

CHAPTER 3

PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Before proceeding to analyze the correlates of the choice of college and programme in the private college under study, some information on the background, demographic and socio-economic characteristics of students who are the respondents to this survey will be described in this chapter. These variables will then be used as explanatory variables to examine the differentials in the choice of programs, and decision making in choosing the college and programmes.

3.2 BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The students of the college under study come from various parts of Malaysia. Some students in this college have come from other countries. To facilitate subsequent analyses, students from the various states are grouped according to region, namely the northern region (Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Kelantan, Terengganu and Perak), central region (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor), the southern region (Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Melaka and Johor). Sabah and Sarawak are grouped together as the East Malaysian states. Figure 3.1 shows that more than two-third of the students in this college are from the central region, about 12 percent are from the southern region, 7% from the northern region, 8% from East Malaysia and 3% from other countries. A more detailed classification

shows that 29% of the students are from Kuala Lumpur and 38% are from Selangor. In terms of place of residence, as many as 98% of the students have come from the urban areas.

Figure 3.1 : Percentage distribution of college students by region (n = 396)

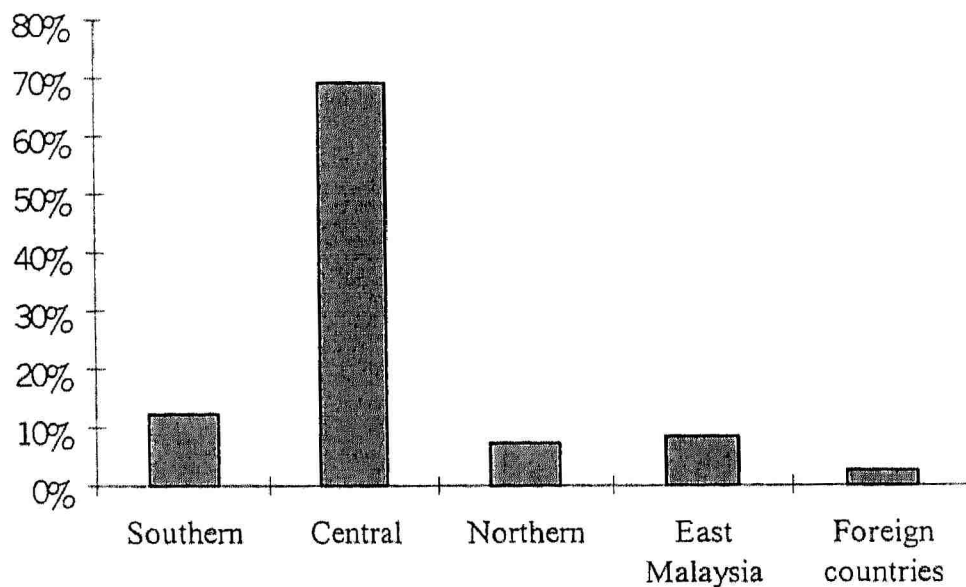
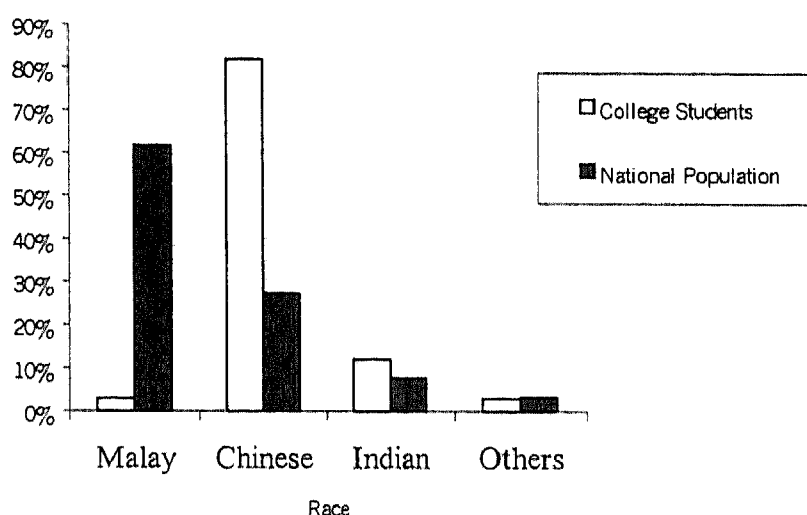


Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of students in the sample according to ethnic composition as compared to that of the national population. While the Chinese make up less than one third of the total population in Malaysia, they make up more than 81% of the sample students. The Indians make up the majority of the rest of non-Chinese students. Very few Malay students are studying in this college. This can be explained by the fact that the majority of Malays pursuing tertiary education are enrolled in public universities and colleges. On the other hand, many Chinese and Indian students are unable to gain entry into public

universities. Furthermore, as the income level of the Chinese is generally higher than that of the Malays, the parents of Chinese students are in a better position to afford the higher cost of sending their children to private colleges. In some instances, Chinese students opt for private colleges to do specific courses when they were not given courses of their choice in public universities.

Figure 3.2: Percentage distribution of college students by ethnicity (n = 396) as compared to national population



Source: Malaysia, 1996 and the administrative records of the College

Students studying in this college are mainly those who had completed their upper secondary education in the public national schools. Most of the students in this college are in the 17-18 age group, making up three-quarter of the student population. Of the 7% who joined the college with British 'O' Level qualification, majority are 16 years of age. The minimum entry requirement for the tertiary courses is a pre-university qualification.

Table 3.1: Percentage distribution of students according to age (n = 395)

Age	Percentage
16 Years and below	8.1%
17 Years	21.8%
18 Years	53.4%
19 Years	13.2%
20 Years	3.3%
21 Years	0.3%

Note: One student did not provide information on age

In terms of gender, females make up 56.6% of the student population. Table 3.2 shows that female students tend to have slightly younger age structure as compared to the male students. For both sexes, those in the 18-19 age groups make up at least two-thirds of the student population.

Table 3.2: Percentage distribution of students in different age group according to gender (n = 395)

Age Group	Female	Male
17 Years & below	30.9%	28.5%
18 to 19 Years	66.4%	66.8%
20 Years & above	2.7%	4.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Note: One student did not provide information on age

The majority (94.4%) of the students from the central region stay with their parents or relatives, while out-station students either stay with their relatives, rent a room nearby or stay in the hostels of the college.

Table 3.3: Percentage distribution of students staying with parents and relatives according to region of residence (n = 390)

Region	Staying with Parents /Relatives	Other living arrangement	Total	n
Southern Region	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	48
Central Region	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%	270
Northern Region	24.1%	75.9%	100.0%	29
East Malaysia	18.2%	81.8%	100.0%	33
Foreign Countries	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%	10

*Note: 6 students did not provide information on place of origin
Pearson Chi-Square test significant at $p < 0.05$*

3.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Information on family income was not collected for the survey. Instead, the respondents were asked a number of questions which may provide a proxy to measuring their socio-economic status in terms of the type of houses owned by their parents, and whether or not they own a credit card, a hand-phone and if they drive to the college. The survey also elicited information on their parents' educational level and occupation. Figure 3.3 shows that 23.2% of the college students drive to college and another 13.9% of them travel in friends' car. About one third of students walk to college as they stay nearby.

Figure3.3: Percentage distribution of students by mode of transport (n =396)

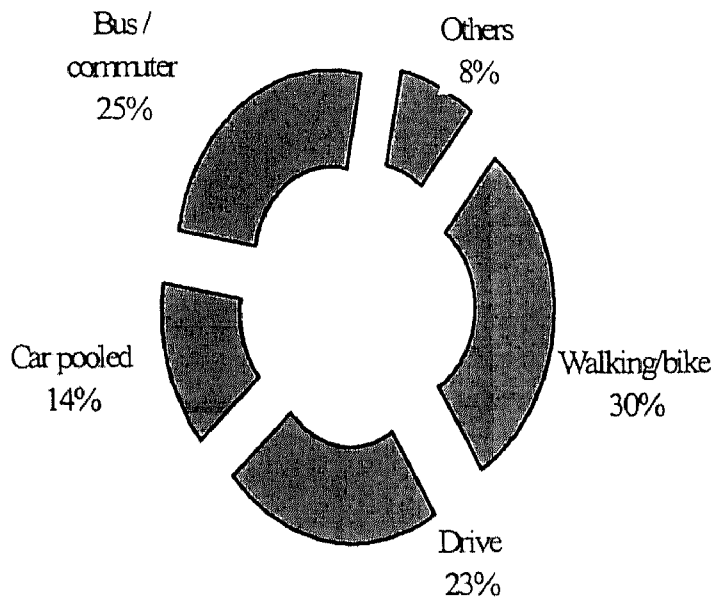


Table 3.4 shows that 61.1% of the fathers and 44.9% of the mothers of the students had completed tertiary education. Relatively few parents have only primary education. A more detailed tabulation shows that 64.8% of students from the central region have fathers with tertiary education. Thus it may be inferred that most students come from the relatively well-to-do families.

**Table 3.4 : Percentage distribution of students by parent's educational level
(n = 394)**

Education Level	Percentage	
	Father	Mother
Primary	5.8%	7.6%
Secondary	33.1%	47.5%
Tertiary	61.1%	44.9%
Total	100%	100%

Note : Two students did not provide information on parents's educational level

In terms of parents' occupation, 55.6% of fathers of students in this college are businessmen, managing directors or managers, 17.7% of them are professionals, 7.6% are government servants and 5.3% are administrators and consultants in the private sector. More than half of them reported that their mothers are housewives (see Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5: Percentage distribution of students by parent's occupation
(n = 396)**

Occupation	Percentage	
	Father	Mother
Businessmen/ Businesswomen	55.6%	12.6%
Professionals	17.7%	5.1%
Admin/Consultant	5.3%	10.1%
Government servants	7.6%	12.9%
Others/retired	7.8%	6.5%
Housewife	Not applicable	52.8%
Total	100%	100%

3.4 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

Students of this college come from public schools and private schools that follow the national curriculum, as well as international schools. Data shows that 62% of the students of the college are from the Malay medium schools and 26% are from schools where the medium of instruction is English. Those from Chinese medium make up the remaining 12% of the student population.

In terms of the examination results, about two-third of the students had scored grade one and 20% scored grade two in the SPM examination (Malaysian public secondary school examination) or the 'O' Level examination. Approximately 78% of the students come from the Science stream.

Table 3.6 shows that 80% of the students in the SAM programme are from the Malay medium. In contrast, only slightly more than half of those in the CAL and other pre-university programmes are from the Malay medium. Compared to the SAM programme, the CAL programme are relatively more popular among those from the English and Chinese medium. The other programmes are also relatively more popular among those from the Chinese medium.

Table 3.6 : Percentage distribution of students of the different programmes according to medium of instruction in the previous school (n = 395)

Programme	Medium			Total	n
	Malay	English	Chinese		
SAM	80.0%	12.0%	8.0%	100.0%	125
CAL	58.0%	33.8%	8.2%	100.0%	243
Others	53.0%	26.1%	20.9%	100.0%	27

*Note: One student did not provide information on medium of instruction
Pearson Chi-Square test significant at $p < 0.01$*