QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION TOOL: A NEW APPROACH TO DEVELOPING AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to review the existing process for the development of an interview guide as an essential tool for qualitative in-depth interviews. It presents the concept of an in-depth interview, the concept of an interview guide, the current process of developing an interview guide and the weaknesses of the present process. This identified a new approach to the development of an interview guide and so a new interview guide was created and is presented. Conclusions and recommendations are also presented.

KEYWORDS

Qualitative Research, Data Collection Methods, In-depth Interview, Interview Guide.

INTRODUCTION

Data is one of the most important elements of any research project. We can argue that there is no research if there is no data as researchers rely on data in order to answer their research questions and objectives (Joungtrakul, 2010). To have a quality research result we must have quality data. To have quality data we have to have quality tools or instruments for obtaining such data. In quantitative research, researchers rely mostly on questionnaires which are

constructed and are usually based on the literature review as a major tool in collecting quantitative data. The researchers pose questions and come up with answers to each question and usually ask the respondents to choose from a list of possible answers provided by the researcher. The respondents are asked to choose from amongst those answers that mostly suit their thinking, beliefs, opinions or personal attitude. So, the answers provided by the respondents might not necessarily be that of a respondent if he or she could express his answer without being required to choose from a list of alternatives. In fact they are then really the researcher's own answers. In order to assure the quality of the questionnaires researchers must ensure the quality both in terms of validly and reliability through the normal statistical process. Therefore, researchers rely on statistical measurements to ensure the quality of the questionnaires as their major tool or instrument for their quantitative data collection both in terms of validity and reliability. Quantitative researchers also use other types of data collection instruments such as observation sheets or checklists, and quantitative interviews which are normally similar to their quantitative questionnaires.

In contrast, in qualitative research, although there are five major qualitative data collection methods which are: (1) interview; (2) observation; (3) participation; (4) participant observation; and (5) document review (Creswell, 2007; Joungtrakul, 2010), the interview is the most important method among these. It was argued by Chadwick (1984) that interviewing is "one of the most basic forms of data gathering" (p.103). An interview is used in most qualitative research projects no matter what qualitative strategies are being used i.e.: (1) narrative; (2) phenomenology; (3) grounded theory; (4) ethnography; and (5) case study (Creswell, 2007). A similar concept is applied in qualitative data collection. In order to have quality data we must also have one or more quality data collection tools.

As interview is the most common data collection method so this paper concentrates on how to construct or develop a tool to use for interviews in order to collecting quality data in qualitative research. The paper then begins with an introduction and follows this with the presentation of the concept of an interview. The guide to the concept of an interview as a major tool used as a guideline in conducting in-depth interviews which are the major types of interviews in qualitative research is presented followed by the process of developing an interview guide and the a new approach to developing such a guide is presented. Conclusions and recommendations follow. The literature contained in the concept and process sections of this paper are adapted from Joungtrakul (2009).

THE CONCEPT OF AN INTERVIEW

It was argued that "it seems that everyone, not just social researchers, rely on the interview as a source of information, with the assumption that interviewing results represent true and accurate pictures of respondents' selves and lives" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.646). The interview is now being used in several ways. At present, in our daily lives, "one cannot escape being interviewed; interviews are everywhere, in the forms of political polls, questionnaires about doctor's visits, housing applications, forms regarding social service eligibility, college applications, talk shows, news programs - the list goes on and on" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.646). Our society is now becoming an "interview society." The 'interview society' is a universal phenomenon as its applications are similar all over the

world (Chadwick, 1984; Joungtrakul, 2010). The interview "as applied in social science research may differ in format or objective from some of these other kinds of interviews, but many of the principles of conducting a successful interview are the same whether the context is a research project or a lawyer-client exchange" (Chadwick 1984, p.103).

Whiteley *et al.*. (1998) argues that the qualitative research interview is "a communicative action in which the principal focus is placed on eliciting feedback so that the message sent seeks to confirm its meaning to the receiver" (p.6). It is a "conversation with a purpose" (Berg, 1998, p. 57). The purposes of interviews, include: (1) obtaining here-and-now constructions of persons, events, activities, organizations, feelings, motivations, claims, concerns, and other entities; (2) reconstructions of such entities as experienced in the past; (3) projections of such entities as they are expected to be experienced in the future; (4) verification, emendation, and extension of information (constructions, reconstructions, or projections) obtained from other sources, human and nonhuman (triangulation); and (5) verification, emendation, and extension of constructions developed by the inquirer (member checking) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Types of Interviews: According to Fontana and Frey (2000) interviews "include a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses" (p. 645). The most common form of interviewing involves individual, face-to-face verbal interchange and it can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The structured interview is often referred to as a focused interview and unstructured interviews most resemble narrative and conversation (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Joungtrakul, 2009). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) assert that for the purpose of qualitative research "the shape that an interview may take has been described in various ways" (p.81). One of the major differences that exist among interviews is "the amount of structure that the researcher imposes on the respondent" (Chadwick, 1984, p.104). It has been argued that "interviews range along a continuum from the highly structured interview schedule which permits no deviation to largely unstructured, undirected exploratory interviews" (p.104). Chadwick (1984) identified four characteristics of the nature of highly structured interview as follows: (1) it will usually contain a series of very specific questions that are to be read to the respondent, along with a set of predetermined response categories; (2) the working form and order of the questions is designed to be exactly the same for all respondents; (3) the respondents simply select one of the answers provided and the interviewer records that response in the appropriate place on the interview schedule; and (4) few, if any, open-ended items or questions are used. Chadwick (1984) further elaborates that "at the other end of the continuum is the exploratory interview, in which the interviewer is to explore a variety of pre-selected topics with the respondents but with little concern for asking specific questions in any pre-established format or sequence" (p.104). The interviewer does not use a predetermined standard set of questions to ask all respondents nor does not give any attention to developing response categories for the subject as practiced in a highly structured interview (Chadwick, 1984; Joungtrakul, 2009). It was argued that "between these two extremes are a variety of other ways of conducting interviews …" (Chadwick, 1984, p.104). He further said as follows:

> Near the more structured pole of the continuum might be an interview that includes specific questions but the interviewer asks them in a largely open-ended format. That is, questions but not response categories are predetermined. The

respondents are all asked the same questions but are given their freedom in answering them in the manner they choose. The researcher then is faced with the responsibility of coding the responses into categories for analysis. Nearer the other pole is the situation where the researcher has some rather specific topics that are to be covered, and these are included in an interview guide. However, the exact manner in which the questions are asked and their sequence are determined in the course of the interview itself. The guide is used to make sure that all of the issues of concern receive attention during the course of the encounter but the interview itself remains unstructured (p.104).

Patton (1990) offers three choices of approaches. The first approach is the informal conversational interview. This type of interview relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction, typically an interview that occurs as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork. The second approach offered by Patton is the general interview guide approach. It involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins. The third approach is the standardized open-ended interview. It consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words (Patton, 1990).

Berg (1998) also classifies the interview into three types. They are: (1) standardized interview: This type of interview uses a formally structured schedule of interview questions. The interviewers are required to ask subjects to respond to each question; (2) un-standardized interview. In contrast to the rigidity of standardized interviews, un-standardized interviews do not utilize schedules of questions; (3) semi-standardized interview: This is located somewhere between the extremes of completely standardized and completely un-standardized interviewing structures. This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics. These questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers and interviewees are allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions (Berg, 1998).

In general, qualitative interviews are "relatively loosely structured and open to what the interviewee feels is relevant and important to talk about, given the interest of the research project" (Alvesson, 2003, p.13). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) provide three main formats for an interview: the unstructured interview, the interview guide, and the interview schedule. The unstructured interview is an informal conversation initiated and guided by the researcher while in the field (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The purposeful conversation is not scripted in advance, but the researcher asks questions pertinent to the study as opportunities arise, then listens closely to people's responses for clues as to what question to ask next, or whether it is important to probe for additional information (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). An interview guide is "a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview" (Patton 1990, p.283), while "an interview format consisting of a detailed set of questions and probes is called an interview schedule" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.83).

In the structured interview, Lincoln and Guba assert that "the problem is defined by the researcher before the interview. The questions have been formulated ahead of time, and the

respondent is expected to answer in terms of the interviewer's framework and definition of the problem" (1985 p.208). To put it another way, the structured interview is "the mode of choice when the interviewer knows what she or he does not know and can therefore frame appropriate questions to find it out" (p.269).

A more highly structured format would also be selected "if the researcher desired to obtain the same basic set of information from all subjects and if a large sample of respondents was to be included in the study" (Chadwick, 1984, p.105). In the structured interview the questions are "in the hands of the interviewer and the response rests with the interviewee" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.169). "The interviewer controls the pace of the interview by treating the questionnaire as if it were a theatrical script to be followed in a standardized and straightforward manner" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 649). In the structured interview "there is very little flexibility in the way questions are asked or answered in the structured interview setting" (p.649). Normally an interview schedule consisting of a detailed set of questions and probes is used in the structured interview (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The major weakness of this type of interview according to Patton (1990) is that there is "little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardized wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers" (p.289).

In an unstructured interview, "the format is non-standardized, and the interviewer does not seek normative responses. Rather, the problem of interest is expected to arise from the respondent's reaction to the broad issue raised by the inquirer" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.268). It can provide "a greater breadth of data than the other types, given its qualitative nature" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.652). It does not utilize schedules of questions as in the structured interview. Interviewers begin with "the assumption that they do not know in advance what are all the necessary questions to ask. Consequently, they cannot predetermine fully a list of questions to ask (Berg, 1998, p. 61). Berg further argues that "they also assume that not all subjects will necessarily find equal meaning in like-worded questions - in short, that subjects may possess different vocabularies" (p.61). The unstructured interview, according to Lincoln and Guba, is "the mode of choice when the interviewer does not know what he or she doesn't know and must therefore rely on the respondent to tell him or her" (1985, p.269). In addition, both questions and answers are provided by the respondent in the unstructured interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the unstructured interview, Berg asserts that "interviewers must develop, adapt, and generate questions and follow-up probes appropriate to the given situation and the central purpose of the investigation" (1998, p. 61). This type of interview is best suited for "exploratory studies and for studies in which detailed information might be needed on more complex and detailed issues" (Chadwick, 1984, p.105).

Maykut and Morehouse assert that "whether unstructured interviews are conducted in the field or arranged, the contents of the interviews must be written down. [The] [i]nformal interviews in the field are reconstructed and entered into the researcher's field notes" (1994, p.83). They further assert that "arranged interviews are frequently audio tape-recorded, and if tape-recording is not desirable or possible, the researcher may take some notes during the interview and then reconstruct the interview afterwards" (p.83). Some of the weaknesses of this type of interview include: different information collected from different people with different questions; they are less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions do not arise "naturally"; and data organization and analysis can be quite difficult (Patton, 1990).

Each type of interview has its own strengths and weaknesses. The type of interview that the researcher chooses will be "determined by the particular research needs and the purposes of the research" (Chadwick, 1984, p.105). In order to choose an appropriate type of interview to be used as an effective data collection method in this research, a comparison is made among the three major qualitative interview types.

Patton argues that "the common characteristic of all three qualitative approaches to interviewing is that the persons being interviewed respond in their own words to express their own personal perspective" (1990, p.287). He further argues that "while there are variations in strategy concerning the extent to which the wording and sequencing of questions ought to be predetermined, there is no variation in the principle that the response format should be opened-ended" (pp.287-290). Based on Patton (1990) a comparative table of ach type of interview, its characteristics, and the strengths and weaknesses of each is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of three types of qualitative interview

Variations in Interview Instrumentation			
Type of Interview	*Characteristics*	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
(1) Informal conversational interview	Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording.	Increases the salience and relevance of questions; interviews are built on and emerge from observations; the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances.	Different information collected from different people with different questions. Less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions do not arise "naturally." Data organization and analysis can be quite difficult.
(2) Interview guide approach	Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; the interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview.	The outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.	Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses from different perspectives, thus reducing the comparability of responses.
(3) Standardized open-ended	The exact wording and sequence of questions	Respondents answer the same questions, thus	There is little flexibility in relating the

interview	are determined and respondents are asked the same basic questions in the same order. Questions are worded in a *completely* open-ended format.	increasing some com-parability of responses; data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview. This reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used. Permits evaluation by users to see and review the instrumentation used in the evaluation.	interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardized wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.
(4) Closed, fixed response interview	Questions and response categories are determined in advance. Responses are fixed; respondents choose from among these fixed responses.	Data analysis is simple; responses can be directly compared and easily aggregated; many questions can be asked in a short time.	Respondents must fit their experiences and feelings into the researcher's categories; these may be perceived as impersonal, irrelevant, and mechanistic. This can distort what respondents really mean or have experienced

Source: Adapted from Patton 1990, pp. 288-289 by Joungtrakul, 2009, pp. 108-109.

In-depth Interview: Each data collection method "best yields a particular type of information" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.138). They suggest that "the researcher should determine the most practical, efficient, feasible, and ethical methods for collecting data as the research progresses" (p.138). They further suggest that "in determining which method to use, the researcher should carefully examine the questions guiding the study: Many questions that appear to be 'how' questions are really 'how many' questions in disguise" (p.138). In order to obtain in-depth information, an in-depth interview is normally used as a data collection method in qualitative research. This is because in general, an interview is "a useful way to get a large amount of data quickly" (p.108). It also fosters face-to-face interaction with participants and is useful for uncovering participants' perspectives. It is a method for collecting data in a natural setting. It facilitates immediate follow-up for clarification and is useful for describing complex interactions. It facilitates discovery of nuances in culture and provides for flexibility in formulating hypotheses. It provides context information and facilitates analysis, validity checks, and triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The other strength "is the validity of the data obtained: individuals are interviewed in sufficient detail for the results to be taken as true, correct, complete and believable reports of their views and experiences" (Hakim, 2000, p.36).

Qualitative interviews are typically referred to as 'depth' or 'in-depth' interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). According to Marshall and Rossman, the "in-depth interviews are much more like conversation than formal events with predetermined

response categories" (1999, p.108). They further assert that "the researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's views but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses" (p.108). Kvale (1996) asserts that it is a conversation with structure and purpose. The in-depth interview can be classified as of three major types; the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, and the unstructured interview (Chadwick, 1984; Patton, 1990; Berg, 1998; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 2000). Based on Fontana and Frey (2000), the unstructured interview is usually used in qualitative research because it can provide a greater breadth of data than the other types, especially the structured interview. However, this research usually utilizes a semi-structured interview because it has the advantage of enabling the researcher to use techniques from both the structured and unstructured approaches (Hocking, 2002). At the same time questions can be specified but they can be open-ended allowing the researcher more freedom to explore and probe the issue (Hocking, 2002).

THE CONCEPT OF INTERVIEW GUIDE

An interview guide is an essential tool for conducting a semi-structured interview (Joungtrakul, 2010). The term "interview guide" is used interchangeably with "semi-structured" and "semi-standardized interview" when used as an interview approach (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Patton, 1990; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Berg, 1998). In the interview guide "the researcher has some specific topics that are to be covered, and they are included in this guide. However, the exact manner in which the questions are asked and their sequence are determined in the course of the interview itself" (Chadwick, 1984, p.105). An interview guide is "a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview" (Patton, 1990, p.283). Patton (1990) describes the interview guide as follows:

> An interview guide is prepared in order to make sure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously and to establish a conversational style - but with focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined (p.283).

An interview guide as defined by Patton is "a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview" (1990, p.283). A different term such as "interview protocol" may also be used (Creswell, 1998). It is different from an interview schedule (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). An interview guide is comprised of a relatively short set of topics (categories of inquiry) or a short set of broad open-ended questions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), while an interview schedule is comprised of many carefully constructed questions, follow-up questions or probes, and possibly other information seen as necessary for the interviewer. It is often substantially longer than an interview guide (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Patton asserts that interview guides can be "developed in more or less detail, depending on the extent to which the researcher is able to specify important issues in advance and the extent to which it is felt that a particular sequence of questions is important to ask in the same way or in the same order for all respondents" (1990, p.283). Creswell

suggests that an interview guide (protocol) should be "about four or five pages in length, with approximately five open-ended questions and ample space between the questions to write responses to the interviewee's comments" (1998, p.124). The interview guide format is "especially suitable for exploring phenomena through interviewing …" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.86). In addition the interview guide has some advantage over the interview schedule in a number of ways. For example, it makes sure that the interviewer has carefully decided how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation. It also helps make interviewing across a number of different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored (Patton, 1990).

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

The most critical part of creating an interview guide is how to develop appropriate questions (Chadwick, 1984). Chadwick emphasizes that "questions must be worded so that they will provide necessary data, and they must be asked in ways that motivate respondents to answer fully and honestly" (p.115). Chadwick further emphasizes that "if the wrong question is asked, or if a question is asked in such a way that the subject either cannot give an appropriate answer or is not motivated to do so, then the interview will not provide reliable data" (p.115).

Based on Patton (1990) there are basically six kinds of questions that can be asked of people in an interview. They are: (1) experience/behaviour questions: these questions are about what a person does or has done. They are aimed at eliciting descriptions of experiences, behaviours, actions, and activities that would have been observable had the observer been present; (2) opinion/values questions: these are questions aimed at understanding the cognitive and interpretive process of people. Answers to these questions tell us what people think about some issue. They tell us about peoples' goals, intentions, desires, and values; (3) feeling questions: these are questions aimed at understanding the emotional responses of people to their experiences and thoughts; (4) knowledge questions: knowledge questions are asked to find out what factual information the respondent has; (5) sensory questions: these are questions about what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelt. The purpose of these questions is to allow the interviewer to enter into the sensory apparatus of the respondent; and (6) background/demographic questions; these questions concern the identifying characteristics of the person being interviewed. Answers to these questions help the interviewer locate the respondent in relation to other people.

According to Chadwick, the central problem in asking questions, especially in an interview, is that of "adequate communication" (1984, p.115). It is important that the researcher must clearly communicate to the respondent what she or he wants to know (Chadwick, 1984). Chadwick (1984) and Berg (1998) suggest some common mistakes that should be avoided in developing interview questions. First is the double-barreled question. This type of question asks a respondent to respond to two issues (often quite unrelated) at the same time. This type of question creates analysis and interpretation problems. The second type is the complex question. A respondent usually has only a moment to consider how to answer, and in that limited time it is difficult to express one's opinion about a complex issue. The third mistake is the order of questions. The interviewer should begin with questions that are interesting to the respondent and at the same time are non-threatening and relatively easy to answer. Once

rapport and interest have been established and the pattern of question and answer has become "natural," the interviewer can proceed to the more complex or sensitive issues. The fourth type is the probe questions. It is almost always necessary to buttress central questions with supplementary probe questions which guarantee, to some extent, that even taciturn respondents will provide the essential minimum of detail. In large-scale studies the probes should be asked uniformly and at specified points so that all respondents have essentially the same "stimulus" presented for response. Chadwick argues that with the open-ended option, "respondents are encouraged to answer in their own words and to reveal their own definitions of the situation" (Chadwick, 1984, p.118). Chadwick further argues that "the interviewer's responsibility is to ask the question and to probe until the respondent has finished the relevant detail, and to record that detail as carefully and fully as possible" (p.118).

The process for development of this interview guide as adapted from Maykut and Morehouse (1994) by Joungtrakul (2009) comprises the following steps: (1) write out the focus of inquiry; (2) researcher lists of words, phrases, concepts, questions, topics that relate to the focus of inquiry; (3) analyse the listing for similarities, group similar ideas together, and describe each group of ideas with a word or phrase. These groups of ideas are potential 'categories of inquiry'; (4) decide which categories of inquiry to include in the interview; (5) make a final decision to develop an interview guide; (6) decide whether to reply on category descriptions or to develop broad open-ended questions for the interview format. Write each category or question on a separate index card to facilitate interview guide formatting; (7) put the category descriptions or broad questions derived from each selected category into a useful sequence; (8) prepare a draft of the interview guide, including at the beginning a personal introduction purpose statement, statement on confidentiality, a request for permission to audio-tape, and an explanation as to why the interviewee has been selected for interviewing; (9) present the interview guide to a panel of experts. The panel of experts is a group of people who can advise on the sort of questions relevant and appropriate to the design of the interview guide; (10) make any necessary revisions in the interview guide; and (11) begin interviewing.

It should be noted that one of the critical steps of developing and interview guide is the presentation of the draft of the interview guide to the expert panel as states in step nine. However, prior to such presentation the draft of the interview guide should be referred to a few academic experts for review and comment. A revision should be made based on feedback from the academic experts prior to submission to the expert panel meeting. An expert panel is brought into the process in order to ensure the quality of the interview guide. In addition Maykut & Morehouse (1994) assert that it is essential to "practice the interview with a few people who are similar to your intended sample and who will give you feedback on the interview guide and your skills as an interviewer (p. 84) The objective of this is to trial the interview guide (Berg, 1998). The trialing is to facilitate "the identification of poorly worded questions, questions with offensive or emotion-laden wording, or questions revealing the researcher's own biases, personal values, or blind spots" (p.71). The details procedures in establishing the expert panel is presented in (Joungtrakul, 2009).

A NEW APPROACH TO DEVLOPING AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

Having adapted the process of developing an interview guide by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) as indicated above and used by the authors and several of their colleagues and students in several research projects. It was found that the interview guides developed under the accepted process did not usually yield the expected information required. The authors then created a new approach to develop an interview guide (Joungtrakul, 2010) by replacing steps one to seven of the adapted process in the format specified in Table 2.

Table 2: A Sample of Appling a New Approach to Developing an Interview Guide

Research Qquestions	Research Objectives	Literature Review	Expected Information from Participant	Interview Questions as Guided by Patton (1990)	Selected Interview Questions	Reason to Select the Questions
1. What is the HR brand concept as perceived by key stake-holders? 2. What are the main elements of HR brand that influence to the success of HR brand building? 3. How is HR brand building developed in selected Thai companies?	1.To develop a clear under-standing of the HR brand concept in the view of the stakeholders of the 2009 Hewitt best employer companies in Thailand in those companies which were ranked highly as having good people, management policies and practices. 2. To determine the elements of HR brand that influences the success of HR brand building. 3. To explore how to develop the HR brand building process. In order to gain as comprehensive a perspective as possible, the research questions will investigate key stakeholders' viewpoints of the HR brand	- Brand and Branding Concept - Product and Corporate brands - Employer branding - HR and Branding Process - Organizational culture - Cultural dimension - HR competencies - HR and Branding Process - Organizational culture - Cultural dimension	- Knowledge about HR Brand from key stake-holders of selected companies. - HR Brand concept - Benefits of having HR Brand - Perspective of key stakeholder in co-creation of HR Brand. - Main elements of HR Brand - Process of HR brand building step by step. - Constraint or barriers	1. Have you ever heard of the term "HR brand"? * If so, in your opinion, could you please tell me what does it mean? 6. What do you plan for your HR brand in the future? 7. How will you achieve the plan? 8. What do the employees or top management tell you when you implement new HR programs? (for HR) / What do you think when HR launching new programs? (for Top Management and employee) 9. How do	1. Please tell me, what do you understand about the term "HR Brand"? 2. What do you think about the role of HR brand in Thai companies nowadays? 3. What does your company's HR brand look like? 4. Could you please tell me about the benefits of building an HR brand? 5. What do you plan for your HR brand in the future? 6. How will you achieve the plan? 7. What do the employees or top management tell you when you	- To understand the HR brand concept from the perspective of stakeholders. - To know the holistic view of what is HR in Thailand stands for. - To know the perspective of stakeholders about their HR organization. - To understand how HR brand is important as well as what benefits of building an HR Brand. - To understand brand positioning or brand vision - To understand the current HR practices or what HR stand for.

Research Qquestions	Research Objectives	Literature Review	Expected Information from Participant	Interview Questions as Guided by Patton (1990)	Selected Interview Questions	Reason to Select the Questions
	concept and the elements of it for building a successful HR branding strategy.			they feel about that? 10. In your opinion, what are the most important elements that influence the success of the development process of HR brand building? 11. What are the problems or obstacles in building an HR brand? 13. How do you build your HR brand in your company? 14. In building your company's HR brand, what is the first step? Could you please tell me the details of the brand building process? 15. Who is required to be involved in each step? 16. How long does it take for each step to be completed? 17. Do you have any other comments or	implement new HR programs? (for HR) / What do you think when HR launching new programs? (for Top Management and employee) * How do they feel about that? 8. In your opinion, what are the most important elements that influence the success of the development process of HR brand building? 9. What are the problems or obstacles in building a HR brand? 10. Do you have any suggestions to correct or overcome these problems? * Culture, Policy * Practical, Budget * Others 11. In building your company's HR brand, what is the	- To know what element of HR Brand for creating branding model - To understand what problems in building a brand - To explore more about HR brand that the questions may not cover all. - To know the step of branding. - To let the participants feel free to co-create a HR brand.

Research Qquestions	Research Objectives	Literature Review	Expected Information from Participant	Interview Questions as Guided by Patton (1990)	Selected Interview Questions	Reason to Select the Questions
			suggestions that might be beneficial to this research project?	first step? Could you please tell me the details of the brand building process? * Who is required to be involved in each step? * How long does it take for each step to be completed? 12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that might be beneficial to this research project?	

Source: Adapted from Aticomsuwan, 2010, by Joungtrakul, 2010, pp 289-293.

As displayed in Table 2, the new approach to developing an interview guide begins with taking into account of the research questions and objectives including the literature review. Based on these three items the researcher identifies what information or data is required to be used for analysis to answer the research questions and objectives. The researcher then develops a number of questions to be asked in order to get the information needed taking into account the six types of questions presented by Patton (1990). The researcher then selects the most suitable questions to be included in the draft of the interview guide. Finally the researcher justifies why the selected questions would yield the needed information. The remaining steps of the previously adapted process should then be applied including to try out the process by testing it. A sample of an interview guide derived from utilizing the new approach is displayed in Box 1.

Box 1: A Sample of an Interview Guide Derived from Applying the New Approach

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Interview Guide: HR Brand Building in Thailand

1. Please tell me, what do you understand about the term "HR Brand"?

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2. What do you think about the role of the HR brand in Thai companies nowadays?

3. What does your company's HR brand look like?

4. Could you please tell me about the benefits of building a HR brand?

5. What do you plan for your HR brand in the future?

6. How will you achieve the plan?

7. What do the employees or top management tell you when you implement new HR programs? (for HR professionals)What do you think when HR launches new programs? (for Top Management and employees)
   Probe Questions:
   • How do they feel about that?

8. In your opinion, what are the most important elements that influence the success of the development process of HR brand building?

9. What are the problems or obstacles in building a HR brand?

10. Do you have any suggestions to correct or overcome these problems?
    • Culture
    • Policy
    • Practical
    • Budget
    • Others

11. In building your company's HR brand, what is the first step? Could you please tell me the details of the brand building process?
    Probe Questions:
    • Who is required to be involved in each step?
    • How long does it take for each step to be completed?

12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that might be beneficial to this research project?

Source: Adapted from Aticomsuwan, 2010, by Joungtrakul, 2010, p. 296.

As displayed in Box 1, questions contained in the interview guide including the probe questions are chosen from the process of the developing the guide. Justification for choosing such questions provides rationale supporting the expected information to be obtained by using them in the interview.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Quality data is essential to all research but they are more critical in qualitative research where the data obtained and used is mostly in the form of the facts from statements instead of the figures used in quantitative research. In order to have the desired quality data it is essential that the researcher uses quality tools to obtain it. The major tool in collecting data in qualitative research is the interview guide (Joungtrakul, 2010). An interview guide is comparable to a gun and the data is comparable to a target. In general the quality gun should hit the target sharply and precisely. By the same token a quality interview guide should yield the quality data from interviews.

In this paper the authors present a new approach to developing an interview guide expected to help researchers to obtain quality data. However, a quality gun alone does not guarantee that the shooting would always hit the target. The skills of the shooter are a critical factor in

hitting the target. So a quality interview guide would not guarantee quality data. The interviewing skill of the researcher is therefore a critical factor for the assurance of obtaining quality data (Joungtrakul, 2010).

It is therefore recommended that researchers especially novice or inexperienced researchers should strictly follow the process of developing an interview guide and practice interviewing to develop their interviewing skills to ensure that they obtain a high quality of qualitative data which in turn will result in high quality research results.

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