

Assignment # 01

(Advance Research Methods & Data Analysis)

Topic:

Single and Organizational Case Studies

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Single and Organizational Case Studies

➤ What is the case study method?

A case study is a research methodology that has commonly used in social sciences. It is a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real life context. Case studies are based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group or event to explore the causes of underlying principles. Case studies are analysis of persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods.

➤ What is a case?

A single case doesn't have to mean just one single person. It might be a family, asocial group, or even a single organisation. A case study can involve dealing with quite a number of individuals, actually. For example, a case study may involve interviewing staff in a small but growing computer company, on the social psychological aspects of managing staff (Hayes & Lemon, 1990). This information could then be used to compare with other larger companies, in terms of how they had tackled staff management issues at a similar stage in their history.

➤ Characteristics of Case Study Method

The main characteristics of the case study method are listed below:

- i. A descriptive study, which may contain qualitative or quantitative data or both, the researcher may combine objective and subjective data for the analysis.
- ii. Narrowly focused, typically a case study offers a description of only a single individual, and sometimes about groups. Often the case study focuses on a limited aspect of a person, such as their psychopathological symptoms.

- iii. Case studies contain details of the subjective aspect, such as feelings, beliefs, impressions or interpretations. In fact, a case study is uniquely able to offer a means of achieving an in-depth understanding of the behaviour and experience of a single individual.
- iv. The case study method enables the researcher to explore and describe the nature of processes, which occur over time. In contrast to the experimental method, which basically provides a stilled ‘snapshot’ of processes, which may be continuing over time like for example the development of language in children over time.

➤ **Advantages of the Case Study Method (Searle, 1999)**

- Case studies provide new ideas and hypotheses, opportunities to develop new clinical techniques, and a chance to study rare phenomena.
- Scientific theories can be challenged when the behavior of a single case contradicts theoretical principles or claims, and theories can receive tentative support using evidence from case studies.
- Idiographic research (the study of individuals to identify what is unique) complements nomothetic research (the study of groups to identify what is typical)
- A case study can sometimes highlight extraordinary behaviour, which can stimulate new research.
- Case studies may sometimes contradict established psychological theories.
- Case studies are so rich in information, they can give insight into phenomena, which we could not gain in any other way.
- The case study gives psychological researchers the possibility to investigate cases, which could not possibly be engineered in research laboratories.

➤ **Disadvantages of the Case Study Method**

- Researchers are unable to make valid causal inferences using the case study method because extraneous variables are not controlled and several “treatments” may be applied simultaneously in case studies.
- Observer bias and biases in data collection can lead to incorrect interpretations of case study outcomes.
- Whether results from a case study may be generalized depends on the variability within the population from which the case was selected; some characteristics (e.g., personality) vary more across individuals than others (e.g., visual acuity).
- Uniqueness of data means that they are valid for only one person. While this is strength in some forms of research, it is a weakness for others, because it means that findings cannot be replicated and so some types of reliability measures are very low.
- The researcher’s own subjective feelings may influence the case study (researcher bias). Both the collection of data and the interpretation of them.
- The heavy reliance on memory when reconstructing the case history means that the information about past experiences and events may be notoriously subject to distortion. Very few people have full documentation of all various aspects of their lives, and there is always a tendency that people focus on factors which they find important themselves while they may be unaware of other possible influences.
- Serious problems in generalising the results of a unique individual to other people because the findings may not be representative of any particular population.

➤ **Single Case study**

Case study in psychology refers to the use of a descriptive research approach to obtain an in-depth analysis of a person, group, or phenomenon. A variety of techniques may be

employed including personal interviews, direct-observation, psychometric tests, and archival records. Benefits with a single case study are that they are not as expensive and time-consuming as multiple case studies. Single case studies are better when the writer wants to create a high-quality theory because this type produces extra and better theory.

A single case study also makes the writer to have a deeper understanding of the exploring subject. Other benefits are that single case studies richly can describe the existence of phenomenon and it is better to make a single case study than a multiple case study when the researcher wants to study, for example a person or a group of people. When a single case study is used the researcher also can question old theoretical relationships and explore new ones.

➤ **Organizational Case Studies**

A case study, in a business context is a report of an organization's implementation of something, such as a practice, a product, a system or a service. The case study can be thought of as a real-world test of how the implementation works, and how well it works. If documentation is sufficiently comprehensive, a case study should yield valuable information about the costs and benefits, both financial and otherwise. The organization itself and external parties can use case studies to gain more information about the specific implementation that can also help guide decisions about similar projects.

An organization might deploy, for example, a new business intelligence (BI) platform. A case study of its implementation would involve an exploration of each stage of the implementation, lessons learned along the way and the ultimate effects. A case study is often compiled by an external party, perhaps for publication. Less formally, a case study may just be a content item, such as a brief article, discussing an organization's business implementation of something or a decision of some sort and one or more significant results.

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