

CHAPTER 3: RESEACRH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research methodology covers the research design used for this study. Each step in the design is carefully documented with reasons and examples of execution.

To begin with, the researcher will explicate how *The Star* is chosen as the researcher's choice of newspaper for this research, after a comparison with *The Malay Mail*. In addition, an explanation of how the researcher narrowed down her search from a vast number of personal advertisements to specific ones based on a set of criteria is also presented.

Finally, the process of data collection is carried out which then leads to an explanation of how data collected will be analyzed that is the most significant section of this research project.

3.1 Data Collection

On the whole, the period of data collection was for a duration of three months from 24-6-2003 to 24-9-2003. For this period, the researcher has collected numerous personal advertisements from www.thestar.com.my. The justifications for her choice of newspaper will be explained in the following section.

The researcher has restricted herself to only 127 advertisements which encompass 66 from men and the remainder 61 from women based on a set of criterion that has been determined. The researcher’s decision on data collection by means of electronic instrument is primarily because it is easily accessible. Moreover, it is a relatively different method of data collection for this particular type of corpus.

3.2 Selection of E-Newspaper

The researcher has chosen the electronic version of *The Star* as her choice of newspaper for this research after doing a pilot study, which encompasses a comparison with *The Malay Mail* for a period of five days from 1-9-2003 to 5-9-2003. What the researcher has observed during this particular week is that in terms of the number of advertisements advertised, *The Star* has a total of 44 where as *The Malay Mail* only has 34. Table 3.1 shows the findings.

Table 3.1 Comparison of Personal Advertisements between *The Star* and *The Malay Mail*

Date Daily	1/9/03	2/9/03	3/9/03	4/9/03	5/9/03	Total
<i>The Malay Mail</i>	7	7	7	7	6	34
<i>The Star</i>	11	5	10	11	7	44

Referring to the table above, it is clear that there are more advertisements published in *The Star* compared to *The Malay Mail*.

The researcher has also found that the advertisements in *The Malay Mail* are monotonous with a lot of repetitions. The same individuals have advertised almost everyday which reflect the lack of variety in the personal advertisements. Furthermore, most of the personal advertisements are advertised collectively or by agencies and only a few are advertised by individuals. Thus, the researcher has concluded and decided that *The Star*, with more varieties and interesting advertisements will be the sole daily for the purpose of her research.

3.3 Selection of Personal Advertisements

There were numerous personal advertisements advertised and the researcher has tapered them down and limited the collection to only personal advertisements advertised by individuals and have eliminated those that were advertised collectively or through agents. This is because personal advertisements advertised by others except individuals are impossible to distinguish in terms of sex, religion and profession of the advertisers. There were also advertisements advertised by parents who were looking for potential sons or daughters-in-law of which the researcher did not include in her research. Examples of rejected advertisements are shown below.

- Example 1

Twin Girls or 2 sisters wanted. **Interested in marry our twin boys.** Age 26, computer graduates, Christian 29/8/2003

(R1)
- Example 2

Be Happy Have a companion, somebody to share, go out with or whatever, even if you don't want to be committed. Never mind your age / marital status. Call **Dateline** Confidentiality assured 29/8/2003

(R2)

Example 3 **S.D Agency** matchmaking services for eligible Indian young men & ladies of Hindu, Muslim & Christian 1/9/2003

(R4)

(Source: *The Star*)

The personal advertisements in the examples were rejected, since they did not comply with the criterion determined. Example 1 was advertised by the parents of the suitor, which did not show any connection to the language of the suitor whilst Example 2 and 3 were advertised by agents, which again, defeat the researcher's purpose to look at the language used by men and women in personal advertisements.

Within the three-month period, the researcher collected and selected a total of 127 personal advertisements. The selection was based on a set of criterion that the researcher has come up with. Generally, they must comprise of individually advertised personal advertisements, contain at least one of the categories investigated that include gender, ethnicity, age, occupation and attributes.

3.4 **Data Analysis**

To begin with, the researcher will adhere to the set of criteria that she has come up with earlier to guide her all the way through the process of analyzing the personal advertisements collected. Fundamentally, the researcher will look at everything listed about themselves in the advertisements including what they seek for in the opposite sex.

Firstly, the researcher will look at the gender of the advertisers, which is usually reflected in the advertisements. This is followed by the nationality, race or religion of the advertisers. Basically, apart from Malaysians, there were also Singaporeans, Pakistanis, Ceylonese, Arabians and Britons who were either permanent residents or foreigners. Most of the advertisers were Malaysians and consisted of Chinese, Malays, Indians and Punjabis.

Age will also be looked at, as there could be interesting findings in terms of the differences in the age of the advertisers and the partners they sought. It will be noteworthy to look at the extent advertisers are able to tolerate age differences.

Occupations will be an aspect that will be looked at additionally, as the researcher has observed a variety of occupations among the advertisers. Although the majorities are professionals ranging from teachers to medical doctors, there are also a few who are blue-collar workers as well namely, factory worker and kitchen helper. Other aspects that will be observed are age that varies from 20 to 50 years old and marital status of the advertisers as they could be single, divorced or widowed.

Attributes are also an important facet to consider in analyzing the data collected. There are basically two types of attributes that will be given duly attention to which are attributes sought in the opposite sex and attributes possessed by the advertisers. Both men and women seek different personalities and characteristics in their partners. Attributes that they may seek for may include physical appearance, personalities or religion wise.

Attributes possessed by the advertisers are essential in the sense that they reflect the advertisers' attitudes and traits.

Lastly, the researcher will do a frequency count to look at the priorities given to the different aspects mentioned and examine possible explanations for their actions. The researcher will also tabulate the percentage of advertisements that give priorities to certain aspects and particular requirements seek in the opposite sex. Concentration will additionally be placed on advertisements with exceptional prerequisites.

3.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the research methodology designed basically covers the route undertaken to embark on this research. The method mainly encompasses four basic stages namely data collection, selection of e-newspaper, selection of personal advertisements and data analysis.

The Star daily has been chosen exclusively for the purpose of this study after considering issues pertaining, which includes the variety published, the number of personal advertisements that appeared everyday and also after a comparison with *The Malay Mail*.

Data analysis will be done based on the criterion set, which comprised of gender, ethnicity, age, occupation and attributes of the personal advertisement writers as well as preferred in their potential mates.