

Chapter 48

Infusing Yourself into the Backstory: A Multidimensional Case Study Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The Ubiquitous Infusion Thinking (UIT) strategy is an innovative action strategy evidenced by the weaving of cognitive and affective thinking into organizational theories that serve to shape the understanding of multidimensional threads and themes that emerge in the problem-solving analysis of complex problems, situations, and/or dilemmas used in a multidimensional case study perspective. The UIT strategy utilizes a focus-refocus-focus—visualize-interpret technique allowing the researcher to engage the power of emotions by stepping in and out of a situation, observing, and then stepping back to acquaint and reacquaint the actions taking place in the setting, permitting clear thinking to emerge. There are four phases: Ubiquitous Investigation, Shaping One’s Understanding, Building the Backstory, and Action. This chapter walks the researcher through the historical case study research methodology and the Multidimensional Perspective to case study research using ubiquitous infusion thinking strategy.

INTRODUCTION

“I feel,” “I believe,” “I think” are statements made in daily decision making. In order to truly understand situational intricacies the backstory must be revealed. How is this accomplished? Through case study methodology. Case study methodology plays a vital role in giving data meaning, making data personal, and making data applicable to individual situations and is provided through a “systematic inquiry into

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an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (Bromley, 1986, p. 302).

In the current climate, there are emerging pressures placed on researchers to offer perspectives that create a wider range of options that present case study methodology from an options approach rather than from the historical problem identification model. Studies emphasize the need to consider new approaches that foster increased awareness, better understanding, and objective developmental view and emphasize complex social phenomena which, according to Yin (2003), is the preferred strategy as to *how* and *why* questions are posed. Yin (2003) further posits that case study is not a methodology but tool; a tool that one can use to illustrate examples or place researchers in an environment that would support their decision making skills. Management has to be collective in nature and embrace a world’s view perspective and is the forefront of cultivating global mindsets. People need to stop thinking in isolation to have collective thinking, working together to achieve a global mindset. To better understand the multiple variables in case study research requires us to explore new approaches that enhance our learning and interpretation of the problems that are surfacing. Researchers immersed in the case study methodology are able to insert or remove biases related to personal experiences such as racism, sexism, etc. unique to each individual and make meaning of what is presented to reflect research and best practices. Until the case study methodology incorporating a multi-lens perspective is used to give data meaning, data exists in isolation, providing one lens, a myopic representation that lacks significance. This chapter walks the researcher through the historical case study research methodology and the Multidimensional Perspective to case study research using the Ubiquitous Infusion Thinking strategy.

HISTORICAL APPROACH TO CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Case studies are pertinent when your research addresses either a descriptive question “What is happening or has happened?”— or an explanatory question —“How or why did something happen?” (Yin, 2012, p. 5).

Most of the time, researchers seek the answers to problems under two branches of research: quantitative and qualitative. In fact in many venues, the quantitative and qualitative conversation/argument on how to best find the answers to problems is quite heated and the research questions drive the research. Quantitative research is statistically based, numerical, factual and non-interactive. Some types of quantitative research are experimental, quasi experimental, causal-comparative, and survey. Qualitative research according to Merriam, (2009) includes “four major characteristics: focus on the understanding meaning of experience; the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis; the strategy is inductive; and rich description characterizes the end product” (p. 19). Some types of qualitative research are naturalistic, case study, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology. Data are often collected through interviews, observations, focus groups and document analysis (see Table 1).

Case study research however, is “unlike experimental, survey or historical research, [as] case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis” (Merriam, 1988, p. 10) which make this method unique to research.

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