

# **CASE STUDIES AS A TEACHING -LEARNING TOOL IN MANAGEMENT COURSES**

**An Instructor's Perspective**

**Yusof Ismail**

**IIUM Press**  
**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



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## CHAPTER 6

# Case Studies in Strategic Management

Yusof Ismail

### Introduction

I was first introduced to a long and comprehensive case study during my undergraduate studies. I was required to solve a case with my team members when completing three courses simultaneously – *Finance, Marketing and Operations Management*. It was the business school requirement. Later, when I studied *Strategic Management (SM)* course, I formed an opinion that students of ivy-league business schools in the United States were required to learn SM in particular by discussing cases rather than listening to lectures. My undergraduate SM instructor happened to be a graduate of an ivy league, and so was my SM instructor for my graduate program. They used the same approach. In a week, our classes were alternating between lecture and case discussion. Those were my first and second exposures learning *Strategic Management*.

When I first taught the course to perhaps the third batch of BBA students, I replicated my experience as an SM student with my own students but only once, and have never repeated it ever after. I prefer a combination of lectures and cases. Unlike during my student days where I dealt with approximately fourteen cases in a semester, a lot in my judgement, I think four are enough with my students. Yes, four are enough. Students lose the opportunity to digest the spirit of case analysis and case studies and get trapped with structure and quantity if they are given more cases to solve. I think, may be when some of my undergraduate SM students pursue their graduate studies they can be challenged with a high dosage of cases, and they have to wait for that regime.

### Objectives of using cases

I have formulaed three (3) objectives of using cases in SM course: Decision making skill, reinforcement of theory, and integrating theory and practice.

1. *Improving student decision making skill:* I think case studies do not provide as much knowledge on theory and principles of SM as much as lecture topics or book chapters. As many of the cases revolve around issues to be solved by the actors in the case, students play the role of the former, i.e. making decisions on their behalf. The students hone the skills required of decision makers, by solving the problems contained in the case. Besides, they also other managerial skills, such as communication and conceptual. Students show the writing competency through case reports, whereas oral communication through oral class presentations. They employ conceptual skill by role playing the position held by the main actor(s) in the case, and in formulating solutions to the questions.
2. *Reinforcing the concepts:* Unlike essay questions that assess students understanding of concepts, principles and some practices, case studies contain