CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in conducting the present research. The overall objective is to discuss in detail all related issues dealing with research methodology, with particular emphasis on the most important theoretical and practical issues involved.

This overview consists of eight major sections. First, in order to present the research approach and theoretical stand within the literature, the chapter begins with a theoretical background on methodology and research in management. Second, the research position in relation to quantitative and qualitative approaches will be discussed. Third, the case study, namely the UNRWA Education Programme will be looked at albeit briefly. The fourth section will deal with the data and data collection techniques, observations, interview process, questionnaires and selection of data collection methods for this study. Fifth, the design of the questionnaire and questions, data measurement and pilot study will be outlined. Sixth, the interview process and format used will be discussed briefly. Seventh, analysis of data will be discussed. Finally, in the last section relevant conclusions will be drawn.

4.2. Theoretical background to methodology

Before discussing the methodology of management research, in general and the intended research in particular, it would be helpful to consider the theoretical background to the concept of methodology itself including how methodology is defined.
4.2.1. What is methodology?

It has been argued that, research methodology refers to the procedural framework within which the research is conducted (Remenyi et al., 1998; Robson, 1997). It describes an approach to a problem that can be put into practice in a research program or process. Accordingly, it has been argued (Burns, 2000; Malhotra, 1999) that, methodology is understood to be the general principles behind research, whereas methods are the practical techniques used to undertake research. From this perspective, methodology provides the link between method and theory.

As argued by Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), scientific methodology is defined as a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which claims for knowledge are evaluated. It must be noted that this system is not unchangeable or without faults. Rather the rules and procedures are constantly being improved; scientists look for new means of observations, analysis, logical inference and generalization. The methodology of social science has evolved slowly. Within this evolution, the continuous interchange of ideas, information and criticism made it possible to firmly establish or institutionalize commonly accepted rules and procedures, such as rules for reasoning, and to develop corresponding methods and techniques.

4.2.2. Positivistic position and research methodology

It has been contended that, in general the 'aim of positivism is to collect and assemble data on the social world from which we can generalize and explain human behaviour through the set of our theories' (May, 1997, p. 10). In order to consider the importance of the positivistic approach to management studies, it is necessary to know about the nature of social science.
It has been contended that all theories of organizations are based upon a philosophy of science and a theory of society (Burrell and Morgan, 1993). Sociological scientists approach their subject via explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated (Sayer, 1992). It is contended that the purpose of science is to develop scientific law; you start from the observation of a particular set of objects and look for regularities (Smith, 1998). The general assumptions of positivism suggest that scientific law is a general statement which describes empirical regularities, which occur in different places and at different times (Burrell and Morgan, 1993). The nature of natural and social sciences is subject to different interpretations. Thus, not surprisingly, there exist different assumptions about the nature of social science. A system for developing a scheme for analyzing assumptions about the nature of social science has been developed which takes into consideration different perspectives and ways of “seeing” the social and organisational reality (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996; Burrel and Morgan, 1993).

First, there are assumptions of an ontological nature - assumptions, which are concerned with the very essence of the phenomena under investigation. Social scientists are faced with a basic ontological question: whether ‘reality’ is of an objective nature or the product of individual cognition. Ontology involves the study of theories of being, the questions we ask about what can really exist (Sayer, 1992). Associated with this ontological issue, is a second set of assumptions of an epistemological nature. These are assumptions about the ground of knowledge - about how one might begin into understand the world and communicate this as knowledge to fellow human beings. Epistemology involves the study of theories of knowledge, the questions usually asked about how the social reality is known (Smith, 1998).
The epistemological assumptions in these instances determine extreme positions on the issue of whether knowledge is something, which can be acquired on the one hand, or is something, which has to be personally experienced on the other.

A third set of assumptions concern human nature and in particular the relationship between human beings and their environment (Burrell and Morgan, 1993). This view tends to be one in which human beings and their experiences are regarded as products of the environment: one in which humans are conditioned by their external circumstances.

The above mentioned sets of assumptions have direct implications of a methodological nature. Each one has important consequences for the way in which one attempts to investigate and obtain ‘knowledge’ about the social world. Different ontology, epistemologies, and models of human nature are likely to incline social scientists toward different methodologies.

These three sets of worldviews have direct methodological implications about how the social world must be investigated. Each has important consequences for the way in which one attempts to investigate and obtain ‘knowledge’ about the social world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Thus, different ontologies, epistemologies and models on human nature are likely to incline the social scientists towards different methodologies. The social positivists who see the social world as objective reality use nomothetic methodologies with the main relationship between elements and a search for general laws, unity of method or scientific method (Smith, 1978). On the other hand, the
subjectivists who see the social world as a subjective reality tend to use ideographic methodologies (see Table. 4.1).

Table 4.1: The subjective-objective approach to Social Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy of Science Assumptions</th>
<th>The Objectivist Approach</th>
<th>The Subjectivist Approach</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>Nominalism</td>
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<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
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<td>Human Nature</td>
<td>Deterministic</td>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
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<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Nomothetic</td>
<td>Ideographic</td>
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Source: Adapted from Kamoche, 2001 and Morgan and Burrell, 1979

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979) assumptions about the nature of society, on the other hand, can be thought of in terms of the regulation-radical change dimension. Sociology of regulation is essentially concerned with the need for regulation in human life or affairs. The basic questions it seeks to ask tend to focus upon the need to understand why society tends to hold together rather than fall apart. Sociology of change on the other hand, has the basic concern of finding explanations for the radical/dynamic change, deep-seated structural conflicts, modes of domination and structural contradiction, which its theorists see as characterising modern society. Sociology of change, therefore, is concerned with diverse interests, conflicts, control and distribution of power.

As Hollis (1994) argues, it embraces such an approach which applies scientific method to human affairs and is conceived as belonging to a natural order open to objective enquiry.
The notion of logical positivism asserts that experience is the foundation for the knowledge of the world (Hollis, 1994). Positivism in social science may be broadly represented as depending upon the assertion that the concepts and methods employed in natural science can be applied to form a ‘science of Man’ or a natural science of society (Giddens, 1978). It has been maintained that the word positivist has become more of a derogatory epithet than a useful descriptive concept (Giddens, 1978). It can be argued that most of the descriptions of positivism in current usage refer to one or more of the ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions of their scheme for analyzing assumptions with regard to social science. Thus, positivist attempts to characterize epistemologies, which seek to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements (Burrell and Morgan, 1993).

It is argued that natural sciences are viewed to be directly associated with positivist epistemology (Analoui, 1999). Some positivists would claim for example, that hypothesized regularities can be verified by an adequate experimental research programme. Others would maintain that, hypotheses can only be falsified and never demonstrated to be true. It is argued that, both ‘verifications’ and ‘falsifications’ would accept that the growth of knowledge is essentially a cumulative process in which new insights are added to the existing stock of knowledge and false hypotheses eliminated (Burrell and Morgan, 1993). Positivism is opposed by anti-positivist theory. The epistemology of anti-positivism may take various forms but is firmly set against the utility of a search for laws or underlying regularities in the world of social affairs (Douglas, 1970). For the anti-positivist, the social world is essentially relativistic and
can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied (Donaldson, 1996). Anti-positivists reject the standpoint of the ‘observer’, which characterizes positivist epistemology as a valid vantage point for understanding human activities (Burrell and Morgan, 1993). Hence, social science is essentially viewed as being of a subjective nature as opposed to an objective view of the world.

4.2.3 Deductive vs inductive approaches

Bryman, (2004) exemplifies the need for understanding the nature of the relationship between theory and research by illustrating how the deductive approach deduces a hypothesis that must be subjected to empirical scrutiny. The researcher must then translate and deduce the hypothesis into operational terms. This will require the researcher to specify how the data for this hypothesis will be collected.

Figure 4.1: Inductive and deductive approaches

Source: Adopted from Bryman (2004, P. 64)
The differences between the deductive and the inductive approaches is that the
deductive process starts with a theory and is followed by a hypothesis or set of
hypotheses, and then the requirement for data collection and findings, followed by
confirmation or rejection of the hypothesis and revision of the theory. The inductive
approach on the other hand involves movement in the opposite direction where the
researcher assumes and infers the implication of their findings that introduced and
promoted the theory. The findings are fed back to the theory. With the inductive
approach, theory is the outcome of research (Bryman, 2004). Figure 4.1 illustrates the
differences between the deductive and the inductive approaches.

4.3. Quantitative or qualitative: Research methods

As shown above a distinction has been made between “methodology” and Methods”.
This is issues is often neglected by researchers. Here, in following sections, methods for
collecting and generating data will be discussed.

Qualitative research is aimed at discovering ‘meaning’ and involves both interpretation
and a critical approach to social work. Research questions are posed, rather than
hypotheses and theory is often grounded in data. Concepts are in the form of themes,
rather than relationships (Boumar and Atkinson, 1995; Slavin, 1999). Data is often in
the form of words from observation, documents, interviews and participation. For
qualitative researchers the fundamental question is not whether the data proves or
disproves a given theory but how to go about theorizing and generalizing from data
(Blaikie, 2003).

Robson (1997) contended that, ‘quantitative research method relies mainly on a
hypothesis which is derived from theory deductively. The objective is to test the theory
by way of observation and data collection, the findings of which following analysis, would either confirm or reject the theory’ (p. 11). This is in contrast with the qualitative research. In quantitative research the causal relationship between variables is investigated. The primary data is collected mainly using questionnaire and structured interview. In business and management studies, the quantitative research has been compared with the methodology that natural scientists use in their investigations, with the core language of approach including terms such as variable, control, measurement, experiment, reliability and validity (Bryman, 1988). Considering different aspects of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies the question raised is; which one is the appropriate research method to be used in managerial effectiveness research? In an attempt to answer this question different aspects of both methodologies will be overviewed.

4.3.1. Quantitative research method

A number of scholars have, therefore, suggested alternative terms to the quantitative-qualitative terminologies. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested rationalistic (quantitative) and naturalistic (qualitative) paradigms. Evered and Louis (1981) suggested ‘inquiry from the outside’ and ‘enquiry from the inside’ and Magoon (1977) and Smith et al., (1982) suggested ‘constructivist’ and ‘interpretive’ approaches. However, these alternative terminologies have not achieved as wide a currency, as ‘quantitative-qualitative’; hence the quantitative-qualitative divide tends to be the main focus. In some respects qualitative-quantitative researches are viewed as competing views about the ways in which the social reality ought to be studied or investigated, and as such, they are essentially divergent clusters of epistemological assumptions, that is, of what should pass as warrantable knowledge about the social world (Bryman, 1988).
Practitioners of the quantitative research often conceptualize it as having a logical structure in which theories determine the problems to which researchers address them in the form of hypothesis derived from general theories. These hypotheses are invariably assumed to take the form of expectations about likely causal connections between the concepts, which are the constituent elements of the hypotheses. In quantitative research the researcher uses quantitative data (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Normally, the data, which have been measured in interval level, is considered as quantitative data. However, the measured data in ordinal level can be treated as quantitative data. The obvious benefits of quantitative data as argued by Hart (1987) are that, the numerical form which makes comparison easier to do, and data are standardized, visible and amenable to the test of classical survey statistics.

In comparison, the sample size is greater and controlled in such a way as to be representative of the population from which they are drawn. This allows greater confidence in accepting the reliability or generalizability of the findings. One process of quantitative research is the need to render observable the concepts, which are rooted in the hypotheses derived from a prior theoretical scheme. Thus, the quantitative researcher tends to be concerned with relating those concepts to one another to investigate associations and to obtain and verify the causal nature of the processes which are under investigation. The present research is of an exploratory nature and therefore does need to obtain the casual relationships between the parameters of the effectiveness as perceived by the managers. It intends to understand the effectiveness and its meaning from the managers’ point of view.
In the quantitative approach, the measurement of concepts tends to be undertaken through the use of questionnaire devices or some form of structured observation. Quantitative research is often highly preoccupied with establishing the causal relationships between concepts. The frequent use of the terms ‘independent variable’ and ‘dependent variable’ by quantitative researchers is evidence of a widespread tendency to employ causal imagery in investigations. Another aspect of quantitative research is that, the results of a particular investigation can be generalized beyond the confines of the research location. By verifying generality, the quantitative researcher draws nearer to the law-like findings of the science. Accordingly, the replication of established findings is often taken to be characteristic of natural science. Replication can provide a means of checking the extent to which findings are applicable to other contexts. Finally, quantitative research tends to treat the individual respondents as the focus of empirical inquiry where as in the present research, although middle and senior managers are the focus of the research, it is the context and other personal, organisational and environmental factors which are treated as the main focal point. This is simply because the participants draw their meaning from complex social relationships within these contexts.

4.3.2. Qualitative research method

Qualitative research is not a new approach to the study of the social world, as social researchers have used the methods associated with it for many years (for example, Lupton, 1963; Gan, 1962; Roy, 1960; Dalton, 1959; Whyte, 1943). Over the last few decades, comprehensive discussions of the principal qualitative research methods and a convincing rationale for using them in management research have been provided (Hurley, 1999). Van Maanen (1983) describes qualitative methods as an array of
interpretative techniques, which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. Similarly, Chisnall (1986) defines the essence of qualitative research as diagnostic attempts to discover what may account for certain types of behaviour, seeking a deeper understanding of factors, sometimes covert, which influence the decisions (Analoui, 1999). Qualitative methods arguably offer powerful and versatile techniques with which to examine the complexities and subtleties in the complicated sets of relationships in business and management studies (Analoui, 2000).

Writers such as Burns (2000); Malhotra (1999); Bryman (1988) argue that qualitative research is constituting an appropriate methodology in the following research situations:

I. that can not be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons
II. that probes into complexity and processes
III. for which relevant variables have yet to be identified
IV. unknown societies or innovative systems.
V. informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations
VI. real as opposed to stated organizational goals (Marshals, 1985)

Quantitative research is therefore based on an ontological assumption that the social reality is external and objective. Epistemologically, it assumes that knowledge is only produced through scientific method and knowledge is only significant if it is based on observations of the external reality. It assumes that an objective reality can be described through measurement and quantification and that the ‘reality’ is both independent of the researchers and research instruments. Researchers must, therefore, be independent of
what they are studying, use objective criteria in determining what to study and how to study it. In addition, researchers must aim at identifying causal explanations and fundamental laws that explain regularities in human social behaviour, among others.

The ontological assumption of qualitative research on the other hand, is that there are multiple social realities, which are subjective and socially constructed. In the case of the present research the realities of the UNRWA as an organisation are surely different from those in Ghana reported by Analoui (1999). In other words knowledge is significant only if it reflects what people are thinking and feeling. Researchers should therefore focus on what people feel and think and must also pay attention to the ways people, individually and collectively, communicate with each other either verbally or non-verbally. Researchers should attempt to understand and explain why people have different experiences, rather than look for external causes and fundamental laws to explain their behaviour.

4.3.3. Selecting the research methodology

Research into managerial effectiveness should reflect the dynamics of social reality (Burrell and Morgan, 1993). In highly dynamic and uncertain environments there is no single generic method to research. Robson (1997) argued that, although qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches are different, it is wrong to oppose them as two competing methodologies. For some researchers however qualitative and quantitative research are simply different ways of conducting the research, each may be the most appropriate for different kinds of research questions. For instance, qualitative researchers may resort to some form of quantification in their work and for a survey to be successful a quantitative researcher must integrate some qualitative knowledge into
the survey’s design and interpretation, and/or understand peoples frame of reference (May, 1997). Different methods have different advantages and disadvantages, and can be mutually supportive (Wilson, 1995). More specifically, the difference between the two research methodologies in business and management studies (See Table 4.1).

One of the advantages of the qualitative research is that it provides insights and an understanding of the problem setting, whereas quantitative research seeks to quantify the data and typically uses some form of statistical analysis. While quantitative methods are necessary to test the validity and general applicability of research findings, the potential of in depth quantitative studies diminishes rapidly as the underlying conditions change in a dynamic environment.

| Table 4.1: A comparison between qualitative and quantitative research |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| **Objective** | **Qualitative Research** | **Quantitative Research** |
| | To gain a qualitative understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations | To quantify the data and generalize the results from the sample to the population of interest |
| **Sample** | Small number of non representative cases | Large number of representative cases |
| **Data collection** | Unstructured | Structured |
| **Data analysis** | Non-statistical | Statistical |
| **Outcomes** | Develop an initial understanding | Recommend a final course of action |


Understanding what managerial effectiveness means to managers therefore requires the right balance between qualitative and quantitative methods. Whenever a new management research problem is being addressed, quantitative research must be preceded by appropriate qualitative research. Langer (1999) argued that, qualitative
research studies should always be followed by quantitative research. An example might be finding out what the consumer needs are in order to create new product concepts, which will be shown in subsequent qualitative research. It is a principle of research in business and management studies, more especially leadership, to view qualitative and quantitative research as complementary, rather than in competition with each other (Judd et al, 1991). Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods as a contingency approach in management researches, has been used by several different researchers (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002; Analoui, 1990). The degree to which quantitative and qualitative studies are utilized will depend on the environmental circumstances of the firms. In turbulent environments research will focus on developing conceptual knowledge by relying on qualitative studies, whereas in more static environments quantitative studies are favoured for testing and validating existing conceptual knowledge. In the case of the present research, there is a need for validation of the parameters of the managerial effectiveness in the UNRWA Education Programme which initiated this investigation, Moreover, there is also a need for understanding the meaning attached to these parameters by the middle and senior managers.

4.4. Case Study: A Research Design

The logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial question of the study is often referred to as research design. Yin (1994) states that a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is a set of conclusions about these questions. It provides the link between the questions that the study is asking, the data that is to be collected and the conclusions drawn (Robson, 1997). It has been
noted that the two factors, which mainly influence research design, are the purpose of
the research and the time frame for the investigation (Robson, 1997).

Yin (1994) acknowledged that a comprehensive ‘catalogue’ of research design for case
studies has yet to be developed. However, he suggested that the following five
components of a research design are especially important:

1. a study’s questions
2. its propositions if any
3. its unit(s) of analysis
4. the logic linking the data to the propositions, and finally;
5. the criteria for interpreting the findings

This study of the middle and senior managers in the UNRWA Education Programme,
attempts to answer the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions which according to Yin
(1994) and Robson (1997) are ideally answered by the case study approach.

The literature abounds with various definitions of case study. The term has been used in
different ways (Blaikie, 2003; Boumar and Atkinsen, 1995). While some scholars use
the term to refer to exploratory studies in which no hypotheses are tested, others use it
to refer to studies where hypotheses are rigorously tested (Boumar and Atkinson, 1992;
Platt, 1988; Mitchell, 1983; Goode and Hatt, 1952). ‘Case study’ is an umbrella term
for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on inquiring
around an instance (Adelman et al., 1977). Goode and Hatt (1952, p. 331) define case
study as “a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the
social object being studied”. The social unit may be personal, a family, or other social group, a set of relationships, a process, or an entire culture. Goode and Hatt’s definition could be seen in the same light as that of Creswell (1994) who says in case studies, the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon ‘the case’ bounded by time activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained time period. Yin (1989), a popular figure in the literature of case studies has provided a definition, which distinguishes case study from other research strategies. He sees case study as:

“an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1989, p. 23).

Case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research as noted by Root, (1996). According to Yin (1994), to explain the causal links in real-life interventions is too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. Case studies can illustrate certain topics within an evaluation, again in a descriptive mode. The case study strategy may be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. The case study may be a study of an evaluation study (Smith, 1998). The case study research approach provides a better explanation of the phenomena studied because it allows for a ‘thick description’ (Miles and Snow, 1994) which would otherwise be lost in experimental and other quantitative designs. It is further noted that, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1994).
Smith (1998) also supports this statement and reiterated that case studies have a special purpose in that they gather in-depth program information that is not possible to collect through broad surveys. This is particularly useful when conducting research into program evaluation in which the researcher or evaluator are able to identify problems with program implementation or suggest ways to design effective practices. It has been discussed that (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002) a well-designed case study can be an important tool for researchers wanting an in-depth understanding of the relationships. Gerson and Horowitz noted that neither set of findings is likely to have emerged from larger-scale comparison group or survey studies.

Exploratory case study analyzes have been found especially useful in understanding implementation problems of new legislation. The results from these useful case studies support the more general conclusions of the potential benefits from conducting scientifically sound case studies. Case studies are particularly useful in explaining how or what is going on in a local context and in generating plausible hypotheses for later quantitative work or improvements in data collection instruments. Scientifically sound case studies are usually guided by either a theory or theories, and a clear conceptual framework. The selection of sites based on data describing the character of the site is likely to produce added knowledge worth the investment. They develop and analyze multiple sources of data ranging from observation, review of documents and records, examination of physical artefacts, to interviews. They can provide enough detail to let the reader judge the validity of the findings (Yin, 1998). This study can, therefore, be termed as an illuminative and exploratory case study. In addition, case studies have been adjudged to be appropriate for single-person research with limited budget and time frames (Blaikie, 2003). Furthermore, this study, even though aimed at generalizing the
results to the entire UN Agencies, or at least those included in the Education Programme, it did not aim at generalization in the narrow sense (Blaikie, 2003), but, rather, with appropriateness, ‘relatability’, ‘logical inference’ and analytical generalization’ (Yin, 1989; Mitchell, 1983; Bassey, 1981). Case studies have been found to be effective in these senses and it is hoped that its use led to achievement of the purposes of the study (Blaikie, 2003).

4.4.1 Case study design and issues of validity and reliability

In judging the quality of the research designs, Judd et al, (1991) summarized the following tests which are often found in advanced textbooks on social science research methods:

Construct validity: establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied.

Internal validity: establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from a spurious relationship.

External validity: establishing the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalized.

Reliability: demonstrating that the operations of a study - such as the data collection procedures - can be repeated with the same result.

It has been discussed that generally validity is the accuracy with which the instrument obtained measures what it is intended to measure, while reliability is concern with the measurement instrument ability to provide the same results over time (test-retest reliability), across a range of items (internal consistency reliability) and/or across
different rater/observers such as inter-rater or inter-observer reliability (Gilbert, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1980).

The use of multiple source data and evidence has been recommended by many authors and researchers such as Hitt et al (1998); Silverman (1998); Langer, (1999). Thus, the current research employs multiple sources of evidence in data collection to enable it to achieve the requirement for both validity and reliability (Bell, 1999; Bryman, 1998; 1992; Turner, 1994).

4.4.2. Suitability of case study for UNRWA
This study investigates the middle and senior managers’ perception of their managerial effectiveness in the Education Programme, UNRWA, Lebanon. The suitability of the case study for this research is summarized as follows:

Firstly, in order to understand and make sense of (Silverman, 1998) the process by which middle and senior managers’ effectiveness is positively or adversely influenced; a relatively detailed analysis is required of the complex information-seeking context, the social processes of the studied organization and the interactions of the middle and senior managers involved in the Education Programme.

Secondly, the diversity of the stakeholders, the information needs and the nature of the information required. According to the exploratory framework adopted, a range of information sources including individual (personal), organizational and external context are required to make sense of the behaviours involved (Analoui, 1999; 2002; Analoui, et al., 2010).
Third and finally, a case study approach provides the opportunity to examine a continuous process (such as evaluation) in context and to draw on the significance of various interconnected levels of analysis. Also it is within the capacity of a lone researcher with limited resources to undertake such an approach. The researcher has undertaken all the responsibilities for the design and implementation of the study and has not benefited from support such as research assistants as is the case for bigger research projects.

The process of collaboration and participation has an impact on collaborators quite beyond whatever they intend to accomplish, as the people who participated in creating something tend to feel ownership of what they have created (Perry, 1998). All the respondents in this case study were provided with the necessary information relating to the purpose of the study, benefits of the study, background of the program to be evaluated and issues relating to research ethics such as confidentiality and anonymity. As noted by Zikmund (1991) there are many ways in which data can be anonymous or kept confidential. He suggested the use of pseudonyms, which is commonly used in qualitative research, and in some cases it is relevant to use pseudonyms not just in published reports but also throughout the study, in labelling interview notes and taped interviews. The researcher has ensured that the identity of the managers involved has been protected throughout the study and beyond in this document.

4.4.2.1 UNRWA as case study

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4.5. Sources of Data

As explained earlier, the present research study is exploring middle and senior managers’ effectiveness, those who are responsible for management of the day to day operations of the Education Programme in UNRWA. It has been commented that, like secondary data analysis, qualitative research are major methods used in exploratory research, such as the present study (Malhotra, 1999). In this research ‘triangulation’ (Denzin, 1978) has been used. This is often referred to as ‘mixing methods’ (Brannen, 1992) or ‘multi-method research’ (Brewer and Hunter, 1989). Unlike the studies which solely employ quantitative and quantitative methods, the researcher has sought to explain the causes in social facts and understand the nature of the effectiveness by studying the perception of the middle and senior managers in UNRWA of their own and others perception. The combinations of the quantitative, qualitative and secondary data provide rich information for achieving the above objective.

This section aims to shed some light on the nature and sources of data used in the current research study, which is divided into two main sources: primary and secondary data. Here the aim is to illustrate the nature of the primary and secondary data, and the
sources from which these data could be obtained. According to Zikmund (1991) primary data are data gathered and accumulated specifically for the project or the research study at hand. Secondary data is gathered and collected by someone else before the research and for purposes other than the current needs of the researcher. Secondary data are usually historical. According to Zikmund (1991) the primary advantage of secondary data is that obtaining this kind of data is not expensive and that secondary data can be obtained more rapidly than primary data. The financial resources and time factors play an important role in the success of the research and secondary data could save on both elements. Collecting data that has been already gathered and tested saves the researchers doing some of the fieldwork themselves. One of the disadvantages of secondary data is that the data obtained from these secondary data resources may not designed to meet the specific need of the research and the researcher (Zikmund, 1991). However, the data obtained helps to better understand the social construct at work. Prior to collection of the data relevant questions were asked; Is data applicable to the population of interest? Is the subject matter consistent with the research problem of definition? For example, in this current research study concerning managerial effectiveness secondary data was provided from the offices of UNRWA.

4.5.1 The sampling employed for this study

This section is concerned with the explanation of the some aspects of sampling principles and the section of people who would be asked questions through participating in survey interviews or questionnaires conducted by the researcher. Cooper and Schindler (2003) throw light on the nature of sampling by giving the example that one taste of the drink tells us whether it is sweet or sour and that the basic idea of sampling is that by selecting some of the elements in a population, conclusions can be drawn
about the entire population. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003) the population element is the subject on which the measurement is taken. Another term to be used is the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis could be a person, an organizational department, a functional operational team or something else. In the case of the present research the unit of analysis is the middle and senior managers who work in the Education Programme in UNRWA in Lebanon.

Moreover, in this research study, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of what factors and processes influence the effectiveness of the middle and senior management of the organization, it was decided to involve the entire population of the middle and senior management of the Education Programme, UNRWA, Lebanon (N: 132). The main criteria used for the selection was first the position of the middle and senior management involved. It was felt that the above cadres provide the leadership for all the others, including heads of the departments. Second, another major criterion was that the middle and senior managers are those who are directly involved, to lesser and greater extent, in the formulation of polices and act as decision makers in so far as the Educational Programmes are concerned. Thus, in their positions as middle and senior managers, it was evident that it is their perceptions and behaviours which influence the ways, each within his or her span of control, is managing the operations of the education programme.

It is important to note that, as stated earlier, the intention of the researcher is to maximise the quality and accuracy of the data generated. Thus, it is believed that attention must be paid to the quality of data rather than quantity alone. The unit of analysis is therefore the middle and senior managers in the Education programme.
UNRWA, Lebanon. According to Maxim (1999) sampling is a less desirable procedure for data collection; however conducting a census would be very difficult and impractical. Sampling is less costly and would require less time if compared with testing the whole population. According to Maxim (1999) the accuracy of a sample is very important and the more accurate a sample is the more expensive. In some studies a high degree of accuracy is required to estimate respondents’ participation. If a high level of accuracy is required but the resources are not available, the researcher would either consider an alternative strategy or reschedule until a later date. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003) there are many reasons why researchers do sampling and that includes lower cost, as sampling requires less costs than testing the whole population; sampling also gives greater accuracy with results and greater speed of data collection, data analysis and availability of population elements, although in the case of the present research the total number of managers in the UNRWA Educational Programme constituted the entire population of the study.

Cooper and Schindler (2003) outline two factors that should exist in a sample to represent the characteristics the population. The validity of a sample depends on accuracy and precision. Accuracy is the degree to which bias is absent from the sample. An accurate sample is one in which the under-estimators and the over estimators are balanced among the members of the sample and there should be no systematic variance with an accurate sample. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003) systematic variance is defined as the variation in measures due to some known or unknown influences that would cause the scores to lean in one direction more than another. In the present research the researcher has avoided using measurements which would cause such variation.
4.6. Main Methods of Data Collection employed

Not surprisingly, data in social science in general, and in business and management studies in particular, are obtained in either formal or informal settings and involve either qualitative or quantitative formats. Robson (1997) argued that, a variety of combinations of these two settings for data collection results in three types of data collection: observation, interview and questionnaire survey. In this section the advantages and disadvantages of these three data collection methods are compared and in light of the discussion the selected data collection method for this study is described.

4.6.1. Observation

It is argued that, social science research is rooted in observation (Nachimas and Nachimas, 1996). A major advantage of observation as a technique is its straightness. You do not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes; you watch what they do and listen to what they say (Adler and Adler, 1998; Robson, 1997). Moreover, data collected by observation may describe the observed phenomena as they occur in their natural setting. Other data collection methods introduce elements of artificiality into the research environment. Observational methods might also be used when persons are unwilling to express themselves verbally. In the case of the present research, the observation of the managers and their interaction with others was to be found useful and revealing in so far as their effectiveness is concerned.

Is observation an appropriateness method? The answer is that appropriateness does not imply that observation is an easy or trouble free option (Adler and Adler, 1998). There is a major issue concerning the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation. There is also the very practical problem with observation that it tends to be
time consuming (Robson, 1997). Based on the literature, there are very few footprints for using observation as a data collection method in management studies. However, observations made by the researcher may provide the insight into operations and processes involved. In the case of the present study, the researcher as a manager has arguably been in an enviable position to interact with all middle and senior managers thus benefiting from daily observation of the respondents and their interaction with her and others. It was felt that these observations could be of value when comments made by respondents in the form of interview and questionnaire need clarification, interpretation and understanding their relationship and their views concerning their own and others effectiveness.

4.6.2. Interview

Interview has always presented itself as a way of approaching and gathering data. Not surprisingly, one of the most effective methods of gathering primary data in management research is interview. The research interview has been defined as ‘a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific propose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by her on content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation’ (Cohen and Manion, 1980, p. 244). They argued that as a distinctive research technique, the interview might serve three purposes. First, it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives. Second, it may be used to test hypotheses or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. Finally, the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking (Cohen and Manion, 1980). Such a combination of methods provides a powerful approach to the collection of relevant quality data.
Enquiry about the opinion and attitude questions, especially if they are presented in an open-ended format, the interviewer has the opportunity to make sure that the respondent understands the questions. Interviews are increasingly being used in management research through which in-depth information about people, attitudes and values can be elicited. The researcher gains an impression of the respondent, is able to explore issues in greater depth and clarify concepts and definitions. There are more obvious advantages in the use of interview (Kohn and Dipboye, 1998). The process allows the interviewer to encourage the potential respondent to interpret complex questions, to correct the respondent’s misunderstandings and to keep track of the interviewee’s attention (Judd et al, 1991). Both questionnaire and interview are powerful instruments in collecting primary data. For collecting qualitative data in management research the in-depth interview is a considerable instrument.

Basically, there are four types of interview. Based on research objectives, the researcher uses the appropriate type of interview. In the standardised or structured interview the wording of questions and the order in which they are asked is the same from one interview to another. The piece of paper, which is held by the interviewer, is the ‘interview schedule’ and that word ‘schedule’ seems to convey the formality of this type of interview (Gilbert, 1993). The interview format, predetermined number or areas of enquiries gives structure to the interviews.

Having established that all interviews have some degree of structure, Gilbert (1993, p. 136) has argued that the second type of interview is the semi-standardised type; here the interviewer asks certain, major questions the same way each time, but is free to alter their sequences and to probe for more information. The interviewer is thus able to adapt
the research instrument to the level of comprehension and articulacy of the respondent, and to handle the fact that in responding to a question, people often also provide answers to questions we are going to ask later.

The third type of interview is unstructured or informal interviewing. What differentiates this form of interviewing from the structured or semi-structured interview (Malhotra, 1999), is its open-ended approach. Based on a list of topics, which the interviewer wishes respondents to discuss, questions are flexible and phrased as the interviewer wishes. Context in this type of interview is very important. It is the most informal form of data collection and is often rich in content, which is why it is associated with a qualitative approach (Robson, 1997). However, the unstructured nature of the process often implies lack of control over the process of gathering relevant data (Analoui, 1999).

Collective or Group interviewing is the fourth type of interview. Group interviews have special value for those who want to assess how several people work out a common view or a range of views, about some topic (Gilbert, 1993). In this type of interviewing the topic should be directed and it is up to the interviewer to maintain the focus so that the discussion does not deviate from the main topic. The researcher aims to encourage interaction in the group (Robson, 1997; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). Group interviewing allows the researcher to see how people interact when considering a topic, and how they react to disagreement. Often the amount of data generated in terms of observable data is so vast that investigator may not be able to exercise control over the collection of most data generated.
On the whole, it can safely be argued that there is no single best way of collecting data. In this research, as it will be discussed later, the semi-structured interview has been used for gathering the data. This provided the necessary flexibility needed to generated information related to the parameters of the effectiveness as perceived by the middle and senior managers involved. In most cases the researcher can help in creating a relaxing environment in which the researcher can be trusted and communicated with informally. In the current research the informal relationship established with the middle and senior managers over a number of years meant that, the researcher could explain the concepts and construct to the participant to ensure the generation of high quality data. The researcher also felt that a semi structured approach to interviewing middle and senior managers ensured both flexibility and relevance of the data collected.

4.6.2.1. Use of Interviews

The interview is a kind of conversation; a conversation with a purpose (Robson, 1997). Interviews carried out for research or enquiry purposes are a very commonly used approach, possibly in part because the interview appears to be a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out. The main advantage of interview lies in the quality of the data obtained. Interviews are the best instruments when as small number of high quality and detailed responses are to be considered. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) argued that, flexibility in the questioning process; control of the interview situation; high response rate; and fuller or supplementary information are the main advantages of interview. In contrast, higher cost; interviewer bias; and lack of anonymity are the main disadvantages of interview. Interviews offer more flexibility to the interviewer to probe for quality information. Personal interviews have a better chance of acceptance returns, with a low respondents-refusal rate. The sample is less distorted and a much wider
range of questions can be covered (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Gorton and Dool, 1983). In the case of personal interviews the researcher has the opportunity to establish a connection with respondent or participants to learn more about the values, beliefs, thoughts and interests that under-line their reactions to others and events.

It is contended that, face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administrated questionnaires cannot (Robson, 1997). In contrast, interviewing is time consuming and in addition, in some fields it appears to be increasingly difficult to obtain co-operation from potential interviewees.

Comparatively, interview is an unusual method in that it involves the gathering of date through direct verbal interaction between individuals. In this sense, it differs widely from the questionnaire. All tools of research have their own strengths and weaknesses. It is commonly agreed that interviewing is time consuming and costly, nevertheless, the process usually produces a good response rate (Robson, 1997; Judd et al, 1991). It is held that interviewing allows flexibility and adaptability in the process of eliciting information from people (Robson, 1997). Although the interview allows more flexibility, at the same time such flexibility can lead to bias in the way questions are asked, prompts given and answers recorded. Judd et al (1991) argued that the source of bias lies in the personalities of both interviewer and interviewee. The problem highlights the difficulties of ensuring validity and reliability in the interviewing process. This is not unique to interviews, indeed, in any form of interaction, biases can call into question the degree of process reliability.
4.6.2.2. Ethical considerations

The most important ethical principle to be considered when conducting research is that the researcher should not cause harm to participants or others (Saunders, 2007). Predominantly the risk stems from the possibility that the thoughts, perceptions, and details of incidents included within the report may be perceived negatively by others, hence reflecting poorly on both the participants and their organisations. Thus, following Miller and Brewer (2003) two key ethical considerations have been observed in this research: informed consent and anonymity. To ensure that senior and middle managers are able to provide informed consent, as advised by numerous scholars (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Hussey and Hussey, 1997), participants were provided with an information sheet (covering letter) that outlines the project's aims, details of what their participation will entail, and the intended outcomes of the research. Moreover, throughout the process of collecting data, they were reminded that they could withdraw from the process at anytime. It was interesting to see that all senior and middle managers were interested in the study and wish to know more about what it entails. For this reason, a summary report will be prepared and sent to all those involved in the study.

However, cultural norms and procedures were respected and permission in written form was not requested. To ensure anonymity, the names of participants and their organisations have been obscured, and as any other information that could have pertain to their identification via a process of manipulation was removed (Richards, 2009).

4.6.3. Questionnaire: Advantages and disadvantages

It has been argued that there are two main survey data collection models: questionnaire and interview. The main purpose of the research questionnaire is to obtain information that cannot be easily observed or that is not already available in written or computerised form. Evidence from the questionnaire survey is then used for one or more of the
following purposes - description, explanation or hypothesis testing. Remenyi et al, (1998) argued that, the type of information sought when surveying individuals or objects, such as firms, usually includes evidence on demographic and socio-economic variables. In addition, depending on the study, evidence may be sought on opinions or beliefs related to behaviours, experiences, activities and attitudes. In the present study, the perception of managers provides the focal point hence their opinion of the contexts and factors which lead to their effectiveness is very important to the understanding of the meanings used in that context.

Evidently, the foundation of all questionnaires is the question. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) argued that the questionnaire must translate the research objectives into specific questions; answers to such questions will provide the data for hypotheses testing. The question must also motivate the respondents to provide the information being sought. The major aspects of the questionnaire which have to be considered when formulating questions for the postal questionnaire, consist of its content, measurement considerations, structure and administration. McNeill, (1990) and Nachiman and Nachiman, (1996) discussed that the main advantages of the mail survey are; low cost, reduction in biasing error, greater anonymity, considered answers and consultations, and accessibility

Generally, the mail questionnaire has some disadvantages in comparison with other survey methods. Nachiman and Nachiman, (1996) listed the disadvantages of the mail survey as follows:

I. Requires simple questions.
II. No opportunity for probing.
III. No control over who fills out the questionnaire.
IV. Low response rate
From the listed disadvantages of the mail survey, the low response rate is crucial. In administrating the survey, it is important to consider the factors affecting the response rate. The difficulty of securing an acceptable response rate to mail questionnaires requires the use of various strategies that can be taken to increase the response rate. Two factors ought to be considered. First, the sponsorship of a questionnaire has a significant effect in motivating a respondent to fill it out and return it. Therefore, information on sponsorship must be included usually in the covering letter accompanying the questionnaire. Secondly, the researcher must appeal to the respondents and persuade them that they should participate by filling out the questionnaire and mailing them back. In this case providing some facilities such as self addressed and stamped envelopes is very useful. Most researchers believe that ultimately self administration of the questionnaires will largely ensure a better return.

4.7. Design of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a formalised set of questions for obtaining information from respondents. Regardless of the form of administration, a questionnaire is characterised by three specific objectives (Malhotra, 1999). First, it must translate the information needed into a set of specific questions that the respondents can and will answer. Second, a questionnaire must uplift, motivate, and encourage the respondent to become involved in the interview, to cooperate and to complete the questionnaire. Third, a questionnaire can be a potential source of response error. Therefore, a questionnaire should minimise response error. The researcher needs to be careful about the way questions are put and the structuring of the questionnaire. In this research the questionnaire was structured (See Appendix One) in six steps.
The first step was the decision about what information is required. It is useful to list all the items about which information is required. Based on the conceptual framework of the research, the subject area of discussion is mainly concerned with the following concepts:

- Managerial effectiveness
- Management training
- Effectiveness parameters
- Contextual influences
- Organizational context
- Managers’ behaviour

Considering data collection alternatives is the second step. It is necessary to answer the question, is survey research the best way of obtaining the information? In response to this question, since in this research the primary qualitative and quantitative data was needed, and the researcher herself has direct access to the participants, it was concluded that using personal administration of the questionnaire and carrying out personal interviews constituted the best strategy for generating adequate and relevant information to meet the objectives of the present research.

The third step was the decision about the type of interview and questions schedule. In management research as Bell (1993) has argued, once the researcher has decided what he or she needs to know, a decision will have to be made about the type of interview. A structured interview will produce structured responses. And open-ended interview will produce a wide range of responses. In summary, the interview schedule consisted of the questions of different types - close-ended and open-ended.

The fourth step was refining the questions and considering how the questions will be analyzed. In this research the researcher decided to include questions related to the
parameters of effectiveness and project performance in the list to be asked. Thus, the categories of the responses related to the categories of the questions asked, and in this way the analysis was done with ease and the responses were used to support the discussions in the categories in which questions were asked.

Preparing an interview schedule or guide was the fifth step in structuring the questionnaire. It consisted of considering the order of the questions and preparing prompts in case the respondents did not provide essential information freely (See Appendix Two).

Finally, in the sixth step was concerned with structuring the questionnaire, revising the questionnaire, and avoiding bias were necessary for finalising the questionnaire.

On the whole the above formed the stages involved in completing the process of designing the questionnaire for the present research.

4.7.1 What kind of questions were asked?

As explained earlier, the questionnaires were self-administered. The researcher used the organisational daily mail service to research the managers involved. However, in order to ensure the maximum return periodically attempts were made to remind the managers of the administered questionnaire. Despite adopting above strategy only 109 of the 132 were received. Subsequent investigation suggested that during the period of data collection a number of the senior and middle managers were away from their posts.

Moreover, it has been suggested that questionnaire should not be complicated so that respondents can easily relate to and answer the questions posed. Therefore it was
decided that the questions must be simple and detailed instructions must be provided. Questions can be either open or close ended. The type of question chosen has implications for the type of evidence that can be obtained and therefore on the method of analysis of the evidence. Since open-ended questions require the respondents to be articulate and willing to spend time on giving a full answer to the questions, a few of them have been used in the interviews. While open-ended questions are typically used in personal interview surveys involving small samples, the close-ended questions are typically used in quantitative studies involving large samples. Remenyi et al. (1998) argued that, the assumption is that detailed knowledge is available on the attributes of interest and therefore it is possible to pre-specify the categories of responses. In the present study, a mix of open and closed questions was used. Therefore it was possible to pre-code so as to be amenable to computer analysis using statistical packages. Although, close-ended questions were difficult to design, they made the collection and analysis of evidence and the task of the respondents easier. Nearly all of the close-ended questions were answered. This however is not an unusual response. Usually respondents find the open questions more challenging, since it requires committing themselves to articulating their feelings, views and responses.

4.7.2. How to Measure Data

Data types vary and are listed as nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio types of data. Each data type has its own set of characteristics and empirical operations. According to Zikmund (1991) the nominal scale is the simplest kind of scale as the numbers and the letters assigned to objects serve as labels for identification or classification. In the business research for example, the coding of male as 1 and female as 2 is considered to be an example of the nominal scale. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003) nominal data involves the collection of information on a set of variables that can be grouped into
two or more categories that are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. Nominal data is widely used in surveys when the data is categorised by major subgroups of the population. Classifications of nominal data are such as respondents’ marital status, gender, age and education.

Q6. How significant are the following reasons to you in motivating you to maintain high quality performance at your job? Please use the scale of 1 to 5. (1 being the least and 5 the most important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Very low Importance</th>
<th>Low Importance</th>
<th>so-so</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good salary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job security.</td>
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<td>Good working conditions.</td>
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<td>Good and fair personnel policies</td>
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<td>Recognition of good work.</td>
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<td>Well respected and high status job.</td>
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<td>High control over others people’s job.</td>
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<td>Participation in policy making and evaluation.</td>
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<td>Opportunity for personal growth and development.</td>
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<td>Job autonomy and freedom.</td>
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<td>Job with a valuable purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity for advancement, achievement and success, in the job.</td>
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<td>Opportunity to participate in management training programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenging job that is personally rewarding and fulfilling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other factors (Please identify) .................................................................</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

Ordinal scale is the second level of the data measurement. According to Zikmund (1991) an ordinal scale classifies objects according to their degree in an ordered relationship. A typical ordinal scale in business research asks respondents to rate a certain brand for example, as excellent, good, fair or poor. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003) the use of an ordinal scale implies a statement of greater than or less
than without stating how much greater or less. An example of ordinal scale measurement level is as follows:

Finally, the third level of measurement is called the continuous, ratio or interval scale. Remenyi et al, (1998) argued that, ‘rating scales’ are strictly speaking ordinal. However in practice, especially in the field of management these are treated as being measured at the interval level’ (Remenyi et al., 1998, p. 153). Evidence based on interval scales can be analyzed by virtually the full range of statistical procedures such as the mean, standard deviation and Pearson’s correlation coefficient. In practice, although the survey generally makes the most use of evidence at the ordinal level, some of the variables were measured in continuous scales. Variables such as the number of employees of the firm, amount of turnover of the firm and duration of business plan preparation are examples of the variables which are measured in continuous scale.

Another important issue is the question design or style that needs to be borne in mind by the researcher when developing and building the questionnaire. According to Bryman (2004) one of the most significant considerations for many researchers is whether to ask a question in an opened or closed format. In the case of opened questions, the respondent is asked a question with no limitation and is not given a choice of answers from which to choose. The respondent has the freedom to answer as they wish. In the case of closed questions the respondent is presented with a set of choices from which they can select an appropriate answer. In this study, attempts have been made to ensure that there is balance between the close and open-ended questions in order to provide the necessary choice for the managers involved.
With self completion questionnaires, most of the questions are likely to be closed (Bryman, 2004). The process of developing a strongly constructed questionnaire is extremely important, as it is one of the most important ways of accomplishing a good response rate. According to Dillman (1983) an attractive layout is more likely to increase the response rate than other tactics such as reducing the margins or space between questions. According to Bryman (2004), to avoid the low response rate problem it is preferable to design the questionnaire to be as short as possible, assuring that the layout is easy on the eye and that it facilitates the answering of all the questions that are relevant to the respondent. As will be demonstrated below, one of the reasons for undertaking a pilot study was to ensure that the above issues are dealt with effectively.

4.7.3. Pilot Study

Pilot study is a necessary part of the process of designing the questionnaire. It has been the experience of many researchers that entering the piloting questionnaire will improve the final product. It has been already indicated that for the current research the author designed the questionnaire and generated the questions from three basic sources including,

a) Theories of management especially those dealing with perceptions, training and development, managerial skills and motivation, b) previous empirical studies, and c) managerial effectiveness models in particular ‘the Parameters of Managerial Effectiveness’. All relevant theories, empirical studies, and models from which questions were developed were discussed in Chapter Two. Designing an effective questionnaire that will yield appropriate data is a long process. An important part of this processes it to test the questionnaire on a group of people similar to the intended sample. The questionnaire was revised several times before it was ready for
administering to the middle and senior managers. There were several rounds of discussions between the researcher and supervisor. Further discussions were held with statistical consultants and other researchers in doctoral research workshops. The questionnaire was revised after each round of discussions. More importantly, the questionnaire was tested on a small sample of middle and senior managers within the Education Programme, UNRWA, Lebanon. In this regard, the questionnaire was pilot tested using random sample of middle and senior management (2 Head of Divisions; 5 School Supervisors and 10 Head Teachers) as well as 2 academics (management specialists) and 2 doctoral students in their last stages of writing up. Following a number of minor adjustments to the format of the questionnaire, it was ready to be administered to the respondents. For the final version of the questionnaire please see Appendix One.

4.8. Survey and Interview Process

Following the lengthy preparation and design of the research survey questionnaire, the researcher had to implement the survey in order to collect the data. The questionnaire was used in order to obtain the data from the whole population and interviews carried out from selected respondents. This objective was achieved through the survey process. As mentioned earlier, interviews are very time-consuming. Then, there is the use of the extra time needed to consider what has been said during the interview and also consider the notes taken to extend and clarify points that may have been noted. The validity of the data collected through the interview depends upon the effective establishment of a particular kind of social relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. It has been argued that the task of the interviewer is to obtain information, often of a highly personal and private nature, from a respondent who is a stranger with little or no
obligation to spend time and effort answering questions (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992). In the case of the present study, the researcher herself undertook the task of obtaining and generating information from the respondents. The close working relationship which had already been developed over a number of years did play a significant part in obtaining meaningful information.

After careful consideration, it was felt that a sample of 14 (33%) interviews provided adequate information to meet the objective of the study. Based on the managers’ managerial levels and the interviewees’ organizational and personal personality, the initial contact was especially crucial. Obviously if this fails there is no interview. The interviewer must give the respondents sufficient information about who the interviewer is, how the respondent came to be selected, what the questions will be about, assurances must be given as to confidentiality, and permission sought for the interview to take place (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992; Dillman, 1983). The interviews were transcribed and coded as follows;

The arrangements for interviews were made through personal informal channels. The researcher, also the interviewer has known the respondents for a number of years and had no difficulty in accessing the views and/or making arrangements for the interview meeting. All interviews have been individually conducted and the researcher started by first briefing the interviewees about the background, importance, and objectives of research for the development of middle and senior managers and their organization (Miller, 1991). The second phase in the process of interview is establishing a suitably relaxed and encouraging relationship between the interviewer and respondent. Since the participants already knew and trusted the researcher, the second phase of the process
was already in place and the researcher used just a little amount of small talk to ease the situation a little before embarking on the interviews proper. However, the researcher provided adequate information on the purpose of the research where it was needed. Since the creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust is essential for the successful conduct of the interview, the interviewees were then assured of the confidentiality of the entire discussion. During the interviews, since the interview contains significant non-standardised items, the researcher aimed to place respondents at ease so that they felt free to talk at some length. The final stage was bringing the interview to a close and disengaging from the scene. This can often be harder than it looks, especially if the relationship has been a rewarding one for the respondent (Singleton et al, 1988; Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992). There are also cultural implications that have to be observed. For example, was the amount of time spent with interviewees related to the degree importance given to their role as participants to the study or was it correlated to their perceived status as middle and senior managers? To avoid such potential misunderstanding the respondents were guided towards the completion of the process by being asked if they felt that there was anything which needed to be included but which had inadvertently been missed out. Next was the process of thanking the respondents for their participation in this research. Interestingly, since the subject of study is managerial effectiveness, the middle and senior managers’ interviewed expressed the desire to know the result of the study. The researcher has agreed to provide a seminar in which the results of the research can be discussed with all middle and senior management after the completion of the work.
4.9. Interview format

Since the main purpose of the interview was the generation of “adequate” and “relevant” data (Analoui, 1999; Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992) which otherwise could not have been accessed and support for the responses gathered through survey questionnaire, it was decided to use the main of items enquiry as a format in the interviews with contextual background given more attention since the study has aimed to contextualise the concept of managerial effectiveness in UNRWA, especially in the Education Programme setting. As explained earlier, the researcher felt that the respondents may wish to expand on their responses. Also, since questionnaire by its very nature has to include a large a number of close questions, it was felt that it would be appropriate to provide the participants with an opportunity to provide extra information should they feel it necessary. Having explained the purpose of the study to the participants it was evident to them that issues related to managerial and leadership effectiveness are of the main concern. It must be noted that since the researcher is also a manager in the organization in which the study is being carried out, it was important to ensure that the participants did not confuse the interviews with that of ‘annual performance appraisal’. The classical nature of the organisation lays the ground for suspicion and over cautiousness on the part of the respondents involved. It was encouraging however to see that the respondents felt free to express issues related to managerial effectiveness and make sure that ‘their points were made’. This showed that the respondents were interested in both the subject of enquiry and the research as the whole. Moreover, to avoid the issue of associating the physical setting with that of the authority of the researcher, as far as possible the interviews were held in a neutral place. Thus, after a brief ‘warming up’, ‘relaxation’ the necessary but brief research ‘background information’ were provided. Almost all the middle and senior managers
were aware of researcher’s research and seemed to appreciate the fact that their organization (Education Programme) had been adopted as a case for this managerial study. As one commented;

‘we are aware that you (researcher) can gain access to almost any organization you choose, so we are pleased that you have also provided us with the opportunity to contribute to this first time study” (S.M.F.I).

The participants also found the process and rational for selecting of the respondents for interview as being ‘fair’, ‘encouraging’ and ‘appropriate’. The researcher shared the experience of other researchers regarding sharing information about the research, background to the study, the reason for doing so was because it has been found that this will facilitate the process of the interview as well as ensuring the quality and quantity of the data collected. The main issues discussed were as follows;

Parameters for Effectiveness: Most questions were evolved around ‘parameters’ for managerial effectiveness and the role of the managers. The questions were, by and large, concerned with their perception of and their views on parameters of effectiveness such as the degree of awareness of the senior managers of their own and others effectiveness, or the ways they went about increasing their effectiveness. These questions also corresponded to those which appeared on the questionnaire and as such provided either extra or more clarification on their part. This part of the interview formed the main part of the data generation since the researcher’s main interest is to explore the managerial and leadership effectiveness in detail. As noted earlier, throughout the interviews, the researcher observed that the interviewees showed interest
in the topics related to parameters of effectiveness and the impression given was that they felt that their contribution could ‘make a difference’ to discovering ways in which they could improve the achievement of the goals of the Education Programme. This was particularly evident when issues of the ‘Demands, Constraints and Opportunities’ were discussed. As one of the interviewees mentioned;

“..it is good to be a part of the process which leads to better achievement of our targets, not that we are not doing well, as you are aware yourself (leaning forward) but there is always room for improvement (sitting back feeling comfortable that the point has been put across)” (M.M.M.4)

In some cases the interviewees showed more interest in one or more of the parameters in question. When interviewing a senior manager, one said;

“Perception and awareness are important but in my view the skills and know how makes all the difference.” (S.M. F.I.6).

It was also interesting to see that most middle and senior participants were aware of the differences between the dominant styles of management. Most seemed to be familiar with the leadership jargons and effectiveness related terms such as “transformational” and that of “transactional” leadership approaches and indeed had no problem in discussing the management related to UNRWA and UN as the whole and the issues and how they can be improved. This also culturally makes sense; as one mentioned;

“Politics is a way of life. \m\we all have suggestions for improvement (Smiling)”

(S.M.M.11)

*Contextual Factors:* This category of the questions was directed towards the context in which effectiveness was demonstrated. These interviewees showed concern for the ‘contextual factors’ particularly the environment. One middle manager commented:
“To be effective you got to know the environment (American English accent), you got to know the physical environment and the politics…” (S.M.F.I.9)

And another Middle manager was concerned with the influence of religion, Islam on managers’ effectiveness;

“This is important in Islam, to work hard, be fair and give back to the community. That is what we are here for, the people of Lebanon” (M.M. M.I.8).

On the whole, the interviews showed concern for their role as managers in UNRWA. As one clearly commented;

“The UNRWA is different from other organisation, as you have seen it yourself (pointing to the eye) we are responsible for the education and future of refugees. Their future is in our hands” (M.M.M.I.7)

Interestingly, all interviewees showed concern for the ‘quality of managerial work, effectiveness and getting things done’ indicating that they were aware of ‘being effective’.

Perceived additional Issues: Finally, to ensure that all relevant information was gathered, the interviewees were asked, if there was anything which they felt was important to this investigation but that had not come up either in the questionnaire or the interviews. The initial response was to mention the new management development projects’. This clearly showed that managers are interested in becoming more effective and are viewing the process with some concern. One senior manager said:

“I believe the recent training and monitoring and other curriculum based training are important…. but sometimes the foreigners think we don’t know how to make use of our knowledge, skill and resources. ... Some are good and have respect for us and the kind of job we do...we work well with them” (S.M.M. I.6)
Interestingly, almost all respondents complained about the increasing demand from the top management and UN and the resulting stress. As one commented:

“Sometimes, I feel they want us to leave or get ill with stress” (M.M.F.I.7).

However, they all placed emphasis on the importance of management development schemes especially the one which was offered by Bradford University some years ago. It was evident that managers perceived the importance of the managerial skills as oppose to education for improving managerial effectiveness. For example, as one mentioned:

“…new skills and competencies and indeed the management training as the whole helps to develop the managers, their organization and of course, their work…” (M.M.F.I.7).

On the whole, the questions asked helped to portray a view of the reality which is often not open to top leaders of the organization - it was revealing to say the least. The researcher felt that there is an insider’s account that is only shared amongst participants and that the top management are not trusted with. This is not uncommon is organisations with classical dominant managerial values in their operations (Analoui et al., 2010)

4.10. Data Analysis

Some researchers’ believe that the data analysis stage begins after data has been collected. This is not entirely true; the researcher becomes conscious of the need for analysis and some form of analysis begins to emerge especially where the qualitative data is concerned (Ackroyed and Hughs, 1992). The raw data that is collected in the
fieldwork must be edited, categorised and transformed into the meaningful information that helps the researcher. According to Zikmund (1991) the conversion of raw data into information requires that data must be edited and coded so that it might be transferred to a computer or other data storage medium. Editing is a process of checking and adjusting for omission, legibility and consistency. Coding is a process of identifying and classifying each answer with a numerical score. Transforming the data into numerical symbols prepares the data for entry into the computer.

The completed questionnaires had already been edited in the field after completion of each interview. It was necessary to code the responses to facilitate computer data input. Defining research factors did the coding of the data. Accordingly for each variable, its acceptable variable name (eight characters) was defined. Also the variable label and variable value were indicated. Since the data analysis of the quantitative data collected was to be carried out using the SPSS statistical package, the data entry was done using the SPSS spreadsheet.

According to Zikmund (1991) descriptive data analysis refers to the transformation of data into a form that will make it easy to understand and interpret. Descriptive data analysis involves the calculation of averages, frequency distribution and percentages distribution. In order to analyze the data and consequently answer the research questions, the collected data was summarised using statistical graphs such as, bar charts and histograms. The main reason for such analysis was to get a clear picture of how the different variables were distributed.
As for the qualitative data, following the interviews, the data was transcribed, translated, coded, labelled and categorised. As mentioned earlier, a mixed method was used (triangulation), on the evidence collected to ensure a better understanding the processes involved. Using a pre-determined format of questionnaires five sections of questions were used to ascertain their views on parameters for effectiveness, the importance of contextual factors on their effectiveness and attempting to generate information which were not directly related to the main objectives of the study but are important for better understanding the motives for middle and senior managers increased effectiveness. As for the interviews, simple coding was used. These included the used on “M and S” middle and senior managers, “M and F” for male and female, “I” for interview, “No (1-14) for interviews. On the whole, the interviews generate rich data, which resulted in sense being made of the behaviours observed.

4.11. Chapter summary

As shown, this chapter has reviewed a number of alternative approaches to the design of an appropriate methodology (triangulation) to meet the specific objectives of this study including qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, research process, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. On the whole the approach employed can be described as being suitable and relevant to the needs of the research setting. It has been concluded that, the objectives of this research require that rich, qualitative and quantitative data be collected; thus a methodology which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. In order to study the processes which underlie and influence the managerial effectiveness in UNRWA Education Programme, a ‘case study’ approach was deemed appropriate. Management researchers use a wide range of techniques to collect their primary data. In order to gather the data, a combination of
both questionnaire and personal interview survey techniques was judged to provide the most comprehensive means of capturing exploratory, descriptive and explanatory data pertinent to the stated research objectives.

The data generated through interviews proved to be rich in quality and enable the researcher to make sense of the processes involved as well as understanding the motives behind the behaviour of the actors involved. Adequate preparations and the painstaking process of data collection resulted in the collection of adequate and relevant data for this research.

In the event, the qualitative data proved to be more promising. It helped to create a profile of the contexts in which respondents operated and lived their professional lives.

The next Chapter will deal with descriptive analysis of the data