



Research Article

USING CASE STUDY METHOD IN NATIONAL DEFENSE - SECURITY EDUCATION AT HIGH SCHOOLS IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of the case study method in teaching National Defense - Security Education in Ho Chi Minh City high schools. A survey of 50 teachers and 200 students from three high schools reveals that while the case study method has been introduced, its application remains limited, with an average score of 3.19. Students demonstrated a relatively positive attitude in class, with average scores ranging from 3.26 to 3.69. Interviews with nine teachers of national defense-security education highlighted challenges associated with the method, including increased teacher workload, the need for extensive professional experience and practical knowledge in national defense and security, and the time-intensive nature of student engagement with case studies. Based on these findings, the article proposes measures to address these limitations and enhance the effectiveness of the case study method in practice.

Keywords: high school; national defense and security education; case study; teaching methods

1. Introduction

National defense - security education is a part of the national education system, a basic content in building the national defense, people's security, is a main subject in the curriculum from high school to university and political, administrative, and other types of schools. Therefore, introducing this subject into teaching not only aims to achieve comprehensive education goals but also creates conditions for the young generation to cultivate qualities, train abilities, and contribute to educating the future generation of the country with bright ethics and strong will (Cao & Nguyen, 2018). At the same time, national defense and security education is also a subject related to strategic issues and tasks of the entire Party, people, and army, directly contributing to strengthening national defense potential to ensure the country has enough ability to firmly protect independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the Fatherland (Tran, 2023).

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In the trend of educational innovation in the country, Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW on fundamental and comprehensive innovation of education and training built by the Ministry of Education and Training plays a role as a lever for secondary education. General education is gradually making positive changes to achieve the common goal of modern education (Tran & Nguyen, 2023). Currently, the Vietnamese Communist Party and the State always care about the content and fully equip facilities for schools across the country, especially paying attention to the training of National Defense Education teachers with quality teaching (Benrd & Nguyen, 2014). One of the important factors that determine the quality of national defense-security education is to innovate teaching methods in a positive direction to suit the cognitive process of learners and promote the proactive, positive factor of learners (Do, 2018).

In recent times, many high schools in Ho Chi Minh City have been applying various teaching methods to improve the quality of teaching the subject of national defense-security education, however, not all applied methods are suitable and effective in teaching. Meanwhile, this is a subject that requires many practical activities, using theory to practice, so case-based teaching is considered one of the positive teaching methods suitable for teaching this subject. Therefore, this study examines a detailed view and comprehensive evaluation of the current situation and the potential of applying case studies in teaching the subject of national defense-security education.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Methodology

Literature Review: Data and information were collated from diverse sources, including domestic and international articles, research journals, books, and online platforms about case studies in National Defense - Security Education.

Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with nine National Defense - Security Education teachers from three high schools: Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Le Quy Don, and Vo Van Kiet. These interviews aimed to elucidate the practical application of case-based teaching methods in the subject.

Survey: Due to time and resource constraints, a survey was administered to 50 teachers and 200 students from the aforementioned high schools. The survey instrument, using a five-point Likert scale, addressed the following areas:

- a) *Frequently used teaching methods*
- b) *Criteria influencing the selection of case studies*
- c) *Evaluation of students' positive engagement following the implementation of case studies in teaching the course.*

Data analysis: The Likert scale responses were analyzed with the following interpretations (Table 1).

Table 1. Scale interpretations

Range	Interpretations
1,00 -1,80	Infrequently/ No impact
1,80 -2,60	Rarely/ Little impact
2,61 -3,40	Normal
3,40 - 4,20	Frequently/ Impactful
4,21 -5,00	Very frequently/ Very impactful

2.2. Findings

2.2.1. Some concepts of case-based teaching

Case-based teaching is considered a method aimed at effectively conveying knowledge to learners to achieve learning objectives (Tran, 2021). Regarding the promotion of student engagement, Kharlamop (1970) defined teaching methods as the interaction between teacher and student to address educational and developmental tasks within the teaching process. Lecne (1977) further characterized teaching methods as a system of purposeful actions by the teacher to organize students' cognitive and practical activities, ensuring their acquisition of learning content. Nguyen (1994) described teaching methods as coordinated approaches employed by teachers and students under the teacher's guidance, fostering students' self-awareness, active participation, and independence in achieving educational goals. While definitions of teaching methods vary, for this study, we define them as: "The strategies employed by teachers in the educational process to facilitate learners' rapid and effective absorption of lesson content and knowledge."

The case-based method is a widely adopted active teaching approach. This method employs complex topics linked to real-life scenarios, fostering critical thinking and creativity skills in both educators and learners (Tran, 2021). Notably, the situational teaching method encourages student engagement and cultivates self-study, independent research, and problem-solving abilities in practical contexts. Implementation of this method necessitates that educators possess strong theoretical knowledge and practical experience. It also requires a diligent collection of authentic, relevant situations about the lecture material, as well as a passionate commitment of time and intellectual resources to the teaching process (Do, 2018).

The essence of the situational teaching method is that through solving situations, learners get the best adaptability to the volatile social environment (Phan, 2005). For the situational teaching method, teachers must face specific teaching circumstances and conditions. At the same time, it is necessary to grasp the circumstances, conditions, and environment... when the teaching process takes place.

2.2.2. The role of using the situational teaching method in national defense and security education

National defense and security education is a subject that encompasses much knowledge about military and people's security, the application of the situational teaching method in this subject brings the following roles:

Firstly, it helps students understand more about the real situations that can occur in the military and security forces. This method helps students learn how to analyze, evaluate, and make decisions in complex situations, as well as hone leadership skills, crisis management, and effective communication. In addition, the use of this method also helps students develop a sense of responsibility and solidarity in national defense and security work.

Secondly, the situational teaching method is also a valuable tool to attract students and increase students' interest in the subject. Situational teaching helps learners have a deeper and more practical view of the theoretical issues they have learned. Through handling situations, learners will have the conditions to flexibly apply theoretical knowledge, understand concepts more clearly and deeply, and expand their understanding in a lively, attractive way (Trinh, 2014).

Thirdly, it creates conditions for students to learn from practical experience through analyzing and evaluating situations that have occurred. This helps them understand more about the results of each decision and action they choose. Practicing through specific situations also helps students build self-defense skills, as well as respond quickly and flexibly in an uncertain environment. From there, this method can help form and develop decisiveness, courage, and civic responsibility in students.

2.2.3. The practical application of the situational teaching method in national defense and security education at high schools in Ho Chi Minh City

National defense and security education is an important content of general education. The important thing is that high school teachers must choose an effective teaching method to ensure that students are provided with full information and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute to national security. Below are the survey results.

Table 2. *The use of teaching methods in national defense-security education (frequency)*

Teaching methods		Statistics		
		Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
1	Presentation	3.38	1.424	2
2	Observation	3.32	1.341	3
3	Using visual aids	3.43	1.340	1
4	Role-play	3.35	1.343	4
5	Situation/case-based	3.19	1.330	5
Cronbach's Alpha		0.755		

Analysis of the data reveals that interviewed high school teachers have implemented various active teaching methods in National Defense and Security Education. Visual aids emerge as the most frequently utilized method, with an average score of 3.41 from both teachers and students. The presentation method ranks second, scoring 3.38 on average. This traditional approach, characterized by unidirectional information flow from teacher to student, efficiently covers substantial material in a limited time. However, it risks becoming monotonous, potentially leading to student disengagement. The situational method, scoring

3.19 on average, is the least employed among teaching methods in this subject. This indicates that while the situational teaching method has been introduced, its application remains limited and not widely adopted in classroom settings. It is noteworthy that the results demonstrate a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.755, indicating the high reliability of the scale used. These findings suggest that while diverse teaching methods are being employed, there is room for increased integration of more interactive approaches, particularly the situational method, in National Defense and Security Education at the high school level.

Table 3. *Criteria affecting the decision to choose the situational teaching method in the subject of national defense - security education among teachers*

	Criteria	Statistics		
		Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
1	Students easily absorb and remember the lecture	4.10	1.182	1
2	Evaluate students' ability to apply theory to handle situations	4.06	1.219	2
3	Enhance group discussion activities	3.80	1.262	5
4	Increase the lively and interested atmosphere in class	3.88	1.206	4
5	Overcome the phenomenon of students being bored and dozing off in class	3.94	1.219	3
Cronbach's Alpha		0.959		

To evaluate the motivation to change teaching methods, a survey was delivered to 50 teachers at Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Le Quy Don, and Vo Van Kiet high schools about the criteria affecting the decision to choose the situational teaching method in national defense and security education. Analysis of teachers' survey results reveals that all criteria received above-average scores. The criterion "students easily absorb and remember the lecture" emerged as the most significant, with a mean score of 4.10. This finding aligns with the current perception among students that National Defense and Security Education is of lesser importance, resulting in decreased engagement. Consequently, the selection and modification of teaching methods to enhance student absorption and motivation remains a primary concern for educators. The criterion "Evaluate students' ability to apply theory to handle situations" ranked second, with a mean score of 4.06. The situational teaching method not only aims to improve student engagement but also seeks to foster creative thinking and practical application of theoretical knowledge. This approach contributes to the holistic development of students' competencies. These results underscore the importance of implementing teaching methodologies that not only facilitate knowledge retention but also promote the application of theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios. Such approaches may address the current challenges in student engagement and the perceived relevance of the subject matter.

*Table 4. Positive expressions in class
after applying the situational teaching method*

	Behaviors	Statistics		
		Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
1	Students pay attention, follow, and study the questions and situational exercises assigned	3.26	1.303	5
2	Focus on studying the content of the situation and discuss it in groups	3.47	1.200	2
3	Be able to come up with reasonable solutions to the situation	3.44	1.235	3
4	Students are active and enthusiastic in the lesson	3.41	1.187	4
5	Students pay attention to the lecture and actively participate in hypothetical situations	3.69	1.228	1
Cronbach's Alpha		0.874		

Table 4 reveals that the implementation of the situational teaching method in National Defense-Security Education elicited predominantly positive student responses, with all measured expressions scoring above average. The most pronounced response was "Students pay attention, follow, and study the questions and situational exercises assigned," achieving the highest mean score of 3.69. This was followed by "focus on studying the content of the situation and discuss it in groups," with a mean score of 3.47. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for these variables is 0.874, indicating the high reliability of the measurement scale employed. This robust internal consistency supports the validity of the observed outcomes. The utilization of authentic scenarios and practical activities appears to facilitate a more profound comprehension of the subject matter and its real-world applications. This approach potentially enhances students' problem-solving skills and augments their practical knowledge base. These findings suggest that the situational teaching method may be an effective pedagogical strategy for increasing student engagement and fostering the development of applied skills in the context of National Defense-Security Education.

Through interviewing nine teachers (GV) about the practical application of case-based teaching methods in the subject, the results show that:

GV 1, GV 2, GV5, GV 8, and GV 9: All responded that the application of case-based teaching methods in national defense-security education creates a positive learning environment, helps students quickly absorb knowledge, and fosters greater interest in the subject. Additionally, the case-based teaching method increases the workload for teachers. To construct an educational scenario, teachers must possess extensive subject expertise and a deep understanding of practical realities.

GV 3, GV 4, GV 7: The case-based teaching method enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the lesson content and encourages them to actively participate in

the learning process, focusing their thinking on the presented scenarios. The case-based teaching method incurs significant costs and requires physical resources to set up hypothetical scenarios. It also consumes considerable time for students to think through and solve these situations.

GV 6: Students have the opportunity to flexibly apply theoretical knowledge and dynamically broaden their understanding; however, this method only fully realizes its effectiveness when there is active participation and enthusiasm from the students.

2.2.4. The practical application of the situational teaching method in the subject of national defense-security education at high schools in Ho Chi Minh City

- **Advantages**

The application of the situational teaching method contributes to improving the quality of national defense-security education, thereby creating a positive learning environment and training a generation of intelligent young people, who are responsible and ready to face the challenges of the future.

Through the application of this method, teachers can examine how this method helps students apply theoretical knowledge to reality through simulated or practical situations. It also enhances students' focus and attention when they have to face challenging situations, helping students absorb knowledge quickly and stimulating interest and eagerness to learn more.

Situational teaching helps learners gain a deeper and more practical understanding of the theoretical issues that have been learned. Through handling situations, learners will have the opportunity to flexibly apply theoretical knowledge, understand concepts more deeply and broadly, and expand understanding in a lively and attractive way.

The situational teaching method also helps students develop a deeper understanding of the topic when they actively participate in the learning process, encourages students to discuss, lead the logical thread, comment, criticize, attract attention, and focus the learner's thinking on the situation raised.

- **Disadvantages**

In addition to the advantages that the situational teaching method brings, there are also some limitations, specifically:

Firstly, the situational teaching method increases the workload of teachers. To have realistic situational exercises, teachers have to invest time and intellect to approach various information sources and build situations close to the lesson content. This requires teachers to have personality, passion for the profession, correct motivation and needs for the goal of educational innovation, and awareness of linking knowledge with practical life.

Secondly, building a pedagogical situation is not simple, it is a continuous working process. Therefore, it requires teachers to have a lot of professional experience, deep cultural capital, and an understanding of the practical issues related to national defense-security education.

Thirdly, this method only fully promotes effectiveness when there is active participation and interest from learners. Learners need to have the ability to think independently, dynamically, creatively, passion, and interest in knowledge about national defense and security.

Fourthly, learners spend quite a lot of thinking time solving the situation and drawing out the necessary knowledge, and sometimes get lost in the process of solving the situation so it is easy to be discouraged when facing difficult situations or not enthusiastically participate when the situation lacks attractiveness.

Fifthly, it costs a lot of expenses and physical facilities to equip hypothetical situations. Meanwhile, not all high schools can fully meet the necessary physical facilities for teaching activities.

• **Some measures to improve the effectiveness of applying the situational teaching method at high schools in Ho Chi Minh City**

To effectively apply the situational teaching method in teaching the subject of national defense-security education, it is required that the school and the subject teachers have a specific teaching plan suitable for the circumstances of the school. Below are some measures to enhance the effectiveness of applying the above method in teaching.

Firstly, teachers need to construct scenarios that are both scientifically rigorous and practically relevant. An effective situational exercise should align closely with the lesson's objectives and content. The scenario's subject matter must maintain scientific accuracy, adhering strictly to the knowledge presented in the curriculum. In the implementation of situational teaching, the subject matter should be practical and integrally linked to relevant real-world events. This approach facilitates learners' ability to draw connections between the educational content and their daily experiences, thereby enhancing comprehension and retention.

Secondly, teachers are required to engage in research of the lesson content. This entails a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, thorough document collection, and judicious information selection. These steps establish a foundation for defining the lecture's objectives and requirements, as well as informing syllabus development and content compilation. This crucial preparatory phase involves synthesizing theoretical knowledge from textbooks and reference materials with practical insights derived from experience. Such a holistic approach enables the construction of effective teaching situations, optimally integrating theoretical concepts with real-world applications.

Thirdly, teachers need to demonstrate adept facilitation of situational teaching scenarios and judicious time management. The teacher's proactive guidance and control play a pivotal role in enhancing lesson engagement, dynamism, and efficiency. Effective time allocation is crucial, with the teachers skillfully directing focus to the core elements of the scenario and resolving key issues at appropriate junctures. This approach aims to cultivate an atmosphere of enthusiasm and intellectual stimulation among learners.

Fourthly, educational institutions should prioritize the enhancement of pedagogical competencies among their faculty. This involves regularly promoting political education initiatives and elevating awareness to reinforce professional motivation. Such efforts aim to foster a sustained sense of responsibility and dedication to pedagogical expertise among teachers. Moreover, it is imperative for teachers to continually augment their experiential knowledge base. This expanded repertoire enables the construction of valuable situational scenarios that effectively engage learners. The ability to craft scenarios that captivate student attention and stimulate active participation in analytical discussions is a critical skill for teachers implementing situational teaching methods.

Fifthly, the situational teaching method needs to combine additional visual aids. A lesson will easily become boring if it lacks visual aids. Therefore, teachers need to take advantage of it to stimulate the visual sense of learners such as pictures, videos, or gun models.

3. Conclusion

The above research results show that the application of the situational teaching method in teaching the subject of national defense-security education is a necessary and important activity in high schools. This method not only helps to maximize the ability of self-study and creativity of learners but also has the effect of linking the learning and research process of students. By giving students suitable situations and challenges, teachers can help students develop practical skills and knowledge that can be applied to real situations. The use of the situational teaching method contributes to enhancing student participation and understanding more deeply about the topic and practical application of the topic. The evaluations of the practical application of situational teaching in the national defense and security education model at middle schools have somewhat demonstrated the effectiveness of this method and highlighted the importance of applying it to practical teaching.

❖ **Conflict of Interest:** Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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**THỰC TRẠNG SỬ DỤNG PHƯƠNG PHÁP DẠY HỌC TÌNH HUỐNG
TRONG MÔN GIÁO DỤC QUỐC PHÒNG – AN NINH
Ở MỘT SỐ TRƯỜNG TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG TẠI THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH**
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TÓM TẮT

Bài viết phân tích tình hình sử dụng phương pháp dạy học tình huống trong giảng dạy môn Giáo dục Quốc phòng – An ninh hiện nay ở các trường trung học phổ thông trên địa bàn Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Kết quả khảo sát 50 giáo viên và 200 học sinh ở ba trường trung học phổ thông tại Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh cho thấy phương pháp dạy học tình huống đã được tiếp cận và sử dụng nhưng ở mức độ còn hạn chế với điểm trung bình 3,19, sinh thể hiện thái độ khá tích cực trong giờ học với điểm trung bình từ 3,26 đến 3,69. Kết quả phỏng vấn 9 giáo viên dạy môn Giáo dục Quốc phòng – An ninh đã chỉ ra nhược điểm của phương pháp dạy học tình huống là làm tăng khối lượng công việc của giáo viên, đòi hỏi kinh nghiệm chuyên môn sâu và am hiểu những vấn đề thực tế liên quan đến lĩnh vực giáo dục quốc phòng và an ninh; học sinh tốn khá nhiều thời gian tư duy để giải quyết các tình huống và rút ra kiến thức cần thiết. Từ kết quả này, bài viết đề xuất một số biện pháp nhằm khắc phục những nhược điểm để nâng cao hiệu quả sử dụng phương pháp dạy học tình huống vào thực tiễn.

Từ khóa: trung học phổ thông; giáo dục quốc phòng - an ninh; dạy học tình huống; phương pháp dạy học