

# **Principle and Technique of Case Study Research**

## Abstract

This study consists of three components: (1) The Breadth Component, overviewing the nature of case study research, outlines the history of the case study method in business, starting from its introduction by the Harvard Business School in 1908; and reviews concepts, methods and criticism of case study as a research technique. Examples are quoted of case studies of contemporary organizations facing the challenges of the changing corporate world of today. Reference is made to a brief comparative study of entrepreneurship in the rural north east of Thailand. The application of the method to the study of information technology use in organizations is then introduced. A case study of the application of information technology by a contemporary Thai organization is proposed, with particular reference to the effect on productivity and profitability. (2) The Depth Component further explores information technology as a means to optimization of organizational performance. Case studies, principally of western organizations, while illustrating the gains to be had, reveal various problems that can beset the introduction of advanced information technology. However such studies as are available of organizations in Thailand suggest that the cultural background is rather favourable to the introduction of technological change. In all organizations studied, some aspects of performance were improved, but the overall effect on organizational effectiveness is more difficult to assess. Assessment of the effect on productivity depends on how productivity is defined. A value added concept of productivity has been suggested as most appropriate to information-handling work. Observations to date suggest that many organizations have not yet found the best way of using the new technology. (3) The Application Component describes an introductory case study of an organization comprising two closely related companies, Kang Yong Electric Co., Ltd. as manufacturers, and Kang Yong Watana Co., Ltd. as distributors, of consumer electric products under the Mitsubishi brandname. The introduction, in 1986, of transaction processing, office automation and management information systems by Kang Yong Electric Co., Ltd. was followed by a noticeable increase in labour productivity, in agreement with the personal opinion of informants. Productivity of Kang Yong Watana Co., Ltd., in terms of sales revenue generated per employee, seems mainly to reflect trends in the economic and business environment of Thailand. In general, the data are consistent with the hypothesis that the introduction of advanced information technology will be followed by increased organizational efficiency and productivity.