CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology used to investigate the proposed hypotheses and the correlation model is outlined. It consists of three major sections. In the first section, the research objectives will be restated. Next, the research hypotheses are listed out. Finally, the research methods used to carry out the study are discussed in detail, including measures development, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Objectives

Acknowledging the potential of existence of White Supremacy Culture in local subsidiaries of MNCs, Malaysian employees may face hindrance to career upward mobility. Theoretical basis suggests that this so-called "modern discrimination" could be due to multi-level influences affecting by individual, organization, and society. Hence, the objectives of this research are:

a) To identify the existences of white supremacy culture, a potential modern discrimination within MNCs local subsidiaries in Malaysia.

b) To identity the correlations between the determinants contributed from individual, organization and society influence to the existence of white supremacy culture within MNCs local subsidiaries in Malaysia.

3.3 Research Hypotheses

The literature review in Chapter 2 suggested that the existence of White Supremacy Culture, a potential modern discrimination within MNCs local subsidiaries in Malaysia may have been contributed from individual, organization and society. Hence, the following three hypotheses were developed and will be tested in this study.

Hypothesis 1:

The greater the belief in ethnic barrier to success among Malaysian employees in MNCs local subsidiaries, the greater the perceived White Supremacy culture existence in the organisations.

Hypothesis 2:

The greater level of participative decision-making opportunities conferred to Malaysian employees in MNCs local subsidiaries, the lower the perceived White Supremacy culture existence in the organisations.

Hypothesis 3:

The greater used of job-focused impression tactics by Malaysian employees in MNCs local subsidiaries, the greater the perceived White Supremacy culture existence in the organisations.

3.4 Measures

A questionnaire was designed to enable the researcher to collect information. The questionnaire consists of 50 items divided into three sections. The first section of the survey contained three questions asking respondents' experience working in local subsidiaries of MNCs. These questions are required to ensure the respondents are within the survey target population. The second section consisted of 39 questions related to the constructs and hypothesised relationships in the research. Respondents were asked to respond to questions by ticking a 5-point range Likert-type scale. The third section contained eight questions asking demographic details, including: gender, citizenship, race, age, marital status, education level, position and department in the employment. A summary of the questions and variables contributing to each construct and making up the questionnaire are provided in Appendix A.

White Supremacy Culture

The existence of White Supremacy Culture in organisations is measured by the level of racism awareness the local employees themselves. Questionnaires developed by Bass, Cascio, McPherson and Tragash (1976) are used to gauge five awareness factors, which are system biased, implementation limited, competency of the minorities, the minorities' need of inclusion and the minorities' need to build self-esteem. These five factors are used to measure the perception of discrimination awareness within an MNCs from the aspects of the systems and policies adopted by the organizations towards local employees, the perceived competence of the local employees in

comparison with the whites, and how the local employees perception on their own importance and confidence in the organizations. The responses are measured on a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranged from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Barrier of Ethnicity

Oyserman and Sakamoto (1997) research in studying Asian American identity, culture and stereotype perception defined the degree in believing ethnic barriers as a measure to Asian American identity. To measure the degree of agreement to the fact that the ethnic background of local employees itself would lead to prejudice and lesser chance to succeed in compared to the whites counterpart within MNCs, two statements measured on a 5-point Likert-type response scale, adopted from Oyserman and Sakamoto (1997) are used. The two items are summed to form the belief in barrier of ethnicity.

Participative Decision-Making Opportunities

PDM is defined as influence sharing between hierarchical superiors and their subordinates (Mitchell, 1973). PDM opportunities are measured by the level of participative decision-making in of Malaysian employees working in MNCs on a 5-point Likert-type response scale, based on Lam, Chen and Schaubroeck (2002), which were adopted from Siegel and Ruh's (1973). It measures the overall influence of Malaysian employees on their white immediate supervisors' decisions and the frequency of their participation in procedural and policy decisions with the supervisors. The response categories range from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Job-Focused Impression Management Tactic

Job-focused tactics refer to employees' behaviour related to tasks given by supervisor with the intention in creating positive impression. Questionnaires developed by Wayne and Ferris (1990) and adopted by Xin (2004), are used to gauge the degree of job-focused impression management of Asian American. Respondents are asked to indicate how frequently the local employees working their organisations engage in behaviours by marking a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 5 ("always").

Employment Experience in local subsidiaries of MNCs

In order to ensure the respondents are the target population, three questions are asked to seek their employment experience in local subsidiaries of MNCs. They are asked to confirm they are currently working or have been working in a local subsidiary of MNCs and their length of employment. The third question asked respondents to state the country the MNCs are headquartered. This is to ensure the respondents relate their employment experience with MNCs that are established or headquartered in the United States or the European countries.

3.5 Sampling Design

As this research relates to MNCs, the sampling frame will only be concentrated to those working or have been working in any MNCs local subsidiaries. Since there will be difficulty in obtaining a complete list of Malaysian employees who are or have been working in MNCs local subsidiaries, a complete sampling frame would probably not available. Hence,

non-probability sampling method will be used. In addition, this research is in an exploratory stage aiming to provide elementary information, rather than a generalization to the whole population. Non-probability sampling allows the obtaining of the elementary information in a quick and inexpensive way.

3.6   Research Time Horizon

Cross sectional analysis will be used in this research as the time factor. This is due to the constraint research of time period. As such, data will be collected and analysed at a single point of time.

3.7   Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected for a continuous period of 2 months, from January 20, to March 19, 2010. Questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents that are currently or have been working in MNCs within Klang Valley region. To comply with the scope of this research, the randomly selected MNCs are headquartered in the U.S. or European countries. A total of 200 questionnaires were hand-distributed through hard copy questionnaires or sent by electronic mails. The potential respondents received a cover letter explaining the research attached together with the questionnaires. In the cover letter, the potential respondents were assured of their anonymity and that their responses would be used strictly for academic research purposes.

In order to improve the response rates, follow-up emails have been sent to those respondents who received the questionnaire through electronic mails.

While questionnaires distributed by hand, the author waited for respondents to finish filing up the questionnaire or giving reminder to the respondents.

Out of the 120 hard copy questionnaires sent, 94 responses were received with 89 usable responses. On the other hand, out of the 80 questionnaires sent through electronic mails, a total of 56 responses were received with 48 usable responses. The 13 unusable responses (5 from hard copy responses and 8 from electronic mails responses) were rejected because these respondents have indicated that they are working in MNCs headquartered in Asian countries, among others, Japan, Korea and Singapore. These provide a sample size of 173 respondents or an overall usable response rate of 68.5%. A summary of questionnaires distribution with usable response rate for this research is presented in Table 3.1. These respondents had been employed in their positions from 1 to 16 years, with the mean duration being 5.5 years (standard deviation is 3.6).

Table 3.1: Distribution and Response Rate

	Distribution	Usable Samples	Response Rate
Hand distribution	120	89	74.2 %
Electronic Mail	80	48	60.0 %
Total	**200**	**137**	**68.5 %**

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 17.0. A series of steps were taken to test the hypotheses and to estimate the relationship of the independent variables to the dependant variables included in the research.

3.8.1 Preliminary analyses

After responses from the questionnaires were collected and entered to SPPS as data file, data were screened for errors. Errors, for example, missing data and out-of-range data, were identified. Data transformation was then performed. Recoding was used for grouping demographic responses with large variance of input. As there were negatively worded questions in the questionnaires (please see Appendix 1 for the direction of scoring), the relevant data were recoded. These recoded data will be used for further analysis. Missing observations on the other hand were handled in each analysis separately. Exclusion of missing cases were chosen, in which involves the deletion of cases with missing values only on the relevant variables.

3.8.2 Assumption tests

A number of assumption tests were carried out to ensure the correct statistical test will be used for analysis. Each variable was tested for normality. Next, factor analysis was conducted on the measures. Factor analysis was used to identify and condensing measures that have a large set of dimensions. Reliability test using the Cronbach's α was then conducted to assess the internal consistency reliability of the measures used in this study.

3.8.3 Statistical analysis techniques

The summated scores generated from the relevant constructs were used to conduct statistical analysis. Pearson correlation analysis was performed between variables. Multicollinearity test was also performed to ensure no high

correlation among independent variables. Lastly, multiple regression was used to analyse and test the hypotheses in this study. Significance level was set at 5% (p = 0.05). Therefore, hypotheses will be rejected if computed p-value is less than 0.05 and vice versa.

3.9   Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology employed in this research has been outlined. First of all, the research objectives have been restated. A total of three hypotheses have been formulated. Measures for each variable were taken from previously developed reliable instruments. Exploratory research design has been applied and cross sectional analysis has been used as the time factor. Due to limited resources, a non-probability sampling method has been used. Primary data collected from Malaysian employees working in local subsidiaries of MNCs employees were used for analysis. The data collection method was then outlined, followed by the steps taken to protect employee confidentiality.

The final section of this chapter explained the analytical method used to explore the influences of Barrier of Ethnicity, Job-Focused Impression Management Tactic and Participative Decision-Making Opportunities on the existence of White Supremacy Culture in MNCs.