CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY

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Research Questions

The study seeks to explore the leisure reading habits and interests of students from various higher learning institutions.

In particular, the study examined the following categories of data :

a.   Personal data

     i.   Sex

     ii.   Race (Malay, Chinese, Indian, Others)

     iii.   Type of course

     iv.   Education level

     v.   Home-environment (Parents' educational background & materials at home)

b.   Factual data on current behaviour of students' leisure reading habits

c.   Opinions and attitudes of students towards leisure reading

Included in the questionnaire were questions intended to elicit three major types of information from the subjects:

a.   Questions aimed at eliciting personal data for classifying the sample into categories which provide a basis for analytic, relational study;

b.   Questions aimed mainly at eliciting information on current behaviour with regard to reading and library utilities that the respondent him/herself is in the position to report and the data obtained would provide a basis for descriptive enumerative study ;

c.   Questions aimed at eliciting expressions of opinions and values towards reading in order to gain an insight information towards leisure reading and use of the academic libraries.

The survey instrument was designed in the form of a structured questionnaire comprising a series of questions sequence. It begins with questions on personal and home background, which are followed by questions on reading activity and finally by questions on influences, attitude and opinion towards reading. As far as possible questions aimed at eliciting factual information on the respective behaviour precede questions aimed at ascertaining feelings / opinions.

Both the 'closed' (fixed-alternative) and the 'open-ended' types of questions are used. The open-ended questions allow the respondent to answer in a relatively unconstrained way. In order to avoid major self-contradictory, incomprehensible or irrelevant answers, lose-ended questions were added to produce meaningful results for analysis.

Thus, the researcher's approach is to give a set of fixed response alternative and also an open-ended "other" category, allowing respondents who do not fit any of the given alternative to fill in their own.

Sampling Design

Using simple random sampling, 250 students from five higher learning institutions in Malaysia were selected. All with the exception of one are located in the Klang Valley. The academic institutions involved in the study are :

- University of Malaya (UM)
- International Islamic University (UIA)
- Unitek College (KU)
- Taylor's College (TC)
- Polytechnic Port Dickson (PPD)

Pilot Study

The study adopted the survey method of research. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a sample of 25 UM students. The students were asked to fill in the questionnaire while they were in the study area at the UM main academic library.

After analysing the data from the pilot study , guidelines for improving the final questionnaire and its administration were obtained. Among the major modification were :

I.   It was decided that the questionnaire be distributed during classes rather than in the library because students who were located in the study area of the library months before the examination period were found to be avid book readers. Therefore, this might not represent the student population of the academic institution itself.

II.   The translation of the final questionnaire (originally in English) into Bahasa Malaysia.

III.   The deletion, omission and rewording of a number of questions in the questionnaire.

Administration

Questionnaires were handed out to the students with the assistance of colleagues and lecturers in classroom settings. Subjects were also assured of confidentiality of the information supplied and no names were required on the actual questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The following types of statistical analysis were conducted :

I.   Frequency count and descriptive statistics

II.   Cross-tabulation