

# Discussion 9



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Case study and Focus Group Methodologies Case studies Case study is a type of methodology in which the researcher aims to have an in-depth understanding of a single issue, situation or phenomenon. The technique is used in many fields because of the flexibility and the detailed outcome that it produces. The case study is a form of descriptive research that gathers a large amount of information about one or few participants. Case studies are meant to be a detailed examination of a single case that is representative of many such cases. Therefore, through the detailed study of an individual case, a greater understanding about similar cases is achieved (Thomas, Nelson, Silverman, & Silverman, 2011). Scholars argue that although it is possible to learn about other cases through a similar case, it does not mean that cases studies are only used in making generalizations. On the contrary drawing inferences about a population from a case study is not justifiable (Creswell, 2003). Case studies are similar to other types of research and involve the identification of the problem, the collection of data and the analysis and reporting of results. As in other types of techniques, the approach and the analysis depends on the nature of the research problem. Case studies can be descriptive, interpretive or evaluative. The defining characteristics of a case study therefore are a deeper, intensive study of a single unit through detailed collection and analysis of many sources of information (Kumar, 2008; Babbie, 2010).

In the first article titled “ The impact of internet usage: A case study of delta state tertiary institutions” the objective of the study was to investigate and evaluate the impact of internet usage in institutions of higher learning in Delta State in Nigeria. The methodology used in this case is a case study that used questionnaires to solicit information from students and staff of four

higher institutions of learning in Delta state in Nigeria. The questionnaires were randomly distributed to staff and students in four institutions of higher learning and later collected and analyzed (Ureigho, Oroke, & Ekruyota, 2006). It is possible to see a link between the research objective and the methodology taken as this study involved an in depth analysis of the impact of internet usage in institutions of higher learning. The most suitable approach to conduct this study was thus the case study methodology as it would lead to a lot of information about the problem in question.

#### Focus group methodology

A focus group is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic. A focus group as a research methodology involves more than one participant per data collection session and thus it is sometimes called a focus group interview, a group interview or a group depth interview. Focus groups are collective conversations which may be small or large. They are arranged to examine a specific set of topics. The group is focused because it involves some kind of collective activity for example debating about a specific social or health issue (Babbie, 2010). The objective of a focus group is to describe and understand the meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants in the group. A successful focus group discussion relies on the development of a permissive, non-threatening environment within the group where all the participants can feel comfortable to discuss their opinions and experiences without the fear that they will be judged or ridiculed by others in the group (Creswell, 2003).

In the second article titled “ a focus group study of consumer motivations for e-shopping: UK versus Malaysia,” the objective of the study was to gain an

understanding of the motivational factors which affect consumers adoption of internet shopping (Kamarulzaman, 2011). The methodology that was employed in the study was a focus group discussion. The reasoning behind this is that qualitative research is very effective in gaining an understanding of people's behavior, thoughts and actions. Following the research objective, the focus group method was ideal in this situation because of the need to obtain people's thoughts and actions, interactions and experiences that guided them in the use of e-shopping. The methodology is thus effectively used in addressing the research question in this study.

#### References

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