Case study Guide

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1. Definition: Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. Rather than using large samples and following a rigid protocol to examine a limited number of variables, case study methods involve an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance or event: a case. Researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used’ (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

2. History of the case study: The Oxford English Dictionary traces the phrase case study or case-study back as far as 1934, after the establishment of the concept of a case history in medicine. The use of case studies for the creation of new theory in social sciences has been further developed by the sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss who presented their research method, Grounded theory in 1967.

2.1 History of Business Cases: When the Harvard Business School was started, the faculty quickly realized that there were no textbooks suitable to a graduate program in business. Their first solution to this problem was to interview leading practitioners of business and to write detailed accounts of what these managers were doing. Professors instructed their students to read the cases and to come to class prepared to discuss the cases and to offer recommendations for appropriate courses of action. Basically that the model still being used.

3. Types of case study

a) Exploratory case studies: Exploratory case studies condense the case study process: researchers may undertake them before implementing a large-scale investigation.

b) Critical instance case studies: This method particularly suits answering cause-and-effect questions about the instance of concern.

c) Program effects case studies: Program effects case studies can determine the impact of programs and provide inferences about reasons for success or failures.

d) Prospective case studies: In a prospective case study design, the researcher formulates a set of theory-based hypotheses in respect to the evolution of an on-going social or cultural process and then tests these hypotheses.

e) Cumulative case studies: The cumulative case study can have a retrospective focus, collecting information across studies done in the past, or a prospective outlook, structuring a series of investigations for different times in the future.

f) Narrative case studies: Case studies that present findings in a narrative format are called narrative case studies.

g) Embedded case studies: A case study containing more than one sub-unit of analysis.

4. HOW TO WRITE A CASE STUDY

4.1 Case Study Organizing Tips: Before beginning to outline a case study, writers must decide on less than six dominant Issues. Writer should keep diary, note book, pen, and tape recorder with her/him during interview. S/he should take enough time for rapport building. Case writers must ask, “What is this case study about?” Each issue (topic meant for discussion) should be written in the form of a simple question (For example: What types of
sales goals are effective?). Writer should select suitable time and venue by preliminary
discussion with concerned person(s). S/he has to go to selected venue timely for listening and
write after listening clearly or use tape recorder. If the words, phrases and sentences are not
clear s/he should ask question(s). Writer should write topic by using direct speech. S/he
shouldn’t ask question at the middle of a conversation that may be disturbing. Rather s/he may
write the question for later. S/he shouldn’t give any opinion or ask any question that will make
emotional to the respondent. If s/he has any opinion about the event s/he may write it in other
paragraph with relevant figure and facts. After completion of interview s/he should read whole
story to respondent or set on the recorder for review and re-visit. S/He should include relevant
photo(s) with the case study.

4.2 Case Study Writing Tips

a) **Keep your audience in mind**: Remember that you are writing for program team or
discussants who may not be familiar with the background, details, and terminology of the
situation. Keep jargon to a minimum.

b) **Use short-story-writing techniques**: A case has flesh-and-blood characters who should
be interesting. Each story element should move the narrative forward.

c) **Openings**: Grab the reader with a character facing his or her biggest problem: set the
scene for the arguments, the frustrations, and the main conflicts.

d) **Present situations and scenes without any attempt at analysis**: Scenes must follow a
logical order and should illustrate a point, concept, or issue that relates to the problems that
the writer wants to have analyzed. Do not give any signals that one solution might be
preferred.

e) **Provide relevant details**: After an opening that sets up the situation, provide relevant
details about goals, strategies, dilemmas, issues, conflicts, roadblocks, appropriate research,
relevant financial information, people, and relationships. Be careful with numbers; they must
help solve the problems, not confuse readers or send them off on unproductive analytic
tangents.

f) **Use as much dialogue as possible**: Make the characters come alive with dialogue.
Straight narrative is boring.

g) **Endings**: Leave the reader with a clear picture of the major problems—either ask or imply
"what is to be done now?" If you have any recommendation(s) please don't forget to write it
clearly.

**Uses of Case Studies**

To evaluate the effectiveness of a program's processes, including its strengths and
weaknesses, evaluators might develop cases studies on the program's successes and
failures. Case studies are used to organize a wide range of information about a case and then
analyze the contents by seeking patterns and themes in the data, and by further analysis
through cross comparison with other cases. A case can be individuals, programs, or any unit,
depending on what the program evaluators want to examine through in-depth analysis and
comparison.

5. Program effect Case Study

The aim of these case studies is to document important characteristics of successful
interventions, assess and document the efficiency of different interventions, and assess and
document potential indicators for future application. Case studies are important for understanding and documenting multiple facts of each intervention. Capture the situation that the individual or group or institution was in before the project begun. Explain project intervention and describe what impact this project has had for the beneficiary or beneficiaries.

The case study should be conducted by the project staff (from both the field and headquarters). The comparative advantage of inviting an external expertise should be considered. The objective of a case study should always be clearly defined. Subject of the case study will be determined according to the components’ intervention types, social dynamics and contextual differences. Following study outline of a case should be included:

a) **Type of intervention being studied:** Indicate what intervention is (Recruitment, orientation, PTNA, ToT, PMCA, Service provider selection, activity of service provider or producer group or regional network, rural business fare, Condition of individual producer or service provider or vulnerable women-baseline, success of individual producer or service provider or vulnerable women etc.)

b) **Study Justification:** Describe what stimulated carrying out the study and the hypothesis to be tested.

c) **A detail description of the study:** Here describe study location (map etc.), the current observations, past experiences in similar situations elsewhere, source of secondary information.

d) **Methodology:** Indicate the approach to be used. Examples are individual interviews, structures or semi-structured questionnaire. Describe the indicators to be used for the study in this section.

e) **Detailed documentation of evidence:** Record all the findings, Factual statements, measurement results, photographs, samples. Indicate how the indicators used helped to arrive at the results. Mention if any potential indicators have been identified for future use.

f) **Strengths, weakness, and opportunities:** Indicate any strength (positives), weakness (negatives), opportunities related to the intervention. If cost-benefit analysis is carried out, include it in this section. Problems encountered during the project implementation should also be included here. These may involve materials, human resources, financial and timeliness.

g) **Potential indicators:** Potential indicators would normally be identified during the study period. The field staff and beneficiaries are very important in helping to identify potential indicators. Identification is based on experience, discussions, observations and being alert. Once identified, an indicator should be precisely described paying particular attention to sensitivity, technical feasibility, being realistic, reliable, ethical, and its timeliness. Also mention the units of measurements.

h) **Alternative perspectives:** Observations that are not covered in the above but are or could be useful for the intervention.

i) **Recommendations:** The recommendations based on the sound synthesis of the study. These should be clear and concise. Include what future direction or activities would need to be taken based on the study findings. Adjustment/modifications should be included here.

j) **References:** A list of literature, or other documents mentioned in the text.

6. Case study outline or Tools: Enclosed please find 3 case study tools (Page 4-6).
Making Markets Work for Small-Holder Farmers and Rural Producers Project: a case for a rural producer

OUTLINE

1. Case Identification
What is this case study about?
Name/sex/age/location of producer
What is/are her/his product? Who are customer and/or suppliers?
Significance of the case

2. Family, childhood and education or literacy
Family: single/joint, family members
Social status/wealth ranking class
Childhood-how/where/when-any interesting/remarkable/miserable story
Education/Literacy-level: why/how- any interesting/remarkable event

3. Young age/occupation/ marriage: How was your young age? Occupation-
primary/secondary- Age at marriage? Spouse/ # children/ emotion and straggle/share of family assets etc.

4. Benchmark: Capture the situation where the producer was before project begun

5. New and changing attitude for life and occupation/planning stage
How you have the idea for change? Why/how you planned? Why not planned?


8. Income, livelihood and savings: Change of wealth from before business enterprise and after/ New assets owned/ savings

9. Impact of project intervention Explain project intervention/what impact this project have had for the producer (If any)

10. Sustainability and replicability: sustainable change in the life and occupation of the producer, replicable issues.

11. Lesson learned

12. Future planning
Making Markets Work for Small-Holder Farmers and Rural Producers Project: a case for a service provider

OUTLINE

1. Case Identification
What is this case study about?
What are your services? Who are customers?
Name/sex/age/location
Significance

2. Family, childhood and education/literacy
Family-single/joint/ family member
Social status/wealth ranking class
Childhood-how/where/when-any interesting/remarkable/miserable event
Education/Literacy-level/why/how- any interesting/remarkable/ event

3. Young age/occupation/ marriage- How were your young age? Occupation-
primary/secondary/ spouse/ children/ emotion and straggle/share of family assets etc.

4. Benchmark: Capture the situation where the provider was before project begun

6. About work: Type of work/ main occupation or second occupation/involvement project intervention/points of interest/

7. Client service example to further illustrate about work

8. New and changing attitude for life and occupation/planning stage
How you have the idea for change? Why/how you planned? Why not planned?

7. Implementation stage: How you implemented? any problem and why/who helped you/
gap between plan and implementation/ did you know market supply and demand of the service? What are risk factors? How you faced/minimized risk factors?

8. Income, livelihood and savings: Change of wealth from before business enterprise and after/ New assets owned/ savings

9. Impact of project intervention Explain project intervention/what impact this project have had for the provider (If any)

10. Sustainability and replicability: sustainable change in the life and occupation of provider, replicable issues.
11. Lesson learned

12. Future planning

Making Markets Work for Small-Holder Farmers and Rural Producers Project: a case for a producer group

OUTLINE

1. Case Identification

What is this case study about?
What is the business of the group? What are their products? What are their customers and suppliers?
Location
Significance

2. The problem/Opportunity:

What is the specific business situation that is the focus of this case?

3. Answers of specific case questions

What is the objective of the group? How many members?
Gender/wealth status of group member
Financial activities/ who handle the bank account? How? other resource mobilization activities.
Monthly meeting-attendance/agenda
Annual action plan and its implementation.
Group activities-bulk purchase of raw material
Skills sharing activities
Meeting/discussion/interaction with local business organization & service provider
Business fare related activities
Demand generation activities
Exposure visit

Capture the situation where the group member was before project begun
What change they felt after group activities?
Explain project intervention/what impact this project have had for the group (If any)

4. Sustainability and replicability: sustainable change in the life and occupation of producer for group activities, replicable issues.

5. Lesson learned

6. Future planning