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Improving the effectiveness of teacher-selection interviews: Headteachers' perspectives

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Title: Improving the effectiveness of teacher-selection interviews: headteachers' perspective

A project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Human Resource Management at the Westminster Business School, University of Westminster

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Executive Summary

Interviews are required component of teacher-selection process within the educational arena in London schools (DCSF, 2009). Research concentrating on teacher-selection interviews includes psychological effects during face-to-face interviewing (Delli & Vera, 2004) and postemployment outcomes (Young & Delli, 2002). Noticeably, omitted from the interviewing literature in educational arena are interview structure of teacher-selection interview; how interviews are measured; and how interview results are combined with other sources of selection information. To begin filling these gaps, the purpose of this study is to review current literature related to teacher-selection interviews; gather data from headteachers of London schools; and present findings.

Taking an interpretative approach, this study has been designed to gather qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, document analysis for research questions 1, 3 and 4 and quantitative data with the help of a self-completion questionnaire for the research question 2. Interviews have been conducted with seven headteachers and transcribed verbatim and 32 self-completion questionnaires were received out of 50.

This study has found that headteachers use structured interviews for teacher employment with some variations in some components such as teaching a lesson or making a presentation as a part of interview process. It also found that the interviews are assessed using rating scales and a panel of at least three members including headteachers discuss and come to consensus to finalise most suitable candidates. Additionally, it was discovered that information from different source of teacher-selection methods is combined with interview performance to make an informed decision. Finally, headteachers could improve teacher selection-interviews with the introduction of technology into interviewing, involving parents and students and making teaching a class as a formal component of the interviewing process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The use of interviews in the teacher-selection process is a key tool (Broadley & Broadley, 2004) as well as it is a mechanism that allows headteachers to better evaluate a candidate to hire as a teacher. Choosing the most suitable candidate for teaching jobs is extremely important because students' learning is significantly affected by the quality of teachers in schools (Harris, 2006) and having well-qualified teachers in schools means improving student achievements (Sparks, 2000). One way to address this issue is through the way they are selected to be employed. However, selection of quality teachers is a notoriously complex issue because it is influenced by various factors in applied psychology including the topic of interviewing such as structure of interviews and question phrasing (Hindman, 2009).

Interview is also a required component in teacher selection process, which is one of the most popular predictor for teacher employment (Castetter & Young, 2000). In the context of the primary schools in London, many staffing activities are delegated to the headteachers which include interviewing candidates, consulting on their suitability and making the final decision as to who are going to be selected (DCSF, 2009).

Many studies of human resource practices in education, most of which come from the States, suggest that a valid prediction needs to be applied to hire the brightest teacher among a pool of enthusiastic and competent applicants, a sine qua non in the school setting as far as quality education is concerned (Young & Delli, 2002). In London primary schools, staffing process includes face-to-face interviewing prior to accepting a candidate as a teacher. Unfortunately, there is not much knowledge available in literature on this topic. Nevertheless, an enormous amount of knowledge pertains to validity and reliability of face-to-face interviews in private and commercial sector rather than education field. Omitted entirely from these studies is the link between pre-employment interview results to the postemployment performance in teacher-selection interviews. It is also not clear from the current literature about how teacher-selection interviews are structured nor does it indicate ways in which interview results

are treated in making final decision by the headteacher. Similarly, there is not much information available on how candidates are assessed against their interview performance in teacher-selection.

One might take it for granted that there is a strong research base addressing the practices of interviewing in teacher-selection given the well-grounded use of interviews with the employment process (Delli & Vera, 2004). Unfortunately, this important administrative function has been neglected substantially in educational research arena. To start filling a void in research that exists in face-to-face teacher-selection interviews, this study investigates, with guidance of available literature; (a) whether headteachers prefer structured interviews to unstructured ones; (b) how teacher candidates are assessed against their interview performance; (c) how interview results are combined with other sources of selection information; and (d) how can headteachers improve the effectiveness of teacher-selection interviews.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

One component of staffing process in schools is the employment interview which is carried out face-to-face, based on credentials, mostly by headteachers. In addition to checking on identity, academic qualifications, professional and character references and previous employment history, interviews are widely used in teacher-selection process (Hindman, 2004). While acknowledging that there exists a literature well researched on interviews, bulk of the body of knowledge is about the business sector. Guided by the existing research in education arena, to add to what has been already researched on teacher-selection interviews, the purpose of this paper is to focus particularly on improving the effectiveness of face-to-face teacher-selection interviews.

Edenborough (2002: 4) defines an interview as 'a meeting of people face to face, as for evaluating a job applicant'. It is intriguing to investigate what it is about interviews which give headteachers a sense of 'knowing' the candidates in a 'fleeting encounter'. Perhaps they may want to know if the applicants can do the job – whether they have mastered the skills which they have included in their curriculum vitae, gained enough experience and have personal qualities required by the job. Or they may intend to see if the potential candidates could do the job and whether they are motivated by and interested in the opportunity. Headteachers may also wish to know how the candidates will fit into their schools' culture, how they will become accustomed to the working environment and how they will be compatible with other teachers. Identifying how competitive the candidates are in these areas is crucial for the effectiveness of teacher-selection interviews, but the question is to what extent does interviewing process enable assessing such important areas.

Because interviews are able to provide crucial information about applicants, it may be the main reason why interviews are popular among recruiters. Successive surveys undertaken by Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD) have found that interviews are frequently used method of staffing process in selecting potential

employees and 77% of the selection methods used in companies are found to be interviews based on the contents of the curriculum vitae/application form (CIPD, 2007). Despite its popularity, earlier studies have shown that the predictive qualities of interviews are 'markedly' weaker than the other selection techniques like assessment centres and personality tests (Courtis, 1988 & Taylor, 2008). However, interviews are continuing to be widely used mechanism to select employees not only because of their social functions in selection, but also because of their acceptability to both recruiters and candidates (Barclay, 2001): hence, employment interview remains popular among recruiters (Campion et al, 1997) even for the teacher selection as well.

Although there are challenges to the validity of interviews, employers of teachers are interested in interviews to guide them to make informed decisions (Galbo et al, 1986) because of many reasons. For one thing, the face-to-face interviews enable headteachers to gather information about the applicant's ability to fit with the ethos of the school and teaching. For another, interviews allow an opportunity to obtain a rich source of information, making headteachers feel comfortable in their decision-making (Broadley & Broadley, 2004). Impression, favourable or otherwise, created through verbal and non-verbal information including candidate's facial expressions has also a significant impact on interviewers (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). Moreover, there is a strong correlation between the measures of teacher competency and their verbal ability which is assessable using interviews (Shields & Daniele, 1982) because it is possible to have more interviewer autonomy and self-expression in interviews (Dipboye, 1994). However, interviewer decisions on selection are seen to be idiosyncratic and variation in decision making process exposes into organisational ineffectiveness (Graves & Karren, 1996). Other advantages of face-to-face interview include economical benefits compared to other selection methods such as psychometric tests (Porter et al, 2008). However, poorly designed and conducted interviews can be expensive because it may lead to selecting candidates who may not be the most capable employees to achieve the organisational objectives.

Accordingly, a bulk of knowledge currently exists about the ways in which interviews can be used effectively. A body of literature is available on emphasising the

importance of structured interviews (e.g. Cooper et al, 2003; Morgeson et al, 2007, Arvey & Campion, 1982; Harris, 1989) and these researchers have suggested that structured interviews demonstrate noticeable improvement. Crockton, (2008) also found that interviews improve job performance predictions with its ability to learn more about the candidates through a face to face conversation. Buckley et al (2000) argue that structured interviews are more reliable than unstructured ones because they have higher predictive validity than those which are unstructured (Borman et al, 1997): hence can be used as a tool for predicting future performance (Taylor, 2008).

Structured interviews have become increasingly popular in all kinds of organisations (Barclay, 1999) including schools. Huffcutt & Arthur (1994) found that interview validities increased as structure increased and Adams et al (1994) in their study stressed its usefulness for assessing applicant-organisation fit. According to Barclay (2001), there are two particular ways in which questions may be asked to improve the structure of an interview. They are situational questions and questions based on past behaviour or behavioural questions. Whilst situational questions pose hypothetical situation to find out what the candidates would do if they were in a similar situation, behavioural questions focus on the past behaviour of the candidates which may be asked to learn more about what the candidate had done in the past.

Behavioural questions can be asked, for instance, if the employer requires the candidates to be persuasive, they are asked to describe an event where they had to use persuasive skills. These types of questions may be asked when the interviewer has a clear idea about the competencies required for a particular job and that the questions need to be directed to these competencies. Questions may also be asked to find out about the opinions, attitudes, goals and aspirations, and self-evaluation. However, Campion et al (1997) argue that questions on these aspects are weaker because they provide opportunities for candidates to present their credentials in an exaggerated fashion which controls revealing their weaknesses.

Past behaviour questions in interviews have been emphasised in literature because of improved validity against less structured interview questions. Cronshaw and

Wiesner (1989) proposed a theory known as “behaviour consistency theory” which claims that there is a relationship between intentions of people with the future behaviour and that questions which allow describing past situations are likely to predict future behaviour. It is suggested that attitudes are formed through behaviour, and the past behaviours of people are the causes of the present attitude (Kallgren & Wood, 1986).

When behavioural interviews are so important for employment, the important question is how valid is the information obtained through interviews? In a comparison study using undergraduates as interviewers, Janz (1982) discovered that the validity of behavioural interviews is much better (correlation coefficient, 0.54) than the validity of “standard” interviews (correlation coefficient, 0.07). In a similar study conducted by Orpen (1985) also found that behavioural interviews produced higher validity than the “normal” interviews. Similarly, Campion et al (1994) in their study compared the behavioural interviews with situational interviews and reported that the former has slightly higher validity (0.51) than the latter (0.39). These studies have demonstrated a strong case for structuring interviews with behavioural type as well as situational types of questions.

Moreover, Delli & Vera (2004) reported that their study indicate that interview format is more significant in selecting a candidate for a job than the job qualifications of the candidate. Either guided by the research on interview questions or not it is common practice by many organisations to use both experienced-based questions as well as hypothetical questions. Using professional employees of government as subjects, Pulakos & Schmitt (1995) conducted a research hypothesising that behaviour description interviews are more effective for higher-level jobs than situational interviews and they found out that it was the case. However, Huffcutt et al (2001) in their study concluded that there is “diminished effectiveness for situational interviews and continued effectiveness for behavioural description interviews”. According to Clement (2008) behaviour-based interviews can lead to better hiring and retention. This is particularly significant in teacher-selection as aspects of personality are crucial in the nature of teaching jobs. Hence, there is a disagreement between Huffcutt et al

(2001) and Campion et al (1994) on the validity of situational type of interviews, but most of the researchers agree that behavioural type of interview has higher validity than the “standard” interviews.

Structured interviews, with their numerous advantages, nevertheless, still remain problematic. According to Dipboye (1997) they are seen as detrimental to recruiting purposes, incongruent with the organisational culture (Kossek, 1989), expensive (Terpstra & Rozell, 1997) and they are less favourable than unstructured interviews among interviewees (Chapman & Rowe, 2002). What’s more, Nevo & Berman (1994) argue that if interviews are structured, then they may be less spontaneous and the interviewer may omit important information, otherwise could be obtained through supplementary questions. The predetermined questions may influence and act as external loci of control which may discourage the interviewees to be open during an interview process. Additionally, inflexible interview structure may provide candidates with the opportunity to “beat the system” as popular interview questions are generally available to candidates through textbooks or guidelines of effective interview skills for which they are often either get professional support or well-prepared.

For these reasons Nevo & Berman (1994) proposed an interview method called “two-step selection interview” which consists of an “integrated” part as well as a “combined” part where the former is highly structured while the latter is open-ended. However, the open-ended part of this interviewing process requires intensive training and experience to move effortlessly and naturally from the “integrated” or the structured part. One of the disadvantages of this method is that the second part of the interview has a tendency of biasness: hence low predictive validity.

Hoynes (2005) asserts that a ‘structured interview’ can have the following features: questions are planned carefully before the interview; all candidates are asked the same questions; answers are scored using a rating system; questions focus on the attributes and behaviours needed in the job. Although there is a lot of research on interview structure there is no consensus about a definite way of structuring an

interview and surprisingly, there is very little or no information available about this area of interviews in educational arena.

Despite many researchers recommending structured interviews over unstructured ones, a study conducted by Graves & Karren (1996) suggested that majority of organisations practise unstructured interviews, making the interviewer completely responsible for the entire interviewing process. Blackman & Funder (2002) argue that structured interviews are less useful when it comes to assessing characteristics of interviewees' personality than those which are unstructured.

Another way interviews can be improved is through empowering the interviewers. Inter-rater reliability levels, according to Convey et al (1995), are higher when interviews include multiple ratings, interviewer training, and standardisation of questions and efficiency in response evaluation. Motowidlo et al (1992) contended that qualified interviewers can elicit more relevant information and are able to evaluate candidates more accurately than those who have acquired less skill in conducting interviews. The more the interviewers are able to extract job related information the more accurate judgements can be made in relation to the future performance of the candidate. Accordingly, skills to assess personality traits are a necessary component of teacher selection interview process (Delli & Vera, 2004).

Although researchers suggest that "structure" improves the effectiveness of the interview, it is not yet known exactly as to what form does a "structured interview" takes. Ellis et al, (2002) have identified that structured interviews frequently take the form of both experience-based and situational question formats. In a study conducted by Campion et al (1997) identified fifteen ways in which interviews can be structured and divided these components into two categories: content-based such as questions based on job analysis; and judgemental-based such as using the same interviewer(s) across all candidates. Liu and Johnson (2006) in their study recommended implementing "information-rich hiring" in future and that it is important to start teacher

selection process as early as possible because this would not only allow schools to collect more information about their new recruits but also more teachers will be available to conduct interviews of prospective teachers.

According to Barclay (2001) some of the components in Campion et al study such as limited prompting, comparatively longer interviews that have larger number of questions and allowing candidates to ask questions only after the interview have negative influence on interviewers or candidates. Barclay also identified some the areas of research which need to be explored in future research including what "scoring" systems do organisations use for assessing interviews; what kind of training is required to undertake such a scoring system; whether interviewers apply these; how do they feel about them; and whether interviews are combined with other forms of assessment information in making selection decisions. On the basis of previously collected data on 174 organisations including both public and private sectors Barclay (2001) discovered that 65% of the respondents introduced the use of other assessment methods such as tests to link with behavioural interviews and 75% of the organisations weight interviews higher than other assessment methods such as assessment centres. This shows the level of reliance on interviews over the other methods necessitating improving interviewing knowledge and competencies.

Another area of interest in this study is to examine ways in which teacher-selection interviews are scored. According to Campion et al (1994), the use of rating scale for assessing candidates is one way to improve structure of interviews that would enable to reduce the subjectivity in decision making. Barclay's (2001) study reported that 63% of the organisations claimed that they use a system of scoring to help them take informed decisions. The data obtained from the public sector indicated that they use "three-category approach" for measuring each area of the interview: "fully meets requirement", "partially meets requirement", and "does not meet requirement" (Barclay, 2001: 94). On the other hand, private sector is found to be using more detailed and information-rich five-point rating scale, which might not necessarily be, according to Barclay, better than the ones in use in the public sector.

What's more Young & Delli (2002) suggest carrying out further research on finding out the relationship between preemployment assessments and postemployment outcomes. In addition, Delli & Vera (2004) propose further research directions such as exploring whether or not novice interviewers are more influenced by psychological dynamics than experienced interviewers; if panel interviews are more likely to minimise the impact of psychological influences; and whether or not experience level of the interviewer impact interview evaluation.

The scope of this study, however, restricts investigating all these areas: hence, focuses on assessment of interview performance, the format of a teacher-selection interviews, whether or not interview results are combined with other source of information when making teacher-selection decisions; and if headteachers can contribute improving the effectiveness of teacher-selection interviews. In this study, it is thus attempts to address the following research questions:

1. How are teacher-selection interviews measured?
2. What form do teacher-selection interviews take?
3. How are interview results combined with other sources of assessments information in teacher-selection?
4. What are the ways in which teacher-selection interviews could be improved?

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides information on methodology including research design, methods of triangulation, data collection procedures and how data have been analysed. It also justifies the reasons for choosing the methods and techniques for data gathering and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

To address the above research questions, data have been gathered in two ways: qualitative and quantitative. Majority of the data collected is qualitative which is combined with simple quantitative data to achieve greater validity (Silverman, 2006).

Taking an interpretative approach, this research has been designed to gather data, generally, through qualitative means. The main purpose of using this approach is to gather 'authentic' understanding of headteachers' experiences as this research looks at headteachers' perspectives in addressing the research questions. According to Silverman (2006) 'open-ended' questions may be one of the effective ways to achieve this objective. However, a small representative sample, seven interviews to be precise, has been collected due to the time and cost constraints. This may not be a major limitation because qualitative interviews are generally conducted with small samples (Finch, 1984).

The choice of qualitative research also gives many advantages. It enables to study a phenomenon which is not accessible anywhere else. The nature of this study requires examining various areas in teacher-selection interviews that would have been extremely difficult to study if quantitative approach has been employed. For example, headteachers' opinions regarding the ways in which teacher-selection interviews could be improved. Another advantage is that qualitative data would facilitate

investigating directly what happens in the real world context. In other words, this research design enables to examine what headteachers actually do in conducting teacher-selection interviews. Finally, according to Silverman (2006) there is a general belief that qualitative data would be source of information that can provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena.

However, qualitative data collection has its limitations. First, there is the problem of reliability. Reliability can be defined as 'the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Hammersley, 1992:67). If consistency cannot be maintained, then validity of the data collected may be in question. Yet, Mason (1996:21) argues that validity, reliability and generalisability 'are different kinds of measures of the quality, rigour and wider potential of research, which are achieved according to certain methodological and disciplinary conventions and principles'. According to Mason (1996:24) validity means 'you are observing, identifying, or "measuring" what you say you are'. Another criticism of qualitative research is the question of how authentic is the information it offers. This argument is sometimes referred to as the problem of anecdotalism (Silverman, 1989) which means revealing information based on stories that people narrate regarding some apparent phenomena, without producing enough analysis on less clear or even contradictory data.

Therefore, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data may provide better evidence and information than sticking to one.

3.2 Methods

Taking a triangulated approach, this study has employed more than one method of collecting data to explore the research questions. They are semi-structured interviews, self-completion questionnaires and document analysis. These methods have been chosen after considering various issues such as the length of the study,

the availability of resources, whether qualitative methods will provide more information to learn about this topic than using quantitative methods and the practical considerations that would sway my choice.

The first method used in this study is self-completion questionnaires with fifteen questions requiring respondents to tick either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (see Appendix 5) which are specifically focused on the teacher-selection interview structure because there are contradictions in the current literature with regards to this issue. These questionnaires were sent to fifty randomly selected headteachers by post with stamped addressed envelopes. There are a number of advantages of using self-completion questionnaire. First, it is relatively cheaper to administer compared to other methods such as interviews. This would become easier when the respondents require put a tick to answer the questions in the questionnaire. Interviews, except telephone interviews, are costly in terms of travelling and time and sometimes postal questionnaire have low cost advantages (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Another advantage is that it is quicker to administer. For this study, all the questionnaires were posted in one batch, but if it were to complete by interviewing it would have taken a long time and cost so much for travelling. However, of those sent, thirty-two questionnaires were returned after having reminded the schools over the phone. Third, self-completion questionnaires can be answered by the respondents according to their convenience.

Although these advantages exist, there are a number of disadvantages as well. First, before answering the questions, respondents will be able to read the whole questionnaire which means the respondents can answer questions as they like without following the order of the questionnaire. Another disadvantage is that it is difficult to know who answered the questions. In the case of this study, the questions in the questionnaire can be answered by anybody in the school.

Being aware of the disadvantages of self-completion questionnaire, it was employed as a part of verifying some of the responses given by the headteachers in their interviews so that the value of validity can be raised.

As the second method, semi-structured interviews have been conducted in seven schools across London that has been chosen at random. Headteachers, five from the public schools and two from the private, have taken part in this study to fulfil a request of the author. Student population of these schools ranges from 350 to 600. The sample size has been reduced from its initial size of ten because of the length of the study, unavailability of headteachers and the cost involved in the interviewing process. These headteachers were assured complete confidentiality as a condition of participation in this study. To give the level of confidentiality necessary to contribute in this research, it was agreed not to disclose any information which would link in this study findings to the public knowledge. Semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection have a number of advantages. First, this type of interviews allows flexibility in adjusting interview questions to clarify and elaborate further into the areas specified in the study. This is useful when the investigation of the research questions is fairly clear because semi-structured interviews can address more specific issues (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Second, the respondents are also likely to be encouraged to provide their own definitions of their current practices of particular activities with the help of open-ended interview study (Silverman, 2006). An example of such an activity in this study is how headteachers combine interview results with other sources of selection information. Third, audio recording of the interviews can be used to transcribe verbatim the content of interview. Transcription of these interviews can be an important record of natural interaction that can offer reliable source of information to be used in the research (Finch, 1984). Silverman (2005) provides another reason to use semi-structured interviews stating that almost all the published qualitative research documents use interviews. Finally, interviews are comparatively more economical when it comes to time and resources than other methods.

Nevertheless, interviewing headteachers poses some specific problems. The busyness, authority and power held by this group of individuals makes their accessibility quite difficult and arranging a convenient time for a face-to-face interview requires long period of time and patience. In the case of this study, many headteachers rejected to offer an opportunity to interview them with a reason that they

were just ‘busy’. Headteachers might not have recognised that participating in this study was important for them or they were unwilling to grant time to conduct an interview because they might have felt that spending time away from productive activity is unnecessary. However, interviews have been conducted with willingly participated headteachers and they spent more than half an hour for an interview in this study. Another problem with interviews is that the interviews need to be transcribe verbatim which is time consuming and tedious. To do that, it is necessary to use a voice recorder which costs money.

Additionally, bias factor in interview data is a major problem. According to positivists, bias is a considerable limitation because there are bad interviewers and interviewees (Silverman, 2001). Similarly constructionists argue that informants may conceal ‘what the interviewer most wants to know‘(Denzin, 1970:130).

Finally, some of the organisational documents regarding evaluating teachers’ performance in teaching, criteria used to short-list candidates for the interview and rating scales have been collected and analysed to verify headteachers’ responses in the interviews. Because many headteachers were unable to provide detailed description of exactly the same format in the interviews, the documents have been used to provide examples of the instruments used by different schools. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain such documents from all the headteachers who have agreed to participate in the interviews.

Therefore, a triangulated approach in data collection may be more reliable and hold high validity than relying on one single method.

3.3 Procedures of Sampling and Data Collection

Data collection for this study was undertaken between early June and Middle of July 2009. However, the process started in January 2009 when the request letters were sent to 30 different schools for which none responded. A second attempt was made

in the middle of March with 50 schools that were selected at random. This time the request letters were followed by telephone calls and luckily seven headteachers were agreed to provide an opportunity to interview them face-to-face. Interviews were arranged according to the convenience of these obliging headteachers. Many schools replied, when telephoned, that their headteachers are extremely 'busy. Apparently, this period coincided with schools' annual report giving; as a result many headteachers refused to participate in this study: hence the sample size was limited to seven interviews. With their acceptance, these interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for the use of this study. At the end of each interview, a request was made to obtain the interview assessment format and the scoring forms from each headteacher. These instruments are important to analyse the nature of the rating scales used in teacher-selection and to investigate how interview results are linked with other sources of selection information. Unfortunately, among the respondents only 30% of them were able to supply a copy of such instruments which might be due to the unwillingness of revealing such information or because of the sensitivity issues.

In addition, fifty schools, which are randomly selected, were chosen to post a self-completion questionnaire with fifteen questions for which headteachers were required to respond as either "yes" or "no" (see Appendix 1) with a covering letter. These were posted with stamped addressed envelopes of which thirty-two questionnaires were returned from different schools: a response rate of approximately 64% which according to Mangione (1995) is acceptable for postal questionnaires. This information is aimed at finding out the components of teacher-selection interview structure.

Finally, to gather information for the research questions, interviews were conducted because they involve opinions, experience, feelings and perspectives of individual headteachers. To do this, direct encounters with headteachers, through one to one interviews were made possible. Following a qualitative research design, this study was based on grounded theory. Some ideas which emerged from the analysis of data have been included in the subsequent data collection which led to change parts of the interview questions to be changed from their original forms.

3.4 Data Analysis

For research questions 1, 3 and 4, qualitative data collected through face-to-face interviews are analysed using grounded theory. According to Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12) this theory can be defined as 'theory that was derived from data systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another'. This approach is employed as a framework for analysing interview data because data collection and analysis can proceed at the same time referring back to one another as and when necessary so that if required additional questions may be asked to the interviewees.

Coding has been used to review transcripts by giving labels to the key components of the most salient information provided by the respondents. According to Charmaz (1983) codes are useful shorthand devices to organise, label, separate and compile data. Hence, using open coding method, different concepts are generated from the transcribed interviews.

Although this approach has been employed in this study, it has some limitations. First, practical difficulties need to be taken into consideration. For example, it takes a long time to transcribe the voice recordings of the interviews. This is particularly very difficult for a project like this as there is lack of time available to complete it. Second, Bryman & Bell (2007) argue that it is not clear whether grounded theory leads to a new theory. Finally, the idea of fragmenting the data by coding may result in a loss of the real sense of context (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

For the research question 2, however, quantitative data analysis has been used. The questions in the self-completion questionnaire are in the form of dichotomies, variables that have two categories containing data. Using univariate analysis, these data are put into a frequency table (see Appendix 2). One difficulty with this analysis

is that the findings may not be generalizable to the population because of the possibility that sampling error might affect the representativeness of the wider population. However, given the questionnaires have answered by the headteachers, it would be plausible to argue that this analysis can be generalised.

Chapter 4: Presentation of the research questions

This chapter presents various themes that are uncovered in relation to the research questions. It first, starts off with the question “how are teacher-selection interviews measured?’. Then, it attempts to discuss the second research question: “what form do teacher-selection interviews take?” This will be followed by the third question which is “how are interview results combined with other sources of assessment information in teacher-selection? Finally, the fourth research question “what are the ways in which teacher-selection interviews could be improved?” will be analysed. These questions will be discussed by drawing relevant quotations from the responses given by the respondents.

4.1 How is teacher-selection interview measured?

Participants of this research believe that it is important to have prewritten criteria to measure the performance of interviewees. However, the format of such criteria and scoring system that the headteachers use differ from school to school. The Deputy General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, Mr. Martin Ward writes:

> Practice varies widely between one school and another. There is no standard system, or even one that we would recommend to our members (see Appendix 1)

4.1.1 Scoring system

A scoring system is a method to rate individual applicant’s performance in an interview which all the headteachers use to facilitate decision making process. Some headteachers use a scale of 0 – 2 where “0” means “unsatisfactory”, “1” means “satisfactory” and “2” means “good”. Others rank the interviewees by using scores from 1 – 5 where five is the highest whilst there are headteachers who use a rating scale from 0 – 3 where a score of 3 is the highest score that is possible for a given question in the criteria. All the respondents said that they had selection criteria in which they would check whether the interviewees are able to meet the requirements

of the job. Such criteria derive from job specification rather than having rigid and inflexible questions that constitute the criteria in the teacher-selection interviews. One participant comments:

> We don't exactly have criteria. Our interview process isn't a case of fixed questions and fixed answers. So, the questions asked are very broad such "Tell us about your work experience", "Tell us about your qualifications" and "Tell us about your experience of ELL". So in terms of criteria, what we do is we gather answers and we do have three people in our panel and we get together, look at the job specification and see whether the person has met the criteria in the job specification (Interview 7: line 23 – 28).

All the participants responded by saying assessing interviews is very subjective and they use scoring as a "tool" of minimising the subjectivity and a way of quantifying the opinions of the members in the panel as shown in the Interview 4, line 40 – 44.

> It's just the way we usually see the performance with these three people. It's a way of quantifying our opinions. We give the score for each candidate. To be honest with you, that isn't the bottom line. If a candidate has scored more than the other one, but still we may pick the one with the lower score and we'd have picked reasons for that

As a means of lowering the subjectivity of measuring interview performance of the candidates, and to make the interview assessment objective, different strategies are employed by headteachers. First, of all the participants, six headteachers use a model answer in their scoring sheets. These headteachers provide some example responses on the question sheets that they consider characterise a "good" answer and the panel members use these to assess the performance of the candidates against the model answers. According to these participants, this way it would be easier to come to a team view rather than a subjective individual view. Second, of the participants, two gather answers of the individual candidates and the panel members analyse to find out who meets the criteria in the job specification: these headteachers have outlined the criteria in the job specification itself. However, how they examine the areas in the job specification has not been explained. Finally, three participants have identified some prompts and some areas of competencies, such as theoretical understanding of teaching, that need to be demonstrated in the oral answers which facilitate panel members when giving scores for individual candidates. One participant said:

> ...on the answer sheets you have key prompts what we'd expect to hear from those candidates (Interview 5: line 27 – 28).

What's more, the number of questions and the areas of interest also vary from school to school. A sample "interviewing assessment form" provided by one school (see Appendix 3) has 6 questions that they consider important to ask in teacher-selection interviews while another has 9 areas of interest (see Appendix ....). Of those who participated in the interview, 20 per cent said they use 9 to 10 questions. However, there is one school, a private and an international school that uses 18 different areas that they assess when selecting a teacher to be employed by them. The following are the most salient areas that are looked at in the teacher-selection interviews:

Area	Possible enquiry questions	Frequency
Teaching and lesson observation	How do you feel the lesson went?	6
Theoretical understanding of teaching and learning process	What approaches would you choose to teach, say a year four class? Tell us about teaching strategies? What behaviour strategies would you use in the classroom? Why?	7
Classroom management	How would you organise your classroom for learning? Tell us about how you would engage children for learning.	7
Work experience	Can you tell us about something that has been a learning experience for you? Tell us about something you have done that has been successful.	7
Curriculum	How would you ensure that the curriculum was relevant and accessible to all children in your class?	6
Personality		7

Table 1: Areas of enquiry in the interview assessment

To assess candidates in an interview, different schools employ different instruments. Most of the participating headteachers (70 per cent) were unwilling to reveal their instruments. However, some sample interviewing assessment forms have been collected from those who were willing and the following interviewing assessment form is an example of such a form.

Name of School
Teachers Interview
Question Evaluation Form

Name of Candidate:		Post Title: Class Teacher
Interview Panel:		Ref. No. .....
Interview Date and Time:		Completed by: .....
Q. No.	Key Questions	Comments
1	You taught a 30 minute lesson as part of the selection process, how do you feel the lesson went?	
2	Describe indicators that would show that it was successful lesson.	
3	How would ensure that the curriculum was relevant and accessible to all children in your class?	
4	Can you tell us about something that your proud of?	
5	Can you tell us about something that has been a learning experience for you?	
6	Tell us your experience in dealing with a parent that has approached you concerned about the behaviour of a child in your class?	
Applicant successful?		Yes / No
Should applicant's name be placed on waiting list?		Yes / No

Table 2: A sample interviewing assessment form

Another example of such an assessment form, requiring the assessors to give scores as well as comments, can be found in the Appendix 4. The problem with this kind of assessment is that it is very subjective and scorers are giving a single mark for so many areas.

All the participants in the interviews pay a special attention on the personality of their job applicant even though it was very difficult to define what "personality" means to them and notoriously difficult area to measure. Of the respondents, eight participants look for openness, flexibility and genuinely interested in their professional growth. One respondent said that it was just an impression which is why they have the opinions of three people because sometimes one person's impression can be different from the other. Two of the headteachers think that personality is about positive attitudes as well as likability in a straightforward sense. One headteacher responds:

> I think it's a combination of everything. Likability in a straightforward sense. I think it's about inevitably how they relate to oneself during interviewing and we'll be making a judgement about how they'd relate to children, primarily, how they'd relate to other members of the team (Interview 4: line 16 – 19).

Therefore, most of the headteachers employ criteria based on job specification to assess individual candidate's interview performance and take their decisions with the help of panel members' opinions and assessments.

4.2 What form does teacher-selection interview take?

All the respondents had been asking questions based job requirements and they also ask the same questions to all the candidates. These elements are found to be in Campion et al's (1997) interview structure. Most of the headteachers, 81 per cent, had a practice limiting prompting, follow-up questioning and elaboration questions. One respondent commented on this saying that it would not be realistic to let the candidates to go on talking when the interview has some particular objectives.

All the respondents agreed that they had used questions to find out the candidates past experiences and allowed them to give various examples of their work experience. However, very few of the respondents, 10 percent, had asked hypothetical questions. Similarly, all the headteachers who have participated in the interview believe that hypothetical questions are less likely to provide what they are looking for from a candidate as far as teacher selection is concerned. The reason being that the experience teachers would be able to provide generalised solutions in a given teaching related situation: hence, past experience would reveal their ability to handle most of the teaching-related events without wasting time on hypothetical questions which might never happen in future.

Of all the respondents, 72 per cent carry out long interviews which exceed more than half an hour allowing candidates to respond questions in details and headteachers seem to prefer practical examples along with candidates' responses. This might be one of the reasons why 81 per cent of the respondents do not control ancillary information. Those who control, 19 per cent, said that they would not allow candidates

to talk about whatever they wanted to discuss when the candidate had answered the question.

Majority of the respondents, 69 per cent, said “No” to the question “Do you allow questions from candidates throughout the interview?” However, at the end of the interview, the candidates are given opportunities to ask a few questions to clarify whatever they want to find out. Of those responded, only 31 per cent, said they do allow candidates to question in between interview questions because the candidate may need to add more information into the answer they gave.

As far as evaluation process is concerned, all the respondents claimed that they rate each answer using response scales, which vary from school to school. Some headteachers use a scale from 1 – 3, where 3 is the highest, while others apply a scale from 0 – 2, where 2 is the most competent. Each of the components in these scales has detailed explanations of the behaviours to be displayed in order to fit in a particular component. In addition, all the respondents use detailed notes during the interview.

Interviews are conducted in a panel of mostly three members, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a governor for which all the respondents said “yes” to the question to find out the number of interviewers interview candidates in an interview. Moreover, all the respondents claimed that the same members in the panel interview all the candidates most of the time. However, there have been incidents where two members or four members involve in teacher-selection interviews depending on the workload and the nature of the availability of the members from outside the school. If a teacher vacancy needs to be filled immediately, then the chances of reducing the number to members in the panel is likely to happen. When selecting teachers for a new year, there is a higher chance to get the involvement of more than three members in the interview panel because the head teachers are able to buy-in more time to prepare for the next year. Hence, a common figure is three in a panel.

Of all the respondents, 75 per cent said they hold discussions about candidates between interviews. Of those headteachers who have been interviewed by the author, 50 per cent believe that it is important to find out whether all the members have a similar opinion regarding the candidate before the next one is interviewed so which will enable them to form consensus on the performance of the candidates fairly and objectively rather than doing it at the end of the interview. However, 25 per cent of all the respondents agree that discussions about the performance of the interview should be done at the end when all the candidates have been interviewed. This view is in line with the research findings of an effective interview structure proposed by Campion et al (1997). Of all interviewed headteachers, 50 per cent support this standpoint. They believe that discussion about candidates' performance before finishing everyone would run the risk of being biased or favoured to particular candidates.

One important element of an effective interview structure is the training and experience of the interviewer. Of all the respondents, 53 per cent claimed that they had interview training in the past; the other, 47 per cent needing to be provided with interview training in future. This might be so if the requirements of school headship do not require headteachers needing to acquire such knowledge and to discuss this information is beyond the scope of this research.

Of the headteachers who participated in this research, 25 per cent believe that they predict candidates' future performance based on interview result and of all the respondents to the questionnaire, 75 per cent rejected the idea of predicting the future performance of the candidates based on interview result alone because according to them, interview questions can be answered very well by the candidates, but this does not necessarily make them "good" teachers in future.

The following table summarises the components found in the interview literature and the number and the percentage of headteacher said 'yes' to these components.

Components	Number of respondents who said 'yes'	Percentage of responses with 'yes'
1. questions focus on job requirements	32	100
2. same questions to all candidates	32	100
3. limit follow-up, prompting and elaboration questions	26	81
4. ask past behaviour questions rather than hypothetical questions	32	100
5. hold long interviews: more than half an hour	23	72
6. control ancillary information	26	69
7. allow candidates' questions only when necessary	26	69
8. rate each answer	32	100
9. use rating scales with a follow-up panel discussion	30	94
10. take detailed notes during interviewing	32	100
11. use a panel of three members including head of the school	32	100
12. use the same interviewers to interviewing	32	100
13. discuss candidates between interviews	24	75
14. headteachers are provided with interview training	17	53
15. predict teachers' future performance based on interview results	8	25

Table 4: Components of structure of teacher-selection interviews: headteachers' responses to the structure questionnaire

Hence, most of the components in the interview structure found in the selection process of business organizations are similar to what is practiced in educational sector. However, some components such as asking behavioural questions rather than hypothetical questions and use of the panel members using the headteacher are seem to be different.

4.3 How is interview results combined with other sources of assessment information in teacher-selection?

All the participated headteachers combine the interview results with other sources of candidate assessment information in the process of teacher employment. However, their practices vary greatly from headteacher to headteacher.

Of all the schools, five respondents specifically talked about teaching as a required component for selection. According to these headteachers, the job is to teach and even if a particular candidate has performed extremely well in the interview, if s/he cannot teach properly, then there is no point in selecting that person. One headteacher reacts:

> Because that's what the job is. You know...the job is teaching, the job is...emm..you know...emm..err.. teaching, how they work with children, how they teach is very very important aspect (Interview 4: line 59 – 61)

Three headteachers claimed that they ask the candidates to make a presentation on one of the areas in teaching that the candidates are comfortable with. Two schools allocate marks for accumulation with the result of interview performance to arrive at a total marks and two headteachers said they wanted their interviewees to write a sample letter to a disgruntled parent as a part of selection process. Of all the schools, 10 per cent go for work samples and lesson observation reports from the previous schools that the candidates have worked. One headteacher very strongly oppose the idea of candidates being asked to teach a lesson as a part of selection process. This headteacher responds:

> At the end, I don't ask them to teach. I find it quite contrived. I think you can teach a lesson in 25 minutes and do quite well, but I look for something longer than that. I mean...at the end of each interview, we accumulate the four or five aspects. We accumulate the references with the presentation of children's work with lesson observation reports and with their performance in the interview (Interview 6: line 61 – 66).

Again, there is no consensus among headteachers as to how marks from different sources of selection methods are accumulated. Of all the schools, 10 per cent take into consideration of the job application, job description and person specification to include in the accumulation of the total marks with teaching and interview performance. The other 90 per cent use these areas as a criterion to shortlist for interviews. All the school make use of references, but 60 per cent of headteachers clearly mentioned about how they treat reference in teacher-selection process. Explaining how they accumulate different aspects of teacher selection, one headteacher gives details:

> We accumulate the references with the presentation of children's work with the lesson observation and with their performance in the interview....and look at these four aspects (Interview 1: line 42 – 44).

The following table shows aspects, headteachers views, weighting of marks and frequency of responses.

Aspects	Need to include? Y (yes) N (No)	Weighting	Frequency
Interview performance	Y	Each of these aspects varies from 10% to 50% (no uniformity)	7
Teaching	Y		5
Work samples	Y		2
References	Y		7
Job description	Y		2
Person specification	Y		2

Table 5: Weighting of marks, percentage of response of various aspects in teacher-selection process

This study also found that there are some schools that take references very seriously as a part of safeguarding procedure. These headteachers believe that interviewing techniques are not robust enough, sometimes unsuitable candidates are being appointed and sometimes insensible people are recruited for working with children. One headteacher responds:

> We consider whether we want to ask any additional questions put out things formal before any references (Interview 3: line 39 – 40). .

Teaching a lesson is assessed using lesson observation forms. One example of such a form can be found in Appendix 3 which involves looking at the ability of planning a lesson, various aspects of teaching children, language command, contents of the subject, classroom management and evaluation of the students performance. Unfortunately it is unknown as to how work sample is assessed by these headteachers.

All the headteachers believe that it is important to combine the candidates' performance of interview with other sources of information because of some reasons.

First, some headteachers claimed that in order to make a sensible judgement it is very important to select the right person. Looking at these areas and giving scores would enable headteachers to justify their reasons. However, they believe that the scores may not be reliable and their decisions should not be limited by the scores alone. Second, some headteachers claimed that the use of other sources of information together with interview performance of the candidates give them more evidence to verify their thoughts which enable them also to verify their judgements. Third, when there is more than one candidate out of whom one has to be selected. In such cases, according to many headteachers, the scoring system to accumulate marks to find out who got the highest marks sometimes is very convenient when it comes to make an informed decision. However, sometimes the candidate with the highest marks is not necessarily the one who is selected. One headteacher responds:

> We mark each questions, so we do accumulate that, but appointing staff is a science and an art and so what you end up with is this formal interview to offer people a job, it is a naughty system which we use. You can easily get rid of two people because, let's say, if the marking is entirely out of 100, you end up with people having 50 or 60 and some of them getting 80 or 90. So, I think you can get rid of those on the lower extreme ends. What I wouldn't want to do is to go for the person who got the highest marks (Interview 6: line 69 – 77).

Of all the respondents, 60 per cent said they might do it because the person who scores the highest marks may not necessarily be the most effective teacher. Hence, they go for detailed discussions by involving all the panel members to talk through what they think about individual candidates. For these headteachers the scores serves on thing and their instinct does another. Finally, it is a means to lower the subjectivity of these areas. Those candidates who have achieved the highest marks will be put to a further discussion and the panel members talk about the pluses and minuses of these candidates and weigh the pluses against the minuses before they choose someone to be employed as a teacher.

Hence, the application, the person specification and the job description are sources information to determine who will be selected for the teacher-selection interview and there is not a particular way in which interview performance is combined with other sources of selection information in teacher-selection process.

4.4 What are the ways in which teacher-selection interviews could be improved?

Of all the headteachers who took part in the interviews, 60 per cent think that it is important to include teaching component as a part of the interviewing process. There are some advantages and disadvantages in formally introducing such a component in the interviewing process. This method would enable headteachers to see whether or not the candidate has appropriate teaching skills including class control, delivery of contents and teaching strategies. It also demonstrates how the candidate put the theory into practice. Additionally, the candidate's ability to organise and engage children to learn can be observed through a practical activity such as teaching a lesson. Nevertheless, the introduction of a teaching component involves panel members to have classroom teaching experience as well as the knowledge of the curriculum. This strategy may also be time-consuming and costly as the process takes longer time than selecting teachers based on the interview results combined with other sources discussed above.

One headteacher suggest improving rating questions and questioning techniques. However, how it helps improving the effectiveness has not been explained. Barclay (2001) advocate "better types of questions" to be asked in the interview, but many headteachers assume that past behaviour questions are far better than hypothetical questions.

Another headteacher thinks that involving parents and children would be an important aspect in improving interviewing process. According to this headteacher, it would help the panel to have wider perspective of what is expected of a teacher and parents and children can ask questions that the candidates understand their view points as well. Involving them could improve the credibility of teacher-selection process because teachers serve students and parents who are the real clients of a school and the

satisfaction of these parties need to be taken into consideration. Yet, this headteacher agrees that such a strategy will result in longer interviews and for effective implementation training parents and students will be required.

Two headteachers propose introducing technology into interviewing process. Apparently, they use technology in some of their interviews. The use of technology can be done through different media. One medium is recording the interviews verbatim and them watch or listen to the recording afterwards. This will help the panel members to analyse interview questions more thoroughly. The second medium is the use of the Skype facilities. This is particularly useful when a competent candidate is away from the home country. One headteacher believes that it is an extremely effective way to conduct an interview when people are in other countries and this headteacher makes use of this facility because of many benefits. First, it is cheap and readily available. Second, it is interactive because they use webcam and virtually be similar to a face-to-face interview. Third, it can be used to interview people anywhere in the world provided that they have internet access. Finally, it can be done even if the panel members are in their own offices. This headteacher responds:

> We'd like to bring a practical element, an observation or a presentation, but it's not always possible. Erm...this year, I've started using Skype lot more. Using this facility, recently I had recruited someone who is very very strong in certain areas, who was in far away country (Interview 7: line 98 – 101).

Despite these benefits, it is not free from problems. The use of such a method requires qualified people not only in the interview process but also they need to be professional people who are technology friendly. Additionally, because world's time zones are different, the time that is convenient for one party may not be suitable time for the other. This might not yield the expected results. What's more, there may be room for faking out in the interviews if the interviewing is not done in person.

One headteacher thinks that it is not necessary to have set questions for teacher-selection interviews. Unlike business interviews, he argues, that it is important to express themselves in the process of selecting a competent teacher as teaching

requires effective communication and interview plays an important role of providing them with an opportunity to express themselves and show their ability to communicate effectively. They are also not interested in asking difficult questions about candidates' experiences but rather look for the areas that match their criteria through an interview. Furthermore, two headteachers suggest including components of relationships to see how candidates relate themselves with others. According to them, personality of teachers is an important area and their attitude towards teaching and learning process need to be taken into account in a sound interview. Personality tests are used in the selection process for employment in business sector. However, she was unable to explain how components of relationship can be included in the interviews. The following is the table showing the most suggested ideas and the percentage of response.

Ideas	Frequencies
Including teaching a lesson as a component of interview	6
Conduct interview sessions using technology	2
Improve rating questions and questioning	1
Involve parents and students in the interview process	1
Do not asks set questions – concentrate on what people can do rather than what they can't do	1
Using a presentations or observations	5

Table 6: Ideas to improve teacher-selection interviews

Hence, according to the most of the headteachers, teacher-selection interviews can be improved if a practical element can be included formally into the components of interview process.

Chapter 5: Positions of Research Findings within Extant Literature

This chapter outlines most important findings of this study and describes what the findings say in relation to the existing literature. It also highlights the implications for theory and practice as well as presents some limitations of the study.

5.1 Teacher-selection interview structure

This study has shown that headteachers use structured interviews as a component of teacher employment process. Although most of the elements in the structure of teacher-selection interviews take the form of business employment interviews as suggested by Campion et al (1997), there are other components included in the interview structure in teacher employment interviews. Most of the headteachers believe that past behaviour questions are more important than hypothetical questions because, apparently, headteachers want the candidates to express and talk about what they have done in the past with children. This finding is consistent with the findings of Huffcutt et al (2001) and Clement (2008). Nevertheless, Barclay's (2001:83) "better type of question" include questions on both past behaviour and hypothetical situations.

5.2 Measuring interview

Almost all the headteachers who took part in this study reported that they use an instrument to measure interview performance of candidates. Some use a rating scale from 0 – 2, (where 0 indicates "not satisfactory", 1 means "satisfactory" and 2 shows "good"), 0 – 3 (where 0 is the lowest and 3 is the highest marks) whilst others use a scale of 1 – 5 (where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest). Similarly, Barclay (2001:94) found that public organisations use "a simple three-category approach": "fully meets requirement", "partially meets requirement", and "does not meet requirement". These slight variations in scoring, however, do not necessarily mean one way is superior and effective than the other. According to Campion et al (1997) the use of rating scale is

one way that structure of the interviews can improve effectiveness of interviews. The assessments are done by a panel that consists, generally, of 3 members including the headteacher. Most of the headteachers provide a model answer for prewritten questions so as to “lower subjectivity”. After the interviews, the panel members come together, discuss the pluses and minuses of individual candidates and arrive at the final decision based on the team consensus.

5.3 Combining interview results with other selection methods

Most of the respondents do not use the result of the interview alone as the means to decide who they would employ as their new teacher. Almost all the headteachers combine the interview results with other sources of information such as the ability of teaching or making a presentation. However, this study did not find any particular format that headteachers employ rather it was more individualistic, suiting the needs of their own school. Some prefer to look at four aspects such as references, teaching, interview results and work samples and give equal weighting for each of these areas whereas others claim they think teaching component needs to be weighed more than the interview results itself. It is a common practice that applicants are shortlisted for interviews using the job description and person specification which are included in the application form.

The previous researchers such as Barclay (2001) reported that it is less clear how interview information is used to reach decisions by business organisations and that these organisations do not seem to have a structure to evaluate information from various methods of selection process. This seems inconsistent with educational arena as different source of selection information is evaluated to make an informed decision in teacher-selection. However, inconsistency in the practices is evident in the responses by the headteachers.

5.4 Headteachers ideas to improve teacher-selection interviews

Many ideas have been proposed by those who have participated in this study. Most of the headteachers believe a practical component is a necessary component of

interviewing process. A practical component means activities such as classroom teaching, an observation or a presentation. Formalising such a component, however, requires more time and administrative work. Other ideas given by the headteacher to improve teacher-selection interviews include the use of technology, improving rating the questions and questioning and involving parents and students in the interview process. Such elements involve further training for the headteachers, willingness from the parents and approval from the government authorities.

5.5 Implications for Theory and Practice

To apply the concepts suggested in this study in real context may require considering various issues as one headteacher noted that “you can never be 100% sure” (Interview 5: line 89) that the right candidate has been selected in teacher employment process. First, it is extremely difficult to measure the performance of a candidate in an interview as it is extremely subjective. This does not mean that this component of teacher employment process is not important. Although there are practical difficulties in terms of time and resources, the implementation of a rating scale by a panel of at least three members with appropriate experience and knowledge would reduce subjectivity. Hence, as suggested by one headteacher “a group consensus” may lessen the bias effect (Interview 2: line 64). Second, the use of marks to combine different sources of teacher-selection information may seem unrealistic as this method has probability to cancel out a potential candidate who is good at teaching if the marks are allocated equally to more two areas. For example, one candidate who is not good at teaching may perform better in the interview than someone who is good at teaching and yet that person is able to gain more marks than the latter. On the other hand, if there is no mechanism whereby various areas of teacher-selection process are not considered, then headteachers might face difficulty in justifying their choices. Hence, it may be plausible to argue that having some instruments to combine information from different source of teacher employment process would enable headteachers better opportunities to make informed decisions rather than using one single method of selection process. Finally, incorporating technology, parents and students also would pose practical difficulties because it involves training and experience to do it effectively. Nevertheless, these ideas are not impractical to implement in teacher-

selection process provided that headteachers are ready to accept these ideas, extend their commitment and be innovative.

5.6 Limitations

This study only looks at the headteachers perspective in collecting data which is based on subjective responses. There are some scholars who advocate subjective measures as being more reliable than objective indicators (Dess & Robinson, 1984). However, it is generally believed that objective indicators would reveal information with better accuracy. Hence, both objective and subjective measures would have indicated better information and it is important to use such a methodology in the future.

Another limitation of this study is that it focuses only on the responses of the headteachers. Since the topic of this study concerns about the teachers, information from the teachers would have been useful to arrive at conclusions. It would be plausible to collect responses from teachers regarding to include a practical component such as teaching or presentation to include their perspectives.

Moreover, the formats provided by this study such as the format for combining interview results with other sources of selection information may be used after considering the school culture and the present practices because they are suggested based on available data. Many headteachers refused to provide with the formats and instruments that they currently use in their schools. This part of the study requires further insight in future.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Employing effective teachers in educational arena is crucial when it comes to providing quality teaching in schools. In this regard, selection process becomes extremely important for all the stakeholders in education. Interview being a required component of teacher-selection process, it needs improving the effectiveness of this important administrative function. Majority of literature on interviewing knowledge comes from business sector and recent literature recommends studying areas such as how to combine interview results with other sources of selection information, how to measure interview performance in educational arena. Additionally, there is contradiction with regards to the structure of interviews in different sectors. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how interview performance is measured, examine how information is combined from different sources of selection methods and verify teacher-selection interview structure as well as learn ways in which teacher-selection interviews could be improved.

This study has found that the teacher-selection interviews are structured and follow certain elements that are in the structure of selection interviews in business sector suggested by Campion et al (1997). However, some components in teacher-selection interviews are different from those found in selection interviews in business sector. This study has found that the headteachers prefer to ask past behaviour questions to hypothetical questions. It also found that the head of school is a member of the interview panel and most of the headteachers use a practical element as a component of the interview. Additionally, questions are also asked about the performance of the practical activity.

Interviews are measured based on a rating scale. Most of the headteachers provide the panel members with a model answer which include the important points to be considered. The reason for doing so is to lower the subjectivity of the marks given by the panel members. Marks of all the panel members are accumulated to give raw

marks to indicate the performance of a candidate and this information is used to hold a discussion among the panel members.

Furthermore, this study has found that the result of interview performance of candidates is combined with other sources of selection information. Majority of headteachers use more than two sources which are interview performance and references. Most of the headteachers include three areas: interview performance, references and teaching. There are headteachers who also include four aspects: interview performance, teaching, references and work samples. However, it is less clear how they weigh these aspects when it comes to give marks to each component. Some headteachers said they would weigh these areas equally. Of these headteachers, some only look at the performance of teaching and the interview and weigh these two components equally whereas others take fours aspects into consideration and weigh them equally. Hence, this study found that the headteachers combine other sources of information with the performance of teacher-selection interviews. However, there is no a particular format to evaluate this information.

Finally, this study looked at ways in which teacher-selection interviews can be improved and found out that there are various ways this can be achieved. Most of the headteachers believe that they would include a practical component such as teaching or a presentation formally into the structure of the teacher-selection interview. Others assume that introduction of technology such as using Skype to conduct interviews would enable them to seek for diverse workforce. Of those headteachers who are in favour of the technology, some use audio/video recording of the interviews verbatim and evaluate the performance of the candidates. Involving parents and students in the interview process is also another way to improve teacher-selection interviews. Nevertheless, this idea may not be practical unless parents and students are provided with interviewing skills and training. Even if this is possible, acceptance of such ideas by the governors and other stakeholders is something to be considered.

6.1 Recommendations

Taking headteachers' perspectives, this study has identified some ways in which interview results could be combined with other sources of selection methods. Further research is required to learn more about the differences in performance of teachers of those schools that practice this method between schools that do not practice such an approach. For example, whether these teachers produce better academic results than the teachers who work in schools where this approach is not in practice.

As for the interview assessment, this study has shown how interview performance is measured. Future research may look at the candidates' view with regard to the ways in which assessment components are allocated. For example, including teaching a lesson or making a presentation as a formal part of interview process. Finally, more research needs to be carried out to identify how technology could be incorporated in teacher-selection process with its benefits. This may require an investment of effort and time, but it may bring better results in decision making, enabling to achieve effective teaching in schools.

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Appendix 1: Interview Data Analysis

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Analysis

Questionnaire

What form does teacher-selection interview take?

		Yes	No
1.	Do you ask questions based on the job requirements?	32	0
2.	Do you ask the same question to all candidates?	32	0
3.	Do you limit prompting, follow-up questioning and elaboration questions?	26	6
4.	Do you use questions for past experience?	32	0
5.	Do you use long interviews: more than half an hour?	23	9
6.	Do you control ancillary information?	26	6
7.	Do you allow questions from candidates throughout the interview?	22	10
8.	Do you rate each answer?	32	0
9.	Do you use rating scales?	30	2
10.	During the interview, do you take detailed notes?	32	0
11.	How many people interview a candidate?	32	0
12.	Are the same interviewer(s) interview candidates? 3 – 5 people	32	0
13.	Do you discuss or answer candidates between interviews?	24	8
14.	Have you been provided interview training?	17	15
15.	Do you predict candidate's future performance based on interview result?	8	24

Appendix 3: An example of a lesson observation form

LESSON OBSERVATION FORM – 2008

Name: …… Date: …….. Time: …….

Subject: …… Topic: ……..

1 **= Not evident at all** **2 = Insufficiently evident** **3 = Sufficiently evident** **4 = Clearly evident** **5 = Very clearly evident**

		OVERALL / SPECIFIC AREA	1	2	3	4	5	POSITIVE REMARKS
1	PLANNING	Clear and appropriate aims/objectives						
		Describes clearly the sequences planned to achieve the objectives						
		Suitability of materials and methods for level and type of class						
		Developmentally and contextually appropriate activities included						
		Balanced lesson plan, variety of activities and appropriate timing						
2	TEACHING	Effective introduction						
		Varieties of teaching strategies to meet student and subject needs						
		Progress through the lesson, changes in activity, pace						
		Questioning; graded (level), directed, appropriate						
		Ability to foster genuine language use						
		Awareness and correction of errors						
		Use of board and other equivalent aids						
		Effective use of materials, meaningfulness						
		Establishment of rapport						
		Used effective motivation strategies in teaching						
		Involvement and encouragement/reinforcement of learners						
		Voice projection and audibility						
		Effective conclusion						
		Ability to adapt and improvise (if necessary)						
		Management of time						
3	LANGUAGE COMMAND	Correctness of structure						
		Use of appropriate vocabulary						
		General intelligibility including adequacy of pronunciation						
		Fluency						
		Sensitivity to pupils' level of language						
4	CONTENT OF TEACHING	Demonstrates knowledge of subject matter						
		Able to initiate and respond to student questioning						
		Presents subject matter to address variety of types of learning						
		Identifies and caters for the special needs of individual learners						
		Adapt content of teaching to specific contextual needs of class						
5	CL MANAGEMENT	Withitness						
		Overlapping						
		Movement management						
		Physical layout						
		Teacher movement						
		Group focus						
6	EVA	Appropriate assessment procedures						
		Achievements of aims/objectives						

General Comments: …….
……..
…….

Appendix 4: An example of interview score sheet

Score Sheet
(0 – 3) 3 being the highest score

Candidate's Name: .....

Q	Key points	Scores	Comments
1	Open – commitment, excellence, professionalism, loyalty, positive attitude, enthusiasm, energy, drive to effectively deliver the school's vision		
2	Supporting practices/ethos of the school		
3	Rigorous monitoring & follow-up, quality teaching & learning, quality formative planning, differentiation & marking, quality 'hands on' experiences etc.		
4	Planning & learning intentions, previous learning, next level of learning, targets, mark/assess, diagnosis and identification of intervention at class level etc.		
5	Whole-school system of support, eg. circle time, clear boundaries, consistency of expectation, graduated consequences, supportive environment, supportive withdrawal. eg. Learning mentor, involvement of parents, use of external support etc.		
6	Child protection, positive affirmation of pupils' contribution, responsibility, voice in school, eg. school council, prize giving, nurturing parental links etc.		
7	Acknowledge diversity, co-existence/contribution of different groups in local area, supporting pupils' appreciation of different faiths/practices etc.		
8	Show ambition, but demonstrate a realistic balance between personal develop & whole staff school development, sense of commitment to school etc.		
9	Insight as to whether able to evaluate what impact s/he had made in schools or has acknowledged that this could be an issue if not committed to the school etc.		