CASE STUDIES AS A TEACHING-LEARNING TOOL IN ECONOMICS, FINANCE AND QUANTITATIVE COURSES
An Instructor’s Perspective

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Preface**

**PART I OVERVIEW**

Chapter 1
- Introduction – Yusof Ismail 3

**PART II ECONOMICS**

Chapter 2

Chapter 3
- *Managerial Economics* - Jarita Duasa 19

Chapter 4
- *A Student’s Experience with Managerial Economics Cases* - Amir Qayyum Che Norddin and Yusof Ismail 25

**PART III FINANCE**

Chapter 5
- *Case Studies in Investment* - Razali Haron 33

Chapter 6
- *Case Studies in Financial Management* - Nor Azizan Che Embi 41

**PART IV QUANTITATIVE**

Chapter 7
- *Case Studies in Decision Science* - Nur Anisah Abdullah 49

Chapter 8
- A Student’s Experience with Decision Science Case Studies - Nor hazirah Abu Hassan and Yusof Ismail 57

Chapter 9
- *Case Studies in Operations Management* - Rafikul Islam 63
Chapter 10
• A Student’s Experience with Operations Management Case Studies - Muhammad Fikri Hairudin and Yusof Ismail 71

Chapter 11
• Using Case Studies in Operations Research - Zaihan Mohd Noar 77

Chapter 12
• A Student’s Experience with Operations Research Case Studies – Muhamad Hafiz Zainudin and Yusof Ismail 83

PART V
EVALUATION

Chapter 13
• Final Examinations - Yusof Ismail 93

Chapter 14
• Types of Assessment - Yusof Ismail 109

Biography of Contributors 121
CHAPTER 9

Case Studies in Operations Management

Rafikul Islam

Introduction
Case studies play an important role in reinforcing the concepts of Operations Management in student learners, otherwise the whole course will be only theories and concepts. Besides requiring students to discuss the cases in group and submit group case reports, the students are also required to make oral presentation to reinforce the importance of teamwork.

Objectives of using cases
I have set three (3) objectives in using cases in the course:

1. To relate theory with the practices of Operations Management across organizations – manufacturing or services.

   In the normal lecture classes, students are exposed mainly to theories. Students must also be exposed to the practical scenarios where they can relate theories with the practical issues.

2. To enlist and explicate a list of possible actions that companies can implement while faced with a situation similar to the one encountered by the company referred in the case.

   Case studies normally deal with a unique problem that the company/organization is facing. What possible actions could have been taken in order to avert that unwanted situation? Or even after facing the problem, what can the company/organization possibly do to overcome the problem? Brainstorming is necessary to list down a number of recommendations. Case studies are excellent vehicles through which students get familiarity with the actual business environment.

3. To discuss the lessons learned from the cases.

   Mistakes of any sorts must not be repeated. We can learn a number of lessons from any case. I think it is one of the major objectives of any case study to learn lessons and apply those to avert any ensuing negative situation that may cripple the company.

Relevance of the cases with theory and practice
Theories are meaningful only when those are applied in practice. A case study can expound theories vis-a-vis organizations’ operational issues.