

Chapter 15

Challenges of a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter envisions the key challenges of a case study research being faced by researchers and case study itself in terms of the criticism. The case study is an interlinked, multi-perspective and a dynamic analysis-based method, applicable to both qualitative and quantitative research. Considering the significance of applying case study in research methods, there are various advantages with some disadvantages too. These disadvantages are contributing to creating the challenges to case studies. Having a deep strength and weakness analysis of the case study, the factors contributing to challenging the case studies can be easily identified. The major challenges to case studies are based on generalization, validity, reliability, theory role, authority, and authenticity, dependency, and longevity of the case. This chapter provides a detailed overview of the challenges being faced by researchers throughout the application of case study research and has presented a section comprising a solution to these challenges in practical terms.

INTRODUCTION

It is universally accepted that an effective piece of writing is one that convinces its readers to accept the point of view that it presents. The use of case study in their writing helps researchers to substantiate their views and research outcomes by relating them with case studies, which are examples from real life. The use of case studies, facilitates understanding and exploration of the complex issues in multidisciplinary areas of knowledge (Zainal, 2007).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9429-1.ch015

The case study approach is useful in getting a deep understanding of real-life phenomena; it is a well-designed research plan, which can be widely used and is well accepted among scholars and by society. However, it is not as easy to define a case study as it might seem. In a later section of this chapter, various definitions of the case study method given by various authors from a variety of perspectives have been described in their chronological order. Besides the above significance of the use of case study in research, there are some disadvantages attaching to this method, which have given reason for challenging the scope of application of case study in research.

In addition to the above advantages and the disadvantages of the method itself, there are some advantages and disadvantages that attach to the selection of the case study approach as a research method. While the first, the significance of case study and its implementation as a research method is the major subject to be evaluated in the preliminary studies; the second significant feature to be considered carefully is the selection of a particular case study and the level of its impact as evidence of the validity of the conclusions from the research. Using case studies is not an independent exercise in validation, but an interlinked, multi-perspective and dynamic analysis-based method. These are significant aspects of the use of case study to be considered, because the suitability of the case study method is questioned on the basis of the scope of its applicability. There always are challenges in the selection of a case study. For instance, one of the simpler challenges when applying the case study is that not only the perspectives of the objects of the research need to be aligned with those in the case study, but also the interaction of those objects with their environment and the other groups of relevant objects must also be taken into account.

Besides the applications of case study-based method in research, there are several other areas where the case studies have been implemented widely, including law, policy, and business (Crowe et al., 2011). Mostly, the sociologists, psychologists, and related professionals and researchers adopt this approach on the currently emerging social challenges, including illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, and others (Grassel & Kubat, 2006).

Further, researchers' attitudes toward case study and the applications of a case study in research are also significant areas to be considered. The perseverance of the researchers in meeting the challenges to their research findings, and their skill at understanding the factors that underly the challenges to the scope of the applicability of case study, are also crucial and deserve detailed analysis. Whether the case study is used in qualitative research or quantitative research, there may remain certain aspects that the researcher neglected to address. Thus, how the researcher adopted case study methodology with a positive effect on the ultimate solution would adequately address and mitigate the challenges to the use of case study. Therefore, considering

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