



Class: BSc Sem 5

Subject : Business communication

Subject Code:

Chapter: Unit 4 Chp 4

Chapter Name: Learning through cases

Today's Agenda

1. Define case study
 1. Importance of case method of learning
2. Types of cases
3. Facilitating the learning process
4. Different approaches for case analysis
5. Steps in case analysis
6. Writing a case analysis
7. Lessons from case method
8. Developing skills by using case studies

1 Define Case study



Case study has been defined as a complex example which gives an insight into the context of a problem as well as illustrating the main point

1.1 Importance of case method of learning

- Learning through cases is one of the most effective ways of management. The application of theoretical concepts in real-time settings is made possible by the case study method.
- A case study engages students in activities, which are based on topics that demonstrate theoretical concepts in applied settings. Thus, case studies bridge the gap between theory and practice and encourage active learning.
- Adoption of the case study method of learning provides opportunities for development of communication skills. It enhances problem-solving ability and facilitates group dynamics. Practical application of theories increases the students' desire to learn as the topic does not remain clinical any longer.

2 Types of cases

There are two main types of cases - theoretical cases and factual cases.

Theoretical cases



Management concepts presented as pages of theory can be boring and difficult to digest. The dry theoretical concepts of management are clarified through a theoretical case.

A well-written theoretical case builds in principles and concepts and makes the student go for critical thinking and analysis.

The following are some problems presented in theoretical cases:

- The communication dilemma faced by an organisation during a financial crisis.
- The behaviour pattern adopted by a transformational leader seeking to bring about organisational change.
- The viability of introducing a new product or a new pricing strategy.

2 Types of cases

There are two main types of cases - theoretical cases and factual cases.

Factual cases



Factual case studies are those which are based on critical managerial issues in organisations. The issue may be presented in the form of a story or chronological history and is supplemented with data.

The following are some situations presented through factual cases:

- Should a restaurant, which is making profits, open a branch in another location in the same city?
- Should a brand, which has wide recognition among customers, change its logo?

3 Facilitating the learning process

Case study method is an effective method of applying theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. It creates a dynamic learning process in which the students learn how to think and ask right questions.

Asking right questions is one of the most critical skills which help a manager take the right decision.

- A manager has to rise above personal preferences and biases and take a decision, keeping in mind the organisational vision. It is important that personality and mindset do not hamper the decision-making process.
- The case analysis is about discussing a situation, identifying the problem, leading to a sound decision and making an action plan. It helps the students sharpen their analytical skills. During the process of analysis, one learns how to think logically and reason rigorously
- It allows them to look at a particular managerial problem as a detached observer. It gives them an opportunity to take an objective stand without being emotionally involved in the problem. A person who has worked in a group for case analysis learns to rise above biases and consider alternative viewpoints and thereby becomes a better manager.

4 Different approaches for case analysis

A case can be analysed using any one of the 4 approaches:

The Systems Approach

A holistic view is taken in this approach - the organisation is looked upon as a system. Information regarding all its components - business, markets, technologies, stakeholders, organisational structure and how they interact with each other - is sought. This approach works well for cases related to marketing, finance and operations and managerial aspects, such as planning, organising and controlling systems.

The Behavioural Approach

This approach is adopted when it is necessary to focus on behaviour patterns of people within the organisation. It works well for cases related to Organisation Behaviour, Business Communication, Human Resource Management since leadership traits and styles, organisational culture, communication environment, training need analysis, etc. all become a part of the study when the behavioural approach is adopted.

4 Different approaches for case analysis

The Decision Approach

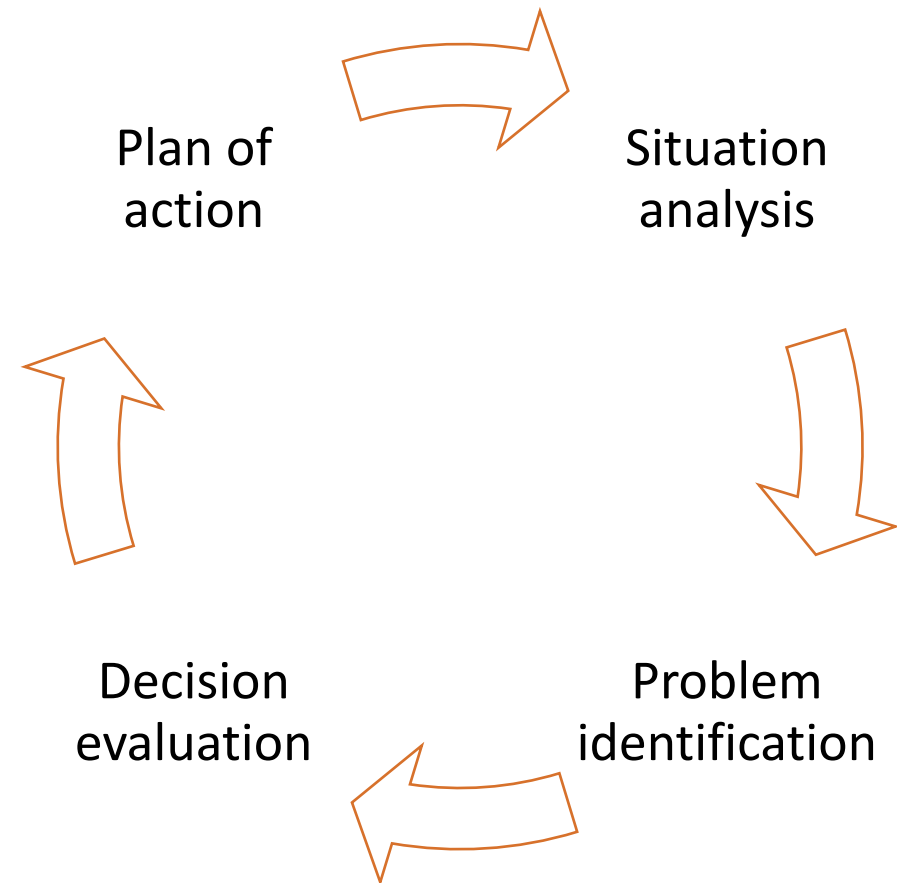
This approach is suited for cases with a lot of data related to finance. As it evaluates alternative decision-making models or tools, one should be competent enough to understand the relationship of different variables. It is also necessary to ask the right questions to understand what will impact a particular variable.

The Strategy Approach

This approach is used with organisational policy-related cases where as a manager one is supposed to take a strategic decision, keeping in mind the objectives of the organisational vision and core values. Conducting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis (SWOT) is the best approach for these cases. The SWOT analysis is sometimes referred to as a situational analysis or an environmental scan. It is widely used for gathering, structuring, presenting, and reviewing extensive planning data within a larger business or project planning process. SWOT analysis in business and marketing situations is normally structured so that a 2×2 matrix grid can be produced, according to two pairs of dimensions. 'Strengths and Weaknesses', are 'mapped' or 'graphed' against 'Opportunities and Threats'.

5 Steps in case analysis

A thorough understanding of the case is essential for carrying out effective analysis. As we have seen the purpose of a case analysis is to provide an opportunity to apply concepts from class to real-world situations. There are facts, which are verifiable from several sources. There are inferences, which represent an individual's judgement in a given situation. There is speculation, which is information that cannot be verified. There are also assumptions, which cannot be verified and are generated during case analysis or discussion. Clearly, all these different types of information are not equally valuable for managerial decision-making.



6 Writing a case analysis

Once a case is analysed, one can start writing the analysis. It must be brief, extending to not more than three or four pages. One may select any of these three formats of writing the analysis:

The Suspense or Inductive Format

- Based on the three-step method:
- Identify the key issue and write a paragraph about the main problem and available options to deal with it
- Evaluate possible alternative options, support the argument with quantitative and qualitative information presented in the case with the help of numbers and data as well as opinions and statements.
- Make recommendation on what can be the plan of action to implement the decision

The News First or Deductive Format

- It is just the opposite of inductive format. Here we start by
- Presenting a set of recommendations first
- Supporting the recommendations
- Listing possible alternative options and why a particular one was selected
- Supporting the argument with data given in the case

The Strategic Issue Format

- It is the one that we generally follow while writing a proposal. In this format, we first mention the following:
- Strategic issue or the basic problem
- Different options available to deal with the problem and suggest the one recommended
- Justification for the recommendations
- Plan of action

7 Lessons from the case method

Not all information given in the case is useful

Do not look for more information

Do not jump to conclusions early

There is no perfect method of analysis

Cases are interdisciplinary

There is no ultimate solution to the problem

8 Developing key skills by using case studies

