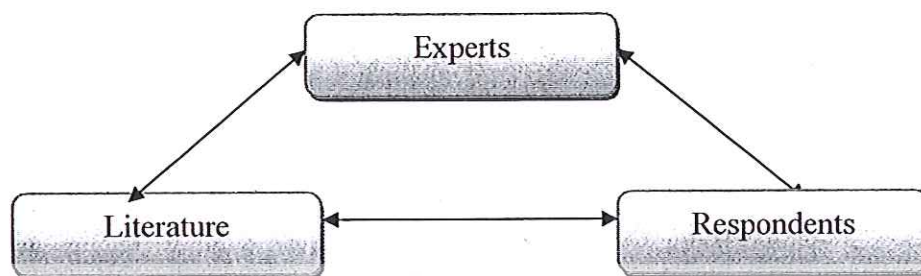


Figure 10 Data triangulation

Data Collection

Data required for this study was collected through a qualitative research method. Qualitative research allows the interviewees to give much 'richer' answers to questions by the researcher that may give valuable insights which may have missed out by any other method. In other words, qualitative research method was used to refine understanding of potential issues and the experiences of the respondents through the use of well thought-out questions and cautious assessment of their responses. Detailed data was gathered through open ended questions that provide direct quotations.

The interviews took place in the parks and artificial beach surrounding Male' during the month of December 2012. December is the holiday season to Maldives and it was believed that people are more likely to have free time during this period. Face to face interviews were conducted with the respondents and each interview lasted about half an hour. The interviews were conducted in Dhivehi and the English language. Dhivehi is the mother tongue of Maldives and it was easy for the respondents to converse about their experiences. And to the respondents who prefer to respond in English will be interviewed in English. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed in to the themes and codes. Field notes were taken in conjunction with the interviews.

Information required for this study was also collected from secondary sources such as journals, articles, newspapers, Sri Lanka Hospitals website, tourism promotional websites of Sri Lanka and statistic departments such as Monthly Statistical Bulletin, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority with proper references.

Analysis of Data

The study used general deductive approach to analyze the collected data. A total of 25 interview questionnaires were analyzed for this study. An ongoing data analysis took place throughout the study. Once the qualitative data was collected, all raw information was converted to text. Hence, the tape recorded interviews were transcribed. Then the interviews conducted in Dhivehi were translated to English. Once this has been done, the text was read and re-read thoroughly to gain an understanding of the nuances and themes in the text. Next, the texts were classified in to themes and categories. After that, the connection between categories and themes were identified. Thus, this information was used to analyze and interpret the data. Figure 11 shows the process involved in data analysis for this research.

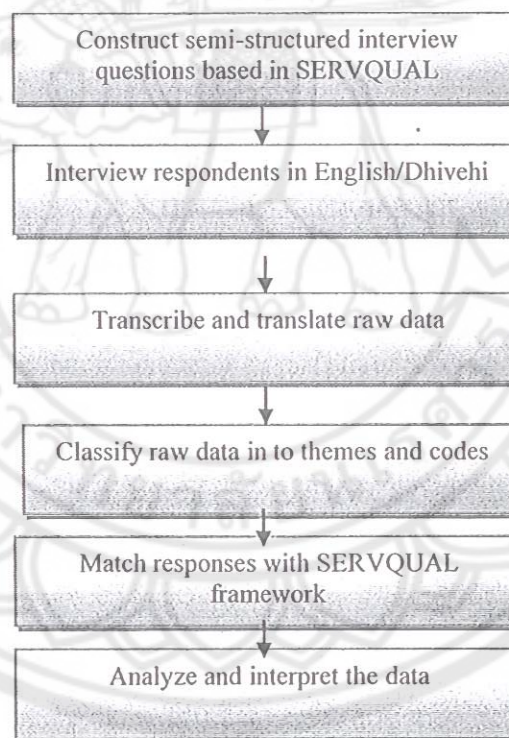


Figure 11 Steps involved in the analysis of data