

CASE STUDY FORMAT

Title Page

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to consolidate the principal points of your paper in one place. It must cover the information in the paper in enough detail to reflect accurately its contents but concisely enough to permit a public or non-profit agency executive to digest the significance of the paper without having to read it in full. The Executive Summary is a comprehensive restatement of the document's purpose, scope, methods, results, conclusions, findings, and recommendations. The Executive Summary should be proportional to the length of your paper. For purposes of the Capstone paper, we recommend a 500-word Executive Summary.

Introduction

The introduction provides the reader with background information for the research reported in the paper. Its purpose is to establish a framework for the research, so that the reader can understand how it is related to other research. The Introduction has multiple purposes, namely to create reader interest in the topic, establish the problem that leads to the study, place the study within the larger context of the scholarly literature, and reach out to a specific audience.

Literature Review

The review of previous research accomplishes several purposes. It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported, it relates the study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature about the topic, and it provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study. It can serve as a benchmark for comparing the results of the study with other findings.

Methodology

This section specifies the type of research design utilized in the paper, such as the approach to data collection, analysis, and report writing. It should detail the context of the research, e.g. type of organization, jurisdiction, indicate how subjects were selected, e.g. random, key informants, discuss techniques for data collection, e.g. interviews, questionnaire, document review, study of case files, and explain the underlying rationale for these decisions. It may be useful to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen design.

Study

A case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case. Relevant cases will include public and not-for-profit administrators and their programs. Most often, these cases will be embedded in a political system in which actors exercise power and influence over processes and decisions. We are interested in cases for both their uniqueness and commonality. Cases are "bounded, integrated systems;" hence, we observe working parts that connect people with programs in some sort of purposive fashion. Some cases are so important in themselves that we focus on studying their intrinsic qualities. Other cases are applicable to important public administration and public policy questions. Hence, they are considered instrumental to understanding larger issues

Analysis

The analysis compares the findings of the study with benchmarks established in the review of literature. It may point out similarities and differences, agreements and contradictions, and posit explanations for these relationships. Normally, it will not assume a burden of proof or disproof, nor claim superiority or insights not justified by the small sample size or singularity of the subject or methodology. Cautious conjecture, with appropriate language and solid reasoning, however is encouraged.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although this section does not need to be long, the writer has an opportunity to tie up loose ends, summarize findings, and draw inferences. Specific recommendations are a good way of concluding the paper. The writer should recommend possible changes in current administrative practices, suggest new methods of management or analysis, or propose changes in ordinances and statutes, for example. The recommendations should flow from the present study and be related directly to the analysis.

References and Appendices