

## THE INFLUENCES OF JAVANESE CULTURE IN POWER OF MAKING DECISIONS IN INDONESIAN UNIVERSITIES: CASE STUDIES IN MM PROGRAMMES

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to explore the influence of Javanese cultural values in power of the processes of making decisions in the Indonesian university settings. The case-study method is used in this study. The choice of particular universities in Yogyakarta and Surakarta to be studied is based on a number of criteria, namely, location in central Java, accredited and non-accredited institutions, similarity of programmes and the year of foundation, and ease of access by this study, to obtain one-to-one interviews. The findings show that Javanese cultural values, including loyalty to the top level of the hierarchy, obedience to superiors and the desire for conflict avoidance are power to control the decision-making processes in the universities. Furthermore, the practice of using that power is maintained because of social acceptance. However, the findings do not represent a model of the healthy institution in which autonomy and empowerment are emphasized on.*

**Keywords:** *Javanese culture, founding fathers, loyalty, obedience, seniority, and case study*

### INTRODUCTION

The internal context of organizations significantly contributes on the sources and use of power in decision-making processes. Based on a study of the decision-making process in Canadian universities, Hardy (1990) indicated that the powerful individuals or groups in the decision-making processes were influenced by the established different traditions of the decision-making processes committed in the universities, rather than subject to the organisational hierarchies only. In line with that, a study in the longitudinal case studies of UK universities, Jarzabkowski (2005) reveals that the issue of distributing power in making decisions in organisations is not easily managed by formalisation of organisational structures, but

rather tends to follow the practices from the organisational environment accepted by members involved in making decisions. Simply put, the power distribution to making decisions are socially constructed by contextual values embedded in their environment. The influences of specific values embedding the organisational environment influence to the extent that the distribution of power in making decisions is negotiated among the participants involved, rather than referring to the established organisational structures.

Sagie & Aycan (2003) reveal that the use of power links with the influences of the national culture at the location of the organisations. The authors indicate that the paternalistic culture emphasising high in power dis-

tance and collectivism is frequently observed in most of the developing countries. In line with that study, Wang & Clegg (2002) revealed that Chinese managers invited less employee participation in decision-making than did Australian managers. Confucian values, in fact, influenced the Chinese managers in shaping the condition of less participation from their employees in the decision-making processes.

This study perceives that cultural preferences have been contributing in forming the uniqueness of how organizational decision-makings are established and maintained. Cultural preferences mean that values dominating and embedding in nations have strong influences in organizational making decisions. This study is in line with "high-context perspectives of organizations. High-context perspectives believe that organizations tend to retain their own unique characteristics that stem from cultural preferences and institutionalized practices (Child, 1981). Instead of applying universalized system, Child argues that substantial idea of organizational systems source from cultural, religious, and political matters. In particular, cultural theory mentions that behaviour and thinking within an organization are significantly driven by cultural values dominating in the environment. Then, cultural perspectives enable to distinguish management styles across nations and society. In particular, the dominating cultural values explicitly contribute on organization uniqueness. Briefly, the internal contexts embedding in the organisations can provide a contextual understanding of how the decision-making processes are performed, in terms of the effects on the involvement of the people.

To respond with the cultural preference-based processes of making decisions, this study aims to reveal the influence of Javanese cultural values as base for power of making decisions. In respect with the cultural preferences, this study considers that Javanese culture is a representative of the dominant Indo-

nesian cultural values permeating the Indonesian bureaucracy, government, and military (Dean, 2001; Perks & Sanderson, 2000). In addition, Java is the most populated island in Indonesia and the centre of the Indonesian national government.

In particular, this study endeavours to answer the following research question: "*how have power and cultural factors influenced decision-making in the Indonesian universities?*" Some previous studies have been revealing the internal context of a university in terms of the influences of decision-making processes (Hardy, 1990; Brown, 1998; Thomas, 2000). The issues of seniority, political behaviour, and tradition have been embedding in the processes of making decisions. Furthermore, Hardy (1990) argued that the top management in each university would have uniqueness of how to make decisions, because of their tradition, instead of hierarchy.

In line with the importance of "high perspective" of organizational practices in Asia, the benefit of this study is to contribute an understanding of the cultural influences of power in making decisions in Indonesia. In addition, this study is to provide insight that power in making organizational decisions in Asia can be subject to the cultural preferences compared with power in Western organizations. In the following section, this study elaborates the Javanese culture in relation power and its possible impact in making decisions. This study provides the rationale of using case-study method in this investigation. At the final section, this study describes and discusses the findings of this investigation in connection with the literature.

## LITERATURE STUDY

### **Beliefs in Javanese Culture: Harmony in Society**

Javanese society believes that individuals play a role as a harmonious part of the family group. Especially, to be Javanese means that

an individual should know and conform to his/her manners and place in either the family group or society (Geertz, 1961; Mulder, 1978). Living in the Javanese society should be characterised by 'rukun' (harmonious unity), which Mulder (1978) emphasises as follows:

*"The whole of society should be characterised by the spirit of rukun, but whereas its behavioural expression in relation to the supernatural and to superiors is respectful, polite, obedient, and distant, its expression in the community and among one's peer should be 'akrab' (intimate) as in a family, cosy, and 'kangen' (full of the feeling of belonging)."* (Mulder, 1978:39)

Rukun can be achieved with the belief that the person should put emphasis on the group interests instead of the interests of the individual. All expression of the individual's interests leading to conflicts or disagreement should be avoided. Unlike Western culture, which regards individualism and group belonging as mutually exclusive, most Javanese consider the two intimately related (Mulder, 1978). Therefore, the basic values of Javanese culture are the maintenance of social harmony (rukun) used as moral guidance for social interaction within both the family and the community, such as the workplace, schools, and political organisations (Geertz, 1961; Mulder, 1978; Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Suseno, 1998).

Furthermore, harmony is ensured by conformity to a social hierarchy. Hierarchy ensures that every person in society knows both their place and obligation in the social structure. In practice, the cultural values result in obedience to superiors (manut), generosity, conflict avoidance, understanding of others, and empathy. This is expressed in situations, such as cooperative harmony and decision by consensus (*musyawarah mufakat*) (Rademakers, 1998).

In relation to the decision-making, conflicts or disagreement among the people involved should be avoided, because it would

lead to disharmony in relationships. In practice, the consensus required a presence of the person perceived as more senior than the rest of the participants. The presence of the more senior person was perceived as the preferred way to resolve the different opinions.

Furthermore, Javanese society is strongly hierarchical, with what appear to be great power distances between each level within a social structure (Dean, 2001). Authority is connected to a person and characterised by a high level of centralisation of power in Indonesian society. This value can be traced back to social units, such as family, firm, or state, where authority is specific to a single person (Rademakers, 1998). In particular, Indonesian authority relations are characterised by paternalism or 'bapakism'. The paternalistic relationship between a superior and his or her subordinates resembles the relationship between a father and child (Sagie & Aycan, 2000). The term of 'bapakism' frequently used by Indonesians means that the 'bapak' (father) is the leader of a society and is expected to care for the needs of his followers who are called 'anak buah' (children). In return, the anak buah are expected to respect their 'bapak' without interfering with his power and influence in society. In Javanese families, but also in most other ethnic groups in Indonesia, the father or the male embodies the highest authority (Rademakers, 1998). In relation to decision-making in this case, obedience or loyalty to the senior male person is required in resolving that disagreement.

In fact, the respect of the *bapakism* dominating in the Javanese society links with patriarchy and the authoritarian style in decision-making. Patriarchy is a form of social organisation in which the male is the supreme authority and the highest-ranking member in the family, clan, and tribe (Lee, 2001). An authoritarian person is defined as one demanding total obedience and refusing to allow people freedom to act as they wish. This fact, however, can lead to the suggestion that the

senior persons in Javanese society would have positions of influence in leading the decision-making.

### Teaching of Javanese Values in Society

The Javanese prefer to identify themselves as members of their villages, or 'kampung' (Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Dean, 2001). Most Javanese villages are divided into smaller units known as either '*rukun kampung*' (village mutual assistance association) or '*rukun tetangga*' (neighbourhood association). '*Rukun tetangga*' and *rukun kampung* can be perceived as social systems sharing collective actions where the members participate in household rituals, such as '*arisan*' (rotating credit associations).

Furthermore, labelling the villages with the name of '*rukun*' addresses the aim of its establishment, namely to create a harmonious society (Mulder, 1978). Leading smaller units of a society is believed to enable leaders of the villages to manage the people. The leaders normally are individuals who are perceived as a senior person by the people in the village. The leaders are the persons who have lived in their village for a long time and are very well known to the people. The leaders' experience in dealing with any matters in their villages can be a reference in resolving for the people to choose them. The status of seniority then allows influencing the people to follow the leaders' preferences.

Importantly, teaching manners and values starts from the family level with the belief that a harmonious family is a building block for constructing a harmonious society. Parents begin teaching their children about the concepts of '*isin*' (shyness), '*wedi*' (fear), and '*sungkan*' (respectful politeness) as a foundation of building social relationships outside the family (Geertz, 1961; Suseno, 1988). The emphasis is on controlling natural expressions of feeling and emotion to the outer world. In general, Javanese children have to learn to control any expressive behaviour, even leading

to displaying a passive attitude, because they learn not to express any disagreement with others, especially older persons.

In brief, these explanations can shape a contextual understanding of Javanese society by focusing on three points which this investigation benefits from. Firstly, there exists firm loyalty to the hierarchical relationships within Javanese society. Secondly, the leadership criterion in Javanese society puts emphasis on the importance of seniority. Thirdly, the attitude of controlling individual expressive behaviour in social relationships, in particular behaviour leading to any disagreement with the senior persons is also given emphasis in Javanese society in order to facilitate harmony. In general, the concise review of Javanese society on a daily basis can construct specific beliefs and values shared among the members of organisations within the context of this investigation and influence on how they perform decision-making processes.

### The Influence of the Javanese Values: the Importance of Seniority Power

The seniority power produced a perception that the senior persons were more knowledgeable and experienced in decision-making (Sagie & Aycan, 2000). Influenced by obedience to the persons positioned on higher levels or to senior persons, the people allowed the senior persons to handle the decision making. That produced power emanating from the appreciation of their importance of what they had done in the foundation and the development of the institutions (Pfeffer, 1981). Pfeffer also adds that the senior individuals would have a good awareness of the political and cultural system in their organisations.

In respect of power-oriented culture values, a person's seniority means that their presence in the institution has to be respected regardless of their actual position in the institution (Capon, 2000). The persons succeeding them in the management of the institution appreciate their contribution enormously.

Importantly, the senior persons would not have exercised their power on a regular basis, because they are not positioned as the formal leader in terms of hierarchical aspects. To be powerful, in terms of seniority power, it is not necessary to hold decision-making authority or to have energetic force for daily decision-making, but rather to have status in the organisation (Jackson, 1980).

In particular, Hofstede (1997) added that hierarchical relationships are more readily observed in Asian cultures than in Western cultures. In practical terms, these social relationships will raise the issue of who is older and who is younger, who has a higher level of education, who has a lower level, who is in a higher economic position and who is lower. This kind of value is strongly embedded in the strictly hierarchical Javanese society, with what appears to be a great power distance between each level within a social structure (Dean, 2001). Hierarchy ensures that every person in society and in an organisation knows both their place and their obligations within the social structure.

### **An Example of the Javanese Culture's Power: the Indonesian Government**

In the late twentieth century, the political culture in the Indonesian government was dominated by paternalistic rule reflecting Javanese cultural values. The Javanese, the largest single ethnic group, filled - to a degree beyond their population ratio - the most important roles in government and the Indonesian armed national forces. The officers' corps was dominated by Javanese, partly as a result of Java's central role in the development of modern Indonesia.

Power in the Indonesian government has been exerted through a paternalistic bureaucratic state, where the ruler was the key to command and rewards. This power resembled the pattern of patron-client in which the patron was the '*bapak*' (father or elder). The '*bapak*' as a leader is expected to look after the mate-

rial, spiritual, and emotional need of each of his followers who are called '*anak buah*' (children). In return, the '*anak buah*' are expected to be at the *bapak*'s beck and call to pay deference (Jackson, 1980). Obedience to the ruler or the patron derives from the Javanese '*gustikawula*' (lord-subject) formulation, which describes man's relationship to God as well as the client's relationship to the ruler. As a result of this sort of relationship, benefits flow from the top hierarchy to the obedient. It underlines that in the relationships within the government open emotion is repressed, and any overt expression of disagreement with the plans of a superior derogated (Jackson, 1985). This kind of cultural relationships reflect an attitude of obedience - respect for seniors, conformity to hierarchical authority, and avoidance of disagreement (Sagie & Aycan, 2000).

Koentjaraningrat (1985), however, remarked that great reliance on, and respect for, seniors and superiors in the civil servant can weaken the sense of self-reliance. Obedience to superiors can lead to an unwillingness to take risk because those at a lower level in the hierarchy do not feel safe in acting without the support of other people, particularly acceptance from the senior persons with whom they can share responsibility on that action. Therefore, a centralistic power in command accentuates regional government programming.

Relationship culture within the Indonesian government, in particular the civil service, was also influenced by a condition where people on a lower level would not show any obvious expression of disagreement with the plans of a superior or a repression of open emotion (Jackson, 1980; Suseno, 1988). Aggressive actions seemed to be counter-productive for them. As a result, the desire to avoid personal friction can lead to a situation where the processes of policy-making were performed in one-way communication; the policy-makers produce such policies without self-correcting feedback from people at lower level who are

more passive, rather than taking initiative as evidenced in the above national programmes.

The long-established internal context, tradition, in the institutions effects on the practices of making decision as well. This matter is in line with Pettigrew (1985), who stated that the persons in organisations who understand fluently the political and cultural system in their organisations are well aware of dealing with their organisational change. This seems to highlight that those persons have been involved in, and have maintained, the distinguished internal practices, including decision-making processes in their organisations for a long time. It delivers distinguished context of the decision-making in the Indonesian government organization setting. The internal context of the government institutions becomes a clue, to some extent, to the institution's specific tradition in the processes of making decisions.

This study considers putting together the main tenets constructed from the influences of

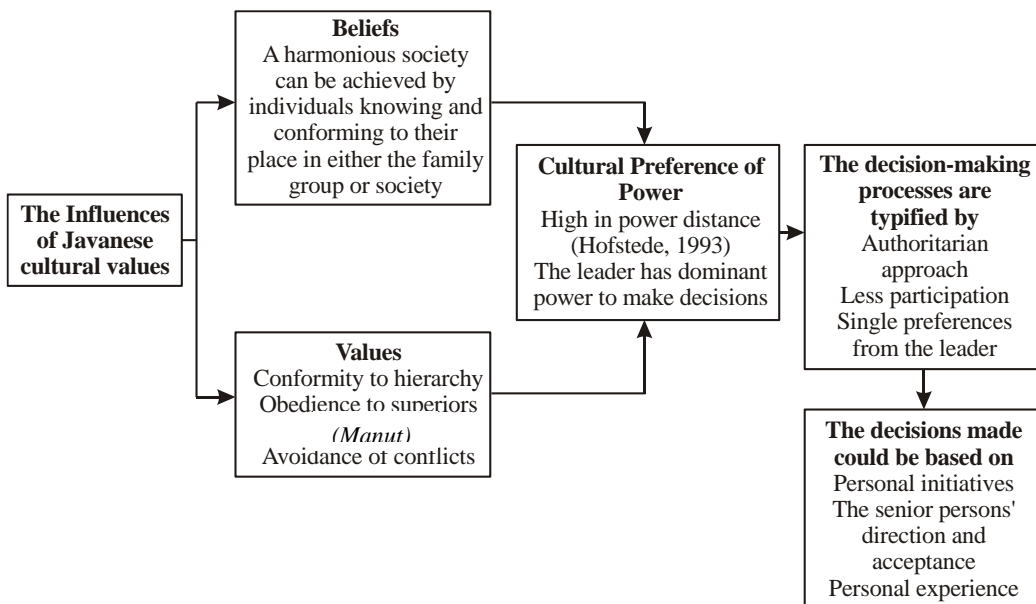
Javanese cultural values in the different areas, namely the villages and the civil services. Table 1 draws attention to matters of obedience to the seniority power or loyalty to the hierarchy in three different areas. Furthermore, table 1 provides insight that specific Javanese values have contribution to establish institutionalized practices in the Indonesian institutions. Moreover, it could have been maintained by members of the institutions, because of the cultural preferences of Javanese values.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**A Rationale of Using Case-Study Method**

This study is to explore distinguished contexts within the Indonesian universities, instead of making generalization. The use of case study method is in line with the related previous studies and are based on a motivation to explore the processes of making organisational decisions which are different in every organisation, even with every decision (e.g. Mintzberg *et al.* 1976; Cray *et al.* 1988; Nutt,

**Table 1.** The Influence of the Javanese Cultural Values on the Use of Power in the Processes of Decision-Making



1984). Those facts refer to Cray *et al.* (1988:14) stating that the attempt “to comprehend the decision-making process analytically is frustrated by the convolutions and variety of the process”.

This study presents some previous studies that explain the practices of making decisions in the differed organizations (see on Table 2). Those studies applied case study method to respond the differences in organizational contexts. Though, the studies have been using similar case study-method, the findings from the studies were not same in term of explaining how the decisions making were practices. However, there is no generalization in the findings, rather than to argue that decision makings in organization are unique, contextual based.

In line with high-context perspective as mentioned earlier, the organizational practices tend to be unique or be distinguished because beliefs and values shared by the members of the organization based on the cultural preferences (Child, 1981). Instead of applying universalized system, Child argues that substantial idea of organizational systems source from cultural, religious, and political matters. Hence, to identify the uniqueness of organizational practices, especially in process of making decisions requires case-study method.

Using case-study method is appropriate when a study wants to investigate “how” or “why” some social practices work (Yin, 2003). A question “how” contains interpretation that distinctive practices in society or organizations exist. As mentioned earlier, this study perceives that the practices of making decisions in organizations are contextual based. Therefore, this study is in line with the idea of using case-study method as this study aims to investigate how Javanese values influence the use of power in making decisions. Furthermore, this study adopts an explanatory case study includes cases ‘which are used to inform other forms of non-empirical research or directly to

explain the reasons for observed practices (Spicer, 1992:24).

### **Rationale for the Selected Case Study-Sites in this Study**

In relation with the Indonesian university setting, this study considers to select MM (Magister Manajemen) programmes in the four Indonesian universities which locate in Central Java (Surakarta and Yogyakarta) with some reasons showed at Table 3. The reasons are in line with several related previous studies, namely extreme location and polar types (Pettigrew, 1975; 1985), similarity in industry/environment & age (Eisenhardt, 1988; 1989), easy to access (Stake, 1995), sub-units of universities (Thomas, 2000). Extreme location and polar types address the origin of Javanese culture-based society which is Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

In particular, the reasons of easy to access is in line with that to search case study sites can be based on the availability of the people who are targeted as subjects of an investigation, because case study-method requires personal interactions with the subjects, such as to conduct interviews with them (Spicer, 1992).

In addition, the selected four institutions as targeted investigation are in line with the appropriate numbers of the case-sites as case study-method aims at investigating specific relevant phenomenon, instead of seeking generalization (Yin, 2003). Yin suggests that three to four sites are possible to be selected in terms of those selected sites represent distinct contextual-based cases.

### **Data Collection**

The primary data addresses the evidence of decision-making processes from the respondents interviewed because of be a main line of inquiry of this investigation. Data was collected in 2004-2006. In respect to qualitative interviewing, this study focuses on the semi-structured approach.

**Table 2.** Examples of Case Study based Research in the Investigation of Decision-Making

Elements of Research Method	Mintzberg, <i>et al.</i> (1976)	Nutt (1984)	Cray <i>et al.</i> (1988)	Hardy (1990)
Purpose	To develop a basic framework that describes unstructured, strategic decision processes	To study decision processes	To distinguish between the process of decision-making and the factors which influence that process	To investigate the link between the intra-organisational context, decision-making process and strategies outcome
Respondents	The completed 25 decision processes. These decisions include manufacturing firms, service firms and government institutions and agencies.	Seventy-eight case studies of decision making in service organisations (e.g., hospitals, governmental agencies, insurance companies, & consulting firms)	150 decisions from 30 British organisations including public and private organisations; manufacturing and service organisations.	Six universities in Canada
Unit of Analysis	Decisions	Decisions	Decisions	Decisions
Data Collection	Conduct interviews with the people involved in those processes. The data collected over the span of five years by more than 50 teams of four to five students taking courses in management policy at master's degree level. The groups were given a list of guiding questions (structured interviews).	Conduct interviews with the contact person who knew most about the details of the decision processes, so they could be interviewed in depth. The data was collected and compiled over a period of six years.	Do interviewing. The CEO nominated one or more key informants who were central to the decision processes. Data was collected over two or three years and this involved one team for single decision.	Conduct interviews with the parties, such as deans, senate boards, faculty associations, involving in the funding decisions as representatives of the decision teams; the semi-structured interviews were carried out between 1983 and 1987 (four years).
Data Analysis and Presentation	The structured interviews were divided into the basic structure of the strategic decision process. The students reported proceeded iteratively in three steps following its structure. Data was presented descriptively, based on the structure of the decision processes	Using a framework to classify decision activities including the stages of formulation, concept development, detailing, evaluation and implementation	The data was subjected to cluster analysis to group decisions.	It was not clear, but in general data was presented in descriptive form including universities, structures and profiles and the quotes of the interviewees.
Findings	The three phases of decision processes were identification, development and selection. This model described a decision flow in terms of delay, reconsiderations and interruptions	Research established types of decision-making as evaluative, historical model, off-the-shelf, search, and nova process. The study found that the normative method was applied in innovation decisions.	They developed aspects of the decision-making process, namely scrutiny, interaction, flow, centrality, gestalt and duration. The decision processes consisted of sporadic, fluid, and constricted.	Despite similar structures embedding in the universities, the individual universities applied different decision-making models, due to the different internal contexts of them, such as power and tradition in the universities



**Table 3.** Reasons for Choosing Case-Study Sites in this Study

Reasons for choosing the case study sites <sup>1</sup>	Explanation
Extreme location:	Jogjakarta and Surakarta as the origin or centre of Javanese society/culture
Status (polar types) :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nationally accredited: University D is located in Surakarta</li> <li>▪ Non-accredited: University A and University C, both are located in Jogjakarta, and University B is located in Surakarta</li> </ul>
Same industry/environment:	MM Programmes
Relative similar ages (the year of foundation):	Founded between 1999 and 2000
Easy to access:	The availability of the contact persons for approaching the leader of the selected institutions

Note: In respect to the MM programmes studied, the present author labels the institutions studied 'University' in order to preserve the anonymity of the institutions, such as University A and University B. Also, the use of the 'University' label is to associate the cases within the university settings.

This sort of interviews is equipped by a list of questions on fairly specific topics to be covered as an interview guide (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The semi-structured interviews are prepared to be flexible in terms of interviewees developing ideas and responding more widely to the issues raised by the researcher (Saunders *et al.* 2003; Denscombe, 2003). The availability of key persons is associated with the accessibility to interview them as to be the targeted respondents interviewed. The key persons here are those persons who knew most about the details of the decision making (Nutt, 1984) or who were involved in the decision making (Cray *et al.* 1988).

Furthermore, this study considers the use of coding and content analysis. Coding is used for the reduction or simplification of the interview data which is reduced to their bare bones

and stripped down to a simple general form. Importantly, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) underline that the base for coding is on this study's theoretical or conceptual framework – coding data according to key concepts and theoretical ideas. Meanwhile, this study use content analysis as an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that emphasise the role of an investigator in the construction of meaning of and in texts (Bryman & Bell, 2003:195).

### **Basis for the Development of the Interview Subjects**

The development of the interview subjects is based on the theoretical themes of the involvement of people in the decision-making processes in respect with the use of power resulting from cultural influences as presented at Table 4.

<sup>1</sup> The reasons are in line with several related previous studies, namely extreme location and status (polar types) (Pettigrew, 1975; 1985), same industry/environment and age (Eisenhardt, 1988; 1989), easy to access (Stake, 1995), and sub-university (Thomas, 2000)

**Table 4.** Theoretical Theme of the Involvement of People in Making Decisions in terms of Using Power (Cultural Influences)

Theoretical Themes of Decision-Making Processes	The Cultural Processes (Cultural Influences)
A degree of participation (Power distribution)	Less participation in making a decision; high in power distance (e.g. Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Sagie & Aycan, 2000)
Presence of potential disagreement	Disagreement is controlled or conflict avoided (Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Rademakers, 1998; Pun <i>et al.</i> 2001)
Dominant persons in decision-making processes	Dominant persons exist due to high power distance (e.g. Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Sagie & Aycan, 2000) or the importance of seniority (Dean, 2001)
Specific actions in relation to the use of power	Authoritarian style, single preferences to resolve disagreement, centralised power to make decision (Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Rademakers, 1998; Pun <i>et al.</i> 2001)
Factors influencing the use of power	The cultural influences: such as obedience to superior, loyalty to hierarchy, importance of seniority power, and male dominance (e.g. Sagie & Aycan, 2000, Dean, 2001; Rademakers, 1998); social acceptance and norms (Handy, 1997; Pfeffer, 1981)
Source of power	Source of seniority power: the length of services, age, sex, status/title, expertise (experience), and structural positions (Capon, 2000; Dean, 2001)

### Stages of this Investigation

Dealing with the execution of the case study research, this study requires specific rigorous steps to reach a level at which the leaders in the targeted institutions will provide acceptance for this study. This investigation was performed through three stages namely the approaching stage, the introductory stage, and the interview stage (see Table 5).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A Brief Profile of the MM Programmes in the Cases

Table 6 shows that the majority of MM's in those institutions were not accredited yet. All MM management in the cases studied embedded in the hierarchy of postgraduate programmes led by a director and had the differed composition of the individual MM management.

In general, the majority of the decisions perceived as 'tactical' were aimed at making an immediate response to the local competition in order to settle firmly in the long-established "MM" market. The people in those institutions made decisions which resulted in incremental changes from the existing programmes.

### Dominant Persons and Sources of Power

In general, all cases confirm that the distribution of power in making the decisions was centralised to the particular individuals at the top levels in the institutions, rather than being shared among all the members of the institutions (Hofstede, 1990; Sagie & Aycan, 2000). Importantly, that situation was effective in the particular cases, because of social acceptance of their influences in that respect or because the people were aware of their powerful roles in that matter. There was a social acceptance that their senior colleagues could take control

of the decision-making processes. Therefore, they followed the practices of the decision-making committed by the senior persons.

The following Table 8 shows that sources of power of dominant persons include holding a top position in the hierarchy, possessing more experience, being founding fathers, and having a higher academic level. These sources of power can be associated with seniority power (Sagie & Aycan, 2000; Capon, 2000; Dean, 2001). Seniority produces power emanating from the appreciation of their practical experience in managing the institutions over

time. With regard to seniority power of founders, power can be produced from their importance of what they did in founding and developing the institutions (Pfeffer, 1981). Their seniority means that their presence in the institutions has to be recognised regardless of their actual positions in the institutions. The findings from the cases revealed that the presence of seniority power in the programmes stemmed from the time those individuals were involved in the management of the Faculty of Economics, ever since the foundation of their universities.

**Table 5.** Stages in this Investigation

The Stages	The Goals	The Strategies Performed
Approaching	To get appointments with the leaders in the institutions	Seek the specific individuals who have a relationship with the leaders in the institution selected
Introductory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being granted access to the institutions;</li> <li>2. Getting a brief of decisions completed;</li> <li>3. Recommendations about the specific decisions as subjects of this investigation;</li> <li>4. Confirmation about the availability of the key persons in those decisions.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Present a letter of introduction</li> <li>2. Present a list of the decisions</li> </ol>
Interviews	To collect information as targeted from the research objectives	A list of questions for conducting semi-structured interviews

**Table 6.** A Brief Profile of the MM Programmes in the Cases

Profile	University A	University B	University C	University D
Established (year)	2000	2000	2001	1999
Status	Not accredited yet	Not accredited yet	Not accredited yet	Accredited
The management of the MM Program	Program Director and Secretary	Program Director and Secretary	Program Director and Secretaries for Finance and Academic and Development committee	Program Director and Secretary
Classes offered	Two Regulars	Regular and Weekend	Regular and Weekend	Regular, Weekend and Special
Lecturers: Full-Time (FT) Part-Time (PT)	15 24	58 4	24 23	9 11

**Table 7.** A Highlight of the Decisions Investigated in all the Cases

	University A	University B	University C	University D
The Decisions	To set up premium classes by recruiting graduates with outstanding performance	Launching regular classes in after two years of running weekend classes	To build cooperation with some institutions to recruit more students	To restructure the MM Programme under the Postgraduate Office
The Reasons	To focus on the development of the existing programs with enhanced quality	To concentrate on the segment which the major competitor was not focusing	Chances to recruit from the local market is limited	To control and to achieve efficiency in its operation
The Information on which the decision was based	The direction from the postgraduate director and the board of Foundation	Based on the experiences from the vice director	The secretary's relationships with the leaders in local governments and the alumni	By looking at other similar programs

**Table 8.** Dominant Persons and Sources of Power in all the Cases

The Cases	Dominant Persons (senior persons)	Sources of Seniority Power
University A	The senior persons on the board of the Foundation (or the development committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Top position in University A's hierarchy</li> <li>▪ Founder of University A, including MM programmes</li> </ul>
University B	The MM secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A single experienced person required for making a quick decision</li> <li>▪ Higher academic level compared to his colleague (the MM director)</li> </ul>
University C	The MM secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has more experience related to the decision</li> <li>▪ Senior persons in terms of his length of service and founders of the faculty of economics and MM programme</li> </ul>
University D	The Postgraduate director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Top position in the hierarchy of the postgraduate programmes;</li> <li>▪ Founder of the MM programme; former MM director</li> <li>▪ Former vice rector of University D, before launching the MM programme</li> </ul>

For example, in University A, it was clear that people in the board of the foundation or development committee were more senior than the individuals positioned as the MM Program Director and the postgraduate secretary as revealed by the postgraduate secretary as follows:

*“The committee consisted of the people who established University A. Those people have been involved since the school was firstly run. Their positions in the university were important, in particular in making the decisions. People in the university were aware of it.”*

Seniority power had been held already by the people in the development committee in the decision-making processes since University A was established. It allows building conformity to the hierarchy in dealing with the decision-making.

In particular, the case of University D revealed that the postgraduate director already had a good awareness of handling the decision in terms of approaching personally the rector of University D and being the important persons helping in accelerating the decision-making processes. This situation can be associated with the individual understanding of the cultural system in University D when dealing with decision-making (Pettigrew, 1985).

In addition, the relationship with influential persons, such as the rector, produced prestige power or status for the postgraduate director in the managerial elite. Finkelstein (1992) stated that individuals' standing in the 'managerial elite' sends out a powerful message to others about their personal importance in the organisation. In the case of University D, the postgraduate director was grouped into the inner circle of the top level in University D, because of being the former vice rector. Contact with the rector was personal, rather than formal, because a personal relationship had been formed in the past.

In brief, all the cases show that the power structure was dominant in setting up the decision-making processes throughout all the cases. The power structure for all the cases was derived from being the founders of the institutions and the programmes, their experience in a variety of the hierarchies, their experience in handling the particular subject of the decision.

### **The Purposes of the Seniority Power in Making Decisions**

The evidence above gives rise to cultural influences in the decision-making processes throughout all the cases. Table 9 shows the

description of the actions executed by the dominant persons in the decision-making processes. The actions stand as forms of controlling the decision-making limiting power to the other participants in making the final decisions. The evidence underlines those influences of Javanese values present in the processes of making the decisions. Obedience to the concept of seniority power, or loyalty to the senior person higher in the hierarchy, influences the use of the authoritarian approach in decision-making processes.

According to Geertz (1961) and Koentjaraningrat (1985), the main tenet of Javanese values is the maintenance of social harmony. That situation can be achieved through conformity to a social hierarchy. It means that each Javanese individual has to acknowledge his or her place and obligation in the social structure. In respect to the importance of seniority power, people lower in the hierarchy have to show obedience to those higher in the hierarchy (*manut*) and to control individual expression leading to disagreement with the senior persons.

Drawing upon the cultural influences embedding in all the cases, table 9 briefly describes how high power distance and collectivism represent the dimensions of the organisational culture in all the institutions addressed. This fact is relevant with a claim that Indonesian society is characterised by high power distance and high collectivism (Hofstede, 1993), in particular because of the values accepted by Javanese society. The society believes that social harmony can be achieved by its members acknowledging their places and obligations in the social structure (Koentjaraningrat, 1985). Then, the attitude to be committed in order to achieve realise these beliefs is based on the values and norms of conformity to the hierarchy, obedience to superiors, and conflict avoidance. With regard to the organisational culture embedding the decision-making processes in all the cases, Table 10 shows some of the respondents' experi-

**Table 9.** The Forms of Power used by the Dominant Persons in relation to Cultural Influences

Cases	The Forms of Power Use by the Dominant Persons	Cultural Influences
University A	Setting up the direction of the decision  Established the practices committed since the MM programme of University A was founded	Obedience to the hierarchy or the senior persons and social acceptance from people throughout the university in terms of the practices committed as they were perceived as the founders of the university
University B	Individual decision-making	Avoidance of conflicts and tolerance given in order to facilitate individual decision-making, because of having the distinct experience in relation to the decision and the former vice director
University C	Single preference in making the decision;  Single preferences, if there was disagreement	Obedience to the senior persons, due to seniority in relation to more experience in the subject of the decisions, practical experience in leading the institutions, as the founder
University D	Deploying the authority in making the final decision order to resolve the disagreement;  Making personal approaches to the rector in accelerating the decision-making	Avoiding conflicts with senior persons from the other faculties

ences from all the cases addressing the influence of Javanese cultural values in term of power.

#### **The Direction of the Decision-Making Processes throughout all the Cases**

It is clear that the factors influencing the use of power, the decisions made in response to the local competition are based on cultural influences, namely obedience to superiors, loyalty to the hierarchy, and a commitment to conflict avoidance as summarized in Table 11. In addition, seniority power in all the cases has its roots in personal characteristics, such as title, status, and length of service in the institutions. Then, social acceptance of seniority power can make available opportunities for the senior person to build power structures in the

institutions (Capon, 2000). In addition, the limited distribution of power is also aimed at accelerating the decision-making processes.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The findings show that Javanese cultural values, including loyalty to the top level of the hierarchy, obedience to superiors and the desire for conflict avoidance are power to control the decision-making processes in the universities. Seniority is not only linking with the hierarchal positions at the programs, but also being the founding fathers of the programs and having the networking with the long-established and well-known universities in Indonesia especially. Emphasizing individual preferences and tactical decisions highlights the Javanese influences of power in decision-

**Table 10.** The Respondents' Experience Representing the Cultural Influences Embedded in all the Cases

The Particular Cultural Values	The Respondents' Experience
Conformity to Hierarchy	University A The postgraduate secretary experienced that the senior persons on the Board of the Foundation have authority to control the decision-making processes; "If there were any important decision, we would propose it, then they decided whether our idea was relevant or not for this institution..."
Obedience to superior ( <i>manut</i> )	University C The MM program director admitted that she followed the preferences of her senior colleagues during the decision-making processes, and even tried not to argue with them "I recognised that people around me have more experience and a higher academic level, are more senior, and I had to maintain good relationships with them. Their ideas, references, and even recommendations were important for our decision."
A Desire for Conflict Avoidance	University B The MM program director explained about the purpose of having a small management team during his period: "Since this management was a small team, tendency to conflict was less, even nothing. The differences regarding that matter between us were handled easily." University C The MM secretary claimed that he had the role to control the emergence of disagreement during the decision-making "The differences were there, but I had to manage. So, we could avoid disagreement. Until now, at our level, there were no conflicts. I just controlled and minimised it." University D The postgraduate director tried to resolve the disagreement by the professors from the oldest faculty in the institution by taking an action individually, as the MM program director revealed "...the director of the postgraduate programmes set up a standardisation of the teaching fees for all the Master's programmes. They agreed and were satisfied."

making processes. Furthermore, these practices are maintained because of social acceptance. However, the findings do not represent a model of a healthy institution in which autonomy and empowerment are emphasized on. The directors should have power to impose shared governance which the shared responsibility and authority has to be equally delegated within the management structures.

The results from this study contribute to the aspect of originality of the contextual research in the subject of organisational decision-making, in terms of the cultural influences –specific to Javanese values- in obtaining and using power in the decision-making in Indonesian MM programmes. The findings also underline that the matters of power in

decision-making in the universities can be subject to the internal context of the organisations compared with the studies of decision-making in Western organisations. The distribution of power for decision-making can be negotiated by them following the particular practices accepted by their environment. Hence, it can provide a justification that the cultural values preferences influence the matters of power in the decision-making processes as shown throughout all the cases. The finding underlines that the internal context of the MM programs can be constructed by the influence of Javanese values, namely, conformity to hierarchy, obedience to superiors (*manut*), and avoidance of conflicts seniority. For the future research, those values should be examined in

**Table 11.** The Emphasis of the Influences of Javanese Culture in Power of the Decision-Making Processes in all the Cases

The Themes of Involvement of People	General Facts in all the Cases	The Cultural Processes (Cultural Influences)
A degree of participation (Power distribution)	Limited (Emphasise on Cultural Influences)	Less participation in making a decision; high in power distance (e.g. Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Sagie & Aycan, 2000)
Presence of potential disagreement	Potential disagreement can be controlled (Emphasise on Cultural Influences)	Disagreement is controlled, or avoidance of conflict (Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Rademakers, 1998; Pun <i>et al.</i> 2001)
Dominant persons in decision-making processes	Dominant persons were the senior persons (Emphasise on Cultural Influences)	Dominant persons are present due to high power distance (e.g. Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Sagie & Aycan, 2000) or the importance of seniority (Dean, 2001)
Specific actions of using power	Authoritarian style, single preferences, less participation (Emphasise on Cultural Influences)	Authoritarian style, single preferences to resolve disagreement, centralised power to make decision (Hofstede, 1993, 1997; Rademakers, 1998; Pun <i>et al.</i> 2001)
Factors influencing the use of power	Obedience to the senior persons, loyalty to the hierarchy and the desire for avoidance of conflicts (Emphasise on Cultural Influences)	Cultural influences: such as obedience to superiors, loyalty to hierarchy, importance of seniority power, and male dominance (e.g. Sagie & Aycan, 2000; Dean, 2001; Rademakers, 1998); social acceptance and norms (Handy, 1997; Pfeffer, 1981)
Source of power	Seniority power in terms of top positions, experience, founders (Emphasise on Cultural Influences)	Source of seniority power: the length of service, age, sex, status/title, expertise (experience), and structural positions (Capon, 2000; Dean, 2001)

the population of the MM Programmes in order to be able to justify a model of the decision-making processes at the institutions.

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