

# Unit Three: Introduction to Research Designs

*Research Methodology*  
*Case Study Design*

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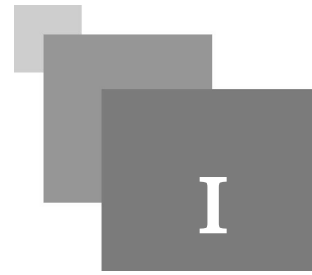
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# Objectives

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

- Define case study design and understand its essential characteristics
- Recognise the types of case study design.

# What is a case study?



## Definition

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*"Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real-life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic, programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action."* (Simons, 2009, P.11)

According to Stake (1995): *"Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances"* (p. xi).

A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin, 1994, p. 13)

"The case study method "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information... and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97)

## Fundamental

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In terms of research methodology, a case study is often considered a qualitative approach. Even so, case studies cannot be defined solely by their methodology, whether qualitative or otherwise (Simons, 2009). It is pertinent to note that case studies are primarily defined by their purpose and focus, which involves studying "a situation or phenomenon in its 'real life' context" (Simons, 2009, P.11). In this regard, two elements should be emphasised: a case study examines a 'bound context' and focuses on one 'thing' in depth. Case studies are widely used in many fields. Still, they are typically employed to study a unit of analysis, be it a character, an event, a theme or a setting in the field of literary studies (novel or otherwise). To study a case in detail over a prolonged period, researchers may collect multiple types of data.

# Types case study

II

## *Single VS Multiple Case Studies*

Based on the definitions and types of case studies shown above, there are several different types of case studies. Based on the purpose of the study, there are two types of case studies: single case studies and multiple case studies. Using the former design, one can study and investigate an unusual case, a critical case, a longitudinal case, or a revelatory case. Comparatively, multiple-case studies examine the same phenomenon across several cases (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2003; Yin, 2017 as cited in Alqahtani, n.d.)

## *Intrinsic, Instrumental, Collective*

Stake (1995) distinguishes three types of case study: intrinsic, where a case is studied for the intrinsic interest in the case itself; instrumental, where a case is chosen to explore an issue or research question determined on some other ground, that is, the case is chosen to gain insight or understanding into something else; and collective, where several cases are studied to form a collective understanding of the issue or question (pp. 3–4). The point of making these distinctions, he says, is not because it is useful to sort case studies into categories but because the methods used will be different depending upon intrinsic or instrumental interests (p. 4). (As cited in Simons, 2009, P.12)

# Bibliography and further reading



Alqahtani, N. (n.d.). Multiple Case Studies – Short Guides in Education Research Methodologies. Pressbooks. <https://iu.pressbooks.pub/lcle700resguides/chapter/multiple-case-studies/>

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