

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

Yusof Ismail



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A Student's Experience with Operations Research Case Studies

Muhamad Hafiz Zainudin and Yusof Ismail

Introduction

Hafiz studied *Operations Research* (OR) last semester and has been appreciating the value of using case studies in the course. Analysis, application and creativity have been mentioned by him to be three benefits of using case studies in OR. He rated overall students oral performance for the last three years to be 4 out of 5 due to *consistent improvement and students ability to answer questions* during Q&A session.

Objectives of using cases

Hafiz obtains three benefits while doing case studies assignment in *Operations Research* course:

The first benefit is *analysis*: Solving OR cases necessitated him to train himself to follow the problem solving steps in solving a problem. Students are expected to be able to identify the problems described in the case studies. Sometimes the problems are implicitly described in the case studies, hence it is important for students to be able to detect the root cause of the problem, and therefore giving appropriate solutions or actions.

Case studies also have enabled him to foresee the compatibility of the solution or decision and the problem identified. Students are expected to justify the efficiency of the proposed solution in solving a particular problem. For every solution, he has to ask myself: "Can this solution/decision actually solve the problem"? Inability to do so may lead to a problem-solution mismatch.

Second benefit is *application*: Case studies give a hint to students of potential situations that students might encounter when they start a career. Case studies allow students to be more sensitive, to be aware of the changes in some factors that lead to the changes of the performance of the company. This knowledge is important as it helps to students to think critically and the possible impact of their decision. Students will apply this knowledge not only in their future career, but also in their daily life.

The third benefit is *creativity*: Some cases usually ask student's opinion on the issues in the case study. This kind of questions forces the students to think creatively. Questions of a case study can encourage students to think out of the box by using not only their theoretical and conceptual knowledge, but also using their intuition and logical reasoning. This advantage