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THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF AN
INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Educational Administration

Massey University
Palmerston North
New Zealand

RAHMAT
2001
I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation, or report submitted to this university or any other institutions for a degree, diploma or any other qualifications.

RAHMAT
ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research aims to describe and analyse the current characteristics of organisational culture at the Nusantara College, one of the higher education institutions for Indonesian civil service. The research employed a qualitative case study as its method using three data collection techniques, namely, semi-structured interviews, participant observations and document analysis. This research applied an analytical framework from previous studies in analysing organisational culture in which the analysis focused on the tangible aspects of culture: artefacts, behavioural and verbal manifestations, and intangible aspects of cultural beliefs and values.

The findings from this study demonstrated the distinct cultural characteristics of the college culture and discovered main cultural concepts that are generated from the artefacts, behaviour and verbal manifestations, and cultural beliefs and values. Further analysis on the relationships among these cultural concepts revealed that the current organisational culture of the college was characterised as having three cultures that are operating simultaneously.

The first was the familial culture that signified the familial values and practices among the members of the college. The culture was demonstrated in the behaviour of treating the colleagues as extended family members where they helped and assisted each other in carrying out their tasks. The second was the scholarly culture, which perpetuated academic values and practices among the members. The idea of pursuing knowledge through research and teaching, facilitating students' learning, and practising honesty, objectivity and integrity were reflected in the academic events and activities of the college. The third was the bureaucratic culture that manifested in the structural values and practices among the members. The culture was represented in the practice of top-down decision-making processes, centralised career promotion, and giving much power and authority for senior managers.

The findings of the research also revealed that these three cultures were the result of the interaction with the college's broader cultural setting. It was observed that the familial culture was the influence of the collectivist culture of Indonesian society. The scholarly culture stemmed from the role of the college as an academic institution, whereas the bureaucratic culture was the impact from the working culture of the government institutions.

With the three cultures operating at the same time, it was noted that the college members faced working dilemma and conflicts in their operations. The scholarly values and practices, for instance, sometimes contradicted the bureaucratic culture. To overcome the problems, this study suggested the college leaders to provide a clear priority on which culture the members should operate. As the college's vision was to provide high quality teaching, learning and research, it was suggested that the college should prioritise coordinated actions to strengthen scholarly culture among the members.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alhamdulillah, Praise is due to Allah, The Lord of the worlds, who has given me strength and health in my life. Peace and blessings of Allah are due to Muhammad, His messenger and his infallible household.

This thesis would not have been completed without a lot of support and cooperation from a number of people and I would like to acknowledge my gratitude for their contributions.

I would like to first thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade that has provided me with the NZODA scholarship to study at Massey University. My gratitude goes to Mr. Charles Chua, a Massey liaison officer, who has given me continual support during my study.

To Associate Professor Wayne L. Edwards, my first supervisor, I would like to convey my sincere thanks for the academic guidance and supervision, unrelenting support and encouragement. His own research and deep knowledge of the topic of school culture has been invaluable to guide me completing the thesis. Here I must also thank Dr. John O'Neill, my second supervisor, for his invaluable advice and assistance during my study, and especially for his patience in correcting my language mistakes in my thesis.

To Ibu Dra. Elis Kantiningsih M.Si, I would like to thank her for giving me a two-year leave to study. To the managers and colleagues at the Nusantara College in which this study was undertaken, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation. They talked so openly and in considerable detail to describe their experiences, perceptions and opinions concerning the culture of the college. To Dra JatJat W, MagRerPubl., Dra Endang W, M.Si., Drs. Dedy M, M.Si, Teh Dina, and Kang Eris, thanks for your support during the research. To Pak Usdia and friends, thanks for providing me with necessary equipment to document the data.
To my friends in the international students education group and especially to Dr. Drummond, I thank them for their support (for solving both the administrative and practical problems). I also would like to thank “my third supervisor”, Edi “Esha” Suharto, who has given me inspiration and encouragement, and all the Indonesian students society members at Massey whom I cannot mention individually.

Finally, to my parents and family, I dedicate this thesis. My parents, Ibunda Ruki and Ayahanda Suparman, have been a source of strength and unquestioning support throughout my life. They have always believed in me and pushed me to achieve what I am capable of. To my brothers, uncles and aunties, I thank them for their invaluable support. To my wife, Iin Indrawati, in particular, I present this thesis as but a small token in return for your understanding, infinite patience, and relentless support while your husband was away studying. To my son, Raihan Imaduddin, I want to ask for forgiveness for not being with you to play or read storybooks for almost two years. This thesis will “tell” you why when you are grown up.
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