

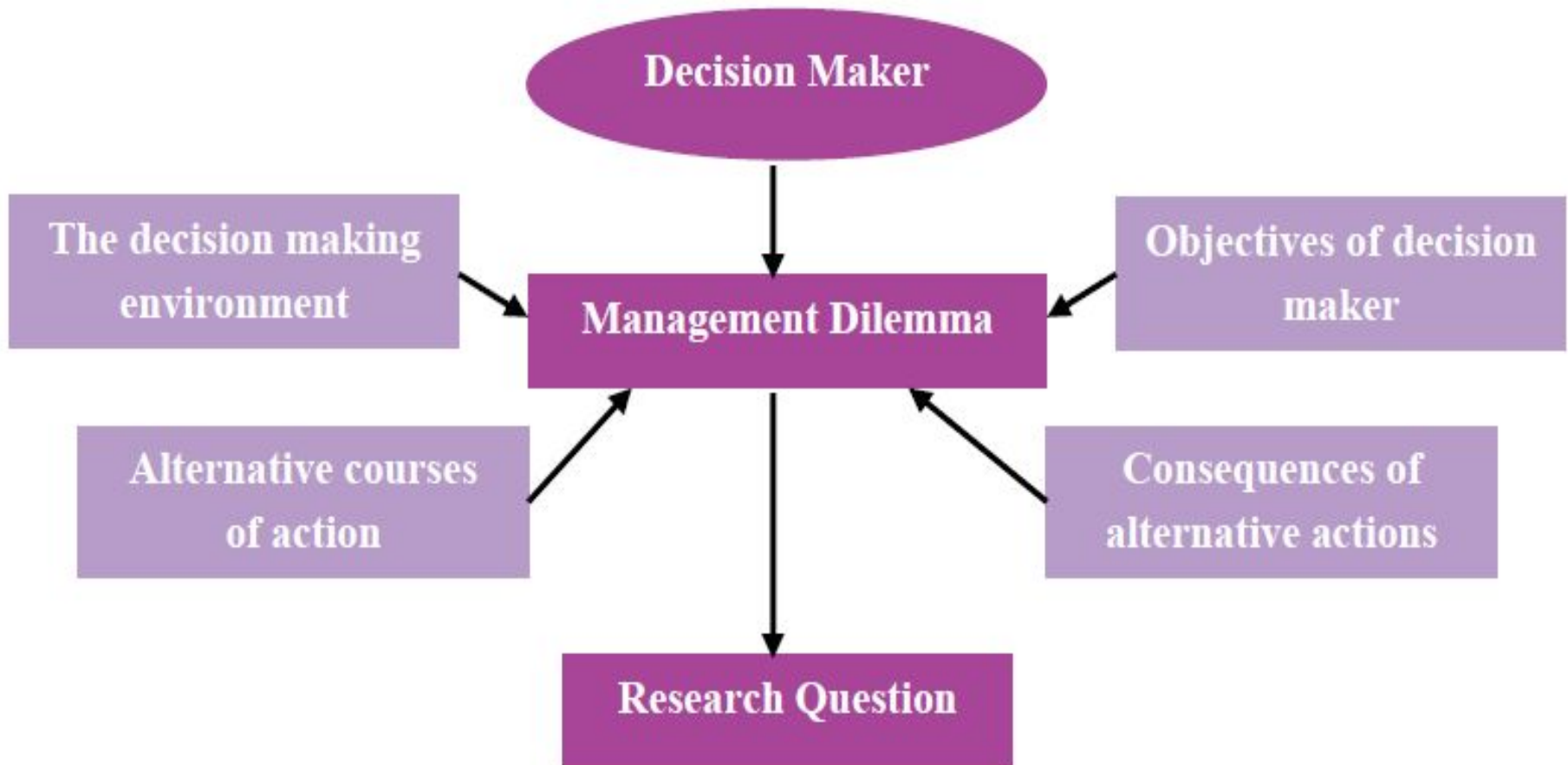
Defining a problem

- Research in general is related to queries and queries arise when we observe some anomaly (or inconsistency). This anomaly can provide the basis for a problem or opportunity. Thus, defining a research problem or opportunity correctly is of major importance in any research. If the problem defined is not exhaustive the research may lead to incorrect or in some cases contrasting findings.

Following are the questions which must be asked before a marketing research problem is identified.

1. Have the decision makers and researchers framed an initial question and looked at the alternatives clearly? Is there an agreement on the initial question and the alternatives among most participants?
2. Is there agreement on the basis for selecting one alternative over others? Have acceptable criteria been developed?
3. What consequences would a 'wrong' decision bring upon?
4. Is there a serious disagreement among the team members with regards to choice of research alternatives and their adoption?

Process of developing research question



Marketing research cannot provide decisions.

- Marketing research's role is not to make decisions. Rather, marketing research gathers data on an uncertain and dynamic marketplace and rearranges it into a form which can assist the decision maker in understanding the phenomenon better and take good decisions on the basis of the same. Realistically, it has been observed that research recommendations are often used as a stepping stone for decision making after the appropriate approval is granted.

Marketing research cannot guarantee SUCCESS.

- Marketing research at best can improve the odds of making a correct decision. Anyone who expects to eliminate the possibility of a failure by conducting marketing research is both unrealistic and likely to be disappointed. The real value of research however lies in the improvement of the long term decision making and improved bottom-line performance.

References:

- **Essentials of Marketing Research – Paurav Shukla, BookBoon.com, 2012**