

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes:

1. The subjects
2. The materials
3. The procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data
4. The data analysis

3.1 SUBJECTS

The study population was 720 Thai high-school-aged students who participated in the AFS year program between 2006-2007. Due to homogeneity of the population, the sample size of 300 was determined and considered sufficient to represent the total sampling population. The quota sampling technique was utilized to select the sample units of 150 from each study category, English speaking and non-English speaking host countries.

3.2 MATERIALS

A self-administered pre-coded questionnaire for data collection was customized from the AFS International Standard Questionnaire for Returned Participants Version 2006-2007. The description items were written in accordance with the guidelines for AFS partners' usage of AFS Customer Service Evaluation Forms by Dr. Bettina Hansel, Head of Research and Evaluation, AFS Center for the Study of Intercultural Learning, AFS International.

The format of the questionnaire was developed using closed-ended questions with Yes/No responses and more applicable alternatives to gather general information and frequency. Open-ended questions were also integrated as well as a space for additional information where it was appropriate. A 5-point Likert Scale was incorporated to measure the respondents' attitudes in specific areas. The questionnaire consists of three major parts. *Part 1* comprised of closed-ended, open-ended questions and Likert's 5-point rating scale to obtain the respondents' personal information,

demographic details, levels of expectations, and general AFS background and experience. The five levels of scales to measure the levels of expectations were interpreted as follows:

| Rating | Interpretation |
|--------|----------------|
| 5 | Very High |
| 4 | High |
| 3 | Medium |
| 2 | Low |
| 1 | Very Low |

| Levels of expectations | Mean |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Very high | 4.21-5.00 |
| High | 3.41-4.20 |
| Medium | 2.61-3.40 |
| Low | 1.81-2.60 |
| Very low | 1.00-1.80 |

Part 2 was designed to measure the satisfaction degree of the respondents with the program by employing Likert's 5-point rating scale. The measurement was done in four areas: preparatory program, support from AFS, hosting milieu and program achievements (expectation fulfillments). The five levels of scales were interpreted as above.

Finally, in *Part 3*, open-ended questions were employed for in-depth information from the respondents' suggestions on program improvement in two major areas: AFS services and preparatory programs. As space for other suggestions was also provided for the respondents to give more ideas on other aspects at their preference.

3.3 PROCEDURES

3.3.1 Research Design

By using the quota sampling technique, 300 sample units were selected from both sample groups. In an attempt to minimize the extraneous variables, the participants who were granted scholarships from private companies and organizations, so called corporate scholarships and funds, financial aid scholarships, and the US

Department of State funds for Muslim students, were excluded. In addition, according to AFS Thailand's participant records, almost 85 % of the participants of each program cycle were females. Thus, gender was not included in the independent variable list.

3.3.2 Data Collection

Before conducting a survey with the study sample, the designed questionnaire was pre-tested with the Thai AFS returnees of the previous years to assure the questions were understandable, easy for the respondents to give their answers as well as constituting no leading questions. The purpose of the study and the instructions to complete the questionnaire were clearly explained on the cover page.

The copies of questionnaire were distributed to students who had completed the program of 2006-2007, or so called 2006-2007 returnees, at the Post-Orientations organized by AFS Thailand between November-December 2007, and at the AFS Homecoming Party for 2006-2007 Returnees in October, 2007. To promote the respondents' cooperation in responding to the questionnaire, the researcher personally assured the respondents that all the responses and information given would be kept in strict confidence, and input from individuals would not be identified.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package for Social and Science (SPSS) program version 12.0 was utilized to analyze the collected data. The descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test scores and one-way ANOVA was implemented to test the hypotheses. The statistical devices used in this study were as follows:

1. **Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient** was utilized to assess the reliability of the questionnaire where Five-Point Likert Scales were used to measure certain variables.

2. **Frequency Distribution and Percentage** were employed to analyze

the respondents' general information gained from closed-ended and open-ended questions: gender, host countries, and residence in Thailand.

3. **Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation** were used to calculate the average degree of the satisfaction with the AFS exchange program en bloc, preparation program, supports from AFS, hosting milieu, program achievements as well as the respondents' expectation levels.

4. **T-test Scores** were used to test hypotheses 1-6.

5. **One-Way ANOVA** was exploited to test hypothesis 7.

In summary, this chapter has illustrated the methodology of the study including subjects, materials, procedures, and data analysis. In the next chapter, the research results will be presented.