CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlined the methodology employed in the study. It consisted of five major sections. Firstly, the procedure employed in the data collection was discussed. Next, the basis behind the questionnaire design was explained. The following sections would cover the sampling plan, statistical techniques used for data analysis and finally, the limitation of the study.

3.1   Types of Data

The data relevant to the study was obtained through primary information search and secondary data.

The secondary data search was intended to give a brief understanding of the tourism industry as a whole and its development in Malaysia. It also serves as an introduction to the concept of psychographics in general, with particular reference to personality, in analysing consumer behaviour. Previous empirical research on psychographics was also gathered. It has to be mentioned that such research within the Malaysian context is limited.

Secondary data was gathered through exploratory search with experts in the area such as Lecturers in the Faculty of Business and Accountancy and Ministry of Tourism.   Other main source of information was gathered from books, journals, magazines and newspapers.

The secondary data was the main foundation of the questionnaire design. The design was reached with the help of experts' constructive recommendations from the tourism industry players.

The primary data of this study was derived from a questionnaire survey conducted mostly on working executives in the financial district of Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The survey was intended to investigate consumer behaviour in relation to their personalities.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was set to achieve the objectives stated above, whereby and demographic, personality and travel behaviour of respondents will be analysed. The questionnaire seeks to examine the validity of Plogs' (1987) theory on personality and their travel behaviour as well as their demographic characteristics.

The survey instrument was a four-page questionnaire. This instrument was deliberately limited to a few pages in order to attract attention from respondents. This was due to respondent's limited time available to answer the questionnaire, as long pages will demoralise them in answering the questionnaire accurately. Therefore In order to maintain accurate information, questionnaire was intentionally made short. Vagueness was avoided in structuring the questions. In the effort to further lessen the number of pages, fonts and spacing are reduced to the minimum while maintaining the readability and tidiness of the questionnaire; the scope of the study was made concise and précised.

Questionnaires were prepared in English only because the target population of executives in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya are expected to at least hold first degree, which would assume their competencies in the English language.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section I was designed to collect the demographic profile of respondents, while section II was designed to measure the psychographic or personality characteristics. Next, section III was designed to measure their purchasing behaviour or their actual travel behaviour. The following

section IV, was design to evaluate their perception on the benefits offered and section V was designed to analyse the importance of benefits sought.

Prior to these five sections, a brief introduction was presented in the beginning of the questionnaire to give respondents an orientation on the subject being studied before they proceed to answer the preceding questions.

Section I was designed to collect demographic profile of respondents. This section covered age, marital status, gender, occupation, education level and household income. This section is probably the most important in identifying the target market. Unlike most recent questionnaires, this section was presented after the introduction. This was deliberate so as to ease respondents into the more difficult questions that were to follow.

Section II was designed to ascertain the personality types of respondents. The questions were adapted from Stanley Plog's theory to determine travellers' personalities. According to Plog there are two major personalities amongst travellers – psychocentrics and allocentrics – and personalities that lie in between – near psychocentric, midcentric and near allocentric. They were 16 questions within this section. The first eight questions were design to determine respondent's psychocentricness and whilst the remaining eight was to determine respondent's allocentricness. If respondents agreed mostly of the psychocentric statements then they are qualified to be psychocentric personality type, while if respondents agreed to most of the allocentric statements, they were classified as allocentrics. For respondents who have mixed agreements, they were categorised as either near allocentrics, midcentrics or near psychocentrics depending on which side they were inclined to.

Section III, aimed to classify respondent's behaviour pertaining to domestic leisure travelling. The questions were developed based on Kotler's theory on behavioural segmentation (Kotler, 1999). This segmentation was further divided into seven variables – occasion, benefit sought, user status, usage rate, loyalty status, buyer readiness stage and attitude. The questions were constructed based on these variables in an attempt to gather the travelling behaviour of respondents.

Section IV, required respondents to rate their level of agreement on the benefits offered in the Malaysian tourism. This section presented a five-likert scale; from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Section V, called the respondents to rate the level of importance in regards to the benefits offered. This section also presented a five-likert scale of strongly disagrees to strongly agree.

The questionnaire was pre-tested twice. The first test was conducted on 10 subjects that the researcher believes to have similar characteristics to the targeted sample. After amendments were made following the first pre-test, another test was administered amongst five of those 10 subjects. Constructive criticism was undergone during the pre-testing and necessary changes were made.

3.3   Sampling Design

Probability sampling of cluster sample was used to collect data. The population target was the urban Malaysian white-collar workers in the private and government sectors. According to Nickerson (1996), travellers are generally highly educated and the white-collar workers, as opposed to blue-collar workers, represented this segment well. Additionally, this population is believed to have substantial discretionary income to be used for travelling.

3.3.1 Sample Size

The targeted sample size was 300. In anticipation of response errors and no return questionnaires, 350 questionnaires were distributed. The questionnaires were distributed and collected in the span of three weeks from mid August to the first week of September 2001. Only 250 questionnaires managed to be collected and 248 were usable.

3.3.2 Data Collection Technique

Self-administered questionnaires were used because of limitations of costs, time and manpower. Convenience sampling was employed for the study. The respondents were confined to the Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya work force in the private as well as the government sector. The drop-off method was applied during the collection of data by placing between 10 – 30 questionnaires in each organization across a variety of different industries.

Although the absence of emphasis of work force from different industry, the questionnaires were dispersed around a variety of industries. The questionnaires were distributed amongst different levels of management and departments in order to achieve a more representative sample. Amongst the companies that the questionnaires were distributed included KAF Discount House, Shahrizat and Tan, ABN Amro, Arab Malaysian Bank, Road Builders Contructions, Entilium, RHB, Colliers, Jordan, Lee and Jafaar, Celcom, University Malaya, Hyatt Saujana Hotel, Putrajaya Holdings, CIMB and FCB Advertising. The rest of the questionnaires were distributed personally amongst the working MBA students of University Malaya.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

The survey data was analysed using the latest Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 10.0). Statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages were used on section I, II and III. Cross tabulations were used to associate variables between sections and within a section. Pearson's Chi-square analysis was performed to test the significance of the associations. A confidence level of 95% was applied and only variables that were within the 0.005 significant level were accepted and analysed. Some options were collapsed due to small count of cell value, which otherwise would make them unreliable and did not have statistical values.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

The study was confined within the working executives around Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. Potential travellers who do not work and live out side the mentioned parameter were discounted in this study. Hence there is a probability that samples from other parts of the country and occupation level would yield a different results. Furthermore, respondents industry background was not gathered which made the sample lack of real population representation accuracy. Additionally, this study failed to collect racial data that is quite vital information because Malaysia's market is consists of a multi-racial society.

In addition, the sample size could have been bigger. Due to time constraint, questionnaires distributed were limited and collection period shortened, which caused some questionnaires were unable to be collected at all.