

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter shall discuss the research methods available for the study and what is applicable for it to use in response for the statement of the problem in Chapter 1 which is directed towards the ability of Tesco's human resources management to motivate their employees in their respective workplaces.

Likewise, this chapter presents the various procedures and strategies in identifying sources for needed information on the analysis and evaluation of the human resources management of Tesco.

Thus this part of the study specifies the method of research used, research design, respondents of the study, data collection, instruments used, validation and administration of the instrument, conducted semi-structured interview, data representative and reliability, description of the study, statistical treatment of data and analysis of the gathered data.

Methods of Research Used

For this study, the descriptive research method was utilized. In this method, it is possible that the study would be cheap and quick. It could also suggest unanticipated hypotheses. Nonetheless, it would be very hard to rule out alternative explanations and especially infer causations. Thus, this study used use the descriptive approach. This

descriptive type of research utilizes observations in the study. To illustrate the descriptive type of research, Creswell (1994) guided the researcher when he stated: Descriptive method is to gather information about the present human resources management of Tesco in the United Kingdom.

The purpose of employing this method is to describe the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the cause/s of particular phenomena. The researcher opted to use this kind of research considering the desire of the researcher to obtain first hand data from the respondents so as to formulate rational and sound conclusions and recommendations for the study.

To come up with pertinent findings and provide credible recommendations, this study utilized two sources of research: primary and secondary. Primary research data were obtained through this new research study, in depth interviews were conducted. On the other hand, the secondary research data were obtained from previous studies on the same topic.

The Research Design

In order to come up with the most suitable research approaches and strategies for this study, the research process “onion” is used. This is because conducting a research is like peeling the back layers of an onion—in order to come to the central issue of how to collect the necessary data needed to answer the research questions and objectives, important layers should be first peeled away. With the said process, the researcher was able to create an outline on what measures are most appropriate to be applied in the study.

Saunders *et al* (2003) said that while it is not unusual for a researcher to first think of his research undertaking by considering whether one should, for instance, administer a questionnaire or conduct interviews, thoughts on this question should belong to the centre of

the research 'onion'. That is, in order to come to the central issue of how to collect the data needed to answer one's research questions, there are important layers of the onion that need to be peeled away: the first layer raises the question of the research philosophy to adopt, the second considers the subject of research approach that flows from the research philosophy, the third examines the research strategy most applicable, the fourth layer refers to the time horizon a researcher applies to his research, and the fifth layer is the data collection methods to be used.

Figure 1 shows how the researcher conceptualized the research approach to be applied in this study by Saunder et al (2003), in order to come up with the pertinent data needed to answer the research questions stated in the first chapter, as well as to arrive to the fulfillment of this research undertaking's objectives.

Then again, the research philosophy that is reflected in this study is *positivism*. With this research philosophy, a researcher prefers to work with an observable social reality in order to come up with law-like generalizations similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists (Remenyi *et al*, 1998), and in this tradition, the researcher becomes an objective analyst, coolly making detached interpretations about those data that have been collected in an apparently value-free manner (Saunders *et al*, 2003). In addition, the emphasis is on a highly structured methodology to facilitate replication (Gill & Johnson, 1997) and on quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis (Saunders *et al*, 2003). In here, the assumption is that the researcher is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research (Remenyi *et al*, 1998; Saunders *et al*, 1998).

Meanwhile, the second layer shows that this study has undertaken a *deductive* approach. Accordingly, this approach has five sequential stages: deducing a hypothesis;

expressing the hypothesis in operational terms; testing this operational hypothesis; examining the specific outcome of the inquiry to either confirm the theory or indicate the need for its modification; and finally, modifying the theory in the light of the findings (if necessary) (Robson, 1993, p. 19).

Further, the deductive approach has a number of important characteristics. First, this approach is *a search to explain causal relationships between variables*, which consequently leading to the development of a hypothesis. Second, it involves the *collection of a quantitative data* (although it can, as well, use qualitative data), and these data are important to test a hypothesis that has been previously developed. The third characteristic of a deductive approach is that *it controls to allow the testing of hypothesis*. However, one must remember that with this approach, it is important that the researcher is independent of what is being observed—that is, the researcher should be objective and not subjective—so that the principle of scientific strictness will be pursued, as this approach emphasizes scientific principles. (Saunders et al, 2003)

Also, it is important that concepts are *operationalised*, which will enable facts to be measured quantitatively. Finally, the deductive approach is *generalization* (e.g., to be able to generalize about regularities in human social behavior, one must be able to select a sufficient numerical size of samples). (Saunders et al, 2003)

Respondents of the Study

In this study the supervisors, human resources managers and employees of the main office of Tesco and the branch managers of the different branches of Tesco were interviewed. From this 50 respondents were interviewed in each organization with the help of a checklist.

Data Collection

Data shall be collected from multiple sources, allowing for a number of different perspectives to be taken into consideration in the development of the recommendations.

The data sources that will be examined include:

- A review of the appropriate research literature. This includes examining studies where customer satisfaction had been used either in a research or organizational setting. Both technical articles and "how-to" articles were included in the review;
- Phone interviews with the respondents. The interviews shall focus on the customer satisfaction.
- An examination of the regulations and practices related to the human resources of Tesco.

Validation and Administration of the Instrument

For validation, the researcher adopted the three-stage process devised by Saunders et al (2003, p. 205):

The first stage is *assessing the overall suitability of data to research questions and objectives*. During this stage, the researcher paid particular attention to measurement validity (measuring / estimating whether the secondary data will result to a valid answer to the research questions and objectives) and coverage (this includes ensuring whether or not the data is wanted and can be included, as well as making sure that sufficient data remain for analyses to be undertaken once unwanted data have been excluded).

The second stage is evaluating precisely the suitability of data for analyses needed to answer and meet the research questions and objectives. In this stage, the researcher made sure of the validity and reliability of the secondary data by assessing how it was previously

gathered, who are its sources, and the likes. Also, the researcher was cautious not to commit measurement bias (which can occur due to deliberate distortion of data or changes in the way data are collected) had been paid close attention.

Finally, the researcher judged whether to use data based on an assessment of costs and benefits in comparison with alternative sources.

Conducting the Semi-structured Interview

During the interview, the interviewer encouraged the interviewee to clarify vague statements or to further elaborate on brief comments. More importantly, the interviewer was objective and did not attempt, in any way, to influence the interviewee's statements. In order to do this, the interviewer did not share his/her own beliefs and opinions. Also, the questions thrown at the interviewees had been phrased clearly, so that interviewees can understand them, and they were delivered in neutral tone of voice. The researcher also avoided long questions, or those that are really made up of two or more questions, because as Robson (2002) said, by asking long-questions, the tendency to obtain a response for each aspect a researcher wants to explore will be lost. The researcher also avoided too many theoretical concepts or jargons, as the researcher's understanding of such terms may vary from that of the interviewees. Also, during the interview, the researcher was determined to establish trust by not being too assertive and by being attentive to the interviewees' responses. Finally, the researcher made sure that the interview did not last too long and did not consume much of the respondents' time, as this may instigate uncooperativeness from the respondents.

Data Representative and Reliability

To ensure the reliability of interview results, a test-retest was conducted – administration of the same test to the same (or a similar) set of interviewees on two different

occasions was conducted. This approach assumes that there is no substantial change in the construct being measured between the two occasions. Thus, two tests was also conducted – a pretest or a pilot test shall be done and a post-test. Interviewees are questioned twice themselves. Furthermore, the proposed approaches, structured interview and telephone questionnaire are interview-administered in mode. This part encouraged credibility and accuracy in the interviews.

Description of the Data Used in the Study

The study also utilized secondary data. *Secondary data* include raw data and published summaries, as well as both quantitative and qualitative data. Saunders et al (2003) deduced that secondary data fall into three main subgroups—documentary data, interview-based data, and those compiled from different sources.

Documentary secondary data, accordingly, are the ones often used in research projects that also use primary data collection data methods, although such data can also be used on their own or be combined with other secondary data. This type includes: *written documents* (notices, correspondence, minutes of meetings, reports to shareholders, diaries, transcripts of speeches, administrative and public records, as well as articles from books, journals, magazines and newspapers) that can be important raw data sources on their own right, a storage medium for compiled data, provide qualitative data, and can be used, as well, to generate statistical measures; and, *non-written documents* (like tape and video recordings, pictures, drawings, films and television programs, digital versatile disks and CD-ROMs) that can be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, as well be used to help triangulate findings based on other data such as written documents and primary data collected through observations, interviews and questionnaires (Saunders et al, 2003, pp. 190-191).

Validity of the Research Methods

The definition of validity emphasizes the test itself. Validity is a static property of a measure that is often referred to as a very general sense; a test is valid for anything with which it correlates (Carmines, 1979, p. 165). A test is considered to be either valid or not as evidenced by the correlations between the test and some other external criterion measure. Validity has three specific categories: content validity, criterion validity and construct validity (Crocker and Algina: 1986). The discrete kinds of validity and the need for multiple types of validity evidence with their landmark presentation of the multi-method, multi-trait approach to validation included the introduction of convergent and discriminating types of validity (Guilford: 1996). Validity has been replaced with one that focuses on five distinct types of validity evidence, evidence based on test content, evidence based on response processes, evidence based on internal structure, evidence based on relations to other variables, and evidence based on the consequences of testing (Aiken: 2003).

The psychometricians and measurement experts began to give emphasis to the inferences and decisions made from test scores (Carmines:1979). Validity defines as the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores (Guilford:1996). While test validation is describe as the process of accumulating evidence to support such inferences (Dillman: 1978). The concept of validity as a unitary concept with construct validity is the key and unifying type of validity. Validity also involves an overall evaluation of the plausibility of the intended interpretations. The essential question of test validity is how well a test does the job it was employed to do. Some measurement experts have debated that the wider conceptualization of validity have a more limited and technical definition of validity that focuses primarily on the descriptive interpretation of scores (Carmines: 1979). This includes consequential evidence as part of validity has been

controversial and not well accepted by some because investigating consequences extends beyond traditional psychometric boundaries into policy arenas. It is often termed as prescriptive part of a validity argument.

In discussing the validity of this study, it would probably be useful to separate the interpretative argument into two parts. The study comprises a network of inferences leading from scores to descriptive statements about individuals and the prescriptive part involves the making of decisions based on the descriptive statements. . Test validation is the process of accumulating evidence to support such inferences. A variety of inferences may be made from scores produced by a given test, and there are many ways of accumulating evidence to support any particular inference. Validity, however, is a unitary concept. Although evidence may be accumulated in many ways, validity always refers to the degree to which that evidence supports the inferences that are made from test scores (Stufflebeam: 1985).

If validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory that support the interpretations of test scores that entails by proposed uses of tests. Therefore, the test questionnaires can be considered valid. The questionnaires comprise accumulating evidence in order to provide a sound scientific basis for the proposed score interpretations (Grant and Davis:1997). The interpretations of the test scores required by proposed uses that are evaluated, not the test itself and are utilized or interpreted in more than one method, each intended interpretation are all validated (Goodwin:1999). Their sources of evidence illuminate different elements of validity, although they do not show distinct types of validity (Haertel: 1999). Validity is a unitary concept that is the accumulated evidence supports the intended interpretation of test scores for the intended purposes.

The content validity evidence is based on logical analyses and expert's evaluations of the content measure, including items, tasks, formats, and wording and processes required of

examinees (Buboltz, Miller and Williams:1999). The research presented evidences of such characteristics of a test as sufficient, clear, and relevant and the match between the items and tasks and gives definition of the construct. Moreover, there is no bias on gender, culture and age. Since the test domain is sampled and the same, there is no need to collect empirical data to identify the relationship between the brain and the behavior of the person (Grant and Davis: 1997)..

As long as the significant difference among test development and test validation is known, content-oriented test enhancement provides an affluent set of potential for improvement (Taylor and Summerhill:1986). Reproduction, theoretical measures that challenge to repeat the basic thoughts to cause greater presentation, and many the other inventive measurement methods that can be consequential from considerately observing the patient's attention span and behavior become potentials (Angoff:1988). On the other hand, as with any other test improvement approach, a pragmatic validation procedure must then establish that the implications about attention and behavior are valid.

When it comes to data collection methods, screening records and reports, direct observation of behavior, face to face interviews, telephone interviews and mail questionnaire, validity and reliability should be tested (Angoff: 1988). A test should constitute technical adequacy (reliability, validity, freedom from bias), practicality (cost, political consequences, duration, personnel needs) and ethics (protection of human rights, privacy and legality) (Goodwin: 1997). In the case of this study, all factors were considered. The test included well-balanced criteria without violating any of them to the extent that the technique is inadequate, unfeasible or ethically indefensible.

Summary of Action

This section summarizes the entire chapter; it will attempt to show a simplified explanation on how the research took place as well as explain the different stages it underwent. First, there was the choosing of 5 people from the human resources management and five from the supervisors, then 40 from the employees. where the research was to be conducted, followed by obtaining the list of employees who will respond to the survey questionnaire and marketing management people who will be interviewed. These possible candidates were randomly chosen with 10 recipients being chosen per company to answer the questionnaire. The rate return was high as 90% per company.