THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

An investigation of the factors involved in successful and unsuccessful university mergers in Taiwan

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Education in Education, Policy and Values

in the University of Hull

by

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Abbreviations

EI – Education Index

LIHS - Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences

NTD - New Taiwanese Dollar

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PhD – Doctor of Philosophy

R.O.C. – Republic of China

SACAE - South Australia College of Advanced Education

SAIT – South Australia Institute of Technology

SCI – Science Citation Index

SSCI – Social sciences Citation Index

TMUC – Taipei Municipal University of Education

TPEC – Taipei Physical Education College

USA – United States of America

USD – United States Dollar

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research by explaining the background and motivation to the research. The background analysis sets out to examine the current scene in Taiwan and the several pressures, which are creating change and uncertainty within the education system in Taiwan in order to see if there is a knowledge gap where research could be usefully applied. The purpose and aims of the research are explained, together with the content of each of the chapters of the thesis.

1.2 Research Background and Motivation

Currently, the higher education sector in Taiwan is feeling under pressure and there is an increased need for the sector to adapt to change. There are several causative factors, some interrelated, for example:

- there are both public and private universities
- the globalization of education means that foreign universities are attracting Taiwanese students
- the changing economy and employment requirements
- the declining birth rate
- too many student places

- the changing higher education emphasis
- the Taiwan government is looking to use the higher education budget more efficiently.

Education in Taiwan is not a free market because there are both public and private universities. The private universities have been encouraged to develop rapidly to meet the higher education expansion needs particularly of the last two decades. However, although the Taiwan government gives financial support to universities on the basis of a student number evaluation, the public universities always receive a larger state contribution than private universities, and the private universities have a proportionately greater dependence on academic fees from students. So, particularly the private universities tend to be more susceptible to changes in the economy or decline in the numbers of students, because this will mean even less government financial support. Also, each university cannot cut salaries because these are set nationally, so any university which is unable to attract enough students will become progressively even weaker financially. Taiwanese parents try to send their children to the most prestigious universities, so low ranking private universities tend to be the most vulnerable, and eventually some universities may be unable to continue.

Globalization refers to the interdependence of world society (Giddens, 1989), and it is now suggested that there is a global war for talent in higher education which is influencing national education policies (Green, 1999; Bottery, 2000). Thus, developed countries try to attract students to their universities because these universities are often under pressure financially, and also if talented students stay on after their education is completed they contribute to the host country economy. Many universities from developed countries are offering degree courses both in their own countries and in Far East centres such as Hong

Kong and Singapore, many of which are attracting Taiwanese students. Consequently, developing states like Taiwan must be careful not to lose their talented people because, for example, Gomory and Shapiro (2003) report that more than 40 percent of scientific Ph.D. students trained in the United States are now foreign nationals, and only about half of these return to their countries of origin. Also, globalization is changing the nature of careers and employment (Sennett, 1998). In the past, people used to have linear career lives with "a lifelong channel for one's economic pursuits" (p.9). However, the modern emphasis is on flexibility, and in the twenty-first century people can expect to do several jobs during their life. In the developed counties the number of jobs for people without any qualifications has decreased. Thus, globalization is increasing the importance of having a well-educated workforce and it is seen as the key to participating successfully in the globalized world (Pollard, 1997; Tipton, 1998). In Taiwan, degrees from overseas tend to be valued more highly, so again this puts pressure particularly on the low ranking Taiwan universities. Furthermore, there is political influence on the education system, as Green (1997) and Bottery and Wright (2000) argue, because, in many countries, e.g. Germany, France, USA, and Japan, the role and function of the education system has been influenced by the creation of the nation-state, because in many cases the education system was designed to spread the dominant cultures, develop political and cultural unity and consolidate the hegemony of the ruling classes. This has also occurred in Taiwan, like Japan, because it has used its education system for two purposes. Firstly, as a way to construct national identity and state power. Secondly, for the development of economic competitiveness, by intervention to guide economic activity to specific national requirements (Bottery and Wright, 2000: 8).

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993) also emphasise this point of political pressures by highlighting the growing importance of 'return on investment' in education internationally, which focuses on organizational profitability. They highlight four important drivers (p.3):

(1) Costs and demands for public education provision are outstripping revenue.

(2) Some taxpayers are baulking at paying.

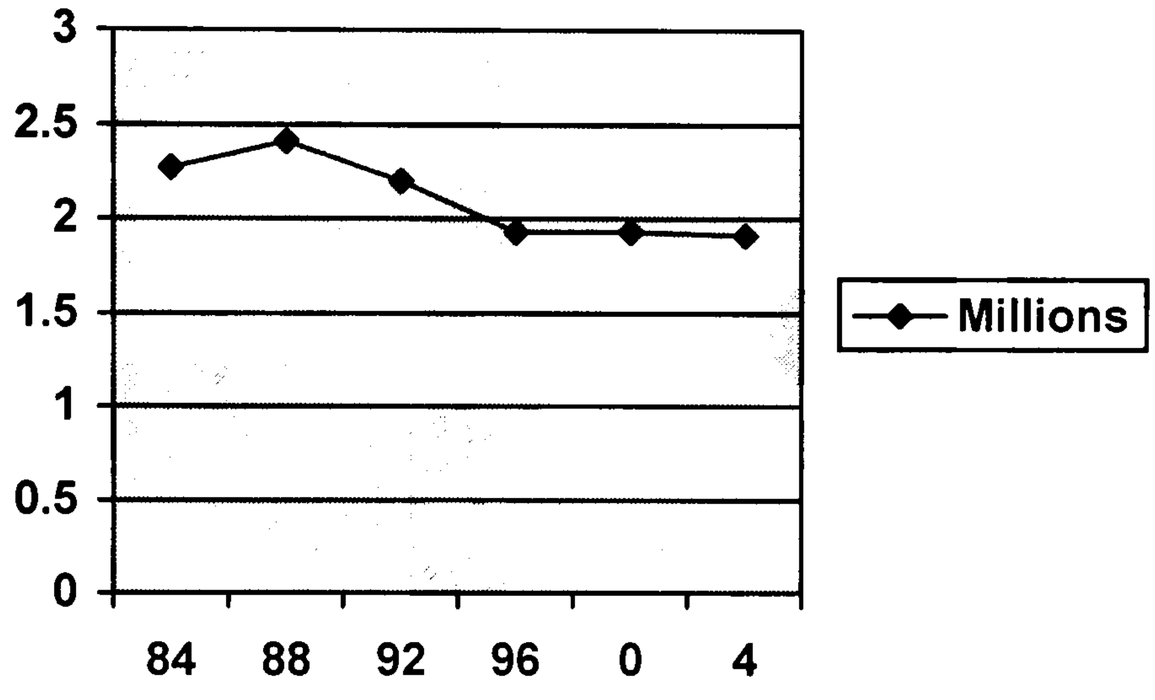
(3) Parents and governments are re-defining what they expect from schools (to include personal, health and social education)

(4) Government and influential groups expect education to contribute to national economic competitiveness.

Indeed, this appears to be happening in Taiwan with globalization pressures, because education leaders and politicians in Taiwan now appear to be tending towards the market system as the solution to education provision which appears to be creating a market driven education system emphasising financial efficiency and profitability in Taiwan.

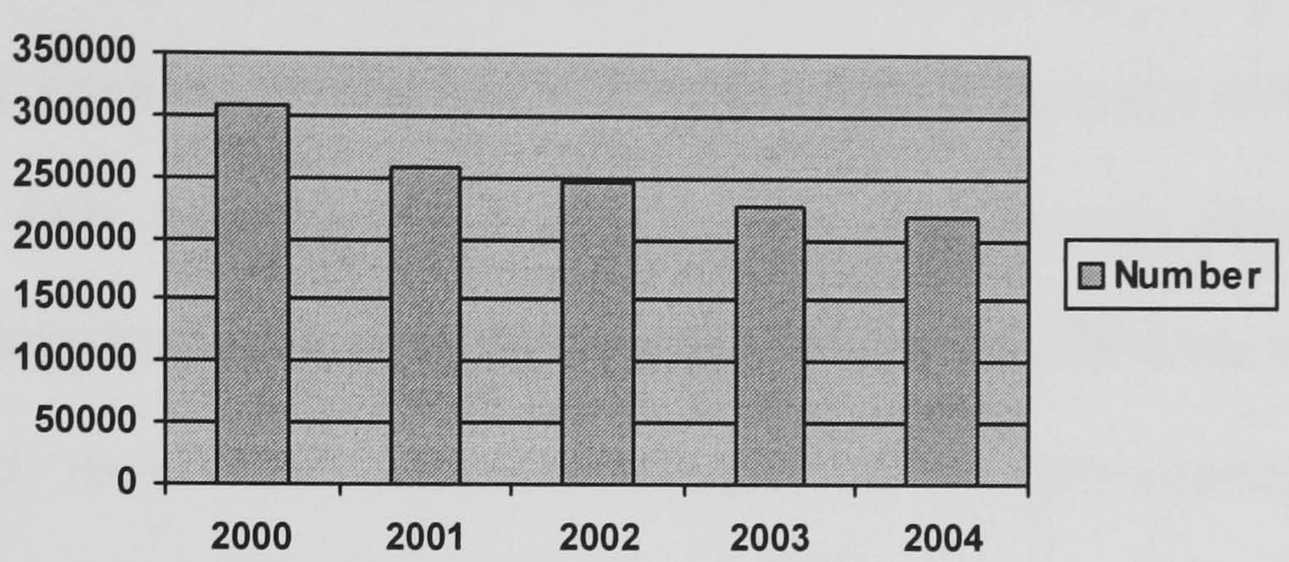
The number of Taiwanese universities have increased in recent decades to educate the increasing number of students, however since about 1998/99 there has been increasing pressure on colleges who are finding it increasingly difficult to fill all their student places that have been created. This is partly a cultural factor because parents want their children to go to the top universities, and prefer universities rather than colleges because the degree is considered more valuable and employability potential better. However it is also a consequence of the declining birth rate in Taiwan, as illustrated in Figure 1.2 (Education Statistics, 2004: 22).

Figure 1.1 Number of Primary School children in Taiwan 1984 – 2004 (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004: 22).



All Taiwanese children attend elementary primary school, and Figure 2.1 shows that the number of primary school children peaked at around 2.4 millions in 1988, and has declined to about 1.9 millions in 2004. Primary school entry age is six, and university entry age is usually eighteen, so the number of entry age university students is expected to decline significantly until around 2008. On the basis of the number of births in Taiwan from 2000 to 2004 (Figure 1.3) the decline in the student numbers is likely to continue to decline for a long time after 2008 (www.moi.gov.tw/stat). Of course, decline in higher education student numbers will mean a further decline in the education budget allocation from the Taiwan Government.

Figure 1.2 Number of Births in Taiwan 2000 – 2004 (www.moi.gov.tw/stat).



For several decades, the emphasis of the Taiwan higher education policy was on quantity expansion, but now there are too many student places so, during the twenty-first century, the policy is changing towards more emphasis on quality. One potential solution for some universities is to merge with another institution, perhaps more prestigious or to create a better mix of course provision, and to try to reduce managerial overheads and improve their financial positions and therefore to keep running. However, of several possible mergers which have been tried in recent years in Taiwan, only one merger so far seems to have been successful – the formation of National Chiayi University. Other institutions which have tried to merge have subsequently ceased trying to merge and remain separate institutions. These then are unsuccessful merger cases.

However, the questions arise – Why has one merger been successful and the other mergers been unsuccessful, and are there guidelines for successful higher education sector merging in Taiwan?

There has been no systematic attempt or published explanation, as far as I know, to try to reach an understanding of why one case has been successful and why several other mergers have been unsuccessful in Taiwan. Consequently, with all these pressures and lack of understanding about merging, there are fears and anxieties in the Taiwan higher education system. From my personal point of view, I am a lecturer at a private college in Taiwan and in the early stages of my career, so these pressures can have very real and important consequences for my career development. Therefore, this is my motivation to carry out this research about higher education mergers because there appears to be a knowledge gap which is important to the higher education sector in Taiwan and which this research project can explore.

1.3 The meanings of Merger, Successful Merger and Unsuccessful Merger in this Research

In this research the following working definitions are adopted for Merger, Successful Merger and Unsuccessful Merger:

Merger: An higher educational institution which has been formed from the joining of two or more previously separate educational institutions. As a minimum, the merged institution has one name, one principal chief executive and one top policy administration.

Successful merger: A merged higher education institution which continues to exist as a merged entity more than four years after the start of merging. (This is a working definition adopted merely for ease of reference concerning the mergers considered in the primary data collection during this research, and because this is also the criterion used by the Taiwan

Ministry interviewees. However, it is accepted that what is successful can depend on one's perspective, which suggests the need for qualitative primary data).

Unsuccessful merger: A merger attempt by higher education institutions which has failed to produce a merged institution.

1.4 The Purpose and Aims of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explore the knowledge gap about university mergers in Taiwan to generate understanding about the criteria needed for successful merging.

The six explicit research aims at the start of the research were:

(1) To carry out a literature review about higher education mergers

(2) To search for existing published data about higher education mergers in Taiwan

(3) To generate new data about higher education mergers in Taiwan

(4) To analyse the data to generate new understanding about higher education mergers, principally in Taiwan

(5) To explain why one merger has been successful and another merger was unsuccessful.

(6) To recommend guidelines for successful higher education sector merging in Taiwan

At the start of the research, it was expected that attainment of these aims would generate five research outputs, as follows:

- qualitative opinions concerning a case of successful merging
- qualitative opinions concerning a case of a failed merger attempt

- increased understanding of successful and unsuccessful mergers
- explanation of what leads to a successful merger and an unsuccessful merger
- recommendations of the required criteria for successful merging.

1.5 Overview of the Thesis Chapters

The research is reported in a total of eight chapters.

Chapter One is the introduction chapter for the thesis. It aims to explain the motivation and background to the research by the identification of a knowledge gap which is creating fears and anxiety within the educational community in Taiwan. Also, the purpose, aims and hoped for research outputs are explained.

Chapter Two contains the first literature review chapter. This chapter looks briefly at Chinese organizational culture in Taiwan, and then explains the set up of higher education in Taiwan. It moves on to review previous published research about education mergers across the world in order to discover the existing knowledge and understanding in this area, and to generate a list of most appropriate questions to ask interviewees.

Chapter Three contains the second part of the literature review. This chapter describes the successful case, the unsuccessful case, and the role of the Education Ministry in Taiwan.

Chapter Four contains the first chapter addressing the research methodology. This chapter reviews the methodological approaches, looks at their strengths and weaknesses, and selects the most appropriate approach for this study.

Chapter Five progresses the methodological approach focus by explaining implementation of the methodology choice concerning interview process for interviews, interview guide, gaining access for the interviews, and the people to be interviewed.

Chapter Six reports the results of the research. This chapter contains a summary of the answers of the interviewees to the list of interview questions using quotations from the transcipts of the interviews, and preliminary analysis.

In Chapter Seven the results are further analysed and discussed and compared and contrasted with research results from other studies.

Chapter Eight sets out the conclusions which are drawn from the research and puts forward several recommendations to increase the chances of success when carrying out higher education mergers in Taiwan.

1.6 Conclusion

This introduction chapter has revealed that there are pressures from several different sources on the higher education sector in Taiwan. These pressures are leading to merging of educational institutions which are creating fears and anxiety within the education community in Taiwan. However, there appears to have been no systematic attempt or published explanation to try to reach an understanding of the reasons for merger success or failure in Taiwan. Thus, there appears to be a knowledge gap which is important to the higher education sector in Taiwan and which this research project will explore to generate understanding about the criteria needed for successful merging. One appropriate research

methodology for the project would appear to be to collect and examine the points of view of participants involved in specific cases of university mergers, involving both successful and unsuccessful mergers. The study should be able to generate five important research outputs.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW 1:

Chinese Organizational Culture, Higher Education in Taiwan, and Previous Research about Education Mergers

2.1 Introduction

Firstly, this chapter looks at Chinese organizational culture to form a basis for understanding the research analyses of the primary data collection. Secondly, it examines the current set up concerning higher education in Taiwan, particularly regarding the number of students, and the number of public and private institutions. Thirdly, the chapter contains a review of previous literature about education mergers. The initial literature search used the key words – education and merger – and this surfaced about twenty publications, but none from Taiwan. The reference lists of these publications were used to find other relevant publications for review.

2.2 Chinese Organizational Culture

Hofstede (1991) sees culture as the collective programming of the mind which can distinguish one group from other groups. It is the personality of the society or organization. Culture involves shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices. Deal and Kennedy (1982) point out that the core of organizational culture is the values embodied in the beliefs, and rituals of the organization, and that "a strong culture is a system of informal rules that spells

out how people are to behave most of the time" (p.15). It is important because it affects how societies and organizations operate, evolve and can operate better. Culture is recognized as stable and difficult to change, and a factor which can affect the internal coherence of the society or organization and how well it can adapt to change (Schein, 1992). The majority of Taiwan's population trace their ethnic and cultural origins from mainland China. In Chinese culture, the important factors are harmony, guanxi (connections), mianzi (face), seniority, and authority (Chen, 2001). Thus, 'top-down' decision making is traditional and accepted. Also, Chinese people avoid creating conflict because of the Confucian emphasis on harmony (Leung et al, 2002).

Meade (1970) has compared the Chinese and American cultures and reported that traditional Chinese culture stresses respect for age and experience and there is an inherent feeling to obey the authority much more than the West. Consequently the traditional management style in Taiwanese organizations tends to be based on traditional Chinese culture leading to the top-down autocratic style relying on a power structure rather than democratic management style. Recent generations who attended university have been more influenced by Western culture and thinking, so the younger generation may tend to have slightly different values and be more individualistic (Cheng and Kleiner, 1993). Chow et al (1998) examined cultural influences by comparing Taiwanese and US staff and found differences. Taiwanese people made fewer misrepresentations than Americans about private information in non face-to-face interactions, but both nationalities showed an even lower misrepresentation rate in face-to-face interactions concerning private information. This is particularly relevant when reflecting on the validity of the research findings. Chow et al (1999) found that participation in budgeting was lower in Taiwanese companies than

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in US owned firms in Taiwan, indicating more centralized control in Taiwanese organizations.

Consequently, it appears that Taiwanese organizations generally involve the traditional centralized top-down hierarchical decision making and are likely to adopt the traditional Chinese culture of respect for traditional practices and authority.

In the field of education, Green (1997) suggests that national education systems were designed to spread the dominant cultures, develop political and cultural unity and consolidate the hegemony of the ruling classes in nations. Taiwan has followed the same example, and used its education system for two purposes. Firstly, as a way to construct national identity and consolidate state power. Secondly, for the development of national economic competitiveness, by intervention to guide economic activity to specific national requirements (Bottery and Wright, 2000).

Grace (1995) points out the importance of the recontextualization of education in the marketplace, as part of the increasing market culture in education which has meant that education has become another commodity in the wider political, cultural, economic and ideological movements of society. Greenfield and Ribbins (1986) have argued that specific national education leadership-culture and education leadership-values relationships are only understandable in the light of the historical and cultural contexts of the societies in which they are found. Internationally, Bottery and Wright (2000) propose that education has become more centrally managed by government, with loss of autonomy and deprofessionalization of teaching, because they have identified the same features in the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. As a consequence, success or failure in

education has become judged by an outcomes-based approach using only carefully selected criteria.

Taiwanese education is also centrally managed, as revealed by the Ministry of Education role in the review of higher education in Taiwan (Chapter 3), and there has been a shift towards a market driven approach (Chapter 1), all of which must be considered within the strong tradition for a top-down decision making culture.

2.3 Higher Education in Taiwan

2.3.1 The Current Education System in Taiwan

In order to understand the position of higher education in Taiwan, it is useful to start by looking at the position of higher education within the current education system of Taiwan (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004).

Figure 2.1 Diagrammatic representation of the current school system in Taiwan(Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004)

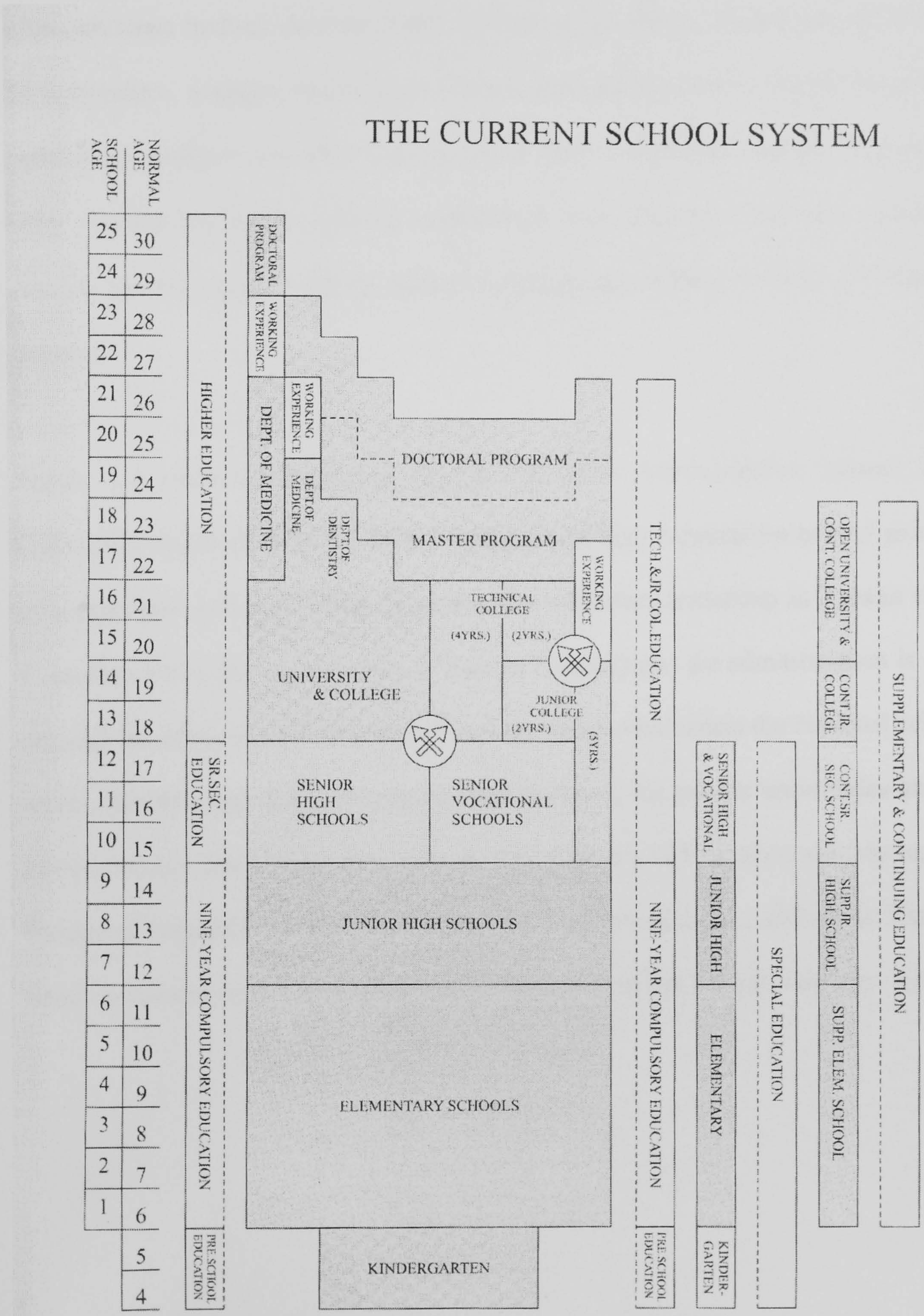


Figure 2.1 contains a diagrammatic representation of Taiwan's current schooling system, which shows that for the great majority of students higher education starts at age eighteen, although some students do enter Junior College at age fifteen. Higher education is provided in universities, colleges, technology colleges, and junior colleges. The junior colleges and technology colleges can offer courses which lead to bachelor degrees. The colleges can offer courses leading to bachelor and master level degrees, while the universities can provide the full range of higher education degrees at bachelor, masters and doctoral level degrees.

Figure 2.2 contains a diagram of the Education Administrative System in Taiwan (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004). This contains both Administration and guidance lines of control and influence. This illustrates that education leadership in Taiwan starts at the Executive Yuan (the Government of Taiwan Cabinet) and the administration is carried out through the Ministry of Education of Taiwan which administers the National schools at all levels, the National Social Education Organizations, the private universities and colleges, and the private senior secondary schools. The Ministry of Education also has input into the Bureau of Education for both the County and City Governments, and of the Municipalities, which is referred to as the guidance line of influence in the Taiwan education system.

Figure 2.2 Diagram of the Education Administrative System in Taiwan(Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004).

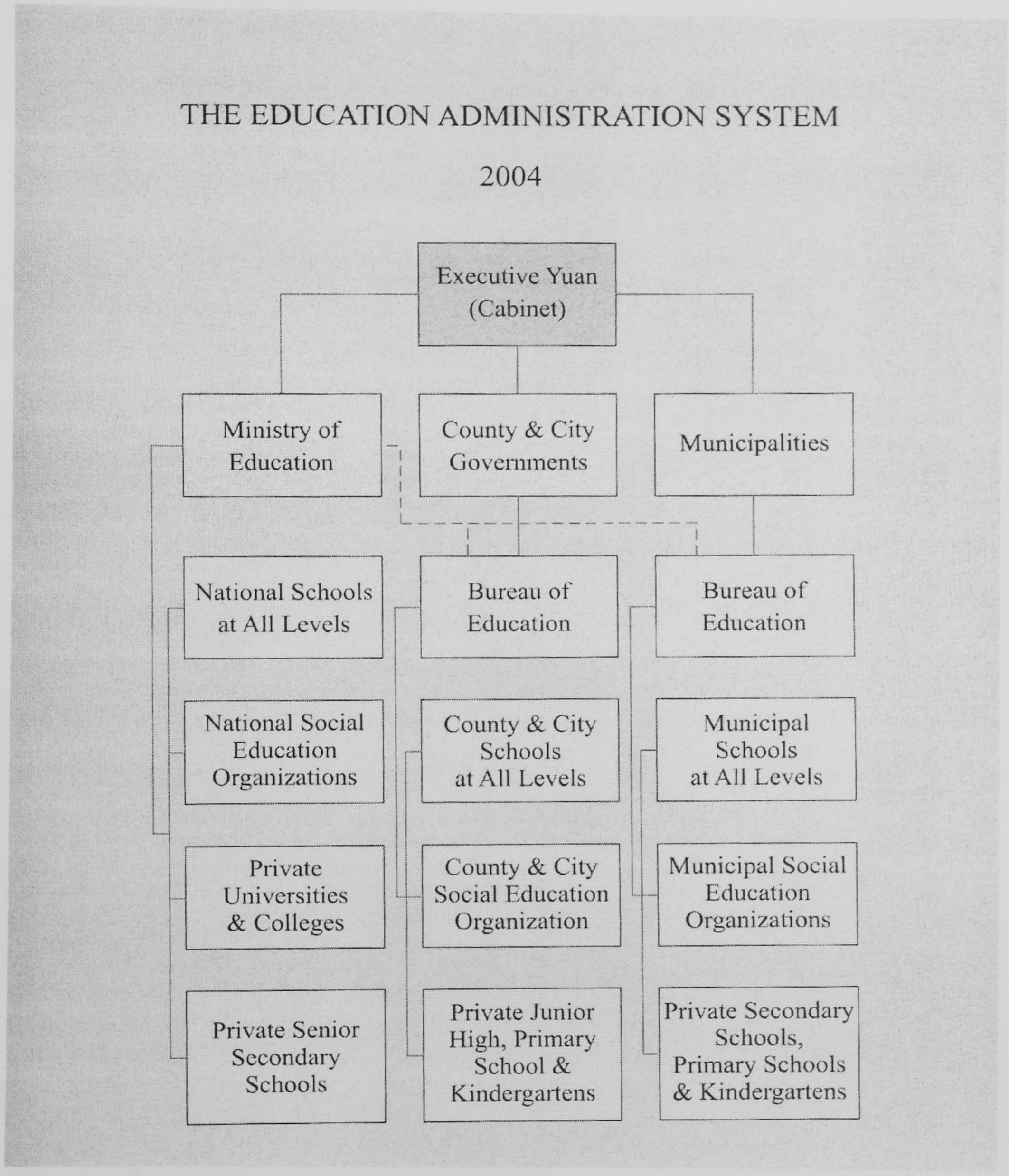


Figure 2.3 Diagram of the Organization of the Taiwan Ministry of Education in 2004(Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004)

ORGANIZATION OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

2004

MINISTER		
Administrative Vice Minister	Political Vice Minister	Administrative Vice Minister

INTERNAL UNITS	AFFILIATED AGENCIES	AFFILIATED SCHOOLS
Secretariat	National Central Library	Universities (30)
Counselors Office	National Central Library Taiwan Branch	Colleges (19)
Inspectors Office		Junior Colleges (3)
Dept. of Higher Education	National Institute for Compilation & Translation	Senior High Schools (81)
Dept. of Technological & Vocational Education		Vocational Schools (80)
	National Museum of History	Supplementary Schools (96)
Dept. of Secondary Education	National Taiwan Science Education Centre	Elementary Schools (9)
Dept. of Elementary Education		Kindergartens (10)
Dept. of Social Education	National Taiwan Arts Education Institute	
Dept. of Physical Education		
Office of MOE in Center Taiwan	National Institute of Educational Resources and Research	
Dept. of General Affairs	National Education Radio	
Dept. of International Cultural & Educational Relations	National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine	
Dept. of Students Military Training	Dr.Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall	
	Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall	
Dept. of Personnel	National Museum of Natural Science	
Dept. of Civil Service Ethics	Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center, National Theater & Concert Hall	
Dept. of Accounting		
Dept. of Statistics	National Kuo-Kuang Chinese Opera Company	
Educational Research Council		
Committee on School Discipline & Moral Education	National Science & Technology Museum	
Committee on Medical Education	National Museum of Marine Biology & Aquarium	
Committee on Overseas Chinese Education		
	National Museum of Prehistory	
Committee on Academic Reviewal and Evaluation	National Museum of Marine Biology & Aguarium	
Committee on Laws & Statutes	National Museum of Marine Science & Technology-Preparatory Office	
Screening Committee on Appeals		
Mandarin Promotion Council	National Feng-Huang-Ku Bird Park	
Advisory Office	The Institute for Secondary School Teachers in Taiwan	
Computer Center		
Environmental Protection Division	National Hsinchu Social Education Institute	
Mainland Affairs Division		
Central Grievance Committee for Teachers	National Chang-Hwa Social Education Institute	
Special Education Division	National Tainan Social Education Institute	
Overseas Cultural Units(24 Units)		
	National Taitung Social Education Institute	
	National Academy for Educational Research-Preparatory Office	

Figure 2.3 contains a diagram of the organization of the Taiwan Ministry of Education in 2004 (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004). Figure 2.3 illustrates that reporting to the Minister of Education there are two Vice Ministers: the Administrative Vice Minister and the Political Vice Minister. Both the Minister of Education and the Political Vice Minister are appointed by the party elected into government by the Taiwan people, while the Administrative Vice Minister is a career member of the civil service administration. The Administrative Vice Minister controls both the Internal Units and the Affiliated Schools. There are thirty-two Internal units, and one of these is the Department of Education. The Affiliated Schools are all National Schools, all of which come directly under the Administrative Vice Minister.

2.3.2 Higher Education

In the list of Affiliated Schools, there are fifty-two schools in the Higher Education sector - consisting of thirty universities, nineteen colleges, and three Junior colleges (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004). These fifty –two schools are the National higher education universities and colleges of Taiwan. Also, there are two municipal higher education institutions, therefore in total there are fifty-four (54) public universities and colleges in Taiwan. The Ministry of Education also administers the private universities and colleges, as described above. There are one hundred and four (104) private universities and colleges in Taiwan.

Therefore, in 2004 there were a total of one hundred and fifty eight (158) institutions of higher education in Taiwan, all of which come under the direct or indirect responsibility of the Ministry of Education. A summary of the institutions of higher education in Taiwan in 2004 is given in Table 2.1, the breakdown showing the division into graduate schools,

departments, courses, and includes the number of full time and part time teachers, and the number of students and graduates.

The breakdown indicates that most students (58 per cent) are at universities rather than colleges or Junior colleges. Also, most students (72 per cent) are receiving their higher education at private universities, private colleges and private Junior colleges rather than at the public institutions. It is also interesting to note that, just considering the universities, at the thirty National (Public) universities there are 14122 full time teachers for the 270210 students, while at the thirty-seven private universities there are only slightly more full time teachers (14842) for the 460589 students. However, there are 6204 more part time teachers at the private universities than at the National universities. The average student: teacher ratio at the national (public) universities is about 12, while at the private universities the average student: teacher ratio is almost 16. This could be interpreted as suggesting that the private universities are driven by competition to be more efficient at the education process than the public universities, which may or may not be true. However, it is also necessary to take account of the type of students. When the type of students is examined, it is seen that the public universities educate about twice as many Masters level students, and more than five times as many Ph.D. level students, both of which tend to require a higher student: teacher ratio than the Bachelor level teaching. Also, the public universities are generally rated, by both ordinary people and academics, to be of higher quality than the private universities at Bachelor level, and the degrees are generally more highly regarded.

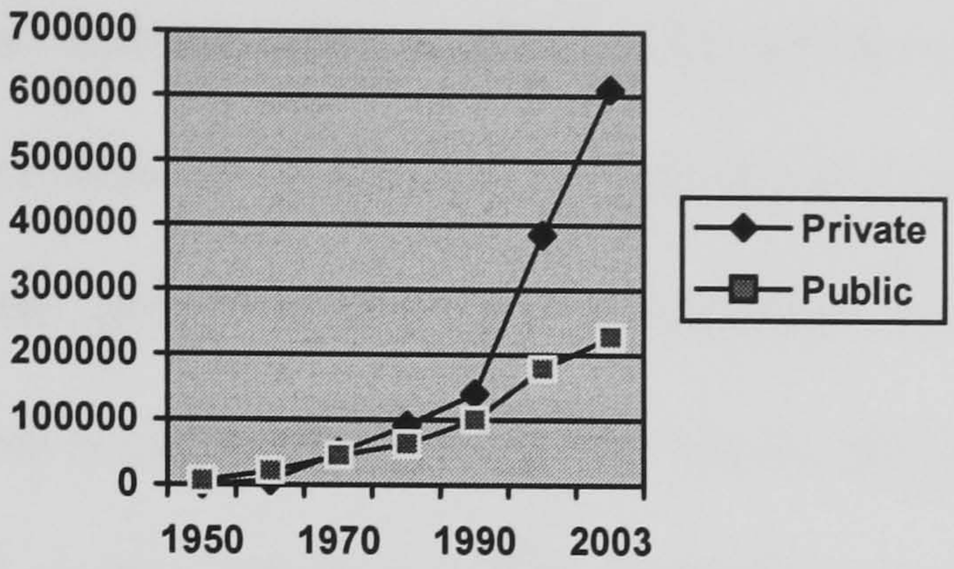
Table 2.1 Summary Breakdown of Universities, Colleges and Junior Colleges in Taiwan (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2003/4).

Type	Total	Univ.	Coll.	Jr. Coll	National			Munici -pal	Private		
					Univ.	Coll.	Jr Coll		Univ.	Coll.	Jr. Coll

All	158	67	75	16	30	19	3	2	37	54	13
Graduate schools	2215	1918	297	-	1103	169	-	24	815	104	-
Departments	4059	2249	1810	-	852	320	-	20	1397	1470	-
Courses	1105	104	829	172	42	108	11	-	62	721	161
F/T Teachers	47472	28964	16738	1770	14122	3380	112	350	14842	13008	1658
P/T teachers	35506	22784	11730	992	8290	2535	113	160	14494	9035	879
All Students	1270194	730799	490812	48583	270210	78025	2804	5344	460589	407443	45779
PhD students	21658	21338	320	-	17986	271	-	35	3352	14	-
Masters students	121909	110486	11423	-	71683	7287	-	1258	38803	2878	-
Number of graduates 2003	318867	168740	138130	11997	61339	19697	249	1459	107401	116974	11748

Figure 2.4 illustrates the great increase in the number of undergraduates at both public and private universities and colleges in Taiwan from 1950 to 2004. However, the graph shows that the number of undergraduates at private universities and colleges has grown at a much higher rate than at the National higher education universities and colleges, particularly since the mid-1990s.

Figure 2.4 The number of undergraduates at private and public universities and colleges in Taiwan 1950- 2003 (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004: 20-23).



During the 1990s, Taiwanese universities were encouraged by the Taiwan Government to increase the number of places for postgraduates, because many students wanted to study for a Masters or Doctorate degree but most students could not afford the cost of studying overseas. Thus, the numbers of postgraduates at Taiwan's public and private universities and colleges have increased greatly particularly since around 1990, as shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 The number of postgraduates at private and public universities and colleges in Taiwan 1950-2003 (Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004, p. 20-23).

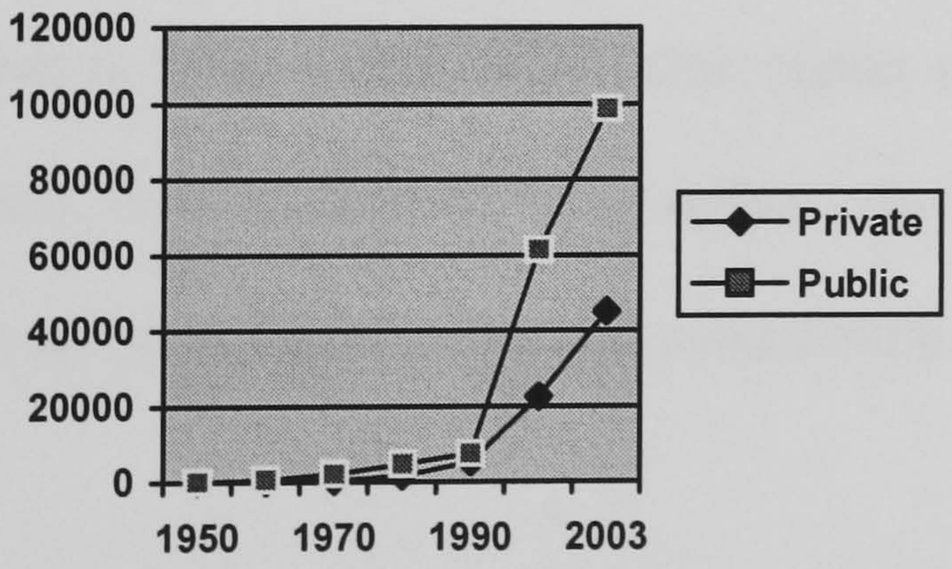


Figure 2.5 illustrates that the growth in postgraduate places has been much greater at the public universities rather than at the private universities in Taiwan.

From Table 2.1, it can be seen that both the public and the private universities have graduates/ students ratios of about 0.23, which is surprising given the much higher growth in the numbers of students attending the private universities compared with the public universities over the recent past, as illustrated in Figure 2.4. This suggests a slightly higher failure rate at the public universities which may be interpreted as supporting the view that these universities maintain higher standards on average than the private universities.

2.3.3 Higher Education Entrance Examinations

Entry to higher education institutions in Taiwan is by examination. The public and private universities and colleges have a joint entrance examination, which is taken across the nation in a three day period each year. Similarly, the public and private Junior colleges have a joint entrance examination, which is taken across the nation on one day each year, but this examination is different from the public and private universities and colleges joint entrance examination.

All students in Taiwan who wish to enter higher education must take and pass the entrance examination. Also, students in Junior college who wish to move to universities and colleges must take and pass the joint entrance examination of the public and private universities and colleges.

Students use their examination grade to guide the choice of university. A higher grade means more choice, and the chance to gain entry to one of the higher ranking higher education institutions.

2.3.4 Higher Education Funding

Funding for higher education institutions comes from two main sources: Taiwan Government and academic fees from students.

To determine the state funding, the Ministry of Education carries out an evaluation each year of each higher education institution in terms of research result of teachers, equipment, the financial statement of the university, the numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students… etc. The higher the ranking from the evaluation by the Ministry of Education, the more the funding to the higher education institution from the state. If higher education institution have high savings reserves, the government may even decide to reduce the state funding allocation to them. In the case of a public higher education institution, if they run out of funds, it appears that they can call on the government for more funding. Also, the government provides support to buy equipment and buildings for public higher education institutions. However, the private universities have to survive on the allocation from government and fees, so they need to budget very carefully.

Table 2.2 shows the private expenditure and total state expenditure at University, College and Junior colleges 1980-2003

(Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004: 43 –45). The total state expenditure includes allocation to both private and public universities. The table indicates the large growth in expenditure since 1980, both in the public and in the private sectors. Many private Junior colleges were reclassified as colleges and universities, in 2000, but even so the growth in expenditure to private colleges and universities has been enormous.

Table 2.2 Private expenditure and Total State Expenditure at University, College and Junior colleges 1980-2003

(NTD billions)

Year	Total State Expenditure		Public Expenditure		Private Expenditure	
	Junior College	Universities & Colleges	Junior College	Universities & Colleges	Junior College	Universities & Colleges
1980/1	6.1	10.0	2.6	7.0	3.5	3.0
1986/7	10.9	18.7	4.6	13.8	6.3	4.9
1990/1	20.2	51.0	6.5	35.6	13.7	15.4
1995/6	34.2	71.9	9.2	44.9	25.0	27.0
1998/9	37.8	96.3	9.1	51.2	28.7	45.1
00/01	-	-	-	-	8.9	96.5
02/03	-	-	0.7	79.7	6.5	115.7

In Table 2.2, the expenditure on public Junior Colleges and Universities and Colleges is determined by subtracting the private expenditure (by the state) from the total state expenditure in order to indicate the differences in expenditure between public and private institutions over the years. The expenditures for 2002/3 concerning public and private universities, colleges and Junior colleges presented in Table 2.2 is as given in Education Statistics, R.O.C., 2004: 43 –45.

From Table 2.1, in 2003/4 there were a total of 49 public universities and colleges and there were a total of 91 private universities and colleges. Hence, this suggests that the average

allocation for each public university or college was 1.6 NTD billions, while the average allocation for each private university or college was 1.3 NTD billions.

Also, in 2003/4 there were a total of 348835 students at public universities and colleges, so this suggests that the average allocation for each student at a public university or college was 0.23 NTD millions, while there were a total of 868032 students at private universities and colleges, so this suggests the average allocation for each student at a private university or college was 0.13 NTD millions.

This supports the generally held view that the public higher education institutions get a much larger state contribution than private higher education institutions, and the private higher education institutions have a proportionately greater dependence on the academic fees from students.

2.4 Previous Research about Education Mergers

2.4.1 Literature review

Merging of educational institutions is not a new phenomenon and not an infrequent occurrence. In the UK, merging of educational establishments dates at least to the 19th century (Harman and Harman, 2003), and in the USA, the US Office of Higher Education reported up to 23 mergers each year from 1940 to 1978 (Boberg, 1979). Merging has probably been happening to a varying degree throughout the history of the existence of educational establishments in response to the changing needs and demands of the society which the education system aims to serve.

However, Humpal (1971: 103) noted that the "paucity of any kind of literature which systematically addresses the organizational and behavioral aspects of merger" had created an information gap in this area. Humpal highlighted that mergers cause high personal and organizational stress involving uncertainty, anxiety, role conflict, ambiguity and distrust. A major cause of these problems appears to be that the merged entity is unlikely to absorb all members of the previous separate institutions, which emphasised the important factor of power differentials between participants.

Merger proposals create threats for institutional loyalties and administrations and consequently are usually controversial, but they provide opportunities for solving problems, for re-adjustment, and for innovation leading to survival or growth (Harman, 1988). There is an extensive literature on this subject from a number of different countries, particularly since the second world war to the present day, indicating that mergers continue to occur in the modern era and that the subject is of continuing interest and importance. However as Rothschild and White (1993: 34) noted "the analysis of university behaviour in a market context has been an under-researched area".

Merging in higher education is influenced not only by educational ideals but also by political and financial necessity (Meek, 1988). Both the UK and Australia have had binary higher education systems involving academic universities and teacher training colleges, but with the decline in the birth rates in the 1960s and the expected decline in demand for teachers, there were many cases of cross-sectoral mergers between universities and colleges. Universities are larger and more powerful, and inevitably attitudes of their staff to merging carried the most weight. People were in favour during initial phases when their expectations were focused on better conditions, better facilities, and raised academic prestige. However, staff at some colleges feared shrinkage or disappearance, but reluctantly accepted that this was inevitable because of the external pressures of declining birth rate and poor economy. The research of Meek (1988) indicates that cross-sectoral mergers involved particular problems of different funding sources, co-ordination and course accreditation. However, the merged entity was always a university.

In the Netherlands, Goedegebuure and Vos (1988) report that changes in higher education had the objectives of improving efficiency and effectiveness by: size enlargement by merging; increase of autonomy; and greater efficiency of resources usage. They note that game theory is relevant in merging. In particular, "the larger the differences in power between actors... the larger the degree of harmony of interest between actors" (p. 209). However, I wonder whether perhaps this harmony is superficial because the weak do not complain. Their analysis suggests that merger negotiations between unequal organizations have more chance of success than those between more equal organizations, unless one or both organizations are under 'shrinkage' pressure, which can increase willingness to merge between 'equal' organizations. Consequently, the relative status and viability of merging

institutions is likely to be an important influencing factor on whether mergers succeed or fail.

Goedegebuure (1992) explains merger occurrences on the basis of the resource dependency theory, meaning that mergers occur because of diminishing resources, or the threat of them. However, Jansen (2002) argues that there are problems with this assumption because it suggests that institutions act rationally, when in practice it is observed that sometimes institutions resist merging even when it appears to be financially beneficial for the parties. Also, the assumed view that merger policy implementation is a rational process, and proceeds in practice as planned, is often not the case because "the merger plan is not the merger" (Eastman and Lang, 2001: 243).

Sehoole (2005) carried out a comparative case study of several mergers in South Africa using a semi-structured interview methodology schedule involving individuals, focus groups of students, academics, administrative and technical staff to try to answer the three questions : (1) How do mergers happen? (2) What are the effects of mergers on curriculum, organizational and physical integration? (3) Why are mergers difficult to implement as planned? Sehoole concluded that the origins, processes and effects of mergers depend on the interaction of institutional and governmental politics. Thus, Sehoole stressed the importance of politics in merging and challenged the assumed view of rationality in the merging process because government policy was not rational, coherent or congruent, rather a contingency theory of merging was proposed because merging origins, forms and outcomes were conditioned by the turbulent environment of institutional micro-politics and government macro-politics. Sehoole proposed that merger form and outcome were contingent on whether there was strong institutional leadership, strategic leadership, and

strong proactive government intervention. The political interactions affected whether there was autonomy or incorporation, whether there was choice of incorporating partner, and who owned college plant and property, after merging which were important to participants.

Bates and Santerre (2000) mathematically analysed closures and mergers in higher education in the U.S.A. from 1960 to 1994, and revealed a direct linkage between merger rate and tuition fee or salary changes. In this period, 1969 saw the largest number of mergers, 11. Their analysis showed that the rate of occurrence of mergers declined with increase of tuition fee rise because a one percent increase in tuition was associated with a 7.7 percent decline in merger rate. In contrast, the rate of merger occurrence increased when there was a real salary increase because a one percent salary increase led to a 16 percent increase in merger rate. This research seems to suggest that some higher education institutions are living on a financial knife-edge, and that consequently even small changes in the income stream could have rapid consequences on viability.

Harman and Harman (2003) have reviewed recent international experience of mergers in higher education. They point out that mergers have been used by both national governments and institutions, and that there can be different degrees of collaboration between institutions: ranging from informal cooperation, to a certain amount of coordination, through to formal institutional mergers or amalgamations. They define a merger as "the combination of two or more separate organizations, with overall management control coming under a single governing body and single chief executive" (p.30). The new institution usually assumes all assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the former separate institutions. However, the control structure may be of either a federal or

unitary type. Federal refers to some retention of autonomy by (prior) institutions after merging, while in the unitary case there is complete integration of the power structure. Harman and Harman (2003) point out a variety of merger purposes, for example: major re-structuring; efforts to address problems of institutional fragmentation; lack of financial and/or academic viability; low efficiency; low quality; in order to tackle financial problems; falling student demand; and competition. They identify several types of higher education merger:

- Voluntary and involuntary mergers
- Consolidations and take-overs
- Single sector and cross-sectoral mergers
- Two-partner and multi-partner mergers
- Similar and different academic profile mergers.

Harman and Harman (2003) comment that mergers tend to be more successful in 'horizontal' mergers where the potential for integration and articulation between institutional goals and visions is greater, than in cross-sectoral or 'vertical' mergers where visions are less likely to be similar. This comment appears to contradict the conclusion of Goedegebuure and Vos (1988) that the greater the differences of status and power of institutions the higher the chances of a successful merger. Clearly, there is some disagreement among researchers concerning the criteria influencing success and failure in merging.

Key stakeholders can have an important influence on the merging process, according to Harman (2000). For example in several cases, Harman identified that key stakeholders showed low transparency, a lack of communicating important information, and a low level of consultation. These factors could have contributed to merging difficulties.

Harman and Harman (2003) emphasise that culture is an important consideration in mergers. Academic culture refers to the historically transmitted patterns of shared meaning and values (Harman, 1989). From a recognition that university cultures tend to be different from higher education college cultures, Harman (2002) has proposed five dimensions for distinguishing cultural differences: academic role (looser or prescribed); professional loyalty (to disciplines or to institution); teaching versus research (value emphasis); reward structure basis (from research or teaching); and governance styles (democratic or hierarchical). The degree of difficulty in merging appears to depend on several factors: the number of partners involved; their institutional characteristics; the degree of voluntary choice about merging; the academic profile and culture of merging institutions; whether it is consolidation or take-over. Harman and Harman (2003) conclude that effective leadership with sensitivity to human and cultural factors are critically important to achieving a successful merger.

The important role of culture is emphasised in several other studies. For example, Scott (1988) looked at the merging of James Cook University and Townsville College of Advanced Education (TCAE) in Australia, and noted that conflict was created in the merged institution because many staff remained loyal to the identity and culture of their previous separate institutions. The initial idea for merging came from Australian Government pressure who recognized the high unit costs of two small institutions. Meeting and negotiations continued from 1967 to 1982, because there was staff resistance particularly in TCAE but it was political pressure which forced the merger through eventually. In order to study the merger, Scott (1988) carried out interviews with 30 people involved in the amalgamation process but there were no interviews with people near the top of the decision process and few interviews with people who were satisfied with the amalgamation, so the study was imbalanced. Also, Rechter and Scott (1988) noted a highly competitive staff culture during the merging of La Trobe University and the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences (LIHS) in 1988.

Both La Trobe University and LIHS voluntarily proceeded with merging even though the initial stimulus came from Government pressure that single-purpose education colleges should merge, however there were other specific influencing pressures and constraints. La Trobe emphasised research excellence and general student education but before merging had an emphasis towards the Arts, and wished to enlarge the Sciences side. However, La Trobe was not allowed to open new science departments by the Australian Government. LIHS had accommodation problems which it wanted to solve to expand, however it did not want to lose its identity, reputation and status, and staff fought to retain this identity, which delayed the merger for about seven years. The proposed merger was expected to save 1.4 million Australian dollars annually.

Subsequent case study research (Gamage, 1992) identified a number of particular merger issues at La Trobe University:

(1) the acute shortage of suitable accommodation at the LIHS and the hidden agenda to preserve its identity;

(2) the existence of schools of behavioural and biological sciences in both institutions and the problem of their integration;

(3) the academic programmes and staff profiles of the LIHS;

(4) the cost of amalgamation and concerns regarding the distribution of research funds;

(5) the problem of associate professorship titles and status for the principal lecturers of the LIHS.

Also, culture was the research focus of Wallace (1996) who charted the culture shift following the merger of three schools. Wallace pointed out that "reorganisation may entail a change in age range of pupils, removal of classrooms, closure, creation of a new institution, or merger" (p. 460), and that uncertainty follows the initial announcement, creating stress for teachers, and jobs are at risk. The study traced the transition of staff professional cultures and political perspectives during the merger and tried to identify who had the power to shape staff culture and identity. The head tried to build a unified culture. However after the merger there were persistent subcultures – from the pre-merged infant department staff and from the group responsible for promoting the unified culture - which created a perception of a remote head. The process of culture transformation was beyond the control of anyone or any group. The main lessons from the study were, firstly that merging can save money but the cost is teacher stress, disruption of management and education (unless additional resources are provided), and secondly that the new designated

head may have responsibility without authority during the transition, which can limit their influence on the culture shift. Clearly, culture, and how it is dealt with, are important factors for consideration in achieving merger success and avoiding failure.

Hazelkorn (2004) has highlighted the pressures on educational institutions which are driving change across the OECD: "globalization and internationalization; changing demographics and enrolment patterns; technological revolution; stricter regulatory environment; new educational sites and formats; changing nature of the workplace and of academic work" (p.2). In particular, it is important to recognize that students, government and society have differing needs and expectations: Students, as "citizens, consumers or clients" (p.1), are increasingly concerned about the education quality of institutions and their career prospects; Governments believe that higher education can contribute to the economic prosperity and national prestige; Society wants higher education to serve the community "acting as catalysts and facilitators for knowledge and technology transfer and social, cultural and intellectual activities" (p.1). The wider context of the merger decision is seen as the balancing of the differing needs and expectations of students, government and society, against the background of international change in the OECD. Consequently, whether the differing needs and expectations of students, government and society have been adequately considered during merging must be considerations for deciding influencing factors of success or failure.

Frame analysis research was used to study the merging of two universities in Australia in 1996 - Kalgoolie College and Western Australia School of Mines (Pick, 2003). Frame analysis has been used previously by Rein (1983) and Schon and Rein (1994) with the aim of making complex policy development more understandable, because "a frame integrates theory, facts, interests and action" (Rein, 1983: 96). The analysis examined how differing and competing interpretations and commitments affected how the merger proceeded.

Multiple sources of data were used to triangulate findings e.g. taped interviews with participants, participant observation, questionnaire, various organizational documents, plans, policies, press reports etc. The study identified three important influencing frames on the merger at different times - regional, social and economic development; education for industry; and economic rationalism. Some researchers (e.g. Fisher, 1997, and Welsh and Chesters, 2001, have criticised frame analysis because there is no agreement about how to identify and use a frame, and there can be over-emphasis on the importance of particular frames. This seems to suggest that researchers must be careful not to impose their own perspectives over-strongly about contexts at the expense of the views of the people in the c o n t e x t .

Higher education mergers are not restricted to private establishments nor to the developed countries of the West. For example, Sharpe (1999) presents a translation of a 1997 China National People's Congress strategy discussion on re-structuring needs in the higher education sector in China. In China, a realignment of colleges and departments took place in the 1950s when the emphasis was on 'separation' into different establishments, whereas in a new realignment in the 1990s the emphasis had changed to one of 'recombination'. The strategy change had followed a recognition by many Chinese education leaders that China needed a single comprehensive university system rather than many scattered colleges and that the hope was that this amalgamation of colleges and universities would lead to a quantum leap forward.

In the 1950s, the higher educational structure in China was decided by the interests of the major regions and the professionals there. Most provinces established colleges and universities of their own to serve the local needs for development. The institutions were

small but complete, but in fact most of them simply replicated what was done in many other areas. Consequently, it was recognized that there was need for a combination programme involving combining and merging of institutions to minimize replication and strengthen the education and research within China. The educational set-up in China differs from most other countries in that its top universities are all specialized in the various disciplines, and none of them offers a comprehensive range of multiple disciplines covering the arts and humanities, the sciences, engineering and technology, agrarian sciences, medicine, finance and business, economics, law, foreign languages and international studies. The old structure of small colleges and universities led to major imbalances between the number of students graduating in some disciplines and the expected requirements of the country in the coming decade. For example, the People's Bank of China found that the number of students studying finance was already greater than the expected societal needs, and this could lead to disappointment for graduates as well as wasted educational resources. Also, more recently insufficient students were enrolling for mathematics courses.

Overall, narrow education had focused too much on the industrial sciences and technologies, and tended to ignore law, economics, and political science. However, it was recognized that merger programmes needed to be conducive to development and stability. Hence, merging must only proceed in stages by taking careful and secure steps. Qingdao University had been formed by merger of four institutions--the former Qingdao University, Shandong College of Textile Industries, Qingdao Medical College, and Qingdao Teachers' Vocational School" (p.2). Integration was carried out in stages over four years in the areas of administrative structuring, organizing the curriculum and discipline clusters, carrying out

an in-depth interdisciplinary exchange of scholarship, and setting up common integrative teaching programs.

The purpose of merging is for better effectiveness, not just for greater size. Care was needed in the naming of the merged institution, and the appointing of the new president, and it was recognized that no mention should be made in terms of who was swallowing whom, it had to be 'mutual marriage'. People had to be agreed that merging was the right direction to take. It was thought that it would generally be easier to merge a weak institution with a stronger one, but less easy to merge institutions of equal strength and standing. Also, the history of institutions could be a factor for consideration. There are difficulties such as budgeting, human resources, and, in China, the problem of having three overseers - the departments of the central government, the provincial governments, and the municipal governments all involved in the promotion of education. - so it is essential for people to have a concept of the new whole at the start.

In China, there is the problem of power imbalance because the departments of the central government and the provincial government are both much bigger than those of the municipal government, but they are both remote and difficult to consult. Therefore, roles, responsibilities and obligations must be defined and finances must be sufficient. It was recognized that a benefit incentive mechanism was necessary to make the mergers work, and the management system of the schools may need reforming. At the strategy discussion it was pointed out that merging institutions must seek two effects: effectiveness of scale,

and effectiveness of cross-disciplinary integration. If the separation distance between the institutions is too far and these two effects are absent, then merging would be futile.

Zhiping (2000) argues that the initial inspiration for the merging of China's universities was external, it came from outside the China education system. Zhiping proposes it stems from 1980 when Nobel Prize winner Chen Ning Yang suggested to China's leadership to reform education and develop 10 world class universities.

Sharpe (2003) presents another translation from China which details how to "to re-adjust the management system of the ninety-three regular higher education institutions, and seventy-two higher learning institutions for adults, secondary vocational schools and technical schools" (p.1). The report illustrates the top-down nature of higher education merging in China because it details the organization and procedures of implementation, the roles and responsibilities for the management and the implementation of the re-structuring.

Clearly, the China National People's Congress strategy discussion reported by Sharpe suggests many factors for consideration when looking at success and failure during higher educational mergers.

From carrying out an historical and documentary analysis of policy change in China, Mok (2005) attributes the changes on the education structure in China to the pressures of globalization creating a drive towards a more competitive and efficient system. Before the late 1970s the influencing model was the Soviet Union. However the opening up of the

economy to the outside world made the old higher education model inappropriate. Reform emphasised local responsibility, diversity of opportunities, multiple sources of funds and decentralization of power. There was major re-structuring. In 1998, 1999, and 2000, the leadership of 151, 59 and 97 universities, respectively, were transferred from central state council and central ministries to local governments. In fact, university mergers occurred from 1994 onwards, and in year 2000, 556 higher education institutions merged to become 232 institutions. This is seen as the 'rolling back' of micro control by centralized state by Mok, from intervention to deregulation to a marketization led model.

Previous research also contains several examples of failed mergers. Lamb (1988) described some of the lengthy merger discussions that took place between the University of New England and Armidale College of Advanced Technology in Australia from 1971 and 1983. Both institutions had suffered declining student enrolments. However, the institutions could not agree on how to amalgamate and focused on defensive strategies. There was resistance inside the university to a greatly enlarged education faculty. Also, Armidale did not want to lose its identity, and resisted the merger but was threatened with loss of federal funding. However, following a political change this threat was withdrawn, so the discussions ended and the two institutions remained separate.

Martin (1996) looked at the case of merging higher education institutions in South Australia in 1991. The Dawkins (1987) proposal was for merging to produce one or two large universities. The outcome was three universities: Flinders University merged with the adjacent Sturt campus of SACAE (South Australia College of Advanced Education), the University of Adelaide with the city campus of SACAE and the Roseworthy Agricultural

College, while the Magil, Salisbury and Unidale campuses of SACAE amalgamated with SAIT to form the new University of South Australia. The single university plan failed because there were several losers and only one winner. The predicted economies and greater course design flexibility failed against the protective instincts of entrenched administrators. Several proposed mergers have indicated an overall difficulty in coping with political and organizational change and factors such as centralization, job survival, group dominance, coalitions of resistance, defensive strategies and federal/state rivalries.

Hoff (2004) highlighted the complexity of merging from the case of a merger idea which failed. The idea was to merge a low achieving school with a nearby high achieving school. There was strong opposition from parents of pupils at the high achieving school that they did not want pupils travelling to a reportedly high crime area. However, many parents of pupils at the low achieving school also opposed the merger because they didn't want pupils attending a school outside their community. Clearly, there is a need for consensus among the affected people on both sides of the merger that merging will bring improvement for them, otherwise merging has little chance of a successful outcome.

It can de deduced from the above literature that, although there is some disagreement among researchers concerning the effects of differing status and power and their influence on success and failure in merging, the chances of merger success appear to be enhanced if some factors are included, such as - maintenance of trust, and no job losses (Humphal, 1971); large difference in size or status (Goedegebuure and Vos, 1988); strong strategic leadership (Sehoole, 2005); a merger negotiation process, good planning, agreement of all institutions (Harman and Harman, 2003); high transparency, and student consultation (Harman, 2000); meeting needs of students, government or society (Hazelkorn, 2004); care

taken with naming, someone in control, sufficient finance, good role definition (Sharpe, 1999; 2003). Moreover, it can be deduced that for success other factors should be avoided, such as - personal stress, uncertainty, anxiety, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust, organizational stress (Humphal, 1971); highly competitive staff culture, political intervention perceived as unwelcome (Rechter and Scott, 1988); threats to jobs, coalitions of resistance, defensive strategies (Martin, 1996); loss of status (Zhiping, 2000); declining tuition fees (Bates and Santerre, 2000).

Thus, there is extensive prior research in the area of mergers in education and higher education which seems to indicate that mergers often have both supporters and opponents, involve cultural, social, political and international issues, and can involve some difficulties resulting in success or failure. However, none of the reviewed literature has reported in-depth qualitative interviews with stakeholders involved in mergers to elucidate differences between successful and unsuccessful cases, and the literature search using key words revealed no publications concerning mergers in Taiwan. All these points suggest that more knowledge and understanding of mergers could be beneficial and indicates that the subject is worthy of further research. Furthermore, examination of the above previous literature raises a number of important questions to ask concerning mergers which are covered in the next section.

2.4.2 Questions raised by the literature review

The conclusions, comments and discussions in the previous literature, reviewed in Section 2.4.1, point to many relevant and important factors for consideration of how and why a particular education merger has succeeded or failed. These factors are now presented in the

form of questions likely to be relevant to merger success or failure. The reference source of my main inspiration for discerning each question is indicated, however, several of the questions were inspired by more than one of the reference sources.

From Humpal (1971):

Did the merger cause personal stress – uncertainty, anxiety, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust?

Did the merger cause organizational stress?

Did the merged institutional absorb all members of the previous separate institutions?

How much did staff trust the decision makers?

How important is maintaining trust, in your view?

From Meek (1988):

Were there political or financial pressures for merging?

Was it a cross sectoral merger?

From Goedegebuure and Vos (1988):

Were there differences in size or status between the establishments?

Were these differences large or small?

Were power differentials influential in shaping the merged entity?

From Sehoole (2005):

Is it autonomy or incorporation?

Was there choice of incorporating partner?

Who has ownership of college plant and property?

Was there strong institutional leadership, strategic leadership, strong proactive government intervention?

From Bates and Santerre (2000):

Were there changes in tuition fees or salary just prior to merging?

From Harman and Harman (2003):

Is it a consolidation or a take-over?

Is it a single sector or a cross-sectoral merger?

Is it a two-partner or multi-partner merger?

Were the previous academic profiles similar or different?

Are there problems of - major re-structuring; institutional fragmentation; lack of financial viability; academic viability; low efficiency; low quality; financial problems; falling student demand; competition; technology changes; globalization; new regulations?

Was merging from an internal initiative or from external pressures?

Did the separate institutions have different cultures?

Are there institutional history factors to take into account, and have they been?

Was the merger well planned?

Was there a merger negotiation process?

Was there a merger strategy?

Was it agreed by all institutions?

Was there a shared vision?

How did merger implementation take place?

Was degree of difficulty in merging connected with: the number of partners involved; their institutional characteristics; the degree of voluntary choice about merging; the academic profile and culture of merging institutions; whether it is consolidation or take-over?

From Harman (2000):

Concerning the role of key stakeholders: Was transparency high or low? Was important information communicated well or poorly? Was consultation wide or narrow? Were students asked for their opinions?

From Harman (2002):

Concerning your former institution: Was the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Was your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Was teaching or research most valued?; Was the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Was the governance styles mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical? Did this create problems during merging?

Concerning the new institution: Is the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Is your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Is teaching or research most valued?; Is the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Is the governance styles mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical? Does the new institution have a coherent culture? Has the previously separate institution retained any autonomy?

From Scott (1988) and Rechter and Scott (1988):

Do staff remain loyal to the identity and culture of their previous separate institutions?

Was there a highly competitive staff culture during the merging?

Was there political intervention which was perceived as unwelcome?

Did economic advantages only appear minimal?

From Hazelkorn (2004):

Will the merged institution meet the needs of students? Government? Society?

From Sharpe (1999, 2003):

What is the purpose of merging?

Has care been taken in naming the new institution?

Who will be the new President?

Do the involved people all agree that merging is the right direction?

Is it a mutually agreed and beneficial 'marriage'?

Does someone have a concept of the new whole?

Who will be in control?

Will any one be in control?

Are roles and responsibilities defined adequately?

Does the new institution need a new management system?

Are the finances sufficient?

Are the human resources considerations sufficient?

Is there effectiveness of scale, in terms of size and geographical closeness?

Is there effectiveness of cross-disciplinary integration?

Is there a benefit incentive scheme?

Is legislation necessary to achieve standardization and improvement?

From Zhiping (2000):

What will be the merging rules?

Which name has more value and who chooses it?

Could loss of well-known name, mean loss of status?

From Pick (2003):

Has the merger process been evaluated?

From Martin (1996):

Were any of the following factors issues for stakeholders: centralization, job survival, group dominance, coalitions of resistance, defensive strategies and federal/state rivalries?

Many of the above questions, which are discerned from the comments and conclusions of indicated previous researchers in this field, will be used as the basis for the design of an interview guide later in this thesis (Section 5.4).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has firstly briefly looked at Chinese organizational culture. It secondly examined the current position concerning higher education in Taiwan, and thirdly carried out a review of previous literature about education mergers.

Published literature about Chinese organizational culture indicates that Taiwanese organizations generally involve the traditional centralized top-down hierarchical decision making and are likely to adopt the traditional Chinese culture of respect for traditional practices and authority. The literature suggests that Taiwanese education is centrally

managed, and there has been a shift towards a market driven approach, all of which must be considered within the strong tradition for a top-down decision making culture.

The overview of higher education in Taiwan revealed that there are 158 higher education institutions in Taiwan and that most undergraduates in Taiwan attend private higher education institutions. However, since the public higher education institutions seem to get a much larger state contribution than private higher education institutions, the private higher education institutions have a proportionately greater dependence on the academic fees from students, and are therefore likely to be more vulnerable to the economic and other environmental pressures outlined in Chapter 1.

The review of previous literature about education mergers revealed that mergers occur in both capitalist and communist countries and that there is extensive prior research in the area of mergers in education and higher education. This indicates that mergers often have both supporters and opponents, involve cultural, social, political and international issues, and can involve some difficulties resulting in success or failure. However, no previous literature has attempted to elucidate differences between successful and unsuccessful cases, and the literature search using key words revealed no publications concerning mergers in Taiwan. The review indicated that the subject is worthy of further research. Furthermore, the previous literature raised a number of important questions to ask concerning mergers.

CHAPTER THREE

MERGERS IN TAIWAN:

Description of the successful case, the unsuccessful case, and the role of the Ministry

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the successful and unsuccessful cases of higher education merging in Taiwan for which access was gained to carry out the primary data collection by qualitative

interviewing, as reported in detail in Chapter 5. The first part of the chapter contains details of the successful case, and the second part presents details of the unsuccessful case. The purpose of looking at the successful and unsuccessful case histories and structures before and after merging is to learn about both cases in order to see if there are obvious differences in history and structure which could have contributed to one merger attempt being successful and the other merger attempt being unsuccessful, and to support or deny data and comments provided in the qualitative interviews. The cases are labelled as successful and unsuccessful using the working definitions adopted in Section 1.3, in which a merger is considered successful if it remains a merged entity four years on, and the histories presented confirm this qualification. The third part of the chapter provides information about the official role of the Taiwan Ministry of Education as derived from published sources to see how it links in with higher education merging.

3.2 The Successful Merger Case: National Chiayi University.

3.2.1 Structure before merging

In 2000, two previously separate higher education institutions in Taiwan – a teacher training college, and a technology college (both public colleges) - merged into one university called National Chiayi University. This university still exists in 2006 and therefore qualifies as a successful merger case for the purpose of this research according to the working definition in Section 1.3.

The teacher training college was called National Chiayi Teacher College (also often referred to as Chiayi Teacher College). The National Chiayi Teacher College was first established in 1957 with the name "Taiwan Provincial Chiayi Teacher School" (http://www.ncyu.edu.tw/eng/about/history.php). It was located on the Linsen Campus as today, which was the former location of Linsen Elementary School. Chiayi Teacher College was established with the aim of nurturing excellent teachers for elementary schools to satisfy the teaching load to be filled in the elementary schools from both Chiayi and Yunlin. In 1966, the school underwent a reformation and was renamed "Taiwan Provincial Chiayi Normal College," a five-year junior college that accepted junior high school graduates. Furthermore, to meet the need for the development of pre-school education in Taiwan, a two-year program for the education of kindergarten teachers was started in 1983. With regard to on-the-job training education, a summer program was established in 1970, while the evening program was established the next year (1971). The Minsiun Campus was built in 1987, and in July of the same year, the school was upgraded and reformed as the "Taiwan Provincial Chiayi Teacher College" and started taking undergraduates. An evening program was also established for the continuing education of the administrative staff from elementary schools and kindergartens. In 1991, the college was subordinated to the central government control, and it was renamed the "National Chiayi Normal College." The administration, along with most of the departments, was relocated to the Minsuin Campus in 1992. On the solid foundation of the undergraduate programs, the graduate programs were started in 1994 and the Ph.D. program was launched a few years later. During its history of 43 years, the Chiayi Teacher College educated numerous excellent teachers for elementary schools, kindergartens and nurseries, along with talented people in the fields of school administration, educational administration, and researchers in the field of national education. At the same time, National Chiayi Teacher

College was responsible for providing teaching assistance to the elementary schools and kindergartens in Chiayi and Yunlin campus, and contributed a lot to the improvement and development of primary education and pre-school education in the area. The cultivation of excellent teachers, the rich and abundant ambiance of humanities and arts have been the special features of National Chiayi Teacher College.

The technology college was called National Chiayi Technology College (or Chiayi Technology College). The teaching establishment that eventually became the National Chiayi Technology College was established in 1919 with the name "Taiwan Public Chiayi School of Agriculture and Forestry" (http://www.ncyu.edu.tw/eng/about/history.php). Its aim was to nurture talent in the fields of agriculture and forestry in Taiwan. In 1921, it was renamed the "Taiwan Provincial Chiayi School of Agriculture and Forestry" and was further reformed in 1945 as "Taiwan Provincial Chiayi Vocational School of Agriculture." In 1965, the school was upgraded to a five-year junior college, and it became the Taiwan Provincial Chiayi Agricultural Junior College. In the year 1971, a two-year evening division program was established at the college. In 1975, a two-year day program was launched and in 1981, the college became subordinated to central government control and it was renamed to become the "National Chiayi Agricultural Junior College." In July, 1997, the college was again upgraded to be "National Chiayi Institute of Technology." During this long period of development, the location of the school changed quite a few times. The first location of the school was at Shan-Tzai-Ding (The Hilltop), or the present location of the National Chiayi Senior Commercial Vocational School. In 1938, it was relocated to today's Minsheng Campus. In 1985, the school administration was relocated to the present location of Lantan Campus. Throughout its long history of 81 years (before upgrade to university), the school combined the fields of nature, science and industry, and there was

academic and technical collaboration with countries like the United States, Japan, Korea and the Philippines. It made itself into the national cradle for the cultivation of Taiwan's agricultural elite, and consequently regards itself as having a special education role in Taiwan. The baseball team from Chiayi Agricultural School won tremendous victories in Koshien and became famous in Japan and Taiwan. It pioneered the craze for baseball sport in Taiwan and it is still famous for this today.

3.2.2 Structure of National Chiayi University after the merger

After the merger, National Chiayi University is now structured into six main colleges or institutes, with a total of 51 departments (http://www.ncyu.edu.tw/eng/about/).

The six colleges and institutes are:

(1) College of Teaching

(2) College of Agriculture

(3) Academy of Life Sciences

(4) College of People's literature and Art Skills

(5) Institute of Technology

(6) College of Management

3.2.3 Staff numbers before and after merging.

There are both full time and part time teaching and support staff in National Chiayi University. Some details are presented to give a useful picture of the university. Table 3.1 shows the numbers of full time staff – teaching and support workers - from 1995 to 2004,

in order to illustrate the progression both before and after merging completion in year 2000 (National Chiayi University Merger Report, 2004).

Table 3.1 Full time Staff Numbers Before and After Merging

(A = Chiayi Technology College; B = Chiayi Teacher College; C = National Chiayi University).

Year	Institution	Teacher	Staff member	Fellow workers	Security staff	Subtotal	Total
1995	A	291	74	63		428	634
	B	128	51	27		206	
1996	A	294	74	60		428	639
	B	130	54	27		211	
1997	A	322	74	59		455	668
	B	128	58	27		213	
1998	A	319	71	56		446	665
	B	132	60	27		219	
1999	A	298	70	61		429	659
	B	140	63	27		230	
2000	C	465	129	88	12	-	694
2001	C	470	131	84	12	-	697
2002	C	486	132	75	11	-	704
2003	C	489	129	74	11	-	703
2004	C	493	132	73	11	-	709

3.2.4 Categories of student in 2004.

At National Chiayi University there are both full time day students and evening/weekend students. The day student population in 2004 is 8405, and there are also 3020 training students who received evening and weekend teaching. The total student population consists of doctoral, masters, bachelor, college, training and credit class students as shown in Table 3.2 (National Chiayi University Merger Report, 2004).

Table 3.2 Categories of all Students in 2004 in National Chiayi University

	Doctor's class	Master's class	Bachelor 4 year	Bachelor 2 year	2 or 3 year-college student	Credit class	Subtotal
Department (day)	46	1221	6218	855	65	-	8405
Training (evening/ weekend)	-	894	905	898	1	322	3020
Total	46	2115	7123	1753	66	322	11425

3.2.5 Day student numbers before and after merging.

Table 3.3 shows the total day student numbers from 1994 to 2004, to illustrate the progressive change in the day student population over this time period and both before and after merging (National Chiayi University Merger Report, 2004). The day student population has grown year on year except when it shows a small fall in number of students in year 2000, and again in year 2004.

Table 3.3 Day student number totals before and after merging 1995 to 2004.

Year	Chiayi Technology College	Chiayi Teacher College	Subtotal	National Chiayi University
1995	4300	1303	5603	-
1996	4404	1395	5799	-
1997	4554	1516	6070	-
1998	4779	1717	6496	-
1999	4850	1915	6765	-
2000	-	-	-	6674
2001	-	-	-	7132
2002	-	-	-	7724
2003	-	-	-	8524
2004	-	-	-	8405

3.2.6 Teacher to student ratios in National Chiayi University from 2000 to 2004.

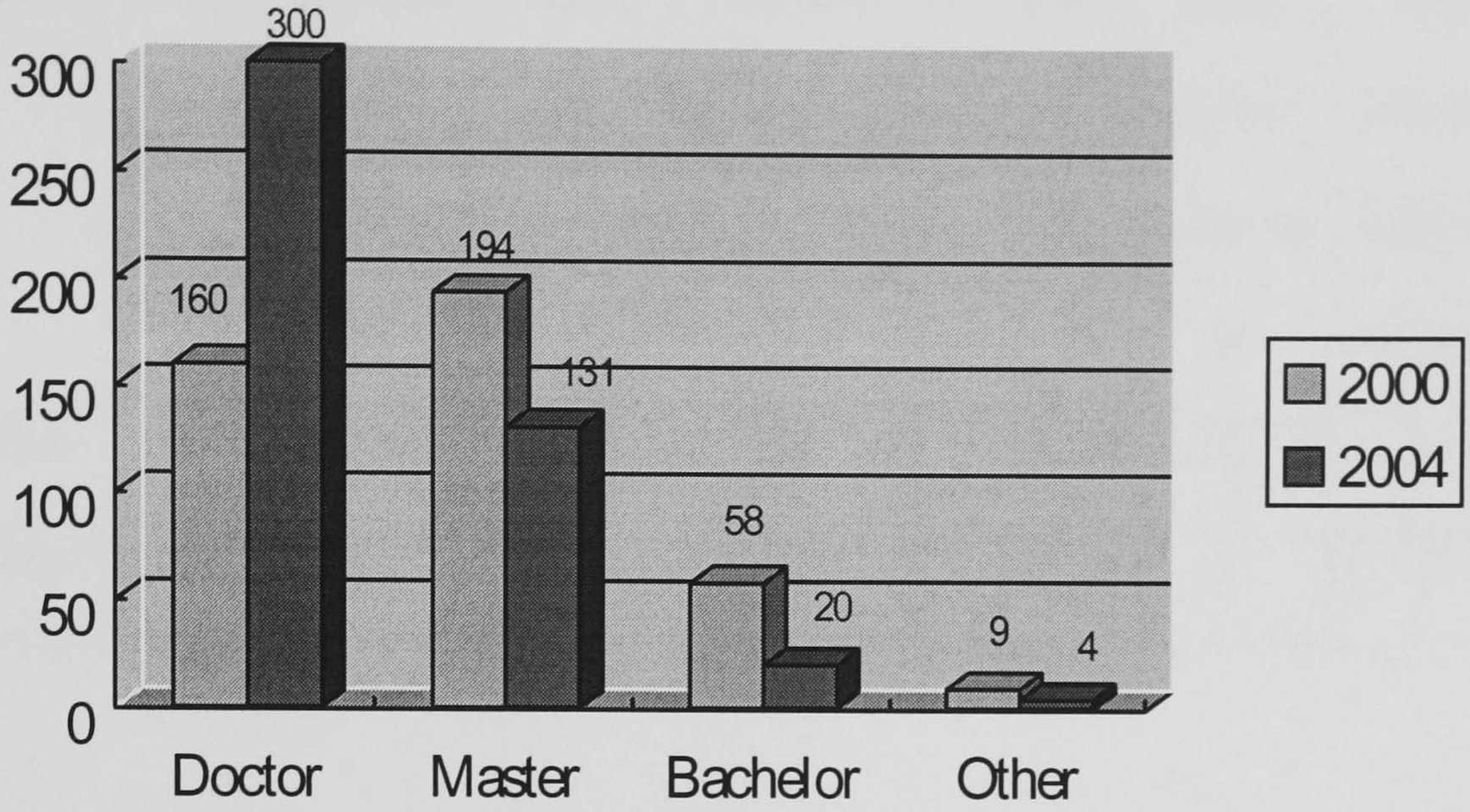
Since the merger to create National Chiayi University in 2000, up to year 2004 the rise in the day students has been much greater than the rise in the number of full time teachers (National Chiayi University Merger Report, 2004). Therefore, the number of day students for each full time teacher has increased on average from around 14 in year 2000, up to 17 in year 2004 (Table 3.4). The ratio of full time teachers to day student number is presented as this is the ratio used by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan.

Table 3.4 Full time Teacher : Day student ratio from 2000 to 2004 in National Chiayi University

	Number of teachers	Number of students	Ratio
2000	465	6674	1: 14.4
2001	470	7132	1: 15.2
2002	486	7724	1: 15.9
2003	489	8524	1: 17.4
2004	493	8405	1: 17.0

However, although on average there are fewer full time teachers for the students, the quality of the teaching staff in terms of the number of doctoral standard teachers has risen, as shown in Figure 3.1. Figure 3.1 shows that there were 300 doctoral teachers in 2004 compared with only 160 in 2000. The number of teachers with only a Masters degree has fallen from 194 to 134, from 2000 to 2004, with the rise in doctoral qualifications. The number of teachers with only Bachelors degree has risen from 20 to 58.

Figure 3.1 Teacher's quality growth statistical chart, year 2000-2004



In fact, as shown in Table 3.5, there are also part-time teachers together with the full time teachers with degree level qualifications.

Table 3.5 Full and part time teacher with degree level qualifications.

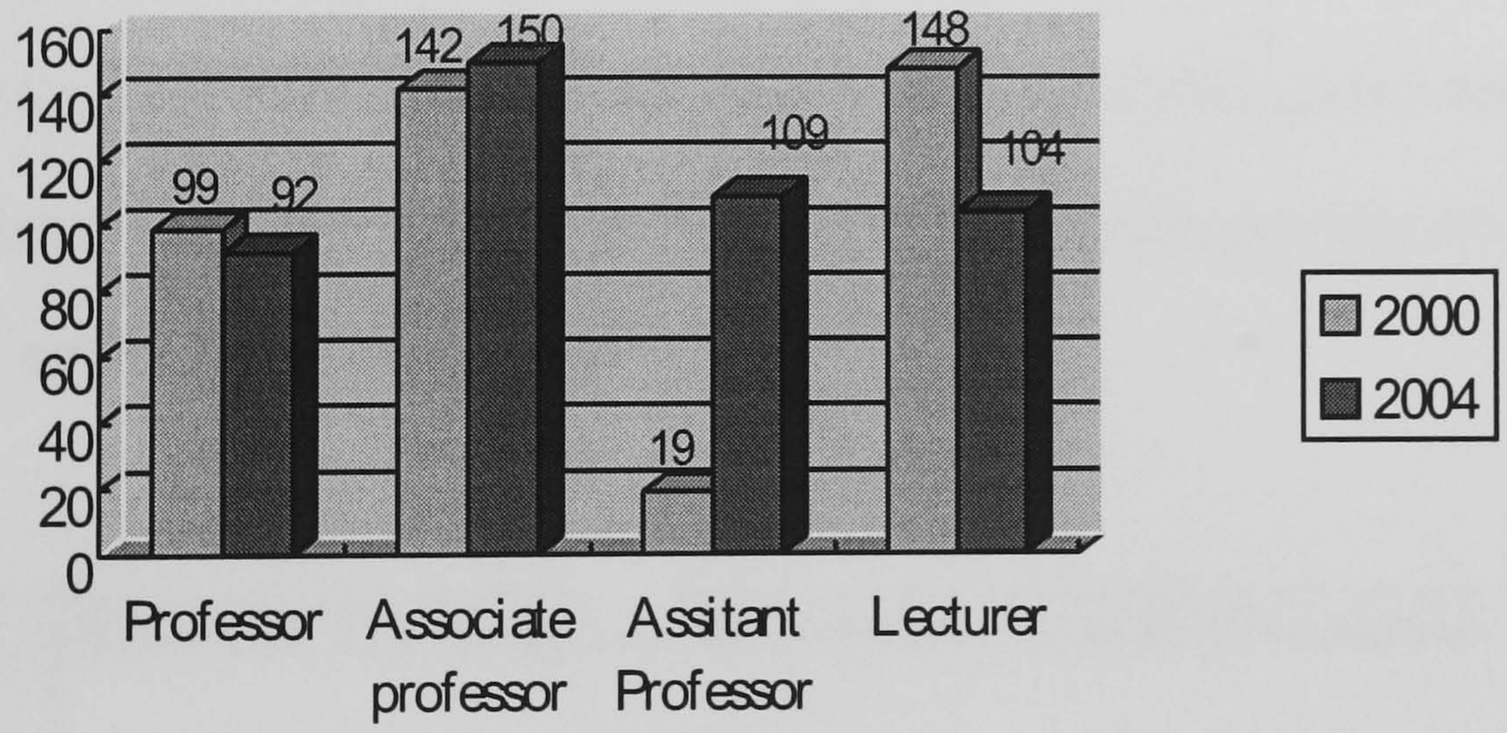
	Doctor	Master	Bachelor	Other	Total
Full-time	300	131	20	4	455
Part-time	92	138	19	2	251

In addition, the trend toward a more highly qualified teaching staff is also reflected in the breakdown of professors and lecturers, as shown in Table 3.6 and Figure 3.2. Figure 3.2 shows that, from 2000 to 2004, although there has only been a slight rise in the number of Professors and Associate Professors, there has been a huge leap in the number of Assistant Professors, compared with the reduced number of lecturers.

Table 3.6 Breakdown of all teaching staff in 2004

2004	Professor	Associate professor	Assistant Professor	Lecturer	Assistant	Army partial personnel	Rare scientific/ technical personnel	Total
Full-time	92	150	109	104	10	23	5	493
Part-time	33	44	37	137	0	0	0	251

Figure 3.2 Breakdown of Professors and Lecturers in 2000 and 2004.



Also, the increasing quality of the academic staff can be illustrated by looking at the academic research results from 2000 to 2003 (Table 3.7). The table indicates a year on year rise in the total amount of published works which suggests the increasing quality of the university.

Year	Table 3.7 National Chiayi University academic research results, 2000 to 2003.								
	Journals				Conference	Books	Copyright	Other	Total
	SCI	SSCI	EI	Other					
2000	51	3	3	185	154	45	6	11	458
2001	67	1	1	162	198	44	1	8	482
2002	60	3	5	171	247	53	10	13	562
2003	81	5	2	199	270	27	13	25	622

Table 3.8 shows the budgets of the colleges and merged university prior to, and following, merging (National Chiayi University Merger Report, 2004). Table 3.8 illustrates that the budgets were generally rising year on year for each separate institution and the total continued to rise for two further years for the merged institution. However, during 2003 and 2004 the budget has declined each year although it is still greater than the total of the two institutions just prior to merging. In contrast, day student numbers rose by about 24 per cent from 1999 to 2004 (Table 3.3).

Year	Table 3.8 The budgets of the successful case (NTD million)			
	National Chiayi Teacher College	National Chiayi Technology College	National Chiayi University	Total
1996	373	601		975
1997	385	621		1005

1998	438	702		1139
1999	439	696		1135
2000	600	1007		1607
2001			1797	1797
2002			2084	2084
2003			1962	1962
2004			1717	1717

3.2.7 National Chiayi University Philosophy and Strategy to progress present situation

The university has an ultimate goal which is to "attain truth, goodness, and beauty through excellence in research, professional training, cultural and social services". The university stated that its main values are "honesty, simplicity, action, innovation and service", in order to become renowned both nationally and internationally (http://www.ncyu.edu.tw/eng/about/developments.php).

The overall strategy statement to the Ministry of Education in the National Chiayi University annual report of 2004 set out the aim to improve the university and study environment, improve teaching quality, promote the academic research level, and make the budget develop steadily (National Chiayi University, 2004). More specific progress steps were made as follows:

Progress construction of the administration building;

Progress the building of the management college;

Develop the focus of the administrative affairs of schools;

Work to improve teaching skills quality, and specifically set up a teaching incentive system to praise teacher's professional dedication , encourage teaching morale and reward excellence;

Extend the network tutoring system website;

Implement the school motto “honesty , strength, competence, innovation , service”.

National Chiayi university seeks to attain increased administration efficiency and to develop better services provisions by developing into a learning community. It will try to achieve this through “regular in-service training programs, improved teaching by increased competitiveness, from regular teacher evaluations, new teaching methods and techniques to promote creativity and critical thinking in students, and from raised research standards”. This can help to bring more research grants, awards, exchanges and cooperation programs with both national and international universities. (http://www.ncyu.edu.tw/eng/about/developments.php).

3.3 The Unsuccessful Merger Case:

In 2001/2, two educational institutions – the Taipei Municipal University of Education and the Taipei Physical Education College - tried to merge into one university. The merger process proceeded for about one year but then ceased in 2003. In 2006, the two institutions remain separate educational establishments, therefore this case represents an unsuccessful merger case as defined in Section 1.3.

3.3.1 Taipei Municipal University of Education (TMUE)

By 2000, the Taipei Municipal University of Education had existed for one hundred and five years. Because of its long history and several name changes it is still variously referred to by one of four names: the Taipei Municipal Teachers College, the Multiple Teacher College of Taipei, the Taipei Teacher Training College, and by its present official name the Taipei Municipal University of Education.

The college was originally established in 1895 as the Academy of Language in Chih Shan Yen, Taipei when Taiwan was under the rule of the 21st year of Emperor Kuang Hsu's government, in Ching Dynasty, Japan (http://reg.aca.ntu.edu.tw/college/search/colshow.asp?selid=3101). The aim was to cultivate competent Japanese translators and to promote Japanese culture in Taiwan. The hundred-plus years of development and improvement of this university can be viewed in terms of four periods:

(1) Japan's Occupation Period (1895-1945). The government of Japan set up the Academy of Language in Chih Shan Yen, Taipei, in July, 1895, however, in 1896, the school was transferred to Tsu Shih Temple in Wan Hua and constructed on the present site, with a new name "the Language Grammar School." Again, in March, 1919, the former Government of Taiwan renamed the school "the Taipei Normal School." In 1927, the Japan Government divided the school into two branches: the south area, which only admitted Japanese students, was named "the Taipei First Normal School," while the newly constructed area, which mainly accepted Taiwanese students, was called " the Taipei Second Normal School." Nevertheless, in 1943, the

two schools merged into one, entitled "the Provincial Taipei Normal School," offering pre-course programs, a major program, and a lecture training program to develop Taiwan's future teachers' education.

(2) Female Teachers Period (1945-1964). After Taiwan's restoration, in 1945, our Government replaced the school's name with a new one, "the Provincial Taipei Normal School for Girls." The school set up many teacher training programs, which included the Normal Teachers Training Program and the Two-year Simple Teachers Training Program, the One-year Teachers Training Course and the Three-year Normal Teachers Program, the Four-year Normal Teachers Program and the Three-year Kindergarten Teachers Program, the Spring Teachers Training Course and the Special Teachers Program.

(3) Vocational School Period (1964-1987). In August, 1964, the school was promoted and renamed "the Taipei Municipal Normal School for Women." However, when Taipei became a Special Municipality in July, 1967, the school was re-entitled "the Taipei Municipal Normal School for Women." It retained its education systems and customs, and provided the Primary School Teachers Training Course and the Primary School Teaching Guidance in Taipei. In 1979, the school became co-educational and was renamed "the Taipei Municipal Teachers Junior College."

(4) University of Education Period (1987 up to now). The school was upgraded to become a prominent, city-supported institute of higher education and assumed the name "the Taipei Municipal Teachers College," on July 1st, 1987, setting up the four-year university system. Despite experiencing a long-term development and numerous

changes of school name, the Taipei Municipal Teachers College, with its excellent teachers and abundant facilities, remarkable teaching research, high academic status, and its alumni's prominent achievements, showed that the school's main purpose, to provide professional education positively and to cultivate outstanding teachers in junior-high, primary school, and kindergarten, has not changed. To match the Government policies and school development, the school advancement project includes to strengthen education, enrich school facilities, and to merge the Taipei Physical Education College into the University. It is hoped that, with teachers' and students' efforts, society's and government officials' supports, and alumni's help, the Taipei Municipal University of Education will become one of Taiwan's best higher-education institutes.

To meet Government policy, accommodate the city's demands, push up vocational education, and collaborate with other business incorporation, the Taipei Municipal University of Education planed to cultivate some capable business staff and to keep close contact with other business sectors, to create mutual development and a big triumph. The departmental adjustment and increase of the Taipei Municipal University of Education hinged not only on the needs of the cosmopolitan area development, but also on the manpower demands of the Government policies in the 21st century, and, thus, the school has set up more departments which combine vocational education in the Nei-hu Science Park and the Nan-kang Software Industrial Park. Also, in combination with Taipei city's medical system, the university has organized older people's education, and also health and recreational education for all citizens, opened many practical programs, and is promoting local business growth (http://reg.aca.ntu.edu.tw/college/search/colshow.asp?selid=3101).

The most important part of the Taipei Municipal University of Education's transition was, under the Ministry of Education's (but only since becoming a university) and Taipei's Department of Education's help and guidance, that, by the change of school name, teachers and students could cohesively improve the school's systems. Through its transition and the change of school name, the university aimed to eliminate conservative thinking and school systems, simplify and rebuild the administration organizations to enhance its efficiency. Also, they aimed to re-focus their numbers in the teacher-training classes to alter their direction into developing a Special Education Department, a Culture Department and a Social Science Department, and, additionally, to accommodate the importance of knowledge service and to match the future possibility of creative business. The aim was to change from a simple teacher-training program into cultivating both teacher-training and other business-training projects. This included designing foresighted plans and helping students to develop a second specialty in order to help the school to develop both diversity and flexibility, and to encourage student specialisms and professional certificates, all of which can boost the school's academic research and pragmatic application development to make a more competitive edge. Taipei Municipal University of Education believes it has undergone a "positive transition" and that it has not only responded to the "impact and the challenge of the College of Education system", but further it has helped accomplish the preliminary plan of the Taipei Physical Education College's integration, creating a "successful cornerstone of school-integration development" (http://reg.aca.ntu.edu.tw/college/search/colshow.asp?selid=3101).

According to the "Organization Regulation of Taipei Municipal Teachers College, 2003", admitted by the Ministry of Education in June, 2003, the job positions of this

college prior to 2003 were as follows: one principal, 232 teachers, 25 teacher assistants, 11 military instructors and 1 medical teacher. Therefore, the total for teaching staff was 270.

By 2003, the reported teaching numbers had changed, there were: 197 teachers, 22 teacher assistants, 11 military instructors, 1 medical teacher, and 87 other teaching employees, giving a total of 320.

3.3.2 Taipei Physical Education College (TPEC)

By 2000, the Taipei Physical Education College had been in existence for 32 years. It was officially established in August, 1968. The purpose of the establishment of the school was to fulfil governmental policies concerned with developing physical education for all people in Taiwan. The Taipei Physical Education College was given the task of the cultivation of elite standards in sports, physical education teachers of all levels, sports coaches, researchers in physical science, leaders in sports and excellent workers in the field of physical education in society. The goal was to satisfy the requirement of the long-term national policy in developing physical exercise and sports (http://www.tpec.edu.tw/).

The first president Mr. Lin, Hong-tan started the grand plan of establishing the school and continued until February, 1977. Then, President Liu, Shaw-ben took over. President Liu carried out President Lin's plans of "pursuing excellence and continuous development" (http://www.tpec.edu.tw/). In October 1985, President Tsai, Te-lung continued with the plan with "great enthusiasm and a reforming mind" (http://www.tpec.edu.tw/). In March 1994, President Tsai transferred to The National Academy of Physical Education, and Dr. Cheng, Hu took over the office. President Cheng set the primary goal of upgrading the school to be a college. The status and standing of the school steadily developed and

became a college in 1996. President Cheng, Hu retired in August 2002, and President Yang, Jongher, Ph.D., the current president, took the office on July 7th of 2003.

President Yang focused on improving the administration work with the ideological concept of running the school with "macroscopic, open-minded, harmonious, revolutionary, caring and encouraging qualities", to carry out his responsibilities and enhance the chances of the school (http://www.tpec.edu.tw/). He also hoped to bring a balance to "sports and competition, humanity, art, and science". He set the goals of enhancing "the academic quality, pursuing efficacy for the sake of enhancing the efficiency, seeking fairness in handling matters so as to consolidate the spirit of humanitarianism and build a campus of warmth and harmony" (http://www.tpec.edu.tw/).

From 1998, there have been seven departments: Department of Recreational Sports Management, Department of Dancing, Department of Aquatic Sports, Department of Land Sports, Department of Martial Arts, Department of Ball Games, and a two-year Department of Physical Education. The Graduate Institute of Exercise and Sports Science was established in 1999. In the academic year of 2003, the Department of Physical Education and Health was set up, and then in 2004, the Graduate Institute of Sports Technology, the Graduate Institute of Sports Pedagogy, The Graduate Institute of Sports Equipment Technology and Science, the master's program of the Department of Recreation and Sport Management and the master's program of the Department of Dancing were subsequently added to the list (http://www.tpec.edu.tw/new/eng/index.html).

For the purposes of enhancing the teaching environment and quality, the college is working hard on the construction of a new campus in Tien-mu. With great expectations from the

faculty and student body, Taipei Physical Education College started on the construction of the new teaching building in 2002, the construction of the building of TPEC and the Shih-Hsin Building was commenced in 2004. Taipei Physical Education College took over the management of Tien-mu Baseball Stadium in January 2006 and the school relocated to the new Tien-mu Campus in July 2006. All the modern equipment and software can give the college a brand new look, and by then, TPEC can be a specialized school and represent the cradle of professional talents in physical education and the main force for promoting the development of physical education in Taiwan.

3.3.3 Teachers, Students and Budgets of Taipei Municipal University of Education and Taipei Physical Education College

It was in 2001/2 that Taipei Municipal University of Education (TMUE) and Taipei Physical Education College (TPEC) tried to merge into one university.

There were differences in the numbers of teaching staff, students and graduates of the two colleges as illustrated for years 2000/1, 2003/4, 2005/6 in Table 3.9 (http://www.edunet.taipei.gov.tw/public/publicx.asp?SEL=52; Education Statistics, 2004). TMUE is bigger in terms of staff, classes, students and graduates from 2000 to 2005. Both show growth in numbers of staff and classes. TMUE shows growth in students and graduates, while the figures for TPEC do not show much change.

Table 3.9 Numbers of teaching staff, students and graduates of the two colleges for year 2000/1, 2003/4, and 2005/6

Year/ College	Full time	Number of	Total number of	Total number of

	teachers	classes	students	graduates
2000/ TMUE	189	98	3420	804
2000/ TPEC	93	36	1965	417
2003/ TMUE	226	112	3591	950
2003/TPEC	124	40	1753	509
2005/ TMUE	228	133	3939	908
2005/TPEC	136	51	1954	405

However, the budgets of the two colleges from 2001 to 2005, which are presented in Table 3.10, reveal a different story (http://www.edunet.taipei.gov.tw/public/publicx.asp?SEL=52)..

Table 3.10 The budgets of the unsuccessful merger colleges (NTD million)

Year	Taipei Municipal University of Education	Taipei Physical Education College
2001	630	296
2002	1068	375
2003	766	404
2004	728	732
2005	705	841

Table 3.10 illustrates that at the time of the merger negotiations in 2000/1, Taipei Municipal University of Education had more than twice the budget allocation of the Taipei Physical Education College. However, since 2002, the budget of TMUE has fallen by about

thirty per cent to around 705 million NTD, while the budget of TPEC has more than doubled to 841 million NTD. Therefore, although Taipei Municipal University of Education was much bigger financially than Taipei Physical Education College at the time of merger negotiations in 2000/1, TPEC is now financially more substantial than TMUE. TPEC receives income from external sponsoring companies, and is benefiting from interest in the coming 2008 Olympics.

Thus, since the failed merger attempt, TMUE has grown in all aspects except budget, while TPEC has grown in staff, classes and budget, but not students and graduates.

3.4 Official Role and Strategy of the Taiwan Ministry of Education

For 2500 years, China has had a government office overseeing education with the overall aim of developing culture and maintaining social order through education (http://rs.edu.tw/english/home_ministry.htm). The Ministry of Education, R.O.C., was founded in 1912, to make and implement national educational policies to give a "solid foundation for societal transition, democratic development, cultural attainment, and economic achievements".

According to the Taiwan Ministry of Education "the goal of education is to allow every student to show their full potential and become individuals who can make contributions to society, the nation and mankind" (Education in R.O.C., 2005: 4). Furthermore, innovation is the source of a nation's power, so education plans should possess foresight to meet the challenges caused by globalization and international competitiveness. This requires analytical thinking, innovative, awareness of societal duties and global perspectives. The

role of the Ministry of Education is regarded as crucial because it can influence the overall development and advancement of the nation's education policies and power.

Before the 1980s and the emergence of democracy in Taiwan, the avenues for political participation for the common members of society were limited, so education policy was mainly planned by the Ministry of Education, following the policies of the central government. During the 80s, Taiwan moved towards a plural, democratic and open model of society. In 1994, the Alliance for the Education Reform Movement was set up, and pushed forward concepts of education modernization (Tu, Cheng-Sheng, Minister of Education, Education in R.O.C., 2005).

In order to ensure the full development of education in Taiwan, the 13th Chapter of the Constitution, section 5 clearly states that "all citizens should have equal access to education, and that the poor should be given greater financial assistance" (Education in R.O.C., 2005). Furthermore, it stipulated that citizens have the right of education and that the goal of education was the cultivation of people with "good character, democratic thinking, concepts of law and order, cultural achievement, healthy and with the abilities of judgment and creation".

On May 14, 1998, the Ministry of Education's Educational Reform Action Program was approved by the Executive Yuan, with the allocation of a special budget equivalent to $5 billion US dollars for five years, for this unprecedented project, in order to propel Taiwan forward into an "era of educational reform" (Lu Mu-lin, 2005; http://rs.edu.tw/english/home_ministry.htm). Several key points regarding Taiwan's current higher education transformation and reform were identified: Special emphasis was to be put on "the quality and quantity of opportunities available to Taiwanese students;

Development of Programs For Increased Student Enrollment and Academic Excellence; and Establishment of an International Component in order to achieve excellence in education".

Furthermore, within this period the Ministry of Education continued with seven important policies:

1.The Establishment of a Legal Foundation for Universities

2. Active Promotion of a Multiple-channel Entrance System

3. Continuation of University "Academic Excellence" Development Projects

4. Establishment of an Internationalized Environment for Higher Education

5. Establishment of Lifelong Learning Society

6. Developing a Knowledge-based Economy Educational Foundation

7. Promoting Cooperation between the University and Business Sectors.

The academic excellence program included plans for more on-the-job training in graduate schools, pre-education programs in Universities, and implementation of policies for increasing and adjusting departments and enrollment at Universities. The educational reforms started in 1998 resulted in the creation and development of higher education institutions with more autonomy because of relaxed higher education legal restrictions (Lu Mu-lin, 2005). The educational reforms are still continuing in 2006. This reform program resulted in a rapid expansion of higher educational institutions and the availability of education for all sectors of the population. However, this has led to an increase in quantity and a decrease in quality in higher education. There appeared to be a lack of diversification or development of specialty areas within the university environment and, because of the

globalization trend in higher education, a need to work at upgrading Taiwan's universities to meet international standards was recognized.

In order to further improve the quality of university standards in Taiwan a five-year USD400 million dollar "Academic Excellent Development Project" was launched in 2000 (Lu Mu-lin, Nov .6, 2003; http://140.111.1.22/english/home_press.htm) . The first phase of 16 projects were awarded a total of USD130 million in grants. In July 2001, a sub-project entitled "Improving University Fundamental Education" was implemented with the purpose to explore how to best utilize and develop the teaching and research resources within university settings in order to push Taiwanese universities to conduct research and refine their teaching methods. It was considered that Taiwan had too many small higher education establishments and fewer larger universities were needed to raise standards and compete internationally. Thus the Ministry of Education encouraged some merging between higher education establishments. The encouragement to merge was in the form of a promise to increase the funding for the merged institution above what it would have been if the institutions had remained separate establishments.

The Ministry of Education has two goals concerning the development and promotion of higher education - Developing and Promoting Higher University Education, and Supporting and Encouraging Cooperation for a More Inclusive Internationalized Environment (Lu Mu-lin, Nov .6, 2003). The Ministry would like at least one of its universities to be ranked among the top 100 leading international institutions of higher education, within the next ten years and to have at least one university ranked as number one, within Asia by the next five years. In order to encourage and motivate the universities, a Taiwan scholarship was established. Four areas of classification were established for universities. These

classification areas are research, teaching, profession and community and new development. Seven universities have been selected for present excellence (National Taiwan University, Tsinghua University, Chao-Tung University, Central University, Yang-Ming University, Cheng Kung University, and Sun Yat-Sen University) and for the past several years, the Ministry of Education has provided extra budget to help these universities to pursue excellence. Over the period 2003 to 2008, the Ministry will distribute $50 billion NT dollars to increase standards. A similar monetary plan, with slight variations, is being implemented for university departments that would like to be ranked as number one within Asia by the year of 2008.

It should be noted that the Ministry of Education role only directly applies to public universities (such as National Chiayi University, TMUE and TPEC), however its control of finance coupled with the top-down hierarchical culture in Taiwan, suggests its influence can be crucial in mergers.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described the background to the successful and unsuccessful cases of higher education merging which represent the focus of this research, and the philosophy within the Taiwan Ministry of Education which is encouraging merging of institutions in higher education in Taiwan.

National Chiayi Teacher College was first established in 1957 for the cultivation of excellent teachers with emphasis on creating a rich ambiance of humanities and arts. National Chiayi Technology College was first established in 1919 particularly to nurture talent in the fields of agriculture and forestry, and more recently in the fields of nature,

science and industry. It made itself into the national cradle for Taiwan's agricultural elite, and consequently regards itself as having a special education role in Taiwan. Thus, both institutions have a long history, and have contributed to higher education in Taiwan though in mainly different specialisms. These two colleges merged in 2001/2 to form National Chiayi University, which still exists as a merged university in 2006 and therefore qualifies as a successful case as defined in Section 1.3.

Taipei Municipal University of Education (TMUE) was originally established in 1895 as the Academy of Language to cultivate competent Japanese translators and to promote Japanese culture in Taiwan. Subsequently, it educated a wider range of teachers. Currently, the university aims to eliminate conservative thinking and to simplify and rebuild the organizations to enhance efficiency.

Taipei Physical Education College (TPEC) was officially established in August, 1968, to develop physical education for all people in Taiwan by the cultivation of elite standards in sports, physical education teachers, sports coaches, researchers in physical science, leaders in sports and excellence in physical education in society.

Thus, both Taipei Municipal University of Education and Taipei Physical Education College have long histories, and have both contributed to higher education in Taiwan though in mainly different specialisms. They were completely separate establishments prior to 2001 and tried to merge into one university.in 2001/2. However, they remain separate institutions in 2006. This example therefore qualifies as an unsuccessful merger case as defined in Section 1.3.

The role of the Taiwan Ministry of Education was identified to be concerned with beneficially influencing the overall development and advancement of the nation's education to meet the challenges caused by globalization and international competitiveness with the goal of every student showing their full potential to make contributions to society, the nation and mankind.

Over the past two decades, the Ministry of Education oversaw educational reform which resulted in a rapid expansion of higher educational institutions and the availability of education to all sectors of society. However, this increased quantity and was perceived to decrease quality in higher education. There arose a perceived lack of diversification and specialty areas within universities and, because of globalization trends, a perceived need to upgrade Taiwan's universities to better meet international standards. A USD400 million dollar "Academic Excellent Development Project" was launched in 2000. The Ministry of Education felt that Taiwan had too many small higher education establishments, and needed fewer larger universities to raise standards and compete internationally. Thus the Ministry of Education encouraged merging between higher education establishments. The encouragement to merge was a promise to increase funding for the merged institution above what it would have been if the institutions had remained separate establishments.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY 1

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the subject of research and how knowledge can be acquired, in order to choose an appropriate research approach for the study. The methodological approaches which have been used by previous researchers for carrying out research, and their strengths and weaknesses, are considered, and explanation is made about the choice of methodology for this study.

4.2 Research Methods

The ways by which mankind can inquire into, make sense of, and ultimately understand, the world fall into three categories - experience, reasoning, and research (Mouly, 1970). These three categories are all valuable means for mankind to search for truth, acquire knowledge and gain understanding of the world. However, they must not be regarded as independent of each other because they are complementary and overlapping (Cohen et al, 2000).

Kerlinger (1973) has defined research, the third of these categories, as the systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena, which sounds like the 'scientific method', and research is often associated in the minds of people with the scientific method. Zikmund (2000: 40) defines the scientific method as

"the use of a set of prescribed procedures for establishing and connecting theoretical statements about events, for analysing empirical evidence, and for predicting events yet unknown. There is no consensus concerning exact procedures for the scientific method, but most discussions of the scientific method include references to 'empirical testability'. Empirical means that something is verifiable by observation, experimentation, or experience."

Punch (2000) sees the scientific method in two parts, firstly real-world data, and secondly, theory which explains what is observed. Social science refers to the study of human behaviour using the scientific method.

Borg (1963) views research as a combination of both experience and reasoning, and observes that research has been particularly successful in the search for knowledge in the natural sciences. However, research is also very important to social science and education, and contributes knowledge in terms of description, prediction, improvement and explanation (Gall et al, 2003).

Thus, research can involve exploration of real world data or theory, and requires data collection by observation, experiment or experience, and/or the making and testing of theory, and the concept of verifiability is an important characteristic in science. Research in the social sciences can be regarded in terms of three components – construction of theory, collection of data, and design of methods (Gilbert, 1993), and research is often categorised into quantitative and qualitative approaches (Punch, 2000).

The following sections look at quantitative and qualitative approaches, what they offer, strengths and weaknesses, the theories underpinning them, and examines the implications for the choice of the research methods to be employed in the proposed research project.

4.3 Quantitative Approaches

Bryman (2004) notes that the quantitative research tradition exhibits many of the features of the natural sciences approach. Bryman distinguishes five different quantitative approaches which are valuable for inquiry and data collection in the social sciences. These are:

(1) Surveys

(2) Experiments

(3) Analysis of previously collected data

(4) Structured observation

(5) Content analysis.

Sarantakos (1997) indicates that surveys are the most widely used form of data collection in the social sciences. In the survey method, data is collected by either oral or written questioning from the population under study. The oral questioning is termed 'interviewing' while the written questioning is achieved using 'questionnaires'. The questions can be administered face-to-face, by telephone, by mail, by email, or by internet. Compared with interviewing, questionnaires have several advantages if care is taken in their design. They are less expensive than interviewing, they can produce fast results, they can be anonymous and completed at the convenience of the respondent, the results are not biased by the interviewer presence or attitudes, there can be wide coverage using a consistent uniform

measure, and they can receive a considered response as files can be consulted. Also, the quantitative findings can be statistically analysed and represented by simple summary measures representing whole populations. The limitations of questionnaires are that there is no opportunity for motivating participation, or probing, prompting and clarification of answers, the respondent identity and consideration of the questions is unknown, the order of answering is unknown, partial responses may occur which cannot be followed up, and relevant additional information may be missed. Questionnaires, remotely administered, can suffer a number of problems such as low response rates, non-response bias, the different understandings of respondents to questions, and the fact that information is a 'cross-section' at a particular time. However, surveys are widely used and rated a valuable data collection route provided care is taken in the questionnaire design and interpretation. Interviewing in the quantitative method uses a structured approach involving a strict pre-planned procedure with an interview guide (the questionnaire) which is administered face-to-face to individuals or groups. The interviewer is required to ask questions like a 'robot' to maintain presentation consistency and try to minimise bias.

Experiments are the major quantitative data collection method in social psychology (Bryman, 2004). Experiments involve at least two groups – the experiment and the control - consisting of randomly selected people. The two groups are treated in as an identical a way as possible except that only the experimental group is subjected to the experimental stimulus (the independent variable). Observed differences between the two groups are attributed to the independent variable. This experimental approach can produce valuable knowledge even with small groups, but large groups, or care with sampling design, may be needed to achieve the statistical significance of findings beyond random variation (Sarantakos, 1997).

The analysis of previously collected data is another quantitative approach. This can involve the examination and exploration of figures, records and statistics published by governments and local governments, non-governmental organizations, world or regional organizations, companies, groups, or individuals. This is a valuable approach to produce data for interpretation or re-interpretation.

Structured observation is the name given to research in which observations are made using a particular programme plan and the data which is generated is presented in a quantified form.

Content analysis is the name given to the analysis of the communication output of media in quantitative terms which can be used for classification, and other, purposes particularly concerning newspapers and broadcast TV content, and often involves summary statistics.

4.4 Qualitative Approaches

Van Maanen (1979) proposes that the term 'qualitative methods' has no precise meaning but is umbrella terminology for methods to describe, decode, or translate the meaning, but not frequency, of social phenomena. Patton (1990) identifies ten themes of qualitative inquiry in qualitative approaches: naturalistic inquiry; inductive analysis; holistic perspective; qualitative data; personal contact and insight; dynamic systems; unique case orientation; context sensitivity; empathic neutrality; design flexibility. Different authors identify and emphasise different qualitative approaches. Gall et al (2003) identify in particular: Case study research, Investigation of lived experience, Investigation of life and culture, Ethnography, Investigation of Language and Communication, and Historical

research. Bryman (2004) focuses on participant observation, which is part of ethnography. Cassell and Symon (1994) identify a variety of qualitative approaches particularly: the Qualitative Research Interview, Discourse Analysis, Participant Observation, Analysis of Company Documentation, and Case Studies.

Let us briefly look at five of these:

(1) Qualitative Research Interview

(2) Ethnography

(3) Case Study

(4) Historical Research

(5) Discourse Analysis

Interviewing is the most widely used qualitative approach in organizational research according to King (1994). In general, qualitative research interviews are characterised by low structure, mostly open questions, and focus on specific situations and sequences. The aim of the qualitative interview is "to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand how and why he or she comes to have this particular perspective" (King, 1994: 14). Sarantakos (1997) notes that qualitative approaches are characterised by unstructured or semi-structured interviews in contrast to the strictly controlled standardised structure in quantitative interviewing. In the qualitative interview, the interviewer and interviewee have a different relationship than in the quantitative interview. In the quantitative interview the interviewee is seen as a passive research subject and the interviewer must minimise interpersonal impacts. In contrast, in the qualitative interview, the relationship is part of the research process because the interviewee is seen as an active participant in the research, who can change the interview course. 'Rambling' answers by interviewees can be unwanted distractions in quantitative interviews, but in

qualitative interviews the 'rambling' is an important part requiring investigation because it is important to the interviewee (Measor, 1985). Because of the different strengths and weaknesses of the different interview approaches, the type of interview appropriate to a study depends on the nature of the research. The qualitative interview is particularly appropriate when the meaning of particular phenomena is important to the participants; individual perceptions or historical accounts are needed; exploratory information is needed; existing quantitative data needs validation or explication (King, 1994).

Ethnography is essentially an anthropological study in which the researcher finds out about, and uses, the shared knowledge of participants to gain understanding about behaviour (Gill and Johnson, 1991). Burgess (1984) identifies four depths of immersion in context for researchers

(a) Complete-participant, where the researcher has a role as a participant and covertly observes the context.

(b) Participant-as-observer, where the researcher participates in the context, makes relationships with participants but overtly observes.

(c) Observer-as-participant, where the researcher has limited involvement with the context.

(d) Complete-observer, where the researcher only observes and does not participate.

The complete-participant role has the major advantage that the researcher can make very detailed observations and gain in-depth understanding of the group dynamics without the research observation affecting the situation. Also, it can overcome the gaining-access problem of overt research. However, note taking is difficult and the covert nature of the status and role of the researcher creates an ethical and moral problem because the people under study, who treat the researcher as a colleague, are unaware that research is being

carried out on them. There is high risk of discovery of the research, immersion in context and observations can take a long time, which makes this approach expensive, and writing up may take six times longer than the time in context, but the main value is the high reliability of the naturalistic observations (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991).

The participant-as-observer role does not have the moral dilemma of complete-participant because the researcher role is known by the participants and so immersion in role is less time-consuming and less-expensive, however it is possible that the behaviour of the people being studied will not be completely natural which could affect the reliability and value of the research findings.

The observer-as-participant role means there is only occasional participation by the researcher in context activities. This role requires less time-involvement and cost than the previous two roles, but there is less-data collection and the risk that the group behaviour may be different when the researcher is not present, so information which could be relevant and important may be lost from the research.

In the complete-observer role the researcher remains an outsider from group participation. Therefore, researchers may

gain an accurate knowledge of events but may not be able to reliably explain the underlying reasons for the behaviour in the context, which may limit the value of the research findings.

Research purpose, cost, the access which is possible, the time available, and how comfortable the researcher is with the role can all influence the choice of role (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991).

Case study is an in-depth focus on a particular phenomenon, and over a period of time, and is widely used in education research (Gall et al, 2003). The purpose can be description, explanation or evaluation. Data collection and analysis are focused on the phenomenon or on particular aspects of it and may involve a number of methods both quantitative and qualitative. The key feature of case study is its emphasis on understanding processes occurring in the context from detailed knowledge usually over time which can make it particularly valuable research (Hartley, 1994).

Historical research is a "process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a past phenomenon for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of present institutions, practices, trends, and issues in education" (Gall et al, 2003: 514). The value of historical research rests in the fact that it can contribute to understanding the present educational situation by examining the past from which it originated. It can involve study of social issues, specific individuals, institutions, and social movements, exploration of relationships between events, synthesis of data, and reinterpretation of past events. It can use quantitative records, and qualitative materials including diaries, archives, documents, oral history, and relics. The researcher may act as interpreter of history, look for causal inferences, and try to form generalizations, in a search for understanding of occurrences. It can be a valuable way to gain understanding of the present.

Discourse Analysis focuses on the use of language, both spoken and written, in contexts (Marshall, 1994). It is concerned with identification and description of language usage, and with examining the consequences of particular language usage, in particular contexts. Data is gathered from texts and from interviewing. In interviews, it is recognized that participants may provide only limited accounts, therefore the active involvement of the

interviewer is important, and it is not the 'genuine' views of interviewees which are sought but their ways of making sense of the practices of the participants in the context. Discourse analysis has been valuable in examining the ways that language can be important concerning the scope of understanding of occupational role and practice, which is neglected in other more traditional approaches.

4.5 Evaluating Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

The strengths and weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative approaches derive from the differences between them. Some differences are technical, as revealed in the previous sections, but deeper differences between them are revealed below.

For Best (1981) quantitative studies use a numerical description of observations, while in qualitative studies description is not in quantitative terms. Punch (2000: 4) points out that the main distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is that "Quantitative research is empirical research where data are in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers", which could suggest that there is only a technical differentiation between the two research approaches. Proctor (2000) observes that quantitative data involves numbers and figures, while qualitative data refers to people's motivations, impressions, awareness, intentions, and behaviour. Concerning social research, Bryman (2004: 1) states that "Quantitative research is typically taken to be exemplified by the social survey and by experimental investigations. Qualitative research tends to be associated with participant observation and unstructured, in-depth interviewing".

However, Bryman points out that although technical issues are involved in the classification of whether an approach is quantitative or qualitative, there are contrasting philosophical issues underpinning each of the two approaches which it is necessary to consider in order to understand the differences between the two approaches and to evaluate their relative merits. Guba and Lincoln (1982) identify quantitative and qualitative approaches with different paradigms because they can be seen to rest on different epistemological assumptions about what constitutes knowledge and how it can be generated. Von Wright (1993) points out that the philosophy of science involves two principal traditions of empirical inquiry. One is termed positivism, and the other he refers to as antipositivism, which many other authors refer to as interpretivism (O'Brien, 1993) or phenomenology (Cassell and Symon, 1994).

4.5.1 Positivism, and its strengths and weaknesses

Positivism derives from the work of Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill. The underlying tradition of positivism is that there is "a unity of scientific method among a diversity of subject matter", that natural sciences can set a methodological standard against which to measure development and perfection of other sciences, and that scientific explanation is causal in character (von Wright, 1993: 10). Thus, according to the positivist philosophy, the assumption is that there is an objective reality about the social world, which can be uncovered using the approach of the natural and physical sciences. Cohen et al (2000: 8) point out that the positivism of Comte suggests that "all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experience".

Kolakowski (1993) maintains that positivism involves a particular philosophical attitude to human knowledge, because:

a) It does not prejudge questions about how men arrive at knowledge, but it helps us distinguish between that which may and may not be reasonably asked.

b) The data recording and collecting is according to the actual manifestation in experience.

c) Positivists do not object to getting invisible causes of any observed phenomenon, but they reject accounting for them in occult terms or something beyond human reasoning.

d) Positivist philosophy is unity of scientific method, which expresses the belief in the unity of methods for acquiring valid knowledge in all types of experience.

There are several practical methods involving a positivist philosophy, for example the inductive and deductive hypothesis methods, the experimental method, and the survey research method.

This positivist philosophical view assumes that individual cases will accord with general laws which exist in the universe, and so rejects as unscientific the explanation of phenomena in terms of factors such as intentions, goals, and purposes. The positivist view in sociology is that it is progressive, cumulative, and can be explanatory. Therefore in the positivist philosophy, the inference is that society, and behaviour within society, is explainable in terms of scientific laws and logic (O'Brien, 1993).

Sarantakos (1997) points out that quantitative research is based on the positivist philosophy, which leads to identification of several theoretical principles of quantitative research, as follows: there is only one reality (from sense impressions) which is objective, simple and positive; human beings in the social world are subject to fixed observable patterns (scientific laws); facts are to be separated from values; social science should use physical

science methods; metaphysics is rejected; explanation comes from experience which can be validated; the logical form of theory is deductive.

The strengths of quantitative approaches come from the close adherence to natural science principles, so that the findings are logical, can be replicated, and generalisations are possible which are applicable to other cases. The findings can often be statistically analysed and results can represent populations.

The weaknesses of quantitative methodology also derive from the adherence to natural science principles, in particular it is regarded as inappropriate to treat human subjects as objects, leading to a number of criticisms (e.g. Sarantakos, 1997; Bryman, 2004) most of which are summarised in the following observations. Social phenomena are not objective but are in people's minds and their interpretations; quantification can hide the real meaning of social behaviour; it can assume appearance is reality; it supports the status quo; study of reality is adjusted to fit available methods; measurement can give a biased perspective; reductionism, causality, generalisation and replication of natural science are often inappropriate for social study; researchers cannot achieve complete objectivity, and observations are not uncontaminated by scientists; prior design of research can mean omitting what is relevant and meaningful; the researchers are taken as objective experts. Furthermore, Cohen et al (2000) emphasise that the quantitative approach can give a misleading representation of social life because it ignores important factors such as intentions, individualism and freedom.

4.5.2 Antipositivism, and its strengths and weaknesses

The tradition of antipositivism is related to such thinkers as Droysen, Dilthey and Max Weber (von Wright, 1993). These thinkers reject the notion that the positivist approach is the only route to a rational understanding of reality. The natural sciences look to reveal generalisations about reproducible and predictable phenomena and therefore a positivist approach is appropriate in this case. However this contrasts with some other disciplines of inquiry, such as social science or the study of historical occurrences, in which the unique factors are often the goal of the study. The antipositivist or interpretive tradition "seeks not so much explanations and predictions of social events as understanding what meaning and what significance the social world has for the people who live in it" (O'Brien, 1993: 7). Antipositivism takes the view that the behaviour of human beings can only really be understood if the researcher is able to share their frame of reference of the world, and so the understanding comes from the inside, not the outside (Cohen et al, 2000). Thus, this tradition views social science as a subjective rather than an objective inquiry, and is associated with the qualitative approach.

Bryman (2004) points out that the main basis of the distinctive epistemology of qualitative research are: phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, verstehen, naturalism, and ethnogenics. Phenomenology derives from the ideas of Husserl (Sarantakos, 1997) that people actively create their world and experience it through consciousness. Although people create their world they are not aware of this and accept it as natural and so do not question it. So human behaviour is a result of how humans interpret their world. Symbolic interactionism "views social life as an unfolding process in which the individual interprets his or her environment and acts on the basis of that interpretation" (Bryman, 2004: 54).

Verstehen, from Weber, views sociology as concerned with understanding – from observation of the subjective meaning or from explanatory or motivational understanding. Naturalism means that researchers should not adulterate the context of study. Ethnogenics is concerned with revealing and explaining the underlying structures of sequences of interlocking human actions (Bryman, 2004).

Thus, it can be inferred that qualitative research has several strengths. It looks at people in natural contexts, and there is emphasis on interpretations and meanings to achieve a deeper understanding of the world of those people. The method has great flexibility and it treats people as human subjects or participants rather than objects.

However, some weaknesses can be recognised in qualitative research from its methodology and underpinnings. The degree of subjectivity of studies can generate questions about the reliability of findings, and problems of representativeness and generalisability. The process can take a long time and can generate a lot of meaningless information. There are often also problems of objectivity, detachment and the ethics of probing into people's lives (Sarantakos, 1997).

4.5.3 Is one approach better than the other?

From considering the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches, it is clear that the theory underpinning research is a very important consideration because this is determines the interpretation of the research. The fact is that "pure 'empirical' research is impossible" (O'Brien, 1993: 11). The theory behind research may not be acknowledged but even simple investigations will involve some prior assumptions about

the world. Therefore research is theory-dependent. This supports the view that the design of methods to investigate the social world is important in the interpretations that may subsequently be drawn out. For example, one view may be that there is only one right way of investigating social contexts, and if one method produces a biased result then this is not the 'right' way and the 'right' way must be found. This represents the view that empirical reality is the privileged source of theoretical understanding of a social context (termed empiricism). Thus researchers must be careful in their inquiries and interpretations because the social reality we see is determined by the theories we use to examine it (Gilbert, 1993).

4.6. Implications for Choice of Approach for this Study

This research is being carried out to tackle the fears and reality problem of university mergers in Taiwan. This requires exploration of the knowledge gap about university mergers in Taiwan to generate understanding.

There has only been one successful merger – National Chiayi University – and a few unsuccessful merger attempts in Taiwan. Therefore attempts to gain understanding on the basis of numerical descriptions or comparisons and the assumption that there is only one objective reality, that experiences can be validated, and that facts can be separated from values concerning mergers would seem to rule out adoption of a quantitative approach for this research.

However, the qualitative research approach which views research as a subjective rather than an objective inquiry in which values are important, and seeks to gain understanding

from the experiences, meaning and significance of the participants in the context would seem to be a highly appropriate approach for this study.

Interviewing is the most widely used qualitative approach, and interviews are characterised by low structure, mostly open questions, and focus on specific situations and sequences in order to discover the perspective of each interviewee and to understand how and why he or she comes to have this particular perspective. Other qualitative approaches such as ethnography, case study, historical research and discourse analysis would appear to be less appropriate for the present study because observation of participants before and after merging would only be suitable for studying one merger which has yet to happen and may or may not turn out to be successful four years later, similarly case study requires in-depth study over a period of time of one merger case yet to occur which may or may not be successful, historical research requires the existence of records which may or may not exist or be very difficult to access, and discourse analysis would only be justified if interviewing reveals differences in language use and understanding by participants.

Therefore, in-depth interviewing seems to be the most appropriate collection method for the primary data, because this can reveal the perspectives of participants and from these it could be ascertained if use of other research approaches would be justified for follow-up research. The interviews will probably use a semi-structured interviewing approach with a series of prepared questions but with adequate space for open discussion.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the available methods of research inquiry. These can be classified in terms of quantitative and qualitative approaches which rest on different paradigmatic assumptions. Quantitative methods are numerically based and assume an objective reality in which facts are separated from values. Qualitative methods emphasise the importance of human beings as participants rather than as objects, look at people in natural contexts, and focus on interpretations and meanings to achieve a deeper understanding of the world of those people.

The qualitative research approach using in-depth interviewing is chosen as the most appropriate approach for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY 2

5.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the explanation of methodology in the study by explaining how I implemented the methodology choice made in Chapter 4, in terms of interview process to carry out the interviews, interview guide, gaining access for the interviews, and the people interviewed.

5.2 Methodology Implementation

There were several steps in methodology implementation. First to consider was the theory and practice of interview process from previous researchers. Second to decide was the interview guide for the qualitative interviews. The third step was to gain access for the interviews and fourthly there was the issue of identifying the participants for the interviews who were appropriate to answer the questions. Each of these issues will be considered in turn.

5.3 The Interview Process

Brown and Gilmartin (1969) have noted how the use of verbal data has become increasingly widespread in empirical social research. For example, in 1940-41, 25 per cent of the empirical studies used interviews and questionnaires, while in 1965-66, 48 per cent

of studies collected primary data in these ways, although the percentage rises to 64 if verbal secondary data is included. Foddy (1996) believes that more recent sociological studies probably rely even more on data from interviews and questionnaire. Consequently, the collection and use of verbal data has a long and significant history in social research. However, Belson (1986) concluded that there are five main sources of error using this route:

(1) Respondents not understanding the intended meaning of questions

(2) Lack of interest by respondents

(3) Respondents' reluctance to admit particular attitudes and behaviour

(4) Respondents' memory failures from interview stress

(5) Interviewer failures – from word changing, poor presentation or poor recording.

Foddy (1996) outlines several cases of proven inaccuracies in verbally collected data in previous studies. This leads Foddy to identify ten sources of inaccuracy: - even factual answers can be invalid; there can be differences between what respondents say they do and what they actually do; attitudes, beliefs, opinions can be unstable; small changes in wording can bring changed responses; questions can be misinterpreted; earlier questions can affect answers to later questions; question order can affect responses; question format can affect answers e.g. closed versus open questions; some respondents will give answers to questions they know little about; cultural context can affect answers. However, several of these problems can be minimised by not using a rigid self completed questionnaire approach, but by instead using face-to-face interviewing so that the meanings of questions can be explained, if necessary.

King (1994) divides the interview process into four parts:

(1) Defining the research question

(2) Creating the interview guide

(3) Finding participants

(4) Carrying out interviewing.

The research question should be defined by reference to the question: how do participants describe and understand the element in focus? The question, or questions, should not contain assumptions of the interviewer that could introduce bias to the answer. The interview guide is not 'word-for-word in set order' but a list of topics to be covered. The guide can draw on three sources: research literature, interviewer personal knowledge, and from preliminary conversations in the research area. The degree of structure in qualitative research interviews can vary from unstructured discussion to quite detailed but flexible interview guides. Usually qualitative research interviews have a low amount of imposed structure, contain mainly open questions, and focus on specific situations of the interviewee world. However, questions should be simply phrased and only one question should be asked at a time to avoid partial answering or confusion.

The number of participants will depend on the time and resources available. Generally, transcibing a one hour interview can take at least a day and up to three days (King, 1994). Potential participants must be promised confidentiality, informed of the reasons for the research, its aims, and if and when there will be feedback of results. Tape recording of interviews can avoid the danger of interviewer bias about what it is relevant to record, but permission must be obtained from respondents prior to using tape recording (Proctor, 2000).

During the interview, which usually is started with a common easily-answered opening question, the order of topics and questions on the interview guide can be varied if discussion and probing takes different routes, and participants must be allowed to raise and talk about any other issues they think relevant, because questioning should be "as open-ended as possible.....encourage respondents to communicate their underlying attitudes. beliefs and values rather than a glib or easy answer" (Fielding, 1993: 138). Frankness is the aim, so the interviewer should be relaxed, unselfconscious, and show interest without rudeness or over-intrusiveness. Questions can be repeated for clarification, but care should be taken not to suggest any answer is 'wrong' because it does not seem to fit in with the interviewer's mindset.

Interviewees giving very short answers should be allowed time to elaborate, but the other extreme of repeated digressions with over-verbose answering should be steered gently back to the relevant area. With high status interviewees, it is important to be respectful but to be confident with one's own expertise to ask and probe with the questions. The interview can be ended by asking the interviewee for any relevant comments not already covered in the interview. Pilot testing of questions can help surface difficulties, but again tape recording is recommended (Foddy, 1996).

Reliability in qualitative interviewing does not come from 'objectivity' and 'distance' from participants as in quantitative research (which expects repeatability of results), rather it is about describing and understanding how people make sense of their world context. Fielding (1993) recommends that: interviewer guidance and direction should be minimal; interviweees should be allowed full and specific expression to include the value-laden implications of the responses. Validity, which refers to measuring what you aim to measure,

in qualitative research is reached by drawing on multiple viewpoints concerning interviewees, expert researchers, research colleagues and supervisor opinions on the research approach, because as Reason and Rowan (1981:243) write "rightness of an interpretation is *inter-subjective*...it is right for a group of people who share a similar world".

Therefore, although total accuracy cannot be relied on in any verbally collected data (Foddy, 1996), inaccuracies were minimised in this study by using the above guidelines from previous researchers which included using a relaxed face-to-face in-depth interviewing approach with a list of topics and open questions drawn from existing knowledge and research, choosing interviewees who had been involved in merging, and from the same cultural background, open-ended questions with time for frank value-laden responses, deciding on the word order and the order of questions only if thought appropriate by supervisor or colleagues, and asking interviewees to make clear if their answers to any questions came from direct personal experience or from indirect sources. Participants were informed of research aims and about feedback, and were forewarned that the interviews were to be recorded for later transcription and translation but confidentiality would be maintained by use of code letters or some description of roles and responsibilities, to which they agreed.

5.4 Interview Guide

The following interview guide for the qualitative interviews was compiled mainly from questions raised by the conclusions, comments and discussions in previous research on mergers in education, presented in Section 2.4. In the limited duration of each interview

with the busy interviewees (probably a maximum of ninety minutes at any one time), it was thought that an interview guide containing all of the questions in Section 2.4.2 would be too long to receive full answers, therefore a shorter list of forty questions, interview guide draft 2 (Appendix 1) was prepared as an interview guide. A personal trial of interview guide draft 2 indicated that this too would probably be too long, therefore a shorter version with twenty questions, interview guide draft 3 (Appendix 2) was prepared focusing in particular on aspects suggested as most important in previous research. This interview guide was pilot tested on a person in the higher education system in Taiwan to minimise difficulties and to ensure the questions were appropriate for the likely duration of interviews. The final interview guide, draft 4 below, was finalised following the comments from the pilot trial. The subjects of the questions were chosen from both previous research and my own ideas in order to try to surface the important factors leading to merger success or failure, which previous researchers attribute to a variety of factors, including in particular purpose, size, status, position, education profile, external intervention, internal politics, organizational culture, negotiation process, finance, leadership vision, planning, implementation, trust, and clear definition of roles and responsibilities. However, participants were allowed to raise and talk about any other issues that they thought were relevant and the order of topics and questions was varied if discussion and probing took different routes. Furthermore, interviewees were asked to make comments and answer questions from their own experience or in their own opinion, and to make clear if that was not the case.

The final interview guide then consisted of the following questions:

Q1. What was your role in the merger, or merger attempt? Explain.

Q2. Why did the institutions merge or try to merge? Explain.

Q3. Were there differences in size, status, history, geographic position, tuition fee, salary, education profile or education sector prior to merging?

Q4. Were prior power differentials influential in shaping the merger? Explain.

Q5. Did the institutions have the choice of incorporating partner, or of looking for other partners?

Q6. Was there proactive government or Education Ministry intervention?

Q7. Was anyone in control of the merger, and who was it?

Q8. Was there a merger negotiation process? Who was involved? Did involved people all agree that merging was the right direction? Explain.

Q9. Were the finances sufficient to complete the merger? Explain.

Q10. Concerning your institution prior to merger: What was the organizational culture like?

e.g. Was the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Was your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Was teaching or research most valued?; Was the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Was the governance styles mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical?; Did any of these create problems during merging?

Q11. Concerning the institution after merger, or attempted merger: What is the organizational culture like?

e.g. Is the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Is your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Is teaching or research most valued?; Is the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Is the governance style mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical?; Does the new institution have a coherent culture?

Q12. Was organizational culture influential in merger success or failure?

Q13. Did the merger create uncertainty, anxiety, job losses, rivalries, defensive strategies, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust? Explain.

Q14. Was the merger well planned, and well implemented? Explain.

Q15. Are, or were, new roles and responsibilities defined adequately? Explain.

Q16. Does, or could, the merged institution better meet the needs of students? Government? Society? Explain.

Q17 How much did staff trust the decision makers? How important is maintaining trust, in your view?

Q18. Was the merger process evaluated? Should it have been? Explain.

Q19. Did the merger, or merger attempt, solve any problems, or create problems? Explain.

Q20. In your view, did the merger, or merger attempt, succeed or fail? Explain why.

5.5 Gaining Access

In order to collect empirical primary data in social research, access must be gained to the sources of data (Hornsby-Smith, 1993). Thus, gaining access is an essential part of social research involving gathering new contextual data but because it is essential it is always a potentially problematic aspect of the research. The first decision for the researcher is whether to choose overt or covert methods of inquiry. In this study, the methodology to be used was the qualitative research interview. It was thought that the overt approach would be able to generate the required data, so this had to be the first choice because it is most acceptable ethically (Punch, 1986). Consequently, the research used the overt approach and the subjects were informed of the aims of the research.

However, even with this choice of inquiry approach, it was necessary to negotiate access because the access was of the closed type, that is the people with the knowledge and experience of the mergers being investigated were insiders in the universities and colleges of successful and failed mergers, and Government Ministry officials. Therefore, sensitive approaches needed to be made to institutions and individuals, because the 'wrong' approach could result in the raising of barriers to discourage inquiry by an outsider. For example, Lee and Renzetti (1992) indicate that some closed groups can strongly oppose research, and create effective barriers to inquiry.

My method of approach was to approach people and colleagues within the Taiwanese education system, both in the Ministry and others who were teacher members of successful and unsuccessful university and college mergers cases, and to explain my research aims and the potential research outputs, and to ask them to participate as interviewees. I explained that confidentiality would be guaranteed, but emphasised that the research outputs would create knowledge and guidelines for merging which should benefit the Taiwan education system henceforth, and everyone involved in it. This proved to be a persuasive argument particularly for the Ministry officials, and also for failed merger case participants because the participants agreed with the argument that guidelines could have saved them much time and resources, possibly in making better choices concerning matching the fit of institutions or procedures. The successfully merged institution was persuaded to participate not particularly for themselves but to hopefully provide information which could help other institutions and the education system, indicating a concern for the Taiwan education system beyond self interest. However, the interviewees demanded forewarning of the kind of questions which I would be asking in the interviews as a precondition of giving the interview. Therefore, I sent each of them a copy of my interview guide prior to the

interview date. Thus, the interview guide actually became an essential part of gaining access.

5.6 The Interviewees for this Study

Interviews were arranged with a total of fifteen people who had either direct or indirect involvement with the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, the successful merger case or the unsuccessful merger case. The interviewees signed the IFL Ethics Committee Consent Form of Education Studies, University of Hull, as participants in the study. They were promised confidentiality for their participation in this research, therefore each interviewee is referred to by a code letter. The code letters, titles, roles and brief job description of the fourteen people are presented below.

5.6.1 Ministry of Education

The five interviewees from the Ministry of Education are given code letters M1 to M5, as follows.

M1: Political Vice Minister of Education. This person is assistant to the Minister of Education and will be the next Minister of Education. The political vice Minister of Education receives education policy from the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education receives policy for the Ministry of Education from the Executive Yuan, the elected ruling council of Taiwan (see Figure 2.3).

M2: Chairman of the Department of Higher Education. Supervisor of Higher Education Affairs in Taiwan. This person is Chairman of the department which supervises all universities in Taiwan including both the successful and unsuccessful university merger cases considered in this research. This person reports to the Political Vice Minister of Education (M1).

M3: Chairman of the Deptartment of Technological and Vocational Education in Taiwan. This person supervises all colleges in Taiwan including Taipei Physical Education College, the unsuccessful college case. This person reports to the Political Vice Minister of Education (M1).

M4: President of National Tainan University of Arts. Former Chairman of Department of Higher Education. This person supervised all universities in Taiwan at the time of the unsuccessful merger case. This person reports to the Political Vice Minister of Education (M1).

M5: President of National University of Tainan. Former Director of Technological and Vocational Education who gave the initial permission for the merger, supplied the finance needed for the merger, and was involved in all of the meetings for the successful merger case. This person reports to the Political Vice Minister of Education (M1).

5.6.2 Successful Merger Case - National Chiayi University

The four interviewees from the successful merger case are given code letters S1 to S4, as follows.

S1: Professor of Graduate Institute of Elementary and Secondary Education, National Chiayi University; Former President, National Chiayi University. Director of Special Office; Deputy Minister of Education. Prior to start of the merger process, S1 was not affiliated with either of the merging colleges, but he was directly involved in the merger as Director of the Special Office.

S2: President, National Chiayi University; Former Vice president, National Chiayi University; Former Dean of Academic Affairs, National Chiayi Technology College; Former Dean of Academic Affairs, National Chiayi Institute of Agriculture. This person was vice-president of the larger part of the successful merger.

S3: President of Hwa Hsia Institute of Technology; Former president of National Chiayi Technology College, the larger part of the successful merger.

S4: Professor of Southern Taiwan University of Technology; Former Dean of Teachers College of National Chiayi University ; Former Dean of Education College of National Chiayi Teachers College. The smaller part of the merger.

5.6.3 Unsuccessful Merger Case - TMUE and TPEC

The interviewees relevant to the unsuccessful merger case are referred to using the code letters U1 to U6, as follows.

U1: Professor of Graduate Institute of Social Studies; Former president of Taipei Municipal University of Education (TMUE). This college was the larger part of the attempted merger.

U2: Professor of Department of Languages and Literature Education; Former vice president of Taipei Municipal University of Education. This college was the larger part of the attempted merger.

U3: Professor and The President of Taipei Physical Education College (TPEC), which was the smaller part of the attempted merger.

U4: Commissioner of Department of Education of Taipei City Government. Supervisor of all educational establishments in Taipei City and reports to Taipei City Mayor. This person gave permission for the merger, and was a former political vice Minister of Education.

U5: Assistant Commissioner of Department of Education of Taipei City Government. Assists the supervision of all educational establishments in Taipei City. This person reports to U4.

U6: Director of Higher Education, Department of Education, Taipei City Government. Supervisor of all higher education establishments in Taipei City. This person reports to U5.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has completed the explanation of methodology in the study by explaining the background to implementation of the methodology choice made in Chapter 4. The important aspects of the interview process for carrying out the interviews was described and decided upon, the list of questions drawn from previous research on merging was compiled into an interview guide involving a pilot test, the theory underlying the gaining of access for research interviews was reviewed and the method used in this study described, and the people who were decided as appropriate targets for qualitative interview were described in terms of code letters, roles and responsibilities. The thesis moves next to the outputs from the interviews.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the output from the interviews with the fifteen interviewees. In the first part of the chapter, details are given of the date, timing and duration of each interview. In the second part of the chapter, the answers of the interviewees to the interview guide questions concerning the successful merger case are summarized with preliminary analysis, using actual quotations from interviewees. In the third part of the chapter, the answers of the interviewees to the interview guide questions concerning the unsuccessful merger case are summarized with preliminary analysis, using actual quotations from interviewees.

6.2 Interview details

The dates, times and duration of each interview with the people from the Ministry, the successful case and the unsuccessful case are given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Dates, Times and Duration of interviews.

Person code	Interview date	Interview start time	Duration of interview, Hours.
M1	14/03/06	1600	1
M2	16/02/06	1430	1
M3	7/03/06	1000	1.5

M4	3/03/06	1400	1.5
M5	22/02/06	1500	1
S1	1/03/06	1330	1.5
S2	15/02/06	1400	1.5
S3	1/03/06	1000	1
S4	14/9/06	0900	1
U1	15/03/06	1100	1.5
U2	2/03/06	0900	1
U3	3/03/06	1100	1.5
U4	9/03/06	0930	1.5
U5	22/03/06	1800	1.5
U6	23/03/06	1600	1

The interview process was as follows. All of the interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. A copy of the interview guide in Mandarin Chinese had been sent to each interviewee prior to each interview, as this had been requested by most of them as a condition of consenting to be interviewed. At the interview, I outlined the aims of my research and then proceeded to ask them the questions in my interview guide. Each interview was recorded. I let the interviewees answer the questions, and any follow up questions, in their own way, even though sometimes they did not answer a question or said "no comment", or gave what seemed to me to be an incomplete or sometimes partly irrelevant answer. If this occurred, I generally asked the question, or any follow up question, again with different phrasing but I could not press anyone too vigorously because all the interviewees were senior people involved in higher education matters in Taiwan, and they

could have terminated the interview and left me with nothing, so I had to be respectful and diplomatic with the questioning and probing. A short time after each interview, I transcribed and translated the answers into English ready for later analysis.

6.3 Summaries of the Interviewees' Answers Concerning the Successful Merger Case.

In order to facilitate understanding for the reader, each question of the interview guide is considered in turn concerning the answers from the interviewees.

6.3.1 Q1. What was your role in the merger, or merger attempt? Explain.

The interviewees gave some different responses to this question, indicating that they were involved in the merger in different ways and from different sides. However, from their job titles and from what they said it is clear that they were senior people closely involved in either the colleges or in aspects of the merger.

For example, S1 answered "As the Political Vice Minister of Education and the Director of the Preparatory Office at that time, I took charge of the whole merger's plans and co-ordination with the Ministry of Education". S2 said "I was the Dean of Academic Affairs in National Chiayi Technology College, acting in a consultation role". S3 replied "as principal of National Chiayi Technology College, I took charge of the external negotiation and the internal communication". S4 commented that as "Dean of the Teacher college...I…communicated between planning leaders.. of National Chiayi Teacher College and teachers".

The Ministry of Education officials who were interviewed also had some involvement in the merger. For example, M2 (Supervisor of Higher Education Affairs in Taiwan) answered "I was responsible for this program. Later… I was instated as National Chiayi University's Chief of the Administration Department, Preparatory Office, thus, taking part in almost every group's plans and works, including personnel affairs…new information, school organization after integration, and some Ministry regulations". Also, M3 observed "I supervise all colleges in Taiwan….. I offered most support to Chiayi Technology college, especially concerning policy and regulations". Furthermore, M5 pointed out that "as the chairman of Dept. of Technological & Vocational Education. I supervised and communicated with National Chiayi Technology College and National Chiayi Teacher College".

However, M4 (Former Chairman of Department of Higher Education) said "During the process of integration, the Department of Higher Education didn't make any big move….all plans and works were fully conducted by the Department of Secondary Education, and by the Technological and Vocational Education….The first time we knew the plan was the National Chiayi University of Education's establishment…From that moment the Department of Higher Education started to get involved". Also, M1 (Political Vice Minister of Education) commented "I cannot easily explain all that I did in this case".

6.3.2 Q2. Why did the institutions merge or try to merge? Explain.

The interviewees were all agreed about the reason for the merger.

For example, S1 pointed out that "The factors that drive the National Chiayi University merging together come mostly from the Government's advocacy. The promise made by the Premier of the Executive Yuan, during the local election".

S2 supported this, saying "There was an important reason - the political promise… The Premier of the Executive Yuan made a promise in the election that there must be a university in Chiayi city. Then the Ministry of Education picked National Chiayi Technology College and National Chiayi Teacher College…two equal colleges that seek to upgrade to university".

S3 commented "The merger… resulted mainly from Government's policy. Since, the Premier of the Executive Yuan and a few local inhabitants advocated the program. There was a political policy".

Also, S4 replied "Because of the political promise from the Excusive Yuan, the Ministry of Education suggested that the National Chiayi Teachers College merge with the National Chiayi Technology College. The Teachers College got a lot of pressures from the Ministry. The Ministry controls the budget and policy of the Teachers College…That's why we went for merger".

Also, the Ministry officials all agreed it was a top down policy.

M1 observed that "The process of the merger was from high to low, not low to high. The former Minister of Education, Lin Ching Chiang, broached the idea…to the former Premier of Executive Yuan, Hsiao, who, born in Chiayi, always hoped to establish a university in his hometown". M2 noted the "integration is unusual…The Government first made the policy, through which they started to negotiate with the two schools, setting up the Preparatory Office to operate the program".

M3, M4 and M5 all said the merger "was a political promise".

6.3.3 Q3. Were there differences in size, status, history, geographic position, tuition fee, salary, education profile or education sector prior to merging?

M1, M2, M3, and M4 said they did not know these details. However, the other interviewees all pointed out that the Technology college was larger than the Teacher college, in staff, students, and area, and they had a different focus.

For example, M5 said "There were approximately 15 miles between them. The history of the National Chiayi Technology College is over 80 years, the National Chiayi Teacher College is over 45 years. The number of teachers in the National Chiayi Technology College (298) was two times that of the National Chiayi Teacher College (140). I think the National Chiayi Technology College was focused on research, the National Chiayi Teacher College was focused on teaching".

These observations concurred with those of the other interviewees. In addition, S1 commented that "National Chiayi Technology college was under the Department of Technological and Vocational Education's supervision. National Chiayi Teachers College

was under the Department of Secondary Education's supervision. The two colleges' tuition fee was quite similar, and so were their teachers' salaries".

S2 noted that "National Chiayi Technology College… occupied 2/3 of National Chiayi University…[and] had more budget than the Teachers College. Because of this, some people in the Technology College opposed the merger. They thought National Chiayi Technology College [could] upgrade to a…scientific and technology university. But the Ministry of Education wouldn't increase the budget each year…. The Technology College's culture was open, but the Teacher College is conservative. About salary, the Teacher College could get extra pay, because of the interactive teaching. The Technology College is in Chiayi city, but the Teacher College is in Chiayi county". S3 noted "[after merging] the academic status has become better; after all, a university's academic status and the education resources are better than a college. The rest of the parts did not change too much, either".

S4 commented "The Teachers College focused on teaching…But two years before the merger, [we] applied to establish more institutes and tried to put more focus on research [but were unsuccessful]".

6.3.4 Q4. Were prior power differentials influential in shaping the merger? Explain.

M1 and M4 refused to comment. M2 and M5 did not know. M3 pointed out "I didn't see power operating between the two parties... This was a policy straight from the government. They will follow the policy as near possible as they can, even if they don't like it".

Also, the other interviewees expressed the view that power differentials were not important. For example, S3 observed "[not] too much difference in their power or resources. Although the campus size of the two colleges was different, but I think it did not make any influence over the project". Also, S4 noted "In the merger… I didn't think the prior power differentials influenced the merger. As I mentioned, this merger was a political promise. The government led the merger".

However, power differentials did exist. For example, S2 said " The Technology College was superior to the Teacher College [in budget and students]... At the beginning of idea of merger, the Technology College did not want the merger. The Teacher college did npt want it either. The Teacher College was afraid of elimination from merger. The Teacher College had treasured values. Without the political promise, the merger may not have been completed". Also, .S1 commented "To the superior college – National Chiayi Technology college, merging with another was unnecessary. But to the inferior college – National Chiayi Teachers college, merging [could] engender worries that some of their facilities might be eliminated after the merger. Therefore, the inferior college might feel difficulties during the communication with National Chiayi Technology college, but this did not happen".

Thus, the answers of several interviewees actually suggest that power differentials were important influences because there were feelings of superiority and inferiority.

6.3.5 Q5. Did the institutions have the choice of incorporating partner, or of looking for other partners?

All interviewees answered either 'No, or Don't know', except for S4 from the Teacher college.

For example, S2 said "No, these two colleges were matched by the Ministry of Education". Also, S3 replied "No..[but]..Before the Government gave the merger attempt, we did not have any [other] merger attempt". Furthermore, S1 commented "There was a pressure that we have to accomplish the political promise. That's why the Ministry of Education gave a lot of guarantees to avoid worries and objections from staffs of the two colleges".

M1 replied "I do not know", and M2 said "For National Chiayi University, they had no choice about partner". This was supported by comments from M3, M4 and M5.

However, S4 replied "Yes. The National Chiayi Teachers College tried to merge with the National Chung Cheng University before (one year before the National Chiayi Technology College). But the National Chung Cheng University was too superior. Therefore, the merger attempt stopped. After that, the Ministry suggested the National Chiayi Teachers College merger with the National Chiayi Technology College".

6.3.6 Q6. Was there proactive government or Education Ministry intervention?

All interviewees agreed that there was proactive government or Education Ministry intervention, and this was critical because both were public institutions.

For example, S1 commented "the Government's help promoted these two colleges' negotiation and execution of the merger. Because the Ministry of Education guaranteed most requests in the negotiation". S2 noted "The government had tremendous influence… Probably more than 70%. Because both colleges are public. All were supervised by the Ministry of Education. If we don't follow the suggestion, the Ministry of Education may decrease the budget, or reject the application project for new departments". Also, S3 observed "Yes, both were involved in the project, but I think it is a positive movement. They offered the merger attempt, funds (240, 247 NTD for campus repair; 370,000,000NTD for Auditorium; 430,727,000 NTD for library), and new buildings (Auditorium, 2002~2003; Library, 2002~2005). Especially in the new buildings, without their support, it would take years to apply [and receive]". Furthermore, S4 answered "Yes, it was the Ministry of Education. At that time, the National Chiayi Teacher College tried to establish a few new institutes. And the Ministry will approve them [but] only if the National Chiayi Teacher College merged with the National Chiayi Technology College".

Also, the ministry officials' answers supported the above comments. For example, M1 said "The premier said this city needed a university, so the Education Ministry suggested a merger of these two colleges to achieve this". M4 agreed with this comment. Also, M2 replied "Certainly…The successful and unsuccessful merger cases are all public. Public schools' integration is different because both successful and unsuccessful merger cases

were top down suggestions. This was the case for the successful case from the Ministry. It was the same for the unsuccessful merger case, from the Taipei City council". However, M3 noted "The Ministry gave the merger suggestion, but then it was up to the two parties except that the Ministry of Education controlled the budget to make them carry on as it was a political promise", and M5 observed "if they…want to upgrade to university, it is their best chance".

6.3.7 Q7. Was anyone in control of the merger, and who was it?

The interviewees gave some different answers to this question, although most thought S1 to be in charge but recognized the Minister as a key person.

For example, S1 said "I was in control of the merger. The Minister of Education appointed me…. But I think the Minister of Education is a key player. If he didn't approve the merger, then nothing would happen". S2 thought "The Minister of Education is a key man. Because he encouraged this merger and gave lots of support in finance. The other one is the director of special office in the merger preparation. He adjusted the structure of the university". Also, S3 answered "the Minister of Education was the one. If there was...no positive promotion of the merger, this case may not be completed. The Minister of Education could offer policies to appease worries of staffs and teachers. That is a very important support". And, S4 commented "The director of the special office controlled the merger. Because he was the first president after the merger. He decided the framework of the new university. He also reassigned some staffs to different departments".

These comments were supported by M3 and M5. For example, M3 replied "the president of the university is a key factor….assigned by Ministry of Education…. The director of the merging office, he spent a lot of energy to link it up, co-ordinate too, and to support the policy, and communicating constantly. I think all these let it exactly combine, and [was] key to the good effect". Also, M5 thought it was "The director of special office...[who became] president of the new university after the merger. So he planned lots of things for the new university. For example, new buildings, campus restructure, job adjustment. Therefore, I think he controlled the merger".

However, M1 stated that "there is no such designation….Once the school convention agreed, we can find representatives, chosen by their own schools not by the Ministry of Education, to carry out the project". Also, M2 expressed no comment, and M4 said "I don't really know who was in control of the merger. Because a lot of people worked for this case".

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6.3.8 Q8. Was there a merger negotiation process? Who was involved? Did involved people all agree that merging was the right direction? Explain.

The interviewees agreed that meetings did take place prior to merging.

For example, S1 said "Yes, some representative directors of the two colleges, and some officials from the Ministry of Education attended the meeting together… all the members who attend the meeting approved that the merger is a correct decision". S2 replied "These two colleges held several conferences with their staff, in order to get agreement. After that, two representative directors of each college, the officers of the Ministry of Education, the principals of two colleges all were committee members. And all of us agreed the merger is

correct". S3 concurred, saying "Yes, we had meetings. We had representative directors from both colleges, 5~6 persons. Officers from the Ministry of Education, 5~6 persons. Experts from other universities and other countries, 4 persons. We all agree the merger is right".

However, although S4 agreed with the above comments about a merger negotiation process and numbers of people involved, he added "they all agreed the merger was the right direction. Because those people already left the merger process who did not agree to merger".

The ministry officials generally agreed with the above, although both M1 and M2 were unable to answer this question.

M3 pointed out "Yes, we had a lot of meetings. There were nearly 20 people in the meeting. You could check the records. In each meeting, we all believed the merger is the only goal to achieve". Also, M4 observed that "Both colleges negotiated for the working right, new buildings, new departments, etc. We have lots people in the meeting, including experts, directors of both of colleges, and directors of Ministry of Education. Of course we all agreed the merger is the right thing".

M5 gave more details about the meetings, stating that "Before the negotiation, each of them (The National Chiayi Teacher College and The National Chiayi Technology College) had an internal meeting and had an agreement to merge. Therefore, everyone in the negotiation meeting agreed that the merger was the correct decision. There were 5 senior administrators (president, director of academics, director of student affairs, director of general affairs)

from the National Chiayi Teacher College, 5 senior administrators (president, director of academics, director of student affairs, director of general affairs) from the National Chiayi Technology College, 6 officers from the Ministry of Education (The Minister of Ministry, 2 Deputy Ministers, Chairman of Dept. of higher education, chairman of Dept. of Technological & Vocational Education, Chairman of Dept. of Secondary Education). So, there were 16 people in the negotiation meeting".

6.3.9 Q9. Were the finances sufficient to complete the merger? Explain.

The interviewees said that there was no extra budget allocation for merging, which did not cost a lot. However the new budget after merging could help with planned changes.

For example, S1 stated that "we did not execute the merger with any extra budgets. Because in the preparatory stage, it didn't cost us too much. As to some considerable expenditure on both hardware and software, we would use the new budgets…after the merger completed". S2 replied that "the original budget of the two colleges was enough. We could operate the merger plan very well by means of the original budget even without the funding for a special office". S3 noted that "the real support from the Government was after the merger completed. Because it became a new university, it got a new budget". S4 said "There was no budget for merger".

The ministry comments did not disagree with the above comments. For example, M4 answered "In National Chiayi University's case, the Ministry of Education didn't give any budget for the merger process, because there were just a few meetings during the merger process. But we did give lots money after the successful merger, because it was a part of

the negotiation between the Ministry of Education and National Chiayi University". Also, M5 pointed out "[only] after the merger, there were a lot of institutes to be established, and offices to be adjusted etc. …These all need funds from the Ministry of Education". M1, M2 and M3 either agreed that finances were sufficient, or did not know.

6.3.10 Q10. Concerning your institution prior to merger: What was the organizational culture like?

The interviewees from the Technology college thought their college was more democratic than the hierarchical teachers college.

For example, S1 observed "National Chiayi Technology College had a democratic representative culture, but they did not want to merge. The National Chiayi Teacher College had a conservative one – they did not want to change and the power structure was hierarchical. Moreover, National Chiayi Technology College was characterized by their technology and science, always focused on developing research. However National Chiayi Teacher College, marked by their teacher-training program, always concentrated on developing their teaching and education". Also, S2 commented "The Technology College is democratic, the Teacher College is conservative. The National Chiayi Technology College is focused on research. The reward structure… is based on research. It took a lot of time to convince the staff of the National Chiayi Technology College [to merge]". S3 agreed with these comments.

S4 replied that "the president of the National Chiayi Teacher College decided most things. It was hierarchical…[and] focused on teaching. Because of it, the reward structure was based on teaching ability".

M1, M2, M3, M4, and M5 all said "I do not know".

6.3.11 Q11. Concerning the institution after merger, or attempted merger: What is the organizational culture like?

The interviewees who were able to comment on this question all thought that National Chiayi University had a friendly democratic culture.

For example, S1 commented "After merging, the whole culture became more liberal and the prospect tended towards research. For the evaluation of teachers, school research and teaching became the criteria….After the merger, National Chiayi University has a coherent culture". S2 answered "quite friendly, also democratic [like the Technology college]... Now the reward structure became semi-structured, based on research output and teaching ability…[but] The teachers of the education institute have little research". S4 observed that "After the merger, National Chiayi University is focused on research. The governance style is democratic".

M1, M2, M3, M4, M5 did not know, nor did S3 who had left the university to take up another position.

6.3.12 Q12. Was organizational culture influential in merger success or failure?

The interviewees did not think this was the case, even though the institutions both had a long history and some conservative thinking probably because of that, in the end the Government policy and inducements had won over the staff.

For example, S1 noted "In National Chiayi University, some departments from the education institute argued that they got less funding than before. They can't understand that the budget now is for the university, not for their college. These arguments happen all the time. It's the difference of culture. If we don't deal with it carefully, the university may separate". S2 said "I think the culture is a long-term accumulation. The problem for National Chiayi University is the organizational culture after merger. We have to compromise the culture gap, to deal with each other. It will take a long time, five or ten year maybe. If two colleges try to merge, and they have a similar organizational culture. That might be easier". S3 remarked "In this case, the merger may not complete without the Government's intervention. The National Chiayi Technology College had a very good connection with many enterprises. We didn't have a major problem to force us to consider merging".

M3 commented "[culture] can be very serious influence on whether the whole really can exactly combine.... The most important factor should be the feelings of their personnel, you have not to give people too great pressure, especially if they are professors, because of academic freedom". M4 said "Chiayi Teacher College had a conservative culture... established in the Japanese Occupation Period... The long historical background made them conservative... proud of what they were. That may make them hard to accept changes. In

the National Chiayi University [merger], the culture influenced the merger attempt, but not much". M5 remarked "In the Chiayi university case, I wasn't aware that the organizational culture was influential. They were very cooperative with the policy, and very peaceful in the merger. The Ministry offered many things they requested in the negotiation (e.g. extra budgets for new building after merger, guaranteed staffs' job)".

S4, M1 and M2 did not know.

6.3.13 Q13. Did the merger create uncertainty, anxiety, job losses, rivalries, defensive strategies, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust? Explain.

The interviewees generally considered that these negative factors were seemingly dispelled by government promises to protect salaries, employment and workers' rights.

For example, S1 noted "During the negotiation process, the Ministry of Education promised to protect the current staffs' job. Then, the two colleges negotiated and coordinated with their own members, reducing their misgivings towards the successful merger". S2 pointed out that "People feared about job losses. But at the beginning of the merger, the Ministry of Education guaranteed their jobs. Defensive behavior happened, but with only a few teachers. These teachers objected to the merger, even when the merger was completed". Also, S3 observed "Certainly, many were worried about their internal policies. But, specifically, the Government promised that every staff would keep the same position with no layoffs".

M1 pointed out "it was decided that... the merger would never affect wages [but could include] work transference but exclude job demotion". Also, M3 commented "We promised their working rights. In fact, nobody lost their job because of the successful case merger. If the policy can keep jobs, everything gets easy". Furthermore, M4 said "In the National Chiayi University case, the "job losses" was the thing they worried about...[so] the Ministry of Education guaranteed that nobody would get fired".

However, for M2 "The main mutual disagreement in National Chiayi University lay in their dissatisfaction at the change of school name. During the integration, some faculties of these universities were worried that some departments might be eliminated, or two schools' academic status and school customs would be strongly influenced, but this did not happen. What teachers care most about is whether the integration would change their promotion system or not". Also, M5 noted "Some people... argued which school should give up the name. But the Ministry wanted a new name, then we solved the argument. Some people worried about job losses. The Ministry guaranteed their job, even if not the same job title, but still the same salary. So, we solved their worries. That's all I know".

But merging problems may not have ended yet from the remarks of S4 who said "The rivalries happened after the merger. For example, the National Chiayi Teacher College had 1.3 billion NTD budget each year.... But now, the National Chiayi University doesn't offer the same budget for the education institute (previously the National Chiayi Teacher College). Therefore, the staff from the National Chiayi Teacher College are not happy with it". This suggests that some merger problems are now arising.

6.3.14 Q14. Was the merger well planned, and well implemented? Explain.

All interviewees except one of those able to comment seemed to think planning and implementation were satisfactory.

For example, S1 commented "Maybe we cannot fulfill each tiny plan, especially in the administration. We got three campuses, and it is very hard to make administration more efficient. But rest of the plans were executed well and engendered very good effects". S2 answered "Some are not completed on time. For example, we had planned to use an electronic administration system, and tried to improve the efficiency in administration. We purchased the system, but it did not work as well as we expected. We have too many sites...[but] The education establishments were built as expected.". S3 replied "Yes, I think well-executed. For example, there were 11 departments in the Teacher College, 14 departments in the Technology College. After the merger, it became 51 departments. We planned to build 4 new buildings (auditorium, library, business school, seminar building) that all started in 2002 and were completed before 2005".

M3 said "I think it was well planned. For example, there was no business school in these two college before merging. But they do have one now, a management area in National University of Chiayi for future development, a very good foundation it establishes...[for] teaching and research and the improvement of the teachers college of Chiayi".

However, S4 thought differently about the execution "From my opinion, the merger was well planned. But not well implemented, especially in the education institute. In the merger plan, the National Chiayi Teacher College planned to establish new institutes. But none of them were approved. The teachers in the education institute are very angry about that".

M1, M2, M4 and M5 were either unsure or made no comment to this question.

6.3.15 Q15. Are, or were, new roles and responsibilities defined adequately? Explain.

None of the interviewees made any complaint about new role or responsibility definitions. For example, S1 said "Yes, so far the operation is no problem". Also, S2 answered "Yes, some of the staffs have been promoted to other department of government. For example, the former vice president of the Technology College, was promoted to The Council of Agriculture, as a vice Minister. Some have been reassigned to different campus. Over all, they were all defined adequately after merger". M3 remarked "Yes, I think so. Some of the staffs were reassigned to new positions. They are doing well". Furthermore, M5 noted "The former Deputy Minister, he was the director of the special office in the merger. His job was to plan the structure of the new university after the merger. And he also was the first president of National Chiayi University. That was a very clear definition of his role".

S3, S4, M1, and M4 did not know, and M2 made no comment.

6.3.16 Q16. Does, or could, the merged institution better meet the needs of students? Government? Society? Explain.

According to most interviewees there seemed to be advantages from merging for students, government and society.

For example, S1 commented "[now] the students' curriculum is richer and more multifarious…[so] good for students. For the Ministry of Education, I think they supervise

easier than before...[was] two institutions before the merger, but now it is one. For the society, the political promise was accomplished".

S2 answered "After the merger, students have more choices on courses. For example, they may choose a second specialty, contact more schoolmates, participate in each kind of different student society. For the government, the National Chiayi University is the only case that has completed merger".

S3 pointed out "To society, they witnessed the first university, which succeeded in merger. To the Government, they accomplish their political promise. To students…they have a new university, and receive a different certification inscribed the "National Chiayi University."… So, I think it attained to everyone's anticipation".

M1 answered "a university needs a large scale, various educations, and multifarious faculties in order to achieve students' mutual learning and mutual competition.... I think [enlargement] is very good for students. ..[because] All those changes might drive them to absorb more knowledge and receive better education, from many academic domains. No matter whether to students or to schools' economy, the merger program is really beneficial". M3 remarked "students… get more courses to choose....[this merger] could be a model to other colleges that try to merge… If [more] colleges could merge, that will be benefit to the government.... If they didn't merge, they both may not be strong enough".

M4 pointed out "students get more courses…[also] the Government now only needs to cope with one big university, simply and smoothly. If an integrated school become more prominent than it was before, the integration is worthwhile".

M5 said "The numbers of departments increased to 51 departments. Therefore, the students got more choices. The funds were raised, the students got a better environment in which to study. The merger also met the needs of government. The Ministry of Education used the budget more efficiently….the big university is more competitive".

However, S4 appeared altogether less enthusiastic "I think the merger meets the needs of government. In the merger of National Chiayi University, it was a political promise. Therefore, the merger proved the political promise".

M2 did not know.

6.3.17 Q17 How much did staff trust the decision makers? How important is maintaining trust, in your view?

Most interviewees thought trust was maintained during the merger and this was very important.

For example, S1 commented "During the merger, most members believed their decision makers. A leader must have staff's trust and recognition. Otherwise, the leader's credibility would strongly influence the plan's execution and also the guidance after the merger. Therefore, I think that mutual trust is extremely important".

S2 answered:

"There was no problem about trust. The National Chiayi University is democratic….the Ministry of Education did not get any complaint letter related to me [president]. This is very important! You must extinguish disparagement...The staff of

the National Chiayi University could express their opinion anywhere, anytime. I do not control them, but I communicate with them. That' s the way I keep the trust from my staff. Trust is very important. You can' t lead the university to improvement, or execute internal policy without the trust from staff".

S3 said "mutual trust is vital. The leader needs the trust of employees, otherwise it would be difficult to communicate with them, execute the actions, and complete the merger. As for the Technology College, there were about 80% workers who trust their decision maker. Now, I have no idea".

S4 expressed the view that "Most staff in the Teacher college trusted the first president of National Chiayi University. He was the Deputy Minister of Education, and some staff were his students. He also respected the tradition of the Teacher College. Therefore, he tried to make change on Teacher college slowly (in teacher evaluation structure). After he retired, the new president made changes too fast. Therefore, a few staff were not happy and left their position".

M1, M2, M4, and M5 all said "I don't know". M3 said "No comment".

6.3.18 Q18. Was the merger process evaluated? Should it have been? Explain.

S1, S2, S3, S4, M2, M3, M4, and M5 all said "No evaluation was carried out during the merger process".

However, S2 and M5 noted that it had been evaluated as part of the normal three yearly evaluation of universities. For example, S2 said " we have the university evaluation... we got a very good comment". M5 noted that "the evaluation includes: Academic quality, administration system, and equipment".

6.3.19 Q19. Did the merger, or merger attempt, solve any problems, or create problems? Explain.

Overall, the merger solved problems according to most of the interviewees.

For example, S1 commented "the merger really solved [both colleges] problems. At first, the two colleges were facing the setback in their development, they can't get upgraded, more campus, or more courses at that time. But the completion of the merger solved all those thorny problems. The success of the merger not only satisfied citizens' anticipation, but also offered students multifarious education options...No academic departments merged because there was no overlap, however there was merging of the administrations". S2 pointed out that "we all upgraded to a university. We got more students, more funds, better ranking. That's why I say the merger solved the problem". S3 replied "we did solve the problem. If the merger had not been completed, these two schools might probably have difficulties in recruiting new students now".

M5 remarked "[Both colleges] were trying to reform and upgrade to universities. But were limited by their campus size [the Teacher College], the qualification of teachers [the reason for both]. Because of the political promise, they got the chance to upgrade to university by merger. For now, I think the merger solved their problem, also it avoided the student recruitment problem".

However, both S4 and M1 thought it solved a problem for government. S4 thought "the merger solved the problem for the government. Because it was a political promise. As time goes by, it created some other problems. For example, the Teacher college didn't get the same budgets as before. Therefore, there are [still] a few complexities". M1 said "National Chiayi University has been [the only] successful case of the merger program". Furthermore, M1 pointed out that "when we tried to consolidate other teacher colleges with other universities, upgrade to them was not effective anymore, especially universities. Even though the other teacher college reached the agreement in the school convention, the university, which was a higher-education institute originally, has no intention to merge with them. The National Hualian University of Education was a good example. Upgrade is a very good incentive, but it is hard to find schools wanting to upgrade so much just like how the National Chiayi University did".

M2, M3 and M4 were unsure whether the merger had solved or created problems.

6.3.20 Q20. In your view, did the merger, or merger attempt, succeed or fail? Explain why.

All interviewees thought it was a successful merger.

For example, S1 said "I think it is really successful. At first, the merger… was to accommodate the Government's policies, but nowadays the two schools not only successfully merged together, but also managed and developed very well after their integration. Since there has been no layoffs or unemployment in the merger, the objection to the merger was controllable. After the merger, the evaluation from the academics and the inhabitants towards this project was highly regarded". S2 answered "Very successful.

Because regardless of finance or academic, all better than before. Staff 's working rights were all safeguarded, the organization culture is fusing". S3 commented "the merger was successful…the merged university, no matter in student recruitment, academic status, or the school administration, operates perfectly well". S4 thought "it was a successful merger. Because completed, and still together so far. It also satisfied the political promise".

M1 remarked "the National Chiayi University merger is successful…the system has changed for the better, but it still takes them more efforts for them to become really integrated". M2 said "It succeeded because the two institutions are still merged together". M3 commented." Certainly…so far as performance, I think it is more efficient than before, reach originally anticipated goals, the merger raised the quality". M4 pointed out "the National Chiayi University is successful…it is running better than separate. It was hard [before] to achieve a higher education standard and to make progress in academic research... the integration will strengthen National Chiayi University's development".

M5 replied "successful merger… from statistics. The number of students increased 1,635, from 6,765 (1999) to 8,405 (2004), they merged in year 2000. The budget increased 581,447,000 NTD, from 1,135,497,000 NTD (1999) to 1,716,944,000 NTD (2004). The research publications increased 164, from 458 (2000) to 622 (2003). ..the performance was very good".

6.4 Summaries of the Interviewees' Answers Concerning the Unsuccessful Merger Case.

6.4.1 Q1. What was your role in the merger, or merger attempt? Explain.

The different responses of the interviewees to this question indicated their close, but different, roles in the merger which could generate different perspectives on the merger.

For example, U1 (President of Taipei Municipal University of Education) said he "negotiated with my school members, … negotiated with Taipei Physical Education College and reported details to the Taipei City Hall". U2 assisted U1.

U3 (President of Taipei Physical Education College) said "I represented my college when negotiating with Taipei Municipal University of Education".

U4 (Commissioner of Department of Education of Taipei City Government and Vice-Political Minister of Education when National Chiayi University merged) had the role "to provide help and assistance….use my previous experience".

U5 (Assistant Commissioner of Department of Education of Taipei city Government) "communicated with the two college Presidents" concerning the merger attempt. U6 (Director of Higher Education, Taipei City Government) said "I handled some procedures and communicated with [both colleges] and Taipei City Hall".

6.4.2 Q2. Why did the institutions merge or try to merge? Explain.

Some interviewees pointed out that the economic reality of too many teacher graduates for the available jobs was the driver for the merger. For example, U1 said "overstock of teacher (amount needed in Taiwan: 9000, amount supplied in Taiwan: 27,000), …many students …still unemployed", and U2 said "in the past had 100% employment… [but now] just a few student gets employed..[because] they don't have other expertise if they aren't a teacher".

U4 supported this suggestion that wider education was the key factor saying "Universities provide students with multifarious education…[which] can improve teacher's quality, emphasize various courses, and enhance the university's competitiveness..[and] match ..[the] cosmopolitan area's development". And U6 said "Nowadays…difficult for colleges…to avoid difficulty in student [employment].. Therefore... the university merger.. [would be] a new way to make progress".

However, U3 suggested a different emphasis "both [colleges] are Taipei City Hall's property… [and] not enough budget for these two colleges …these two colleges have to use their budget more efficiently".

Furthermore, U5 thought Ministry policy was an important influence, saying "Due to the Ministry of Education's higher-education policies…aimed at enhancing high-school students' opportunity for further study, and… island-wide university establishment…the Ministry of Education manifested their intent to establish universities in every city or county, at least one university for one place [but] Taipei City's resources are limited..[and]..

the schools receive financial budgets from Taipei City, so the procedure must be accredited by City Council….[but] the Ministry of Education...would help the colleges' communication and negotiation".

6.4.3 Q3. Were there differences in size, status, history, geographic position, tuition fee, salary, education profile or education sector prior to merging?

According to the interviewees (and supported by Chapter 3), at the time of the merger attempt, 2000, Taipei Municipal University of Education had a much longer history and about twice as many teachers and students as Taipei Physical Education college, but the education fee was similar and both focused on teaching.

For example, U1 said "TMUE excelled their merging counterparts - TPEC… in student number… employee number… in annual budget. The tuition fee was similar. Both colleges emphasised their teaching". And, U2 said "[Since] the budget of these two colleges is all from Taipei City Hall… both are on the low-budget status…[geographically] these two colleges are in Taipei City…TMUE is training teachers for elementary school, The TPEC is training physical teachers for all schools.. these two colleges were complementary".

However, concerning perceived status they were similar, and although TMUE had a larger site than TPEC, it was less good location and less valuable. For example, U4 commented that "The size of both schools ..not big….in campus or status", while U5 noted "[In] status TMUE and TPEC are the same… both in Taipei city…15kms between their campus…TPEC has better location, more valuable". And, U6 commented "TMUE size

almost double TPEC. The location of TPEC is next to the Taipei City Stadium. Therefore, [they] got a better location".

6.4.4 Q4. Were prior power differentials influential in shaping the merger? Explain.

Five of the six interviewees identified that power differentials did influence the merger attempt.

For example, U1 commented that "We [TMUE] had already upgraded to University… but…our merging partner is a [smaller] college…It affected TPEC's intention to merge. We have pressure from Ministry of Education to merge [because it was] condition [to] be upgraded to…University…[so] TPEC felt under pressure…[and was] unhappy with us".

U3 observed that in a free vote TPEC would not merge because of "asymmetrical [power] distribution…if we…vote, the merger would definitely be turned down. However…because [Taipei] Government provides the budgets…Unless I quit my job…I must follow the Taipei City Hall's guidance. The TPEC [lacked] a sense of security, but TMUE held an arrogant attitude". However, U3 told the Commissioner (U4) how to solve the problem "First, when integration completed, TPEC and TMUE [must be] equivalent, with equal faculties and equal-sized areas. This is a key point ...to maintain equivalence. Second, keep the original campus….[so after merging each have] own faculties and territories… no occupation or intervention problems...to provide us with a sense of solidity".

U4 did not regard TPEC as inferior because both colleges had strengths however "Certainly, the dissimilar college histories might engender some discrepancies to the two colleges' power…TPEC has successfully delivered…Olympic gold-medal athletes and accomplished

Industry-University Cooperative Research, and sports business…TMUE has attained high social evaluation…the two colleges are essentially complementary….The future potential of the college is the key that [should] influence the merger".

U5 highlighted that people's perceptions are important concerning whether university or college and therefore "TPEC [wished] to upgrade to University [before merging to be] same level as TMUE. In my opinion, it is only a problem which implicates people's conception and thinking patterns. As the regulation says, independent colleges also stand at the same level as universities…[so] if TPEC was willing to merge, the program would be very successful and accommodate the Ministry of Education's policies and target".

Furthermore, U6 observed that "The discrepancies of power strongly influenced the program. The different power comes mainly from different school status, or different historical background". However, U6 thought TPEC thought itself to be more powerful and therefore should not merge on inferior terms because "The TPEC believed they are stronger [because] they got more and more budget in these 3 years. They had co-operation with sports apparatus companies and gyms…also the students could get a job easily. Therefore, the Taipei Municipal Physical Education College didn't want to merge".

6.4.5 Q5. Did the institutions have the choice of incorporating partner, or of looking for other partners?

Some interviewees thought that the municipal circumstance meant that there was really no other obvious merging partner available for either establishment. For example, U1 noted that "In Taipei City, there are two [municipal] higher education establishments [TPEC and

TMUE]… [so] legally the property could be transferred easier.". Also, U2 said "Because…municipal establishment, difficult [to merge with non-municipal] and hard to sell to government…Taipei only has [these] two higher education establishments...Therefore we were going to merge".

However, U3 held the view that it was policy therefore "we did not have any choice". In fact, U3 thought that TPEC did not want merger with TMUE [because] the status of the Taipei Municipal University of Education is going down".

Furthermore, U4 revealed that TPEC had a possible alternative partner "due to the Olympic 2008, the Ministry of Education attempt to consolidate National College of Physical Education and Sports with TPEC into National Physical Education University. And this is why TPEC is still vacillating". This was supported by U5 who pointed out that "during the two colleges' merger, the Taipei City Hall had set up a Preparatory Office to handle the affairs, but it was abolished since the program must require two colleges' agreement and City Council's approval. …[also] the Ministry of Education demands that TMUE must integrate with TPEC.. However, TPEC preferred to merge with Nation Physical Education Colleges".

However, U6 thought that merging with non-Taipei colleges was not feasible because of the property issue, he commented that "No [choice because] belong to Taipei City Government...[who] designate…the merger. Although, TPEC had intention to consolidate with other schools into Physical Education University, they found it difficult to merge with Non-Taipei-City colleges due to the problem of their school property".

6.4.6 Q6. Was there proactive government or Education Ministry intervention?

All six interviewees revealed that merger inducements were offered to the colleges by the Taipei City government or the Ministry of Education. However, the inducements did not all appear to be pulling in the direction of this merger.

For example, U1 commented that "Taipei City Hall guaranteed new establishments (new stadium, new campus) to TPEC". Also, U2 noted that "the City Hall increased the budget to TPEC to encourage the merger, and threatened the budget of TMUC if it didn't merge with TPEC soon". U3 revealed that in addition to new campus and stadium, TPEC was promised "help to set up the Primary Diploma of Teaching Course and Secondary Diploma of Teaching Course….[to] expel the staffs' misgivings and the sense of insecurity". However, U5 indicated that there were alternative inducements for TPEC which may have pulled against the TPEC/TMUE merger because "there was an intervention from… the Department of Physical Education, Ministry of Education and the National Council on Physical Fitness and Sports…[concerning] the merger of three Physical Education Colleges, TPEC, National Taiwan College of Physical Education, and National Kaohsiung Physical Education College….[so] TPEC not willing to merge with TMUE".

Also, U6 revealed an important political factor which could have adversely affected the merger attempt "because the Taipei City Mayor turned down the merger..[which] might also have led to the failure of the ongoing project".

6.4.7 Q7. Was anyone in control of the merger, and who was it?

Five of the interviewees had opinions about this.

U2 thought that "The City Mayor was the key man. This merger case was stopped by him because of City mayor election and he wanted more votes from citizens [so he promised] more of the education budget would go to elementary school [therefore less for higher education merging]". Also, U3 commented that most influential was the "Taipei City Council and The Taipei City Mayor. We can not presume the merger if without any permission from them". This view was supported by U4 who said "the two college properties belong to City Government, the City Council can also supervise the operation". Also U5 noted that "the process must be accredited by City Government and by the City Council. Furthermore if… the schools become one university… higher-education institutes are under the Ministry of Education's control, so…the difficulties of the procedure are even higher than setting up a national university".

U6 considered that control progressed from the colleges to City Hall to council because "both TMUE and TPEC …are the first to control the merger..[then].. The Taipei City Hall and the Taipei City council were the second and the third one who controlled the merger".

6.4.8 Q8. Was there a merger negotiation process? Who was involved? Did involved people all agree that merging was the right direction? Explain.

All the interviewees reported that there were meetings and discussions concerning the proposed merger involving representatives from both colleges, however there is some difference of opinion concerning whether this was effective and whether the right procedure was adopted.

For example, U1 put it succinctly "The attendees were about 10 to 20. 5 senior directors of each college, 3 officers from Taipei City Hall, 5 or 6 experts. We signed the agreement of the merger". Furthermore, this view was generally supported by the comments of U2, U4. U5, and U6. For example, U2 said "We had two colleges discussions, visits to each other, two group workings…[but]…When we communicated, we spoke only to people at the same status level…we completed several matters…use of libraries…and joint establishment day celebration".

However, U3 thought that the negotiation procedure was inadequate, saying "the Department of Education of Taipei City Government does not really understand the operation of higher-education institutes….[merging] is a very significant policy and a huge change…the school convention must make the decision by vote, counting the ballots one by one…. [and] There were many factions in the college [TPEC]".

6.4.9 Q9. Were the finances sufficient to complete the merger? Explain.

All the interviewees commented that there was no extra funding to finance the merger process but extra funding was promised for the merged entity after the completion of the merger by Taipei City Hall.

For example, U1 said only "if we complete the merger, they will provide the university more budgets to purchase software and hardware facilities..[but] Ministry of Education...didn't offer any financial support".

U3 observed that "The Taipei City Hall promised …TPEC a new campus after the merger accomplished"..

Also, U5 noted that "We didn't give any funds during the merger attempt. But we offered a promise that the budget will be increased for establishments after the merger". However, U5 explained that changes had already occurred prior to the merger attempt because TMUE had already received extra land from Taipei City when it upgraded to a university and "The ministry of Education…last year…offered 20 to 30 millions to TMUE for their education improvement and development". Also, TPEC had already been provided with a larger new site in Tian Mu by Taipei City.

6.4.10 Q10. Concerning your institution prior to merger: What was the organizational culture like?

U1, U2 and U3 gave their view of their own institutions, but U4, U5 and U6 who were not in either institution all said that they did not know.

U1 pointed out that "The governance style of the TMUE is hierarchical, but willing to change. Training teachers is the teaching goal". U2 answered that." TMUE focused on teaching…[and] evaluated teachers by their teaching ability….TMUE is hierarchical, but wants to change…[and since] both the TMUE and TPEC are focused on teaching…[therefore] no problem on teacher evaluation during merging".

U3 observed that "The TPEC [has] various types of departments, including the researching type, teaching type and professional-technique type, [it is] multifarious and well-rounded.

All the departments have their own goals. Researching-type departments, for example, always aim at developing their research. TPEC comprises researching, teaching, and training. But the TMUE aim at teachers training. And that is why I said the TMUE does not benefit us. Frankly speaking, I think the TPEC is the most friendly college in Taiwan. We are a democratic college. But unwilling to merge with the TMUE".

6.4.11 Q11. Concerning the institution after merger, or attempted merger: What is the organizational culture like?

All the interviewees pointed out that the merger was not completed.

6.4.12 Q12. Was organizational culture influential in merger success or failure?

All the interviewees recognized that organization culture could be an important factor in merger success or failure, but several did not think it had been the decisive factor.

For example, U1 said "Organizational culture influences the operation of the whole system, which includes policy conveyance and workers' opinions. Therefore, organizational culture should be dealt with carefully". U2 recognized the importance of culture as a reason for the merger, saying "this is a very important reason for trying to merge: The urgency to reform, and the market competition increase".

U3 had the view that organizational culture had been decisive for TPEC because "it is what I worried about. Dissimilar to our trend, opinions, and teachers' diligent teaching attitude, which is the same as foreign teachers', the TMUE can never keep up with us". U5

supported this opinion, saying "the two schools have different conceptions. TMUE features training teachers and a well-rounded education system, while TPEC features training remarkable athletes or ball game players....their thoughts and conception are also dissimilar...TMUE, in my opinion....is more positive than TPEC towards [merger]...there is a huge gap between the two schools' thinking patterns, ...[but]... Since they are essentially non-complementary, the merger might be easier to succeed. If the quality of the schools is too similar, it will be hard to achieve what we expect since their similar quality might conflict together....but the different historical background, and dissimilar thinking would also affect the project".

However, U4 thought that "In my opinion, the key...[was].. how many funds or benefits the Taipei City Government offered the colleges. Organizational culture was not the main factor". Also, U6 thought that "whether the organizational culture... [influenced] success or failure, I think it was not the only factor".

6.4.13 Q13. Did the merger create uncertainty, anxiety, job losses, rivalries, defensive strategies, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust? Explain.

All the interviewees commented that staff in both colleges had worries about their jobs, positions and salary levels, even though the City Hall had guaranteed no job losses as a result of the merger.

For example, U1 said "Many staff of TMUE were worried about layoffs..[but].. Taipei City Hall guaranteed their jobs. Some staff of TMUE worried their college will be eliminated".

Also, U2 commented that "[TMUE staff] were worried [about] transfer to other department… job loss… [and].. salary level".

U3 answered that "TPEC staff worried [about] loss of respect and benefits. Because …TPEC was the smaller part of the merger..[and]... If merged, the TPEC staff worried they have to share funds [from external companies] with TMUE".

U4 said that "TPEC was worried that merging… would devour their resources and discriminate against them".

U6 observed that "some teachers were concerned about their jobs. Especially… overlaps. For example, both colleges had a Department of sports".

6.4.14 Q14. Was the merger well planned, and well implemented? Explain.

Interviewees U4, U5 and U6 refused to comment on this question. U2 did not know. However, both U1 and U3 had an opinion. U1 said that "we specifically make the plan, hold the meetings regularly, and often report the progress to the Mayor and the Commissioner of the Department of Education. We planned to exchange 20% of teachers to each other's campus, exchange 50% of staffs in the administration system".

U3 indicated that he thought it could have been done better because "I suggested to the Commissioner to establish a higher-education committee… The committee, with the same rank as the Government institutes, controlled directly by the higher-education commissioner, such as Deputy Minister… However, establishing a higher-education committee will waste too much manpower and too many resources".

6.4.15 Q15. Are, or were, new roles and responsibilities defined adequately? Explain.

All the interviewees said either the merger was not completed or they did not know.

6.4.16 Q16. Does, or could, the merged institution better meet the needs of students? Government? Society? Explain.

Both U1 and U2 gave no answer to this question because the merger was not completed. However, the other interviewees had quite a lot to say about the potential benefits of merging.

For example, U3 thought that "The integration would exert two impacts on our society...-curtail redundant school departments and facilitate better management of the schools. Physical Education…is potential exercise training for all citizens...[and]… cutting-edge training ….for students … who prefer TPEC because of its cosmopolitan situation".

U4 commented that "a merger could make colleges re-evaluate and re-adjust…. To Government, a merger can also reduce unnecessary manpower consumption, and help enhance and increase schools' education quality, equipment, and their academic status".

U5 considered that "it would benefit students and government…students could have a wide-range of courses…. government could supervise the university more easily".

U6 expressed the view that "merger can create a multifarious and well-rounded university learning environment, which, undoubtedly, would benefit students. Additionally, the efficient operation of the schools' education resources is also what City Government expects to see".

6.4.17 Q17 How much did staff trust the decision makers? How important is maintaining trust, in your view?

U1 thought that trust existed in TMUE because "It is most basic to maintain mutual trust among the school members. If employees do not trust their leaders, it will be extremely difficult to improve a program. In terms of our school [TMUE], mutual trust and members' credibility are quite good". However, U2 did not know.

U4 said that "Instead of dogmatic intervention, the City Government held a liberal and democratic attitude to promote the program. So all staff still believed the Taipei City Government".

U3 thought that he generated trust by example, saying "As a leader, I am …the type of person who always executes the plan myself, setting a good example for [staff]. Therefore, they trust me, and I can easily lead and convince them". However, trusting others in the negotiation process was a different matter for U3 because he said "I only talked to the Commissioner or Vice- Commissioner of Education Department during the negotiation. I am…a level-13 officer. The director of higher education in Taipei City Hall who supervised these two municipal colleges is a level-9 officer.[so] how can I trust or negotiate with him?"

Thus, U3's comments indicated that there was some arrogance which may have obstructed the negotiation process, and this was supported by the comments of U5 and U6. For example, U5 pointed out that "TMUE didn't trust the lower level officers of the Taipei City Hall. They only negotiated with me and the Commissioner of Department of Education of Taipei city government". U6 supported this view when he observed that "the President of

TMUE talked to The Commissioner and The Vice Commissioner of Department of Education of Taipei city Government only. Even though I am supervising the higher education in Taipei. He thought I am not the same level".

6.4.18 Q18. Was the merger process evaluated? Should it have been? Explain.

All interviewees said there was no evaluation of the merger process.

6.4.19 Q19. Did the merger, or merger attempt, solve any problems, or create problems? Explain.

It appears that the merger attempt had contrasting effects on the perceptions about the two colleges.

U1 thought "it created a new problem…Last time, the Mayor of Taipei City agreed the merger then rejected it again… also TMUE had a [failed] merger attempt with other colleges". However, U3 considered that even though the merger process failed TPEC was able to earn respect which will be important in any future negotiations because "TPEC proved [its] competence in the market ..[and that it] could survive even if not merged with another college. Before the merger attempt, the Taipei City Hall and the Taipei Municipal Teacher College didn't care about us. Through the unsuccessful merger, they [learned] the importance of TPEC".

6.4.20 Q20. In your view, did the merger, or merger attempt, succeed or fail? Explain why.

Most interviewees, but not all, thought the merger attempt failed, as explained below.

U1, U2, and U6 thought it failed because of withdrawn political support. For example, U1 commented that "It failed...[because] the Mayor turned the merger down. The Mayor hoped to use the budgets on primary schools or secondary education institutes, because of the election [he thought this would win more votes]".

However, U3 thought it failed because "TMUE would not benefit us.... Why can't TMUE find another school to merge with? The answer is that no college wants to merge with them... their faculties cannot compete with ours. Our faculties have potential in the future". This was supported by the view of U5 that "TPEC...feared the distribution of the two schools' faculties and departments would be unfair, after they integrated... [perhaps] their departments would be eliminated...[however] TPEC is still discussing the final decision".

However, U4 expressed the view that "The merger did not fail...[it was] the Government being too passive to execute the project and the Ministry of Education, holding a different plan, the attempted merger of three Physical Education Colleges ...[so]... it has not failed it is just slower than expected ...the two schools will soon treat merger as their main goal".

6.5 Conclusion

The output from the interviews with the fifteen interviewees has generated a lot of relevant and interesting primary information concerning both the successful and the unsuccessful merger cases. The information is analysed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the information derived from the fifteen interviewees is further analysed, and considered in terms of the previous research. The first part of the chapter examines the information concerning the successful case. The second part of the chapter analyses the information concerning the unsuccessful case. The third part is some reflections on the research.

7.2 Analysis of the Information Concerning the Successful Case

The nine interviewees concerning the successful merger case (Section 5.6) are, or were, very senior people in education in Taiwan who were involved directly and intimately within one of the merged institutions, had merger involvement within the Taiwan Ministry of Education, or as Director of the Special Office set up to manage the merger. Furthermore, the responses of the interviewees confirmed that they were involved in the (successful) merger case in different ways and from different sides.

As outlined in the Chapter 1, the driving force behind higher education mergers in Taiwan was to attain higher quality, status, and international standards in universities to attract more students and be more competitive, in an environment of limited government budgets, the increasing profitability-motivation within education, declining birth rate, and globalization of education. However, within this background, all the interviewees

concurred about the reason for this merger to create National Chiayi University - the initial inspiration for the creation of a university in Chiayi City was from a political election promise made by the Premier of the Executive Yuan, the governing cabinet of Taiwan. Thus, the idea had come from the 'top', and the Ministry of Education set out to implement the promise.

The interviews revealed that National Chiayi Technology College and National Chiayi Teacher College were selected for merging by the Ministry because they were both public institutions, the Technology college was in Chiayi city, the Teacher college about 15 miles away in Chiayi county. The technology college was about twice as big as the teacher college in staff, students and campus area, and almost twice the age. Tuition fees and salaries were similar.

The interviewees reported that there was a merger negotiation process involving representatives from both colleges and the Ministry and that those present all agreed that merging was the right way forward (this followed internal college meetings where there was agreement to the merger). However, the interviewee from the Teacher college (S4) suggested that any people who had expressed opposition to the merger initially were not subsequently included in the negotiation process. My own view is that only a few people opposed the merger plan initially and some of these were subsequently persuaded that it was a good idea, however a few who still objected decided to leave the college voluntarily. The interviews revealed that the merger process did not cost a lot and there was no extra budget requirement, because the Ministry promises of extra university budget after merger completion allowed plans for room alterations, new hardware and software to be made.

The appointment of a director of the special office (S1) to be in control of the merger, who had no prior affiliation with either of the merging colleges and appeared to be trusted by both sides, appears to have been an important element for successful merger completion. For example, the interviews revealed that most staff in the Teacher college trusted the director of the special office and first president of the merged university because some staff had been his students and he respected the tradition of the Teacher College. This person decided the structure of the new university and became its first president. Furthermore, most of the interviewees who were able to comment thought that the merger had been well planned and implemented, although all of the potential administration efficiencies were thought yet to be achieved. However, the interviewee from the former Teachers college thought that the implementation for the education institute, which was formed mainly from the former Teacher college, was not yet good enough and some staff were angry about it.

Those interviewees who expressed a view suggested that power differentials were not important in the merger mainly because it was a political promise, or they did not see power differentials operating, or they thought power resources were similar or did not create difficulties. However, the words of some of the interviewees reveal that the Technology college was superior in budget, students, staff, campus size and some staff felt merging was unnecessary for the Technology college as it was possibly large enough to upgrade to a university alone. Therefore the Technology College negotiated from a position of greater strength compared with the Teacher college, because it would make up about 2/3 of the merged university. Furthermore, the Teacher college had previously tried merging with National Chung Cheng University, but this had failed. Therefore the feeling within the Teacher college may have been that merging with the Technology college was their only hope in the longer term because the Ministry wished it to happen and the Ministry

controlled the funding. The Technology college was only merging because of top-down Ministry pressure (its source of finance) but as a consequence it was able to extract many guarantees, including upgrade to a university, from the Ministry to avoid any internal resistance. However, as pointed out by M1, promise of upgrade to university has since proven to be an ineffective inducement for several higher status colleges to merge with teacher colleges in the case of other attempts to consolidate teacher colleges with other colleges. Therefore, the Technology college is so far unique in Taiwan in accepting this incentive. However, the interviews revealed that the promises made to the Teacher college prior to merging concerning more courses and an enlarged budget appear not to have been fulfilled by the distribution of finance within National Chiayi University.

Thus, the objective interpretation must be that the answers of the interviewees actually suggest that power differentials were important during the merger process and did affected the outcomes within the merged institution but that this was not widely recognized, or it was not admitted by the interviewees with the exception of S4 who was aware of anger and resentment from the outcome.

Furthermore, the top-down power dimension from the Ministry of Education was a critical factor concerning merger completion. If the colleges had not merged together they risked a future reduction of budget, rejection of proposals for starting new courses, and rejection of upgrade to university. Indeed the Ministry guarantees concerning workers' rights, salaries, no job losses and new building finance probably dissipated most logical arguments against merging.

Concerning organizational culture, it appears the Technology college had a democratic culture, with assessment by research achievements, while the Teachers college had a more hierarchical top-down culture, with assessment on teaching ability. In National Chiayi university the democratic style of the larger Technology college has become the predominant culture, although a culture gap may exist within the merged university which may take 5-10 years to close, according to one interviewee. The interviewees did not think organizational culture had impeded the merger, and even though long history and some conservative thinking existed, the Government policy and inducements had won over the staff of both colleges.

Although the usual anxieties associated with merging were not present in the merger to form National Chiayi University because of government promises to protect salaries, employment and rights, there was apparently another important concern regarding the naming of the new university. Perhaps for this reason, a new name, different from both colleges was chosen. However, it is evident that unhappiness has been created among some staff from the Teacher college concerning the budget allocation for the Education institute, because it is less than they received before as an independent college, which is not what they expected. Thus, power differentials appear to have influenced the outcome as the weaker partner appeared to either lose out or not to gain as much as expected.

None of the interviewees made any complaint about role definition in the merged university, even though some staff had been reassigned to new positions. According to most interviewees the merged university offered advantages to students, government and society with more courses, higher standards, the awarding of university degrees, more achievements, easier control by the Ministry, and a model for successful merging. Most

interviewees thought trust was maintained during the merger and this was very important to retain leadership credibility and get a successful outcome. However, some staff from the Education institute did not like the second president of National Chiayi University because of too fast changes. Evaluation of the merged university showed it received "very good comment" and "highly regarded". Also the merger had solved several problems for both colleges for example their arrested development, no new courses were allowed, no upgrade to university, and declining student recruitment, without the merger.

All the interviewees thought it was a successful merger because the merged university still exists, higher education standards are easier to achieve, the evaluation has been favourable, and staff, students, and research publications have all increased. These comments are supported by the greater numbers of staff (Table 3.1), higher numbers of students (Table 3.3) and better academic results (Table 3.7), and although there are more students per staff member (Table 5.4) the staff are more highly qualified (Figure 3.1). Regarding budgets, Table 3.9 illustrated that budgets rose for two years following the merger and then declined in 2003 and 2004 although they were still slightly greater than the total budget before merging even though there were about 24 per cent more day students, which suggests much greater efficiency. Perhaps, this partial decline of budget and sharing amongst more students also explains the reason that the Education Institute budget is reportedly lower within the University than it was before merging, and which is causing some anger among staff, however, maybe other departments have lower budgets too (but I have been unable to obtain the internal budget information to confirm or deny this).

It would seem unlikely that success or failure in merging would result from only one or two of the considered factors, rather it is more probable that a number of factors contribute simultaneously.

In the terminology of the previous literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the National Chiayi University merger was a two-partner, cross-sectoral consolidation with dissimilar academic profiles, against a background of increasing competition, low quality and falling student demand. The merging was an external initiative with unitary control structure, but there was a merger negotiation process following agreement of parties, and the merger was well planned (Harman and Harman, 2003), there was no difference of tuition fees (Bates and Santerre (2000), it absorbed all members of the merging colleges to minimize objections and stress (Humphal, 1971), there was political and financial pressure (Meek, 1988), apparent transparency existed for the involved, but without consulting students (Harman, 2000), care was taken in naming the new institution (Sharpe, 1999; 2003), there was job survival, no group dominance, no coalitions of resistance, no defensive strategies or federal/state rivalries (Martin, 1996), political intervention was not perceived as unwelcome (Rechter and Scott, 1988), and the merged institution could better meet the needs of students, government and society according to the interviewees (Hazelkorn, 2004). Therefore, this merger appeared to possess many of the prerequisites for a successful merger outcome (Section 2.4.1).

The appointment of a capable person respected by both colleges to plan and control the merger was probably an important factor in overcoming potential resistance and reducing anxieties, and it led to good planning and good merger control. Furthermore, the size and status difference, although perceived as small, may have helped to reduce the chances of

determined opposition in conjunction with the promises of protected worker rights and no job losses from the Ministry of Education. However, the respect for the top-down authority in the culture was probably the crucial factor for success in this merger case. The top-down political decision for merging was consistent and ever-present during merging and both colleges appeared to have no real choice but to continue to negotiate and complete the merger, even if there were some reservations. Top-down pressure does not work in all cultures, for example it was unsuccessful in achieving a giant merger of higher education colleges in South Australia (Martin, 1996), in merging the University of New England with the Armidale College of Advanced Technology (Lamb, 1988), in some schools in the USA (Hoff, 2004), and in the case of La Trobe University and Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences in Australia because, until LIHS was promised it could retain its autonomy, there was fierce resistance (Scott, 1988). But in the case of the National Chiayi University merger, the top-down authority was consistent with the well respected and widely prevailing traditional Chinese culture. Thus the prevailing societal culture in the case of National Chiayi University was probably crucial to acceptance of the inevitability of the authority decision. Furthermore, it is probable that the democratic style of the larger part would not represent a feared obstacle to the smaller part, and the hierarchical culture of the smaller part could have been beneficial because once the senior people within the Teacher college had given their approval for the merger, it would seem natural that the sub-ordinate staff would follow as that was their familiar organizational and societal culture.

7.3 Analysis of the Information Concerning the Unsuccessful Case

The six interviewees (Section 5.6) concerning the unsuccessful case are, or were, all senior people in Taipei Municipal University of Education (TMUE), Taipei Physical Education College (TPEC), or Taipei City Government Department of Education who had been involved with the TMUE/TPEC merger negotiation process and could provide an insight into some of the different experiences and perspectives on the merger.

From the responses given by the interviewees, it appears that the driver behind the merger was the Ministry of Education's policy to have fewer larger higher education establishments and to establish universities in every city, in order to raise quality to international standards and overcome the problem of too many teacher graduates for the available jobs. Initially the Taipei City mayor encouraged the merger because it would raise the status of the city, however the limited education budget was an obstacle.

Although TMUE had 110 years of existence compared with TPEC's 32 years, and about twice as many students, the perceived status of the colleges was said to be similar. The TPEC site was smaller but more valuable than that of TMUC, and TPEC had substantial additional funding income from private industries.

The interviewees went on to reveal that TMUE was under pressure from the Ministry of Education to merge with another college as this was a condition for its recent upgrading to university status. TPEC were encouraged to merge with TMUE by the Commissioner of Taipei City Hall. However, TPEC did not want to merge with TMUC because, since TMUE had already upgraded to a university, this put TPEC in an inferior negotiating

position. Also, TPEC students were all employable, so TPEC felt that it was the partner which was helping TMUE, whose students had employability problems, rather than vice versa. In fact, TPEC preferred to merge with other physical education colleges not in Taipei, but the obstacle to this was the college was the property of Taipei City.

Both the Taipei City government and the Ministry of Education had offered inducements – more funding after merging, a new stadium for TPEC, and permission for new courses. The merger negotiations involved talking between individuals of the same grade which could have obstructed wider exchange of information and the understanding of the views of staff at all levels. However, the Taipei City mayor withdrew his support during the negotiation period in order to promise extra budget for primary and elementary schools to win electoral votes.

TMUE had a hierarchical organizational culture, while TPEC was more democratic and friendly. Only the TPEC interviewee thought that the difference in organizational culture had been a decisive influence on the merger attractiveness to TPEC. It is probable that it would have been difficult for democratic TPEC to withstand being subsumed into the hierarchical culture of the larger TMUE, which would clearly be a major discouragement for TPEC to merge with TMUE. However, this factor was not really appreciated by any of the TMUE, Taipei City or Ministry of Education interviewees, even though they thought culture was important. Uncertainties and fears about job losses and salary changes appeared to have been dissolved by guarantees from City Hall. Also, the planning of the merger appeared adequate and not a contributory factor to the merger failure.

There seemed to be more potential benefits from merging for TMUE than for TPEC, however surprisingly the TMUE interviewees refused to answer this question. Taipei City Hall confirmed to me that if TMUE didn't agree to merge with TPEC, Taipei City Hall would cut their budget as a punishment, and the Ministry of Education may demote them to a college, but of course TMUE people will not admit the benefits.

The question of trust revealed some particularly interesting truths about the higher education culture. The interviewees thought trust was important, and one interviewee generated trust by "leading by example", yet he would not discuss the merger with the Taipei City Hall people because they were at an inferior level and therefore he could not trust or negotiate with them. This arrogance could well have been an obstruction to a successful negotiation process, or was it merely a 'convenient' excuse for the TPEC director.

However, since the merger failure, TMUE and TPEC have had contrasting experiences. TMUE approached other colleges about merging and was rebuffed, which has dented its self-regard. However, TPEC has survived well and grown financially much faster than TMUC since the merger failure. In fact TPEC now has experienced increase in budget such that its budget now exceeds that of TMUC (as illustrated in Chapter 3 - Tables 3.9 and 3.10), gaining more respect from both TMUE and City Hall.

In terms of the previous literature, this merger attempt was a two-partner, cross-sectoral consolidation with dissimilar academic profiles, with a background of competition, low quality and falling student demand for one partner only, the merging was an external initiative, and there was only a narrow merger negotiation process, and no full agreement of both parties, and no shared vision (Harman and Harman, 2003), no difference of tuition

fees (Bates and Santerre (2000), members of the merging colleges would be absorbed to minimize objections and stress (Humphal, 1971), there was political pressure to merge but this was withdrawn (Meek, 1988), only partial transparency existed because negotiations were at the same level only, and there was no reported consultation with students (Harman, 2000), no care was taken in deciding a name for the new institution (Sharpe, 1999; 2003), job survival, group dominance, coalitions of resistance, defensive strategies were uncertain factors (Martin, 1996), political pressure was unwelcome to one party (Rechter and Scott, 1988), and it was uncertain whether the merged institution would fully meet the needs of students, government and society according to interviewees (Hazelkorn, 2004). Hence, it appears from the interviewees comments that the merger lacked many of the prerequisites for success.

TMUE interviewees think the merger attempt failed because of withdrawn political support, however the view from the TPEC interviewee suggests that it really failed because TMUE had an unattractive hierarchical culture and TMUE had an unjustified superior self-regard making it unprepared to negotiate with TPEC as an equal partner. Thus, it appears that the key cause of merger failure was the withdrawal of the support for the merger from the Taipei City mayor. Without the top-down authority promoting the merger, TPEC could escape from merging with TMUE which had a conservative hierarchical culture unattractive to democratic and successful TPEC.

7.4 Comparison of findings from the two cases

The findings from the successful case and the unsuccessful cases are compared in Table 7.1. In the Table, the first column is a list of factors identified in both mergers. The second column indicates Y (Yes) or N (No) whether this factor was present in the successful case. The Third column indicates Y (Yes) or N (No) whether this factor was present in the unsuccessful case, or not applicable as did not reach this stage (-).

Table 7.1 Comparison of findings from the two cases

Factor	Successful case	Unsuccessful case
Agreement reached within each institution for merging	Y	N
Merger negotiation process	Y	Y
Coalitions of resistance and defensive strategies existed	N	Y
Capable person respected by both colleges was appointed to plan and control the merger	Y	-
Merger was well planned	Y	-
The merger absorbed all members of the merging colleges	Y	-
Transparency existed in the	Y	N

merger negotiations		
Care was taken in naming the new institution	Y	-
There was consistent political and financial pressure to merge	Y	N
Political intervention which was not perceived as unwelcome	Y	N
The merged institution was perceived to better meet the needs of students, government and society	Y	-
There was respect for the top-down authority which was consistent and ever-present during merging	Y	N
Both colleges appeared to have no real choice but to continue to negotiate and complete the merger	Y	N
The hierarchical style of the larger part was probably unattractive to the democratic smaller part	N	Y
Top-down support for merging	N	Y

was withdrawn during the merger negotiations		

From Table 7.1, it can be easily seen that many differences were identified between the two cases from analysis of the answers of the interviewees in the qualitative data collection. Since the questions reflected important factors in merging raised in previous research, it is considered that the differences were significant contributors to success or failure in the merger attempts.

7.5 Reflection on the Research

Gaining access is a well-known problem in social research (Hornsby-Smith, 1993). To gather primary qualitative data about successful and unsuccessful higher education mergers in Taiwan posed specific problems for this research because there appeared to be only one example of a successful merger, so gaining access was crucial for the carrying out of the research, and furthermore it seemed possible that people with experience of unsuccessful mergers may not have wished to discuss the reasons behind the failure. In Taiwanese culture, sensitivities can be significant, so for a doctoral student to gain significant access required a careful tactful approach. However, if the most senior people agreed, it was likely others would agree to participate because of the autocratic nature of the education hierarchy. As reported in Chapter 5, I decided on target individuals and broached the idea carefully. The fact that I had prepared an interview guide based on questions raised in published research into higher education mergers proved to be crucial, because seeing the questions ahead of the interview was a condition of most of the interviews, and relevant questions

were essential for successful agreement for these busy senior people. The participation of the interviewees validated my approach procedure, which made this research possible.

With all social research, the question arises, were the responses meaningful? The validity and reliability of data is often a concern (Fielding, 1993). During interviews, I considered sometimes whether people were always sufficiently considering the questions, and whether they were actually answering the question asked, because of some moving away from the point (intentionally or unintentionally); whether they were always passing on their own opinion or offering 'accepted wisdom'; and whether "No comment" or "I don't know" were convenient escapes or political sensitivities. However, I resisted interjecting at these times to avoid any guiding towards particular answers, in order not to discourage them from giving their answers in their way, and not to give them any excuse to prematurely terminate the interview. Instead, I continued recording the answers for later analysis, and sometimes I asked the question again slightly differently. Thus, with the exception of some interviewees giving "no comment" to a few questions probably indicating political sensitivity which they wished to avoid, the interviewees answered most of the interview guide questions in what appeared to be a frank manner, and the face-to-face context would suggest the occurrence of few misrepresentations (Section 2.1). My overall reflection on this is that, since apparently relevant and interesting subjective perspectives, sometimes different, were surfaced for research analysis, then it is likely that the responses were meaningful for the contexts.

7.6 Conclusion

The analysis suggests that the National Chiayi University merger case was successful because many of the prerequisites for successful merging were present and the top-down political decision for merging was ever-present during merging. This top-down authority was consistent with the well respected widely prevailing traditional Chinese culture. Furthermore, the democratic style of the larger part did not represent a feared obstacle to the smaller part, and the hierarchical culture of the smaller part was probably beneficial to merging because once the senior people had given their approval for merging, it was natural for the sub-ordinate staff to follow this lead as that was their familiar organizational and societal culture.

The analysis suggests that the unsuccessful merger case, between TMUE and TPEC, failed because of the withdrawal of senior Taipei City political support for the merger which meant that organizational cultural differences became crucial – the larger TMUE had a conservative hierarchical culture which was unattractive to the democratic and more easy-going culture of the smaller TPEC. Furthermore, TMUE had an unjustified superior self-regard and was not prepared to negotiate with TPEC as an equal partner.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

Six explicit research aims were stated at the start of this research:

(1) To carry out a literature review about higher education mergers

(2) To search for existing published data about higher education mergers in Taiwan

(3) To generate new data about higher education mergers in Taiwan

(4) To analyse the data to generate new understanding about higher education mergers, principally in Taiwan

(5) To explain why one merger has been successful and another merger was unsuccessful.

(6) To recommend guidelines for successful higher education sector merging in Taiwan

8.2 Literature Review about Higher Education Mergers

The literature review of higher education mergers established that merging of educational institutions has a long history, and is still occurring across the world in response to the changing needs and demands of the society which the education system aims to serve. Humphal noted in 1971 that an information gap existed in published literature on the organizational and behavioural aspects of mergers. However, this literature review carried out in 2005/6 was able to reveal a lot of relevant published literature on higher education mergers across the world including both Western-style democracies and centrally-controlled countries like China.

It was deduced from the literature review that, although there is some disagreement among researchers concerning the effects of differing status and power and their influence on success and failure in merging, the chances of merger success appear to be enhanced if some factors are included, such as - maintenance of trust, and no job losses during merging (Humphal, 1971); large difference in size or status (Goedegebuure and Vos, 1988); strong strategic leadership (Sehoole, 2005); a merger negotiation process, good planning, agreement of all institutions (Harman and Harman, 2003); high transparency, and student consultation (Harman, 2000); better meeting the needs of students, government or society (Hazelkorn, 2004); care taken with naming of the merged institution, someone in control, sufficient finance, good role definition (Sharpe, 1999; 2003). Moreover, it can be deduced that for success other factors should be avoided, such as - personal stress, uncertainty, anxiety, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust, organizational stress (Humphal, 1971); highly competitive staff culture, political intervention perceived as unwelcome (Rechter and Scott, 1988); threats to jobs, coalitions of resistance, defensive strategies (Martin, 1996); loss of status (Zhiping, 2000); and declining tuition fees (Bates and Santerre, 2000).

The conclusion from the literature review was that there was an extensive body of prior research in the area of mergers in education in 2006 which seemed to indicate that mergers often have both supporters and opponents, involve cultural, social, political and international issues, and can involve some difficulties resulting in success or failure. None of the prior literature had reported in-depth qualitative interviews with stakeholders involved in mergers to elucidate differences between successful and unsuccessful cases. However, the literature did raise a number of important questions concerning mergers which formed the basis for the interview guide used in the collection of primary qualitative data for analysis.

8.3 Existing Published Data About Higher Education Mergers in Taiwan

A database, library and Internet search was carried out at the start of this research in 2005, and this was repeated about nine months later in June 2006, however no published data about higher education mergers in Taiwan was discovered. This supports the gap in knowledge, which was identified in Chapter 1, and justifies this research as a first step towards generating much needed understanding about higher education mergers in Taiwan.

8.4 New Data and Understanding about Higher Education Mergers in Taiwan

In the course of this research, new primary data was collected about the reality of higher education mergers in Taiwan by qualitative interviews with senior participants in two higher education mergers in Taiwan, referred to as successful and unsuccessful merger cases for the purpose of clarity in reporting the research.

The case of the merging of the National Chiayi Technology college and the National Chiayi Teacher college to form the National Chiayi University in 2000 was termed the successful case because it continues to be in existence as a single merged institution at the time of this research in 2005/6.

The case of the attempted merging of Taipei Municipal University of Education (TMUC) and Taipei Physical Education college (TPEC) in 2001/2 was termed the unsuccessful merger case because merger negotiations were aborted and they remain separate institutions at the time of this research in 2005/6.

Both the successful and unsuccessful merger cases involved two partner, cross-sectoral consolidations (or attempted consolidation) of public institutions with dissimilar academic profiles against a background of increasing competition in higher education in Taiwan, and merging was an external initiative.

In the successful case, the merger appeared to have many of the prerequisites for a successful merger outcome, as deduced from previous published literature (Chapter 2 and Section 8.2):

(1) Agreement was reached within each institution that the merger was the right way forward

(2) There was a merger negotiation process

(3) The merger was well planned

(4) The merger absorbed all members of the merging colleges to allay fears

(5) There was political and financial pressure to merge

(6) Apparent transparency existed in the merger negotiations

(7) Care was taken in naming the new institution

(8) There were no coalitions of resistance or no defensive strategies

(9) Political intervention which was not perceived as unwelcome

(10) The merged institution was perceived to better meet the needs of students, government and society

(11) A capable person respected by both colleges was appointed to plan and control the merger

(12) The size and status difference, although perceived as small, may have helped to reduce the chances of opposition

(13) There was respect for the top-down authority which was consistent and ever-present during merging, in the prevailing traditional Chinese culture

(14) Both colleges appeared to have no real choice but to continue to negotiate and complete the merger

(15) The democratic style of the larger part represented no feared obstacle to the smaller part, and the hierarchical culture of the smaller part meant that once senior people approved of the merger, the sub-ordinate staff would follow.

In the case of the unsuccessful case, the merger appeared to lack several of the prerequisites for a successful merger outcome, as deduced from previous published literature (Chapter 2 and Section 8.2), creating fears because:

(1) Agreement was not reached within each institution that the merger was the right way forward

(2) There were coalitions of resistance and defensive strategies

(3) Full transparency did not exist in the merger negotiations

(4) Political intervention was perceived as unwelcome by one party

(5) The smaller college thought it had other choices for merging

(6) The hierarchical style of the larger part was probably unattractive to the democratic smaller part

(7) Top-down support for merging was withdrawn during the merger negotiations

These new data point to the conclusions presented in the next section.

8.5 Conclusions

Concerning public higher education mergers in Taiwan, merging is more likely to be successful if:

(1) Most of the prerequisites for success deduced from previous literature are present (e.g. no job losses; transparent merger negotiation process; good planning and implementation; care in naming; the merger better meeting the needs of students, government and society)

(2) Consensus agreement is reached within each prospective merging institution that merging is the way forward for the institution, prior to the start of the merger process.

(3) Policy support for merging from the most senior authorities is consistent and continues throughout the process of merging.

(4) The appointment of a neutral and capable person trusted by all merging institutions to plan and control the merging process is important.

(5) A democratic organizational culture exists in the larger part because it is less likely to be an obstacle to merging in cases where colleges have contrasting organizational cultures.

8.6 Recommendations

The main criteria for successful merging of public higher education institutions in Taiwan, although it is considered highly probable that the criteria are also applicable to private higher education institutions in Taiwan, are:

(1) Consistent and continuing political and senior authority support for the merger with a firm commitment to absorb all staff of merging institutions.

(2) Consensus agreement in each prospective institution that merging is the right way forward, after consideration of alternative scenarios, prior to the start of the merger process.

(3) Establishment of merger negotiations involving representatives of the prospective merging institutions and Ministry of Education officials, to decide on the merger requirements, decide resources, new outline structure, funding allocation, the naming of the new institution, and how to better meet the needs of students, government and society. A report of the discussions and outcomes of each negotiation meeting should be issued in each prospective merging institution to ensure transparency and maintain trust.

(4) Set up a merger office with a Director, who is a senior person in higher education and who is acceptable to all prospective parties to the merger, to plan and control the merger implementation and maintain trust.

(5) If there are contrasting cultures in merging institutions, ensure that the organizational culture of the merged institution is democratic in nature in order to create a culture to hear all perspectives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide Draft 2

Q1. What was the stated purpose of the merger?

Q2. Were there prior problems of - major re-structuring; institutional fragmentation; lack of financial viability or academic viability; low efficiency; low quality; financial problems; falling student demand; competition; technology changes; globalization; new regulations?

Q3 Was merging from an internal initiative or from external pressures? Explain.

Q4. Did some key personalities inspire the merger?

Q5 Were there differences in size or status between the establishments? Were these large or small differences?

Q6. Was it a consolidation or a take-over? Was it a single sector and a cross-sectoral merger? Was it a two-partner and multi-partner merger?

Q7. Were the previous academic profiles similar or different?

Q8. Does, or would, the merged institution meet the needs of students? Government? Society?

Q9. Was care taken in naming the new institution? Who decided the name?

Q10. Who, or what, decided the new President?

Q11. Did the institutions have choice of incorporating partner?

Q12. Were there institutional history factors to take into account, and were they?

Q13. Was there strong institutional leadership, strategic leadership, strong proactive government intervention? Did someone have a concept of the new whole? Was anyone in control of the merger, and who?

Q14. Is the new control structure of a federal or unitary type?

Q15. Are new roles and responsibilities defined adequately?

Q16. Did the new institution need a new management system?

Q17. Is there a benefit incentive scheme?

Q18. Were the finances sufficient to complete the merger?

Q19. Were the human resources considerations sufficient?

Q20. Was there effectiveness of scale, in terms of size and geographical closeness?

Q21. Was there effectiveness of cross-disciplinary integration?

Q22. Did the separate institutions have different cultures?

Q23. Concerning your former institution: Was the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Was your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Was teaching or research most valued?; Was the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Was the governance styles mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical?; Did any of these create problems during merging?

Q24. Concerning the new institution: Is the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Is your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Is teaching or research most valued?; Is the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Is the governance style mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical?; Does the new institution have a coherent culture?

Q25. Have the previously separate institutions retained any autonomy in the merged institution?

Q26. Was the merger well planned?

Q27. Was there a merger negotiation process? Was consultation wide or narrow? Who was involved? Did involved people all agree that merging is the right direction?

Q28. Concerning the role of key stakeholders: Was transparency high or low? Was important information communicated well or poorly? Were students involved?

Q29. Was there a merger strategy? Was it agreed by all institutions?

Q30. Were any of the following factors issues for stakeholders: centralization, job survival, group dominance, coalitions of resistance, defensive strategies and federal/state rivalries?

Q31. Did the merger cause personal stress – uncertainty, anxiety, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust?

Q32. Did the merger cause organizational stress?

Q33. Did the merged institutional absorb all members of the previous separate institutions?

Q34. Were power differentials influential in shaping the merged entity?

Q35 How much did staff trust the decision makers? How important is maintaining trust, in your view?

Q36. Was there increase in tuition fee or salary prior to merging?

Q37. How has the ownership of college plant and property been managed?

Q38. Was the merger process evaluated?

Q39 In your view, did the merger solve any problems, or create problems? Explain.

Q40 In your view, did the merger succeed or fail? Explain.

Appendix 2 - Interview Guide Draft 3

In the interview, interviewees to make comments and answer questions from own experience or in own opinion.

Interview Guide Questions

Q1. What was your role in the merger, or merger attempt? Explain.

Q2. Why did the institutions merge or try to merge? Explain.

Q3. Were there differences in size, status, history, geographic position, tuition fee, salary, education profile or education sector prior to merging?

Q4. Were prior power differentials influential in shaping the merged entity? Explain.

Q5. Did the institutions have choice of incorporating partner, or look for other partners?

Q6. Was there proactive government or Education Ministry intervention?

Q7. Was anyone in control of the merger, and who was it?

Q8. Was there a merger negotiation process? Who was involved? Did involved people all agree that merging was the right direction? Explain.

Q9. Were the finances sufficient to complete the merger? Explain.

Q10. Concerning your institution prior to merger: What was the organizational culture like? e.g. Was the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Was your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Was teaching or research most valued?; Was the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Was the governance styles mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical?; Did any of these create problems during merging?

Q11. Concerning the institution after merger, or attempted merger: What is the organizational culture like?

e.g. Is the academic role fairly loose or tightly prescribed?; Is your main professional loyalty to your discipline (subject) or to your institution?; Is teaching or research most valued?; Is the reward structure based on research output or teaching ability?; Is the governance style mainly democratic or mainly hierarchical?; Does the new institution have a coherent culture?

Q12. Was organizational culture influential in merger success or failure?

Q13. Did the merger create uncertainty, anxiety, job losses, rivalries, defensive strategies, role conflict, ambiguity, distrust? Explain.

Q14. Was the merger well planned, and well implemented? Explain.

Q15. Are, or were, new roles and responsibilities defined adequately? Explain.

Q16. Does, or could, the merged institution better meet the needs of students? Government? Society? Explain.

Q17 How much did staff trust the decision makers? How important is maintaining trust, in your view?

Q18. Was the merger process evaluated? Should it have been? Explain.

Q19. Did the merger, or merger attempt, solve any problems, or create problems? Explain.

Q20. In your view, did the merger, or merger attempt, succeed or fail? Explain why.