

6.4 Is Case Study Method an Effective Method of Teaching in Commerce & Management Degree Programmes?

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ABSTRACT

Case study method is one of the most adopted teaching methods used in management education. The case study method was initially adopted by the Harvard Law School and then by the School of Business Administration in the Harvard University. A case study describes a problem or a real life situation which requires learners to participate in a group discussion extensively to analyze the case study and derive solutions or make suggestion to the given problem.

A review of literature shows that many factors influence the effective use of a case study. For the purpose of this study, these factors have been categorized as case study development process, teacher/instructor effectiveness, and learners' perception and preferences. Accordingly this research is to examine how effective is case study method as a teaching method in management programmes. Thus objectives of the study are to examine the use of case study, identify the perception of teachers/instructors and learners on the effectiveness of case study method.

The sample comprises teachers/instructors and third and final year students of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies of the University of Kelaniya. Initially a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with 18 third and final year students of the faculty. Based on literature and focus group discussion two questionnaires were developed to collect data from the responding sample units. Data were collected from 80 students of the faculty, 20 from each of the four respective departments and 12 academicians of the faculty. Descriptive statistics were used and hypotheses tests were conducted to identify the most significant variable that influences an effective use of case study method.

Though learners accept that case study is an effective teaching method, variations in types and structures of the degree programs, lecturer/instructor, methodology, type of case study, affects differently the use and effectiveness of the case study method.

Key words: Case study, teaching methods, learners, teachers/instructors, Effectiveness