

Table 1.1

	Case study	Experiment	Survey
Investigates ...	one case or a small number of cases	a relatively large number of cases	a relatively large number of cases
Data collected and analysed about ...	a large number of features of each case	a small number of features of each case	a small number of features of each case
Study of ...	naturally occurring cases where the aim is not to control variables	cases where the aim is to control the important variables	naturally occurring cases selected to maximise the sample's representativeness of a wider population
Quantification of data ...	is not a priority	is a priority	is a priority
To Hammersley and Gomm's table I would add ...			
	Case study	Experiment	Survey
Using ...	many methods and sources of data	one method	one method
Aiming to ...	look at relationships and processes	look at causation	look for generalisation

Case study research comprises two parts:

1. a 'subject' - the case itself
2. an analytical frame, or 'object'


Alternatively, take the example of a hospital ward. Would a description of this ward constitute a case study? In my opinion it would not - it is not a case of anything. It becomes a case of something when you can explain the analytical frame through which you might be viewing it. It might be a good example of that analytical frame demonstrate something interesting in terms of your analysis because of its peculiarity be an example of an analytical focus that arises by virtue of your personal experience

As I indicate in Table 1.3, the analytical focus must extend beyond mere description:

Subject (the 'practical unity')	What would not (on its own) constitute a case study?	What would be a case study?
Jesson Ward at Parktown Children's Hospital	A simple description of the ward	An analysis of why it is thought to be an outstanding children's ward
Editorials in the Daily Globe for the six days in week beginning 5 March	A content analysis of each editorial	A case study analysis of a newspaper proprietor's influence over the content of editorials
Alexander the meerkat: a successful advertising campaign	The rise of this advertising phenomenon	A case study analysis of the exemplary use of personality and a storyline in advertising
Amelia: a quiet child	A simple description of Amelia and her circumstances	A case study analysis of Amelia over a set period in class, with a view to understanding, illuminating and gaining insight into the phenomenon of quiet children

So, a case study is like one of those capsules with two halves: each half, each ingredient, is necessary in order for the other half to work, as shown in Figure 1.1. It has to contain the 'practical historical unity' as Wierwille (1992: 158) puts it (or the subject in plain English), and it has to contain the analytical frame (or 'object'). It is not complete without both parts in place: one will not work without the other.

The subject:



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