6-2 Case Study

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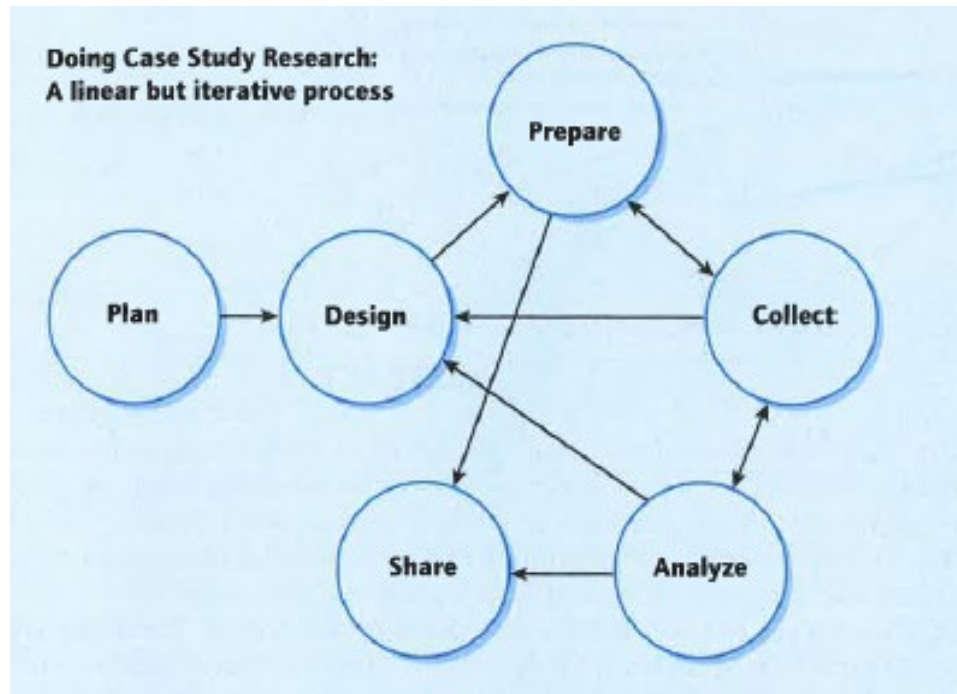knut.hinkelmann@fhnw.ch

Case Study

■ A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context gaining a rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being enacted

Doing Case Study Research:
A linear but iterative process

(Yin 2014)

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Six Steps of Case Study Research

Steps		Guidelines for the researcher
Plan 1	Determine and define the research questions.	Establish firm research focus of a complex phenomenon or object by formulating questions about the situation being studied, determining the purpose of the study. Case study research generally answers questions beginning with 'how' or 'why'.
Design 2	Select the cases and determine data gathering and data analysis techniques.	Key element is selection of single or multiple cases; when using multiple cases, each case is treated as a single case. Determine what evidence to gather from multiple sources and what analysis techniques to use. Ensure that the study is well constructed to ensure construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Ensure that procedures used are well documented and that it can be repeated over and over with the same results.
Prepare 3	Prepare to collect the data	Advance preparation is required to organise the data systematically as large numbers of data is generated from multiple sources. Consider conducting a pilot study to remove obvious problems and barriers prior to initiating the field work. Identify key people, prepare letters of introduction and establish rules for confidentiality.

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Six Steps of Case Study Research

Collect

Analyse

Share

4	Collect data in the field	Collect and store multiple sources of evidence comprehensively and systematically in formats that can be referenced and sorted so that converging lines of inquiry and patterns can be uncovered. It is mandatory to maintain the relationship between the issue and the evidence. Clearly document any renegotiation of arrangements with the objects of the study or addition of questions to interviews as the study progresses.
5	Evaluate and analyse the data	Examine the raw data in order to find linkages between the research object and outcomes with reference to the original research questions. Remain open to new opportunities and insights. Sort data in many different ways or triangulate data in order to strengthen research findings and conclusions. Treat the evidence fairly to produce analytic conclusions answering the original 'how' and 'why' research questions.
6	Prepare the report	Report data in a way that transforms a complex issue into one that can be understood, allowing the reader to reach an understanding independent of the researcher. Use representative audience groups to review and comment on the draft document.

Triangulation: different sources of data to ensure reliability, e.g. quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from interviews

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Six Forms of Case Studies

Critical instance case studies: Answering cause-and-effect questions about the instance of concern.

Program effects case studies: Determine the impact of programs and provide reasons for success or failures.

Prospective case studies: Test hypotheses in respect to the evolution of an on-going social or cultural process

Cumulative case studies: Aggregate information from several sites collected at different times.

Narrative case studies: present findings in a narrative format as events in an unfolding plot with actors and actions

Embedded case studies: A case study containing more than one sub-unit of analysis is referred to as an embedded case study

Lamnek et al., from Alta van der Merwe

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Single Case Studies - Generalisation

■ By their nature, single case studies and design of instantiations do not meet our requirement of «generality» that we defined for research

■ Possibilities for solving this problem

♦ need to do multiple case studies for generalisable results

♦ identify characteristics that justify generalisations

♦ validate artifacts in several enterprises during evaluation

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