

# Advantages of semi-structured interviews



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The interviews can be recording-based such that the interviewer can transcript the tapes later that is in case the interview happened to have diverged from the interview guide (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006).

The interviews act as good sources of comparable and reliable qualitative data.

The interviews questions are prepared in advance such that the interviewer is able to internalize all that the interview entails (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) and thus he/she conducts the interview with much competence.

The respondents are offered the freedom to give their insights and views in the most convenient ways (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006).

### 3. 7. 1. 2. 2 Disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

The interviews may sometime be costly in terms of the resources required (tape recorders (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006).

The interviews may be time consuming (Itika, 2005).

### 3. 7. 1. 2. 3 Choice of semi-structured interviews

Albeit the disadvantages accompanied with semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection, they were selected in this study due to the fact that they offer convenience in data collection (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006).

The convenience can be attributed to the ability for the interviews to be carried out via a phone call (Itika, 2005). The respondents especially in the top and middle managerial were hardly in the office and therefore it was

easier to interview them at the time of their convenience. Some of them were even interviewed past work hours since they had been very busy.

### 3. 7. 1. 3 Design of Interview questions

The questions in the interview questionnaire were designed based on the relevance of each and every one of them to meet the major aim and objectives of this study. The questions were thus formulated to in line with the themes of research. In this case, the major themes were: SMEs Growth management; Factors affecting SMEs growth; Growth strategies; Growth models in SMEs; PPM tools in growth management; and Roles of PPM tools in growth management. Further details of these questions are discussed in section 5. 2. 1 of this dissertation.

### 3. 7. 1. 4 Qualitative data

Qualitative data is the type of data that deals with the description of a given aspect. In this case, it can only be observed but cannot be measured it thus represents nominal scales and can't undergo any statistic manipulations (Joseph and Guillory, 2013). This data tends to answer the question ' what type?' (Karpatschhof, 2007). The semi-structured interviews applied in this study offer good sources of qualitative analysis based on the tonal variation of the interviewees.

#### 3. 7. 1. 4. 1 Merits of qualitative data

The data requires little time expenditure in the planning period.

The data can be highly reliable and even valid as long as the researcher is highly skilled and rigorous in the field of study (Myers and Well, 2003).

It offers a deep type of information on the subject matter in most cases.

The data offers more personal (subjective) results in most studies undertaken though this makes it lowly generalizable (Joseph and Guillory, 2013).

It is a good remedy to prejudgments of that may arise from quantitative data analysis (i. e. in a framework where both data sets are employed).

### 3. 7. 1. 4. 2 Demerits of qualitative data

The data requires much time expenditure during analysis.

The data collection has semi-structured or unstructured options of response which means there arises much difficulty during analysis (Joseph and Guillory, 2013).

### 3. 7. 2 Data sampling

#### 3. 7. 2. 1 Background of selected firms

The considered case study Korean SMEs can be presented in terms of their Key Performance Indicators (KPI). These are performance indicators which offer a means to measure and also monitor the parameters that affect the organizations efficiency directly whether the company in general or a specific sector within the organization (Kaganski et al., 2013). In this study, due to limitations of accessibility of the companies' information, the number

of employees and the annual turnover are the key indicators of performance indicators used. These factors are however advantageous since they will help compare the sizes of the two companies considered in this study. These two major indicators have been outlined in the next two paragraphs.

The first SME considered for the study is the Wedding Ritz (Firm A). This is a company that has been in operation in the Korean Wedding sector for the last two decades. It had a turnover of approximately £8. 2M as of the year 2014 and has 41members of staff. The firm is located in Seoul, Korea. They offer services that involve reporting, photography, motion graphic designs and wedding consultancy. In this case they assist in planning, implementation and finalization of wedding activities (Weddingritz. com, 2016).

The second firm considered in this research was Kohit Wedding (Firm B). The firm just entered the market recently and is hardly a decade old. The firm was in this study considered to be a smaller SME in comparison to Wedding Ritz. This is because; Wedding Ritz has 41 employees whereas Kohit Wedding has 20 employees. Notably, the firm (Kohit) had a turnover of £5. 9M as of 2014. It majorly operates within Korea and has not yet generated operations to new markets. The firm offers studio services, makeup, and hairstyle and clothing services for their customers (Kohitwedding. com, 2016).

### 3. 7. 2. 2 Participants

The researcher considered to incorporate 12 interviewees for this study. The participants were majorly in the management positions of the respective

firms considered in this study and were further divided into various groups depending on the level of management. Specific questions were directed towards the target audience depending on the level in management the audience were. Table 5 gives a clear depiction of the number and type of participants incorporated in the study.

Table 5: Participants considered for this study

Type of participant	Number of participants
Top management	2
Middle management	4
Lower management	6

Top

managem 2

ent

Middle

managem 4

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Lower

managem 6

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3. 7. 2. 3 Sampling strategies

The number (12) of employees considered for the study was considered a good number to provide enough information for the study. The further

division into three categories as listed in table 5 was to ensure validity of the study as an academic research. To recruit these participants, two types wedding SMEs in Korea were sampled; top wedding SME (Firm A) and newly set wedding SME (Firm B). They (SMEs) were chosen based on the size of the firms in that those with the largest number of employees were assumed to have the longest time (age) in existence within the Korean market, largest financial gains and therefore been considered to be big size.

In other words, big size in this case meant a big experience in the market and thus a big scope in the market and most importantly, a good stride in the growth phases' models for SMEs (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). On the other hand, the SMEs with new entry into the market (age) were taken to be small in size and were assumed to be less experienced in the market sector. Further, the small firms were assumed to be experiencing more crisis/difficulties as they strive to grow. The idea was to get a grasp of the growth strategies applied by the two 'extremes' of SMEs in the wedding sector and get a comparison of the same so that a significant generalization of the entire Korean Wedding sector was obtained.

The main ethical issues considered in this recruitment were ensuring transparency between the researcher and the respondents. In this case any act of deception from either party was to be considered an offense. The interview's purpose was therefore clearly communicated and the boundaries of response set before any of interviews was conducted. In addition to this, as mentioned earlier, the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents' answers to the various questions was ensured so as to avoid the arousal of any related ethical issues. Further, to ensure the effectiveness and reliability

of the interviews for this study, the questions were well framed and researched for before they were asked to the interviewees. This ensured that the interviewer and the interviewee had a well-informed consent concerning the studies objectives and repercussions (Blakstad, 2008).