

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes: (1) the subjects, (2) the materials, (3) the procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data, and (4) the data analysis.

3.1 SUBJECTS

The subjects of this research were 50 foreigners who joined The Middle Way meditation retreat at Suan Pa Himmawan, Loey province during December – February 2009. They were either the Thai residents or foreigners from other countries, male or female. They were approached and verbally informed about the purpose of the survey. If they expressed their willingness to participate in the study, a self-administered questionnaire was given to each for filling in.

3.2 MATERIALS

In this research, the self-administered questionnaires were used as and key tool to collect the data. In order to make it as reliable and practical as possible, before conducting the surveys, the researcher had studied a large number of related thesis, books, and questions of other studies. The researcher applied knowledge from such literature to develop this questionnaire.

The questionnaire was used to investigate the factors which attracted foreigners to join an English-spoken meditation course at The Middle Way. It was divided into four parts as follows:

Part One: Personal information of the respondents

This part comprised both of closed-ended and opened-ended questions on personal information of the samples: their gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, annual income, religion, nationality, and country of residence.

The sample was also asked about their background regarding The Middle Way program and of meditation. For example, how did they find out about The Middle Way? Have they ever practiced meditation before? What is their main reason for joining this course?

Part Two: Factors influencing your decision to join The Middle Way meditation course

In this part, the respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of each factor that might have affected their decision to join the course. The Likert 5-point scale was used.

Part Three: Satisfaction of respondent after joining the course

In this part, the closed-ended questions were used to measure the sample's satisfaction with the place, the accommodation and facilities, the course, the instructors and the staff members. The Likert 5-point scale was used.

Part Four: The respondents' opinions and suggestion.

This part contained both closed-ended and opened-ended questions regarding the respondents' advice for the improvement of The Middle Way program.

3.3 PROCEDURES

The data collection procedure was conducted at the site of The Middle Way at Suan Pa Himmawan, Loey province. The primary data was gathered by distributing self-administered questionnaires given to participants after the course had ended. The completed questionnaires were collected right after the respondents finished. The questionnaires were distributed in the monthly classes during December - February until the number of sample reached 50.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative and quantitative data were gained through an analysis of responses using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) version 15.0.

Percentage was used to describe the personal information in the first part and the opinions and suggestions in the fourth part. Finally, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to measure the degree of importance in each dimension that affect the foreigners' decisions to join The Middle Way mediation course and their degree of satisfaction with the course.

In the next chapter, the results of data analysis will be revealed.