Chapter 28
The Types of Case Studies in Research and Career–Based Endeavors

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the overarching components of the case study methodology in the context of research and career-based teaching and organizational learning settings. More specifically, this chapter, presented in several distinct sections, provides a description of the various types of case studies that can be selected for research purposes as well as for use as a teaching tool for career professionals, higher education faculty, and others interested in employing this type methodology. This chapter is intended to serve as a foundation to the subsequent text in this book pertaining to the detailed descriptions and elements of the case study serving as either a research design or a function of the teaching and learning process in academic and career-based settings. Providing a rich initial presentation of the types and qualities of the case study research design, this chapter will launch additional structure for the later chapters to offer a deeper understanding for the reader.

INTRODUCTION

A case study is a teaching and research method in which the author investigates a specific situation or problem in a real-world context. Case study research is one of many types of investigative, narrative designs available to researchers when seeking to explore a topic across a variety of disciplines. Beneficial to those in science, sociology, psychology, medicine, and education, and having a working knowledge of the purpose, benefits, and potential limitations, the case study can be a viable solution to obtaining answers to a research or career-based inquiry. While there are a variety of different types of case stud-

ies, understanding the outcomes and the type of descriptive information that can be derived from this method of study is essential to a researcher's success.

This chapter will explore the different types of case studies that are available to researchers whether in a scholarly context or that of a career-based learning environment. Yielding new theory, testing theory or ideas, and confirming existing theory all within the real-life context builds reliable and trustworthy results, which will also be revealed. Graphs and charts will be included in this chapter to increase application and to use as a quick reference of this complex yet popular method of inquiry.

BACKGROUND

A case study is comprehensive analysis of an event, program, group, or other defined topic of interest (McMillan, 2012). The case study is designed to bring the researcher to a deeper understanding through either initial investigation or ongoing research, which adds depth to what is already known about a phenomenon to be examined. The practice of the case study methodology is most often associated as a category of qualitative research. Case studies can also be accomplished with quantitative methods. While the case study can be either qualitative or quantitative, the use of the case study most often is that of qualitative design (Yazan, 2015).

Case study research refers to an in-depth investigation of the identified topic and provides for a detailed description of behavior or experiences from multiple perspectives (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). When using the case study design, the researcher seeks to explore and provide a clear depiction of the bounded system using a multitude of types of data. The goal is to investigate an existing problem and address it through the various types of data collected, making sense of the issue examined. There is an abundance of detail in the data that is inherent in a case study with the researcher ending with lessons learned or questions for application to similar cases in research and career training settings.

A review of the literature yields many types and defining features of the case study methodology. The case study research process is characterized by the identification of a real-life case that is usually current in time that will be explained and analyzed by the data collected. One significant characteristic of this methodology is that the data collection process must be exhaustive (Yazan, 2015). It is necessary for the researcher to rely upon many types of data in order to deeply investigate the issue being examined. This data collection process can include interviews, observations, document reviews, and the consideration of other artifacts (Yin, 2009).

Creswell (1998) provided the following definition, "A case study is an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (p. 61)." The boundaries of the case in this sense are considered to be time and space (geographical location) and in order to thoroughly examine, multiple data sets must be collected and analyzed. The parameters for bounding a case study are the specific place where the case is located and timeframe in which the case is studied (Creswell, 1998). This method of inquiry, however, is diverse in definition, design, and theoretical traditions (Patton, 2015) providing some leverage to the researcher in these processes.

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