Chapter 2

Methodology

The purposes of this book are: to identify the competencies required for managers of intercultural consultancy services in order to optimize the effects of cultural diversity in Thai international automotive companies; to investigate ways which allow diversity to work effectively; and to identify barriers confronted by different cultures in international companies, as mentioned in the first chapter. Also, the author explored the following questions with many individuals, who got involved in managing and working in international automotive companies in Thailand. Some questions were, as follows: (1) What are the competencies required for the manager who provides intercultural consultancy services, and how to utilize the competencies to work in Thailand? (2) What are the most needed competencies for the manager who provides intercultural consultancy services? (3) What are some ways that allow diversity to work effectively? (4) What are the barriers confronted by differences in culture in international companies? In order to get answers to these questions, the author had to rigorously follow specific methods to accomplish the purposes. Hence, this chapter describes the methods used to collect the data needed for accomplishing the purposes aforementioned.

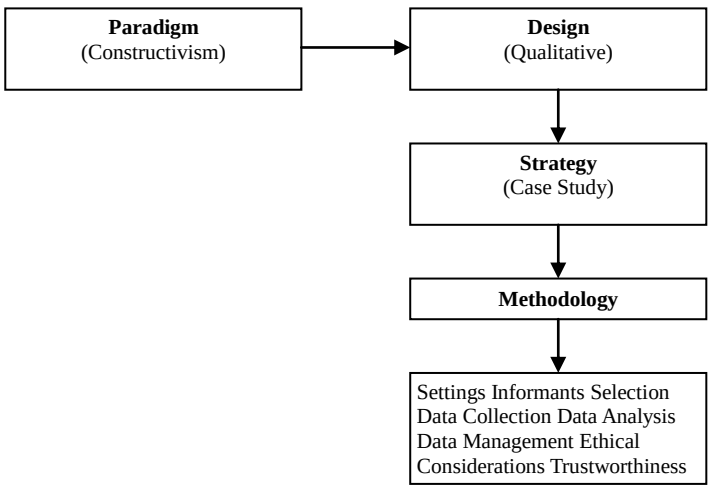

Figure 2.1 *Overview of the Book's Design & Methods.*

The author started this study with selecting a problem, writing inclusive ideas about the research problem, and a variety of knowledge of the related literature. The next step involved in the paradigm, the choice of methodology providing a detailed explanation of the proposed methodology, and the focus on specific methods of data collection, analysis, strategies, ethical considerations, as well as offers a pragmatic description on how to design a qualitative study.

2.1 Paradigm

First, it is important to define what is a paradigm? Guba (1990) noted that a paradigm is some certain assumptions in connection with reality (ontology), knowledge of the reality (epistemology), and how we get this reality (methodology). Guba, also mentioned that researchers should realize what assumptions are relevant to the topic of interest and then choose the appropriate methods with the chosen paradigm. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (2000), Mertens (1998) stated that a knowledge claim might be called paradigms, and it means that investigators begin their studies with some assumptions about how they will investigate and what they will accomplish during their inquiry. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) they reported that there are four schools of thought about knowledge claims including postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism.

Undoubtedly, each school of thought presents philosophical ideas, and the author intended to claim his knowledge in this study through the constructivism paradigm. Going a bit further, Lincoln and Guba (2000), Schwandt (2000), Neuman (2000) and Crotty (1998) illustrated social constructivism, or this school of thought that individuals have the potential to understand the world. As such, they seek varied views, which are often complex, as well as count on their informants' experiences to interpret the desired situation or study. Accordingly,

Schwandt (1989, p.399) stated that:

Our constructions of the world, our values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually self-reinforcing. We conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the precepts of that paradigm.

Moreover, researchers assert to show the difference between qualitative and quantitative methodology, by several characteristics. The following is a composition of assumptions by many researchers:

- Qualitative research exists in a natural setting, where behavior and events happen;
- Qualitative research relies on paradigms that differ from quantitative designs;
- The investigator is the fundamental instrument in data collection;
- Meanings and interpretations are negotiated between the researcher and the participants, in order to allow the researcher to build and reconstruct the knowledge; and
- The principle for assessing a qualitative study differs from a quantitative study.

For instance, in a qualitative study, researchers are seeking insight and believability and trustworthiness whereas in a quantitative study, researchers count on validity and reliability measures (Creswell, 2003). Further, constructivist researchers focus on the 'processes' of the relationship among individuals, as well as the environment in which people interact to obtain the knowledge (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, the author selected the constructivism paradigm for this study

because it is obvious that throughout the study, the author explored all human's behavior in how to manage or deal in a multicultural environment. Creswell (1998) also noted that investigators position themselves in the study, to clarify their formulation through their experiences, personality, and culture.

Interestingly, 'constructivist inquiry', this paradigm also has been called 'naturalistic inquiry' (Kuzel, 1986 cited in Crabtree & Miller 1992) and 'hermeneutics' (Gadamer, 1976 Guba & Lincoln, 1989). They called it constructivism, because the investigator creates constructions in such work. Consequently, Crabtree and Miller (1992, pp.10-11) interpreted that:

Shiva the androgynous Hindu Lord of the Dance and of Death. A constructivist inquirer enters an interpretive circle and must be faithful to the performance or subject, must be both apart from and part of the dance, and must always be rooted to the context. No ultimate truth exists; context-bound constructions are all apart of the larger universe of stories. Constructivist inquiry is best for storytelling. If one wants to understand how patients and providers experience pain or being informed their cholesterol is high, then this is the paradigm of choice.

In summary, researchers should realize what assumptions are appropriate to the topic of interest and then choose the appropriate methods. The author chose the constructivism paradigm for this study because it is clear that throughout the study, the researcher explored all human's behavior in how to manage or deal in a multicultural environment. It was evident that the preferred paradigm or knowledge claim, is in connection with the selected problem, and personal experiences. Therefore, researchers should not assume that a paradigm works better than others, rather than determines the process of making claims, then combines three elements or factors (e.g. knowledge claims, strategies, and methods) to produce a variety of approaches to research.

2.2 Design

Creswell (2007, p.41) noted that, "…there is no agreed upon structure for how to design a qualitative study. Books on qualitative research vary". Nevertheless, Creswell concluded that all researchers begin with a problem, review literature related to the topic, generate questions, collect data, analyze them, and then write their reports. On the other hand, Richards and Morse (2007) reported that the research design is both challenging and necessary, but it is the less discussed, and the less criticized in lots of qualitative studies. Further, Richards and Morse recommended that researchers when planning a research design begin with: first, 'the scope of the project' which means the limitations of the study, the setting to be studied, and the sample. Second, 'the nature of the data required', which means how researchers will collect data, and how they match these data to the research questions. Merriam (1998, p.3) stated that:

Planning a research project can be compared to planning for a vacation trip. Before starting out, you consider what sort of trip most appeals to you, what you like to do, what it might cost, where you want to go, how best to get there, how long to stay, and so on.

A research design is a step for studying the research problem. Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) noted that the common steps in all research designs are: the research design, (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research); noting the location where the study will take place; giving an explanation on how you collect, analyze the data, and which methods and instruments will be used. Similarly, Yin (1994) recommended that a research design comprises of five components including, research questions, the study's proposition, units of analysis, the linkage of the data and its proposition, and the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Moreover, David (2006: 4, p.289) concluded that, "…diversity is probably more often thought of as qualitative rather than quantitative". Accordingly, the author selected the qualitative approach for this study, as it is related to cross-cultural issues and how diversity works best in multicultural organizations. Creswell (1998) mentioned that qualitative research today puts a great emphasis on gender and culture issues or topics, which concern individuals, and practices in organizations. As such, a qualitative approach in this study will be the relevant strategy to find out answers to the questions previously mentioned. Crabtree and Miller (1992) outlined that qualitative studies allow researchers to investigate and illustrate problems and events from the perspective of their participants. Furthermore, Creswell (1998) noted that, researchers play a significant role in a qualitative study because they are learning from their participants, and then the researchers are expected to tell the story from the informants' views. On the other hand, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argued on what is the best technique to use which dominates in a qualitative inquiry. They pointed to some elements considered important, such as, knowing exactly what you want to learn, because different questions have different needs for data collection. Although, researchers make lots of decisions before the process of collecting data, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommended choosing techniques depend on:

- Drawing facts in data needed to understand the phenomenon in question.
- The plethora of perspectives on the topic.
- Managing time for data collection.

In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that researchers seek answers to questions to illustrate how experiences and meanings are created and that the qualitative researchers throughout history have been judged by whether and how researchers conceptualize realities or the study says something to the reader.

Moreover, Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2007) addressed many characteristics of a qualitative study; hence, the author would like to elaborate some, as follows:

- The salient points in most qualitative studies, are to interpret how people deal with their world, then how they describe, accept and feel that world;
- Interviews, observations, and documentations are the most usual types of data collection, though some of it is used as supplementary tools;
- Qualitative researchers, usually provide full description of participants, as well as the location, where the study will take place;
- Despite recording the respondents' answers, the researcher plays a significant role in the data analysis section, as a primary instrument in the study;
- Qualitative researchers attempt to avoid any sort of bias, as well as being aware of what they bring to their studies; and
- Finally, most qualitative researches are presented in the first person and attempt to report findings that are both accurate and reasonable.

On the contrary, Crabtree and Miller (1992) found two major weaknesses of qualitative studies:

- The complexity in different qualitative methods, in the vocabulary, such as jargon or technical terms; therefore, the writing of a qualitative study is not going to be an easy task.
- The variety of terms is another obstacle to comprehending the methods and findings of qualitative studies.

Similarly, Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2007) presented two threats for qualitative studies, such as:

- Writers of qualitative studies sometimes lose control in matching the information provided among several sections.

- The length and complexity of qualitative studies make investigators lose important data in case that there is no plan for recording regularly and sufficiently.

Also, Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002) confirmed that, participants might not act as they normally would once they see that their behavior is recorded for research purposes, which may decrease the accuracy of findings and thereby the results of a qualitative study.

Historically, qualitative researchers believed that they had the ability to observe the entire world objectively. Accordingly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) addressed that qualitative research is an interconnected group of terms, concepts, and assumptions, constitute the term qualitative research. Moreover, they noted that qualitative research describes routine, problems, and individuals' lives with the aim of making the world visible. Thus, Denzin and Lincoln concluded that qualitative researchers are philosophers because they are guided by high principles, and these principles include beliefs about 'ontology', 'epistemology', and 'methodology'. Berg (1995) noted that qualitative researchers are often interested in how people handle themselves, their locations, and how they interpret their environment. Thus, qualitative inquiry, as Berg noted, permits the researcher to gain understandings and perceptions of people. Crabtree and Miller (1992) formulated that a good qualitative researcher should be comfortable with uncertainties, as well as high tolerance with ambiguities. However, they mentioned that tolerance should not be taken to mean anything goes or is accepted. Crabtree and Miller pointed out, that a good qualitative research investigates a question that is important for the researcher, respondents, and the audience; also, it should report a convincing argument. On the other hand,

Holliday (2002, p.13) concluded that, "…scientific qualitative research is that the researcher must take on the discipline of making the familiar strange. Even where the research scenario is familiar, the researcher must find ways of recovering the stranger position". As such, it is inadequate to collect and describe what the researchers see, and observe in the setting where they investigate. However, Holliday stated that viewing the familiar as strange, is a difficult task because it requires special strategies; thus, qualitative research is hard to see, as well as hard to explain. Merriam (1988, 1998) pointed out to characteristics of qualitative researches, as follows: Researchers are involved with processes more than products. It means their priorities are how things happen and what is the nature of such events?; qualitative researchers are looking for how people describe their meanings, and experiences; and importantly, the researcher in a qualitative study is the 'primary instrument' for collecting and analyzing the data.

As such, researchers invent ways of interacting with respondents according to circumstances. Qualitative research can reflect how parts can function together to produce a whole. Most qualitative researchers in describing a setting or a process, as in case studies, become familiar with the case being studied; and finally, qualitative researches are conducted due to the inexistence of a theory, or the existent theory is insufficiently interpreting a particular phenomena. Additionally, Marshall and Rossman (1999) developed three more challenges to qualitative researchers, such as developing a good framework for their studies, drawing a systematic and organized design, and synthesizing all materials that may persuade readers. Nevertheless, David (2006: 2, p.133) concluded that, "Two kinds of problems of understanding to which systematic inquiry is a possible response are: problems of understanding the world in which we are called upon to act and problems of understanding what we ought to try to do". In short, a qualitative study is focusing on understanding and interpreting rather than testing and experimenting. In other words, qualitative inquiry is 'inductive'

rather than ‘deductive’. Also, one purpose of the research design is to prove that the researcher has the ability to conduct a qualitative study. Marshall and Rossman (1999, p.65) stated that, “The research design section should draw supporting evidence for the decisions by using relevant quotations from researchers who have written about these issues”.

In conclusion, the more qualitative researchers interact with participants to identify the findings, the more they get along with their data. Although it is not easy to interpret complex variables, we can learn how to deal with this complexity through the use of many qualitative techniques. Qualitative researchers should believe in multiple realities, as well as, learning from others’ experiences. Importantly, we should believe that everyone has some hidden skills, visions, attitudes, feelings, and thoughts. Qualitative researchers are seeking complexity, varied terms to have specific meanings, and interactions throughout several tools to gain the knowledge from every angle or holistically. Qualitative researchers hope to identify terms not fully appreciated or seen in the past, through their descriptions and analysis of the complex data. David (2006: 4, p.16) noted that, “…qualitative research strives to understand how all the parts work together to form a whole”. Ultimately, the author in this section attempted to show what steps were taken to design this study, as well as the author’s awareness of the qualitative inquiry, which is considered the relevant approach for this study.

2.3 Strategy

In this section, the author will discuss the most appropriate strategy for this study. The author decided, after careful consideration to select the case study, as it is one of the five strategies in qualitative approach. Thus, in this part of the book, the author preferred to begin with a brief history on qualitative case studies.

Historically, case studies were important to the development of ‘anthropology’, ‘psychology’, ‘sociology’, ‘management’, ‘social work’, ‘political science’ and recently ‘education’ have used case study research to discover processes through practice (Merriam, 1988). The name of case study research has been developed since the World War Two (WWII), within sociology (David, 2006: 1-4). David reported that in the last twenty five years there has been an increasing attention to meanings and language to identify human subjects in case study researches, rather than quantification and survey methods in social sciences. In addition, he stated that the name ‘study’ prefixed by the word ‘case’ refers to a complete investigation.

Merriam (1988, p.9) noted that, “The nature of the research questions, the amount of control, and the desired end product are issues to be considered when deciding whether case study is the most appropriate design for investigating the problem of interest”. In other words, the decision of choosing a qualitative case study or another strategy depends on what the researcher wanted to explore. Merriam mentioned that, case studies are used interchangeably with ‘fieldwork’, ‘ethnography’, ‘participant observation’, ‘exploratory research’, and ‘naturalistic inquiry’ as well as the terms ‘case history’, ‘case record’ and ‘case method’ are used with case study, though there are differences among each one. Yin (1994), noticed that case studies are the most relevant strategy when ‘what’, ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are taken place, and when researchers have not enough control over situations or event. Therefore, this study fits with the case study strategy because the author’s questions get involved with what and how questions, as discussed earlier. Besides, Yin (1994, p.21) reported that, “Every exploration, however, should still have some purpose. Instead of stating propositions, the design for an exploratory study should state a purpose, as well as the criteria by which an exploration will be judged successful”. Therefore, ‘What’ questions in this study are ‘exploratory, as Yin (1994, p.7) noted and its purpose is to develop an

understanding of cross-cultural issues. Overall, "…the first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research strategies is to identify the type of research question being asked." Furthermore, there is a common criticism to those who undertake a qualitative case study (e.g. how can you generalize from a single case?) and Yin (1994, p.10) concluded that, "the short answer is that case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes". On the other hand, Creswell (2007) and Stake (1995) illustrated types of case studies as 'intrinsic case study', when it is the researcher's interest in a case, 'collective or multiple case study' when the researcher seeks various sites to interpret the issue, and the 'instrumental case study' the researcher first selects an issue or a problem, then chooses the setting. However, David (2006) demonstrated that a case can be chosen not only because of special interest, but also due to the impacts or effects of a social issue. Thus, 'intrinsic case study' took place in this study because of two reasons:

- The author's interest in understanding challenges in building intercultural teams, and
- To optimize cultural diversity in Thai international automotive companies.

Moreover, Merriam (1988) stated different types of case studies, such as ethnographic case studies where researchers are involved with cultural interpretation; historical case studies in which researchers describe institutions, programs, and practices; and finally, a psychological case study on individuals or aspects of human behavior which are going to take place in this study. David (2006: 1) defined a case study by reporting that it is a special kind of approach that may be considered necessary for study, and it could be counted, measured, compared, as well as the behavior noted. Whereas in other literature, such as David (2006: 3, p.59) defined the case by, "…a 'case' is a 'typical' true-to-life management situation or policy issue presented as a mystery or dilemma

compounded of multiple dimensions". However, Yin (1994) stated that the common definition of a case study starts with the 'scope of a case study'. Also, he noted that a case study is an 'empirical inquiry' that explores a phenomenon within its situations or events, specifically when obstacles between the phenomenon and events are not obvious. David (2006: 1-4) concluded in his books that there is no one specific definition to a case study, it varies from one another according to practitioners and situations. Additionally, David (2006: 3) mentioned that the case study or the case history is narrative and descriptive, when the researcher emphasizes on development; whereas, when researchers take snapshots from reality, it is called a 'cross sectional or photographic' case study. Further, David clarified the terms case study versus case work. As he noted, a case study should be planned sufficiently before it can be implemented, because a case study refers to collecting data; whereas, a case work implies to the diagnosis or the treatment of such work.

Merriam (1988) illustrated that researchers undertake case study research, to obtain an in-depth understanding of events being studied. She concluded that case study research is valuable when the aim is to extend the knowledge of different aspects. In other words, researchers can choose this strategy in order to gain an understanding of a phenomena as much as possible, or because it is an interesting study. Furthermore, Merriam (1998) acknowledged that researchers in the field contended to know what factors establish a case study, how we differentiate it from other qualitative research strategies or methods, and when it is recommended to choose it. In short, case studies are judged by such questions, as Merriam noticed: (Is the outcome descriptive? Does it build a theory? Does it illustrate the data?). Additionally, Merriam (1988) illuminated in her book four characteristics necessary for a qualitative case study, as follows:

- Particularistic- which means focus on specific phenomenon, an event, or a

group of people to take a comprehensive view of situations or processes;

- Descriptive- which means that the outcome of a case study or the results are rich, completed, and covered all areas as possible over a specific time period. Merriam noted that description is mostly qualitative instead of presenting findings in numerical data;

- Heuristic- which means that case studies extend the reader's knowledge of new meanings, experiences, or ensure what is already known; and

- Inductive- qualitative research is mostly inductive, explores new relationships, terms, and understanding rather than predetermined hypothesis or test a theory are characteristics of qualitative case studies.

On the other hand, Merriam (1988) suggested some characteristics for a qualitative case study researcher, such as the following: researchers maximize opportunities to collect rich data with the perception that biases may occur, a high level of tolerance for ambiguity, realization that the right direction to continue is not always clear, ability to unexpected situations, being alert to make decisions according to what the case produced, sensitivity by asking relevant questions and using appropriate words, having good communication skills, and finally, a good qualitative researcher 'looks and listens everywhere'. Alongside, Creswell (2007) clarified that researchers in a qualitative inquiry should spend a long time in the field, be involved in complexity, and write inclusive drafts to show a plethora of perspectives. Following this line of thought, Merriam (1988, p.38) mentioned that, "case study research thus places the investigator in a largely uncharted ocean. For some it becomes an adventure full of promise for discovery; for others, it can be a disorienting and unproductive experience". Nevertheless, there are some limitations or weaknesses of undertaking a case study design in Merriam's view, for instance, a researcher may not have enough time or money to

undertake this strategy and if researchers spend time to do a good case study, the outcome is probably too long for scholars and policy makers to read it. Also, Stake (1995) found that such work in a case study probably fails if too many demands were required. Alongside, David (2006: 2) illustrated some barriers where qualitative case study researchers may challenge it, as noticed:

- The researcher's involvement throughout the study;
- Problems related to confidentiality of data;
- How to control the data and gaining access to different people;
- Difficulty in publishing such work, if anonymity needs to be considered; and
- Lastly, problems concerned with how readers get the knowledge through the investigator's interpretation of the data.

Another important point, Merriam (1988) noted that case studies can be delivered and formulated in a 'descriptive narrative', interpretive account' or an 'evaluation'. Speaking of descriptive and interpretive accounts, the results are described qualitatively by using words and photographs rather than numbers, and evaluative case studies also involve description, and explanation. In other words, case studies present 'holistic' description and explanation. Therefore, Merriam (1988, p.20) noticed that, "knowledge produced by case study would then be judged on the extent to which it is understandable and applicable". Going a bit further, David (2006: 3) showed that the comparative case study differs from the traditional case study. The main issue in the comparative case study, as David noted, is that the researcher is allowed to gather explanations and data through multiple settings. As a result, David (2006: 4, p.293) acknowledged that, "case studies can do a whole variety of things. But some case studies do not do any of them well, and this is often because no particular rationale". In short, the author

cautiously decided to select the case study, as it is one of the five strategies in a qualitative approach strategy for this study.

2.4 Rationale for the Selection of the Case

According to the previous issue, the author should clarify to the reader the rationale of the selection of the case. It is important that the researcher acknowledges the rationale of the study, as Marshall and Rossman (1999, p.60) urged all qualitative researchers, "… to provide a rationale for the particular genre of qualitative research in which the study is situated". Also, Stake (1995, p.4) concluded that, "Our time and access for fieldwork are almost always limited. If we can, we need to pick cases which are easy to get to and hospitable to our inquiry". As such, the author considered the case in international automotive companies in the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand. The four companies are famous in Thailand in dealing with diversity or people from different cultural backgrounds. Although, single cases will not be strong enough to generalize the results to other communities, people can gain a lot that is general from one single case (Stake, 1995). However, it is hoped that the results and the recommendations of this study will help to develop an understanding of cultural diversity to the selected companies, as well as Thai international companies. In other words, the author attempted to do the following:

- Understanding challenges in building intercultural teams, and
- Optimizing cultural diversity in Thai international automotive companies.

In conclusion, the author in this part clarified the relevant strategy for this study; and clarified different types of case studies, and noticed the difficulty in providing one single definition of a case study. Then, the author showed some of the limitations and weaknesses of undertaking a case study, and in the last section, the

rationale of selecting this case. Finally, it was obvious throughout the journey that the choice made in selecting the informants had a great impact upon this study.

2.5 Methodology

The author's intention from this study was to clarify the competencies required for providers of intercultural consultancy services, in order to optimize cultural diversity in Thai international automotive companies; as well as, the role of HRD to Thai international companies. Foremost part, develop an understanding of cultural diversity to international automotive companies in the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand. As such, this study focused on management practices with cultural diversity in international automotive companies in the Eastern Sea Board of Thailand. Accordingly, some certain authorities in those companies were invited to participate in this study, with the aim of illustrating how they can manage diversity in the workplace, and obtain the best outcome. Importantly, Crabtree and Miller (1992, p.89) stated that, "I urge the researcher to reject the tyranny of methodology and use whatever method best answers the question at hand and honestly report what is done".

2.5.1 Setting

With the selected topic and the reviewed literature, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested knowing the following:

- The location where you will conduct the study;
- Who will be your informants;
- What strategies to collect the data; and
- The amount of time you will spend on the process.

However, they argued that each decision needs a careful study by literature, documents, discussions with the desired research participants, and suggestions from experienced researchers, as well as researchers' judgment which all help in making such a decision. Moreover, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated that several issues must be prepared before the interviews or conversations take place. For instances, the location needs to be 'physically comfortable', private places are generally preferred, the time of the interview should be suitable for both the researcher and the respondent, and how long does each interview take. As Glesne and Peshkin noted, although there are some exceptions when less time is available to the participant, how often shall we meet with respondents will depend on the length of the interview and the interest of the informant. However, they recommended that it should be at least twice, and certainly no more than is comfortable for the participants.

Table 2.1 *Criteria for Research Settings.*

	Criterion	**Details**
i)	The setting must have a sense of boundedness.	Time, place, culture
ii)	The setting should provide a variety of relevant interconnected data.	People to watch or interview, artifacts (e.g. documents, pictures, implements)
iii)	There should be sufficient richness.	Different instances, facets and viewpoints-microcosm of the research topic in wider society
iv)	The setting should be sufficiently small.	Logistically and conceptually manageable
v)	There should be access.	For the researcher to take whatever role is necessary to collect data.

Source: Adopted from Holliday, 2002, p.38.

Creswell (2007) and Stake (1995) clarified that case study research engages the study of a subject through one or more cases within a 'bounded system' (e.g. setting). Holliday (2002) concluded that the setting in a qualitative approach is a very important task, to identify where, when, and with whom the research will

exist. Also, Holliday mentioned that it is hard to determine what kind of data we are going to gather before we get started, strategies for collecting qualitative data depend on the nature of social settings, and the relationship between researchers and participants in the research process. Moreover, Marshall and Rossman (1999) showed that choosing a site depends on the following factors: possible entry, the possibility to obtain rich information and interact with participants, and be rest assured about data quality and 'credibility' of the study. Also, Stake (1994, p.24) stated that, "… for almost any topic that might be chosen, specific time boundaries are needed to define the beginning and end of the case". Similarly, Holliday advised his students when writing an assignment in a particular investigation to do the following: Assignment extracts (Holliday, 2002, p.74):

I hope to begin by observing three different classes through February and March. This will depend on the school principal giving permission, and three teachers with whom I have a good relationship letting me into their classes. The timing corresponds with the start and finish of a course in communication skills for airport personnel. I intend that the first two weeks of observation will be exploratory. What emerges will help me decide what other types of data to collect.

Therefore, the author should acknowledge that he conducted his interviews in four international automotive companies in the Eastern Sea Board of Thailand, with nine leaders in the top management, (e.g. managing director, Human resource manager, and manufacturing manager) in the middle of January 2009. However, the author contacted his gate keeper to facilitate the process with whom I gained access, and then what is claimed from the informants helped me to decide different types of data to gather.

2.5.2 Informant Selection

The author should first define the term informant. An informant is an individual, who provides information, and other terms that have been used are consultant, respondent, participant, and interviewee. Crabtree and Miller (1992) stated that informants are individuals who are knowledgeable, and willing to cooperate with researchers. Crabtree and Miller (1992, p.74) comprehended that:

Historically, the key informant was often the anthropological researcher's link to the tribe. He or she might have been the translator. It was often the individual with whom the researcher developed a special friendship. Rather than thinking of key informants as distinctly different from any other individual or informant, I think it is more helpful to view key informants as individuals who are able to teach the researcher.

Committee members and experts in the field, such as Glesne and Peshkin (1992) often expect researchers to notice how many, and which persons will be interviewed, as well as which situations will be observed. Moreover, Glesne and Peshkin outlined that the strategy of participant selection in a qualitative research depends on multiple purposes of interpreting, understanding, and the researcher's judgment. As such, David (2006: 3) acknowledged that sampling in a case study depends on three purposes:

- To identify processes as 'units of analysis';
- To inform the 'methodological advantages' of such work; and
- It is hoped that identifying units of analysis and the methodological advantages will prove the researcher's involvement for such an activity.

Also, Crabtree and Miller (1992) clarified how to sample by: considering

whether to observe or to interview, talking to individuals, groups, or both, recording or listening such as, videotaping, or audio-taping, and deciding which sampling method in a qualitative inquiry should be employed. They mentioned that the selection is an attempt to pick a small number of informants, who can provide the knowledge needed within the study. Therefore, the author in this study used the 'non-probability sampling'. According to Merriam (1988), anthropologists emerged the non-probability sampling method, and the most usual form of which is called purposive based on how to discover, understand, and gain a new vision. In addition, in various books, purposive sampling is the same as 'criterion based sampling' which urges researchers to create the criteria necessary for the study. Thus, the author interviewed nine participants in four international automotive companies in the Eastern Sea Board of Thailand. However, Marshall and Rossman (1999) noted that even the best experts in the field sometimes cannot determine the sample size, unless they get involved with the procedures. They also suggested to further plan as much as possible for their sampling method. Similarly, Berg (1995) argued that in some researches 'purposive samples' are chosen after studying some group in order to ensure that the individuals selected fit in the study. In contrast, Merriam (1998) urged that researchers have to decide in advance how data will be collected, the number of participants involved, as well as what documents will be used. Sampling in a qualitative inquiry consists of the following steps, all of which underline that enthusiasm and developments are important characteristics of both a qualitative inquiry in general, and qualitative sampling strategies in particular:

- The sample design (Where, and with who do I start?);
- Sample (Who and what comes next? Depend on who and what came before);
- The sample is modified continuously;

- Selection continues to redundancy; and
- Sampling includes "disconfirming evidence" in order to develop a theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Kuzel et al., 1990 cited in Crabtree & Miller, 1992, p.41).

Moreover, Merriam (1988) pointed out that, "the most appropriate sampling strategy for a qualitative case study is non-probability sampling, of which there are several forms." (p.52). Similarly, Merriam (1998) noticed that sampling in qualitative research is often 'nonrandom', 'purposeful' and small. Therefore, David (2006) concluded that the common criticism of the case study is that the sample is small, which will not allow both multiple hypotheses to emerge and 'generalizability'. In addition, Creswell (2007, p.125) reported that, "The concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research. This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study." In conclusion, sampling in qualitative studies used to be purposive rather than random, and the purpose is to decorate the research questions with information richness and not representativeness (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). It is necessary to sample before the process of data collection and data analysis because it is rather impossible to interview everyone, observe everything, and collect all materials required for a case (Merriam, 1988; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Therefore, the author planned to interview approximately 5-10 participants or leaders in four international automotive companies in the Eastern Sea Board of Thailand. Eventually, the author interviewed nine participants in four international automotive companies in the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand. Eight participants are Thais, and one participant is Korean; however, Thais and Koreans are working with Americans, Japanese, Czech, and French at the companies where the interviews took place.

2.5.3 Data Collection

Sapsford and Jupp (1996, p.98) concluded that:

There is no single best way of collecting data; the method chosen depends on the nature of the research questions posed and the specific questions you want to ask respondents. The aim of all methods is to obtain valid and reliable data, true answers to questions, not distorted by the methods of collection or prone to chance fluctuation, which can be used as the basis for credible conclusions.

Creswell (2007), Stake (1995), and Marshall and Rossman (1999) showed that gathering data in a case study is through various sources of information (e.g. interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual equipments). Nevertheless, Merriam (1988) noted that interviewing is the most usual way of collecting qualitative data. As a result, she interpreted that the aim of an interview is to get special information, as well as to know things researchers cannot observe (e.g. thoughts, intentions, and feelings). However, she stated that, "throughout the process of doing a case study, investigators continually make decisions, choose among alternatives, and exercise judgment" (p.71). Similarly, Stake (1995) mentioned that each investigator makes continuous decisions on how much focus to empower each role. Hence, interviewing or other sorts of data collection depends on what kind of information researchers are seeking. In all cases, Creswell (2007, p.39) reported that:

The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data. Merriam (1988) concluded three successful factors in every interview to obtain good quality data, such as the character and skills of the investigator, the attitudes of the informant, and the meanings of both the

researcher and the interviewee of such a situation. Nevertheless, Yin (1994, p.11) reported that, "…the skills for doing good case studies have not yet been defined, and as a result, most people feel that they can prepare a case study, and nearly all of us believe we can understand one". On the other hand, Kvale (2007) illustrated the following for a good quality interview:

- Appropriate answers from the informant;
- Short questions by the interviewer, and long answers by the informant;
- The interviewer skills in identifying the straightforward aspects of the study; and
- The interview should be adequate to report the findings without extra explanations, though the researcher's interpretation.

Thus, Kvale (2007, p.81), reported that, "The interviewer is the key research instrument of an interview inquiry. A good interviewer knows the topic of the interview, masters conversational skills and is proficient in language, with an ear for his or her subjects' linguistic style". In contrast, Merriam urged researchers to pay careful attention to some factors, which may impact an interviewee's response, such as the respondent's health, and the respondent's mood throughout the interview. Stake (1995, p.134) concluded that, "we recognize that case study is subjective, relying heavily on our previous experience and our sense of worth of things". In other words, researchers count on their experiences, and abilities throughout their studies rather than relying on how much they are skilled as demonstrated earlier. Researchers, such as Crabtree and Miller (1992) suggested open-ended questioning, with the aim of listening carefully for participants in what they do and how they think. As a result, the emphasis is on listening. "The question is not, how do you talk to an informant? But, how do you listen to an informant?" (Dobbert, 1982, p.118 cited in Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Hence, it is

recommended to follow the direction of the participant and wisely listening, in order to conduct a good interview. Yin (1994, p.85) illustrated that:

Interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation.

The author in this study used the 'semi-structured' interview because I was guided by a number of questions and issues to seek answers and explanations for it, though neither the same questions nor the order of it was determined. In addition, it is important to notice that the purposes of this study were to identify the competencies required for managers of intercultural consultancy services in order to optimize cultural diversity in Thai international automotive companies; to investigate ways which will allow diversity to work effectively; and to identify barriers confronted by different cultures in international companies. Accordingly, the author realized that each purpose may have different way to collect the data, and not necessarily using one way for all purposes. Berg (1995) noted that the questions in a 'semi-standardized' interview imply to the researcher's awareness in the world in different ways. Additionally, Merriam (1988) formulated that this type of interview gives the researcher the space to handle situations, develop the respondents' views, and new concepts on the study. Therefore, each participant at the end of the session was asked for any documents or texts he or she might suggest, as well as names of other participants whom I might wish to interview. The interviews took from me around forty-five to ninety minutes each, and the decision to stop seeking more interviews, depended on how sufficient the data is. There were no fixed numbers as to how long, and how many interviews are needed to collect enough information; although, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) noticed that, short and few interview sessions for those who are inexperienced

and incompetent investigators.

However, David (2006: 2, p.138) reported that, "the problem of field research in case study is to gather evidence in such a way as to make it accessible to subsequent critical assessment, to internal and external criticism and to triangulation". Moreover, David concluded that the case study data when it presents complexity and multiple perspectives, allows policy makers to develop an understanding in what they need to make. Also, he stated that the case study aims at understanding complex human situations; thus, a case study can produce both unique and universal understandings. Accordingly, Richards and Morse (2007, p.2) showed that,"…all methods have the common goal of making sense of complexity, making new understandings and theories about the data, and constructing and testing answers to research questions". Therefore, Richards and Morse concluded that the big challenge for a novice researcher is to find the relevant method for such work. The author of this book attempted to obtain answers for the research questions, through some interview sessions. Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2003) demonstrated that it is seldom necessary to use all strategies to collect data, usually one or two methods dominate, and others support or a supplement to gain more insights. Creswell (2007) suggested that qualitative research is not only to explore many settings or individuals, but also to gather inclusive details about each site or individual. In addition, Merriam (1988, p.86) showed that:

Interviewing, like any other data collection technique, has its strengths, and its limitations. The researcher who attends to the limitations while maximizing the strengths inherent in all phases of the interview process will be richly rewarded by the data obtained.

However, it takes practice to become a skilled interviewer, although skills in observations and interviewing are necessary, it is not a must for researchers to

commit for a case study. Richards and Morse (2007, p.91) mentioned that, "Triangulation refers to the gaining of multiple perspectives through completed studies that have been conducted on the same topic and that directly address each other's findings". As such, Richards and Morse formulated the term 'observation' that it is, "The assumption behind most observational strategies is that they enable the researcher to learn what is taken for granted in a situation and to discover what is going on best by watching and listening" (p.116). Similarly, observation as it is another important method to gather the data required, Marshall and Rossman (1999) formulated that the researcher does not make a special effort to have a specific role, rather than facilitating interactions among people. Marshall and Rossman reported that, "Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry: It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings" (p.107). In contrast, Yin (1994) demonstrated that observations in case studies are not necessarily a source of evidence. Another important method is 'documentation' Richards and Morse (2007) noticed that, documents as a supplement tool, consist of (management records, participants' diaries, or policy statements) may help researchers to gain more ideas about their participants. Moreover, Yin (1994) reported that documents are useful to ensure that the spellings, titles or names of organizations are correct, and it could inspire the researcher for new questions. As such, the author in this study collected the data through interviews, and other sources such as observations, and documentations were needless. In conclusion, the author illustrated the methods to gather the data required for this study, and showed different perspectives, including strengths and weaknesses of each method. Richards and Morse (2007) urged researchers to allow the data to guide them to unexpected information, and it is the data which will determine when it is rich, detailed, and sufficient.

2.5.4 Data Analysis

To provide a general framework for the analysis, there is a common argument in qualitative data analysis. For instance, Sapsford and Jupp (1996) argued that the identification of different perspectives from people who get involved with the researcher, notice the barriers they face it, as well as describe the strategies that emerge to deal with those barriers. Therefore, the author looked at identifying the points mentioned above, and data preparation took place, as suggested by Sapsford and Jupp (e.g. audio-taping). For the purpose of the analysis task, it is important to transcribe recordings regularly. However, Sapsford and Jupp stated that the preparation of data is not solely reliant on audio and video recordings because "field notes" also are frequently used as "raw material" from which the informant provided in many qualitative researches. Furthermore, Yin (1994) recommended all researchers to begin their analysis in case studies by setting two general strategies: one of which is 'relying on theoretical propositions' which is the favorable strategy, to follow the purpose and the design of the case; and the other strategy is to 'develop a case description', which is less recommended than the other one, but it is useful when theoretical propositions do not exist. Nevertheless, Yin (1994, p.123) clarified that, "No matter what specific analysis strategy is chosen, you must do everything to make sure that your analysis is of the highest quality". Therefore, Yin concluded that because of this problem, experienced case study researchers are more formative than novice researchers. Merriam (1988), Richards and Morse (2007) noted that researchers should start the analysis task at the same time with the first interview, first observation, and first document provided. Moreover, Merriam interpreted that the analysis is the task in which investigators strive to produce worthy data, believable, and applicable results. Finally, she mentioned that, "data analysis in qualitative research very much depends on the investigator's sensitivity and analytic skills.

Whether one is analyzing data in a single case study or across several individual cases, the process is inductive" (p.121). Accordingly, David (2006) noted that an important decision in all studies is to pick 'units of analysis' that are relevant for the problem the researcher wants to understand.

Intriguingly, Sapsford and Jupp (1996) addressed that the common question proposed by researchers, who undertake qualitative data analysis for the first time is, now I have got the data, what do I do with it?. They noted that it is hard to answer this question because there is no set of rules and no 'simple recipe' guaranteeing good results, but creativity plays a significant role and that is why different researchers are working with same data and produce different analyses. On the other hand, Crabtree and Miller (1992); Glesne and Peshkin (1992) concluded that analysis should proceed at the same time as data collection, reflect on the data, organize them, and then try to express what the data is telling you. As a result of which, Hobbs and Wright (2006) concluded that an early writing would allow researchers to address which points can be developed, categorized and explored.

Crabtree and Miller (1992) noted that the computer programs facilitate the analysis process, because it helps in data management, data manipulation, saving time, as well as many other advantages. Also, May (1997) showed that some computer programs would help researchers in the analysis task to discover the frequency of some words used by the informants in their contexts, and help to link codes to each other. In contrast, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) synthesized disadvantages in developing a partnership with computers. Some of which are: if the researcher is comfortable with the completion of the data analysis, he/she might stop working further on it. Also, a very big problem is that the data or work can be lost. Nonetheless, the author of this study did not use any kind of computer programs, because the software used to accomplish the aim would probably be

expensive, and definitely it requires an amount of training time which is difficult for the author to achieve at the present time. Additionally, Creswell (1998) presented general data analysis strategies by authors such as, (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Wolcott, 1994b cited in Creswell, 1998). They showed a variety of "Analytic Strategies" (e.g. sketching ideas, summarizing field notes, working with words, and data display) which is going to help the researcher to choose the most appropriate strategies for the proposed study.

Walliman (2001) also outlined that, "researchers must structure their analytical approaches to fit the nature of the data with which they are faced" (p.261). Therefore, the author decided to use only three analytic strategies from what they presented for the analysis task of this study (e.g. sketching ideas, summarize field notes, and display data). The aim in choosing from those three strategies will be for the emphasis on certain data, summarize drafts on field notes, and develop some contrasts, comparisons, charts or figures as suggested by the author of these strategies. In addition, Walliman recommended that researchers should categorize the information required, in order to structure the information easily, and identify gaps. For instance, contact details, main issues, interesting issues raised, new questions emerging, and a summary of information acquired.

On the other hand, Stake (1995) mentioned that the aim from a case study is to get the complexity of a single case, as well as the study of particularity to understand its process in the setting. Thus, he interpreted three forms of data analysis such as (direct interpretation, patterns, and naturalistic generalizations). In direct interpretation, Stake mentioned that the investigator can explore a single event or situation and interpret it without the need for multiple cases. By patterns, Stake means that the researcher develops some categories, charts, or tables to show differences among data and this process sometimes called data display. Finally, Stake noted that researchers may develop naturalistic generalizations

through analyzing the data, so that readers can learn from the case, as well as apply it in many communities. Interestingly, Hobbs and Wright (2006) urged all researchers to be aware that potential interviewees might be too busy to go through all the details, and therefore they might need to count on summaries as much as possible.

A brief summary of what the author implemented in this section or for the analysis task is presented, as follows:

- Transcribed taped interviews;
- Some translations were made from Thai to English;
- Allowed the informants to review their information for accuracy and reliability;
- Organized data according to issues raised;
- Organized the respondents' answers in line numbers;
- Developed some codes from the respondents' answers;
- A comprehensive illustration and description were made;
- Developed categories and themes;
- Summarized each category or each interview session;
- Compare and contrast different data with the aim of synthesizing documents into an inclusive description of the whole process; and
- Drafting and redrafting.

The author believed that the way in which the participants of the study responded during the interviews, can be both unexpected, and complicated. Therefore, the author intended to use some observations, as discussed earlier, as a supplementary tool, which was helpful in analyzing the data. However, the

author did not use any documentation. The author also applied multiple strategies with the interviews; such as field notes, reflexive journals, and e-mail the participants, due to the formative and rich information taken from the participants of this study.

2.5.5 Interpretation

As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, in the research design, qualitative researchers have great emphasis on interpretation. Thus, Creswell (2003) clarified that the process of data analysis involves making interpretation of the large amount of data that has been collected. Generally speaking of which, Sapsford and Jupp (1996, p.318) reported that:

All research stands or falls by the way in which the researcher conceptualizes the field of study: in the design of the study, in the way that measures are defined and measuring instruments constructed, in how the data are coded or clustered or segmented for analysis and in the decisions the researcher makes about what it is important to report and what sense to make of it.

Stake (1995), noted that interpretation is a significant part of all research. For example, interviews, observations, and other data, researchers exhibit their own explanations and conclusions. Stake (1995, p.135), concluded that, "qualitative case study is highly personal research. Persons studied are studied in depth. Researchers are encouraged to include their own personal perspectives in the interpretation". Crabtree and Miller (1992) explained that interpretation follows investigation because it allows understanding and facing problems discussed during interviews. However, they stated that interpretation is important and in the meantime not an easy task; therefore, they suggested the following to understand a text:

Understand the setting in which the text refers. So, in this study I had to understand the locations' backgrounds, where the interviews took place; the awareness of the words and expressions used in the text; and understand the creator of the words. Hence, it is insufficient to understand what was meant by the words, the researcher should also understand the one who constructed these words; and ensure that the participant is willing to converse on the issues being proposed in the study.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.147) advised researchers to ask themselves the following questions to construct more 'trustworthy interpretations':

Whom do I not see? Whom have I seen less often? Where do I not go? Where have I gone less often? With whom do I have special relationships? and in what light would they interpret phenomena? What data collecting means have I not used that could provide additional insight?

As such, they concluded that we should always pay careful attention to our own biases, and our own 'subjectivity' in order to gain a more 'trustworthy interpretation. Moreover, Silverman (2004) noticed that the relationship among individuals' situations, including individual stories, and actions will permit the researcher to interpret individuals' behavior or actions. David (2006: 1) reported that since the case method has referred to gathering and assembling data of the issue, data must be interpreted which is gained from whether individuals, groups or anyone who may add knowledge to the study. Also, Stake (1995, p.134) reported that, "we offer opportunity for readers to make their own interpretations of the case but we offer ours too". Finally, Creswell (2007) noted that investigators, in qualitative studies, interpret what they see, hear, and understand, through their own experiences. Thus, David (2006: 2, p.124) informed that, "… we understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own lived experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's lives".

Overall, Yin (1994) showed that there is no definite way of specifying the criteria for interpreting the results, and researchers just hope that the different perspectives could be adequately contrasted or compared.

In summary, interpretation allows an understanding of what has been discussed during interviews, although it is not an easy task. Most importantly, the author paid attention to his personal biases or his own subjectivity, to obtain more trustworthy interpretation. Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002, p.484) described an interpretive task by:

Interpretive practice engages both the hows and the whats of social reality; it is centered in both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and in the configurations of meaning and institutional like that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity.

Accordingly, the interpretation is an important task because the case method implies collecting data for the study, and these data must be interpreted which is gained whether from individuals or groups. In conclusion, the author was fully aware of the words and the expressions used by the participants of the study, as well as to ensure that the participants are willing to converse on the issues being proposed in this book.

2.5.6 Data Management

In this section, the author presents how the data was managed in this study. For the data management section, the author organized all data and related documents in folders. Speaking of the respondents' responses, the author used some codes or numbers instead of the participants' names, companies and identities, to ensure confidentiality. After gathering all data required or answers to the proposed study, the author was able to generate categories, charts, and diagrams.

Accordingly, when gathering rich information, the author was then able to provide categories which helped in the data analysis task, as well as in writing the final report of the study, and the development of a model. Moreover, the author transcribed the interviews, and relevant documents, in order to answer the research questions. Briefly, as everything in a qualitative study is flexible, the author was conscious that probably new techniques for managing the data will arise to make the study more systematic and organized.

2.5.7 Ethical Protocol

Another important section in this study was to look at the ethics throughout the inquiry process. In the last few decades, changing social behavior about research has led to construct codes of ethics in each scholarly institution (Berg, 1995). Therefore, Berg (1995), Marshall and Rossman (1999), and Kvale (2007) urged all researchers to take codes of ethics into account, and sufficiently explain rights, responsibilities of either the researcher or participants. A fundamental ethical point of research found in several studies, is that the issues of the study should not be harmed by it; however, Sapsford and Jupp (1996) mentioned that we should realize that harm may exist if the informants' interests are not reported in the study. Accordingly, they found that this is the reason for promising our informants 'confidentiality' and 'anonymity'. Going a bit further, they suggested that nothing should be done in the research, without consents from our participants, as well as the awareness of what the word harm means. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) reported that in social sciences, since 1980 each institute has formulated its own code of ethics. Moreover, there are two major points which need to be considered in the ethical issues in research; one of which is honesty, integrity and the other is privacy and confidentiality (Walliman & Baiche, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Therefore, honesty is the best policy to establish good relationships and develop a level of trust. Walliman (2001, p.214) noted that:

Apart from correct attribution, honesty is essential in the substance of what you write. Accurate descriptions are requited of what you have done, how you have done it, the information you obtained, the techniques you used, the analysis you carried out, and the results of experiments- a myriad of details concerning every part of your work.

Alongside, Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2007) showed that the aim of a proposal is to provide readers with an understanding on what researchers attempt to do, and to achieve this goal, researchers need to report appropriate facts and not just favorable things. Also, May (1997) noted that ethical considerations are not only defined to know what is positive to the researcher and the study, but also clarification to understand the acceptable behavior, and the participants' involvement in the research. May concluded that, "The development and application of research ethics is required not only to maintain public confidence and to try project individuals and groups from the illegitimate use of research findings, but also to ensure its status as a science" (p.61). Furthermore, Hoyle, Harris and Judd (2002) contended to interpret why ethical issues need to be taken into account, as follows:

- What is acceptable to do to participants in the name of science?
- Is it ethical to engage people without informing them that they are part of the study?
- Is it ethical to deceive people about the methods and the nature of the study?

They also argued that the uniqueness of social science is that the evidence in social science is people, which differ from the physical sciences; therefore, researchers should know how to protect their participants' rights and identities by careful attention to the ethical issues. In short, none is infallible and it is rather impossible to be free from bias. Hence, researchers are urged to acknowledge any

bias in any section in the research, and admitting to limitations of whether competence or available resources.

(A) Informed Consent

In this part, the author should clarify what is informed consent and why it is important. Researchers should gain the individuals' agreements before collecting data on them, although an informed consent neither prevents the wrong use of research findings nor establishes a relationship between the researchers and researched (Borg & Gall, 1989; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Moreover, Creswell and Clark (2007, p.113) outlined that:

Researchers require permission to collect data from individuals and sites. This permission can be gained at three levels: from individuals, who are in charge of sites; from people providing the data (and their representatives, such as parents); and from campus-based institutional review boards (IRBs).

Further, Glesne and Peshkin (1992), Berg (1995), and Richards and Morse (2007) noticed that the suitable informed consent was generally a written consent form, although lots of arguments surrounded the ethics, by qualitative researchers. Alongside, Diener and Crandall (1978 cited in Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) showed the importance of an informed consent, by illustrating what the participants will be aware of, as follows:

- Participants will be volunteers, so they have the right to whether accept to cooperate or not;
- Participants will be allowed to see if any section in the study harms them; and
- Participants will have the right to stop participating at any time.

Accordingly, Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002) suggested that once the researcher informs participants about what was mentioned above, the researcher should clarify to the reader all procedures made to let readers know how well participants were treated, respected, and protected throughout the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.144) suggested that researchers should inform participants about the nature of the study, the purpose or the aim and methods. They outlined that, "Proper respect for human freedom generally includes two necessary conditions. First, subjects must agree voluntarily to participate that is, without physical or psychological coercion. Second, their agreement must be based on full and open information". Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2007), Richards and Morse (2007) identified a system of rules for informed consent, and some of which are, as follows:

- Informants should be cognizant of the nature of the subject, limits, time, and effort, as well as provide detailed information about what has been discussed in the appendix of the proposal;
- Informants should be promised that their identities will be protected;
- Informants should be informed that they have the right to ask questions, and sign a form to confirm that they have been told about the study and their willingness to cooperate. They suggested looking at some formats in the scholarly institution before designing a form for the study;
- Informants should know that they will have the right to withdraw or stop cooperating at any time;
- Informants should be informed that they can receive feedback about the results of the study; and
- Lastly, informants should receive the name, address, and phone number of

both the graduate student and the supervisor, in case the participants need any clarification related to their roles.

Similarly, Bryant (2004) reported how informed consent information is composed. Some of which are: the title of the study, the purpose of the study, how long does the participant participate, no harm or intended risks, confidentiality, free to stop participating at any time, and agreement or permission to cooperate in the study. Another important thing, Creswell (2007) noted that researchers should show evidence to the committee members that they took into account the participants' rights, confidentiality, and the anonymity of participants in the study. Finally, Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002, p.48) reported that, "respect for persons incorporates at least two ethical convictions: first, individuals should be treated as autonomous agents, and second, that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection". On the other hand, Hoyle, Harris, and Judd argued that researchers can neglect informed consent in case that, "(1) the research involves no more than minimal risk, (2) the rights of the participants would not be adversely affected, and (3) the research could not feasibly be carried out without waiving informed consent" (p.419).

In short, an informed consent form is a background of the researcher's study. It is a written form consisting of some elements (e.g. purpose of the study, procedures, etc.) which allow participants to be aware of the proposition, as well as acknowledging their rights, and finally, the researcher will seek a signature on this form from the participants after reading and understanding its contents.

(B) Confidentiality

In this section, the author intended to show that the confidentiality of the data collected need to be considered by using some strategies. Borg and Gall (1989) recapped a few strategies to meet the confidentiality needs of studies. For

example,

- Ask participants to provide information without identifying persons;
- Use a symbol that can be removed once the participant's response is received;
- Use a 'third party' to select a sample, so that the researcher does not recognize who is in the sample and certainly cannot link answers to someone;
- Develop randomized responses; and
- Let the respondents create their own code.

As confidentiality became a necessary part in such work, David (2006: 2, p.119) showed that, "offering blanket confidentiality affords the researcher faster access to relevant data and prevents the need for informants to continuously monitor what they say". Moreover, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) mentioned that 'privacy' and 'confidentiality' are considered codes of ethics, and emphasize on protecting people's reflexion; therefore, confidentiality is a major principle to secure individuals' perceptions, as well as personal data. Furthermore, Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002, p.60) stated that although the researcher will know the source of the data, the researcher should promise not to link information to anyone. They reported that, "confidentiality should always be assured to the fullest extent possible. What this means is that nobody else besides individuals on the research team should access to or see the raw data". Additionally, Berg (1995) differentiated between 'confidentiality' and 'anonymity'. He interpreted 'confidentiality' by an active trial to omit from the study anything that might refer directly to the participants' identities; whereas, 'anonymity' in his opinion means that issues are kept without their real names. Thus, Berg (1995, p.213) concluded that:

Researchers commonly assure subjects that anything discussed between them

will be kept in strict confidence, but what exactly does this mean? Naturally, this requires that the researchers systematically change each subject's real name to a pseudonym or case number when reporting data.

Finally, Berg urged all researchers to avoid keeping data longer than is necessary for 'safeguarding confidentiality'. Alongside, Kvale (2007) reported that 'confidentiality' in qualitative research refers to hiding private data, in order to protect the subjects' privacy. Briefly, confidentiality is one of the most important aspects of the studies, researchers should not avoid it. Confidentiality should be protected more, by not divulging the participants' names and, whenever possible, destroy names of subjects from data collection and replace it by codes.

2.5.8 Trustworthiness

According to what has been discussed earlier in the research design, the author addressed that qualitative researchers place great emphasis on interpretation. Thus, the author obtained trusted outcomes, as well as provided trustworthy interpretations. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) found some factors to increase gaining trustworthy data, such as:

- Time plays a significant role in trustworthy data, such as the duration for interviewing, and time spent to develop a relationship with the informants;
- Also triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentations may help;
- Be aware of any sort of biases;
- Sharing the interpretive task with research informants;
- Be aware of the limitations of the study;
- Identifying which documents, locations, and persons were unreachable; and

- What data I haven't touched, and how it could assist in the study.

Moreover, Walliman (2001, p.213) concluded that, "Honesty is essential, not only to enable straightforward, above-board communication, but to engender a level of trust and credibility to promote debate and the development of knowledge". In short, being honest and clear were the best policy throughout the study, with the aim of gaining healthy information and contributing to the nature of the study. Also, the author attempted to avoid common sense or personal ideas, which helped to construct trustworthy interpretations.

2.5.9 Reflexivity and the Assessment of Validity

Such considerations should be taken into account by researchers who undertake a qualitative data analysis. How the research was carried out is an essential point in terms of credibility, and did the participants give the researcher what he or she wanted to hear? (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996). Further, they mentioned that the researcher should think about his or her role in the process, continually thinking of the research tasks, or in other words to be a reflective practitioner. They also suggested that:

An equally important aspect of reflexivity is that the process of data collection and analysis should be made sufficiently explicit for a reader to make a reasonable assessment of the credibility of the findings. Of course, the information about the research that we have available to us as readers will always be quite limited. It will also vary a great deal between research reports. Not surprisingly, book length reports tend to provide more information than do articles. (p.295)

Crabtree and Miller (1992) argued that, although in qualitative research the "generalizability" is not the aim, they still worry about the validity of themes

based on small sample sizes. There are several uses of the term 'reflexivity' in qualitative research, one of which reflects the awareness of researchers and their methods of getting involved with politics of the social world (Holliday, 2002). Also, Holliday described this term as the way in which researchers benefit from their contribution within the research setting, in a 'methodical' way. Holliday reported that, "…the researcher acknowledges the unavoidability of interacting with, and perhaps changing the culture she is investigating, but opens all channels of perception to capitalize on what is revealed about the culture, during the process" (p.146). According to David (2006: 1), he attempted to propose what makes the data sufficiently presented in a case study, as thus:

- Data must be referred to the research problem or questions;
- Data must show facts or true events faraway from any sort of deception;
- Flexibility of case methods is required;
- Data should refer to the location where the information is obtained; and
- Finally, systematizing and organizing data are also required.

Moreover, Marshall, and Rossman (1999, p.196) concluded that, "methods are proposed for ensuring data quality (e.g., informants' knowledgeability, subjectivities, and candor) and for guarding against ethnocentric explanations by eliciting cross-cultural perspectives". However, Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2007) found three threats to validity in qualitative researches, such as: How the researcher can confirm that the informants' responses are clear and adequate? Does the researcher bias in the interpretation task? If yes, so what the researcher can do about that? And to what extent do informants react to researchers? Silverman (2004) pointed out that qualitative researches involve the quality of recording, and the 'truthfulness' of the analysis process in order to increase the

validity of qualitative studies. Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002, p.529) noticed that, "the overriding criteria for good scientific writing are accuracy and clarity". In conclusion, researchers should not neglect their perceptions of things, and should therefore account for 'subjectivity' whenever possible, as well as being conscious about threats to validity or accurate data. However, David (2006: 2, p.118) reported that, "educational case studies are almost always conducted under constraints of time and resources and therefore reliability and validity pose considerable problems".

2.6 Conclusion

The author presented in this chapter the research paradigm, the research design, as well as a variety of discussions about the qualitative approach. The author decided to use the case study as a strategy for this study, and then the author showed different types of case studies, with a brief talk about the history of case studies in sciences, and the rationale for the case. Then, the author looked at the setting, participants' selection, and sources of data, which are collected for data analysis. Also, how the data was managed, trustworthiness, reflexivity and the assessment of validity took part in this study; and finally ethical issues were thoroughly considered throughout the inquiry process. In chapter three, the author will provide a detailed description of the major findings of the research.