2. Data Collection Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the **methods** that were employed in order to collect the primary data. It also gives details of the **tools** required to proceed with the analysis of the study.

2.1 The Analysis Methodology

The paper draws on my first-hand experience in a Chinese SOE and thus lends itself to a particular apt tool for synthesizing observations into insights: a **problem solving analysis**. During six months I participated in a Chinese SOE's daily routines as an intern with certain business development-responsibilities. Additionally and in preparation of this analysis, I was in constant exchange with my advisor. Named exchange led to the following methodology, also reflected in the paper's structure:

- The first stage contained a general **description** of the enterprise, my department and my duties as an intern. It also evaluated the potential **problems** that from my point of view and my studies of International Business were found. Following the evaluation, I selected a problem as "the problem to solve".

- Stage two was about the **diagnosis** of the problem and its pertinent literature review.

- Therefore, I formulated a **solution** proposal for the problem by evaluating the options and choosing the more feasible to implement.

- The last stage required the description of the solution **plan** implementation, which required resource and operations planning.

Given the temporal and hierarchical limitations due to me serving as an intern, an implementation and subsequent evaluation of the proposals could not be effectuated.

2.2 Information Sources

In order to write this analysis, I collected the data relying on two sources: primary data as obtained through an exploratory study, the secondary data retrieved from the relevant literature.

The **exploratory study** gathered data through **observation,** an approach validated by Kumar (Kummar, 2005). Personal observation was augmented – where appropriate – with information from employees of CBMIE, obtained through unstructured encounters such as lunch, chat or email. I was able to observe the behavior of CBMIE's integrants and to collect and store the information and documentation provided to me. Information and documentation collection was particularly "facilitated" by the fact that I was provided with very little of both.

That way, I developed a proactive and highly sensitive approach to information and documentation collection.

To supplement printed or digital information and documentation I purposefully and deliberately engaged in conversations as to fill the perceived gaps. My tasks and the information and documentation necessary to perform them, were the main indicator of such informational gaps. Depending on the information required I engaged in conversations in formal or in rather informal settings, such as lunch breaks, or the walks to off-site cafeteria.

Secondary sources such as books and articles retrieved from the interactive learning and information resource at UDLAP (CIRIA, 2010) and case studies containing

information about Global sourcing, Cross-Functional Sourcing Teams and Supply Chain

Management formed the basis of my Theoretical Framework.

2.3 Methodology for Analyzing the Data

To analyze the data from my non-participant observation to define a problem and

describe the root causing factors of the same, I followed the model of the Cause-Effect

Diagram of **Kaoru Ishikawa**. Outcomes will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The cause and effect diagram is a visual representation of a fishbone, which is

divided into two main parts: One part situated at the right side of the diagram which

contains the **fish head**, i.e. the problem. The left side is where the **spines** of the fish are

divided to categorize the main causes. It will be divided according to the nature of the

problem. Most of the times, this diagram is utilized to recognize by a brainstorm the causes

of a particular problem.

The brainstorm or the fishbone diagram has been used in various occasions to

identify the root causes of a problem (Allison, 1994). Examples are in question and in data

similar to my problem, since it helped me to get my ideas down on paper and then helped

me put those thoughts in order. This was a basic start to understand the skeleton or

structure of my analysis project, besides, it enabled me to be more detailed in its

elaboration, due to the necessity of repeating the diagram more than three times.