

Writing a Case Study

A case study is an in-depth study of one person. In a case study, it is possible to analyze nearly every aspect of the subject's life and history to seek patterns and causes for behavior. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a single person or group. The first foundation of the case study is the subject and relevance. In a case study, you are deliberately trying to isolate a small study group, one individual case or one particular population. Case studies are often used in clinical cases or in situations when lab research is not possible or practical. In undergraduate courses, these case studies are often based on a real individual, an imagined individual, or a character from a television show, film, or book. The hope is that learning gained from studying one case can be generalized to many others. Unfortunately, case studies tend to be highly subjective and it is difficult to generalize results to a larger population. Of course our goal is to have a picture of our client before the start of MNRI processes or if you are adding a MNRI process to the ongoing protocol. • The advantage of the case study research design is that you can focus on specific and interesting cases. This may be an attempt to test a theory with a typical case or it can be a specific topic that is of interest. Research should be thorough and note taking should be meticulous and systematic.

Types of Case Studies

- Explanatory: Used to do causal investigations.
- Exploratory: A case study that is sometimes used as a prelude to further, more in-depth research. This allows researchers to gather more information before developing their research questions and hypotheses.
- Descriptive: Involves starting with a descriptive theory. The subjects are then observed and the information gathered is compared to the pre-existing theory.
- Intrinsic: A type of case study in which the researcher has a personal interest in the case.
- Collective: Involves studying a group of individuals.
- Instrumental: Occurs when the individual or group allows researchers to understand more than what is initially obvious to observers.

Case Study Methods

- Prospective: A type of case study in which an individual or group of people is observed in order to determine outcomes. For example, a group of individuals might be watched over an extended period of time to observe the progression of a particular disease or the change that occurs when the group follows the Archetype video twice a week for six weeks.

- **Retrospective:** A type of case study that involves looking at historical information. For example, researchers might start with an outcome, such as a disease, and then backwards at information about the individual's life to determine risk factors that may have contributed to the onset of the illness. Or you may ask the family for pictures of the client before the MNRI processes were started and then ask for pictures that were taken over a six-month period to note any change in posture, alertness, changes in speech, academics, or behavior, etc.

Sources of Information Used in a Case Study

There are a number of different sources and methods that researchers can use to gather information about an individual or group. The six major sources that have been identified by researchers (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995) are:

1. **Direct observation:** This strategy involves observing the subject, often in a natural setting. While an individual observer is sometimes used, it is more common to utilize a group of observers.
2. **Interviews:** One of the most important methods for gathering information in case studies. An interview can involve structured survey-type questions, or more open-ended questions.
3. **Documents:** Letters, newspaper articles, administrative records, doctor's records, school assessments, therapy notes, etc.
4. **Archival records:** Census records, survey records, name lists, MNRI Assessment scores, etc.
5. **Physical artifacts:** Tools, objects, instruments and other artifacts often observed during a direct observation of the subject. Here you could use the D-P evaluation from the book, Achenbach, OT, PT, Speech checklist, etc.
6. **Participant observation:** Involves the researcher actually serving as a participant in events and observing the actions and outcomes. Possibly you could partner with another MNRI Core Specialist or a parent.

The specific format for a case study can vary greatly. In some instances, your paper will focus solely on the individual of interest. Other possible requirements include citing relevant research and background information on a particular topic.

How to Organize Your Paper

I. Case History

1. Background Information

The first section of your paper will present your client's background. Include factors such as age, gender, work, health status, family mental health history, family and social relationships, drug and alcohol history, life difficulties, goals and coping skills and weaknesses.

2. Description of the Presenting Problem

In the next section of your case study, you will describe the problem or symptoms that the client presented with. Describe any physical, emotional or sensory symptoms reported by the client. Thoughts, feelings, and perceptions related to the symptoms should also be noted. Any screening or diagnostic assessments that are used should also be described in detail and all scores reported.

3. Your Diagnosis

Provide your diagnosis and give the appropriate [DSM-IV](#) code. Explain how you reached your diagnosis, how the client's symptoms fit the diagnostic criteria for the disorder(s) or any possible difficulties in reaching a diagnosis.

II. Intervention

The second section of your paper will focus on the intervention used to help the client. Your instructor may require you to choose from a particular theoretical approach, or may ask you to summarize two or more possible treatment approaches.

1. Masgutova Method Approach

Describe how a MNRI Core Specialist would view the client's problem. Provide some background on the **Masgutova Method** and cite relevant references. Explain how the Masgutova Method would be used to treat the client, how the client would respond to therapy and the effectiveness of this treatment approach.

Describe the specific MNRI processes that could be used to treat your client. Provide information on the type of treatment you chose, the client's reaction to

the treatment and the end result of this approach. Explain why the treatment was successful or unsuccessful.

- You may refer to the subject of your case study as "the client." Or if you have a signed Informed Consent to this study you may use his or her name.
- Remember to use [APA format](#) when citing references.

Other Tips on Format

1. **Introduce the Topic:** Your first task is to provide a brief description of the research question. What is the experiment or study attempting to demonstrate? What phenomena are you studying? Provide a brief history of your topic and explain how it relates to your current research.
2. **Summarize Previous Research:** The second task of your introduction is to provide a well-rounded summary of previous research that is relevant to your topic. So, before you begin to write this summary, it is important to thoroughly research your topic. Finding appropriate sources amid thousands of journal articles can be a daunting task, but there are a number of steps you can take to simplify your research.
3. **Researching Your Topic:** Search a journal database, such as Psych Info or ERIC, to find articles on your subject. Once you have located an article, look at the reference section to locate other studies cited in the article. As you take notes from these articles, be sure to write down where you found the information. A simple note detailing the author's name, journal, and date of publication can help you keep track of sources and avoid plagiarism.
4. **Provide Your Hypothesis:** Once you have summarized the previous research, explain areas where the research is lacking or potentially flawed. What is missing from previous studies on your topic? What research questions have yet to be answered? Your own hypothesis should lead from these questions. At the end of your introduction, offer your hypothesis and describe what you expected to find in your experiment or study.

How to Analyze the Results

- Analyzing results for a case study tends to be more opinion based than statistical methods. The usual idea is to try and collate your data into a manageable form and construct a narrative around it.

- Use examples in your narrative whilst keeping things concise and interesting. It is useful to show some numerical data but remember that you are only trying to judge trends and not analyze every last piece of data. Constantly refer back to your bullet points so that you do not lose focus.
- It is always a good idea to assume that a person reading your research may not possess a lot of knowledge of the subject so try to write accordingly.
- In addition, a case study is based on opinion and is very much designed to provoke reasoned debate. There really is no right or wrong answer in a case study.