The Influence of Culture in the International Business Decision-making Process

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Abstract
Organizational culture and organisational political behaviours are the unavoidable part of a company which has a direct impact on its decision making. The purpose of this paper aims to understand the influence of culture and organisational political behaviour in making a decision on going internationalisation of the Chinese company. Through reviewing the cultural literature, the researcher found the interrelation between culture and political behaviour in an organization. The authors then focus on three factors of political behaviour – investment, alternatives and trust – to study their influence in the decision-making process. We used qualitative research approach under which we made in-depth interview to collect the empirical data. These empirical data were analysed using content analysis method. Our findings show that both organisational culture and organisational political behaviour have a direct influence on the decision making of the company. Specifically, political factors like investment, alternatives and trust influence in the decision making of a company. The firm should consider those factors seriously to have a positive influence in its decision-making process.
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1. Introduction

In this section, we present the theory of background of our topic including the purpose of our study. This is followed by the key research question based on which we have developed our literature review and further activities. We have also included methodology in this section which follows after key research question.

1.1 Theoretical Background and Purpose

Conflicts and competitions between the desires and interests of different departments, teams and individuals are frequent in an organisation (Kinicki, 2008). To enjoy the facilities and resources of the organisation, people attempt to secure power by influencing higher level employee and try to accomplish the valuable ends (Zaleznik and Kets, 1985). Such political activities are focused more on an individuals and group interests rather than the interest of an organisation and are practised informally in an organisation (Farrell & Petersen, 1982). Hence, an organisation cannot escape from such activities (Kakabadse, 1983) making it prevalent in an organisation (Riege, 2005).

Gove (2011) described organisational politics as a ‘sinister web’ and ‘the foe’ that hides below the surface of most workplaces. He mentions that such activities can have a negative impact on an organisation as it damages employee morale, and wastes organisation’s time and resources. Besides, this also influences the strategic decision making of the organisation (Elbanna, Thanos, & Papadakis, 2014). According to the author, such activities get prominent when decision-making is uncertain, or crisis motivates decision. Also, since decision-making is a power game over the control of organisational resources (Sykianakis, & Bellas, 2011), employees try to influence it using different tactics. Scholars like Elbanna et al., Walter et al., (2012) argued that political behaviour adversely impact an organisation’s strategic decision making because it obstructs the information flow and distracts managers from organisational goals.

The political behaviour in an organisation is directly influenced by the organisational culture (Sonaike, 2013). Every organisation has their own culture (Sheridan, 1992) which influence the attitude of the employee of the organisations (Siehl and Martin, 1990). Besides, the culture of an organisation also impacts on employee-related variables like
satisfaction, commitment, cohesion (Daulatrum B. Lund, 2003). Such environment in an organisation created by its culture excites the employee to practice different political activities.

So, the primary purpose of this study is to understand how the political behaviour in the company based in China is influencing in their strategic decision making. Hence, this study first reviews the literature on the relevant topics. The empirical data collected through the interviews are then analysed, and finally, the conclusion is made including limitations and future research.

1.2. Key Research Question

Nowadays, more and more companies want to develop international business to extend their market. Every country has their national culture that influences the organisational culture of local companies. At the same time, the decision-making process is the biggest problem for these company, because these companies must face that different culture influence in their decision-making process. Moreover, some researchers stated that every organisation has their own culture (Sheridan, 1992) that eventually impact in the attitude of the employee (Siehl and Martin, 1990) resulting to the influence in organisational political behaviour (Sonaike, 2013).

China has one of the biggest markets in the world. There are some reasons why the researchers choose Chinese company to research. First, although China is considered a “world factory,” only a few manufacturing strategy studies have been conducted in China (Zhao et al. 2006, Li et al. 2010). The importance of “Made in China” makes it more important to understand more about what happened (Li et al. 2011). Second, more and more multinational companies have already transferred or transferred the manufacturing sector to emerging economies such as China (Hahn and Bunyaratavej 2010). Raising awareness of China has significant practical implications for its business in China (Child and Tse, 2001). Finally, China's experience can reveal other emerging economies (Su et al. 2009).

On the other hand, China, placed in high-power distance country with the score of 80 in the power-distance score (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Crutis et al., 2012), has the hierarchical business setting in the companies. Furthermore, there is a clear distinction between positions with specific roles and responsibilities. The decision
making is confined to high-level management leaving less room for the involvement of lower or middle-level staffs. Thus, we choose China to study the influence of organisational political behaviour in the decision making of the company having the hierarchical business setting. The research questions for our study are listed below:

*RQ1: How culture influence in the international business decision making of the Chinese company?*

*RQ2: How organisational political behaviour influence in the international business decision making of the Chinese company?*

1.3. **Methodology**

This study is done to understand the influence of organizational culture and organizational political behaviour in the decision-making process. Hence, we have used qualitative research approach, under which constructionist research strategy has been used.

To find the answer to our research question, we collect data through in-depth interview, which is semi-structured in nature. We interview four personnel from the company located in China. As per the availability of interviewees, we conduct interview either meeting in person or through social media such as Skype or WeChat. The primary data collected through the interview is then analysed using content analysis approach.

During this whole process, we comply our every research activity with the research ethics. First of all, we interview only the interested interviewees for whom we brief about the interview and our study background beforehand. Moreover, we respect the confidentiality of the interviewee; the information is used solely in research work. At the same time, we respect the privacy and anonymity of the interviewees by not publishing his/her personal information along with other information that leaves them in a difficult situation.
2. Literature Review

In this section, the literature review focus on political behaviour and Chinese organisational culture that are present in the organisation. Here, we briefly discussed the organisational political behaviour. It is followed by the influence of organisational culture on the political behaviour of an organisation. Then, we made our study more specific to Chinese companies’ political behaviour and decision-making process.

2.1. Political Behaviour in Organization

The everyday functioning of an organisation is influenced by the issue of power and politics within the organisation (Bhatnagar, 1992). The feud among the key individuals, major cliques, and different departments in an organisation is common which is focused on interpreting the goals of the organisation, control over the organisational resources and opportunities to maximise their power in the organisation (Bhatnagar, 1992).

Scholars have defined the organisational political behaviour in a different language. However, they have a similar perspective on it. Farrell & Petersen (1982) defined political behaviours in organisations as officially not approved activities that influence advantages and disadvantages' distributions within the organisation. In the similar line, Valle and Perrewe (2000) defined political behaviour as a practice of tactical influence in an organisation which is strategically goal oriented, rational, conscious, designed to promote their interests, whether sacrifice or support the interests of others. Similarly, Kapoutsis (2016) defines it as intentional acts like influence tactics, self-presentation, impressing management to produce desired outcomes which are otherwise unfeasible. From the above definition, we can know that political behaviour is an inseparable part of the organisation which influence the different aspects of the organisation. However, in contrast to the general view, organisational political behaviour need not necessarily carry negative connotations.

Organizational politics have been known to turn friends to foes and in the worst case, into the permanent enemy, and it causes serious disaffection between teams (MSG, 2012). However, it is not the case always. According to Morgan (1997) and Sheard & Kakabadse (2011), organisational politics are essential and necessary part of an organisation because they provide an opportunity for the individuals to settle their disagreements. This also helps to minimise the ambiguities present in the workplaces and provide direction to the organisational phenomenon where uncertainty exists (Ammeter et al., 2002). Bolander
(2011) considered this as the oil of an organisation which lubricates its internal gears. Henisz and Zelner (2010) support Bolander saying that organisational politics is a source of competitive advantage and means of avoiding losses for a company. The important thing for a company is to secure the appropriate level of lubrication (Bolander, 2011).

Some studies have been done on the topic from different angles. For instances, Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Scheneck and Pennings (1971) and Astley & Sachdeva (1984) made their study from the perspective of structural property of units and subunits within the organisation. They talked about the underlying sources of organisations like hierarchical position, control of critical resources, the centrality of location (Bhatnagar, 1992).


Similarly, George & Jones (2002) classified political behaviour into functional and dysfunctional. For example, forming coalitions with managers from the interest of an organisation (March, 1962; Vrendenburgh & Maurer, 1984), supporting in achieving organisational goals (George & Jones, 2002) are functional political behaviour. On the other hand, activities, like withholding organisational information and hampering in work, exploiting the legitimate systems for individual rather than organisational ends (Mintzberg, 1983), are dysfunctional political behaviour that has a negative impact on the organisation. These different perspectives of scholars on organisational political behaviour had been synthesised by Bhatnagar (1992) in a single model.

The model proposed by Bhatnagar (1992) on political behaviour in organisations helps to understand the whole political phenomenon in organisations. This model states that characteristics of the situation, influencer and perceived target group influence the political behaviour of organisations which eventually have intended and unintended consequences for the organisation, the influencer, the target and the observer. According to the author, the political behaviour of an organisation can be viewed from three dimensions: internal-external, vertical-lateral and legitimate-illegitimate.
Farrell & Petersen (1982) and Latif et al., (2011) states that factors like investment, alternatives and trust contribute for political behaviours in an organisation. In our study, we have focused on these three factors to explore how they stimulate the three dimensions of organisational political behaviours and influence in making a decision of Chinese company going internationalisation.

**2.1.1. Dimensions of organizational political behaviour**

Organizational political behaviour is categorised into three dimensions: internal-external, vertical-lateral, and legitimate-illegitimate (Farrell and Peterson, 1982). These dimensions reflect the tactical choices that organisational members exercise to influence the distribution of advantages and disadvantages, including available resources within the organisation (Farrell & Petersen, 1982).

The first dimension is the internal-external dimension which is about the resources of an organisation pursued by the people engaged in political behaviour (Bhatnagar, 1992). Sonaike (2013) mentions that resources in organisations are required for the organisation members to carry out various functions. However, the resources are always limited. Hence, this scenario encourages the members to practice political activities in the organisation. Internal political behaviours employ resources available within the organisation for exchanging favour, trading agreements, forming alliances with others in the organisation. However, they explored external resources too when they believe that outside resources result in success than an internal one (Farrell & Petersen, 1982).

The second dimension is vertical-lateral that represents the flow direction of political activity (Bhatnagar, 1992). This dimension recognises the different pattern of influence between the same level of members in an organisation and with their higher authority (Farrell & Petersen, 1982). Vertical influence includes exercising power upward, while downward influence comprises exchanging of favours between the superior and subordinates (Bhatnagar, 1992). In the pyramidal organisation, middle-level management has most opportunities to engage in vertical political behaviours (Farrell & Petersen, 1982). On the other hand, lateral influence includes exchanging of favours and forming a coalition with other members (Bhatnagar, 1992). However, members at lower levels and lacking substantial resources are mostly engaged in the lateral influence of political
behaviour to increase their power and opportunities to access the resources (Farrell & Petersen, 1982).

The third one is a legitimate-illegitimate dimension which is about if the political activities that are carried out in an organisation are usually accepted in the organisation or not. Political activities prevalent in the organisation are distinguished into usual politics and extreme politics that violate the rules of the organisation (Farrell & Petersen, 1982). Legitimate political activities include the exchange of favours, forming coalitions, seeking sponsors at upper levels. On the other hand, less legitimate political activities include whistleblowing, revolutionary coalitions, threats, sabotage (Farrell & Petersen, 1982). The author mentions when organisation members are firmly committed to the organisation, they practice legitimate politic in the organisation. In contrast, alienated members and members who have little to lose are involved in illegitimate politics in organisation.

### 2.1.2. Investments

Investment includes all those efforts and resources that are committed by organisational members to build a relationship with the hope that the relationship will be a source of future gain (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981). Investment is considered suitable for the organisation because it reduces the chances of illegitimate political behaviour in an organisation, and ignites the expectation of better results in the coming future (Farrell and Peterson, 1982). Apart from that, this also influences the political behaviour of an individual and firms (Latif et al., 2011). For instance, it decreases the negative influence of top-level members towards technical staffs when investment is made in specialised skills and fields. When the investment of the company is in favour of the organisation members, they show legitimate political behaviour in the organisation.

Thus, investment of the organisation has direct influence in the decision making of the organisation. When an organisation makes an investment which benefits the employee, at least in some way, then they support the investment decision of the company and work together to make that come true (Farrell and Peterson, 1982). Similarly, when the organisation invests for the development of the employees, they contribute in legitimate political behaviour in the organisation and support the decision of the company.
2.1.3. Alternatives

Alternatives are those opportunities which are available when the first options are missed out (Latif et al., 2011). Commonly, employees in an organisation are always seeking better alternatives than what they currently have. The alternatives that they are looking for can be within the organisation or out of the organisation. Hence, if the organisation provides better opportunities to the employees, they stick with the organisation. Whereas, if the organisation has limited, poor or no alternatives for employees, they tend to go out of the organisation to achieve better alternatives (Latif et al., 2011). This tendency of seeking of better alternatives and trying to meet them results to the practice of political activities in an organisation.

Employees use voice options and internal protest or strikes in an organisation to generate better alternatives for themselves (Hirschman, 1970). However, if the organisation has different opportunities for the employees, they exchange corporate membership for the risks and defy of independent entrepreneurship (Perrucci et al., 1980; Wright, 1980). Thus, alternatives available in an organisation influence in the decision making of the organisation. When the organisation provides better opportunities to its employee, it contributes to legitimate political behaviour in the organisation which is favourable for decision making of the company. On the contrary, when chances are less, the employees illegitimately influence in the decision making of the organisation.

2.1.4. Trust

Trust is perceived necessity for influence (Gamson, 1968). In an organisation with a trustful environment, the lower level employees tend to support the actions of upper-level management believing that those actions will create favourable outcomes for them as well. On the hand, in the organisation with no trustful environment, lower level employees believe that the outcomes of the actions will not be favourable to them unless they directly involved in influencing the actions taken by the upper-level management (Farrell and Peterson, 1982). Hence, the level of trust determines the type of political behaviour in an organisation (Pfeffer, 1978). For instance, in an organisation with a high level of confidence, employees support one another and have respect for one another’s interests. However, the situation is opposite when there is a low level of trust in an organisation resulting in illegitimate political behaviour in an organisation.
Thus, the presence of trust in an organisation have an impact on the decision making of the organisation. As mentioned above, based on the level of the trustful environment in an organisation, employees practice legitimate or illegitimate politics which eventually influence the decision of the company. For instance, high level of trust among the members encourage them to take extreme actions while low confidence among members discourages them from making such activities (Latif et al., 2011).

2.2. Organisational Culture and Political behaviour in an organization

Organisational culture is a valid pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learns while solving problems of external adaption and internal integration, and passed to new members as the right way to perceive, think and feel relevant to these issues (Schein, 1992). Here, the underlying assumption is unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that are not directly observed, instead have to be inferred from what is seen and heard in the organisation (Buch & Wetzel, 2001). This underlying assumption is congruent with artefacts and espoused values of organisations because employees use these values to diagnose organisational culture. Artefacts values of organisations are visible and physical – dress codes, physical settings – while espoused values are audibility and spoken – for instance, justifications, goals, philosophies, strategies (Buch & Wetzel, 2001).

A study was done by Gregory et al., (2009) who states that organisation practices various cultures that eventually influence the behaviour of the organisational members. In general, we can see group culture, development culture, intellectual culture, and hierarchical culture in an organisation. Group culture of an organisation values cohesiveness, participatory decision-making, and leverage these values through empowerment, mentoring, and support of teamwork. In such organisation cultural environment, members use the political tactics that are directed towards achieving the organisational goals. Likewise, in development cultural environment, a higher management inspires creativity in employees in a hope of acquiring new resources for the organisation (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991), which encourages organisational members tend to influence higher authority to access more organisational resources (Bhatnagar, 1992). Similarly, rational culture values productivity, achievement, and competition towards well-established criteria (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991). Since this culture value the ultimate goals, the performance of organisational members is analysed based on their contribution to
achieving the goals. Different rewards like the bonus, promotion is provided for members to motivate them in their works. This cultural environment again boosts members to achieve those facilities through political behaviour (Bhatnagar, 1992). In the same way, in the hierarchical organisational culture where strict guidelines are imposed, members try to influence the higher management who could affect the decision for their job security or other facilities (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991; Bhatnagar, 1992). Members interacting with higher authority acquire their trust and obtain more opportunities (Li & Kong, 2015).

Organizational culture is an intangible resource of a firm because it serves to mobilise, allocate and leverage resources in achieving company goals through values, behaviours, management systems, decision criteria, visionary planning (Barney, 1985; Lado et al., 1992; Merron, 1995). It can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage for the firm. However, whether the organisational culture is beneficial or harmful to the organisation is determined by the political behaviours it ignites among the members. If the members practice legitimate political action, this results in beneficial outcomes for the organisation. On the other hand, if the members practice illegitimate political behaviour, this does not support organisation to achieve its goal (Bhatnagar, 1992).

For instance, the powerful organisational culture encourages organisation members to make their effort together for better firm’s performance (Xiao-yan, 2006, October). Such organisation cultural environment excites the behaviour of organisation success. The personal commitment of individuals merges seamlessly with the values and the mission of the organisation because the values and goals of the organisation become their own (Owens, & Steinhoff, 1989). The people accept the legitimacy and authority of the organisation without questions. They support the upper-level managements’ decisions, maintain good relation in the organisation, and work for the betterment of the organisation.

On the other hand, when the values of employees’ efforts are difficult to estimate and when the market value of the organisation’s output is ambiguous, the legitimate authority is vested in supervisory roles. The supervisors supervise, evaluate, and punish or reward to maintain organisational discipline (Owens, & Steinhoff, 1989). This again encourages the lower level employee to influence those supervisors either to achieve the rewards or to avoid the punishment. According to Li & Kong (2015) employees desire to have a closer relationship with higher level personnel because the employee is having good
relation get more opportunities and are even participated in the decision-making process. Hence, the higher-level personnel become the target of the employee for the influence (Bhatnagar, 1992).

In short, we can say that organizational culture has direct impact in the organizational political behaviour because the underlying values of organization influence on the behaviour and attitude of organizational members (Siehl & Martin, 1990; Schein, 1989), and members rely on those values to guide their decisions and behaviours (Schein, 1989). So, the organisational culture can be a resource for the organisations when it influences for legitimate political behaviour in the organisation (Barney, 1985; Lado et al., 1992; Merron, 1995; Bhatnagar, 1992).

2.3. Political behaviour and Strategic Decision-making Process

In this part, it pays attention to the political behaviour on strategic decision making in the organisation, which considers that the political perspective focuses on how the participants influence the process and outcome of strategic decisions through the power they have or by taking measures to influence them. Strategic decisions are strategic decisions that have a significant impact on the organisation and its long-term performance (Hickson, Butler, Cray, Mallory, and Wilson, 1986).

Strategic decisions involve political issues that reconcile different interests and technical problems that attempt to calculate optimal decisions based on multiple parameters (Hickson et al., 1986). They usually expect and authorise innovation or other actions for a long time into an incompletely known situation. This provides ambiguity and uncertainty for arguments and calculations that they can prove, which in turn allows a series of competing proposals and preferences to claim credibility. Competing proposals are based on the selective recognition and recognition of sub-goals and interests (March and Simon, 1958). This situation encourages political behaviour among competing parties. At the same time, political behaviour increases the uncertainty of decision making because it is inconsistent with formal decision rules and may overturn them (Mumford and Pettigrew, 1975). Thus, based on the literature, firstly, it will introduce what strategic decision-making process is. Secondly, it will perceive political behaviour in the strategic decision-making process.
2.3.1. Strategic Decision-making Process

Dean and Sharfman (1996) stated strategic decision as: ‘committing substantial resources, setting precedents, and creating waves of lesser decision (Mintzberg et al. 1976); as ill-structured, non-routine and complex (Schwenk 1988); and as substantial, unusual and all providing (Hickson et al. 1986)’. Strategic decision research has long been the focus of scholars and executives (Ireland and Miller, 2004). In the previous study, the strategic decision-making has always been divided into two aspects: content research and process research. The former addresses strategic content issues such as portfolio management, diversification, mergers and the alignment of corporate strategy with environmental characteristics, and the latter involves the process of making and implementing strategic decisions and the factors that it has engaged (Elbanna, 2006).

Over the past two decades, the research has shown that content issues dominate research agendas and process problems have received less attention. However, at present, there is renewed interest in process research (Rajagopalan et al. 1997). In this paper, the author focuses on process research. Due to strategy process research issues cover a broad range, this review narrows down the topic, and it will focus on Strategic Decision-making Process (SDMP) that is a field of process research to know how to make a strategic decision in international business. Thus, based on empirical literature, this part will provide analysis three perspectives: Rationality and Strategic Decision-making, Political Behaviour and Strategic Decision-making and Intuitive Synthesis Strategic Decision-making. In this part, it will pay attention to political behaviour and strategic decision-making, as well as shortly introduce others.

2.3.1.1. Rationality and Strategic Decision-making

There has the concept of rationality in decision-making: ‘Rationality is the reason for doing something and judging behaviour as reasonable is to be able to say that the behaviour is understandable within in a given frame of reference’ (Butler, 2002). Furthermore, the rationality of the decision-making process plays a central role in the theory and practice of strategic decision-making (Papadakis and Barwise, 1997).

However, when decision-makers want to make a decision, there are three main obstacles in the rational decision-making process (Jones, Jacobs and Spijker, 1992). First of all, the organisation may lack the resources needed to search and analyse relevant information. For instance, Braybrooke and Lindblom (1970) argued that, although the rational model assumes that information is available when needed, it ignores the cost of providing this
information. The next obstacle is limited cognitive capabilities of organisational decision-makers. The last barrier is that executives may feel uneasy about the organisation's existing political structure and are responsible for its consequences.

On the other hand, Goll and Rasheed (1997) found that there seems to be a problem with the relationship between the process of rational decision-making and the outcome of the organisation as it has been a topic of ongoing debate among researchers and no consensus has yet been reached. After that, based on empirical evidence, there are three relationships between rationality and organisational outcomes: positive relationships, negative relationships and no relationships. For example, between rationality and performance, Fredrickson and Mitchell (1984) found that a negative relationship was found in the unstable environment and a positive relationship exists in a stable environment (Fredrickson 1984).

2.3.1.2. Intuitive Synthesis Strategic Decision-making.

In the strategic decision literature, compared to rationality, there are few kinds of research on the application of intuitive processes. Intuition is hard to describe but easily identifiable (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004). Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992) argue that intuition refers to a deeper and more intimate understanding of the situation facing decision makers and more adaptive. Intuition is a comprehensive psychological function that understands the overall condition of a particular situation. Moreover, Butler (2002) argued that most intuitionistic models can be viewed as a way of trying to push the decision-making process as far as computational strategy. Parikh (1994) observed that intuition might be a form of intelligence that decision-makers can use when they cannot access a rational process. The intuitions that Khatri and Ng (2000) considered is subconsciousness; complexity; quickness; components of all decisions; insensitivity; not fundamental bias. Also, they proposed three intuitive indicators: reliance on judgment, reliance on experience and the use of gut feeling.

On the other hand, some researchers clarified that because few strategic decisions have the complete, accurate, and timely information advantage, making decisions intuitively is increasingly seen as a viable approach in today's business environment. Decision literature suggests that the assessment of alternatives is often straightforward unless managers are forced to intervene with others (Nutt, 1998). At the same time, Papadakis and Barwise (1997) stated that decision-makers should consider between rationality and intuition connections to make a decision. Although some authors suggest that top
management uses intuition in an unstable environment (e.g., Agor 1989a; Mintzberg 1994; Quinn 1980), none of them explicitly check their intuition for any impact on organisational results.

2.3.1.3. Political Behaviour and Strategic Decision-making

The strategic decision-making process involves matching the agency's capabilities with the threats and opportunities within the organisation's mission (Hunt et al., 1997:32). It serves as the brain and nervous system of the organisation and is also the cornerstone and catalyst of the strategy. In addition to choosing the most appropriate one from the alternatives; it needs to be aware of the nature of the decision conditions, select and implement the best choices. It functions as part of an integration (Mintzberg, 1994:107). In this regard, the efficiency of strategic decision-making depends on its degree of influence on the organisation's goals and the complete information between different options. These attributions refer to the rationality of the decision and to what extent it contains the political actions of the decision makers. The political behaviour in organisational decision-making is defined as "the act of filing a claim against the organisation's resource-sharing system" (Mayes and Allen 1977 p. 673). Political behaviour is typical in the management of sustainable development and is fundamental and indispensable to an organisation (Quinn, 1980). Political behaviour is typical in the SDM process and has the following disadvantages: inefficiency, unpleasantness, bargaining time consumption and disruption of information flow (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988; Mintzberg et al., 1976). At the same time, Hickson et al. defined that ‘Since, strategic decisions are made among people by people they are a welter of action, interaction, and counteraction’ (Hickson et al. 1986, 54). Moreover, SDMP can connect with political behaviour because of the interaction of interests, conflicts and power (Wilson, 2003). Furthermore, MacMillan and Jones (1986) defined that, in decision-making, as a part of behaviour, political behaviour tires to ‘get others to do what we want when they might not elect to do so’.

On the other hand, the political perspective of strategic decision-making assumes that decision-making emerges from the process of decision-makers having different goals, forming coalitions to achieve their predominance of the most potent advantages. From an organisational perspective, organisational politics includes passive (intent to protect self-interest) and active (promoting self-interest) behaviour (Elbanna and Child, 2007: 434).
By blaming or attacking others, using information, image building/image management, supporting construction ideas, praising others, power alliances, strong allies, and organisational politics being accepted as visible. Influential and Creative Obligation - Reciprocal Linkage (Allen et al., 1979:77-79).

2.3.2. Political Behaviour in Strategic Decision-making

In the previous literature, the political behaviour is the use of power or influence by individuals or groups. The origin of political opinions on strategic decision-making lies in the political science literature of the 1950s, when various authors believed that people's conflicting goals and interests affected the government's decision-making (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). This view assumes that decision-making is the result of a process in which decision makers have different goals and form alliances to achieve their goals, and where the strongest advantage prevails (Stone 2002). For example, Lindblom (1959) developed the theory of gradualism or "confusion" in social decision-making. In this view, decision-making evolved through small steps, each step representing the result of competition and bargaining between political and market elite groups. He believes that the balance between competing interests will help ensure a fair and equitable distribution of democracy and interests. After that, Lindblom (1977) warned that if specific groups gain more power than other groups, or start collusion rather than competition, then the use of less powerful forces and suppression of discussions on alternatives may follow. This warning still applies to the abuse of power by corporate strategic decision makers, and there are already some well-known examples.

Traditionally, political actions have been considered to use power in pursuit of sectoral interests, even in violation of organisational or social rules. For example, Lyndall Urwick, the principal representative of classical organisation principles, believes that any organisational politics does not conform to the “scientific” management approach (Urwick, 1945). Political actions may be divided and conflicted, often equating people with other “approved” influence systems, such as formal authority, recognised ideology or recognised professional knowledge, or conflicting with each other (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). The political behaviour in decision-making attempts to “let others do what we want to do when they do not choose to do so” (MacMilan and Jones, 1986: 1). This organisational behaviour is sometimes described as playing games (Allison, 1971). Gaming is normal behaviour for ambitious managers because it gives them greater ability
to influence events and increase their power and position based on their interests.

On the other hand, in strategic decision-making, researchers view political behaviour from multiple perspectives. An angle examines the political factors within the organisation and includes a wide range of methods. The first method focuses on personal organisation members. It investigates political strategies among participants and their attempts to influence the outcome of the decision-making process to serve their interests. Besides, it examines the relationship between political dynamics and certain types of organisational outcomes (e.g., organisational performance and decision effectiveness) (e.g., Dean and Sharfman, 1996; Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988; Elbanna and Child, 2007). The second method is to investigate the political behaviour between organisational units, and the acquisition of the units that affect the decision-making process (for example, Pfeffer and Moore, 1980; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1974). Another perspective is broader, including the influence of internal actors (organisation members and/or organisational units) and external actors, such as government agencies, trade unions, and customers on the decision-making process (e.g., Hickson et al., 1986; Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and 1976. Theory; Pettigrew, 1973). The point of linking these ideas is that people realise that whether they are inside or outside the organisation, they believe that they will be affected by the outcome of their decisions. Based on this reason, people try to satisfy their personal or institutional needs by using political means to influence the decision-making process. (Child, Elbanna, and Rodrigues, 2010). Furthermore, between political behaviour and organisational outcomes of decision-making, most of the researchers supported a negative relationship. However, some authors summed up the following reasons that could help organisation account for this negative relationship. First, there is a contrast between the direct discussion of political strategy and decision-makers and the immediate impact of sharing information (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988). Second, the political decision-making process is fragmented and therefore time-consuming. As a result, they may delay their decisions and may lose opportunities and opportunities (Pfeffer, 1992). Third, as Dean and Sharfman (1996) argued, political behaviour can lead to an incomplete understanding of environmental constraints.

Besides, based on the previous literature, this part will introduce political behaviour in rational decision-making and the political behaviour aspects of between organisational units oriented in the strategic decision-making process.
Firstly, in the former part, Bulter (2002) defined that ‘Rationality is the reason for doing something and to judge behaviour as reasonable is to be able to say that the behaviour is understandable within a given frame of reference’ (Butler, 2002: 226). The rational process has long been considered as the core content of strategic decision-making according to in-depth theoretical and empirical research has been done in the literature on this topic. However, the representative of the political model of decision-making denies that the members of the organisation as a whole can be rational (Eisenhardt, 1997). They believe that members may share some goals, such as the welfare of the organisation, but they have different expectations of the future and different preferences and conflicts of interest in different parts of the organisation. Therefore, some people may give priority to growth, while others may prefer profitability (Allison, 1971). Therefore, the question is how the political factors of strategic decision-making oppose rationality and influence it. Although strategic decisions may stimulate political behaviour because they are essential and vulnerable to uncertainty, it is paradoxical that policymakers may find it more necessary to justify such decisions than those with less impact. There are symbolic and functional reasons behind this (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). Reasonable procedures, such as gathering and analysing information, are used to symbolise executives (Langley, 1989; Mueller, 1998). The economics point of view shows that more attention should be paid to the issue of the highest cost or risk (Winter, 1981). When decisions are critical to the success of their organisation, executives want more rationality (Hickson et al., 1986). Papadakis, Lioukas, and Chambers (1998) provided empirical support for this view and found that when the decision-making implies essential consequences, the decision makers act more rationally. Although the evidence is limited, the balance of research results points to the positive relationship between the use of reasonable procedures and decision-making efficiency (Dean and Sharfman, 1996) and organisational performance (Janis, 1989; Miller and Cardinal, 1994; Schwenk and Shrader., 1993).

Secondly, in the political behaviour aspects of between organisational units oriented in the strategic decision-making process, research is located in strategic decision-oriented management level below the highest political actors’ behaviour is much easier to obtain than senior managers. Therefore, more research is available, and some can observe the decision-making process closely through participant observation. These studies show that intra-organizational differences between different departments or units tend to encourage political activities among these organisations because each organisation tries to make
demands on the organisation's resources (Pettigrew, 1973). If some people think that they have an affinity with interests, and the alliance can enhance their access to enough power to dominate the decision-making process (Pfeffer, 1981), they may form a coalition.

2.3.2.1. Chinese companies’ political behaviour in SDMP
Due to the specific cultural situations in China, Chinese managers will be influenced by government regulation when they make the decision, and as a manager, they need to consider organisational oriented united, organisational political behaviour and government policies. Thus, in this session, firstly, it will describe the national culture and organisational culture in Chinese companies. Secondly, it will provide analysis how Chinese company make a decision when they face developing their international business.

2.3.2.2. Chinese Culture Background
Compared with the governments of other countries, the Chinese government has more directly participated in the corporate sector. In 1949, China became the only party-led socialist country. Before the economic reforms that began in the 1980s, the central planning economy was adopted, and the government managed all companies that were considered production units and implemented their economic plans (Doupnik and Perera 2011). After economic reforms, the government tried to reduce its control over the business sector. The new policy gradually separates government functions from companies and service agencies. State-owned enterprises were converted into joint-stock enterprises, and a small number of restructured state-owned enterprises were included in the two domestic exchanges established in the early 1990s (Jiang et al. 2009). Despite the progress made in exiting the corporate sector, the Chinese government still has considerable influence on companies, mainly because of its multiple roles, including shareholders and regulators (Liu, 2006). Specifically, the government as a regulatory body that continues to control critical resources (Li et al. 2008) and continues to intervene as a controlling shareholder (Liu 2006). Furthermore, China’s unique system, including state control of resources, the general political relationships among senior managers, and the government’s highly retained ownership - indicates that business decisions can be influenced to a large extent by political intervention.

On the other hand, when managers know the Chinese national culture, this culture must influence organisational culture. Thus, in other literature, it has shown that political
relations can help companies obtain favourable regulatory conditions (Agrawal and Knoeber 2001), acquires resources such as bank loans (Faccio 2006), and ultimately increase their performance and value (Fisman 2001; Johnson and Mitton 2003). In the context of China’s transitional economy, political connections have become a strategic resource for companies to gain competitive advantage. In the absence of an active market mechanism and a mature legal system, political allies are crucial for Chinese companies to negotiate and execute contracts (Nee 1992). Besides, Chinese companies can respond to political uncertainty through political channels. Although China has made significant and sustained progress in economic reforms, political reforms have experienced several ups and downs and have caused political uncertainty in Chinese companies (Peng and Heath 1996). Companies often mobilise intra-government political alliances to gain government support and preferential treatment, which can effectively alleviate this political uncertainty (Wang and Qian 2011). Moreover, although companies can use political relations to obtain the political legitimacy and resources controlled by the government, the principle of reciprocity in social relationships shows that the government also has expectations of companies (Aronson et al. 2005).

2.3.2.2. Political behaviour in SDMP in China

Although studies have shown that decision-making specific and organisational characteristics influence “political behaviour” (Papadakis et al. 1998), most studies of political or political behaviour are based on Western views of the concepts of power, hierarchy, and group dynamics. This kind of empirical research provides support for the Chinese people's tendency to place organisational interests or collective interests in their decision-making processes ahead of their interests. They also emphasise good relations by maintaining harmony and facing and avoiding conflict during conflicts.

The advantages of China's SDM process come from the intangible roots - Chinese values. First, the cognitive speed path provides support for the focus on the overall situation, and experience can accelerate decision making. These two are essential features of Chinese policymakers. This decision style and pattern works well in certain situations, such as very little data; no time to collect data; the decision involves poorly structured issues; the top of the hierarchy (for example, the owner) makes decisions; It is also complicated (Sterman, 2000). It is best suited for managing uncertainty and complexity. Second, the positioning of the group focuses its decision on the collective interest and the concern of
the team members. This is supported by Martinson and Davison (2007). This effectively reduces the conflicts between team members and focuses on a common goal. However, this limitation lies in the strength of the model. First, relying on experience and intuitive style requires time to accumulate and synthesise, which may be a limited environment. Only works in a rapidly changing environment. Second, universal consensus may limit the emergence of new ideas or alternatives, which may be better than the top decision makers agree or propose. Furthermore, in Chinese companies, they are focusing on collective efforts, and organisations’ interest in Chinese companies often leads decision-making team members toward a common goal that can reduce the abnormal political behaviour (Cheng, V., Rhodes, J., & Lok, P., 2010).

On the other hand, in the strategic decision-making process, political behaviour is influenced by group positioning and hierarchy; it has a negative impact on political behaviour and the extent of the conflict. Although some people think that a certain degree of politics is needed in some cases, it needs to be managed with care. Chinese cultural factors, while reducing political behaviour and conflicts, also pay attention to the latter situation, focusing on maintaining the harmony within a group and establishing stability through a hierarchical structure (Cheng, V., Rhodes, J., & Lok, P., 2010).

1. **Group orientation**
   The Chinese have a collectivist culture in their long history, which is characterised by their participation in intensive social interactions that provide little privacy (Tang and Ward, 2003). In collective society (collective guidance), collective interests are more important than personal interests. It is expected that individual efforts and achievements will contribute to the collective interest (Laaksonen 1988). An essential component of Chinese collectivist culture is “relationship” (a form of social networking and relationship building) that plays an important role in business activities (Chow and Ng, 2004). Understanding "face" is another important aspect of relationship management; although the face is a common phenomenon, it is particularly prominent in Chinese culture (Redding and Ng, 1982).

2. **Hierarchy**
   The hierarchy is considered to be one of the critical variables in the analysis of the SDM process that affects the political process (Hickson, Butler, Gray, Mallory and Wilson 1986). Scholars point out that one of the main characteristics of
Chinese culture is respect for age and grade (Lockett 1988); therefore, Chinese prefer the clear distinction between managers and subordinates. China's decision-making is concentrated or at least supervised. In other words, people with the highest status makes a decision, or if the superior's wishes are explicit, the subordinates make decisions based on these aspirations, which is mostly the agent of the superior (Xu and Wang 1991).

Chinese managers' decision-making style and mode will affect the "speed" and "rationality" of decision-making. Chinese managers' emphasis on recognition-based decision-making or intuition may increase the speed and effectiveness of decision-making (Weber, Ames and Blais 2004). Dane and Pratt (2007) further suggested that intuition can promote rapid and accurate decision-making in organisations.

In the previous research, it shows that Chinese people fully consider the situation (Yates and Lee, 1996). By looking at the big picture, Chinese company's managers can solve business problems with a combination of qualitative and personal information. When hard data is insufficient, Chinese information processing methods focus on the use of qualitative and personal data that are suitable for the collection of such information.

Managers with extensive experience and knowledge can make decisions intuitively (Haley and Haley 2006). That reduces the rationality of the analysis. China’s company's decision makers also use relationships to obtain first-hand information on government regulations and the behaviour of competitors in the absence of clear and transparent access to formal analytical data (Haley and Haley 1998; Haley et al. 2004).

3. Methodology

In this section, we have presented about our methodology for our research work. We have mentioned about our research approach and research design, data collection method, data analysis and ethical consideration.

3.1. Qualitative Research Approach

Research philosophy is a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Saunders M., 2009). These philosophical assumptions are ontological or epistemological. While ontology is about the nature of reality and existence, epistemology is about the human knowledge that helps researchers to understand best
ways of enquiring into the nature of the world (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 134). The philosophical assumptions have a direct influence on the design and quality of the research (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 48).

Under the epistemological assumption, social science research can be positivistic or social constructionists. The positivistic work looks the social world externally and believes that its properties are measurable through objective methods (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 144). The social constructionist work believes that the social reality is determined by people rather than objective and external factors (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 148). It focuses on peoples' thinking, feeling, experiences and other human actions.

The purpose of this study is to understand the effect of organizational culture and organizational political behaviour in the decision-making process in a Chinese company. Hence, we have adopted qualitative research approach for which our philosophical assumption is epistemological, more specifically social constructionism. We use this assumption as a guide to select the method of data collection, conducting the interview, and analysing the data.

3.2. Research Design: Case Study
The critical feature of the case study is that it does an in-depth review at one, or a small number of, organisations, events or individuals, generally over time (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, p. 263). Yin (2013) suggests that all case studies should have clear designs that include the central questions or propositions, the unit of analysis, link between data and propositions, and procedures for interpretation of data.

Rowley, J. (2002) states that case studies are useful in providing answers to ‘How?’ and ‘Why?’ research questions, and exploratory, descriptive or explanatory type of research. This statement is in line with Yin (1994) where he mentions that case studies support deeper and more detailed investigation which are answered by ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.

As our research questions and other factors support the criteria mentioned above, we use case study method to collect necessary information or data to answer the research question. Since, we interview personnel from top-level management, our unit of analysis is an individual from the selected company.
3.3. Data Collection
As we are performing qualitative research approach, we gather information in a non-numeric form through the interview (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 375). We collect data through in-depth interview, which is semi-structured. This approach helps to explore more on our research question as this helps to understand the meaning that interviewees are attached to the issues and situations in context (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 406). The data thus collected are primary in a sense they are first-hand data collected directly by the authors.

3.3.1. Sampling
Sampling is the process of selecting potential research participants and methods for data collection (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 401). Qualitative sampling strategies aim to identify reasonable instances of the larger phenomenon under research (Luker, 2008). Most researchers frequently use more than one sampling strategies to collect qualitative data through language and text design (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 402).

For our study, we have found ad-hoc and typical-case sampling suitable one. Ad-hoc sampling selects the research participants based on the availability and ease of access. This strategy is also appropriate when data need to be collected in short time and at low cost. Similarly, typical-case sampling selects the most opted research participants (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 404).

Using sampling as mentioned in earlier strategy, we select four personnel from the company located in China.

3.3.2. Interview
Qualitative interviews are the conversations made around the questions on a specific topic (Lofland and Lofland, 1984) that differs from regular conversations based on series of questions intended to make the in-depth exploration of a particular topic (Charmaz, 2014). The qualitative interview aims to collect information that captures the meaning and interpretation of phenomena from the perspective of interviewees (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This aim of the qualitative interview can be achieved if the interview is made through semi-structured and unstructured approach (Charmaz, 2014).
The interview can be a face-to-face or a remote one. The face-to-face interview is made meeting interviewer and interviewee in person whereas, telephone, email, social media make the and remote interview like Skype and other video chats. The advantage of the remote interview over face-to-face is that it makes managers feel less committed and flexibility because they do not have an obligation to host the researcher or to meet them at a specific time (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 393).

Our interview can be either face-to-face, or remote, or even both. It depends on the time availability and accessibility of the interviewees. For the remote interview, we use social media like Skype or Wechat.

3.3.3. Interview Preparation
Charmaz (2014) states that the qualitative interview achieves its goal if the interview is done based on semi-structured and unstructured approach. Semi-structured interview guides to open interview. The interviewer uses topic guide to ignite the conversation with follow up question. Then, interviewee speaks freely on the topic. Whereas, in unstructured approach, conversations are quite informal in the sense that there is no interview schedule or guide (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 405).

These approaches give a higher degree of confidentiality as the interviewees’ reply is more personal. Besides, the interviewer has the opportunity to identify non-verbal clues to develop secondary questions (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 405–406).

Those two approaches use topic guides to ignite and guide the conversation. Topic guides are the informal list of topics and questions that can be addressed in any order. It is more flexible that interview schedules and needs to be organised into opening question, issues around many critical topics and closing question (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 407-408).

3.3.4. Conducting Interviews
During the interview, we use laddering technique to ask the questions. Laddering is a technique to collect more information from the question. There are two types of laddering technique, notably, laddering up and laddering down. We use both laddering techniques to dig the information for the interviewees.
In laddering up, interview questions start from direct and straightforward to answer to more general, which helps to understand the opinion of an interviewee on the questions. Questions about such technique are ‘why’ question. According to Bourne and Jenkins (2005) & Wansink (2003) laddering up helps the respondent move from statements of fact or descriptive accounts of the questions posed upwards to reveal the individual’s value base. On the other hand, in laddering down interview, the researcher looks for illustrations and examples or occurrences of events (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 413).

### 3.3.5. Interview-Based Mapping Techniques

The mapping technique helps researchers to identify the view of an individual or a group on the topic and enable to present the complex information into a simple and easily understandable format. This technique also integrates the process of data collection with those of data analysis. Namely, there are two mapping techniques – repertory-grid technique and cognitive mapping (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 426).

We use cognitive mapping technique to rearrange our interview data into a logical pattern. Cognitive mapping is a modelling technique that aims to portray the ideas, beliefs, values and attitudes of interviewees and shows how they interrelate (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 434). A cognitive map shows the relationships between the constructs of some individual managers regarding a managerial issue or problem (Eden et al., 1983; Huff and Jenkins, 2002).

### 3.4. Data Analysis: Content Analysis

Content analysis is an approach that aims at drawing systematic inferences from qualitative data that have been structured by a set of ideas or concepts (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, pg. 539). This analysis can be used with all kinds of data including company reports, observational records, interview transcripts. For review, first, criteria have to be determined to select the materials based on the research question. Then, the materials are analysed; factors are identified after which table, matrix or network diagram can be used to identify the variations within and between the factors.

### 3.5. Ethical Consideration

Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson (2015, p. 356) states that although there is no risk of the life of research participants in management and business research work, there could be harmful
to a company regarding the economy. Because of this scenario, there is growing pressure to adopt specific ethical codes and practices.

Bell and Bryman (2007) have identified ten principles of ethical practice which are widely in use. The first six of these principles are about protecting the interests of interviewees, whereas, last four are about preserving the integrity of the research community, through ensuring accuracy and lack of bias in research result (Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015, p. 356).

Keeping those research ethics in mind, we have performed our research works. After the informed consent, we choose our interviewee. Those interviewees have full right to reject or not to answer any questions that can keep them in the stressful situation. Privacy of the interviewees is well protected in a sense we do not publish the name of the interviewees and the information provided by them is used in research works only. Besides, the authors show no bias on the information provided by the interviewees. The author analyses the collected information/data and present the results based on those facts and unbiasedly analysed data.

4. Result and Analysis

4.1. Data Collection

To get a more in-depth understanding for our topic, a total of 4 managers were interviewed from one Chinese travel agency company. We interviewed four managers about around one hour for each one.

To discuss and prove the research question, we found one company to interviews. The Chinese company is the travel agency company which provide tickets, travel plan and hotel services to customers.

The researcher thinks that the data will have a significant meaning to advance this research problem through this interview. Firstly, the researchers sent the question by email and then conducted the face to face’ interview using Wechat. Secondly, the researcher summarized four managers’ interview contents. Lastly, the researchers analyse the content using content analysis method and connect the analysis with the literature.
In the Chinese company, four managers are interviewed, and it includes one top manager who has been working eight years, two middle managers who have been working four and five years, and one overseas business manager who has been working six years. This company started to develop their foreign business in 2006, which is to extend their customers and make their stakeholders get more benefits. From the beginning, the idea came from their top manager when he had seen the new trend that Chinese hosted the Olympic Games in 2008, and more and more foreigners come to China, as well as more and more Chinese went to travel in other countries. Until now, the company has developed their business in 134 countries to provide their services. On the other hand, the interview content summary will be provided in here (it is some central question and answers in this interview):

1. **When did you want to develop your business in other countries, which factors will influence you to make a decision in your decision-making process?**

   *It starts almost 2006, and we have been developing our business in Thailand, the United States, Spain, Australia in half of a year. Until now, we have developed 134 countries to provide our service for customers, you know, now, more and more Chinese people like go to travel in their holiday, and we also have tickets, hotels and travel plan services.*

   *The factors are too much, because when you make a decision that will be thinking the whole aspects. For example, investment, employee salary, culture, personal habits, countries policy and regulation.*

2. **What political behaviour have you encountered in your company (individual level and business units)?**

   *In the individual level, we need to think about the employee salary and workplace environment. It will influence personal working efficiency. At the same time, we should think about the operating hours, in China, we, in general, can work at least 8 hours in 6 days in one week, but in other countries, for example, in Spain, they have critical rules, at most 8 hours on weekdays and only 5 days in one week, so we need to balance this situation, and make employees have a fair feeling.*

   *For business units, we always need to think about countries regulation, and especially, China policy, and we must follow the rules to develop our business. For example, when you saw the news, you will know US and China trade war, although we have developed*
our business in the United States, we are still careful to make a business plan in the US. At the same time, we need to face the stakeholders, because every decision will influence their benefits.

3. Did you encounter in the political behaviour aspects of the organisational oriented unit problem in your decision-making process? (If you have met, what it is the situation and how you solve it?)

Yes, I have fixed this factoring problem many times. Before we decide to develop our business in other countries, we need to change our mind to make my colleagues make sense; then we should make the whole plan to search investors. In general, political behaviour based on the countries situation, because different countries have their policy, if we want to develop our business, and we need to make a plan how to adapt this countries’ policy. It is so hard to say some specific factors because it will depend on the real situation to overcome lots of elements. I will give you a little of examples.

For example, when we developed our business in Spain, we could not use the seam organisational orientation to make a plan. In our organisation, we need to find a balance point. Firstly, we should know the countries policy and personal habits; then we tried to find a native company to help us, as well as we also found some native employees to develop our business. Notably, in this way, we do not need to waste this money and energy in China.

4. How are a decision made in your organisations? Which level of staffs mostly participate in influencing decision-making process?

In general, if we have the idea to extend our business to others country, the decision-making process will be complicated because it will connect with investment and benefits. The medium level managers will discuss with their managers, and then make the project information to hand in the top manager. After that, the top manager will discuss with each department’s manager, and then they will make a meeting with stakeholders and maybe new investors to make the final decision.
5. What common tactics do you see your employees use to influence decision-making process?

In the decision-making process, the standard tactics are that employees consider their salary, opportunities and company’s training system. For example, in our company, our average wages are a little more than the similar companies, which makes our employees have some motivations to pay attention to their job that will influence the initial decision in our company. At the same time, we think that companies should provide the equal level opportunities for every employee, which is the essential things in our company. Moreover, our company does not have any manager from other companies, or someone directly becomes a manager from a grassroots job to a higher of level manager, which means that everyone will have the opportunities to impact on a significant decision in the future. On the other hand, we have a robust training system for our employees in our company, which means every employee has the best opportunities to improve themselves. For example, in our company, every year we organise different employees and teams from different countries to communicate with each other to enhance their world vision.

Above all, in all of these actions, we try to make every employee feel balance and concentrate on their job, which will be beneficial to improve the quality of decision from the initial to the end. Notably, it also can build employees’ loyalty to our company.

6. How do the opinion of low level and middle-level management staffs influence your decision-making process?

The low level and middle-level managers do not have real power to decide on our company, but the group decision will not count in here, and we discuss the global business’ decision-making process. However, in the Chinese company, we need to have a good relationship with others company or power, it called “guanxi”. In our company, we have an apparent division of responsibilities for each other, and everyone owns their power that means they need to know what they can do or cannot. Thus, in general, the low and middle-level managers do not influence our decision-making process.
7. How do the available resources in your organisation encourage employees to influence in the decision-making process?

For that question, before we have mentioned some factors, such as salary, opportunities and training system, but I want to mention the particular element what is trust. For example, the company should trust every employee, as well as employees, must believe that their company can give their useful life, which will influence the company’s decision-making when a company makes a decision that should make employees see the company’s future and know that their job is safety. For our company, we still need to face different countries people, so we should balance different culture, regulation and behaviours. On the other hand, we think that our organisational culture is also fundamentally what will influence how employees make their decision. For example, when we wanted to develop our business in Italy, we should establish our sector in the local place, as well hire some native employees to build our business, which means we met numbers of the problem, such as culture, trust and business system.

Above all, it is some central questions in this interview; the researcher tries to summary four managers interview contents to get this data. Though this interview, it will be analysed in next session.

4.2. Data analysis

It has mentioned the factors, such as power, organisational orientation and culture, influence decision-making process. In that interview, four managers mentioned that different culture, political behaviour and power aspects would influence their decision-making process. Furthermore, the apparent aspects are that the decision-making process is so complicated, and the lower- and middle-level managers do not have the power to influence the decision. On the other hand, the researcher found that the particular aspect is Chinese relationship (it is called “guanxi”) in their business developing.

4.2.1. Influence of Culture in Decision-making

Chinese company practices different organisational culture which has a direct impact on the political behaviours practised by the company. In the empirical data that we collected from the interview, we can clearly see this aspect. For instance, one of our interviewees mentioned that “… we work at least 8 hours for six days a week. However, in Spain, they work for 8 hours for five days in a week…” The manager believes that this difference
can create a problem in their daily functioning of the company. Hence, they are working on the situation to make a balance in working hours in their company and wants to provide the feeling of fairness in employees.

Also, the Chinese company is very cautious to maintain a good relationship with other companies, which is also called ‘guanxi’ in Chinese term. As the company is providing its services globally, it faces different issues like different governmental policies and regulations, employees with different cultural viewpoints and others. Since the issues cannot be solved completely, they try to make a balance between those issues.

Besides, the company also see a hierarchical culture where there is distinct hierarchical position in the company with a clear division of roles and responsibilities. Hence, every staff are responsible for their respective activities and duties assigned according to their positions. This has resulted in strict control of the operations of low and middle-level staffs by top-level management. One of our interviewees stated that “… we have an obvious division of responsibilities for each other. However, the low and middle-level managers do not influence our decision-making process…”.

Therefore, from the above analysis, we saw that the company is very concerned about building trust with its employees, partners and key stakeholders by maintaining a good relationship with them. It has also created an opportunity for the company in further investment. Hence, the organisational culture of the company has a direct influence on investment and trust building of the company.

### 4.2.2. Influence of Investment in Decision-making

From the empirical data, we can see that the company wants to create a favourable environment for decision-making through the investment. For this, the company is investing both internally and externally. Internally, the company is investing in the development of the employees’ skills and other facilities that directly uplift their motivation. Mainly, the company is investing in the training programs for the staffs. One of our interviewees says, “…we have the robust training system in our company for our employees. We are providing this opportunity for them to improve their skills…”

Similarly, to make the favourable environment for the investment in the countries other than in China, the company maintains a good relationship with the prospective companies
and stakeholders. The company is also aware of specific country’s policy and regulations, including its culture. Hence, the company’s strategy to deal with such issues is to hire the local partners and employees. The advantage for the company by working with the local partners is that they are already aware of the policy and regulation. Hence, the company do not have to spend extra time on it. Similarly, by hiring the local employees, the company can maintain the working environment suitable for the place and people of that country. One of the managers mentions that “… we need to find the balance point. First, we should know the countries policy and personal habits. Then, we try to find a native company to help us including some native employees to develop our business…, this way, we do not have to waste extra money and energy in China.”

So, from the analysis, we see that both the investment, internal and external, influence decision making of the company. By investing internally, for the development of the staffs’ skills and other facilities, they become loyal cooperative to the company and its decisions. They are motivated to work for the company. Hence, they contribute for a good working environment in the company and practice legitimate politics which are in the benefit of the company and its goal.

4.2.3. Influence of Alternatives in Decision-making

The empirical data shows the importance of providing alternatives to the employees. When good alternatives and opportunities are provided to the staffs, they are motivated to work for the company. To maintain the high motivation of the employees, the company is paying relatively high salary to its staffs compared to that of similar companies. In return, staffs are happy with their payment and are motivated in works as well. Similarly, the company is also providing different opportunities for providing training, job securities and other facilities to its staffs.

The opportunities and alternatives that the company has provided have contributed to legitimate political behaviour in the company. By paying high salary compared to other similar companies, the company has blocked the chances for the staffs to change the company. Besides, by providing other facilities, the company is making the staffs loyal to the company. In return, staffs are supporting the activities and decision made by the company. They are practising legitimate political activities in the company to meet the company’s goals and objectives.
4.2.4. Influence of Trust in Decision-making

From the empirical data, we can say that the company is building trust both internally and externally. Internally, the company is building trust among the employees whereas, externally, it is building trust with possible partners and key stakeholders.

By providing good salary and different opportunities, the company is building trust with its staffs. The company has also assigned specific responsibilities for staffs of respective position. This also creates the feeling of trust in staffs because this is kind of appreciation to the staffs; this makes them think that they got the responsibility because they deserve it. Similarly, the company is making trustful environment externally by maintaining a good relationship with its prospective partners and key stakeholders.

By maintaining trustful environment both inside and outside the company, the company is able to make good decisions. Internally, staffs support the decision made by the company with the expectation that they will also get more advantage from that decisions. Likewise, by maintaining trustful relation outside the company, it is easier for them to make decisions about starting the business out of China.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper aims to examine how culture influence firm’s decision-making process in international business. Based on the previous literature and what we have found, the influence process will be that national and organisational culture influence political behaviour, then political behaviour impacts on the decision-making process. Organizational political behaviour is an unavoidable part of every organisation (Riege, 2005). Furthermore, although strategic decisions may stimulate political behaviour because they are important and vulnerable to uncertainty, it is paradoxical that policymakers may find it more necessary to justify such decisions than those with less impact. There are symbolic and functional reasons behind this (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). The analysis of empirical data collected through in-depth interview says that company in China, hierarchical organisational structures where the higher- or top-level manager make the final decision for the company. Thus, in this session, it focuses on culture and political behaviours (Investments, Alternatives and Trust) to discuss how influence firms’ decision-making.
5.1. Influence of Culture in Decision-making

Our empirical finding suggests that culture is correlated with the decision making of the company. When companies face different culture problems, they will face different regulation, organisational rules and political behaviours, which are very difficult for the company to solve. Gregory et al., (2009) states that organisation practices various cultures that eventually influence the behaviour of the organisational members. At the same time, the cultural environment again boosts members to achieve those facilities through political behaviour (Bhatnagar, 1992). After that, the political behaviour will influence decision-making. In the Chinese company, the authors have found that, firstly, culture influence their organisational culture and political behaviours. For example, the obvious fact is that they will face different government policies and regulation when they want to develop their international business. Secondly, the Chinese company has their hierarchical structure, which means the Chinese culture influence their organisational culture. For example, based on the interview, it has mentioned that “they work at least 8 hours for six days a week. However, in Spain, they work for 8 hours for five days in a week”. Thirdly, the Chinese company has a clear division of responsibility for each other, and the low or middle-level managers do not impact on the decision-making. For example, scholars point out that one of the main characteristics of Chinese culture is respect for age and grade (Lockett 1988); therefore, Chinese prefer the clear distinction between managers and subordinates. China's decision-making is concentrated or at least supervised. In other words, people with the highest status makes a decision, or if the superior's wishes are clear, the subordinates make decisions based on these aspirations, which is essentially the agent of the superior (Xu and Wang 1991). Thus, different culture could have a negative influence on decision-making.

On the other hand, culture can directly influence decision-making. Base on Chinese culture, the Chinese company, make a long-term plan when they want to develop their native or international business. At the same time, the researchers still found the interesting things what is Chinese ‘guanxi’ and ‘face’. Chinese company should build and maintain a good relationship with other companies. There is some previous literature what has some similar point with the researcher. For example, understanding "face" is another important aspect of relationship management; although the face is a common phenomenon, it is particularly prominent in Chinese culture (Redding and Ng, 1982). Thus, different culture could have a positive influence on decision-making, and it could
help that foreigner companies are easier to come into the Chinese market if foreigner companies know this relationship factor about China.

Above all, different culture could have negative and positive impact on decision-making when the companies want to develop their business.

5.2. Influence of Investment in Decision-making

Our empirical finding suggests that investment is positively linked with the decision making of the company as it creates legitimate political behaviour in the company. The company under our study has invested both internally and externally. Internally, the company has invested in improving the skills of the staffs through training. Staffs are happy with the training system and are loyal towards the company. This has promoted legitimate political behaviour in the company. This finding is in line with Farrell & Petersen (1982) who stated that organisational members exercise legitimate political activities in an organisation when they are strongly committed to the organisation. This finding also supports the idea of Farrell and Rusbult (1981) that investment is good for an organisation because it reduces the chances of illegitimate political behaviour in an organisation.

Similarly, the company has externally invested in developing a good relationship with its prospective partners and key stakeholders. The company want to partner with the local company and work together. The primary concern of the company is to deal with the inevitable issues related to country’s regulation, policy and culture. Hence, the company is trying to avoid possible illegitimate political activities that might arise in future. This empirical finding is again in line with the authors Farrell & Petersen (1982).

Hence, by investing internally and externally, the company has created a favourable environment for decision making because these internal and external factors have direct influence in the decision-making process (Child, Elbanna, and Rodrigues, 2010). This also makes good relationship with its staffs and stakeholders which reduces conflicts and encourage in achieving common goals of the company through anonymous decision (Martinson and Davison, 2007).
5.3. Influence of Alternatives in Decision-making

Our empirical finding suggests that alternatives create legitimate political behaviour in the company and are also positively linked with the decision making of the company. The company has ample of opportunities and alternatives for its staffs. It is paying relatively higher salary to its staffs compared similar companies. By doing this, the company is blocking the chances of employees changing the company for a higher salary. This supports the idea of Farrell and Petersen (1982) that employees start to explore the external resources when they are not satisfied with the internal one that is available to them. To provide better alternatives and opportunities to the employees, the company is also providing different pieces of training to them. This strategy of the company has encouraged the employees to have common goals and interest as that of the company. Hence, to achieve that goals and interests, the staffs are aligned with the decision of the company. This supports the idea of scholars Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992) who stated that staffs having conflicting goals and interests affect the decision making of the company. By providing different opportunities and alternatives to the staffs, the company has maintained a balance between the interests of the staffs, resulting to gaining their support in the decision making of the company (Lindblom, 1959).

5.4. Influence of Trust in Decision-making

Our empirical finding suggests that trust is vital for the company to maintain legitimate political behaviour in the working place which eventually has a positive impact on the decision making of the company. The company has maintained trust internally and externally. By providing good salary and training company has gained the trust of its employees. Similarly, by maintaining a good relationship with its prospective partners and key holders, it has maintained trust externally. Because of the trustful environment, the company has seen the legitimate political behaviour in its periphery and have seen the support of employees in decision making too. This finding is in line with Ammeter et al., (2002) who stated that trustful environment in the company minimizes ambiguities present in the workplaces. This, hence, encourages the company to take extreme actions (Latif et al., 2011). The author also mentions that in a trustful environment, employees show supportive behaviour because they believe that the outcomes of the decisions will create favourable outcomes for them as well. Hence, to secure those possible favourable outcomes, they support the decision of the company (Elbanna and Child, 2007).
Above all, these findings and results can help managers to overcome the confusion that is how to make a decision when they want to develop their international business.

Firstly, decision-makers will face complex cultural problem, one of the best way is that managers should find some local companies to cooperate with them to solve cultural problem, which will make their business more easier come into foreign markets. At the same time, managers should make a balance what is the regulation and organizational rules.

Secondly, company should focus on both internal and external investment. Internally, besides other aspects, the company should invest in the skill development of the employees, which makes the company have more loyal employees. Externally, the company can invest to increase its business. When the company invest sufficiently to meet the needs of employees, they eventually support the company’s decision of external investment.

Thirdly, better alternatives should be provided to the employees, which checks the employees from seeking alternatives outside the company and makes them loyal towards the company. The company can focus on providing higher salary to its employees and invest in their skills development.

Finally, trust is one of the critical factors that a company should focus on. A company should maintain trust within the working place and with their potential partners and stakeholders. By providing a good salary, providing different skills development training and respecting the individuals, the company can maintain the trustful working environment. Similarly, by maintaining a good relationship with the prospective partners and stakeholders, a company can maintain a trustful environment with outsiders.

6. Limitation and Future Research

Although this study has provided some critical insights into culture and political behaviour influence firms decision-making when they want to develop their international business, its finding should notice several limitations for further research. First, in this paper, we just interviewed four managers in the same company in China. Although we still did the similar interview in Swedish company in Sweden, the data was so hard to compare with the Chinese company because Swedish company is so hard to be influenced
by culture or political behaviour, as well they have a very suitable lifestyle’ working environment and organisational rules. Thus, for future research, we suggested that researchers need to get more interview data from different countries, which could help them to make a clear sense how culture influence firms’ decision-making process in international business.

Second, our study did not interview low-level staffs; however, their perspective could add value to the future study because they are one of the main actors who practice politics in an organisation. According to Farrell and Petersen (1982), members at lower levels and lacking substantial resources are mostly engaged in political activities in an organisation to increase their power and opportunities to access the organisational resources. Thus, the future research can be suggested on how low-level staffs influence the decision making of a company.

Third, our study focuses on individual’s cognition has a direct impact on how he/she behaves in the workplace. This impact eventually influences the type of political behaviour he/she shows in the company, i.e. legitimate or illegitimate political behaviour. Hence, the relation of individual’s cognition with his/her organisational, political behaviour can be one of the future researchers.

Fourth, our study pays attention to how culture and three aspects (Investment, Alternative and Trust) of the political behaviour influence firms’ decision-making process. Although our study has gotten some useful factor in this topic, this may not capture all aspects of culture and political behaviour. The reason also needs to be mentioned that the influence process is that culture impact on political behaviour and then the political behaviour influence decision-making process in international business. Thus, we suggest that further research should focus on the only one central point to analysis the influence, such as culture or political behaviour.

Fifth, our information and analysis are based only on primary data. We believe that secondary data would strengthen our findings, which would increase the validity and reliability of the findings. However, because of time limitation, we could only focus on interview through ‘WeChat’, thereby collecting primary data. The other reason for not collecting secondary data is that we couldn’t meet the interviewees in person as they were
in China. However, we recommend making use of secondary data too in the future research on a similar topic.
7. Reference list


Appendix

Appendix 1: Research Interview Question List

Interview questions

1. Could you introduce yourself? Thank you
2. How long have you been working as a manager? How many countries do you provide your service?
3. When you want to develop your business in other countries, which factors will influence you to make a decision in your decision-making process? (grasp the main factors what you want to know)
4. What political behaviour have you encountered in your company (individual level and business units)?
5. Did you encounter in the political behaviour aspects of organizational oriented unit problem in your decision-making process? (If you have met, what it is the situation and how you solve it?)
6. Do you practice any specific model for decision making process? /How are decision made in your organizations?
7. How do you address the issue of political behaviour while making decision for your company (individual level and business units)?
8. Are there any factors that influence in decision-making process?
9. Which level of staffs mostly participate in influencing decision-making process?
10. How do the opinion of low level and middle level management staffs influence your decision-making process?
11. What common tactics do you see your employees use to influence decision-making process?
12. How do the available resources in your organization encourage employees to influence in decision-making process?
13. How do low level staffs influence higher level staffs to influence decision-making process?
14. Are the approaches/tactics used by employee to influence decision-making process legitimate?