

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to conceptualise the *da'wah* approach to Japanese Muslim youth. It intends to answer three research inquiries: 1) to what extent does the Cultural Exchange Programme internalise the Concept of *Al-ta'āruf*?; 2) how does the concept shape the experiences of the Japanese Muslim youth enrolled in the Cultural Exchange Programme?; and 3) what are the reasons for the impact of the Cultural Exchange Programme on the Japanese Muslim youth?

Whereas the previous chapter maps the relevant literature from Islamic approaches to *da'wah* to Muslims in the Muslim minority countries and *da'wah* to Muslim youth in those countries, this chapter focuses on the research design and methods which provide the data with which the researcher examines all the research questions. This chapter is divided into three parts: Section 3.1 discusses observation and interview as a method of ethnographic qualitative inquiry; Section 3.2 discusses what the researcher did to look for host parents; Section 3.3 summarises this research project, and encapsulates the nine key components relevant to the ethnographic research design (Creswell, 2018, p. 203-210). These are: 1) setting, 2) actors, 3) events, 4) processes, 5) ethical considerations, 6) data collection strategies, 7) data analysis, 8) verification and 9) reporting findings. The researcher will discuss each section in turn.

3.1 Observation and Interview as a Method of Ethnographic Inquiry

In this study, an ethnographic design was applied, with ethnographic data gathered from sites of events throughout the duration of the present study. The researcher examined experiences of the participants at a micro-social level. Researchers like Kinginger et. al. (2016), Kinginger et. al. (2014), Castanēda & Zirger (2011), Reynolds-Case (2013), and Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) in particular, employed an ethnographic research design to study experiences in cultural exchange programmes. However, their ethnography is different in terms of geographical and sociocultural contexts. For example, Kinginger et. al. (2016) studied experiences of high school students in the context of language learning; Castanēda & Zirger (2011) studied how students optimised abundant networks via their host families to achieve culture and language developments; Reynolds-Case (2013) studied students' cultural and pragmatic competency; while Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) studied the experiences of the host families throughout a cultural exchange programme. Ethnography is also the preferred design by some Muslim scholars who conducted research on Muslim society, for instance AbdKarim (2018) who adopted participant observation and interviews when conducting ethnographic research at a Muslim TV channel in London; and Yahya (2016) who conducted open-ended in-depth interviews to report on media relations of Malay Muslim editors in media organisations in Malaysia.

Nonetheless, among these ethnographic researchers, the present study mainly referred to Kinginger et. al. (2016) and Castanēda & Zirger (2011). The study by Kinginger et. al. (2018) which focused on language learning found that warm and cordial relations between students and host families can still develop despite major language challenges, and this finding guided the present research in terms of norms and practices to be mindful of throughout the present study. This is because, the majority

of the incoming Japanese Muslim youth in the present study were proficient only in Japanese; while the host parents and families could not speak Japanese. Castaneda & Zirger (2011) on the other hand observed and reported the meaningful, "rich and exceptional" experiences of students staying with host families in a short-term cultural exchange programme. As well, Castaneda & Zirger (2011) examined what facilitates or impairs participants' participation during the cultural exchange programme, which helped inform the present study too.

A closer look at the study done by Costas and Singco (2016) which documented the experiences of Japanese students participating in an English enhancement course at the University of Visayas in Cebu, Phillipines, will illustrate the significance of the qualitative approach. In this study, the researchers applied a qualitative approach, gathering the Japanese students' initial expectations of Cebuano culture prior to their departure and recording the student's thoughts and actions throughout the programme itself. This is deliberately done to help the researchers identify any changes in the students' thoughts and actions before and during the programme. The researchers asked the Japanese students to record their thoughts in the form of written essays. The researchers also kept records of interviews they conducted with the students. The written essays and recorded interviews were then analysed to identify themes related to the students' goals and expectations. The researchers concluded that, although the Japanese students initially participated in the cultural exchange programme for purely academic reasons i.e. to improve their English communication skills, the Japanese students reported that most of their meaningful experiences were related to attainment of self-confidence. Had Costas & Singco (2016) adopted a quantitative approach, the researchers would not have obtained detailed accounts of the students' responses. Also, the qualitative nature of this study allowed the researchers to see for themselves the

variants in the responses of the students. All these richness and depth would have been lost if the research was conducted in a quantitative manner.

The present research was meant as a pilot project with the hope that it could be repeated in future as a regular event, perhaps annually. As a start, the pilot programme saw Japanese Muslim youth coming to Malaysia on a return Japan-Malaysia ticket, paid either by themselves or by their parents/guardian. Ground costs of experiencing Malaysian Muslim life, which included accommodation, food, ground transport and visits to interesting places were covered by the Malaysian hosts.

It was hoped that each Japanese student would be able to bond with their respective host families, and that this visit would be akin to planting the seeds for a long-term relationship between student and host families, beyond the visit itself. The aim was for these youth to see for themselves how good, practising Muslim families lead their lives normally.

Since most Japanese speak only Japanese, communication was expected to be an issue throughout the present study. The researcher had identified four suitable persons who were available throughout the present study as full-time interpreters. The present study, the Japan-Malaysia Youth Cultural Exchange Programme 2019 Itinerary is shown in Table 1. The itinerary was based on consultation with Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre (CICC), designed as such so that the youth could gain insights about Islam and how Muslims live, not by sitting in a lecture hall for hours on end, but by spending time with practising Muslims and getting to know them at a personal level. Promotion of the programme and selection of students were carried out in Japan by the Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre (CICC), the Muslim Association of Shizuoka and the Osaka Islamic Centre. The programme was promoted for a month. A maximum of not

more than 20 students were considered as it was a pilot project. The bigger it was, the harder it would have been to handle any arising issues especially emergencies.

3.1.1 Observation

There are several reasons why the researcher opted to apply ethnography as the method of choice for this study. First of all, ethnography allows the researcher, as a non-participant observer, to watch and scrutinise the participants and conduct interviews to gather and analyse data. In non-participant observation, the researcher quietly "observes the subjects from a distance without interacting with them" (Silverman, 2016, p. 104). Secondly, all of the youth are Japanese Muslims; they are a "single culture-sharing group", which makes them suitable for an ethnographic research (Creswell, 2018, p. 186). Thirdly, the researcher would be physically present, together with the participants, throughout all events of the Cultural Exchange Programme, the research period, allowing her to witness first-hand the daily experiences of participants. Through observation, the researcher could gain understanding of the context of the participants' behaviours and discover things which the participants might not like to mention during interviews. This is the norm of an ethnographic study as highlighted by Fraenkel & Wallen (1990, cited in Creswell, 2018, p. 204). As a non-participant observer, the researcher needs to find out what is going on. To achieve this, she must be as discrete and unobtrusive as possible, so that the participants feel comfortable to be themselves and do not feel compelled to act otherwise. Participants in an ethnographic study bring their own personal histories and as a result, will form their own meanings as they mingle with one another.

3.1.2 In-Depth Interviews

The interviews used in this research project are open-ended. Open-ended questions give ample room for participants to express themselves in rich, descriptive words. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to examine and identify themes and patterns in the responses of the participants, which would have been missed if the quantitative approach was applied (Creswell, 2018, p. 188). As human experiences are subjective and differs from person to person, the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gather rich, detailed data, and therefore gain more in-depth insights pertaining to the experience of participants, what the participants felt and did (Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2018). Data gathered and reported is in the form of words, not in numbers (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The present study focuses on participants' perceptions and experiences, and the meanings these perceptions and experiences bring to their lives. The present study, therefore, casts the spotlight on the process and outcomes. For this purpose, the researcher pays attention to detail rather than make generalisations, in an attempt to create realities that mirror those of the participants. If a quantitative approach was used, the researcher would have been limited to numeric data and close-ended questions. Close-ended questions would not have enabled the researcher to collect rich and descriptive information with regards to what the participants felt and did. The researcher hopes that this study would provide a legitimate basis for future related studies. The key instrument in this research was the researcher.

3.2 Identifying Suitable Host Parents

In this research, host parents and families played a critical role in shaping the experience of the participants. Several past studies on cultural exchange programmes have highlighted the need to identify suitable host parents and families failing which,

the programme would not have succeeded. For example, host parents and families must be mindful of cultural sensitivities (Kobayashi & Viswat, 2015, Kinginger et. al., 2016 & Kinginger et. al., 2014). Host parents and families must be aware that a minimum level and amount of interactions are needed before cultural sensitivity could take place (Martinsen, 2011). Also, if the host parents and family members do not extend their presence during the programme, it would be difficult, even impossible for the participants to come into contact with the community and other established local networks (Castanēda & Zirger, 2011), thereby making it non-immersive as originally intended (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). In fact, such circumstances would have rendered the present research ineffective and possibly failing its objectives.

The researcher sought to look for suitable host parents by posting a personal enquiry in a closed *Whatsapp* group, whose membership comprised of people the researcher had known well for many years. When the researcher needed to look for more host parents, she posted enquiries in her Qur'an study groups. The researcher interviewed the interested parties over the telephone to ascertain their personal and professional background. Potential host parents who passed the initial interview were asked to send photos of the relevant rooms and bathrooms of their homes where they planned to host the Japanese Muslim youth. These information and photos were shared with CICC, the official organiser. In this way, the researcher approached and interviewed host parents individually to ensure their integrity and suitability.

3.3 Encapsulating the Study

This section encapsulates the nine key components relevant to the ethnographic research design (Creswell, 2018, p. 203-210).

3.3.1 Setting

The main locations of the research were in the city of Kuala Lumpur and its vicinity, as shown in Table 1. As the day-to-day itinerary in the Cultural Exchange Programme was rather intense and involved locations mostly in Kuala Lumpur, the researcher recruited host parents who lived in Kuala Lumpur itself. If a host parent lived outside of Kuala Lumpur, it would have taken a long time for the host parent to ensure that the participant he or she was hosting reached the intended locations, causing delays to the entire group. The timeline for this research is shown in Table 3.2.

3.3.2 Actors

There were several actors in this research: official organiser, co-organisers, participants, host parents, partner organisations, Malaysian youth volunteers, and Malaysian interpreters.

- a. Organiser: The official organiser for this study was the Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre (CICC).
- b. Co-organisers: The researcher and her spouse acted as co-organisers under their small private company, MyriadVentures Enterprise.
- c. Japanese Muslim participants: The population in this research were Japanese Muslim youth whose ages were between 15-23 years old, residing in different locations in Japan, which meant they were either students in high school or university. These youth lived in Japan with their families, having access to social media, as the promotion of the Cultural Exchange Programme was carried out over Facebook, Instagram and other available social media channels by the official organiser of the programme, the Chiba Islamic Cultural

Centre (CICC), based in Chiba, Japan. The sampling comprised of 8 males and 1 female Japanese Muslim youth, who were able to afford the Japan- Malaysia return flight and travel/medical insurance. The youth were required to apply through an online application form whereby they must state their personal particulars and the reasons why they wished to participate in the programme, which helped the researcher and the official organiser determine their suitability for the programme.

d. Host parents: All were Muslims. All were Malaysians, the majority belonged to the Malay ethnic group, except for one parent who was Singaporean, and one couple who belonged to the Pakistani-Indian ethnic group. Host parents had the means to cover all ground costs of the students they would be hosting – accommodation, transport and tickets to interesting places as laid out in the itinerary.

e. Partner organisations: Several establishments lent their support to the study: Islamic Science University Malaysia (USIM), Dr Zainol's Halal Chicken factory, Radiant Retreats Janda Baik, Saujana Janda Baik, *Kejiranan Rukun Tetangga* (KRT) Parklane Heights Bandar Tasik Puteri Rawang, Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIT), National Mosque, Islamic Arts Museum, Surau Dagang Avenue Ampang, and Islamic International University Malaysia.

f. Malaysian youth volunteers: These were mainly the children of the host family. During the outing to Janda Baik, several postgraduate students from National University of Malaysia (UKM) participated in the events carried out.

g. Malaysian interpreters: There were four fulltime interpreters, two males and two females, all volunteers.

3.3.3 Events

The full itinerary throughout the Cultural Exchange Programme is as detailed below.

Table 3.1: Itinerary of Cultural Exchange Programme

Day/Date	Time	Purpose	Location	Activity
Saturday Day 1 17/8/2019	Before Noon		KLIA /KLIA2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival at host family house. • Rest and Easy
	5:00 pm	Programme Overview	Ampang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming Dinner • Programme Briefing
Sunday Day 2 18/8/2019	10.00 am	Cultural Experience & Local	Rawang, Selangor (1.5 hours from KL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook local dishes & lunch • Serve the poor folks
		Networking Develop Leadership Skills		
Monday Day 3 19/8/2019	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Understanding of Islamic Knowledge	Dr Zainol's Halal Chicken Factory, Kajang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on halal industry and tour of organic factory plus lunch https://azzainmart.com/ayam-dr-zainol
	1.00 pm – 5.30 pm	Leadership and Academic Institution	USIM (Islamic Science University Malaysia, Nilai) (1 hour from KL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islamic Centre, Japan Cultural Centre, Faculty of Leadership & Management, USIM • Friendly zakat board game with USIM https://www.usim.edu.my

Table 3.1: continued

Day/Date	Time	Purpose	Location	Activity
Tuesday Day 4 20/8/2019	9.00 am – 1.00 pm	Develop Basic Leadership Skills	Janda Baik, Pahang (1 hour from KL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local village: Event to be cofacilitated by Radiant Retreat (obstacles, fishing, crazy golf, archery, puzzle games) http://radiant-retreats.com/
	2.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Cultural Experience & Local Networking		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fig Farm (Benefigs) and Saujana Janda Baik riverside homestay https://www.facebook.com/benefigs.official/ http://www.saujanajandabaik.com/
Wednesday Day 5 21/8/2019	10.00 am - 12.00 pm	Cultural/ Islamic Knowledge	Kuala Lumpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islamic Arts Museum https://www.iamm.org.my/
	1.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Academic Institution & Networking & Local Culture with Japanese lecturers	Malaysia- Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIT), KL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch and Pray Masjid UTM (next to MJIT) Highlight on Japanese learning institution, collaboration with Malaysia. https://mjiit.utm.my/
Thursday Day 6 22/8/2019	9.00 am - 1.00 pm	Cultural/ Islamic Knowledge	Kuala Lumpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islamic Arts Museum https://www.iamm.org.my/
	5.00 pm - 7.00 pm	Multicultural Experience	National Mosque Surau Dagang Avenue, Ampang, KL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitation and tentative meeting with Tun Mahathir (subject to PM's availability) http://www.perdana.org.my Breaking fast & dinner with locals at surau https://www.facebook.com/suraudagangavenue/
	7.00 pm - 8.15 pm	Present Japan & Networking	Surau Dagang Avenue, Ampang, KL	

Table 3.1: continued

Day/Date	Time	Purpose	Location	Activity
	8.15 pm - 9.30 pm	Develop Basic Leadership Skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese youth share their culture with the local community
Friday Day 7 23/8/2019	11.00 am – 2.00 pm	Academic Knowledge	Islamic International University, Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of IIUM and enrolment requirement • Friday Prayer http://www.iium.edu.my/institute/istac
	2.30 pm – 5.00 pm	Multicultural Experience	Kuala Lumpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and Easy
	5.00 pm - 7:30 pm	Programme concludes Post Evaluation	Selected Host Parent's House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farewell dinner & post-mortem
Saturday Day 8 24/8/2019	Various timings		KLIA/ KLIA2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to Japan

3.3.4 Processes

The step-by-step processes carried out from the time the idea was conceived, followed by discussions between the Malaysian co-organisers and the official organiser in Japan, to obtaining support from two other Muslim associations in Japan, to securing support and commitment from host parents, to preparing digital documents, to briefing for host parents, to carrying out the actual Cultural Exchange Programme to the writing of this thesis is shown below.

Table 3.2: Cultural Exchange Programme Research Timeline

No.	Month	Remarks
1.	March 2019	•Introduced idea of Japan-Malaysia Youth Cultural Exchange Programme to the Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre (CICC), who agreed to become the official sponsor.
2.	April/May 2019	•Sought and obtained support from Shizuoka Muslim Association and Osaka Muslim representative.
3.	May 2019	• <i>Whatsapp</i> group formed for Malaysian host parents, and representatives from Chiba, Osaka and Shizuoka. Discussed main objectives. •Presented draft itinerary. Began contacting and securing support from "gatekeepers" of places of interest. Host parents confirmed participation. •CICC created a poster, began to promote programme to interested youths.
4.	June 2019	•Prepared digital documents: Host Parent Application Form, Student Application Form, Student Declaration, Joining Instructions for Students. Documents translated into Japanese where necessary. •Applied for MAA Takaful in Malaysia for all applicants for the purpose of Islamic medical/accident/travel insurance.
5.	July 2019	•Briefing for host parents. •Creation of LINE group for Japanese and Malaysian youth volunteers for ease of communication, entirely in Japanese.
6.	August 2019	•Japanese youth arrived, welcomed by host parents at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Cultural Exchange Programme conducted, Host parents bade farewell at same airport on final day.
7.	September 2019	•Feedback collected from Japanese youth, Malaysian volunteers & host parents.
8.	December 2019	•Thesis writing in progress.

3.3.5 Ethical Considerations

The list of research participants and their corresponding host parents are as shown below. Each participant gave the organisers their informed consent by signing a consent form. Informed Consent is an ethical practice required for research that uses human subjects, to show that their participation is voluntary and that they are aware of

their participation in the research. The researcher also must undertake the responsibility of ensuring that all personal data shared by participants remain confidential.



Table 3.3: List of Research Participants & Host Parents

No.	Pesudonym	Gender	Age	Location	Level of English	School	Grade	Host Parents' Pesudonym	Address
1	Yuta	Male	20	Osaka	Low	Kyoto Sangyo University	High School 2	Mr Ahmad & Mrs Rosila	Ampang
2	Daiki	Male	17	Saitama	Low	Eimei High School	High School 2	Mr Faruq & Mrs Sabariah	Ampang
3	Kaito	Male	16	Fukuoka	Excellent	Ohori Senior High School	High School 2	Mr Azim & Mrs Wani	Gombak
4	Riku	Male	17	Chiba	Low	Tokai University Urayasu Senior High School	High School 2	Mr Azim & Mrs Wani	Gombak
5	Kawai	Male	19	Gifu Ken	Low	Japan Pan Sougo Business Senmon School	High School 1	Mr Zakwan & Mrs Ani	Shah Alam
6	Haruto	Male	19	Chiba	Low	Chiba Prefecture Urayasu High School	High School 3	Mr Zakwan & Mrs Ani	Shah Alam
7	Tatsuki	Male	18	Aichi	Intermediate	Nanzan Kokusai Senior & Junior High School	High School 3	Mr Faruq & Mrs Sabariah	Ampang
8	Marisi	Female	15	Kanagawa	Low	Tochigi Gakuen	High School 1	Mr Musa & Mrs Amin	Shah Alam
9	Tokuda	Male	17	Kyoto	Low	Hokuryo High School	High School 2	Mr Musa & Mrs Amin	Shah Alam

In anticipation of potential issues pertaining to medico-legal matters, the researcher created a digital document called the Student Declaration Form. This form was filled by the visiting Japanese youth before they flew to Malaysia. In the Student Declaration Form, the students or their parents/guardians (for minors) proactively absolved host parents from responsibility to cover medical costs in the event that something untoward happens e.g. accidents or serious illness. Specifically, the Student Declaration Form asks every applicant to respond to the following statements:

- a. "I agree that the Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre (CICC) and the Malaysian host families will be exempted from responsibility or accountability in case of sickness and accidents and loss in the entire programme including the trip between Japan and Malaysia." (Yes/No).
- b. "I hereby absolve liability of the host families or organisers for sickness, accidents or unforeseen circumstances. I acknowledge that no claims will be made by me or on my behalf in relation to this programme." (Yes/No).
- c. "In case of an emergency, I hereby authorise the host families/organisersto take what they deem as necessary action including seeking urgent medical help, and I agree that I will be responsible for the medical bills and related costs." (Yes/No).
- d. "I will not make any claims against the host families/organisers for any damages caused and expenses incurred for medical bills." (Yes/No).
- e. "I confirm that I have overseas insurance and instructions for who to contact in case of emergency." (Yes/No). (State name of the insurance, and contact information below).
- f. Signed on this day/date:
- g. (Signature - to be signed by parent/guardian in case of minor)

h. Urgent contact number (parent or responsible adult other than participant)

The researcher created an online feedback form for host parents and participating Japanese youth. The feedback form asks for:

- a. Email address
- b. What the person liked about the programme
- c. Suggestions for improvement
- d. If the person would like to participate in future programmes (Yes/No)

A banner to welcome the Japanese students on arrival was designed and printed. The e-version of this banner is enclosed in Appendix 1. The Day-to-Day Report of the Cultural Exchange Programme is shown in Appendix 2. The summary of digital documents used in this research is listed in Appendix 3.

3.3.6 Online Application & Feedback Forms

The potential host families were approached individually. Each host parent was required to fill up the online Host Parent Application Form, and provide personal details as well as details of their family members. Based on the information given, the researcher properly matched them with incoming Japanese youth in terms of age and interests, where possible. Specifically, the Host Parent Application Form asked for the host parent's:

- a. Email address
- b. Full name
- c. IC / Passport Number
- d. Full home address

- e. Job designation
- f. Telephone number
- g. Have you ever been a host parent before? (Yes/No)
- h. How many children do you have? Please state their gender(s) and age(s)
- i. Tell us why you wish to participate in this programme
- j. What are your expectations of this programme?
- k. Please state any pertinent information you would like the organiser to know
- l. Informed Consent: Would you allow your responses to be used to research ways to improve the Cultural Exchange Programme in future?(Yes/No)

In this research, the researcher studied the shared patterns of behaviours, language and actions of the observed intact group that comprised of nine Japanese Muslim youth; eight males and one female. Participants' goals and expectations were gathered prior to their arrival in Malaysia using the Student Application Form.

Specifically, the Student Application Form asked for the youth's:

- a. Email address
- b. Full name
- c. Passport ID
- d. Nationality
- e. Date of birth
- f. Gender (male/female)
- g. Name of high school/university
- h. Grade in high school/university
- i. Present address
- j. Telephone number

- k. Level of English proficiency (low/intermediate/excellent)
- l. Special needs (food allergies/vegetarian/none)
- m. Personal belief: (Muslim/Christian/Buddhist/Shintoist/Atheist/Other)
- n. Tell us why you wish to participate in this programme
- o. What are your expectations for this programme?
- p. Informed Consent: Would you allow your responses to be used to research ways to improve the Cultural Exchange Programme in future? (Yes/No).

All the above details were collected to allow the researcher to gather accurate background information about both the Malaysian host parents and Japanese Muslim participants to ensure only suitable participants were selected. The participant information also helped the researcher to identify goals and expectations of all participants and to see if these would change after the programme.

The Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre (CICC), the official organiser for the Cultural Exchange Programme, completed the processing and screening for the Japanese youth using the Student Application Form which the researcher created and which the CICC translated into Japanese. These digital records were used to match each Japanese youth with suitable host parents.

Upon completion of the programme, after they have returned to Japan, all participants were required to submit written responses to interview questions via the online Student Feedback Form. This step was taken to assist the researcher to identify shared themes as well any changes in thoughts and perspectives among the Japanese Muslim youth. Specifically, the Student Feedback Form asked for the youth's:

- a. Email address
- b. Full name
- c. What he or she liked about the programme
- d. Suggestions for improvements
- e. If he or she would participate in future programmes
- f. The top 3 things he or she learnt during the programme
- g. One thing he or she would do differently upon returning to Japan

The feedback format for the Student Feedback is done in such a way as to allow detailed, in-depth responses which were then used as data to gauge the outcomes of the programme.

3.3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

This research is inductive in that the researcher used the data gathered from in-depth, open-ended interviews as well as non-participant observations to form the themes using the Concept of *Al-ta'āruf* as an intercultural *da'wah* approach from past research mapped in the Conceptual Framework. The researcher was physically present together with all participants throughout the Cultural Exchange Programme to observe their responses to the events. The researcher also collected the participants' verbal feedback about the Programme during the Farewell Dinner. Each participant was given between 3 to 5 minutes to share with the organisers, co-organisers and host parents and families, what they think and feel about the programme. With the exception of one Japanese Muslim youth, all of them presented their verbal feedback in Japanese. The four interpreters on standby then took turns to translate the gist of their feedback to the

audience. The open-ended questions enabled the researcher to collate all the verbal and online feedback, check them for consistency, and analysed them for recurring themes.

3.3.8 Verification

To ensure the validity of the data analysis, the researcher adopted the following strategies from Creswell (2018, p. 199):

1. The researcher managed the researcher's bias by reflecting on her own personal and professional background, being extra careful in interpreting what she observed, particularly from the cultural angle, to minimise personal biases from influencing data analysis. Further, her self-reflection was aimed at bringing an honest and open narrative to this programme.
2. The researcher cross-checked and examined data from verbal sources (presented during the farewell dinner) against data from online interviews (submitted by participants after they have returned to Japan) to ensure consistency and justification for the themes.
3. The researcher used rich, thick descriptions for the findings to help create a sense of shared experiences for the reader, so that the reader feels transported to the setting and connect with the actors and the day-to-day events of the programme as much as possible.
4. The researcher presented negative information about Japanese youth who participated in a cultural exchange programme in America, whereby the youth did not report a positive experience, attributed to a lack of understanding by both the youth and American host families concerning hospitality concepts in Japan and America. Americans expect their guests to be more self-reliant,

whereas Japanese have superior-inferior relationships. Hence, a short-term cultural exchange programme does not necessarily create positive experiences.

5. The researcher spent a prolonged period with the Japanese Muslim youth throughout the Cultural Exchange Programme. In fact, she was present during all events to observe them. The only times she was not with them was in the evenings when they had to return to their host families' homes.
6. The researcher used peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of accounts and results of analysis. The representative from Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre, the official organiser, was present together with the researcher and her spouse to keep checking on their observations and perceptions about the Japanese youth, to help ensure the programme progressed as planned.

3.3.9 Reporting the Findings

As this study is naturalistic in nature, the results are displayed in descriptive, narrative form. Thus, the experiences of the Japanese Muslim youth are presented in rich accounts, not as a scientific report. A rich narrative in which the researcher shares the participant's voices as well as her observations, is the ideal platform to present a comprehensive and clear picture of what the youth experienced, what transpired throughout the programme, as well as the meanings the youth attributed to these experiences. A rich narrative would be best to help the reader connect with the participants' experiences. The analysis and findings of this ethnographic research are presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

3.4 Conclusion

In this research, the intercultural *da'wah* approach applied the *Al-ta'aruf* Concept to create an innovative alternative to reach out to second generation Japanese Muslim minority youth. The second generation Japanese Muslim youth grow up in a highly challenging environment which does not encourage them to practice Islam as adults; researchers need to look into more effective ways of engaging with them. If proven successful, the intercultural *da'wah* approach based on the *Al-ta'aruf* Concept may be applied to other minority Muslim communities residing in different parts of the world, connecting Muslim families and communities in different nations, with the clear objective of growing a worldwide community of Muslim youth who are confident with their Muslim identity.

