

Case Study Research and Applications:

Design and Methods

Sixth Edition

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Preface

Spotlighting “Case Study Research”

At the time of the first edition of this book (1984), although popular versions of case studies were plentiful, case study *research* was an obscure mode of inquiry, not well understood. Over the years, both awareness and practice have changed. You and many others have increasingly recognized the value of case study *research*, and it now has gained a spotlight within social science.

The spotlight comes from the sheer use of the term “case study research” (not just “case studies”) in published books. The previous (fifth) edition of this book called attention to a rising trend in such use. Google’s *Ngram Viewer* had provided data on the frequency of the term’s appearance in publications from 1980 to 2008,¹ compared with the appearance of three alternatives: “survey research,” “experimental designs,” and “random assignment.”² [Figure Pref.1](#), reproduced from the fifth edition, compares the four terms.

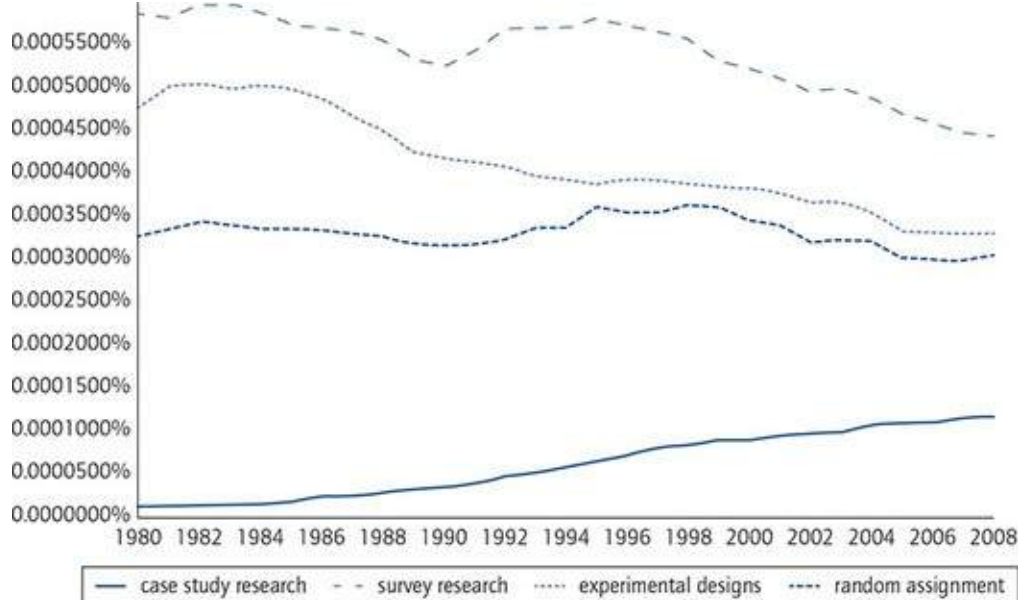
In the figure, the frequency for “case study research” follows an upward trend, in contrast to the other three terms. Even though the absolute level of the trend is still lower than those of the other terms, the others are trending in the opposite direction. The contrasting trends may surprise you (as it did me), because of the decade-long hullabaloo at that time over random assignment designs as the preferred “gold standard” for doing any social science research.³ Notably, the hullabaloo had been accompanied by explicit attempts to downgrade other types of social science research—by giving little or no priority for using federal funds to support studies using any of these other methods. Private foundations, as well as other social science funding sources, followed suit, making support difficult for research not using random assignment designs.

To my knowledge, the 1980–2008 data as well as Google’s *Ngram Viewer* had not been updated by this sixth edition’s publication time. Thus, trends may have changed since 2008 and may have shifted in some unknown way. However, another Google source provided a different type of more recent data that seems to support a continuing spotlight on case study research.

The data represent citation frequencies from Google *Scholar* (see <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/05/12/what-are-the-most-cited-publications-in-the-social-sciences-according-to-google-scholar/>). These data show that the present book, through all its editions since 1984, placed second (!) on a list of the “10 most cited methodology books in the social sciences” (see [Figure Pref.2](#), which originally appeared as Table 3 in the cited blog).

Figure Pref.1 Frequency of Four Methodological Terms Appearing in Published

Books, 1980–2008



Source: Google’s Ngram Viewer (<http://books.google.com/ngrams>), accessed March 2012.

The tenfold list includes *all* social science methods books—qualitative *and* quantitative (Green, 2016). To place second, this book had well over 100,000 citations, which were 20,000 more than that of the third-place book.⁴ (Note that all the books on the list are more than 25 years old; had the analysis normalized the totals by the number of years of a book’s availability, more recent books might have had a fairer chance to be included.) So, whether mentioning “case study research” is still on an upward trend or not (the original trend from Google *Ngram*), a lot of people have been citing “case study research” when they cite this book and its title (the more recent data from Google *Scholar*). Along similar lines, 15 different academic disciplines and practicing professions now have at least one specialized work focusing on doing case study research in their particular discipline or profession (see [Figure 1.1](#), [Chapter 1](#)).

Figure Pref.2 Ten Most Cited Methodology Books in the Social Sciences

Book	Author(s)	Date	Citations
<i>Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences</i>	J. Cohen, P. Cohen, S. West, and L. Aiken	1975	131,033
<i>Case Study Research: Designs and Methods</i>	Robert Yin	1984	107,931
<i>Psychometric Theory</i>	Jim Nunnally	1967	80,196
<i>The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research</i>	Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss	1967	78,385
<i>Multivariate Data Analysis</i>	J. F. Hair, R. E. Anderson and R. L. Tatham	1979	70,700
<i>Qualitative Data Analysis</i>	Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman	1984	59,829
<i>Using Multivariate Statistics</i>	Barbara Tabachnick and Linda Fidell	1989	57,324
<i>Econometric Analysis</i>	William Greene	1990	54,524
<i>An Introduction to Probability Theory and Its Applications</i>	William Feller	1950	51,825
<i>Naturalistic Inquiry</i>	Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba	1985	51,169

Source: Data from Google Scholar, compiled by Green (2016).

The Sixth Edition: Case Study Research and Applications

Special to this sixth edition.

The spotlight on “case study research” suggested the desirability of a special effort in creating the sixth edition of this book—if nothing else, something to increase its breadth and usefulness to you. Thus, if you have followed the book’s previous editions, you will immediately note that, by comparison, the sixth edition has an augmented title: “Case Study Research *and Applications*.” Now included in the sixth edition are 11 substantial case study applications. Although versions of these applications had appeared in earlier works (Yin, 2004, 2005, 2012a), the goal has been to put these materials into your hands in a single