

Chapter 7

Pilot Study Findings

ABSTRACT

*This research started our research methodology with pilot study because this type of the study is exploratory in nature and helps researchers to explore related indicators for the research constructs and improve adequacy of the research questionnaire for the empirical study. Perceptions extracted from the electrical organizations are valuable in validating the questionnaire according to the context of the Wenzhou electrical industry. They are DG, HG, JEA, ZG, ZE and QE, which are recommended by the WSMEA according to its reputation and achievements in the globalization, inter-organizational collaboration and e-business adoption. The face-to-face interviews with organizations' managers were conducted with the period of March 2010 to January 2011. The discussion will focus on three perspectives: challenges from the innovation inside the organizational capacities for collaboration, the **drivers** and barriers to trust in the industry, as well as from e-business diffusion.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the turnover, the selected organizations are three large organizations (DG, HG, and JEA, with turnover larger than 50 million dollars), two medium sized organizations (ZG and ZE, with turnover between 10 million – 50 million dollars) and one small sized organization (QE with turnover of less than 10 million dollars). The interview questions are displayed in Appendix 6. Detailed information and the key findings are summarised according to the content of interviews from the pilot study. A list of questions was prepared as the guideline for the case interviews. An initial questionnaire was also part of the discussion during the interviews. A pilot

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study helps the researcher formulate a hypothesis, brings more exploratory investigation in nature and gathers more in-depth information on organizations involved in the research.

The research focuses on the relationships of collaboration and business performance in order to answer the research question: How and to what extent does collaboration affect business performance? The primary objective of the pilot study is to determine the best set of questions for data collection. Specifically, the pilot study investigates the importance of factors influencing collaborative decisions related to business performance. Moreover, the influences from the attributes of trust, organizational capacities and e-business diffusion that exist in electrical manufacturers and their collaborating partners from the industry value chain are examined.

The questions in the interviews of the pilot study will be used to clarify the questions about five main aspects:

1. To explore the importance of attributes of collaboration in the electrical industry;
2. To explore the relevancy of attributes of business performance measures when an organization is involved in collaboration in the electrical industry;
3. To explore the relevancy of attributes of the e-business diffusion in the electrical industry;
4. To explore the relevancy of the attributes of trust in the electrical industry; and
5. To explore the relevancy of attributes of organizational capacities in the electrical industry.

These six organizations are suggested by the secretary-general of WSMEA Mr. Lu. They are experts in their particular electrical products field, and all have a long history of exporting businesses and an excellent reputation within their global collaboration relationships. Actually, it is understood that these **SMEs** (small and medium sized enterprises) are worthy perspective to adopt collaboration as well as a virtual collaboration in the organization, as shown in Table 1. It is evident that collaboration always exists between manufacturers and wholesalers. The main reason would be these electrical manufacturers are limited in their resources and try to focus on specialization, and the wholesalers are their main customers rather than retailers. The involvement from suppliers and customers enhance the business performance on products and services R&D, marketing strategy and IT system integration, etc.

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