

BUSINESS CASE TEACHING IN THE PHILIPPINES —A FIRST APPRAISAL

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I. INTRODUCTION. One of the oldest methods of business teaching has been that of the apprenticeship system. In our time, however, the apprenticeship method is confined to those operations which consist in routinary activities. In so far as a job necessitates repetition, with little decision-making or exercise of judgment, the apprenticeship system may still be quite effective. But we find in modern industrial society the necessity for training men who could not only effectively perform routine business jobs but could also exercise sound judgment in management.

Aside from the apprenticeship system, there is the lecture method which is by far the most typical kind of instruction in business schools today. This method has now been used for so long that no further explanation is necessary. Still other kinds of pedagogical tools have been applied to the teaching of different business subjects. These include the workshop or syndicate type which emphasizes individual research coordinated by committee study. Combinations of the various types of teaching have been applied to those business courses which are most adaptable to them.

The business case method, which was initiated by the Harvard Business School and gradually became an accepted form of instruction in the 1930's,¹ has been adopted in this country by the University of the Philippines in the College of Business Administration only in recent years. Case analysis may, in a way, be a modern analogy to the old apprenticeship system. But instead of having the trainee go through a lengthy period of practice in one firm, the student is now faced with practical business situations in a variety of firms. The case method tries to project the student vicariously into situations in which he is confronted with business problems. The student is thus exposed, within a relatively short period of time, to much

¹ For a good discussion of various aspects of the case method at Harvard University and in the United States, cf. Malcolm P. McNair, ed., *The Case Method at the Harvard Business School* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1954). The Harvard Law School was already using the case method before the opening of the Harvard Business School in September, 1908. The Commercial Law courses at the latter school were taught by the case method from the start. But it was not until the period 1920-1924 that the case method became prevalent in most courses at the Harvard Business School. See Melvin T. Copeland, "The Genesis of the Case Method in Business Instruction," in McNair, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-33.

more diverse business problems and is confronted with the job of working out the analyses of more problem situations than what a trainee may be exposed to during decades of apprenticeship.

The emphasis of the case method is on realism. As much as possible, a business case should be a full and straightforward description of undisguised facts as actually faced by a decision-maker. From these data, the student is to single out the factors which are pertinent, to use such techniques as are applicable to the specific situation or problem at hand, and to recommend concrete proposals and programs of action. Analysis of facts is basic. Consideration of alternatives is demanded. Choice and decision are to be made, and actions are called for. Such are the essential features of the case method. As a heuristic tool, it has significant advantages to commend itself to the community of business educators.

A wider use of the case method has been observed in recent years. A Philippine casebook in public administration is already in print,² and is being used for class instruction. There is also a growing crop of economic development "cases"³ which deal with the growth experience of specific countries. Development economists (the so-called "growthmen") are today examining country studies in much the same way as business students approach business cases.

II. CASE ANALYSIS PRESUPPOSES SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE. Cases in themselves are not meant to be adequate. A background of substantive knowledge is required before a student can be expected to tackle business problems. For instance, one could not be expected to properly evaluate a Markovian brand switching model unless one knows the Markovian chain model.⁴ Likewise, it is impossible to decide on using linear programming in production scheduling unless one knows linear programming analysis as a technique.

One may safely conclude that the understanding of substantive techniques (such as present value and discounted cash flow methods; stochastic decision trees in marketing, product development, and investment; PERT and CPM techniques of project evaluation; the implications of the learning curve on productivity; etc.) is a prerequisite to meaningful exercise of the decision-making function.

² Raul de Guzman, ed., *Patterns in Decision-making—Case Studies in Philippine Public Administration*, (Manila: U.P. Graduate School of Public Administration, 1963).

³ For instance, Norman Jacobs, *The Sociology of Development—Iran as an Asian Case Study* (New York: Praeger, 1966); Malcolm D. Rivkin, *Area Development For National Growth—The Turkish Precedent* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965). The IMF has made country studies of Venezuela, Thailand, and others.

⁴ See article by Philip H. Hartung and James L. Fisher, "Brand Switching and Mathematical Programming in Market Expansion," *Management Science*, Vol. 11, No. 10 (August, 1965), pp. B231—B243.

III. MANAGEMENT AS A PRAGMATIC SCIENCE. Despite the many serious efforts to mathematize problem solving and business planning, management has been, and is still, a pragmatic science. Model-building and management theoretic studies have resulted in many exciting new finds of lasting value to business executives. A number of high-powered journals have also been started in recent years along the mathematical line of approach in business analysis.⁵ Nevertheless, it remains true that the art of business administration is a pragmatic skill.

Even if the firm engages in a number of functional activities which utilize the findings of the sciences, the business executive is normally not expected to perform the technical functions of the scientist or the technologist. In the field of advanced research and development, the firm may employ highly-trained scientists without the top executives' necessarily being specialists themselves. However, the business executive must deal with men who are technically oriented. He must deal with problems which are technological in nature. In particular, the major characterizing element of a business executive in his role as a member of the firm is that of coordination — of people and activities. He plans, initiates, controls, and executes. He brings about interaction between men. He brings about interaction between the natural forces of production and human wants, translating them into the supplying of goods and services which the community needs, and in the process deriving pragmatic results for himself, for his firm, and for the community in which the firm operates. It is this aspect which the case method is highly suitable to.

The term in characterizing the function of the business executive is that he "applies" and exercises control over specialized knowledge, specialized materials and specialized human skills. It is important to recognize the major function of the businessman as that of application of knowledge. The demand for broad knowledge in an executive becomes more apparent the higher he rises in the firm. From plant engineer to plant manager to production manager to general manager and vice president — all along the way, his responsibilities broaden and his sphere of interaction widens. It means having contact with more people, facing a greater variety of problems, interacting with people outside his firm. Casebooks can then be designed from introductory coverage to progressively more complex functional cases and, finally to cases involving the whole firm as an entity.

⁵ Two outstanding examples in this area are the journals *Operations Research* and *Management Science*. The first one is the organ of the Operations Research Society of America, and this year, it is already issuing Volume 14, with six numbers per year. *Management Science*, a journal of The Institute of Management Sciences, started as a quarterly in October, 1954. The active interest of the profession is reflected by its current volume which, including *TIMS Bulletins*, comes out in monthly issues.

IV. COUNTRY SPECIFICS IN CASE STUDIES. A rather serious question may be raised at this point. If business cases present concrete historical situations, then would not the peculiarities of each economy introduce irrelevant elements when a case is studied in a country other than that in which the case is supposed to have occurred? More specifically, would not the use of American business cases in the Philippines present students with a business environment to which they are unfamiliar? And how relevant are these cases to the Philippines? At this stage of our business education, it is not possible to offer a conclusive answer yet. But it is proper to explore the implications.

To the extent that the institutional conditions obtaining in the underdeveloped countries differ from those in developed countries, different solutions or emphases in solutions to the pragmatic exercise of the entrepreneurial function would be necessary. It needs, for instance, to be determined whether, due to the high cost of capital, labor could be substituted for capital inputs and how such substitution would affect the cost structure of the economy and of a firm operating in such an economy. Another illustration is the consideration of whether the close familial ties in a predominantly agricultural economy of the type to which the Philippines belongs introduce relevant considerations for a different approach in personnel relations and wage policy.

As the economy of a country develops, certain trends can be observed in the behavior of business managers. In fact, as industrialization proceeds and the emergence of a mass market economy occurs, a managerial class begins to develop, with its peculiar and distinguishable characteristics. At the turn of the century, American business literature reflected a type of businessman which was characterized by the Horatio Alger stories and by the "captains of industry" *a la Veblen*.⁶ To what extent these two characterizations may be true remains unsettled, but it is indicative of a changing managerial class that the Horatio Alger hero and the Veblenish captain are now being replaced by the organization man *a la Whyte* and the "pyramid climbers" of the Vance Packard variety.⁷

A developing economy may at the same time exhibit traditional inertia which makes the growth of a managerial class difficult. Yet, at some stage of development and industrialization, when the bonds of tradition begin to loosen and the marketing behavior and consumer attitudes are changing, one finds the emergence of an environment which presents more opportunities for entrepreneurial initiative and a greater degree of freedom for man-

⁶ *Vide* Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904).

⁷ These two "types" of business executives are described in William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man*, and in Vance Packard, *The Pyramid Climbers*.

agerial maneuver. Some economic historians have tended to think that the traditional landed aristocracy gradually gives place to a merchant class and then to an industrial class. During the process, when the dominant economic activity changes from agriculture to commerce and then to manufacturing, the quality of business management also gradually adapts itself to the changing socio-economic conditions.

Certain aspects of business practice may also be observed as country specifics. In the Philippines, a number of manufacturing firms still find it necessary to meet their payrolls by disbursing in cash instead of by check. Despite the greater efficiency and less risky procedure of paying by check, these firms find that their workers would prefer to have cash. As long as workers find it difficult, if not almost impossible, to use their paychecks in meeting daily consumption expenses, it is understandable why they would prefer being paid in cash. As long as financial practices have not developed to the point of widespread acceptance of checks, managements will have to concede to their workers' legitimate wishes.

In another area, we notice managements' preoccupation in discreet hiring and firing of employees. Quite often, it is necessary to exercise tactful handling of job-seekers who are armed with letters of recommendaion from powerful political figures. In discharging employees, management also encounters difficulties which are extra-managerial in nature, as for instance when the employees involved are protegees or relatives of influential personages. One may expect that as industrialization proceeds and a more crystalized behavior pattern develops, managerial behavior would be different from that observed at present in personnel relations.

In consumption attitudes, we notice variations from country to country. In highly urbanized countries, fresh food is often preferred to canned goods. Yet, it has been observed that in an island country like the Philippines where fresh food is more readily available, tinned meats and sardines are considered as more prestigious food items compared to fresh meat and fresh fish.

Based on the above considerations, it may be legitimately asked whether there is not a necessity to produce casebooks in Philippine business. In matters of substantive techniques of analysis it would appear on first thought that business skills are equally applicable and equally valid wherever a firm is located. But the cultural environment, the level of per capita income, and the financial institutions of an underdeveloped country and that of a highly industrialized country are sufficiently different to warrant a text concentrating on actual Philippine business problems. It remains to be seen whether the economic development theoretic assumptions of a dual economy and the condition of backwardness of a primary export economy actually require different approaches and

different solutions to business problems. We do not attempt to validate or invalidate these hypotheses here and now. The study of the firm in a developing country is still in the early stages of scholarly exploration. Any conclusions of a general theoretical nature must await further research.

A Philippine casebook would comprise business problems encountered in an economy which exhibits characteristics of underdevelopment, despite remarkable growth in recent decades. Our texts at present are mostly those used in American colleges, and cases are almost wholly those of U.S. firms. Despite the fact of close historical links, similarities in commercial law, and familiarity between the two peoples, still our students hesitate, unsure of themselves, wary of making wrong assumptions about American business customs and usage. It is for these reasons that "domestic" casebooks may be justified.

V. FROM THE MARKET INTO THE CLASSROOM. Earlier, we observed that the purpose of using business cases in instruction is to obtain realism by exposing students to actual problem situations based on what has transpired at the "market place" of commerce and industry.

In the writing of business cases, it is quite possible to disguise the identity of a firm, provided that such a disguise does not materially affect the subject matter calling for analysis and decision. For instance, the true geographic location of a firm may not be as presented in the case. Depending on the type of business, the substitution of the location of a firm between Cebu City, Davao City, Bacolod City and Zamboanga City may not be an important matter.

The historical time at which the problem occurred may also be disguised, provided that such timing does not materially influence the problem at hand. Problems arising in the personnel department of an industrial firm at one time may be disguised as having occurred one or two years before or after the actual date. The line of business may also be disguised, e.g., a firm that manufactures cosmetics may be disguised as a firm that manufactures similar consumer goods, such as toilet soap, if the problem presented is one concerning organization or structure, or advertising and sales promotion. But certainly, such a disguise would not be advisable if a case dealing with credit and finance of a heavy industry firm were disguised as that of a company producing foodstuffs. Combinations of the permissible disguises could be used freely provided that the changes and substitutions do not materially influence the central problem involved in the case at hand. For instance, it would be extremely unwise in a case dealing with export and import trade, to disguise the time such that the period of foreign exchange control was confused with the period of decontrol by the Central Bank of the Philippines.

Some business cases are written in the form of "synthetic" cases, resulting from a combination of factual developments in a number of firms or in one firm at various times. It is also possible to materially affect the nature of the problem simply by translating the time element, or by changing the geographic location or the product line, thus producing a business case describing a different situation. As long as the problem is realistic enough, the materially changed situation would still serve as good heuristic material.

Both in the analysis and in the writing of business cases one is not confined merely to textual presentation. Any presentation which tends to clarify or emphasize a given situation could be used to advantage. Graphic presentations, such as charts, graphs, organizational structures, advertising copies, maps, plant layouts, diagrams, pictures, blueprints, etc., are oftentimes clearer than a verbal rendering of the same facts. Statistical and quantitative data could be presented by means of tables, stock market quotation graphs, and mathematical equations. Documentation to increase the realism of the situation may include the use of financial statements, legal contracts, newspaper clippings, or written communications such as directives, correspondence and memoranda.

One should not, however, be over-reliant upon one form of presentation. In writing as well as in analyzing a business situation, a good balance should be struck between textual material, graphic material, statistical data, and documentation.

VI. THE TEACHING OF CASES. Just as the skill to study cases needs to be developed by students, the art of teaching business cases needs to be acquired by teachers. An introductory course in the case method presents a particularly difficult situation for the teacher. He would of course need a knowledge of specific functional fields, so as to obtain proficiency in problem analysis.

It is assumed that the student has read and covered thoroughly the usual substantive method of analysis and has at least a basic fund of technical knowledge. The student would be unable to approach the business problem unless he already knows the elements and principles involved in each functional field, be it in production, marketing, personnel, finance, or business law. In addition to textbooks as references, the student should be advised to read business periodicals and journals. In fact, certain articles pertaining to some firms which appear in business publications, as for instance, in *Business Week*, *Fortune*, or *The Economist* of London, are actually illustrative cases which serve to broaden the understanding and provide vicarious experience for students.

From current Philippine periodicals, there are a small number of publications which would serve the same purpose. Among the various publica-

tions may be mentioned the *Economic Monitor* and the *Financial Journal*.⁸ Special industry publications such as those of the Sugar Institute, the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, the Bureau of Forestry, Bureau of Fisheries, and so on, are likewise useful for particular industries. In addition to these, the magazine *Industrial Philippines* published by the Philippine Chamber of Industries also contains good current data. The *Journal* of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines contains articles of current interest. In so far as statistical and factual data are concerned, a good source is the *Statistical Bulletin* which is published quarterly by the Central Bank. In the banking field, the weekly *Central Bank News Digest* is indispensable. The Philippine Statistical Survey of Households is also a good source. The financial sections of most of the Manila papers contain articles on the more current developments.

For more theoretical studies, a student must be referred to the scholarly journals and business publications such as *Business Review*,⁹ the *Philippine Economic Journal*,¹⁰ the *Philippine Review of Business and Economics*,¹¹ the *Journal of Accountancy*, and others.

Sometimes, realism may be simulated in actual work through the use of role playing whenever a case lends itself to this. Such roles would involve either intra-organizational or inter-organizational interaction between various persons in a business. The use of role playing as a heuristic tool depends on the specific problem under consideration. It appears to be most suitable in personnel problems or in other functional problems in which the difficulty does not involve direct functional technicalities but rather involves the interaction of people in their functional performance.

All these methods are useful and all of them may be tried, depending upon circumstances. Some methods are more suitable than others, given the state of a student's business knowledge and given the particular problem under consideration.

But the significance of the pragmatic nature in managing a business enterprise should not be overlooked. This aspect dictates that the learning process and the teaching contents be as close as possible to business reality. In his day to day operations, the manager is confronted with the necessity to make decisions and to take actions based on available business data. Much of these business data and "facts" are unlike the experimental observations and results in the pure sciences. What are often taken as business facts actually involve judgments and selective choices before the facts are arrived at. For instance, what seems to be a piece of purely technical data,

⁸ This is a weekly published in Manila by the Fookien Times, Inc.

⁹ University of the East publication.

¹⁰ Published by the Philippine Economic Society.

¹¹ Of the College of Business Administration and the School of Economics, University of the Philippines.

the cost of living index, actually involves a large number of subjective actions taken by the statistician who works on the index. One of the major elements is that of assigning or imputing a specific relative weighting system to the various economic goods which go into the making up of the list of prices as the raw data for arriving at a single aggregate cost of living index figure. Family budgets and expenditure patterns are, of course, consulted for this purpose. But no sophistication of quantitative framework can completely eliminate qualitative judgment. The user of such data needs to be cautioned about their make-up and must decide on their reliability for his purposes. For the business executive, one of the often-used quantitative facts most impregnated with judgment is that of performance evaluation and rating of employees. There are deliberate efforts to try to attain more specific quantification in this area. But the elements of subjective judgment which go into performance evaluation and rating cannot be avoided. In using facts, it is for the business executive to be aware of the human elements and to decide when such influences are important for performing the correct evaluation, and when the subjective elements may be safely disregarded.

VII. AN APPRAISAL. As has been mentioned, one of the major advantages of the case method over that of programmed instruction or the lecture method is that, by the use of the problem approach, a certain degree of realism is approximated through the examination of situations which a businessman may normally be expected to find himself confronted with.

One instance is that, when a major unit of machinery is installed in a plant, all the many possible methods of depreciation of fixed assets are available from the accountant's handbook or from the notes taken by a student in class during a lecture covering the many methods of treating depreciation. But out of the many possible ways of recording the transaction concerned, management must decide which one is applicable. In the case method, it is assumed that the student has a good grounding in basic procedures and methods. But his skills in deciding which method is applicable must exhibit good judgment and awareness of the consequences of his decision. No handbook would be able to provide clear-cut answers to fit exactly the situation in which a business executive finds himself. An *executive* function must be performed, i.e., that of making a deliberate choice and taking a decision as to which procedure is most pertinent, given the surrounding circumstances. A handbook can enumerate a list of methods, but cannot provide a "correct" answer to every one of the multitude of combinations of factors in a specific situation.

Some unrealisms of the case method as used in class need to be mentioned. One limitation is that the environmental situation, as it is found in the normal operations of a businessman's day, cannot be exactly duplicated in class. While the student analyzes a case in a classroom where there is

little tension or in the quiet of a library or of his own home, the businessman, on the other hand, must often make choices while the telephones are ringing, while the incoming papers are piling up, and while the clock is ticking away.

Still another advantage which the student has over his businessman counterpart is that case facts are organized and presented with a high degree of clarity. Quite an amount of research normally goes into the writing of a case which is presented to a class in the proper style. Thus, the students have the convenience of information properly shifted for their purpose. It is true that sometimes a case writer may intentionally inject irrelevant materials to test the students' ability to differentiate between significant information and useless trivia. It is likewise true that a case may sometimes fail to present sufficient information. Cases of this nature are rather rare, however. The inclusion of extraneous matter is often to be discouraged, to avoid cluttering the casebook with unnecessary material. The businessman counterpart, on the other hand, often could not devote the time and attention for obtaining all the pertinent facts of the case. He certainly cannot do extensive "research" on every problem which he must deal with. Very often, he decides by intuition, sometimes by impulse.

It may also be pointed out that information costs money. One of the decisions which an executive must make very early in the evaluation stage is whether to expend resources to get more data and whether the pressure of time would permit that. Connected with this aspect is that of biased information. The facts as presented by different interested parties may differ from each other. A personnel manager trying to solve a labor dispute may have two sets of facts, perhaps more. Which set of facts could he rely upon? How could he tell that one source of information is more truthful than another? Before making a decision, he must be fully assured of the relative reliability of the information upon which he must make a decision and take action. Not only is this situation prevalent in industrial relations, but it may also be found in marketing research, in sales management and in investment project study. What is being pointed out here is that the information supplied to the decision maker must first be judged as to reliability and the presence or absence of intentional or unintentional bias.

Another important consideration is that the sequential nature of a firm in operation cannot be represented properly in class for heuristic purposes. The sequential occurrence of actions and feedbacks in which a continuity occurs in operations is absent in a clearly cut out case in class. In the sequential nature of events, indications of wrong judgment would be available and rewards of correct decisions would be forthcoming. With these signals, a new set of actions may be taken. But in classroom analysis this would not be possible. It is true that a continuity is attempted at and some feedbacks

are provided. Combinatorial and sequential programming of actions are possible to a limited extent. Still, the degree of emphasis in the combination of actions would not be as realistic as in actual operations.

One last element concerns the recognition of a problem situation. It is assumed that when a student is assigned a particular case, he is being asked to analyze a problem and to propose a program of action. This presumption would be seen as unrealistic when translated to the environment of operations. The "problem" may not be apparent in operations. At times, when a management begins to feel uncomfortable, it may call in an outside consultant, or begin with some "painful reappraisal." There are also instances when management becomes aware of the situation only when things have already gone too far for remedial action.

The business executive must be aware that many factors are involved in the present situation and some of these may bring about the emergence of other problems. He must also be aware that a single action taken to resolve a specific problem may have side effects and consequences, creating other difficulties in related areas, as a result of which the goal may be reached, but the effectivity reduced by undesirable but unavoidable counter-effects. This would tend to develop new problem situations in other areas.

Rigorous analysis and foresight must be exercised by the business executive with regard to his own action and the likely reactions of the people involved as a result of his operational decision. He must be able to rigorously analyze the likely countermoves as a result of his decision. Such countermoves can be expected not only from competitors. They may very well be expected from other departments in his own firm, from his subordinates, his suppliers or his customers.

These illustrations of the differences between a business problem presented in class and one encountered in an actual business environment are indications of the limitations as well as advantages of the case method. The case method affords training in decision-making, demands evaluation, and requires a choice of alternative executive actions. But all these real skills are invalidated if there is a lack of substantive knowledge and mastery of precise techniques. Quantitative procedures and historical knowledge must be present if decision-making is not to degenerate into guesswork, if evaluation is not to become inane, choice to turn into chance, and action into misadventure. One needs to guard against abusing the case method due to intellectual malaise, and against expecting positive results without the use of imagination, attention to detail, and above all, time and effort. This applies to students as it does, possibly even in greater measure, to teachers. For just as surely as a well-handled case encourages students to exert intellectual efforts, stimulating and challenging them to push the analysis to the nth degree, and in the process occasionally unveiling some much-hoped-for-

signs of originality, so does a poorly handled case discourage any show of brilliance and tempt the students to incompetence and mediocrity.

VIII. A POSTSCRIPT.¹² A logical extension of this "first appraisal" is to explore the students' viewpoint and their reactions to the case method, for after all, it is for them that the case method has been developed. This aspect was investigated by the present writer via a letter of inquiry to the MBA graduates of the University of the Philippines Cebu Graduate School.

Three points were raised in the letter:

1. Has the case method prepared the student in some significant way for tackling business situations in actual operations?
2. What would the student recommend, by way of modifications, to make the case method a more effective teaching tool for business students in the future?
3. How does the student rate the case method as a pedagogical tool, in contrast to other methods of business education?

A number of responses to the above questions were received and they pointed out a number of points worth consideration:

1. To question (1) some of the comments were:

"It has given the student ample insight into the importance of listing and evaluating all possible alternatives in the solution of business problems. After reading more than two hundred cases, the student gained some skill in the analysis of departmental problems which have company-wide implications, alternatives which sometimes come out the poorest in the long-run, and multifarious problems on a priority-ordered basis."

"Exposure to the case method has given the student a much more confident footing in tackling business situations in actual operations. It particularly helps the student to pause and think out problems before making decisions, and to go out systematically into objectives, available alternatives, and best solutions. Aside from methodology, the case method gives a broad view of different industries and companies; of the interdependence of the different departments of a business and the need for looking at the big picture; and of the utility of studying the experiences of other companies and industries."

2. The responses to question (2) run as follows:

"It appears that the shortcoming of some business planners, in spite of abundant internal and external data available to them, is their inability to use or understand quantitative analysis and relationships. This may well be the difficulty of some students of business administration, unless the cases

¹² This postscript was prompted by the comments of a reviewer of a first draft of this paper, whose view is well taken and resulted in the sounding off of student opinion.

are modified to place added emphasis on the use of quantitative information for decision-making.”

“In addition to possession of a college degree, prospective students should have at least one or two years of experience in an actual job.”

“Proper attention should be placed on seating arrangements in class, so that each participant in a case study can see every other participant without inconvenient changes of sitting or head positions. Of course, in bigger classes, it may perhaps be necessary to use some kind of amphitheatre arrangement, like that in the Harvard classrooms. The idea is to stimulate responses from participant to participant by placing them face to face. This way they would talk to each other and not to the professor. Also, their egos might be challenged and they may be inspired to talk by the fact that they can be seen by their classmates.”

“Why not make arrangements with companies to send their current problems to the college clearing house and have them studied by students? Or why not make arrangements with firms to allow an MBA student to observe a department head (for core subject students) or a member of the Board or the general manager (for graduating students)?”

3. In answer to question (3), the following opinions have been voiced:

“As a pedagogical tool, the case method is excellent, ‘for wisdom cannot be told’. Of course, it is taken for granted that one is dealing with mature and responsible students who have been indoctrinated in the case method and can be trusted to carry out faithfully the reading and research assignments without having to be tested by high school or even college systems of ‘recitation’. My present students are enthusiastic about the case method.”

“Business education through the case method approach, more than just providing the basic tools, is an effective medium of making clear how the various management functions—production, marketing, finance, etc.—interplay. This is a significant benefit of an exposure to actual business problems that may not be derived, as well, through other methods of business education.”

“The case method is the best method for graduate students and, possibly, senior undergraduate students. An ideal situation, of course, is to use the cases in an MBA class where the students graduated one or two years back (thus they still remember their fundamental courses) and have had business experience (are either employed or in business). Where the class is composed of ‘oldsters’ reentering school after an absence of ten or more years, then brief lectures (of six or more hours) on the fundamentals of particular subjects prior to handling cases will be helpful. The case method is suitable for undergraduates, provided they have had proper grounding in

basic courses such as economics, business mathematics, management principles, etc.”

The comment above came from MBA graduates who have subsequently been in business and/or teaching. The specific points raised should contribute to a careful searching by the academic community. The more general impressions and opinions quite clearly indicate a favorable response to the case method to which the respondents were exposed. Some of the respondents are in highly responsible positions in business and are prominent in their communities as well. Their opinions are well taken and are worth further consideration by all concerned in the case method of business education.

A number of uncertainties are entertained by those in the pedagogical profession who have not been exposed to or are not using the case method, and even by those who have been using it. These doubts concern, more or less, the following points:

Did the students benefit from the case method while in college?

In what particular respects and in what manner have they benefited from it, which would not be likely under the lecture system?

Do the students consider the case method really helpful in decision-making?

In order to appreciate the potential of case analysis, what adjustments do students have to make when they first encounter the case method?

Of these doubts the responses quoted above have given ample indications, and the specific and concrete suggestions are apropos. The value of the case method may then be judged favorably, at least for the purpose of a first appraisal of the use of the method for Philippine business students.