

Chapter III

Research Methodology

Population and Selection of the Population

The population in this research was RIT, Lampang campus students who cohabited while they were studying at the campus. Their partners studied at the same school, in the same or different year, or the same field of study. The research was conducted on 100 students who completed the questionnaires and 15 male and 15 female students who participated in the interviews. The data was collected by purposive sampling from ten fields: Food Technology, Plant Science, Animal Science, Fishery, Technological Industry, Machinery, Business Management, Accounting, Marketing, and Business Computer, and two levels of study: certificate level, which takes two years to study, and bachelor degree which takes another two years. Before conducting the survey a letter of permission (Appendix A) was signed by the director of the campus.

Some preliminary data were collected from:

1. The researcher's observation.

In the classroom while teaching, the researcher noticed the cohabiting students' behavior. They always sat next to each other, were in the same group or pair in group or pair work. Outside the class, they went to school on the same motorcycle, had meals at the cafeteria and spent time in the gymnasium together. The more often they were seen together, the deeper the relationship they had.

2. The researcher's colleagues.

They are instructors in various fields of study. As most students had to join the farm work either in the morning (Animal Science students) or in the afternoon (Plant Science and Fishery), they always went to the farms together and helped each other

willingly and happily. Those teachers had a number of details about their cohabiting behavior to share with the researcher.

3. The residences' owners.

There were three kinds of residences in which the students stayed: for male students only, for female students only, and for both sexes which are like flats for adults. Almost all of cohabiting students stayed in unisex accommodation. There were some female students who lived in male residences with their boyfriends. Some useful information about their cohabitation came from the owners of the male residences because they looked after the buildings and all facilities so they knew what went on around their places.

Research Methods

The research instruments for collecting the data are:

1. Questionnaire

(Appendix B – a questionnaire in Thai for respondents, Appendix C – a questionnaire in English as a supplementary)

The cohabiting students who had not been interviewed were asked to fill in the questionnaires voluntarily. Their schedules of studying were checked to determine what time was suitable for them. The most suitable time was either at 11 a.m. as they had 2 hours for lunch break, or at 4 p.m. when they had finished their study for that day. At the end of their class, before they left the classroom, the researcher asked them to spend about 30 minutes to fill the questionnaire. The research study and the questionnaire were thoroughly explained to the students. After that they were read the invitation letter (Appendix D) and the consent letter (Appendix E). Then, the researcher placed 20 questionnaires on the table and asked the respondents to leave them there after the answers had been completed. The researcher was not in the classroom while they were completing the questionnaires because they may not want

‘an outsider’ to know who supplied the information. As filling in the questionnaire about their private lives was voluntary, the exact number of students who cooperated could not be determined beforehand. The researcher had to step from one group to another to get 100 sets of answers.

The questionnaire was composed of four parts:

1. personal data about the respondent and his/her lover
2. ranking scale towards his/her cohabiting
3. ranking scale towards his/her expectations after graduation
4. the respondent’s opinion about cohabiting.

2. Interview.

In the process of interviewing, open-ended questions based on the objectives were used. The questions were set according to the objectives but the interviewer (researcher) was free to ask related questions. They were face-to-face but informal interviews.

The steps involved in finding the interviewees were as follows:

a. Making appointments.

After making a decision about ‘a right person’, the researcher would make an appointment to interview him/her. A suitable time was in the evening after the interviewee had finished his/her studies. A good place was at the researcher’s schoolhouse as it was more private.

b. Interviewing. Before being interviewed, the respondent was informed about the topic. It was the interviewee’s right to refuse to be interviewed or the interviewee could stop the process of the interview at any time. The researcher wrote down the conversation, or tape-recorded. Some respondents did not like being taped. It was too formal and scary since they were not used to being interviewed. During the process, the interviewer had to be alert to the

circumstances, for example, physical surroundings, settings, or the subjects' behaviors, so as to understand their feelings.

c. Snowball sampling

After each cohabiting student had been interviewed, he/she was asked to name others who would be likely candidates or who were cohabiting.

Analyses of the Data

The information from the questionnaires was analyzed by SPSS program and the context of the interview was transcribed according the purpose of the study.