

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 subject of this study consisted of 179 persons, with a wide cross-section of students, ranging from secondary to master degree level. The subjects were chosen based upon Internet experience. The purpose was to collect information from a diverse population of students who use the Internet for academic uses.

Given the fact that students, regardless of level of education, expose themselves to the same cyber sphere, the use of sample groups from different level was justified. Convenience and random sampling approaches were used in this study.

3.2 MATERIALS

The research instrument in this study is a self-administered questionnaire, with questions designed for the objective of this study. This questionnaire was modified from the research papers of Sermsiri Phusri (เสริมศิริ ภูศรี, 2548) and Miriam J. Metzger, Andrew JI Flanagin, Lara Zwarun (2003), titled ‘College student Web use, perceptions of information credibility, and verification behavior’ and Tsai-Youn Hung’s ‘Undergraduate Students’ Evaluation Criteria When Using Web Resources for Class Papers’ (2003) respectively.

3.2.1 Questionnaires

The Questionnaire was designed to have four parts. The first and second parts were closed questions dealing with respondent’s demographic information and usage of the Internet. The third and fourth parts were matrix question formats (Likert scale) designed to probe the respondents’ attitude toward the Internet usage and their opinion toward the credibility of the Internet information respectively. The values

obtained from these two sections reflect the positive, neutral or negative attitude and perceptions of the respondents. The rating values were used to calculate the correlation co-efficiency values between the respondents' sexes, ages, and Internet experience.

Each part has an easy layout with clear instruction. It took the respondents about 10-15 minutes to complete the survey form.

Any uncompleted questionnaires were not counted for data analysis. If the researcher found any approached target involuntary, he/she would not be asked to participate in this survey.

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted with 30 undergraduate students drawn from the studied population in order for reliability and ambiguity elimination. The pilot study revealed that this instrument was sufficiently reliable to be administered in the present study. Only one part confused the respondents, causing the questionnaire to obtain wrong data. However, that problematic flaw was recomposed to eliminate misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The researcher attempted to avoid questioning the same people when distributing questionnaires to the samples during the real survey.

3.2.2 Measuring Instruments

To measure attitudes and credibility values, the measuring instrument modified from a number of previous researchers to fit into the present study was designed as follows:

Attitudes: To measure attitudes, a modified 10-item version was employed in this study. The measure was adapted from Vanida Pratheepsen's questionnaire who researched the Internet usage by undergraduate students. It is a flexible assessment tool on students' attitudes toward the Internet. Reliabilities of these measures are determined by Cronbach's Alpha. Reliability Coefficients of Attitude scale was high ($\alpha = .9439$). The overall scales of credibility also appeared to be highly internally consistent ($\alpha = .9329$).

In conclusion, the measure for attitudes and credibility was reliable for the present population. Therefore, it could be reliably used to collect information from the studied samples who were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale adapted from

the original seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly not credible) to 5 (strongly credible) as shown in the table, and the obtained scores could be interpreted in terms of means in order to determine the level of credibility.

Rating score	Interpretation of the score
5	Highly credible
4	Credible
3	Neutral
2	Non credible
1	Strongly non credible

Mean	Level of Credibility
4.51-5.00	Strongly credible
3.51-4.50	Credible
2.51-3.50	Neutral
1.51-2.50	Non credible
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly non-credible

3.3 PROCEDURES

Procedures in this study can be discussed on two topics as follows:

3.3.1 Research Design

This study employed a survey approach. It was conducted in a form of descriptive design to study credibility toward Internet information held by students who use the Internet as a source of knowledge.

3.3.2 Data Collection

Two approaches, convenience and random, were used to collect data for the study.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires in person to the sampled students at Muaklek Wittaya School and Nawaminthrachinuthit Bodindecha School while they

were in class. Respondents were given clarification of any unclear questions by the researcher. All questionnaires were returned right after class. This stage took two days, one day at each school. As for Assumption and Thammasat universities, the researcher spent one day at Assumption and Thammasat universities. Participants were selected randomly while they were at canteens or working areas on the campus. Data collection took the researcher four days to complete. During the completion process of the questionnaire, the researcher was present to monitor and help the respondents understand some certain parts. The respondents were informed that the information they gave would be kept confidential and would be used for research purposes only.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The obtained data was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.0 for data analysis. Descriptive statistics (Percentage, Mean, Frequency, and Standard Deviation) was analyzed for all measures involved in the study.

The data gathered was analyzed using descriptive statistics analysis such as frequency, percentage, and means.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the overall attitude and credibility factors in this study.

In summary, this chapter has shown the methodology of the study by describing the subjects, the materials, the procedures used in collection and analysis of the data. In the next chapter, the results of data analysis will be presented.