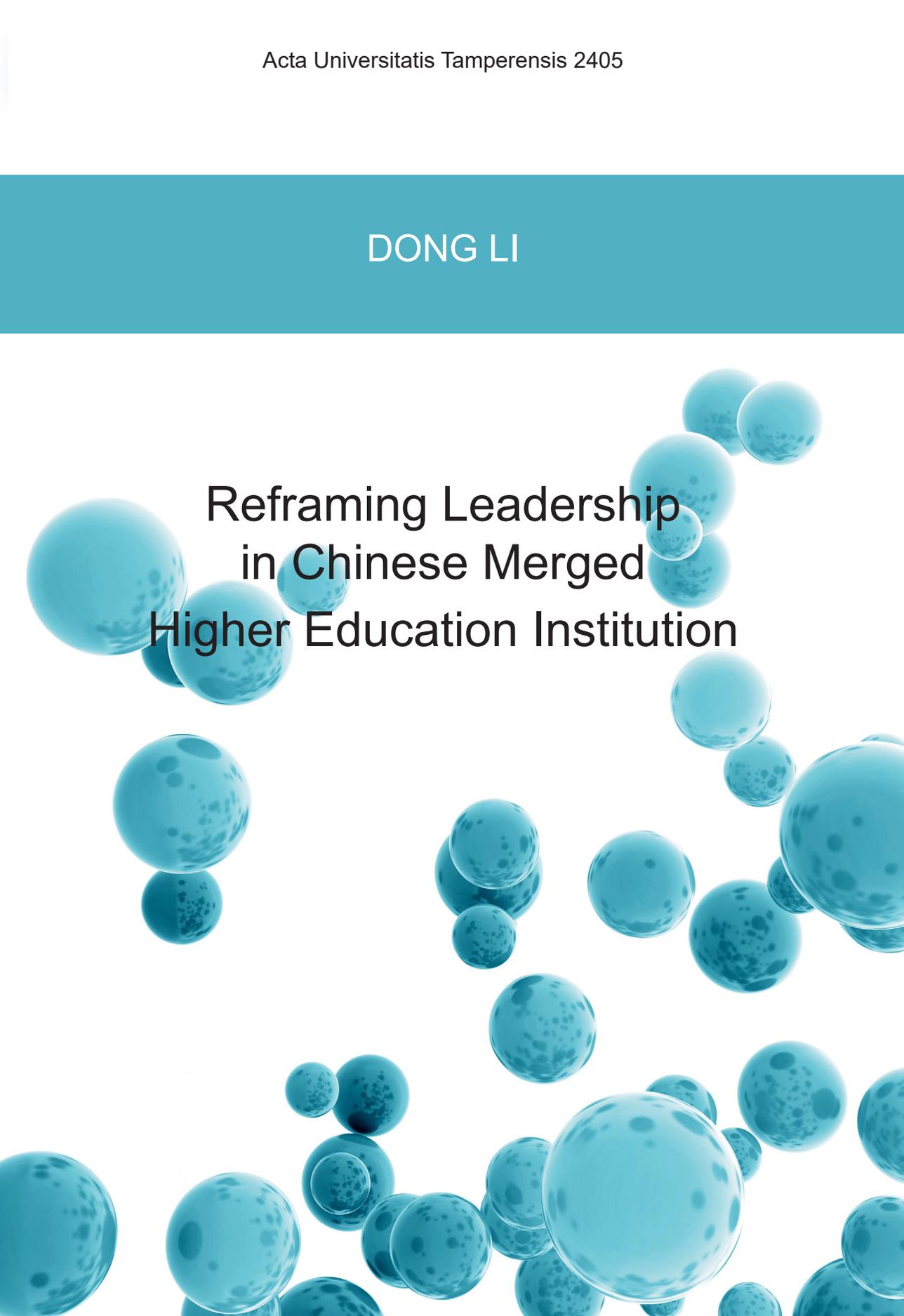


DONG LI

Reframing Leadership  
in Chinese Merged  
Higher Education Institution

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DONG LI

Reframing Leadership  
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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of  
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UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

DONG LI

Reframing Leadership  
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*Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 2405*  
*Tampere University Press*  
*Tampere 2018*

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION  
University of Tampere  
Faculty of Management  
Finland

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service in accordance with the quality management system of the University of Tampere.

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Cover design by  
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Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 2405  
ISBN 978-952-03-0815-5 (print)  
ISSN-L 1455-1616  
ISSN 1455-1616

Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis 1915  
ISBN 978-952-03-0816-2 (pdf)  
ISSN 1456-954X  
<http://tampub.uta.fi>

Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy – Juvenes Print  
Tampere 2018



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give my warmest thanks to my supervisor Professor, Seppo Hölttä. Seppo invited me to join the Management and Economics at Higher Education Group (HEG), University of Tampere as a full-time researcher in 2007. It was he who gave me the opportunity to start my academic career, and step by step to become an education scholar. During the entire period of working at HEG, I have received a lot of support from Seppo, both academic and emotional. Without Seppo's coaching, encouragement, and care, the publication of my dissertation and the development of my academic career would not have been possible.

I want to give my sincere thanks to two distinguished scholars - Professor Xiaoguang Shi (Peking University) and Professor Jouni Kekäle (University of Eastern Finland) as the pre-examiners of my dissertation. I learned a lot from your valuable comments.

I want to thank my former colleagues at HEG. Professor Jussi Kivistö, Docent Vuokko Kohtamäki, as well as other colleagues. I clearly remembered that all of you made a lot of comments and suggestions during each seminar. I also want to thank Acting Professor Elias Pekkola, and Lecturer Antti Talkkari for giving me advice on the statistical analysis of data. My thanks also to Professor James Fairweather (Michigan State University) and Professor Wanhua Ma (Peking University) for your encouragement and comments during your stay at HEG. My thanks to Dr. Ian Dobson for your help on academic writing improvement.

I am sincerely grateful to these institutional leaders and all middle level leaders in the case university who accepted my interviews and the questionnaire survey. I would not have completed my empirical data without these respondents' support and cooperation. I also want to express my warmest thanks to my Chinese university contacts who helped me to collect the relevant documents and contact these respondents. Without your kindly support, I wouldn't have received these important and valuable internal data for my dissertation.

I would like to give my special thanks to my wife Junjie Li. During my doctoral journey, I didn't have enough time to take care of my family, and she always gave me her full support and love for everything. I also want to thank my daughter Weiran Li and my son Bingyue Li. Weiran Li was admitted to her ideal university in the UK with her wonderful examination results from the IB programme of Tampereen lyseon lukio high school this year. Bingyue Li starts grade two with good results at the Finnish International School of Tampere. I am proud of you.

Dong Li  
Tampere, July 2018



# ABSTRACT

Leadership studies in the Chinese merged university context is a research gap. The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership styles' impact on the nature and outcomes of the Chinese merged university. The author employed Bolman and Deal's reframing organization theory as the theoretical framework to examine and understand one Chinese merged case university, and also explore the impact of leadership orientation in the merger context.

This study has drawn a picture of the Chinese merged university from the leadership perspective, and utilized the case study method to provide a systematic study of the leadership aspect. As many scholars' research shows, the merger of higher education institutions is a complex process. This study from the middle level leaders' view explored the challenges that the institutional leadership had been facing, and how the institutional leaders dealt with these challenges. Bolman and Deal's reframing theory is a cognitive theory. It provides a diagnostic approach to examine the organisation and leadership orientation. Although Bolman and Deal's theory has been very widely utilized in higher education research, this study was the first to utilize the reframing theory in the Chinese merged university field. The merger process of higher education institutions was a rapid organisational change process. Bolman and Deal's theory provides a framework to make sense of this kind of change from Structural, Human resource, Political and Symbolic perspectives, and to explore the institutional leadership orientation, as well as the re-impacting between the leadership and the merger.

The governance system of Chinese universities is a unique system in the world due to the CCP administrative system. Within the Chinese university, the main two institutional leaders are the General Secretary of the CCP Committee, and the rector. The governance mechanism is the rector's responsibility under the leadership of the CCP Committee (see Chapters 2 and 5). Therefore, the CCP Standing Committee is the top institutional leadership, the general secretary of the CCP Committee is the chair of the group, and the rector is the vice chair. This group played a very important role in the merger. In this study, the main research aim was to explore the two main institutional leaders, as well as the institutional leadership group. Based on Bolman and Deal's leadership survey instrument, the author extended two sections relevant to the merger.

The study used the quantitative and qualitative mixed research method. A significant amount of valuable first-hand data concerning the internal affairs of a Chinese merger university was presented in this study. The quantitative part played an assisting role in achieving a deeper understanding of the analysis of the interview data.

This research provided a case Chinese merged university study from the leadership perspective; it explored the effects of the merger on the leadership, as well as the impact of the leadership orientation on the integration of the merger. Meanwhile, through an analysis of the case university's context, the study provides a discussion on how the institutional leaders could have reframed their leadership, so that they could have dealt with the challenges in the merger, as well as improved their leadership effectiveness. These findings and analyses can be taken as a good reference for universities who are planning or implementing mergers. This study also can be used by leaders who are working in a merged university, to improve their leadership skills or leadership effectiveness. This study also provides a reference to such scholars who are willing to do research on university leadership, and at least provides a reference for them on how to use Bolman and Deal's reframing theory as a framework to examine the organisation and leadership.

Key words: leadership in higher education, higher education reform, leadership, university merger, reframing leadership theory, integration

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Akateemisia johtamistutkimuksia on tehty vain niukasti kiinalaisista yhteensulautuneista yliopistoista. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus oli tutkia johtamistyylien vaikutusta yhtenäisyliopiston muodostumiseen. Tutkimuksen kirjoittaja käytti Bolmanin ja Dealin uudelleenmuotoiluoteoriaa organisaatioille kehikkona tutkimuksessa, jotta pyritään ymmärtämään yhden kiinalaisen yhdistyneen yliopiston tapausta ja johtamissuunnan vaikutusta sulautumisen kontekstiin.

Tämä tutkimus piirtää kuvan kiinalaisesta yhdistyneestä yliopistosta johtamisen näkökulmasta ja siinä on käytetty tapaustutkimuksen metodia johtamisen systemaattiseen tutkimiseen. Kuten aiempi akateeminen tutkimus osoittaa, ylempien koulutusinstituutioiden yhdistyminen on kompleksinen prosessi. Tämä tutkimus on tehty keskiportaan johtajien näkökulmasta ja siinä tutkittiin niitä haasteita, joita institutionaalinen johtaminen on kohdannut, ja kuinka johtajat toimivat haasteiden edessä. Bohlmanin ja Dealin uudelleenmuotoiluoteoria on kognitiivinen teoria. Se tarjoaa diagnostisen lähestymistavan organisaation ja johtamisen orientaatioon. Vaikka teoriaa on käytetty laajasti korkeakoululaitosten tutkimuksissa, tämä oli ensimmäinen kerta, jossa sitä on sovellettu kiinalaisten yhtenäistyneiden yliopistojen tapauksessa. Sulauttamisprosessi oli nopea organisaatiomuutosprosessi. Bolmanin ja Dealin teoria antaa kehikon, jotta ymmärretään tämä muutos rakenteellisesta, hallinnollisesta, poliittisesta ja symbolisesta näkökulmasta, ja sen avulla voidaan tarkastella institutionaalista orientaatiota ja takaisinkytkentöjä johtamisen ja sulautumisen välillä.

Kiinalaisten yliopistoja hallintoyhteisö on erityinen maailmassa, johtuen puolueen (KKP) hallintojärjestelmästä. Kiinalaisessa yliopistossa kaksi institutionaalista johtajaa ovat puoluekomitean pääsihteeri sekä rehtori. Hallintomekanismi on puolueen johtamana rehtorin vastuualuetta (ks. kappaleet 2 ja 5). Sen tähden puoluekomitea on ylin institutionaalinen johtoelin, ja pääsihteeri toimii puheenjohtajana ja rehtori varapuheenjohtajana. Tämä ryhmä oli tärkeässä asemassa sulautumisessa. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkasteltiin kahta ylintä institutionaalista johtajaa ja institutionaalista johtajaryhmää. Bolmanin ja Dealin näkökulmaa käytettiin tutkimusinstrumenttina.

Tutkimuksessa käytettiin yhteen nivottua kvantitatiivista ja kvalitatiivista tutkimusmetodia. Tutkimuksessa tuodaan esiin primääridataa kiinalaisesta yhtenäistyvästä yliopistosta. Kvantitatiivista osuutta käytettiin apuna tulkittaessa haastatteludataa. Tämä tutkimus tarjosi tapaustutkimuksen kiinalaisesta yhtenäisyliopistosta johtamisen kannalta. Se tutki sulautumisen vaikutuksia johtamiseen ja johtamissuunnan vaikutuksia integraatioon. Tutkimuksessa

keskustellaan tutkimustapauksen avulla siitä, kuinka institutionaaliset johtajat olisivat voineet muotoilla uudestaan johtajuuttaan ja olisivat paremmin toimineet muutoshaasteissa ja parantaneet johtamisen tehokkuutta. Tämän tutkimuksen löydöksiä ja analyysejä voidaan käyttää integroituvien yliopistojen suunnittelussa ja prosessin toimeenpanossa. Johtajat, jotka työskentelevät yhtenäistyvissä ja yhdistyneissä yliopistoissa voivat myös hyödyntää tuloksia johtamistaidon ja -tehokkuuden kehittämiseen. Tutkimus toimii myös referenssinä tutkijoille, jotka tekevät tutkimusta yliopistojen johtajuudesta sekä referenssinä Bolmanin ja Dealin uudelleenmuotoiluteorian hyödyntämisestä.

Avainsanat: johtajuus korkean asteen koulutuksessa, korkean asteen koulutuksen reformi, johtajuus, yliopistojen yhteensulautuminen, johtamisen uudelleenmuotoiluteoria, integraatio

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research background

### 1.1.1 Research context in higher education institutions merger

In the history of Chinese higher education development, reforms have occurred several times. Examples include the Chinese government's "211 Project" of 1995, and the "985 Project" of 1998. Recently, the government launched the "Double First-class University (First-class universities and First-class disciplines)" in 2015. However, the biggest reform was the merger of higher education institutions. On the other hand, these policies are also related to the reform of the university merger in the 1990s.

The Chinese government began a series of reforms of the national higher education system in the 1990s. Mergers of higher education institutions were one of the most important elements of this reform, and most of the key universities in China have been involved in this process (D. Li, 2010). In this reform wave, there were more than 430 new merged higher education institutions, and more than 1400 higher education institutions were involved (Chinese MOE, 2006). The higher education merger has played an important role not only in higher education reform but also in national economic development. Although the merger of Chinese higher education institutions has happened 10-20 years ago, its impact on the development of Chinese higher education is significant and also influences the development of present policies of higher education development.

The merger reform in Chinese higher education has received a considerable amount of attention from higher education researchers in the past three decades. Most of research was done in 2010s. Some research has been undertaken to investigate the possible implications of mergers on the national education policy and on the individual institutions involved.

The available literature covers several categories. First, a particular portion of the literature is, at best, anecdotal in nature or is in the form of reports (Dai, 2000; Zhou, 2001).

Second, some items from the literature are focused on abstract summaries of experiences, which fall short of being concrete studies of practice (K. Y. Cai, 2002; H. F. Chen, 2001; P. J. Wang & Tang, 1997; Zhou, 2001; D. Li, 2011).

Third, some of the literature provides a macro-view from the perspective of the national government. This branch of literature emphasises and analyses the advantages of the mergers of higher education institutions, and thereby ignores the

complexity and difficulty of the mergers (Pang & Zeng, 1999; Xia, 1998; Zeng, 2000). Most of the analyses have been built on idealism or are completely driven by statistics. These studies have not given the merger issue detailed consideration, and they usually represent the voice of the government (D. Li, 2010).

Fourth, in past years, several researchers have completed studies on mergers in Chinese higher education. For example, the author of this study has done one study on mergers in Chinese higher education institutions in the 1990s, which explored the main factors that have influenced the nature and outcomes of the merger. Another study was completed by Wan (Wan, 2008). She used a case study research method to explore the processes and outcomes of mergers in Chinese higher education. In the dissertation, Wan provided a conceptual framework based on the external and internal contexts of the impact of mergers on higher education institutions (D. Li, 2009).

Finally, regarding the governance, management and leadership arrangements in merged higher education institutions, most of the articles focus on multi-campus administration (Y. Z. Cai, 2007; A. P. Chen & Luo, 2000; H. F. Chen, 2001; Y. C. Chen & Shen, 2001; Y. C. Chen, 2002; Shen, Chen, & Liao, X.Y. & Luo, Y., 2001; J. L. Yin & Dai, 2000). However, no one has yet undertaken a systematic and deep analysis of the leadership dimension from the leadership theory perspective in merged universities in China (D. Li, 2011).

From an international perspective, merging is not a new phenomenon in higher education. The use of mergers as a governmental instrument for making higher education more efficient has, however, expanded enormously over recent decades (Goedegebuure, 1992). Some countries even use it to construct or reconstruct the whole higher education system. In countries such as Australia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa and Sweden, governments have played an important role either in initiating or encouraging mergers in order to rationalise national higher education systems (Fielden & Markham, 1997; Goedegebuure, 1992; Harman, 1988; D. Hay & Fourie, 2002; H. R. Hay, Fourie, & Hay, 2001; Kyvik, 2002; Meek, 1988; Skodvin, 1999; Wan, 2008). For example, the Australian government declared in the late 1980s that institutions must meet a certain requirement for size in order to receive federal funding (Eastman & Lang, 2001). The Dutch government also imposed similar limiting conditions in order to restructure its non-university sector during the period from 1983 to 1987 (Goedegebuure, 1992). Systemic mergers have been taking place in South Africa for several years. The institutional landscape of higher education in South Africa is to be consolidated through the establishment of new institutional and organisational forms, including a reduction in the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 11 universities, five polytechnics, six comprehensive institutions, and two National Institutes for Higher education through mergers (Hall, Symes, & Luescher, 2004, P.44).

Regarding the reasons and motivations for merging higher education institutions, some studies have been done by Pinheiro, Geschwind and Aarrevaara in 2016. "A review of the literature covering the period from the 1970s until the 1990s has

identified the most important reasons for merging as being related to the need for: 1) boosting efficiency and effectiveness; 2) dealing with organizational fragmentation; 3) broadening student access and implementing equity strategies; increasing government control over higher education systems; 4) greater decentralization, and establishing larger organizations ” (Pinheiro, Geschwind, & Aarrevaara, 2016)

In Finland, mergers in the Finnish higher education sector have been a popular topic. In 2005, the Finnish government adopted a resolution on the structural development of the public research system, outlining future strategies for organisations that guide, finance and conduct research. This is the most important higher education and science policy document issued by relevant governmental departments of Finland in that period. The purposes of the structural development are 1) to enhance the overall performance of the innovation system and its capacity for renewal; 2) to strengthen the knowledge base and 3) to improve the quality and targeting of research. Attention is focused on commercial and societal utilisation of knowledge and research findings. The reforms now being carried out are designed to carve a niche at the cutting edge of R&D fields that are the most relevant to the national economy, other societal developments, and the population’s well-being (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2005. 04; D. Li, 2011, p. 225; Science and Technology Policy Council of Finland, 2006; Turunen, 2007). In the past decade, as in the other Nordic countries, some universities were merged in Finland, such as the University of Eastern Finland, Aalto University, and so on.

The merger phenomenon in higher education has led to a number of researchers paying attention to this topic worldwide. Most of them have focused on presenting a detailed understanding and interpretation of the typical mergers in higher education, or presenting the basic concept of a merger (Eastman & Lang, 2001; Fledler, 1971; Millett, 1976; D. Li, 2010, 2011). Some researchers have analysed the national reform process, policy and motivation (Eastman & Lang, 2001; Fielden & Markham, 1997; Goedegebuure, 1992; Harman, 1988; D. Hay & Fourie, 2002; Kyvik, 2002; Meek, 1988; Skodvin, 1999; D. Li, 2010, 2011). Regarding the leadership dimension, Martin and Samels (1994) provided the core principles for merging colleges for mutual growth. They emphasised the enhancement of complementary missions, strengthening of academic offerings, and improving administrative efficiency. They also mentioned that the key to successful implementation is diversified planning. However, they have not undertaken an in-depth analysis of how to transfer these principles into management and leadership practice(D. Li, 2010, 2011).

Carlson (1994) mentioned that the achievement of a mutual-growth merger requires a new vision of higher education management, and its ultimate success depends on the leadership provided by the overall chief executive officer. Gray (1987) shed light on how difficult mergers can be for chief executive officers and he stated that they require “fierce determination, considerable endurance, and thick-skinned aggressiveness”. From these points, it can be established that the

leadership in universities formed through a merger process is a major factor that influences the success or failure of the merger (D. Li, 2011).

The importance of quality leadership in a transformation effort cannot be overemphasised (Higgs, 1982; Peterson, 1982). It has been argued that in a merger, strategic and organisational fit offer the potential for synergies, but the realisation of those synergies depends entirely on the ability of leaders to manage the post-merger process in an effective manner (Green & Mitchell, 1979). In most studies about mergers and acquisitions, the need for good leadership is often taken for granted and has not been well articulated and studied. Sitkin and Pablo (Sitkin, 2004) noted that leadership is treated in an almost off-hand way in literature, which seems to reflect the need to acknowledge what is an obviously important factor, while sidestepping the need to address the issue substantively (Wan, 2008; D. Li, 2011).

Therefore, from the international and Chinese perspectives, the area of higher education institutions mergers is still lacking in terms of systematic leadership studies, and in particular, studies of the impact of institutional leadership styles on those mergers.

### 1.1.2 Personal research motivation

The author of this study experienced the merger process of a Chinese merged university. In that university, the whole merger underwent an arduous several-year-long process. The author took part in the policymaking process related to staff and faculty adjustment and integration. Both supportive and critical voices from students, staff, administrators and society could be heard. The whole merger process was difficult and unsmooth. At that time, a number of important questions could have been raised. Why do we need to merge? How should the merger progress? Can one expect desirable outcomes from the initial plan? In addition, how can the new merged institution be smoothly operated and integrated? The experience of the personnel and their bewilderment was the main reason why the author selected this topic for his studies.

In addition, the author has conducted some studies on mergers in Chinese higher education in the 1990s. For instance, one of the author's studies (2004) firstly reviewed the theories and concepts of mergers in higher education from the relevant literature in other countries and evaluated their implications for understanding mergers in Chinese higher education. Secondly, through a description of the background of the reform leading to the Chinese higher education mergers and an analysis of the process of merger policy-making, the motives behind the merger were analysed. Thirdly, on the basis of the analysis of the merger case – a national key university – the processes and outcomes of the Chinese higher education merger, as well as the effects of the merger policy on Chinese higher education institutions, were described. Finally, based on the analysis of the motives, processes, and outcomes of the mergers, the author presented the main factors that had influenced the nature and outcomes of the process of the

Chinese higher education merger. This study represents an extension to the previous studies; the author will focus on the leadership dimension of one Chinese provincial merged university.

## 1.2 Research objective

As mentioned in the above section, the literature review undertaken by the author revealed that is adequate research on leadership in mergers. Regarding the impact of leadership on the university merger process, many researches have pointed out that leadership plays a very important role in the merger process but, as previous mentioned, no one study has given a systematic analysis on how the leadership influences the merger, as well as the outcomes. For instance, how does the leadership work in the university merger? Do the leadership styles have an influence on the success or failure of the merger? Particularly, there were no in-depth studies in the context of mergers between Chinese higher education institutions. In order to fill this research gap, in this study, the author attempts to identify the relevant leadership theory as the theoretical framework to explore the nature and outcome of the merger, the main challenges that the leaders face, as well as the impact of leadership on the merger process.

## 1.3 Significance of this study

There are some significant aspects to this study. First, as mentioned at the beginning of the study background, during the development of Chinese higher education in the past decades, reforms were initiated on several occasions. For instance, in order to build up world-class universities, the Chinese government issued the policy of the “211 Project”. After the “211 Project”, the Chinese government issued the “985 Project”. Recently, the government launched the “Double First-Class University (First-Class universities and First-Class disciplines)”. All these policies are related to the university merger reform in the 1990s. This is the reason why it is very valuable to conduct more research on the mergers in the 1990s. This study presents a profile of Chinese higher education reform, particularly, the background of the biggest Chinese higher education system reform - “the higher education institutions merger” - since the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949. Through the case study, readers will be able to understand the background and practice of the university merger, such as what were the factors that influenced the nature and outcomes of the merger, which can also help other researchers, decision-makers and educators to understand the present policies of the Chinese government in higher education. Second, before this study, no one had undertaken in-depth studies from the Chinese institutional leadership perspective within the merger context. Leadership is a very sensitive issue in the Chinese higher education political system and it is not easy for researchers to collect the requisite data. From this perspective, this work provides a

significant study to fill this gap. Third, in the study, the author will argue that Bolman & Deal's leadership theory 'Reframing theory' is a suitable theoretical framework for the university merger context. Therefore, it is very valuable to examine this theory in the context of higher education institutions' mergers. Finally, from the research method perspective, the author has combined the qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the leadership in a Chinese merged university. Therefore, the author has employed the reframing theory instrument to collect the data, and at the same time used it to help the respondents to gain a deep understanding of the concept of the theory, as well as to help the author conduct the interviews. In addition, many researchers have used this theory to study leadership according to respondents' "self-rating" or "others-rating". Bolman's study has shown that "others-rating" is more valid than "self-rating" (Bolman & Deal, 2012). In this study, the author has evaluated the institutional leaders and the leadership group from the middle level leader's perspectives, in order to adapt to the Chinese higher education governance structure. In the Chinese system, higher education institutions implement the mechanism of "group (collective) leadership". Therefore, this study enriches the application of the reframing theory in higher education.

#### 1.4 Limitation and delimitation

As Patton (2002) has noted, "there are no perfect research designs. There are always trade-offs" (p. 223). All proposed research projects have limitations; none is perfectly designed (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 42). This study also has a few limitations, such as the following:

First, in China, there are more than 400 merged universities, and more than 1400 higher education institutions have been involved in mergers since the 1990s. In this study, in order to have an insight into the merger process, the author has had to make a trade-off between depth and breadth in order to employ the case study method. However, although the author chose a typical provincial key university merger case, only one case cannot reflect the actual nature of the leadership in all Chinese merged universities. If it had been possible to do so, extending the study to include a comparative aspect would have improved it. However, it was not possible in this study because of cost and time constraints.

Second, even within this one case, the author did not collect data from all institutional level leaders. For instance, if the study had drawn data from all institutional leaders (asking them to give a "self-rating"), then this data could have been compared with ratings from others. This would have enhanced the comparative aspect by comparing between the "others-rating" and "self-rating", which would have strengthened the study. There are two reasons why the author did not collect data from all leaders: one is that the author was constrained by space limitations in this dissertation; another is that during the pilot study, when the author discussed the research with different institutional leaders, some of them

mentioned that most of decisions were mainly made by the main two institutional leaders, and some of them were unwilling to participate in the interviews.

Third, the sources of relevant information are limited. On the one hand, the literature that concerns mergers in Chinese higher education is limited. As earlier mentioned, many of the sources are news reports or simple descriptions. The literature that could provide a theoretically well anchored perspective on the leadership of merged Chinese universities is very limited. The overseas literature in this area cannot be completely applied to Chinese practice because of the different societal backgrounds, including history, the nature of the political and economic systems, administration mechanisms and cultural traditions.

Fourth, because the leadership issues are related to the political and personal behaviours, as well as personal relationships, during the data collection process, the author found that some respondents did not wish to give more comments on this topic, especially on some questions concerning politics or governmental policies. In particular, the middle level leaders are under the leadership of the institutional leaders in China. Therefore, several questionnaires were not returned, and for some other reasons, several respondents could not be successfully interviewed.

Finally, from the theoretical framework perspective, it is not certain whether the reframing theory is able to reflect the fine-grained Chinese higher education institutional leadership's approaches and behaviours. During the data collection, the author has done his best to explain the questionnaire in a way appropriate to Chinese culture. Moreover, he has also considered the cross-cultural perspective during the whole process of this study.

## 1.5 Structure of this dissertation

This study comprises four main parts. The first part is the entire background of the Chinese merger reform in Chapter 2. Here, based on the literature review and document analysis, the study presents an overview of the background of the Chinese higher education reform context, which includes the external factors that come from economic development, internationalisation, governmental administration reform, as well as changes in the Chinese university governance mechanism. In particular, the author has presented relevant policies to the restructuring of the Chinese higher education system, as well as assessed the impact on the higher education institutions from a national perspective. The purpose was to present readers of this study with the whole picture of the biggest reform in Chinese higher education since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. At the same time, it is helpful to the readers to enhance their understanding of the mergers that took place in the process of establishing the case university.

The second part is in Chapter 3. In this part, the author provides relevant theories concerning leadership studies in higher education. The purpose is to present the theoretical frameworks for this study. In Chapter 3, through the

literature review on the merger studies from the leadership perspective, the concept of leadership, and the changes and trends of leadership theories in the higher education field are introduced. The author provides the basic theoretical support for the reasons why he chose Bolman and Deal's reframing theory to explore the Chinese merged university and its leadership. In this part, the author also presents a discussion on Bolman and Deal's reframing theory, as well as its development and applications in the higher education field.

The third part is about the research methodology used in this study in Chapter 4. In this part, the author presents the research design strategy, the research question, the case university choice, data collection method, as well as the method of data analysis.

The final part presents the empirical analysis. In this part, the author based his analysis on Bolman and Deal's four dimensional diagnostic model to examine the case university (Chapter 5) as well as its leadership orientations (Chapter 6). The author then presents the findings and conclusions of the study, as well as further recommendations, in Chapter 7.

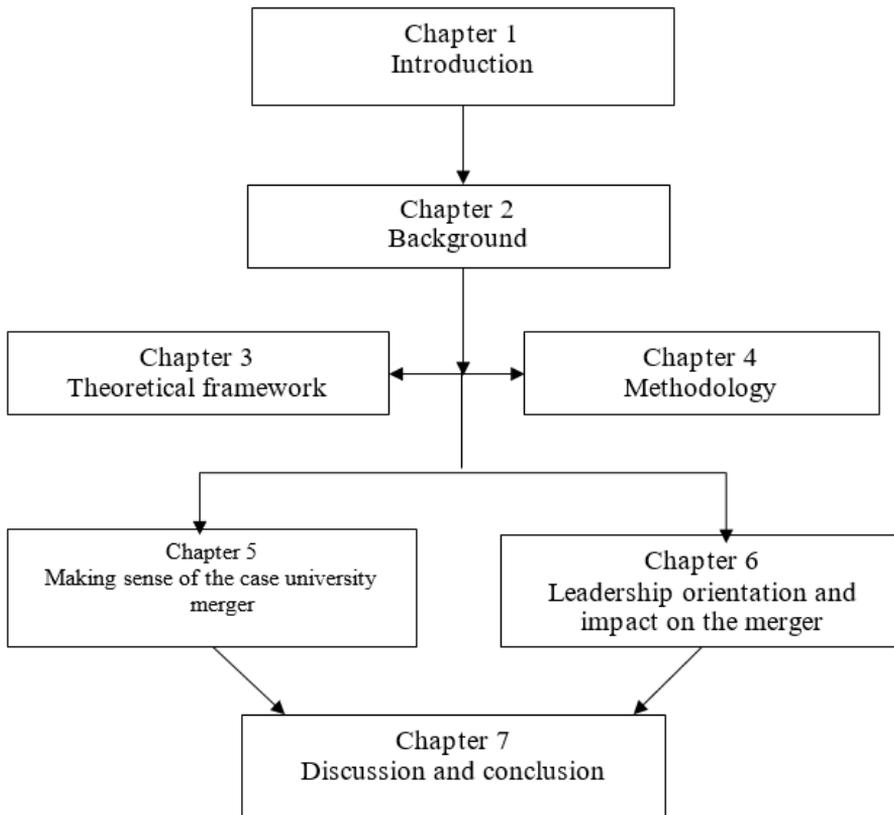


Figure 1.1: The structure of this study process

## 2 OVERVIEW OF MERGERS AND GOVERNANCE CHANGE IN CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION

Since the 1990s, Chinese higher education has been undergoing a profound phase of restructuring, which involves not only higher education institutions but also the governmental administration at both the central and local levels. The restructuring is arguably a continuation of the adjustments that have been made since the founding of the People's Republic of China (D. Li, 2009; D. Li, 2011; Ren, Y.M & Xiong, M.G., 1999; Zhang, 1999; Zhao, 2002). In this chapter, the background of the mergers in Chinese higher education will be reviewed. The merger wave of Chinese higher education institutions in the 1990s had a complex historical and social background. All of this started with the geographical reallocation of universities and the regrouping of faculties shortly after the birth of the new People's Republic of China (L. Q. Li, 2004). Through analysis of the background, the historical reasons for Chinese higher education institutions' mergers and the relevant reform policies will be described. Since the objective of the study is to examine the leadership of a Chinese merged university, the relevant changes in the governance and administration system in Chinese higher education will also be discussed in this chapter.

### 2.1 The historical background of the Chinese higher education system

#### 2.1.1 The restructuring of the higher education system in the 1950s

The People's Republic of China was set up in October 1949. At that time, the higher education sector was fairly small. There were 205 higher education institutions. Sixty per cent of them were owned by foreign missionary organisations, and had in total approximately 117,000 students and 16,000 teachers (D. Y. Chen, 2002, p. 50; Chinese Ministry of Education, 2000). After the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter referred to as the CCP) came into power in October 1949, a campaign of remoulding the "old" education began. The restructuring of higher education institutions was a major reform. Its purpose was to meet the needs of national construction. As the Minister of Education pointed out, the fragmented political and economic situation reflected on higher education, which was in an extremely anarchic state, with each department operating in its own way.

Thus, first of all, a united and centralised leadership needed gradually to be established (Ma, 1950; Yang, 2000). Therefore, in order to adapt to the socialistic regime, the Chinese government rebuilt first the higher education system, and changed the foreign missionary and private institutions into public institutions. At the same time, with the international political phase affecting relationships, the new Chinese government developed a closer fraternal relationship with the socialist Soviet Union. Politically, economically and culturally, the Chinese government chose an all-out emulation of Soviet patterns and practices, with the warm assistance of large numbers of Soviet experts both as consultants to the various ministries and as teachers as well as researchers in a number of specific institutions. Therefore, Chinese higher education was increasingly moulding itself to the Soviet pattern (D. Y. Chen, 2002, p. 51; D. Li, 2004).

The first national restructuring of higher education was under the full guidance of the Soviet Union model. This reform was called yuanxi tiaozheng (Colleges and faculties readjusted) in the early part of the 1950s. The reform started through a national conference held in November 1951.

“The participants were the presidents of engineering colleges. They raised and discussed the draft of a national departmental adjustment. According to the conference, the major problems of the national distribution of engineering colleges were:

An imbalance of geographical distribution;

A dispersion of teachers and facilities which led to uneconomic practices;

Impractical specialisations that failed to train very specialised personnel; and

A shortage of students.

The conference made a tentative plan that centred on the engineering colleges in the three administrative regions” (Yang, 2000, p. 321).

In 1952, the Chinese government made a national higher education reform plan, the so-called “Draft of national higher education adjustment”.

*“This reordering involved two important aspects: the geographical rationalisation of the higher education layout, and the establishment of new types of institutions with special emphasis on the development of new engineering universities, polytechnics and specialised colleges as well as teachers colleges. The primary concern was to restructure the whole higher education system in ways that would immediately serve the economic and political objectives set by the First Five-year Plan<sup>1</sup>. Each institution and each programme had a specially designated mission, oriented directly to an industrial sector, a specific product, or a technical process. Consequently, all institutions were put under some degree of scrutiny and were reorganised by departments and specialisation. Tactically, after decades of growth which*

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<sup>1</sup> After the People’s Republic of China was founded, it followed the Soviet Union’s model; the central government prepared a national plan for every five years, named the “Five Year plan”.

*encompassed the establishment of fairly comprehensive programmes from literature and arts, sciences, engineering, agriculture, to law and medicine, all universities were broken up in a piecemeal fashion to build new specialised universities, colleges, and departments. All related departments, programmes, teachers, equipment, and books in the related higher education institutions were concentrated and moved to one newly designed institution so as to build a specialised college. Almost overnight, specialised colleges mushroomed across the country. In order to ensure a rational geographical layout of each type of higher education institution, six major regions (the Northwest, the Southwest, the Central South, the East China, the North China, and the Northeast) were used as the basic geographic units for political-administrative planning. Each region was allowed to found one or two comprehensive universities (i.e. liberal arts and / or science(s) institutions), one or two polytechnic universities or colleges, one major teacher's university, one to three agriculture universities or colleges, and other specialised institutions (D. Y. Chen, 2002, p. 51).*

The adjustment was nearly accomplished by 1953. The basic situation of Chinese higher education had been established. The total number of institutions of higher education decreased from 211 to 182. Among these 182 institutions there were 14 comprehensive universities and 39 engineering, 31 normal, 29 agricultural, 29 medical, 4 political and law, 8 language, 15 art, 5 sports, 2 ethnic institutions, 1 other type of institution (Central Institute of Education Science, 1984; D. Y. Chen, 2002; Yang, 2000). “While the Ministry of Higher Education (now The Ministry of Education - MOE) was the only legitimate administrative organ controlling higher education, and directly administering comprehensive, polytechnic and key normal universities, specialised institutions were rationed to and administered by the corresponding central specialised government ministries. The whole process was centrally planned and monitored, to a large degree. The only institutions administered at the provincial level were small local normal colleges. In order to improve the geographical balance, from 1955 to 1957 a small-scale restructuring was initiated by moving five coastal universities to the hinterland, and building 12 new institutions there. Although other reforms were tried in the 1960s and 1970s, the overall structure and framework remained relatively unchanged after the radical reordering of 1950s” (D. Y. Chen, 2002, pp. 51-52). According to the literature review, some studies note three characteristics for this period system, so called: “nationalisation”, “departmentalisation”, and “specialisation” (W. F. Min, 1999; D.Y. Chen, 2002). In this study, the author would like to give a more detailed description from four perspectives.

The first characteristic was *nationalisation (state-run)*. “At that time, all institutions of higher education in China were owned by the government; therefore, all universities and colleges became state-run institutions. Private and missionary universities and colleges were either merged into public institutions or closed down. This nationalisation of the higher education system was taken as the precondition for reorganisation of the higher education system in early 1950s for the newly developed centrally planned economy” (Min, 1999, p. 9).

The second characteristic was *departmentalisation* (Ministries affiliation). “As a

result of adoption of the Soviet model of higher education, which was based on the rationale of central planning of the economy and manpower training, many relatively highly specialised institutions were established and they became departmentalised under different jurisdictions. For example, Beijing Geology College, established partially based on the Department of Geology of Peking University and earth sciences departments at other universities, became a very specialised college under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Products. Similarly, Beijing Chemical Engineering College was established under the Ministry of Chemical Industry; Beijing Metallurgy College – under the Ministry of Metallurgical Industry; Beijing Agriculture College – under the Ministry of Agriculture; Beijing Aeronautics College – under the ministry of the Aeronautic Industry; Beijing Institution of Post and Telecommunications – under the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, etc.” (Min, 1999, pp. 9-10).

These ministry-run colleges or institutes were situated not only in Beijing, but also in other cities and provinces. Similarly, the other ministries, such as Petroleum, Coal, Electric Power Industry, *Qingong, Fangzhi, Jixue, Dianzhi, Jianshe, Jungong, Tiedao, Shangye, Waimao*, all controlled related colleges or institutes. So, “from the perspective of the administrative structure, professional ministries controlled and administered relevant specialised institutions. The so-called *bumen banxue* (institutions owned and operated by ministries) led to departmentalisation, insularity, and self-perfection in each sector as well as to an almost closed system of higher education. All students were recruited on the basis of each sector’s needs. In other words, all resources of the specialised institutions in a certain system belonged to the affiliated ministry. Of course, such a system stimulated every ministry to support its own institutions both financially and politically, and to develop its own majors or specialised fields as well as to employ its own graduates. Naturally, institutions in such a closed system had no need to worry about their survival. Under the highly centralised planning those closed systems were somehow appropriate to the needs of fledgling economic and social development” (D. Y. Chen, 2002, p. 52; D. Li, 2004).

The third characteristic was *specialisation (Zhuanyehua)*. On the one hand, all kinds of specialised institutions were established across the whole country. On the other hand, “existing comprehensive universities also become more specialised. For example, Tsinghua University, which had been a comprehensive university, became an engineering oriented institute, with its school of sciences and school of humanities and social sciences relocated to Peking University (Beijing University). While some comprehensive universities, such as Peking University, remained comprehensive universities, many of their engineering departments were transferred to other specialised institutions” (Min, 1999, p. 10).

The fourth was *regional departmentalisation and segmentation*. Regional departmentalisation and segmentation occurred, which meant that the local governments (provincial or municipal authorities), in order to cope with the need for development of the regional social-economy, also established many universities and colleges, and they were departmentalised and segmented on the provincial level

by the provincial bureaus, such as the Provincial Bureau of Coal, the Provincial Bureau of Metallurgy, the Provincial Bureau of Health, the Provincial Bureau of Agriculture, the Provincial Education Commission, and so on. Afterwards, in the provinces and municipalities, the largest sections of regional and city governments also established colleges or specialised schools.

Resulting from the readjustment of the 1950s, the governance structure of the Chinese higher education institutions was reorganised as in Figure 2.1. It was retained until the early 1990s (D. Li, 2004). During this period, many universities and colleges were established under the old system. The citation work from the State Education Commission of China (1997), in Table 2.2, was done by W.F. Min (1999). Based on his work, we can see that in the early 1990s, the public system of higher education in China consisted of 1,032 universities and colleges of which only 35 were national universities directly under the jurisdiction of the State Education Commission. Another 311 universities and colleges were under the jurisdiction of 61 central-line ministries, such as the Ministry of Electronic Industry, the Ministry of Metallurgical Industry, and the Ministry of Agriculture. The remaining 686 universities were local universities and colleges under the jurisdiction of 30 provincial level bureaus (the Provincial Bureau of Light Industry, Provincial Bureau of Agricultural Machinery), including colleges and institutes belonging to the sub-local governments (for example, local cities or regions that are under the provincial government) (See Table 2.2). Universities and colleges under the jurisdiction of the line ministries at the central level, or under the line bureaus at the provincial level, were highly specialised, and their graduates were supposed to be assigned to jobs in specific trades under the jurisdiction of central ministries and provincial bureaus (Min, 1999).

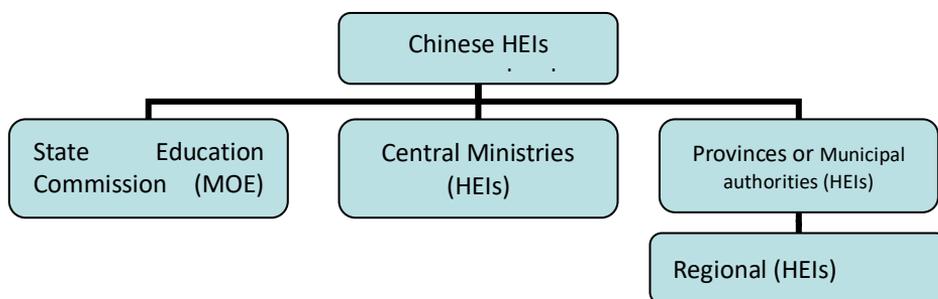


Figure 2.1 The Governance Structure of Chinese Higher Education Institutions before the 1990s.

Table 2.1 Number of higher education institutions in China, by their affiliation and jurisdiction in 1997 (Citation by Min, 1999, p. 11)

Affiliation Institute	Number of institutions	Undergraduate enrolment	Total number of employees	Total number of teachers	Student/teacher ratio
State Education Commission	35	280,541	139,687	46,389	6,04
61 centre ministries	311	1,040,661	399,268	144,437	7,20
Provinces	686	1,699,877	496,583	211,643	8,03
Total	1,032	3,031,079	1,035,808	402,469	7,53

Source: Department of Planning and Construction, State Education Commission of China 1997.

## 2.1.2 The problems of the structure pattern from the 1950s

The proposal and results of the readjustment in the 1950s (nationalisation, specialisation, departmentalisation, as well as regional departmentalisation) aimed to cope with the central plan of social and economic development. At that time, it was helpful to stimulate different level departments to develop higher education. It was also useful to train more specialised high-level technical personnel according to the perceived manpower needs indicated in the central plan.

However, as the policy was turning from the pattern of highly centralized planning towards a market-oriented economy, such a pattern was no longer rational (D.Y. Chen, 2002, p. 52). In particular, the departmentalisation resulted in various serious problems. Min (1999) notes: "First, the Chinese higher education system is segmented into a great number of ministries, provincial bureaux and local governments, namely, so-called "Tiao Kuai". Second, since each ministry and bureau tended to design the curriculum and train students for its own trade only, academic programmes of Chinese universities and colleges tended to be over-specialised. Third, because the actual needs for very specialised personnel were limited, the size of specialised universities and colleges tended to be relatively small. Even in the early 1980s, the rapid expansion of Chinese higher education took place by following the existing structural patterns, without the state paying sufficient attention to issues of economies of scale and cost-effectiveness. Many small, specialised universities and colleges were established under provincial departments and line ministries. The number of institutions of higher learning

increased from 633 in 1979 to 1,075 in 19882. However, the average enrolment of Chinese universities and colleges had remained at below 2,000. Segmentation and over-specialisation of Chinese higher education led to low internal and external efficiency, as well as leading to low quality in teaching and learning” (p. 11).

“The low internal efficiency is first of all indicated by the low student / teacher ratio. In the mid-1980s, the student / teacher ratio in Chinese universities was around 4 to 1, while the international average was about 10 or 12 to 1” (World Bank, 1986; D. Li, 2004; Min, 1999, p. 12). “Because programmes were over-specialised, the academic workload was relatively low in comparison with the situation in other countries. For example, according to a survey of 44 universities and colleges in the mid-1980s in China, the average teaching load of faculty members was only 4.8 hours per week in 1988, while in other Asian-Pacific countries it was between 9 and 12 hours. The utilisation rate of university equipment and facilities was also relatively low because of its over-specialised nature. According to estimates of the State Education Commission in 1985, the average utilisation of equipment and facilities was about 50 per cent of the normal daytime period” (Min, 1999, P.12; World Bank, 1986). “A survey of 116 universities and colleges in three provinces in 1989 showed that the utilisation of laboratories was about 60 per cent on average” (Min, 1999, P.12; World Bank, 1991). “According to the State Education Commission, although most universities and colleges were under-equipped, idle equipment still accounted for over 20 per cent of the total equipment in institutions of higher education” (Jiao, 1988; Min, 1999, p. 12). “The relatively low utilisation of equipment and facilities was partially due to the over-specialised nature of universities and colleges. In 1986, the total number of specialisations in China was 15,804 compared with a total student enrolment of 1,879,994. Each specialisation, therefore, had an enrolment of 119 students, which meant that each one enrolled only 30 to 35 students (approximately one class) on average every year. Some specialisations enrolled only a single class every two years, which led to a low utilisation of highly specialised equipment and facilities. Low utilisation of physical and human resources led to high unit costs. The average unit recurrent cost had always been more than 200 per cent of the GNP per capita in China, while in developed countries, it was about 50 per cent of GNP per capita, and in East Asia and the Pacific – about 100 per cent. In those Asian countries, a level of economic development comparable to that of China was about 150 per cent on average” (Min, 1999, pp. 12-13; Tan, 1992; World Bank, 1986). Small specialised institutions in terms of student enrolment resulted in a low student / teacher ratio and diseconomies of scale, which had been one of the major problems preventing Chinese universities from achieving a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness. A Chinese higher education institution with a student enrolment of less than 4,000 was more costly than a university with a larger student population (Min, 1999; World Bank, 1986)

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<sup>2</sup> Resource: the Statistics of Education, (MOE) 1990.

*The highly departmentalised and over-specialised nature of Chinese higher education also led to very narrow fields of specialisation which made institutions less flexible and less adaptive to the economically and technologically induced change in the workplace and the rapidly changing manpower needs in the labour market of the fast-growing economy. Although there are no systematic data on the external efficiency of the Chinese higher education system, there was evidence of considerable mismatch between demand and supply of higher education graduates. (Min, 1999, p. 14)*

*The internal structure and administration system inside universities took shape in the 1950s and 1960s on the basis of the first adjustment to higher education which was carried out during 1951-53. Before the mid-1990s, there were a lot of serious structural and functional problems that affected the quality and efficiency of the higher education of China. For example, most of the so-called universities of China were actually a kind of specialised college with narrow fields of study rather than comprehensive universities with very wide fields of study. Moreover, in such universities, there were few colleges composed of several interrelated departments but only some independent departments. One of the results of this situation is that it was difficult for educational and academic exchange and coordination to take place between different universities, colleges and even departments. Another result is that it was difficult for the students of a specialised subject to study other subjects. On the other hand, the universities or independent colleges were managed (or were being managed) as a “small society” i.e., “each university provides logistics services, and these logistics services<sup>3</sup> are running like a society.” Chinese universities possessed almost all the service organisations that a society should have (Xu, 2004).*

In fact, the university needs to pay considerably for energy and funding to run these logistic service departments.

### 2.1.3 The background of economic and political reform

At the end of the 1970s, the Chinese government started its economic reform. The thrust of the reform allocated decision-making authority to lower levels of government (World Bank, 1997). The first area of reform was agriculture, and was conducted by the Chinese leader Xiaoping Deng in 1978. The system in agriculture was shifted from collective responsibility to individual responsibility. “The reform also allowed governments’ enterprises to retain much of their earnings for their own development. The private enterprises were encouraged to develop” (World Bank, 1997). At the same time, the Chinese government attracted foreign investments and encouraged foreign trade. This is the so-called “Economic Reform and Open-door” policy. This policy resulted in the rapid growth of gross domestic product (GDP) at an annual average rate of 10 per cent in the past 30 years (World Bank, 1997). With economic development the relevant human resource demands were also changed, and rapidly increased. This had a strong impact on the system of higher education. As stated by the Chinese leadership: “in the new socialist

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<sup>3</sup> Chinese universities owned many logistics service departments, such as hospitals, hotels, restaurants, student hostels, shops, affiliated schools, kindergartens, staff housing, etc.

market economy, market demand and supply, not central planning, were to play the fundamental role in resource mobilization, allocation, and utilization, and the labour market was to play a fundamental role in human resource development and allocation. Under such a system, universities would have to gear their programmes to meet the human resource needs of the labour market. This does not mean that all teaching, research, and other university services would be shaped by market forces, but it does mean that the human resource needs of the development, as signalled by the supply and demand in labour market, would be of great importance to universities” (CCP, 1993; Min, 1999, P.14). The World Bank (1997) study (cited by Zhao, 2002, p. 209) pointed out that “the fundamental challenge of current economic and educational reform is to orient institutions to a more open labour market as well as to a more open society” (p. xiii), and the changing operating environment of higher education is as follows:

1. *From a communist (planned) economy to a socialist market economy.*
2. *From the practice of job assignments and life-long employment in one institution to increasing choice and mobility of the labour market, responsive to changes in skill requirements.*
3. *From a system that derives all directives for policy and action from the centre to a more managerially and financially decentralised one, characterised by increased autonomy.*
4. *From a situation that isolates higher education to one that sees it as fundamentally linked with the government, business, and the local community, and with national and international institutions. (World Bank, 1997, P. xiii; Zhao, 2002)*

Overall, the entire system in the country was urged to shift from an input-driven model to an output- and demand-driven one, effecting wide-ranging changes in the whole field of higher education (Zhao, 2002).

Under the new economic situation, the labour market started to change. There were a lot of graduates who started to choose their jobs by themselves. The government started to shift their assigned power to the free market. This is also a part of the function of government authority change. As Min (1999) mentioned, on the one hand, the ministry concerned had lost the student that it trained. On the other hand, the graduate actually needed more flexibility and adaptability in terms of knowledge and skills. In essence, this problem was structural by nature, in other words, this problem resulted from the departmentalisation, segmentation and over-specialisation of the Chinese system of higher education. (p. 15)

In the 1990s, with the economic reform, the Chinese government carried out a series of political system reforms. In particular, Prime Minister Mr. Zhu Rongji's administration led and pushed the administration system reform in 1998, which has deeply affected the changes in the Chinese higher education system. During that time, the Chinese State Council began to carry out the reform plan on central ministries. The national government structure was changed significantly. Fifteen central ministries were shut down, four new central ministries were set up, and the remaining ministries were reorganised (The Central Government, 1998; D. Li, 2004). According to the reform, ministries no longer had the right to manage their

own higher education institutions. Colleges and universities, which had originally been under these ministries, faced two options: either to be transferred to the governance of the Ministry of Education (originally named the State Education Commission), or to be transferred to the provincial or local educational authorities (Wan, 2008). This reform policy had a strong influence on many Higher Education Institutions, and many key universities had to seek merger partners in order to maintain a good position in the national higher education institution system. This was one of the reasons why so many national key universities were involved in the merger wave in the 1990s.

## 2.2 The policies of Chinese higher education institution mergers

### 2.2.1 Relevant policies review

The trajectory of development of higher education policies, as far as it applies to the immediate issue of mergers, is illustrative of wider concerns over the evolution of the relationship between the Ministry of Education and individual institutions (Hall, Symes, & Luescher, 2004, p. 44). This trajectory reflects the shaping of the Chinese merger policy.

In 1985, the government adopted the document Decision on Education Reform (CCP, 1985). It aimed to provide an appropriate mix of skills to a rapidly changing society as well as to improve efficiency, quality and equity, and to reform the structure of the higher education system. In February 1993, in order to speed up the nationwide transformation from a planned economy to a market economy, the State Council and the Communist Party jointly issued The Outline for Development and the Reform of China's Education System (CCP, 1993). It outlined the strategy for further reform of the Chinese system of higher education. Its objective was mainly to establish a new higher education system that would be adaptive and would help to promote the establishment of a socialist market economy (World Bank, 1997). The document called for reforms to

- *provide required specialists for China's modernisation and for the establishment of a socialist market economy,*
- *improve the social status, work and living conditions of teachers, and*
- *build 100 key universities as well as establish several key courses of study.*(L. Q. Li, 2004)

*The instruments to attain these goals were decentralisation, giving more autonomy to educational institutions, restructuring the system of college enrolment and job placement for graduates, diversification of funding channels, and improving the quality of the teaching and research at higher education institutions. In this document, the Chinese authorities identified higher education as being linked to China's competitive position in the world: "Whoever receives education that is oriented toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century will gain the strategic initiative in international competition during the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (World Bank, 1997, p. 1).*

These ideas of a reform were spurred by internationalisation and globalisation. To achieve this goal, the government determined to accelerate the restructuring of the education system in higher education, with the reform of the administrative system as the focus of concern, and to scaffold the schemes, principles and measures of the restructuring as follows (Zhao, 2002):

- *“Decentralisation.* The change of the state’s full provision of higher education, the encouragement of local governments and social community provision; emphasis on the macro-coordination and macro-control of the government’s administrative power over higher education.
- *Devolution.* The establishment of a two-level administration system, with the local (provincial) government as the main body administering higher education; empowerment of the local government in educational decision-making and planning; the increasing of the autonomy of universities.
- *Injection of market forces and incentives.* The initiation of charging tuition fees in higher education; changes in enrolment and job assignment for graduates, the reform of the funding allocation mechanism, renewed selection of elite institutions (the implementation of the “211 Project”).
- *Socialisation of the logistic services.* The contracting out of certain school logistic services, shifting logistic service administration to the establishment of a business management entity; the implementation of a management contract responsibility system; and the corporatisation of the management of students’ accommodation, etc.” (Zhao, 2002, p. 209)

At that time, under the purpose of “Outlining the reform”, the Chinese government decided to build 100 key universities with key disciplinary areas as a national priority for the 21st century - the so-called “211 Project” .

The Objectives of Project 211:

*The implementation of Project 211 is an important measure taken by the Chinese government in its effort to facilitate the development of higher education in the context of the country's advancement in social and economic fields. Primarily aiming at training high-level professional manpower to implement the national strategy for social and economic development, the project has great significance in improving higher education, accelerating the national economic progress, pushing forward the development of science, technology and culture, enhancing China's overall capacity and international competitiveness, and laying the foundation of training high-level professional manpower mainly within the educational institutions at home. (Chinese Government Document, 1995)*

The overall goals and missions of the “211 Project”:

*During the 9th Five-Year Plan period, the government will initiate actions to strengthen a number of institutions of higher learning and key disciplinary areas. It is envisaged that after several years of efforts some 100 institutions of higher learning and a group of key disciplinary areas would considerably improve the quality of education, scientific research, management and institutional*

*efficiency. In addition, these institutions will also have made remarkable progress in reforming the management system and consequently become the bases for training high-level professional manpower and solving major problems for the country's economic construction and social development. As a result of such efforts, this group of institutions will set up national standards in overall quality, with some of the key universities and disciplinary areas approaching or reaching the advanced international standards. The majority of them will have enhanced their physical conditions and staff competence, in addition to noticeable achievements in human resources training and scientific research. Adapting to regional and sectional development needs, these institutions are expected to play a key and exemplary role. (Chinese Government Document, 1995)*

The “211 Project” began to show the shift of financial policy of the Chinese government. The project intended to select 100 universities and disciplines on which the government would concentrate its investment in the 21st century. Although not stated in the official announcement, it was understood that the remaining institutions would be transferred to provincial governance which, for them, might have meant declining funding and reputation (Wan, 2008). This state initiative aroused intense competition among universities, which wished to be included in the project. Some universities began to talk about mergers in order to strengthen their competitiveness. Although many mergers did happen between 1992 and 1998, their impact was largely regional.

“In May 1995, at the National Conference of Science and Technology, the topic of “making China prosperous through science and education” was first put forward as a national strategy of development by President Jiang Zeming. From then on, promoting economic development and social progress by mainly relying on science, technology and education became the focus of national development policies and strategies” (Zhao, 2002). “When the prime minister, Mr. Rongji Zhu’s administration was founded, Zhu declared the founding of the ‘State Sciences and Education Leading Group’, a special trans-ministry leading body, which was founded to implement the strategies for invigorating China through science and education. This group included Zhu and 11 other leaders above the ministerial level. This group decided to increase scientific and educational inputs and at its first meeting held on June 9, 1998 required the Ministry of Education to create an action plan concerning education reforms running from that date until 2010” (Xu, 2004). As previously mentioned, in 1998, the Chinese State Council began to carry out a reform plan on its central ministries. Many central ministries were shut down, and the remaining were reorganised. Ministries no longer had the right to manage and run their own higher education institutions. Colleges and universities that were affiliated to these ministries faced two options: either being transferred to the governance of the Ministry of Education, or to be transferred to the provincial or local educational authorities (Wan, 2008). The institutions affected had to adjust to the new situation. Another important government action was to build world-class universities based upon models of researcher universities in Western countries. In a speech made on the 100th Anniversary of Beijing University in May 1998, Chinese President Jiang Zeming articulated this idea, and it was soon embodied within state policy (Wan, 2007). Since the reorganisation in 1952, there had not

been a single research university in China. From the point of view of the government, mergers consolidate the strength of different universities and at the same time avoid unnecessary duplication. The merger of several complementary universities, therefore, was considered to be a faster and more feasible way to reach the objective of creating world-class universities (D. Li, 2010; D. Li & Kohtamäki, 2011; Wan, 2008).

During the 1990s, the notion of the “knowledge economy” and “innovation” became hot topics of discussion and caught the attention of the whole society. The Chinese State Council asked the Ministry of Education to produce the “Action Scheme for Invigorating Education towards the 21st Century” (hereafter, Action Plan) (MOE, 1998; L. Wang, 2005). In this document, the Ministry of Education formulated some main tasks as the means to implement the national strategy of development in the education sector. The importance of higher education is well acknowledged. Among these main tasks, some of them are directly related to higher education (Zhao, 2002), such as:

- *The implementation of the “High level innovative talents project”. Strengthening the research work of higher education institutions, actively participating in the national innovation system.*
- *Continuing and facilitating the implementation of the “211 Project”, improving the innovation capacity of higher education institutions in new knowledge.*
- *The establishment of a number of world-class universities and disciplines.*
- *The implementation of the project for the industrialisation of new high-tech in higher education institutions. Promoting the development of the national high-tech industry, making the contribution to foster new economic growth. The purpose is to enhance the relationship between higher education institutions and industries.*
- *The implementation of the “**Higher Education Law**”, actively and steadily developing higher education. Accelerating the reform of higher education, improving the quality of education and the effectiveness of operation.*
- *Deepening the reform of the schools’ ownership system, encouraging multi-investment to develop a national education system.*
- *Enhancing political and spiritual work in higher education institutions, etc. (D. Li, 2011; MOE, 1998; Zhao, 2002)*

In the action plan, the highlight point was determined to be the year 2000, by which higher education was to be actively and steadily developed, and the participation rates of the corresponding age cohort in higher education was to reach 11 per cent or so. By the year 2010, university participation rates would approach 15 per cent with considerable enlargement of the scale of higher education. This policy has had a great influence on the development of Chinese higher education.

In June 1999, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of China made and promulgated the “**Decisions on Deepening Reform in Education and Developing Quality-oriented Education in an All-round Way**” (Chinese Government Document, 1999; D. Li, 2010). In order to affirm the “Action Plan” created by the Ministry of Education, this document was

issued by the highest authority of China. Compared with the “Action Plan”, the majority of the “Decisions” were quite sweeping. However, several stipulations were made quite specific (D. Li, 2010; Xu, 2004). For example, concerning educational input, the Communist Party of China unexpectedly laid down a firm rule that:

*Taking effective and practical measures to increase input in education, the goal that government expenditure on education accounts for 4 per cent of the GDP shall be gradually reached. The People's Governments at all levels shall abide by the Education Law of the P. R. China and make sure that there are substantial increases in the funding for education. The central authorities have decided to increase the proportion of education in government expenditure by 1 per cent every year during the five-year period from 1998 to 2002 (MOE, 1998, pp. 49-50; Xu, 2004; D. Li, 2010)*

Based on the review of the relevant policies and the Act, it is possible to see the whole picture concerning the environment and background of the mergers of Chinese higher education institutions.

## 2.2.2 The Policy of restructuring the Chinese higher education system

In the early 1990s, the Chinese government began to explore and investigate merging of its institutions of higher education. The lack of investment was the main challenge for the Chinese government at that time. But this was only one aspect. Education resources were not rationally arranged and the existing resources were utilised inefficiently. There was unnecessary duplication. Even if the governmental investment had been more extensive, the problem of funding would still not have been solved, and the money would have been wasted. As the Vice-Prime Minister Li Lianqing said (2004, p. 74):

*If we increase our education spending, we have got to see results. And to make that happen we have got to increase funding and overhaul our higher education system simultaneously. That is to say, we need to increase our input to promote reform and raise the returns through reform, so that one penny can do the work of two or even three. I was in economic management for decades after graduating in economics and management. I always wanted to explore the theories and methodology of economics, in light of the law of education, in order to build education economics and use its principles to solve problems in higher education. My actual formula was: 1) input plus reform; 2) input giving impetus to reform; and 3) the result must be: “1+1>2” . The result must be more than the sum of its parts. As to how to proceed, we have got to explore, promote and improve on the basis of our practical experience.*

At that time, some local governments began to restructure their higher education institutions based on the principle of synergising their mutually complementary strengths and resources. The first batch of merged universities was established: Nanchang University, Shanghai University, Yangzhou University,

Guangxi University, Yanbian University and others (D. Li, 2004). At the same time, some universities had set up various restructuring models. These mergers were made possible because of the personal encouragement of the majority of local leaders. Based on these practices, the Ministry of Education summarised the guidelines for the restructuring of the higher education system. They included “*Gongjian* (joint construction), *Tiaozheng* (readjustment), *Hezuo* (cooperation), and *Hebing* (merger)” (D. Li, 2004; L. Q. Li, 2004, p. 75).

*Gongjian*, (joint construction), which means that central governmental departments should stop operating by themselves, and start running higher education institutions in cooperation with the local governments. Accordingly, some universities had been set up by a central ministry or commission as the main partner with the cooperation of a locality; others had been established locally but with central government support. For these universities, new entrants were chosen mainly from among local students and teaching and research was geared to local economic and social development. In this way, both central ministries and localities were motivated to work together and run universities well.

*Tiaozheng* (readjustment) meant remedying any injudicious geographical distribution of higher education and rationalising course set-ups by adjusting the administrative system and regrouping universities and faculties.

*Hezuo* (cooperation), which meant that universities should supplement each other with their strengths and resources, foster interdisciplinary cooperation in teaching and research, do their best to run the school in an open manner, and avoid building “copycat” universities and overlapping faculties.

*Hebing* (consolidation, merger) meant merging certain universities in light of local circumstances, so as to improve teaching quality and administrative efficiency, allowing faculties to make their resources mutually complementary and deliver efficiency benefits from the expanded scale that results from the mergers.

From these guidelines, it can be seen that merging was one of the most important policies used by the Chinese government to restructure the Chinese higher education system. After 1992, based on the reform practice, the Chinese government gradually formed the opinion that merging was the best method to restructure the old Chinese higher education system (D. Li, 2004; D. Li, 2011). Thereby, the merger policy was widely implemented from 1992, which led to the Chinese higher education reform wave in the 1990s.

### 2.2.3 The purpose of the merger policy

“In the 1990s, the General Office of the State Council held several important meetings about the restructuring of the higher education system, for instance in Shanghai in 1994, Nanchang in 1995, Beidaihe of Qinhuangdao city in 1996 and Yangzhou city in 1998. These meetings served to summarise and exchange

experiences, to seek further consensus from the various quarters, to push reform from a few pilot cases to the entire field of higher education, and to lay a solid foundation for revamping the higher education administrative system on a larger scale” (L. Q. Li, 2004). Based on these national meetings, as well as related documents, it is possible to summarise the purpose of the merger policy with the following aspects (D. Y. Chen, 2002; D. Li, 2009; D. Li, 2010):

- *to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Chinese higher education;*
- *to change the obsolete system under which universities were owned and run by a variety of central ministries and commissions, in order to establish a fairly decentralised, two-tiered management system. In this system, administrative powers would be shared by both central and local governments, but with the local governments being required to play a major role;*
- *key universities had another aim related to the goal of building first-class world universities.*

The final aim related to the hope that the merged universities could train students who had an appropriate mix of skills to adapt to the requirements of a rapidly changing society (D. Li, 2010; D. Li, 2011).

## 2.2.4 Stages of the restructuring of the Chinese system of higher education

A review of the Chinese higher education merger waves in the 1990s reveals that there were more than 430 new merged universities until 2006 (Chinese MOE, 2006). The whole process of the restructuring can be divided into three stages: the preparatory stage (1990-1991); the experimental stage (1992-1997); and the full-scale pushing stage (1998-2004) (D. Li, 2009). These stages are adopted from D. Y. Chen’s study (2002) and D. Li’s study (2004, 2009, 2010), and are described as follows:

***The preparatory stage (1990 to 1991).*** During this period, most of the mergers that had taken place were between small universities or colleges, which were usually adult, vocational or television universities or colleges. Fifty-two new merged institutions emerged. Although some experiments had been tried, no substantial progress was made. However, the necessary foundations for further change had been laid.

***The experimental stage (1992 to 1997).*** By 1992, the State Commission of Education (now the Ministry of Education) actively sought a solution to the problem of segmentation between horizontal (called “bars”) and vertical (called “blocks”) departments, by tentatively transferring some institutions from the control of central ministries to provincial governments. In 1992, the Guangdong province pioneered a pilot reform by co-constructing Zhongshan University and the Huanan University of Science and Technology under an agreement with the State Commission of Education. The administration of the Guangzhou University

of Foreign Languages was also moved from the State Commission of Education to Guangdong province. Simultaneously, mergers between universities were used as a mechanism to change the structure of higher education. The Tianjing College of Foreign Trade, owned by the Ministry of Foreign Trade, was transferred and at the same time amalgamated into Nankai University (D. Y. Chen, 2002; D. Li, 2010). During this period, some large-scale universities were established through amalgamation. In May 1992, seven colleges in the city of Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province (Jiangsu Agriculture College, Yangzhou Teacher's College, Yangzhou Technical College, Yangzhou Medical College, Jiangsu Business College, and Jiangsu College of Water Conservation) were merged into a single new institution – Yangzhou University. The merged Yangzhou University adopted the federalisation model at the beginning of the merger. Later it changed again and subjected itself to a total merger, which was a typical case that followed attempts at other merger typologies at that time in China. One merger that was regarded as a successful case was Nanchang University, which was created from a merger between Jiangxi University and Jiangxi Industrial University in 1993. However, the most difficult merger was between Sichuan University and the Chengdu University of Science and Technology in April 1994. This was the very first case of amalgamation between strong universities. Three universities, Yangzhou University, Nanchang University, and Sichuan University, were the least effective cases during that period. In addition, other comprehensive, large-scale universities were created by means of mergers between several institutions. These included Qingdao University (1993) in Shandong province, Shanghai University (1994), Suzhou University (1995) in Jiangsu Province, China Agriculture University (1995) in Beijing, Yanbian University (1996) in Jilin province, Hebei Normal University (1996) in Hebei province, Tongji University (1996) in Shanghai, Guizhou University (1997) in Guizhou province, etc. At this stage, 230 institutions had been merged into 94 (D.Y. Chen, 2002; D. Li, 2004; D. Li, 2010).

***The full-scale pushing stage (1998 to 2006).*** In 1988, an important meeting was held by the State Council in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, to speed up the reform of the administrative system of higher education. At the same time, four campaigns of governmental restructuring were officially unveiled by the central government (see also Chapter 3, and Section 4.1). Their goal was to change the role of the government in the market economy, emphasising macro-regulation rather than unnecessarily detailed micro-direction. As a result, the number of departments of the State Council was reduced from 40 to 29 (GUO, 2000; Li, 2003), and the size of governmental staff was reduced by 50 per cent. Professional ministries were no longer permitted to run higher education institutions. Instead, universities and colleges were required to separate from their originally affiliated central ministries and find their own means of survival. Some were to be decentralised and transferred to local governments; others were to be transferred to the Ministry of Education, mainly by merging with those universities that were already under the direct administration of the Ministry of Education (D. Y. Chen,

2002; D. Li, 2010).

At this stage, several hundred institutions were radically changed through decentralisation and amalgamation. Many key universities also took part in this merger wave, including Zhejiang University (1998), Shanghai Jiaotong University (1999), Tsinghua University (1999), China University of Science and Technology (1999), Peking University (2000), Fudan University (2000), Jilin University (2000), and Wuhan University (2000). Some universities were merged for the second time, such as Tongji University (2000), Nanchang University (2001) and Sichuan University (2000). From early 2000, a general advancement was pushed forward. During the next six months alone, 778 institutions, affiliated with 49 central ministries under the State Council, were restructured. Up until March 2006, 289 new merged institutions had been established during this period. If we put the three stages together, we see that more than 1,000 institutions have been involved, and some higher education institutions have been merged twice. In the end, 431 new universities were established from 1990 to 2006 (Chinese MOE, 2006; D. Li, 2010). However, after 2006, a few universities still merged. Yet, since the number is small, the merger reform is typically considered to have taken place during the three stages above.

From the description of the restructuring process, above, we can see that most of the mergers took place after 1997. In that year, the 15<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CCP was organised; the reform entered a new stage of all-round development, with efforts redoubled and the pace accelerated. Universities affiliated to 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, and 50 central government departments (ministries) were involved in the reform (L. Q. Li, 2004).

## 2.3 The governance and leadership in Chinese Higher Education

### 2.3.1 University merging as a national administration reform in China

As mentioned in Chapter 1, all countries when restructuring their higher education institutions, do so with the purpose of promoting efficiency and effectiveness, and to increase mutual growth (Goedegebuure, 1992; Harman and Meek 2002; Skodvin 1999). The merger policy of higher education institutions in China had a similar purpose as those in other countries. The government sought to promote efficiency and effectiveness by enhancing their research and teaching quality in higher education. However, there was a different general background compared to other countries. The Chinese higher education institutions restructuring occurred against the backdrop of Chinese economic reform, and administration reform. As Ka-Ho Mok (2005, p. 74) states, “higher education restructuring taking place in China should not be understood only as reforms in higher education, as it is closely related to the administrative reform initiated by the State Council in 1998. Therefore, a better understanding of university merging in China can be obtained

from the wider administrative reform initiated by the central government, which injected new dynamics into the changing of university governance in China.”

The result of the restructuring of Chinese higher education system in the 1950s was that most central ministries owned their higher education institutions (see: Section 2.2.1). At the provincial level, different administration departments were also in the same situation. This situation led to the waste of lots of public resources. The national administration reform transferred some authorities from central ministries to the local government, and reduced the number of ministry-level organizations. Therefore, many universities owned by these ministries had to transfer to the Ministry of Education or local governments. In a way, the higher education institutions reform was involved in the national administration reform.

“After the restructuring processes, a new governance system that is characterised by the two-tier management, based on the division of labour between the central and provincial governments, and dominated by the coordinated management of the provincial government, has been established. The restructuring of university systems through mergers is to eradicate the problem and situation of having higher education institutions governed by central ministries, central and local education authorities, provincial governments, municipal governments, and state-own enterprises, so that confusion of higher education policies can be avoided” (Guo, 1998; Mok, 2005 p. 75).

### 2.3.2 Changes in higher education governance

Van Vught (1989) has suggested that there are two basic models of state steering: the rational planning and control model, and the self-regulation model. The rational planning and control model is characterised by strong confidence in the capabilities of governmental actors and agencies to acquire comprehensive and true knowledge and to make the best decisions. In the self-regulation model, monitoring and feedback are emphasised. In this model, the government’s role is predominantly as an actor who watches over the rules of the game played by relatively autonomous players and who changes the rules when the game is no longer able to lead to satisfactory results (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000, p. 4). With respect to higher education, these basic models have been referred to as the state control model and the state-supervising model (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000; Neave & van Vught, 1991). The common focus of these analyses is on how tight or loose the links between central political authorities and higher education institutions are. Olsen (1988) has identified four state-steering models. His models embody different democratic ideals and views of the role of the state, societal actors and government agencies. The models also provide different types of answers to the question of why and under what conditions governments should want to give agencies more autonomy. Olsen’s four models are the sovereign, rationality-bounded steering model; the institutional steering model; the corporate-pluralist steering model and the supermarket steering model (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000, p. 5).

According to a historical analysis of university restructuring in China, the higher education restructuring and university merging that took place in China had indicated a fundamental change in higher education governance. Looking back at the previous analysis of the first readjustments in the 1950s, the Chinese higher education governance model in that period was Van Vught's (1989) rational planning and control model. By the end of the 20th century, the Chinese government had allowed different types of institutions of higher learning and various governance models to flourish in order to fulfil the policy objective of creating more education opportunities.

In China, as it is such a big country, if the central government wants to realize the aim of improving education quality, the local government should play a more important role. The government issued the decentralization policy and encouraged integrating the market resource into higher education development. In fact, the implementation of the decentralisation policy has allowed individual higher education institutions more flexibility and autonomy, and has empowered local governments to chart the course of higher education development in response to the local needs (Ngok, 2003). When we contextualise the higher education restructuring and university merging in the wider public policy contexts of decentralisation and marketization, we realise that China's higher education has been experiencing fundamental governance change (Mok, 2005). The main phenomenon emerging in the late 1990s included on the one hand, the government encouraging the capital market to invest in higher education, so many private higher education institutions were established. On the other hand, some new merged universities were allowed to establish independent affiliated colleges (so called: *Erji xueyuan*), in which the university was permitted to charge its students higher tuition fees. They are under the leadership of the public relevant universities, but their operating style is very similar to the private universities. These changes increased the diversity of the Chinese higher education system. The increasing diversification of the higher education institutions led to a shift of steering model from the single sovereign, rationality-bounded steering model to one of Olsen's other three models.

### 2.3.3 The change of governance within Chinese Higher Education Institutions

The relationship between the president (rector) of higher education institutions and the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has changed several times in the context of Chinese higher education history.

In the 1950s, after the readjustment of the Chinese higher education system, the duality administrative system was formed, which meant that the internal governance included two administrative systems: the academic administrative systems: the academic administrative system and the Chinese Communist Party system. Therefore, there are two top-level leaders in higher education institutions. One is the academic leader – the

President who is in charge of administration and academic issues, and the other top institutional leader is the political leader – the General Secretary of the CCP whose initial role is to be in charge of the political issues. With the development and reform of Chinese higher education, both leaders' roles in the higher education institutions have changed several times in different periods, as summarised in Table 2.2.

From the above table, we can observe that the leadership of Chinese higher education institutions has changed several times in different periods since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The main content and structure of governance and leadership can be classified according to the following stages.

1) *The setting up of the socialist system stage* (1949-1956). In this period, the new government's main task was consolidation of the regime and recovering the economy. Regarding the reform of governance of the higher education institutions, there were two steps. The first step (October 1949–April 1950) was under leadership of the *College Affairs Committee* (Chinese Ministry of Education, 1950). The committee included the president, director of academic affairs, deans, professors, common staff and students. The president was the chairman of the committee, and core leader. The committee was the final decision-maker (G. J. Li & Wang, 2000).

The second stage (April 1950–September 1956) was *the Principle of President Responsibility*. In August 1950, the Ministry of Education issued a new policy – “*The Temporary provision on Higher Education*” (MOE, 1950). This policy pointed out that “Universities and Colleges implement the principle of presidential responsibility”. The main responsibilities of the president included: A) the representation of the university or college in legislation; B) all teaching – learning, research, and administrative affairs; C) responsible for people's political studies (faculties, students, and common staff); D) appointment and removal of all staff; E) approval of the resolution of the institution committee and faculty committee. In this period, the party was the political core, but it had no administrative responsibilities. In fact, this model was influenced by the Soviet Union model. From the perspective of overall effectiveness, the model was good for the quick recovery of the teaching and learning, as well as the reform and readjustment of higher education institutions (Yao, 2010; Wu, 2000; Y. Wang, 1986; Yan, 2009; Ouyang, 2011).

2) *The period of building socialism* (1956-1966). In this period, with the socialist transformation basically completed, the National Socialism Regime was established. The CCP started to explore ways to develop socialism. Concerning the governance of the higher education institutions, there were two different stages (Feng, 1985; Fu, H., 2011; C. Wang, 2000; Yan, 2009). The first stage was from 1956 to 1961, when the CCP implemented “*The principle of a college affairs committee under the leadership of CCP Committee*” (Central Institute of Education Science, 1984). The

CCP Central Committee pointed out that party units at all levels should be responsible for their administrative organisation and public organisation in all enterprises, schools, in the military, as well as in the countryside. In 1958, the CCP

Table 2.2 The evolution of the governance in Chinese higher education institutions

Period	Administrative principles	Rules, Policies and act	Relevant Organisation	Emphasis (core leader)
October 1949- April 1950	College affairs committee		CCP Central Committee	President
April 1950 - September 1956	The Principle of President taking Responsibility	The Temporary provision on Higher Education (Aug.1950)	MOE	President
September 1956 – September 1961	The principle of College Affairs Committee under leadership of CCP Committee	The instruction on Education (Sept.1958)	CCP Central Committee & State Council	General Secretary of CCP
September 1961- May 1966	Under the leadership of CCP Committee, President as the core leader in the College Affairs Committee	The Temporary Regulations of MOE on Higher Education Operation (Draft) ( <i>Gaociao Liushi Tiao</i> )	CCP Central Committee (Sept. 1961)	President & College Affair Committee
May 1966 – October 1976	Revolutionary Committee (Labour, Military, and <i>Geneibui</i> )	Minutes of the National Education Conference	CCP Central Committee Aug. 1971	Revolutionary Committee (CCP)
1978-1984	Under the leadership of Party, President and General Secretary division of Responsibility	The Temporary Regulations on National Key Universities	MOE 1978	Party, Institutional Committee President
1984 - 1989	President Responsibility	The Decision of Education System Reform The Views of President Responsibility in Higher Education Institutions	CCP Central Committee July 1985 National Education Commission April 1988	President
1989-present	President Responsibility under the Leadership of CCP Committee	1. “Strengthening Party Building Notice” 2. The Working Regulation on CCP in Higher Education Institutions 3. Education Act 4. Higher Education Act	1. CCP Central Committee Aug. 1989; July 1990 2. CCP Central Committee Apr. 1996 3. Central government Sept. 1995 4. The Standing Committee of National Congress Jan. 1999	CCP Committee and President

Source: Education Memorabilia of People’s Republic of China (Central Institute of Education Science, 1984), Ministry of Education ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)).

Central Committee and State Council jointly issued “*The Instruction on Education*” (CCP Central Committee & MOE, 1958). The instruction emphasised that “in all higher education institutions, the president is under the leadership of the CCP Committee, the Institutional Committee responds to institutions’ operating affairs”. In this document, it was also mentioned that “the president’s responsibility’ was moved away from the leadership of the Party. Therefore, all higher education institutions transformed their governance systems to this new governance system in that period. The institutional CCP Committee became the core leadership. In fact, the Institutional Committee became an implementation organisation. Regarding big issues of the university, the president was required to report to the Institution Committee, but this committee was under the leadership of the CCP Committee. The general secretary of the CCP was the key leader of the CCP Committee. Therefore, the general secretary was the core leader of universities or colleges. The power and authority of the president and Institution Committee was ignored (Wu, 2000; Yao, 2010).

The second stage was from 1961 to 1966, in which the CCP Central Committee, based on the summary of the experience and lessons from the previous twelve years’ development, corrected some of the mistakes relating to the governance of higher education institutions. The CCP Central Committee approved the Ministry of Education’s policy in “*The Temporary Regulations on Higher Education Operation (Draft)*”. In China, most called it “Higher Education’s Sixty Regulations (*Gaoxiao Liushi Tiao*)” (CCP Central Committee & MOE, 1961; Central Institute of Education Science, 1984, p. 298). In this document, under the leadership of the CCP Committee, the President as the core leader of the College Affairs Committee was emphasised, which meant the role of the president was raised. The legislative position was that the president was the main representative of higher education institutions for external interactions. The president was also the core leader of the Institution Affairs Committee, and they were responsible for the academic and administrative affairs in the internal governance system. The general secretary of the CCP was to focus only on the political and ideological parts (Central Institute of Education Science, 1984; Wu, 2000; Yao, 2010).

3) *The period of the “Cultural Revolution”* (1966-1976): the Central government implemented the Responsibility of Revolutionary Committee in higher education institutions. The CCP Central Committee issued two important documents: one was “*CCP Central Committee Notice*” in May 1966 (CCP Central Committee, 1966), as well as “*Minutes of the National Education Conference*” in August 1971 (CCP Central Committee, 1971). The main idea was to enhance the leadership of the Party, and implement unified leadership of the Party. The Revolutionary Committee was the core leader group in the university. The Revolutionary Committee members were drawn from three fields: Labour of factories, Military people and Youth. The leadership of the CCP and the Revolutionary Committee replaced most of the responsibilities of the president and the Institutional Affairs Committee. In this period, the “Cultural Revolution” influenced the development of Chinese higher

education. The regular order of many universities' teaching, learning and research was destroyed, which led to the operation and management of higher education institutions being very disorganized in China (Central Institute of Education Science, 1984, pp. 439-441).

In 1978, the Chinese Central government issued the "reform and open-door" policy. Mr *Deng Xiaoping* became the new Chinese leader. He stressed the role of science and education in the development of the country (Yao, 2010). The Central government started to change the chaotic situation of the governance of higher education institutions.

4) *Under the leadership of the Party Committee, President and General Secretary Division of Responsibility* (1978-1984). In 1978, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a new policy, "*The Temporary Regulations on National Key Universities*". In this document, the Ministry of Education noted that "the leadership system in higher education institutions is under the leadership of the Party Committee, the President and the General Secretary division of Responsibility" (China Education Yearbook Ed. Department, 1984). In 1983, the Institution Affairs Committee was restored. In 1984, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued "the notice on trying to set up the Institution Affairs Committee in higher education institutions". In this notice, the Ministry of Education gave an explanation of the role, composition, and responsibility of the Institution Affairs Committee. However, it did not give a clear statement about the role of the president. Concerning the core leadership position and responsibility of the president, the document provided no confirmation (Wu, 2000; Yao, 2010).

5) *The president responsibility* (1984-1989). In 1984, the Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee and the Chinese Ministry of Education organized a national conference to discuss the president's responsibility in higher education institutions, and decided to undertake a pilot study at 15 universities (Feng, 1985). In 1985, the CCP Central Committee issued the policy on "***Decision on the Reform of Education***" (CCP, 1985; Central Institute of Education Science, 1984). The decision noted that the president's responsibility would be implemented gradually in higher education institutions. At the same time, the Institution Committee chaired by the president would be established, and the number of members on the committee reduced. The institution committee would act as the deliberative organization (Z. Li, 2007; Ouyang, 2011; Wu, 2000; Yan, 2009; Yao, 2010). In 1988, The Ministry of Education issued "*The opinion on gradually implemented presidential responsibility*". This document pointed out "the principal of the separation of the Party from the administration in higher education institutions, and gradually increase the president's responsibility" (Yan, 2009; Wu, 2000; Z. Li, 2007; Fu, H., 2011; W. F. Chen, 2011).

6) *The president responsibility under the CCP Committee* (1989- present). After the 1989 "Tiananmen Square Event", the Ministry of Education emphasised the leadership

of the Party in higher education institutions. In August 1989, the CCP Central Committee issued a “Notice on Strengthening Party Building”. In this document, the CCP emphasised that the president’s responsibility should be under the leadership of the Party. The landscape scope of the president’s responsibility could not be extended any more. The CCP Committee is the political core of institutions, and is responsible for the cadres’ selection and appointment (Central Institute of Education Science, 1984; Yao, 2010). In July, 1990, the CCP Central Committee issued the “Notice on Strengthening the Party Construction in Higher Education Institutions” (CCP Central Committee, 1990). The document was clear once again on the implementation of the president’s responsibility under the leadership of the CCP Committee. In this document, the CCP Central Committee gave the definition of the CCP Committee’s seven main tasks in the university, and required that the institutional CCP Committee should concentrate on the big issues, major policies, as well as on strengthening the Party’s Construction and political ideology tasks. Therefore, the role of the Party Committee was clearly defined once again in the governance and administration of higher education institutions.

In March 1996, the CCP Central Committee issued the “Working Regulations of the CCP’s Basic Organisations in Higher Education Institutions” (CCP Central Committee, 1996). This document formulated “Implementing the president’s responsibility under the leadership of the Party Committee in Higher Education Institutions; the CCP Committee exercises unified leadership over the work of institutions, the CCP Committee should fully support the president actively, independently, and be responsible to work based on the “Education Act of China”, so that the president does their best to achieve the goal of teaching-learning, research, and relevant administrations.” From then on, the coexisting phenomenon of “the president responsibility” and “the president responsibility under the leadership of the Party Committee” had ended, and the single form of “the president responsibility under the leadership of the Party Committee” had been implemented in all of the Chinese higher education institutions. In January 1999, the “People’s Republic of China Higher Education Act” was issued by the Chinese government (The Standing Committee of the National Congress, 1999). The leadership model was confirmed by Act. In this model, the Standing Committee of the CCP Committee is the leadership group of the CCP basic organisation in Higher Education Institutions. It is also the top leader group of the higher education institutions. The general secretary is the Chairman of the CCP Standing Committee; the president is another very important person (normally as vice general secretary) in this committee.

According to the review of the development and transformation of the governance and leadership in Chinese higher education institutions, it is possible to gain a full picture of the evolution of the leadership model in higher education institutions in China. It is a unique dual system. In all Chinese higher education institutions, there exists an academic administration system and the CCP administration system. The relationship of “Under the leadership of Party” and “The president’s responsibility” is the same as the unification of contradictions. As

the representative of the academic administration system is the president, the general secretary of the CCP is the representative of the Party's administration system. The relationship between the president and the general secretary has the characteristics of both contradiction and cooperation. Who is under the leadership of whom? Or who is "Number One"? This is a very interesting question in many Chinese universities, particularly in merged Chinese higher education institutions. The Chinese government uses a "top-down" approach in appointing the president and general secretary of the CCP. In the merged universities, most of their presidents and general secretaries are from different former universities. They represent different interest groups in the merged universities. These two main leaders are involved in the top leadership group – the CCP Standing Committee. How they deal with the complex situation of the merged university is an interesting question in studies about Chinese merged universities. In Chapter 5 and 6, the author will explore this through the case university study.

## 2.4 Summary

Before the 1990s, the development of the Chinese higher education system was based on the structure of the readjustment in the 1950s, which had four characteristics: nationalisation (centralisation), specialisation, departmentalisation, and regional departmentalisation & segmentation. This old system was helpful for Chinese economic development in the 1950s and 1960s. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, the Chinese government found that the old higher education system had some major problems with respect to changes in the outside environment in some perspectives. In the 1980s, the Chinese government launched the "Economic Reform and Open-door" policy. With economic development and the pressure of globalisation and internationalisation, this kind of system had apparent weaknesses at the end of the 1980s. In order to adapt to the socialist market economic development, enhance the effectiveness of the scale economy, cultivate "world class universities", as well as to train a multi-skilled labour force, the Chinese central government decided to restructure the higher education system.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Chinese government issued a series of policies and acts to promote and impel restructuring. The restructuring forms included *Gongjian* (joint construction), *tiaozheng* (readjustment), *hezuo* (cooperation), and *hebing* (merger). After the experience of the pilot mergers at the beginning of the 1990s, the Chinese government found mergers to be the best way to restructure the higher education system. At the same time, the political reform based on readjustments to the ministries in 1998 also provided a good opportunity for the reform of higher education in China. Almost all the national key universities were involved in the reform wave.

With the merger reform, the leadership of the merged universities had been facing new challenges. The governance and administration also needed to change. When one considers the review of the governance and leadership transformation

background, it becomes possible to understand the unique nature of the dual system of governance and leadership in Chinese higher education institutions. The relationship between the general secretary and president as well as their two administrative systems is complex. This is also why it is significant to explore how this dual system works in the Chinese merger process. As many scholars have noted, merging is a complex process. How the dual governance and leadership system works within the complex merger process of Chinese Higher Education Institutions will be explored in the following chapters.

## 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the last chapter, the merger background and relevant changes of leadership and governance have been reviewed. In order to understand the higher education institution's merger and explore the leadership in the merged university situation, we need to employ a suitable leadership theoretical framework. In this chapter, firstly, the relevant studies on leadership in the merger context will be reviewed. Secondly, the relevant concept of leadership and leadership theories in higher education will be presented. Thirdly, the reframing theory as well as reframing theory in higher education will be discussed. Finally, based on the agreement of these different leadership theories, a suitable theoretical framework for exploring the case merged Chinese university will be presented.

### 3.1 Leadership studies in the merger context

The majority of research on mergers from the leadership perspective can be easily found in the business area. "The two terms of 'merger' and 'acquisition' have often been used in the business field" (Pirrello, 2010). The merger process is commonly divided into three stages, in both business and higher education in research, which includes the "pre-merger or planning stage", the "implementation stage", and the "post-merger stage" (Appelbaum, Gandell, Shapiro, Belisie, & Hoeven, 2000; Appelbaum, Lefrancois, Tonna, & Shapiro, 2007; Eastman & Lang, 2001; D. Li, 2004; D. Li, 2010; D. Li, 2011; Wan, 2008). In the business field, most leadership studies relate to several key perspectives, such as cultural integration, the top leader team (performance), communication, etc. and relevant theories such as leadership styles, charismatic (transformational) leadership, and pragmatic leadership, etc.

In the pre-merger phase, the merger's aim is to increase the merged organisation's value, for example, to integrate resources, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and to enlarge the scale of the organisation, so that the overall value of the new organization would increase. The main challenge for the leader is to acquire a beneficial deal for the shareholders and to have a good impact on the partner. In this phase, attention should be paid to the feelings that the merger partners have. For instance, the challenge can be arrogance. Fubini, Price and Zollo (2006) claim arrogance is a potential problem: "Worse still is arrogance (sometimes reciprocated) towards a merger partner – arrogance that inhibits learning, obscures opportunities and engenders mutually destructive friction between the two sides" (p. 31). "The executives of the acquired firm are treated as if they had been conquered, causing them to feel inferior and to experience a loss of social standing.

Leadership of the acquiring firm has an opportunity to mitigate these feelings on the part of the to-be-acquired firm's leadership by building a relationship of trust during negotiations" (Appelbaum, Lefrancois, Tonna, & Shapiro, 2007; Nord, 1994; Pirrello, 2010).

*In the implementation phase*, some literature emphasizes communication: many think this is one of the main tasks of the leaders. Marks (1997) discussed the "merger syndrome", suggesting it is a cause of merger underperformance. The merger syndrome includes fourteen indicators: "preoccupation; imagining the worst; stress reactions; crisis management; constricted communications; illusion of control; clash of cultures; we vs. they; superior vs. inferior; attack vs. defend; win vs. lose; decisions by coercion, horse trading and default" (p. 268). Nguyen and Kleiner (2003) argue: "at this time employees are in desperate need of an effective leader, or, more specifically, a leader whose influence is perceived as being highly correlated with high levels of employee satisfaction.... mergers increase employee uncertainty, and with that increase there seems to be a rise in stress and decrease in satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and the perception of the organisation's trustworthiness, honesty, and caring" (p. 448). Marks (1997) states self-interest is the first sign of merger syndrome - "people become preoccupied with what the combination means for themselves, their incomes and their careers" (p. 268). In fact, it is very common that people think of downsizing when they know the firm will be merged.

The important issue is how the leader builds trust among employees and relevant people. Lazear (2010) proposes a view of leaders as "individuals who confront new situations often and choose the right direction more frequently than their peers as a result of their success and the visible nature of their success to others, leaders acquire followers" (p. 2). The followers prefer leaders who are fair and who make good decisions. "Thus, a leader is someone who has both vision and wisdom and who attracts a coterie of followers because of displayed superiority of decision making" (p. 3).

Leadership styles are an important component of effective leadership during a merger. Research on the differences between charismatic leadership and pragmatic leadership has been done. Pragmatic leadership "involves problematic needs of people and social systems, objective analysis of the situation, and development and implementation of solutions" (Mumford & Van Doorn, 2001; Pirrello, 2010; Waldman & Javidan, 2009, p.132). Waldman and Javidan suggest such pragmatic leadership is "not relevant when goals are unclear and consensus is not evident and straightforward" (p. 231). In contrast, they mention charismatic leadership: "a common aspect of charismatic leadership is the articulation of vision in an attempt to integrate multiple groups and achieve consensus." They define charismatic leadership as "a leadership between an individual (leader) and one or more followers based on leader behaviours that engender intense reactions and attributions on the part of followers" (Pirrello, 2010; Waldman & Javidan, 2009, p.132).

Covin, Kolenko, Sighter and Tudor (1997) also cite charismatic (transformational) leadership, suggesting that “research thus far has shown the transformational approach to leadership to be highly effective in situations of complex change” (p. 24). They present two attributes of this leadership style: charisma and inspiration. Citing work by Bass, Hater and Bass (1988) and Bass and Avolio (1992), Covin et al. state: “Charisma has been defined as the leader’s ability to instil pride, faith, and respect, or the leader’s ability to generate symbolic power which the employee wants to identify. Inspiration describes how the leader passionately communicates a future idealistic organization that can be shared (p. 24)”. In their research, Covin et al. found that transformational leadership and employee post-merger satisfaction are positively correlated and this correlation was stronger than for reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, referent power, consideration and initiating structure (p. 27).

Waldman and Javidan (2009) identify two types of charismatic leadership: 1) personalised charismatic leadership; and 2) socialised charismatic leadership. Socialised charismatic leadership focuses on the success of the collective; it uses power to focus effort on the vision rather than the leader. Personal charismatic leadership is about personal gain and how to use leadership power for one’s personal benefit. Waldman and Javidan (2009) suggest personalized charismatic leaders are less concerned with building consensus, less concerned about energising followers and more concerned about the impact of the acquisition on their own image. Such leaders are less inclined to invite participation in developing the strategic opportunities of the acquisition, and instead formulate the strategic opportunities individually and then present their vision to others in each of the organisations. Socialised charismatic leaders focus more on a group process. Waldman and Javidan identify three collaborative processes socialised charismatic leaders are likely to undertake. Such leaders work in the early stages of the merger to understand the compatibility of the two organizations. Second, the leader strives to “create a shared vision based largely on values to which followers can readily connect” (p. 136). Doing it will “engender collective identity on the part of followers by helping to link their self-concepts to an identity with a larger social collective and purposes” (p. 136). Finally, socialised charismatic leaders encourage collaboration in formulating a collective vision, allowing for the process to reformulate the leader’s original vision.

Waldman and Javidan (2009) constructed a theoretical model, suggesting that the leadership’s commitment to pursuing a collaborative integration process leads to a strong unified culture resulting in achievement of the expected post-merger synergies (p. 138). They also suggest that a participative approach to decision-making with the sharing of information openly will be associated more frequently with an integration strategy as opposed to an absorption or assimilation strategy (p. 137).

*Leadership during the post-integration phase:* the majority of studies to date emphasise that aspects such as the integration plan, strategic plan, external influence, building

trust, and cultural integration are mainly tasks of leadership. Fubini, Price and Zollo (2006) mention that leadership may believe integration is a more technical challenge which they delegate to others. "Leadership's strategies is winning the support of the personnel or avoiding organizational resistance" (Vaara, 2002). Vaara also found that "strategic fit" was "a contributing factor in success while cultural fit was a contributing factor in failure. The staging of post-merger decision-making as a confrontation between different cultures, nationalities or sub-cultures meant that the conflicting objectives of integration were also usually singled out" (Vaara, 2002, p. 228; Pirrello, J. M. 2010). Therefore, the building up of cultural integration is very important in mergers. With regard to the external influence, Ollie's study (1994) shows external events can be used to rally an organisation to change the focus from an internal us-against-them to a focus of the merged organisation against the outside world. One way to deal with (merger) friction is to pay attention to the external environment (Fubini, D. 2006; Pirrello, J. M. 2010). Trust is a critical element and is the cornerstone of effective leadership. Leaders must maintain the trust of their employees during the post-merger phase. When people trust each other, all governance work and risks can be minimised (Bijlsma-Frankema, 2001). Effective and regular communication is a useful tool for building and maintaining trust. While the cultural match between the two organisations may be promising, any decision to change radically, integrate or maintain the existing culture requires an understanding of the cultural and sub-cultural values and beliefs throughout the acquired or merged organisation (Cartwright & Cooper, 1996). The power struggle and the cultural integration are long-term processes.

With regard to leadership studies in mergers of higher education institutions, the merger phenomenon in higher education has attracted a number of researchers to pay attention to this field. Most of them focus on presenting a detailed understanding and interpretation of the typical merger in higher education or present the basic conception of a merger (Eastman & Lang, 2001; Fledler, 1971; Millett, 1976; D. Li, 2011). Some researchers have undertaken analyses on national reform, policy, motivation, and processes (Eastman & Lang, 2001; Fielden & Markham, 1997; Goedegebuure, 1992; Harman, 1988; D. Hay & Fourie, 2002; Kyvik, 2002; Meek, 1988; Skodvin, 1999; D. Li, 2011). Regarding the leadership dimension, James Martin and James E Samels (1994) provide the core principles of merging colleges for mutual growth. They emphasise the need to enhance complementary missions, strengthen academic offerings, and improve administrative efficiency. They also mention that the key to successful implementation is diversified planning. However, they have not provided an in-depth analysis on how to transfer these principles to management and leadership practice (D. Li, 2010; D. Li & Kohtamäki, 2011).

Bryan E. Carlson (1994) mentioned that "the achievement of a mutual-growth merger requires a new vision of higher education management, and its ultimate success depends on the leadership provided by the overall chief executive officer". Harry J. Gray (1987) notes that the merger is very difficult for the new leader. The

requirements for the leader include: fierce determination, considerable endurance, and thick-skinned aggressiveness. All these points show that the leadership in merged universities is a very important factor that influences the success or failure of the merger (D. Li, 2011).

During the merger process, the transformation of the leadership is important (Hips, 1982; Peterson, 1982). In the post-phase of the merger, success depends on the ability of the leaders to manage the process in an effective way (Green & Mitchell, 1979). Several studies about mergers show that the new institutes need good leadership, and a few studies have provided in-depth, detailed insights into leadership. Sitkin and Pablo (2004) have noted that leadership is treated in an almost off-hand way in literature that seems to reflect the need to acknowledge what is an obviously important factor, while sidestepping the need to address the issue substantively (D. Li, 2011).

According to the above literature review, studies of both the business and higher education worlds show that leadership is a very important factor for the success or failure of mergers. However, among the studies of leadership in higher education mergers few researchers have systematically examined leadership from the perspectives of theories and leadership conception. Therefore, the following sections review the leadership theories and studies in the higher education field in recent years. The final aim is to seek suitable theories to adapt to the mergers of higher education institutions.

## 3.2 Leadership theories in higher education

### 3.2.1 The leadership concept in higher education

“Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on the earth” (Burns, 1978). Regarding the definition of Leadership, there are different ways in which it is defined in leadership studies, and it is hard to come up with a simple working definition. “Leadership is not just a person or group of people in a high position; understanding leadership is not complete without understanding interactions between a leader and his or her followers. Neither is leadership merely the ability or static capacity of a leader. We need to look into the dynamic nature of the relationship between leader and followers” (Business Encyclopedia, 2012). From the beginning of civilization, history has been concerned with the study of its leaders and leadership still remains an area of active inquiry. “Indeed, leadership is often regarded as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions” (F. Bass, 1900; Solberg et al., 2000). The study of leadership began in America in the twentieth century and was initially concerned with leader effectiveness (Yukl, 1981). Researchers define leadership according to individual perspectives, “There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.” (Birnbaum, 1988; Stogdill,

1974, p. 259; Yukl, 1981).

When we talk about leadership, the notions mostly come from business and other fields. Most studies on leadership have taken place in business organisations, military and governmental agencies. Successful leaders are typically driven, knowledgeable, and decisive. “There are those who also see colleges and universities as the long shadows of great leaders or who assert that our future rests on the bold, decisive leadership of college and university presidents nationwide” (Fisher, 1984, p. 11). On the other hand, it has been said that, “the view of the university as the shadow of a strong president is unrealistic now, however, if indeed it was ever accurate” (Walker, 1979, p. 118) and even that “the presidency is an illusion” (M. Cohen & March, 1974, p. 2).

“The study of leadership is even more difficult in colleges and universities than in other settings because of dual control systems, conflicts between professional and administrative authority, unclear goals, and the other unique properties of professional, normative organisations. In particular, the relationship between those identified as leaders and those whom they presume to lead is problematic. Some theoretical approaches assert that leadership can be understood only in the context of ‘followership’. But in higher education, there is a strong resistance to leadership as it is generally understood in more traditional and hierarchical organizations; in particular, in most institutions it may be more appropriate to think of faculty as constituents than as followers” (Birnbaum, 1988, pp. 22-23). As Burton Clark (1983) noted that the value of Higher Education Institutions includes the powerful academic ideologies of freedom of research, freedom of teaching, and freedom of learning. The differences between academic institutions and business firms are significant.

In the study, the aim is to explore leadership in the university merger context. Based on the above argument, some factors of leadership has been considered, which include: leaders, followers, relationship between leaders and followers, as well as the different characterise of higher education institutions compared to the business field.

### **3.2.2 The studies of leadership theories in higher education**

There is substantial literature concerning studies of theories of leadership and organisation. However, most of it is conceptual orientations and interpretations in higher education. “Much of this work tends to be theoretical, with considerable attention given to style of leadership and personality traits” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Since higher education is a dual-control system, the study of leadership is more difficult and different from other organisations. In fact, there are some conflicts between academic people and administrative authority in most universities or colleges. Bensimon et al. (1989) claim that leadership can be examined from the perspective of leadership theories and organizational frames, however, even though there seems to be a lack of an explicit conceptual orientation in many of the works. “Few appear to emphasize the importance of

two-way communication or social exchange processes of mutual influence or to identify leadership as facilitating rather than directing the work of highly educated professionals. Furthermore, few works have considered the possibility that the debate about transformational versus transactional may not be purely an ‘either/or’ and that both perspectives may be useful but in a more complex configuration” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Based on the above reasons, Bensimon et al. (1989) published “Making Sense of Administrative Leadership: The ‘L’ word in Higher Education”. They based this work on a review of research traditions in leadership, for example Birnbaum’s (1988) study, and allocated leadership theories to six major categories. The boundaries of these categories are fluid, and they are neither mutually exclusive nor consistent. They do, however, provide a convenient way of organising an otherwise overwhelming array of materials. The categories include: trait theories; power and influence theories; behavioural theories; contingency theories; cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories.

The study of Bensimon et al. (1989) provides a very good overview of the leadership theories in the higher education field. Based on this study, Kezar et al. (2006) published the volume: “Rethinking the ‘L’ word in Higher Education”. In this work, they conducted further study based on the major theories that Bensimon et al. discussed; they summarized the major assumptions, key findings, and criticisms of each of these six theories, facilitating comparisons across conceptual approaches. “Moreover, a distinction is made in these various schools of thought related to leader and leadership. In trait and behavioural theories, leadership is synonymous with leader. Later theories of culture and power and influence examine leadership as a process, and leader is no longer synonymous with leadership” (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, p.6). This can help us understand the definition of “leadership” and “leader conceptions”. In order to have a clear comparative picture and a deep understanding of each theory, a brief overview will be presented in the next section. The framework will follow up the relevant studies by Bensimon et al. in 1989, Kezar et al. in 2006, Bolman & Deal (2008), as well as Bolman and Gollas (2011), etc.

### 3.2.3 The changes and trends of leadership studies in higher education

***Trait and behaviour theories:*** these attempt to identify specific personal characteristics that contribute to a person’s ability to assume leadership and successfully function in positions of leadership, and to examine leaders’ patterns of activities and managerial roles by considering what it is that leaders actually do (Bensimon et al. 1989). These theories constitute leader-centred theory. “Traits may include physical characteristics (height, appearance, age, and energy level), personality (self-esteem, dominance, emotional stability, initiative, persistence, social background (education, socioeconomic status), and ability (general intelligence, verbal fluency, knowledge, originality, social insight, cognitive

complexity). It is sometimes assumed that these traits are innate, sometimes that they can be developed. Some traits (such as assertiveness, decisiveness, dependability, persistence, self-confidence) and some skills (such as verbal fluency, creativity, persuasiveness, tact) appear to be characteristic of successful leaders” (B. Bass M., 1981; B. Bass M., 1981; Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). In terms of behavioural theories of leadership, many research results have shown that leaders should emphasize goals, vision, planning, and motivating people to action. “Presidents’ perceived effectiveness as being related to directing others and focusing on getting things done” (Birnbaum, 1989; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, p.103). “Much has changed from these directive, task-oriented, and narrow views of successful leaders. The relational and interactive behaviours are seen as much more important for being an effective leader at all levels of higher education” (Fagin, 1997; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, P.104; Martin & Samels, 2003; Montez, 2003; Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999). ... “Birnbaum (1992) were seen as effective when they were perceived to be competent, legitimate, value driven, of complex mind, respectful listeners, and open to influence. The focus on listening, being value-driven, and open to influence differs from earlier research” (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, p. 104). “In addition to the change in nature in the way behaviours are characterised, a plethora of studies have examined specific behavioural dimensions in leadership such as roles and responsibilities focused on competence around financial issues, fundraising, balancing academic and administrative roles, reconciling internal and external roles, strategic planning, and collaboration (Fagin, 1997; Martin & Samels, 2003; Montez, 2003; Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999). Research findings suggest that successful leadership in different roles requires distinctive approaches and skills. This area of research is important, given the lack of instruments and tools designed specifically to allow higher education leaders to examine their own behaviours” (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, p. 104). According to the studies of Birnbaum (1988) and Kezar et al. (2006), earlier studies on trait and behavioural theories show there are some limitations. For instance, 1) traits are difficult to measure; 2) for a leader, which list of traits should be considered; 3) how to examine behavioural dimensions among groups of leaders; and 4) lack of consideration of leadership context, as well as the university situation or environment. In fact, in the Chinese merged university, the situation and the internal/external environment are very complex; merely employing trait and behavioural theories cannot examine the new organisation and leadership fully.

***Power and influence theories***, “which consider leadership in terms of the source and amount of power available to leaders and the manner in which leaders exercise that power over followers through either unilateral or reciprocal interactions” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 23). These theories mainly focus on how leaders use power. There are two main approaches: the social power approach and the social exchange approach (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Therefore, in the study of

Bensimon et al. (1989, p. 37), the authors mentioned that “power and influence theories fall into two types, those that consider leadership in terms of the influence or effects that leaders may have on their followers (social power theory and transformational leadership theory) and those that consider leadership in terms of mutual influence and reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers (social exchange theory and transactional leadership theory)”.

As Kezar et al. (2006) mentioned, the type of power and influence approaches used and seen as effective in higher education have shifted from directive to mutual and two-way power and influence *processes*. Another highlight is that the studies are not only focusing on the top-level leaders (president or rector), but also pay attention to the individuals and groups of the universities. In the study by Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2000), cited by Kezar et al. (2006), the authors examine the organization thoroughly from the perspective of how the two-way process influences studying. They examine the conflict and power dynamics between the central and decentralized administration. Some studies concerning the political nature of universities and political environments on the campus show which kind of political skills are needed from effective leaders (LaRocque & Coleman, 1993; Rosenzweig, 1998; Seagren, 1993). Some studies are undertaken from the social constructivist perspective, which means the leader should consider the history and environment of the university (Birnbaum, 1992; Levin, 1998).

According to research such as the study by Kezar et al. (2006, pp. 106-108), we can find that trends and change of power and influence theories shift from “leaders use power to influence followers” to “considering the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers”. The studies pay attention to the process, situation and university environment.

Many studies use the term ***Transformational theories***: “transformational leadership is typically defined as a power and influence theory in which the leader acts in mutual ways with the followers, appeals to their higher needs, and inspires and motivates followers to move toward a particular purpose” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, P108). Transformational leadership emphasizes the interaction between leaders and followers, and conceptualises leadership as a process (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1993). The key insights of these theories include: Leaders use multiple sources of power to influence followers; The power and influence of leaders is also influenced by followers; Transformational leaders need to use personal charisma to care for people and influence followers.

As Birnbaum (1988) mentioned, higher education institutions have a dual system (administrative and academic), which leads to it being a complex organisation. However, as the analysis in Chapter 2 indicates, in addition to this dual system, Chinese universities have a political system (CCP system) within the university, which is much more complex than in Western countries. In the context of the merger, the merged universities’ investigation will be more complex. These notions provide some points of reference to the author in this study. For instance, when we study leadership, we cannot only pay attention to the top leaders’ (president or the

General Secretary of CCP) power and influence, but must also examine the middle level leaders' feelings and expectations, as well as the process and situation.

***Contingency theories:*** these theories emphasise the importance of situational factors and the university's external environment. "The theories assume that different situations require different types of traits and behaviour for a leader to be effective. Because effective behaviour is contingent on the situation, they are collectively referred to as 'contingency theories'" (Bensimon, 1989a).

"The dearth of attributes consistently associated with effective leadership reinforces the argument that leadership varies with the situation. Leadership is different for first-level supervisors than it is for chief executives. It is different in the public and private sectors. The job of a college president is very different in China from what is in France. The kind of leadership needed for skilled and highly motivated followers may not work for followers who are alienated and unskilled" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 242). Some studies on situation theories have been done (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977; Hersey & Blanchard, 1984). However, these studies lack strong empirical support. As Bolman & Deal (2003, p. 242) point out, "most fail to distinguish between leadership, typically restricting leadership from relationships between leaders and their followers". In contrast, leaders need skill in managing relationships with all significant stakeholders, including superiors, peers, and external constituents (Burns, 1978; Gibb, 1968; Heifatz & Linsky, 2008). "Contingency theories are a major area for further research. Almost everyone believes that widely varying circumstances require different forms of leadership, but evidence is still sparse" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, P.348).

Approaches such as Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) situational leadership model have become widely popular as a training approach. "The model uses two dimensions of leadership similar to those in the Managerial Grid: task and people. The task behaviour is the leader figuring out the duties and responsibilities for the individual or group. Relationship behaviour is the extent to which the leader engages in two-way or multi-way communication. It includes listening, encouraging, facilitating, providing clarification, and giving socio-emotional support" (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1984, pp. 31-32). In fact, all higher education institutions are different from their cultural, historical, internal and external environments. People in different universities own different identities. There exist differences among the sub-organisations. "The culture and norms of organisations limit the leadership processes. The leaders can learn new leadership skills through participating in the training lessons, but will revert to the norms of the organization when they return. This shows that every organization also has a distinctive organizational culture and history that further make the context unique" (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006; Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002). According to these studies, the key insights summarised by Kezar et al. (2006, pp. 60-61) include: "different situations require different patterns of traits and behaviour for a leader to be effective; Widely varying circumstances require

different forms of leadership; Leaders need skill in managing relationships with all significant stakeholders, including superiors, peers, and external constituents; Leaders need to understand the situation of task orientation and relational orientation; Different higher education institutional types and divisions require different leadership. Because of the characteristics of these theories, there are some limitations and criticisms.” As Kezar et al. (2006) note, these ambiguous concepts make empirical research difficult, and also they are difficult to translate into practice.

**Cognitive theory:** Cognitive theories of leadership are closely related to symbolic approaches in that they emphasise leadership as arising from the social cognition of organisations (McCall & Lombardo, 1978; Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985; Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984; Sims, Gioia, & Associates, 1986). In practice, people need to make sense of organisational occurrences, and they commonly need a reason or an explanation for that. From this perspective, leadership is a social attribution. “This explanation is commonly directed toward persons who own the positions of leadership. Leaders may be perceived as causative factors in organisations because of the expectations of followers, because of leaders’ salience and prominence, because of the human need to impose order and seek causes for otherwise inexplicable events and outcomes, or because leaders conform to prototypical models of what followers expect leaders to be” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; M. D. Cohen & March, 1974; Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Green & Mitchell, 1979; McElroy, 1982; Phillips & Lord, 1981; Weiner, 1985).

“Leadership is associated with a set of myths reinforcing organisational constructions of meanings that help participants to believe in the effectiveness of individual control. These myths influence the perceptions of leaders as well as of the followers, so that leaders are likely to have exaggerated beliefs in their own efficacy” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1991). Therefore, leaders should be good at creating stories. In the merged universities, this is very important for teachers, and for students. In particular, during the pre-merger phase, the way in which leaders communicate the positive future that the merger creates is important. “Cognitive processes of selective attention and judgmental bias enable leaders to take credit for successes and attribute them to internal causes like their ability and effort, while they shift the blame for failures, which they attribute to external causes like luck and difficulty of the task” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Bradley, 1978; Frieze & Weiner, 1971; Salancik & Meindl, 1984; Weiner & Kukla, 1970).

Kezar et al. (2006) provided trends of cognitive theory in higher education. They include: 1) leaders’ cognitive frameworks; 2) followers’ cognitive frameworks; and 3) organisational learning. They cited a few typical studies about leaders’ cognitive frameworks. For example, Birnbaum (1992), by the notion of cognitive frames, examined how presidents conceptualised their roles as leaders and the assumptions and beliefs they brought to this role, using four frameworks to capture

their perspectives: bureaucratic, collegial, political, and symbolic. Birnbaum's research was influenced by the work of Bolman and Deal's "*Reframing Organizations* (1991)". "Birnbaum found that leaders were considered more effective when they developed cognitive complexity and used all four frames simultaneously or used more than one frame to analyse a situation. Bensimon (1989b) found that few presidents use a multi-frame orientation and that community college presidents are likely to use a single frame. Newer presidents are also likely to use a single frame, while more experienced presidents tend to use multiple frames" (Kezar et al., 2006, p. 117). Another study by Eddy (2003) noted that cognitive framing affects the way leaders approach various tasks. With regard to the followers' cognitive frameworks, studies by Birnbaum (1992), Neumann (1990), Bensimon (1990) and Erb (1991) were cited by Kezar et al. in 2006 (pp. 117-119), in examining people's perceptions of why they considered someone to be a leader. Birnbaum identified a relationship between the way individuals view the organisation from a structural, collegial, political, or symbolic perspective and whom they label as leaders. Neumann (1990) conducted a case study project of two campuses in financial crisis examining followers' and the leaders' (college presidents') perceptions and interaction. The study identified how the leaders' actions and perspectives affected followers' perceptions. Leaders need to consider people's understandings and commitments, not just the "objective" problem at hand. Leaders can foster hope by tending to what people believe and feel and by focusing on the meaning of their collective work. The study demonstrates the importance of understanding followers' cognitive orientations and maps. Another study examined presidents' views of their leadership compared with others on campus (Bensimon, 1990). Bensimon suggests that presidents should consider how they want to be perceived: if they want to be perceived as collegial or symbolic, then they have to rely heavily on the bureaucratic orientation. Erb's study (1991) examined the sense-making process of followers in a work team around the notion of participation, noting how the leader's communication affects the ways in which followers participate. The study suggests that the notion of effectiveness is socially constructed and related to similarity of perspective between leader and follower. With regard to learning, studies have examined the importance of learning for improving leadership in higher education (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, p.119). Birnbaum (1986; 1990), Neumann (1990) examined how presidents who identify and learn from their mistakes develop greater cognitive complexity. Kempner's study (2003) illustrates the learning that needs to take place for leaders to transition their cognitive maps. Bolman and Gollas (2011) in their work "*Reframing academic leadership*" illustrated the relationship between leadership and learning, and they noted that leaders should learn from their actions, learn from the middle, and learn from difficult people. Regarding cognitive frames and the associated theory, these will be discussed in-depth in the next section.

***Cultural and symbolic theories:*** in the past decades, leadership research from the cultural perspective has been an area of importance. "Research has demonstrated

that leadership itself is a cultural construct that is context bound and affected by the values and beliefs of the college or university where it takes place. In higher education, culture has been used as a framework to examine the context-based and process nature of leadership” (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, p. 123). Regarding the cultural perspective of leadership, Birnbaum (1988) has contributed to the understanding of how leadership can interact with the university culture. He illustrates that the leadership process needs to fit the campus culture; from the other side, a good leader can also affect the university culture. Some studies show that culture and leadership influence each other to an even greater extent. “Neumann’s study (1995) looked not only at the way a leader is perceived through the initial phases of the presidency but also at the socially constructed nature of leadership culture that in his view consisted of multiple realities that were complex and difficult to unravel” (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). In Bolman and Gollas’s work “Reframing Academic Leadership” (2011), they used the symbolic frame (culture) as one of four frames to examine higher education leadership (this will be discussed in the other section). These research findings show that leaders play a role as cultural workers. In fact, in the context of the merged university, cultural differences are complex issues in the integration process.

***Teams and Relational Leadership.*** from the human resource perspective, exploring leadership skills is an often studied area, such as in Bolman and Deal’s work “Reframing organizations” (2008). In the higher education field, Kezar et al. (2006) mentioned that given the tradition of collegial governance and leadership, it is not surprising that the notion of teams has been used widely in recent years to understand the phenomenon of leadership. Some studies on leadership have given team-building and collaboration a central role. Kezar et al. have cited the major studies in this perspective, for example, Lucas’ work “Strengthening Departmental Leadership: A Team-Building Guide for Chairs in Colleges and Universities” (1994), as well as Kouzes and Posner’s “The Jossey-Bass Academic Administrators’ Guide to Exemplary leadership” (1993). These research works focus on techniques and strategies for being an effective collaborative or team leader (pp. 131-132). Bensimon and Neumann’s study (1993) focuses on team formation of leadership in higher education. A key finding related to teams and their role in leadership is that teams lead to more cognitively complex decision-making than individual leaders. Although the research is focused on presidential cabinets, it is probable that teams throughout colleges and universities make better decisions than individual decision-makers. Tierney (1993) focuses on teams and collaborative forms of leadership and envisions this practice as part of a democratic form of organising. For Tierney, the role of leaders and teams in higher education is to cultivate communities of difference, characterised by multi-vocal dialogue and shared decision-making (p. 132). In Bolman and Gollas’s work (2011), they also emphasise team building and communication among the leaders and followers in the human resource frame. For the key insights, see section 3.3.3.

### 3.2.4 Summary

“Mergers are highly complex events with a seemingly infinite number of factors that can lead to success or failure. Because they influence so many parts of the participating organisations in such fundamental ways, mergers represent a difficult organisational change process” (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006, pp. 82-83). Leadership studies within the merger context have attracted many scholars’ interest, whether those scholars come from business or higher education fields. However, many scholars have argued that there are differences between higher education institutions and those in the business world. In order to find more suitable leadership theories for exploring mergers in higher education, the relevant leadership theories have been reviewed in this section. In particular, by reviewing the changes and trends of different leadership theories, this section provides a whole picture with respect to these leadership theories from different perspectives. For instance, transformational leadership theories have been used in the context of higher education mergers (and also in the business field). Authors Chipunza & Gwarinda (2010) employed transformational leadership to examine the mergers of higher education institutions in South Africa. They emphasise shared vision, teamwork, and environment-creation, as well as strategic change. Within the Chinese merger complex context, the basic requirements and responses to the challenges should be emphasized. The whole picture will be difficult to construct, if it is only explored from one or two angles.

## 3.3 Reframing theory

### 3.3.1 Making sense of organizations

“Human organizations can be exciting and challenging places. At least, that is how they are often depicted in management texts, annual reports, and fanciful managerial thinking. But, in reality they can be deceptive, confusing, and demoralizing. It is a mistake to assume that organizations are either snake pits or rose gardens” (Schwartz, 1986; Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 29). The rational view of an organisation leads us to think of administrative structures, rules, and systems for activities such as planning and decision-making. But there is another way to look at the concept of organising, without explicit reference to organization charts, regulations, or formal procedures (Weick, 1979). As leaders, “they need to recognize characteristics of life at work that create opportunities for the wise as well as traps for the unwary” (Bolman & Deal, 2008p.29). Bolman and Deal characterize organizations and their dynamics as “First, *organizations are complex*. They are populated by people, whose behaviour is notoriously hard to predict.” ... “Moreover, organizations are open systems dealing with a changing, challenging, and erratic environment. Things can get even more knotty across multiple organizations.” ... “Second, *organizations are surprising*. What you expect is often not

what you get.”... “Third, *organizations are deceptive*. They camouflage mistakes and surprise.”... “Fourth, *organizations are ambiguous*. Complexity, unpredictability, and deception generate rampant ambiguity, a dense fog that shrouds what happens from day to day. Figuring out what is really going on in business, hospitals, schools, or public agencies is not easy. It is hard to get the facts and, if you pin them down, even harder to know what they mean or what to do about them” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 31-32).

“Making sense of organizations raises a perplexing question about management: why is it that smart people so often do dumb things? Why do managers often misread situations? They have not learned how to use multiple lenses to get a better sense of what they’re up against and what they might do” (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The intricacies of sensemaking and its implications for action have been well developed in the organizational and information science literature (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Argyris, 1982; Argyris & Schön, 1982; Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985; Argyris, 1985; Gallos, 2008b; Gallos, 2008b; Starbuck, W. & Milliken, F., 1988; Weick, 1985; Weick, 1993; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005; Weick, 2007). Sensemaking involves the on-going retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing. These images imply three important points about the quest for meaning in organizational life. “First, sensemaking occurs when a flow of organizational circumstances is turned into words and salient categories. Second, organizing itself is embodied in written and spoken texts. Third, reading, writing, conversing, and editing are crucial actions that serve as the media through which the invisible hand of institutions shapes conduct” (Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994, p. 365; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409). The emerging picture is one of sensemaking as a process that is on-going, instrumental, subtle, swift, social, and easily taken for granted. The seemingly transient nature of sensemaking (“a way station”) belies its central role in the determination of human behaviour. Sensemaking is central because it is the primary site where meanings materialize that inform and constrain identity and action (Mills, 2003; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). “When we say that meanings materialize, we mean that sensemaking is, importantly, an issue of language, talk, and communication. Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence” (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p.409). “Sensemaking is about the interplay of action and interpretation rather than the influence of evaluation on choice. When action is the central focus, interpretation, not choice, is the core phenomenon” (Lant, 2002; Laroche, 1995, p. 66; Weick, 1993; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005).

“Sensemaking involves three fundamental steps: noticing something, deciding what to make of it, and determining what to do about it” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 18; Gallos, 2008b, p. 2). “Sensemaking is always incomplete and personal. Humans can only attend to a limited amount of the information and experiences available to them”; “and an individual’s values, education, past experience, cognitive capacities, physical abilities, and developmental limitations impact what they see”. ... “Sensemaking is interpretive: when thrown into life’s on-going stream of

experiences, unpredictable events, available information, and social encounters, people create explanations for themselves of what things mean” ... “Sensemaking is also action-oriented. These personal interpretations contain prescriptions for how they and others should respond” ... “The sensemaking process is not about finding truth with a capital ‘T’ – although what individuals attend to and how they explain it might be closer or farther from what others might see. It is a personal search for meaning, governed by criteria of plausibility and satisfying rather than accuracy. A ‘good enough’ explanation of the situation will stop the search for alternatives early in the hunt (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp.18-19; Gallos, 2008b; March & Simon, 1958; Weick, 1995).

Gallos (2008) states: “The sensemaking and everyday theory building are close cousins. Together, they reflect the deep human need for order, control, and meaning, and their relationship is intricately circular. Leaders need good theories – whether home grown, borrowed from others, or some combination of the two. Every leadership initiative is based on theories about how organizations work and what might make them better” (pp. 2-3).

### 3.3.2 Reframing organization theory

“Organizations are complex surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous, they are formidable difficult to comprehend and manage” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 41). “Our preconceived theories and images determine what we see, what we do, and how we judge what we accomplish. Narrow, oversimplified perspectives become fallacies that cloud rather than illuminate managerial action. The world of most managers and administrators is a world of messes: complexity, ambiguity, value dilemmas, political pressures, and multiple constituencies. For managers whose images blind them to important parts of this chaotic reality, it is a world of frustration and failure. For those with better theories and the intuitive capacity to use them with skill and grace, it is a world of excitement and possibility. A mess can be defined as both a troublesome situation and a group of people who eat together. The core challenge of leadership is to move an organization from the former to something more like the latter” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 41). Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory was published in their first book - “Modern Approaches to Understanding and Managing Organizations” in 1984. In 1991, Bolman and Deal published the first edition of “Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership” (Bolman & Deal, 1991). This book has been updated and edited three times: in 1997, 2003, and 2008.

#### *“Frame and reframing”*

Bolman and Deal do not claim to have invented the concept, but acknowledge the work of John Dewey and Erving Goffman as sources of inspiration (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 10; Vuori, 2011, p. 69). “In describing frames, we deliberately mix metaphors, referring to them as windows, maps, lenses, orientations, filters, prisms, and perspectives, because all these images capture part of the idea we want to

convey” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp.10-11).

*A frame is a mental model- a set of ideas and assumptions – that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular “territory”. A good frame makes it easier to know what you are up against and, ultimately, what you can do about it. Frames are vital because organizations don’t come with computerized navigation systems to guide you turn-by-turn to your destination. Instead, managers need to develop and carry accurate maps in their heads. (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p.11)*

*Reframing is the conscious effort to size up a situation from different points of view and then find a novel way to handle it. In times of crisis and overload, you will inevitably feel confused and overwhelmed if you are stuck with only one option. That’s the time to go to the balcony and contemplate your alternatives (Bolman & Deal, 2010, p. 3).*

A similar explanation was given by Bolman and Gollas in 2011. “Reframing is the deliberate process of looking to be more mindful about the sensemaking process by examining alternative view and explanations” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 23).

Bolman and Deal (2003, 2008) state that the frames are like maps. “Such maps make it possible to register and assemble key bits of perceptual data into a coherent pattern – a picture of what is happening. When it works fluidly, the process takes the form of ‘rapid cognition,’ the process that Gladwell (2005) examines in his best–seller *Blink*. He describes it as a gift that makes it possible to read “deeply into the narrowest slivers of experience. In basketball, the player who can take in and comprehend all that is happening around him or her is said to have ‘court sense’” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 11). Bolman and Deal (1984, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2008) use four frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) to understand the organization as described next.

#### *A four-dimensions approach to understanding organizations*

As Table 3.1 shows, Bolman and Deal provide different images for each of the frames. The citation work was done by Gallos (2008) from these four perspectives:

*In the **structural frame**, they view organizations as a machine or factory, which means to view organizations as rational systems. It reinforces the importance of designing structural arrangements that align with an organization’s goals, tasks, technology, strategy, and environment (Galbraith, 2001; Gallos, 2008b; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1986; Perrow, 1986). Differentiation of work roles and tasks provides for clarity of purpose and contribution, but leads to the need for appropriate coordination and integration.*

*The **human resource frame**, with its image of organization as family, captures the symbiotic relationship between individuals and organizations: individuals need opportunities to express their talents and skills; organizations need human energy and contribution to fuel their efforts. When the fit is right, both benefit. Productivity is high when people feel motivated to bring their best to their work. The human resource frame has roots in the work of such seminal theorists as Chris Argyris (1962), Abraham Maslow (1954a), and Douglas McGregor (1960). It also spawned the fields of organization development and change management (Gallos, 2006; Gallos, 2008b) and underpins many of our pop cultural beliefs about good leading and organizing.*

The **political frame** views an organization as a jungle – an arena of enduring differences, scarce resources, power negotiations, and conflict (for example, (Cyert & March, 1963; Pfeffer, 1994; Smith, 1988)). Diversity of values, beliefs, interests, behaviours, skills, and worldviews among the workforce are unavoidable organizational realities. They are often toxic, but can also be a source of creativity and innovation when recognized and effectively managed. Finally, the theatre image of the **symbolic frame** captures organizational life as an on-going drama: individuals coming together to create context, culture, and meaning as they play their assigned roles and bring artistry and self-expression into their work (for example, (Blustein, 2007; Blustein, 2007; Cameron & Quinn, 1999; M. D. Cohen & March, 1974; Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; E. Schein, 2004; Weick, 1995) . Good theatre fuels the moral imagination; it engages head and heart. Organizations that attend to the symbolic issues surrounding their own theatre of work infuse everyday efforts with creativity, energy, and soul. (Gallos, 2008b, pp. 4-5)

Table 3.1: Overview of the four-frame Model

	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Metaphor	Factory or machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theatre
Central concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy, and political savvy	Inspiration
Basic leadership challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

Source: Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 18

Based on Bolman & Deal's (2003) book, "Reframing organizations: *Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*", Gallos (2008) has summarized a *four-frame approach to understanding organizations*. Based on Gallos's work, the author updated its content by following up Bolman & Deal's 4<sup>th</sup> edition in 2008. The updated content is shown as Table 3.2. It summarizes the underlying assumptions and images of an organization that underpin each perspective, as well as frame-specific disciplinary roots, emphases, implicit action logics, and routes to organizational effectiveness. The four-frame approach provides a strong framework to make sense of the Chinese merger university from structural, human resource, political and symbolic perspectives.

Table 3.2: A Four-Frame Approach to Understanding Organizations

Frame	Image of Organization	Disciplinary Roots	Frame Emphasis	Underlying Assumptions	Action Logic	Path to Organizational Effectiveness
structural	Machine or Factory	sociology, industrial psychology, economics	rationality, formal roles and relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives.</li> <li>2. Specialization and division of labour increase efficiency and enhance performance</li> <li>3. Coordination and control ensure integration of individual and group efforts</li> <li>4. Organizations work best when rationality prevails</li> <li>5. Structure must align with organizational goals, tasks, technology, environment</li> <li>6. Problems arise and performance suffers from structural deficiencies, which can be remedied through analysis and restructuring.</li> </ol> (Adapted from Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 47)	rational analysis	clear division of labour; creation of appropriate mechanisms to integrate individual, group, and unit efforts
human resource	family	psychology, social psychology	the fit between individual and the organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse.</li> <li>2. People and organizations both need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities.</li> <li>3. When the fit between individual and organization is poor, one or both suffer: each exploits or is exploited, or both become victims.</li> <li>4. When the fit between individual and organization is good, both benefit</li> </ol> (Adapted from Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 122)	attending to people	tailor the organization to meet individual needs, train the individual in relevant skills to meet organizational needs
political	jungle	political science	allocation of power and scarce resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizations are coalitions of diverse individuals and interest groups</li> <li>2. Coalition members have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality.</li> <li>3. Most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources: who gets what</li> <li>4. Scarce resources and enduring differences put conflict at the centre of day-to-day dynamics and make power the most important asset.</li> <li>5. Goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiation among competing stakeholders jockeying for their own interests.</li> </ol> (Adapted from Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 195)	winning	bargain, negotiate, build coalitions, set agendas, manage conflict
symbolic	Theatre, temple, Carnival	social and cultural anthropology	meaning, purpose, and values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is most important is not what happens but what it means to people</li> <li>2. Activity and meaning are loosely coupled: events and actions have multiple interpretations as people experience life differently.</li> <li>3. Facing uncertainty and ambiguity, people create symbols to resolve conflict, find direction, and anchor hope and faith.</li> <li>4. Events and processes are often more important for what is expressed than for what is produced. Their emblematic form weaves a tapestry of secular myths, heroes and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, and stories to help people find purpose and passion.</li> <li>5. Culture forms the superglue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise accomplish desired ends.</li> </ol> (Adapted from Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 253)	building faith and shared meaning	create common vision; devise relevant rituals, ceremonies, and symbols; manage meaning; infuse passion, creativity, and soul

Source: Gallos (2008)

### 3.3.3 Reframing leadership

Bolman and Deal (1991, 1997, 2003, and 2008) suggest that leaders display leadership behaviours in one of four types of frameworks: Structural, Human Resource, Political, or Symbolic. The style can either be effective or ineffective, depending upon the chosen behaviour in certain situations as is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Reframing leadership

Frame	Leadership is effective when		Ineffective Leadership	
	Leader is:	Leadership process is:	Leader is:	Leadership process is:
Structural	Analyst, architect	Analysis, design	Petty tyrant	Management by detail and fiat
Human resource	Catalyst, servant	Support, empowerment	Weakling, pushover	Abdication
Political	Advocate, negotiator	Advocacy, coalition	Con artist, thug	Manipulation, fraud
Symbolic	Prophet, poet	Inspiration, framing experience	Fanatic fool	Mirage, smoke and mirrors

Source: Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 356

Based on Bolman and Deal's work as the above table, Donald Clark (2004) generalised effective leadership into four situations as the following.

*From the **structural** perspective: In an effective leadership situation, the leader is a social architect whose leadership style is analysis and design. In an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a petty tyrant whose leadership style is details. Structural Leaders focus on structure, strategy, environment, implementation, experimentation, and adaptation.*

*From the **human resource** perspective: In an effective leadership situation, the leader is a catalyst and servant whose leadership style is support, advocating, and empowerment. In an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a pushover, whose leadership style is abdication and fraud. Human Resource Leaders believe in people and communicate that belief; they are visible and accessible; they empower, increase participation, support, share information, and move decision making down into the organization.*

*From the **political** perspective: In an effective leadership situation, the leader is an advocate, whose leadership style is coalition and building. In an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a hustler, whose leadership style is manipulation. Political leaders clarify what they want and what they can get; they assess the distribution of power and interests; they build linkages to other stakeholders, use persuasion first, and then use negotiation and coercion only if necessary.*

*From the **symbolic** perspective: In an effective leadership situation, the leader is a prophet, whose leadership style is inspiration. In an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a fanatic or fool, whose leadership style is smoke and mirrors. Symbolic leaders view organizations as a stage or theatre to play certain roles and give impressions; these leaders use symbols to capture attention; they try to frame experience by providing plausible interpretations of experiences; they discover and communicate a vision (D. Clark, 2004).*

This model suggests that leaders can be put into one of these four categories and there are times when an approach is appropriate and times when it would not be. Any one of these approaches alone would be inadequate, thus we should strive to be conscious of all four approaches, and not just rely on one or two (D. Clark, 2004). For example, during a university merger, a structural leadership style may be more effective than a visionary leadership style; while during the post-merger phase, when the integration and development of the new university is the most important issue, the visionary approach may be better. The leader of the university should understand which leadership style to adopt in order to suit their preferred approach. At the same time, they should be conscious of this at all times and be aware of the limitations of a simple approach.

### 3.4 Reframing theory in higher education

#### 3.4.1 The influence of reframing theory in higher education

Bolman & Deal's reframing theory had an influential effect on Birnbaum's work on academic leadership. In the higher education classic "How Colleges Work" Birnbaum (1988) introduces bureaucratic, collegial, political and symbolical views of higher education institutions. These four models result from applying Bolman and Deal's four frames to the higher education context (Vuori, 2011, p. 72). As shown in the first section, Bensimon et al. (1989), in the study "*Making Sense of Administrative Leadership: The L' word in Higher Education*", also treated Bolman and Deal's reframing theory as a theory to discuss in the higher education field. The second edition of Bolman and Deal's other book, "*Reframing the path to school leadership*", was published in 2010. "This book focused on the intersection between life as a new teacher and the challenges faced by a novice principal. At the same time, it also spotlights both teachers and principals. They work in the same buildings, but often live in very different worlds and speak dissimilar languages. The absence of mutual understanding and appreciation only exacerbates the inevitable tensions any working relationship will produce. The better each party understands the other's reality, the easier it will be to find mutually acceptable ways of fulfilling the interests of both the school and its students" (Bolman & Deal, 2010, p. 1). The book: "*Reframing Academic Leadership*", written by Bolman and Gallos in 2011, used the reframing theory to explore leadership in higher education. The authors provided ideas, tools, and encouragement to help higher education leaders make better sense of their work and their institutions, feel more confident, and become more skilled and versatile in handling the vicissitudes of daily life (Bolman & Gallos, 2011).

Bolman and Gallos (2011), deeply informed by the conceptual framework developed by Bolman and Deal (1984), argue that it is easier to understand higher

Table 3.4 Four frames view of academic leadership

	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Human Resource</b>	<b>Symbolic</b>
Metaphor for academic institution	Factory/ Machine	Jungle	Extended family	Theatre, temple
Images of the academic leader	Institutional architect, analyst, systems designer	Advocate, negotiator, political strategist	Servant, catalyst, coach	Artist, prophet
Basic leadership task	Divide the work, coordinate the pieces	Bargain, negotiate, build coalitions, set agendas, manage conflict	Facilitate the alignment between individual and organizational needs	See possibilities; create common vision; manage meaning; infuse passion, creativity, and soul
Leadership logic	Rational analysis	Distributive justice	Attending to people	Building faith and shared meaning
Leadership currency	Clarity	Empowerment	Care	Hope and promise
Frame emphasis	Formal roles and relationships	Allocation of power and scarce resources	Satisfaction, motivation, productivity, empowerment, skills development	Meaning, purpose, and values
Key leadership assumptions	Specialization increases efficiency Clarity and control enhance performance Problems result from structural misalignment	Differences are enduring Resources are scarce Conflict is inevitable Key decisions involve who gets what	Institutions and individuals need each other Individual-organizational alignment benefits both sides Productive relationships are vital to organizational health Learning is central to productivity and change	People interpret experiences differently Meaning-making is a central organizational process Culture is an institution's emotional and intellectual glue Symbols express institutional identity, values, and beliefs
Areas of analysis	Rules, roles, policies, procedure, lines of authority, technology, environment	Power, conflict, resources, interests, agendas, alliances	Needs, skills, relationships, "fit"	Culture, rituals, ceremonies, stories, myth, vision, symbols

(Source: Bolman & Gallos, 2011)

education institutions when people learn to think of them simultaneously as machines, families, jungles, and theatres. Each of those images corresponds to a different frame or perspective that captures a ritual and a distinctive slice of institutional life. The capacity to embrace multi-frame thinking is at the core of the model of academic leadership effectiveness. Therefore, “*Reframing Academic Leadership*” provides an instrument to understand higher education institutions and their leadership from four frames.

Table 3.4 shows the metaphors and images of higher education institutions and academic leaders that underpin each perspective, as well as key leadership assumptions, tasks, logic, currency, emphases and areas of analysis.

### 3.4.2 A four-dimensional diagnostic model in higher education institutions

The Bolman and Deal reframing theory provides a four-frames approach to understanding an organisation, as summarised in Table 3.2. Gallos (2008) employs this approach to diagnosing higher education from four dimensions. Each of the four frames offers a diagnostic lens on a distinct set of higher education institutional dynamics. Each also points to a frame-consistent course of action for leaders. For instance, she argues that “a comprehensive diagnostic picture is better launched with four questions: *What is going on structurally? What is happening from a human resource perspective? What is going on politically? What is happening on the symbolic front?* Taken alone, each question encourages deep consideration of a slice of organizational life. Taken together, the four offer a systematic yet manageable way to approach and examine a full range of organizational possibilities” (Gallos, 2008). These key issues and concepts from each frame in Table 3.5 are summarised by Gallos (2008), which provides a checklist of sorts, identifying a range of possible frame-specific issues to investigate, as well as potential areas of focus for data gathering and intervention.

*The image of the machine, for example, serves as a metaphor for the task-related facets of higher education institutions. Academic leaders succeed when they create an appropriate set of campus arrangements and reporting relationships that offer clarity to key constituents and facilitate the work of faculty, students, staff, and volunteers* (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 11).

So, “college and university leaders play two central roles. They are analysts who carefully study the institution’s production processes; and they are institutional architects and systems designers who develop the rules, roles, policies, and procedures that align efforts with campus goals” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 51). As open systems, educational institutions are loosely coupled in the sense that linkages among organisational units and departments “may be infrequent, circumscribed, weak in their mutual effects, unimportant, or slow to respond” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 38). From the structural frame view of higher education institutions, we can also identify a range of possible structural issues to investigate,

as summarized in Table 3.5.

*The family image focuses on the powerful symbiotic relationship between people and higher education institutions: individuals need opportunities to express their talents and skills; college or universities need human energy and contribution to fuel their efforts. When that fit is right, both benefit. Effective academic leaders create caring and productive campus environments where all find ways to channel their full talents to the mission at hand and to work cooperatively with important others (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 12).*

Table 3.5 provides a checklist of sorts, and identifies a range of possible human resource issues to investigate, as well as data to collect.

Table 3.5 Frame-Related Issues and Areas of Focus

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Potential Issues and Areas to Investigate</b>
Structural	rules, regulations, goals, policies, roles, tasks, job designs, job descriptions, technology, environment, chain of command, vertical and horizontal coordinating mechanisms, assessment and reward systems, standard operating procedures, authority spans and structures, spans of control, specialization/division of labour, information systems, formal feedback loops, boundary scanning and management processes
Human resource	needs, skills, relationships, norms, perceptions and attitudes, morale, motivation, training and development, interpersonal and group dynamics, supervision, teams, job satisfaction, participation and involvement, informal organization, support, respect for diversity, formal and informal leadership
Political	key stakeholders, divergent interests, scarce resources, areas of uncertainty, individual and group agendas, sources and bases of power, power distributions, formal and informal resource allocation systems and processes, influence, conflict, competition, politicking, coalitions, formal and informal alliances and networks, interdependence, control of rewards and punishment, informal communication channels
Symbolic	culture, rituals, ceremonies, stories, myths, symbols, metaphors, meaning, spirituality, values, vision, charisma, passions and commitment

(Source: Gallos, 2008)

*The jungle image encapsulates a world of enduring differences: diverse species or tribes participating in a complex dance of cooperation and competition as they manoeuvre for scarce resources and for influence. Diversity of values, beliefs, interests, behaviours, skills, goals, and worldviews often spawns destructive campus conflict. It is also the wellspring of creativity and innovation – and the source of hope for the future of higher education. Skilled academic leaders are compassionate politicians who respect differences, manage them productively, and respond ethically and responsibly to the needs of multiple constituencies without losing sight of*

*institutional goals and priorities (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 12).*

From Table 3.5, we can find potential issues and areas to investigate from the political frame perspective in higher education institutions.

*Finally, the theatre image captures university life as an on-going drama: individuals coming together to create context, culture, commitment, and meaning as they play their assigned roles and bring artistry and self-expression into their work. Good theatre fuels the moral imagination, and successful campus leaders infuse everyday efforts with energy and soul (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 12).*

Similarly to the other frames, we can find potential issues and areas to investigate from the symbolic perspective of higher education institutions as shown in summary Table 3.5.

Higher education institutions are different from business organisations. They are more complex than other organisations since they have two systems and they also contain many different organisations. Multi-frame thinking is necessary and important for the institutional leaders, and they should pay attention to the different needs of individuals and different interest groups.

*Academic institutions require solid organizational architecture rules, roles, policies, procedures, technologies, coordinating mechanisms, environmental linkage- that channels resources and human talents to support institutional goals and purpose. At the same time, they need workplace relationships and a campus environment that motivate and foster high levels of satisfaction, cooperation, and productivity. Innovation comes from managing the enduring differences and political dynamics at the centre of university life that can spark misunderstandings, disagreements, and power struggles. Finally, every institution needs a culture that aligns with its values, inspires individual and collective efforts, and provides the symbolic glue to coordinate diverse contributions. In such a complex institutional world, multiframe thinking keeps university administrators alert and responsive to the demands of the whole while avoiding a narrow optic that oversimplifies a complex reality- and sends academic leaders blindly down the wrong path, squandering resources, time and credibility along the way. (Gallos, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 13)*

Academic leaders need multi-frame thinking, and to reframe their leadership. “Strong academic leaders are skilled in the art of reframing – a deliberate process of shifting perspectives to see the same situation in multiple ways and through different lenses. Experience, training, and developmental limitations leave too many leaders with a limited range of perspectives for making sense of their work. The dearth of training and pre-service preparation for college and university leaders only exacerbates this gap. As a result, academic leaders can stay stuck in their comfort zones - shielded from experiences that challenge them to see beyond current preferences and to embrace more complicated socio-emotional, intellectual, and ethical reasoning” (Gallos, 1993a; Gallos, 1993b).

Facing challenges is normal life for institutional leaders. Within the merger

context, the environments are more complex, there are more challenges, and institutional leaders need more reframing leadership skills. “When things turn out badly, they blame circumstances, the environment, a lack of resources, or other people, unaware that limits in their own thinking have restricted their options and undermined their efforts. More versatile habits of mind enable academic leaders to think in more powerful and comprehensive ways about their own leadership and about the complexities and opportunities in leading colleges and universities” (Gallos, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 13).

According to Bolman and Gallos’s contribution, we can find that Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory provides a good framework for understanding higher education institutions. In particular, it is a very suitable framework for exploring merged universities.

### 3.4.3 Effective leadership in higher education

In Section 3.3.3, leadership styles or skills were discussed, based on Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory (1991, 1997, 2003, and 2008). The style can either be effective or ineffective, depending upon the chosen behaviour in certain situations. How should these principles be used in higher education institutions? Based on the effective leadership skill analysis in Table 3.3, Bolman and Gallos (2011) developed the skills of the leadership of colleges or universities in several frame aspects. The author adapted the effective leadership skills in higher education institutions from their book, as shown in Table 3.6.

*Structural leaders:* leaders in universities inevitably face structural challenges at three levels: (1) *structuring their own work*; (2) *structuring their organization*; and (3) *structuring the change process*. All are challenging, but the likelihood of success is much higher when structure at all three levels is appropriate to the circumstances. Regarding the structuring of their own work, effective leaders need to do three things well: a) they must manage their own time, b) they must focus on results, and c) they must do “first things first” by concentrating on the things that matter (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 53; Drucker, 1965). Structuring one’s time is a continuous challenge in any administrative job. “Academic leaders who hope to take their organization somewhere need to gain control of their schedules, be clear about what is important, and focus on results rather than activity. The first step in getting control of one’s schedule is defining the most critical priorities in the short, medium, and longer term and identifying the primary outcomes to be achieved. To regularly line up your priorities in your calendar, you must ask: “What percentage of time is going to what is most important? Where is the rest of the time going? What can I do to reach a better alignment? As you achieve clarity about priorities and results, you gain the perspective you need to work in a disciplined, focused way” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 53-54). To understand the structuring organization, we have to make sense of the tension between *differentiation* and *integration*. Bolman and Gallos (2011, p. 56) suggest leaders answer two fundamental structural questions: how is

the work divided up? And, how does the leader coordinate effort once work has been divided? Therefore, the structure should be right, and pull things together. Regarding the structuring of the change process, every administrative job contains routine tasks where the challenge is to keep the trains running on time. Those tasks are vital, and an institution can go downhill quickly if they are not performed well. But leaders rarely find themselves with a mandate to keep things as they are. Leaders are expected to make things better and to stay ahead in a rapidly changing higher education landscape. That is particularly tough whenever it means getting the faculty to change. So, change efforts often require bringing together autonomous players who guard their turf, defend their expertise, and insist on the correct processes for anything about which they have questions or doubts. Efforts to rush or force the process risk catastrophe. Bolman and Gallos highlight the three P's process: Patience, Persistence, and Process. Patience is vital because the wheels of change rarely move very fast in colleges and universities. Persistence is the vital ally of patience. Few people in an institution will invest unlimited time or energy in promoting or opposing any single initiative, even a significant change like the reform of a general education curriculum or the transformation of a campus culture. The third P is process; it is essential to assess and adhere to faculty expectations of how things should be done. Like it or not, faculty are unforgiving when they perceive authoritarian overreach, violation of legitimate procedures, or processes that lack internal credibility – and savvy academic leaders know that it is not always even an issue of what really happened as much as what the faculty think happened (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 63-66).

Table 3.6: Effective leadership skills in higher education institution

Leadership frame	Effective leadership skills
Structural	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) structure their own work</li> <li>2) structure their organizations</li> <li>3) structure the change process (p. 53)</li> </ol>
Human resource	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) open communication</li> <li>2) empowerment</li> <li>3) effective teams for collective action</li> <li>4) support, coaching, and care</li> <li>5) hiring the right people (p. 94)</li> </ol>
Political	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) set agendas</li> <li>2) map the political terrain</li> <li>3) network and build coalitions</li> <li>4) bargain and negotiate (p. 77)</li> </ol>
Symbolic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) building on the past for an exciting, new vision of the future</li> <li>2) leading by example</li> <li>3) constructing a heroic narrative and telling it often</li> <li>4) leveraging the power in ritual and ceremony (p. 117)</li> </ol>

(Source: adapted from (Bolman & Gallos, 2011))

Human resource leaders, as previously mentioned, “need strategies for responding to constituents’ individual and collective needs and for building a work environment with characteristics akin to those found in a caring and supportive extended family. To do this work well, leaders need the combined skills of a servant, catalyst, and coach” (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 92; Pfeffer, 2007). The bedrock of effective human resource leadership is a capacity to encourage people to bring their best talents and selves to their work. Effective leaders do this in several ways, as shown in Table 3.6:

*“first, open communication, they promote openness and transparency. They understand that their constituents want a leader they can trust, especially when times are tough and emotions are ran. People want to believe that their leader is telling the truth – bad news as well as good. Second, empowerment, they empower by providing constituents with the resources and space they need to make the best use of their talent and energy, trust and confidence are easier to squander than to develop. Third, effective teams for collective action, they help ensure that groups and committees function as effective teams. Fourth, support, coaching, and care, they provide support, coaching, and care for their constituents. Finally, hiring the right people, they recognize that a vital part of developing the fit between people and workplace is hiring the right people in the first place” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 93-94).*

Regarding open communication, it is easy to understand; “empowerment has become a buzzword, an often-fuzzy idea that is easy to talk about but hard to do well.” ... “Academic leaders need to get beyond hypocrisy or empty rhetoric to the serious and important task of finding ways to increase people’s ability to make informed and consequential choices – decisions that make a difference. Research confirms that empowered employees do a better job and feel better about their work and their organizations” (Biron & Bamberger, 2007; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 96). For the sake of brevity, more detailed descriptions regarding support, coaching, care, and hiring the right people are not described here. Regarding effective teamwork, much of the freedom in the faculty role is limited to the teaching and scholarly work of each individual instructor. Faculty traditionally are empowered more to do their own thing than to contribute to the collective purpose, yet unit success requires unit-wide engagement and cooperative action. When empowerment works, much of the payoff comes from empowering groups and teams (G. Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, & Allen, 2005). Katzenbach and Smith (1993) studied successful teams in a variety of settings. They drew a clear distinction between undifferentiated groups and sharply focused teams. They identified six key characteristics of higher quality teams:

*1) High-performing teams (HPTs) shape purpose in response to a demand or an opportunity placed in their path, usually by higher management. 2) HPTs translate common purpose into specific, measurable performance goals. 3) HPTs are of a manageable size. 4) HPTs develop the right mix of expertise. 5) HPTs develop a common commitment to working relationships. 6) Members of HPT hold themselves collectively accountable. (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 99; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 161)*

*Politically effective leaders:* “Colleges and universities are highly political institutions,

but that is a statement of fact, not an indictment” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 72). Resources are limited, and there is a range of interest groups in higher education. Power, then, becomes a key resource. Without power, administrators cannot lead because no one will follow, and they cannot get anything done. But power is a complex and fluid phenomenon that is often misunderstood. Like politics, many people use it to ride roughshod over good people, but power is simply the capacity to influence, to make things happen. If you want something to happen but cannot do it, you lack power. It is important to understand that power takes many forms. Authority, or position power, is a basic tool for administrators, but it needs to be supplemented with other forms – the power that rests in having information, expertise, control of resources, personal skills, relationships, allies, the capacity to reward, and many others (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 73-74). Therefore, sophisticated leaders use four key political skills: 1) *setting agendas*; 2) *mapping the political terrain*; 3) *networking and building of coalitions*; 4) *bargaining and negotiating* (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 77; Gallos, 2008a). For instance, the skill of mapping the political terrain, from a political perspective a central challenge in making change stick, is mobilizing enough power to move one’s initiative forward. Administrators have authority over their subordinates but often overestimate how far that authority will carry them, particularly in the face of opposition from powerful individuals or constituents with strong reputations and power bases. Agendas move forward when leaders take a step back, assess the political environment, and get a feel for the full lay of the landscape and how to use it to their advantage. Three questions help to map the political terrain for any given issue (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 80):

1. *Who are the players? (Which groups or individuals are most likely to try to influence the outcomes of a particular process or decision?)*
2. *What are the interests of each player? (What’s at stake for each player and what does each player want? In simplest terms, this comes down to who is likely to be for or against the change we seek.)*
3. *How much power is each player likely to wield? (This requires assessing the potential power of any given player, the likelihood that a given player will use that power on the issue at hand, and the power of each player’s webs of influence.)*

“These questions are rarely easy to answer. Political situations are fluid: players come and go, interests shift in response to events, and power can wax or wane over time. It takes a careful eye and savvy detective work to collect and assess available clues – and continued vigilance to notice shifts in the political winds.” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 80)

Regarding the skill of networking and building coalitions, in a study of senior executives, “John Kotter (1982) found that networking was a key determinant of leadership effectiveness. The higher your position, the more people there are who can help or hinder you in doing your job. Kotter found that effective managers spent more time at the front end, building relationships with key constituents so

that the managers had an easier time getting help when they needed it. Networking is all about relationships, and a key part of its value is the opportunity to listen to people, understand what they care about, and find ways to respond to their interests.” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 82)

*Symbolic leaders:* “A symbol is something that stands for something else, often for something more complex, less tangible, or more difficult to articulate. Symbols serve two particularly important functions in universities, as in life. One is economy – a symbol communicates a complex message in a succinct way that saves words, time, or effort. .... A second function of a symbol is interpretive and emotional. Symbols work when they influence what something means and trigger deeply embedded unconscious associations that affect our feelings and attitudes toward it” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p.111). “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (E. H. Schein, 1992, p.17). In simple terms, culture is how we have learned to think and do things around here (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 114). From a symbolic perspective, building and shaping institutional culture is at the heart of academic leadership. But in shaping culture, leaders never start with a blank slate. Instead, they inherit raw materials from the past – values, beliefs, artefacts, stories, heroes and heroines, rituals and practices (Bolman & Deal, 2008). “These symbolic building blocks offer academic leaders a place to start in sorting out and diagnosing their unit’s or institution’s culture” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p.114). Symbolic leaders construct meaning and foster hope and faith by 1) *building on the past for an exciting, new vision of the future*; 2) *leading by example*; 3) *constructing a heroic narrative and telling it often*; 4) *leveraging the power in ritual and ceremony* (See Table 3.6). For example, many of the best opportunities for academic leaders to retell their stories and leverage power are at institutional rituals and ceremonies. Rituals are stylized or scripted patterns of action that recur on a regular basis, such as the meetings of a class, the faculty, or a president or dean’s cabinet. An essential feature of ritual and ceremony is that they simultaneously signal continuity and change. Many colleges and universities are richly symbolic institutions, infused with myth, stories, ceremony, and symbols rooted in ancient tradition.

Symbolic leaders take advantage of rituals and ceremonies to convene the congregants, reinforce shared beliefs, and re-inspire commitment to share purpose. Skilled academic leaders use occasions that go well beyond the annual pageantry of commencement (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 117-122). Bolman and Deal (1992) used a famous case of an unusually effective design team that had illustrated the symbolic and cultural elements that are critical to peak performance in teams (pp. 34-44).

### 3.4.4 Studies using B&D reframing theory

Bolman and Deal's reframing theory has been utilised in many field studies. Based on Bolman's website information (2010), Johanna Vuori (2011) prepared a classification of the main studies that use the reframing theory in different ways. First, according to the content of the studies, she grouped them into 1) studies in the field of school administration; 2) studies in public administration and non-profit organizations; 3) studies in the field of higher education; 4) other studies (cross-sectional studies, studies in business management). Second, from the research methodology perspective, she provided a summarised description of the quantitative and qualitative reframing studies in higher education (Vuori, 2011, pp. 81-88). More detailed information on studies of this type can be found on Bolman's website ([www.leebolman.com](http://www.leebolman.com)).

Bolman and Deal developed the quantitative four-frame survey instrument for leaders to evaluate their own leadership styles and those of others (see Appendix I). According to the studies' information provided by Bolman (Bolman & Deal, 2012), we can see that the majority of studies in the education field have utilized the survey instrument, which means they used a quantitative approach to study the leadership. Regarding qualitative studies, a few can be found that focus on higher education. For example, "Patterson et al. (2002) used reframing theory as a conceptual framework to analyse the experiences of participants on a mentoring program intended to support the paths of women and ethnic minorities into tenured earning positions in higher education. Thompson et al. (2008) used this theory as the conceptual framework to study professionalism in pharmacy education. Kezar et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative higher education leadership study using the reframing theory to discuss the presidential leadership strategies for the promotion of campus diversity" (Vuori, 2011, pp. 87-88). Of course, Vuori's study is also a qualitative study on program directors from Finnish universities of applied sciences using the Bolman and Deal reframing theory as the conceptual framework.

Regarding the application of reframing theory to empirical studies in mergers of higher education institutions, there is a lack of studies. So far, one study that we can find was done by Thomas M. Mulvey in 1993 (Mulvey, 1993). Mulvey analysed 18 doctoral dissertation case studies of 20 higher education institutional mergers that took place during the period 1964-1985. He identified the similarities and differences and the findings compared with the merger literature. He found differences in the impelling reasons, motivation, process stages, type of risk, degree of consultation and outcomes. Unfortunately, he did not use Bolman and Deal's reframing theory as the conceptual or theoretical framework to conduct the data collection or data analysis. However, he employed it as the recommendation in the final part of his work. However, it is also valuable to bring his perspective to the merger context. He notes: "in order to facilitate the complex process of a merger and to address the identified problems, the application of the integrated frames approach for managing organizational change as developed by Bolman and Deal is adaptive" (p. 104). It is a pity that he stayed on the conception level, and used it

only to provide some suggestions. He did not undertake in-depth analysis or use the four frames to understand the merged organizations, nor did he use reframing theory in the empirical studies of the leadership and management, or the impact of the leadership styles in the merger context.

### 3.5 Summary

“If you want to manage or lead an organization, you need to understand the organization. Normally, organizations are complex, surprising, deceptive and ambiguous. Therefore, the sensemaking is at the heart of leadership” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory provides four frames – structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames to view an organization. They use different images to view an organization as a factory or a machine, family, jungle, and theatre. The reframing theory provides us with a four-frames approach to help us to understand organizations. Simultaneously, Bolman and Deal demonstrated what is effective leadership, or ineffective leadership, based on the structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames. Multi-frame leadership is necessary when leaders are facing or dealing with a complex situation.

Although colleges and universities are different in many ways from other organizations, we can still find many elements of higher education institutions that are the same as in other organizations, such as goals, structures, administrative hierarchies, coordinating mechanisms, cultures, employees, vendors, powerful stakeholders, and so on. Therefore, other fields also influence the studies of higher education institutions. Many researchers in their studies on higher education have employed Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory.

In particular, in the merger context of higher education institutions, as described previously, the leader has to face a more complex situation in the merger process. The reframing theory provides us with a four-dimensional approach to assist with providing diagnoses of higher education institutions. It also provides a useful instrument to evaluate effective or ineffective leadership, as well as an analysis of reframing change, reframing conflict, etc. Therefore, Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory is a reasonable theoretical framework to examine the leadership of a merged university.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

This study tries to interpret the phenomenon of Chinese university mergers, in particular from the leadership dimension. As mentioned in previous chapters, so many higher education institutions were involved in the Chinese universities' restructuring reform wave. Therefore, the author has employed the case study research method. In this chapter, the study will present the research operation strategy, case university choice, data collection methods, analysis, as well as reliability, validity and triangulation.

### 4.1 Research Strategy

#### 4.1.1 Restatement of research question and theoretical framework

The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership styles' impact on the nature and outcomes of the Chinese merged university. As discussed in Chapter 3, Bolman and Deal's reframing organization theory provides us with a four-dimensional diagnostic model to examine and understand higher education institutions and leadership in higher education. In this study, the author will employ Bolman and Deal's reframing organization theory as the theoretical framework to examine and understand the Chinese merged university, and also the impact of leadership orientation in the merger context. Therefore, the research questions are:

- 1) How to understand the Chinese case university in the merger context? What were the main challenges that the university faced after the merger?
- 2) What were the prevailing leadership orientations of the main institutional leaders in the merger context? How did the institutional leadership group perform? Did the main institutional leaders need to reframe their leadership styles after the merger in order to deal with these challenges?

#### *The operational framework of this study*

This study includes three main parts. The first part is Chapter 2, in which the study presented an overview of the background of Chinese higher education reform, which includes the external factors that came from economic development, internationalization, governmental administration reform, as well as the change in the governance mechanism of Chinese universities. In particular, the author presented the Chinese higher education system's restructuring-relevant policy, as

well as the impact on the higher education institutions from the national perspective. The purpose was to present readers of this study with the whole picture of the biggest reform in Chinese higher education since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. At the same time, it was intended to help readers to understand the case study of the Chinese merged university. As noted in Chapter 2, there were more than 1400 higher education institutions involved in this reform, which underwent three stages in the merger waves in the 1990s (see Section 2.2.4). At the same time, the Chinese higher education institutions' governance and administration system is unique in the world. How can foreign readers be made to understand the Chinese governance and administration system? The changes and evolution of governance of Chinese higher education have been reviewed, which presents a basic picture to introduce readers to the case merged university. In order to explore the leadership perspective of Chinese merged universities, the author chooses one typical merged university as the case to study, so that an in-depth analysis can be presented. Therefore, the author employed the case study method in this work, as presented in the following section.

The second part was Chapter 3. In this part, the author provided the relevant concepts and theories concerning leadership studies in higher education. Based on the literature review of merger studies from the leadership perspective, the change and trends of leadership theories in the higher education field were described. The author provided an overview of the leadership literature and relevant theories and studies on development of leadership theories. Through a review of these theories, the author provided the basic theoretical background to support the reason why Bolman and Deal's reframing theory was chosen in exploring Chinese merged universities and their leadership. In this chapter, the author provided a review of the development and applications of reframing theory in the higher education field. According to Bolman and Deal's research, with respect to the evaluation of the leadership, they find "the evaluation of leaders by colleagues is much better than having the leaders evaluate themselves" (Bolman & Deal, 2012). Therefore, the author chose *middle level leaders* to evaluate the institutional level leaders (group) in this study. On the other hand, in practice, middle leaders are familiar not only with the institutional leaders but also with the grassroots staff. Therefore, they are suitable respondents for research on both the merged university and its leadership.

The third portion of this dissertation is the empirical part. The author employs case study research methods based on Bolman and Deal's four-dimensional diagnostic model to examine the case university (see Chapter 5) as well as its leadership (see Chapter 6). The author presents the findings and conclusions in Chapter 7.

#### 4.1.2 Case study design

"A case study is an intensive analysis of an individual unit (e.g., a person, group, or event), stressing developmental factors in relation to context" (Flyvbjerg, 2011; R. K. Yin, 2009). "The case study approach is common in social sciences and life

sciences. Case studies may be descriptive or explanatory. The latter type is used to explore causation in order to find underlying principles” (R. K. Yin, 2009). They may be prospective (in which criteria are established and cases fitting the criteria are included as they become available) or retrospective (in which criteria are established for selecting cases from historical records for inclusion in the study). Thomas (2011) mentions that case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. As previously stated, a lot of Chinese higher education institutions were involved in the merger reform in the 1990s. Therefore, we have to choose a typical case to acquire deeper and more detailed information and knowledge.

Yin (1994) summarises “five different ways of undertaking social science research, namely experiment, survey, archival analysis, history, and case study. The choice of each research strategy depends on the forms of research question, the control that the investigator can exercise over actual behavioural events and the extent of focus on contemporary events” (p. 6). In this study, as mentioned in the above section, the study area is the leadership perspective of the Chinese merged university. On the one hand, there are a large number of merged universities in China, and therefore, the case study (single case or multiple cases) is a good way to study this event. On the other hand, all public Chinese universities follow the centralization model in their internal governance. Their leadership and management operating mechanism and structures are similar. Therefore, the author has tried to employ the case study method to analyse one typical merged university in-depth, and to present readers a discussion on whether the Chinese merged university’s leadership need to reframe or not.

In the education research field, Bassey (1999; 2002) presents a definition that gives a useful prescriptive account of what constitutes a worthwhile educational case study, as shown in Table 4.1. The terms *in italics* inevitably entail value judgments made by Bassey. It is worth elaborating on some of these and other terms contained in this statement (pp. 108-109).

An educational case study:

*‘Educational’ locates this definition in the field of educational research (including educational management research), as opposed to discipline research in educational settings. I define educational research as critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgments and decisions in order to improve educational action, whereas discipline research in education I see as critical enquiry aimed at informing understandings of phenomena (in educational settings) which are pertinent to the discipline. (The term ‘discipline’ includes psychology, sociology, history, economics, philosophy, etc.) Educational research is more concerned with improving action through theoretical understanding, and discipline research with increasing theoretical knowledge of the discipline. The boundary between them is not clear-cut. (Bassey, 2002, pp. 108-109)*

Table 4.1 Prescriptive definition of research case study

An educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is:

- Conducted within a localized boundary of space and time (i.e. a singularity),
- Into *interesting* aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system,
- Mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons,
- In order to inform the judgments and decisions of practitioners or policy-makers,
- Or of theoreticians who are working to these ends, and
- Such that sufficient data are collected for the researcher to be able:
  1. to explore *significant* features of the case,
  2. to create *plausible* interpretations of what is found,
  3. to test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations,
  4. to construct a *worthwhile* argument or story,
  5. to relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature,
  6. to convey *convincingly* to an audience this argument or story, and
  7. to provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments.

(Resource: Bassey, 2002, p. 109; Bassey, 1999, p. 58)

Bassey's definition of an educational case study provides a clear picture of this research method. There are several sources and methods that researchers can use to gather information about an individual or group. The six major sources that have been identified by researchers (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995) are: (1) Direct observation: This strategy involves observing the subject, often in a natural setting. While an individual observer is sometimes used, it is more common to utilize a group of observers. (2) Interviews: One of the most important methods for gathering information in case studies. An interview can involve structured survey-type questions, or more open-ended questions. (3) Documents: Letters, newspaper articles, administrative records, etc. (4) Archival records: Census records, survey records, name lists, etc. (5) Physical artefacts: Tools, objects, instruments and other artefacts often observed during a direct observation of the subject. (6) Participant observation: Involves the researcher actually serving as a participant in events and observing the actions and outcomes (Cherry, 2012). Following this logic, the author has chosen some of these resource collection methods for this study (see Section 4.4).

### 4.1.3 Do Western countries' theories work in the Chinese context?

#### *Cross-cultural research*

During our group's research seminars in the past years, the question: "Does Bolman and Deal's reframing theory work in the Chinese context?" is always raised by someone in the audience. In fact, this is a very common question when we are doing cross-cultural research.

As regards societal culture and implications for understanding the meaning of

research, it is fitting to begin with words of caution to the novice researcher. “A large part of the accumulated body of literature in educational management and leadership has been generated by a culturally homogeneous cadre of scholars from English-speaking backgrounds. These scholars represent societies that constitute no more than 8% of the world’s population yet they claim to speak for the vast majority. In many instances they fail to de-limit the geo-cultural boundaries within their models, theories, ideas, findings and conclusions apply. On other occasions, they advocate the transfer and adoption of policies and practices from one society to another with relative impunity and naivety. Policy makers, too, are not slow to adopt policies that are culturally borrowed from elsewhere. We have come to expect this as part of the globalised world” (Dimmock, 2002, p. 29). “The point to make, however, is not that such international cross-cultural awareness is negative and should cease. Indeed, quite the reverse” (Dimmock, 2002) ... “A key issue is that successful policies and practices can’t simply be replicated and transplanted from one society to another, even with some adaptation. Before a particular policy or practice is adopted in a given system, there is a need to know why it is working in other societies and with what effects. This demands an understanding of the indigenous culture, its values, beliefs, customs and ways of life, all of which interact” (Dimmock, 2002, pp. 29-30).

Dimmock (2002, p. 30) provides three suggestions: First, the fundamental concept of “culture” itself needs clarification. Second, to the extent that cultures differ, the meanings that societies impart to particular ideas, actions, behaviours, processes and structures may differ. Third, there is a need to develop more rigorous and systematic methods of authentic comparison and measurement of cultural differences and their impact on educational management.

In conducting research into educational leadership and management that takes societal culture into account, a key issue concerns the researchers’ understanding of the particular culture(s) being studied. This is less of a problem where the culture of the researcher and the education system under investigation are the same. One would expect a native to possess a full appreciation of his or her own culture (Dimmock, 2002). Therefore, the author’s experience is very important in the cross-cultural education management and leadership research in this study.

#### *Conducting research with cross-cultural thinking*

*First*, in clarifying the concept of culture for the intending researcher in the field, a key early stage is to appreciate the different interpretations and nuances of the term “culture”. The present argument suggests that the concept of culture and societal culture in particular, is a promising base on which to build a comparative and international branch of educational leadership and management (Dimmock, 2002, p. 30). The author recognises that the culture is different in Western countries and China. In this study, how to localize the reframing theory was always kept in mind and was considered when the author designed and collected data (see Section 4.4). Regarding the different cultures in Western countries and China, Wallin (2006) provides the following statement.

*The Western focus is on determining goals and arranging for task completion. The Eastern focus includes those same elements, but a significantly larger amount of energy is spent on determining how the goals and tasks fit into the broader scheme of the players involved. For example, who should be making which decisions, who should be the experts, who should set the goals, etc... The role of the individual is also different. Westerners admire rugged individualism. In a Darwinistic sense this results in highly skilled and experienced leaders emerging among those who are successful after having gone off on their own. In contrast, the Easterners tend to gravitate more strongly to their social networks, and place more emphasis on the credibility and social capital of those they would choose to work with instead of just evaluating pure skill and experience criteria (Wallin, 2006, p. 51).*

Second, Bolman and Deal's reframing theory as well as Bolman and Gollas's *Reframing Academic Leadership* have considered the adaptation in other countries. For example, in Bolman and Deal's "Reframing Organization", the authors employ a number of Asian cases, like Japan, South Korea, as well as China. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition has been translated into Chinese and is being sold in the Chinese market. Bolman and Gollas's "*Reframing Academic Leadership*" also cited Chinese philosophy in their description.

In addition to new frameworks and models, careful thought about the techniques and instruments to facilitate data collection and analysis is needed. Without this rigour, there is a danger that superficial cross-cultural analysis and comparison will result. The same pitfall awaits researchers investigating an educational management problem or issues within a culture rather than between cultures. Failure to distinguish the part that culture plays may seriously weaken their thesis (Dimmock, 2002, p. 34). Bolman and Deal (Bolman & Deal, 2012) developed the "leadership orientation instrument" that will be used in this study. Regarding its use, the author will present a description in the following data collection section.

Finally, the solution for difficulties of access: conducting research in some cultures can present difficult if not insurmountable problems regarding access for even the most experienced academic researcher. ... There is always the need for researchers to cultivate good relationships with potential participants, and where possible, to offer them some benefit in return for their willingness to participate. These problems fade into insignificance, however, when compared with the challenges of researching in countries such as mainland China. There, research into school leadership and management is often seen as "intrusive", the more so if the researcher is from outside the country. School principals, in particular, are extremely sensitive to requests to collect data in their schools for fear of upsetting their superiors; teachers are equally sensitive for much the same reason. Normally, successful access to mainland schools requires the penetration of an elaborate bureaucratic network, and highly trusted co-operative relationships with eminent local academics and bureaucrats (Dimmock, 2002, p. 35).

In addition, the author has more than ten years of study and work experience in Western countries. He has had a rich experience and a deep understanding of Western culture. He is currently working on educational cooperation between

China and Finland. He is familiar with both Western leadership theories and university operations. In addition, he has had business experience as the top-level leader working in a joint venture company between foreign companies and Chinese companies in China. Therefore, from the leadership perspective, he understands the differences in culture between Western and Chinese thinking. With respect to the Chinese university leadership culture, he also had eight years of work experience as an administrator in a merged Chinese university. As a key staff member of the Human Resource Department of the university, he took part in relevant events concerning human resource adjustments and policymaking during the whole merger period. In other words, he underwent the entire process of the merger. Based on the author's work experience and good networks in the Chinese university, he could easily access in-depth material at the case university to conduct the research. Simultaneously, his rich experience and understanding of both of Western countries and China also help him fill the above gaps of cross-cultural research in the educational management and leadership field.

## 4.2 Case selection and description

### 4.2.1 Why was the NewU case chosen?

In this study, the case university is a provincial key merged university; in order to maintain anonymity, it is called "NewU". First, according to Yin's suggestion in 1994, "the choice of this case was mainly determined by three principles of case selection, namely convenience, access, and geographic proximity" (p. 77). As mentioned in the above section, the author worked in this university for more than eight years. He experienced the whole merger process this university went through. He worked in the Human Resources Department, and was in charge of human resource adjustment, professional and technical title or academic ranks<sup>4</sup> evaluation and promotions, and the salary and workload system. He has been following up the relevant policymaking and implementation, etc. He is familiar with the internal operations, so that he has the capacity for deep observation and understanding of this university. The choice of this case matches Yin's principles.

In addition, this case university is a typical Chinese provincial key university merger case, and it is a valuable institution subject for analysis. The author presented the stages of the restructuring of the Chinese higher education system in Section 2.2.4. From 1990 to 1991, which was the preparatory stage across the whole country, there were several kinds of restructuring models. The period

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<sup>4</sup> Professional and technical titles or academic ranks refer to the classification of the teachers' academic positions. In Chinese universities, the Professional and technical titles include: assistant, lecturer, associate professor, and professor. Chinese universities organize the assessment and appointment of professional titles. Human resource departments are in charge of summoning the Academic evaluation committees to assess all applicants.

between 1992 and 1997 was the experimental stage, with the national government promoting only one “real” merger model. The NewU is a very typical “real merger” case. Moreover, it is a typical provincial key universities’ merger case in China, merging from two large, key universities and two smaller colleges. With respect to the merger types in China, they are normally categorised by researchers based on the strength of the universities involved, including: (1) strong to strong; (2) strong to weak; and (3) weak to weak (Y. Z. Cai, 2007; D. Li, 2004; Wan, 2008). In this case, it involved all three types, namely, it included two strong (large) universities and two weak (smaller) universities. Therefore, it is also a more complex multiple higher education institutions merger case than other in China during that period.

#### 4.2.2 Case description

The new merged university – NewU – was founded in 1996. The four antecedent provincial higher education institutions were: University A, University B, College C, and College D.

University A had been founded in 1906, and therefore had a long history as a university. Before the merger in 1996, it had been developed as the key comprehensive university in the province. University A had covered all the disciplines in the common teachers’ education and research. It was a research-based university and had strong research capacity in a range of disciplines, which included the natural sciences and social sciences. University A offered bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D study programmes, and had more than 10,000 students at all levels. The total staff number exceeded 2000. University A was a leading comprehensive university in the province, and a normal (teachers) university with a good reputation in China.

University B was founded in 1902, and was a teachers’ college in the same province as University A. University B was also a key provincial university in the province’s higher education institutions’ ranking system. It also offered similar study programmes at the bachelor’s and master’s levels, and also Ph.D study programmes were offered in a few disciplines. The research capacity was not as strong as that of University A. Still, it was another university in China with a long history.

College C was founded in 1952, after the People’s Republic of China was established. It was a provincial education institute. During the “Cultural Revolution”, it was closed, only to re-open in 1979. The main task of this institution was to offer adult continuing education and further studies or additional training for teachers. The scale of the staff and students was much smaller than in University A and University B, but it was a very good institution, particularly for in-service training of primary school and middle school teachers in the province.

College D was founded in 1984. It was a vocational technology teachers college. The main task of this college was to provide teachers for the vocational education and training schools in the province. College D had several thousands of students and several hundreds of staff before the merger in 1996.

According to the background description of each original university or college, it can be seen that each of these four higher education institutions had a similar education task with respect to teacher education. They were located in the same provincial capital city. From the city geography aspect, University B and College C were closer to each other and located in the southwest of the city. University A and College D were also proximate and located in the southeast of the city. Comparing the size, education, research, as well as the reputation of these four institutes, University A and University B were much stronger than the other two institutions. If we have to compare University A and University B, both institutions had almost 100 years of history, but University A was superior to University B in size, education, research as well as social reputation. In 1996, the provincial government decided on the merger of these four higher education institutes.

This merged university is a key provincial universities' merger case, however, as discussed earlier, since all Chinese public higher education institutions follow the centralization steering model, they have similar characteristics in governance structure, leadership, management, and administration. Therefore, this case is not only suitable as a match to Yin's case choice principles, but it can also be representative of the Chinese universities' merger cases.

### 4.3 Pilot study

As outlined in the discussion in Chapter 3, Bolman and Deal's reframing theory has been widely used in leadership research in both the education and business fields. As for the utilization of the instrument, researchers such as Scott (1999), Thompson (2000), Turley (2004), and Deluca (2009) have mainly used quantitative methods to measure the leadership styles in higher education. Some researchers have used reframing theory as the conceptual framework to conduct studies with a qualitative approach, such as Thompson et al. (2008), Patterson et al. (2002), as well as Vuori (2011) in her doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this pilot study includes: 1) to test Bolman and Deal's instrument- "Leadership Orientation (others)" (see Section 4.4.1), which will help the author to decide whether to use this instrument or not; and if it is to be used, how to use it in this case university. 2) To find the target respondent group; 3) to test the interview questions and revise them.

#### 4.3.1 Description of the pilot study

The author conducted the pilot study in the case university. The author made appointments with eight middle level leaders, which included four director level leaders (two directors and two branch secretaries) and four vice directors. According to the research objectives, the investigation was arranged as follows:

1) Investigation contents, including: a) asking about the problems and challenges of the university in the merger process, based on Bolman and Deal's four-frames

(structure, human resource, political, and symbolic) perspectives. b) Evaluating the institutional leadership and the leadership styles' impact on the integration of the merger, based on the four-frames perspectives.

2) Investigation preparation: translating the instrument (questionnaire) into Chinese and designing the primary interview questions according to the investigation contents of a) and b).

- 3) These eight persons were divided into two groups, each of four persons:
- One director (middle level leader, such as the dean of school),
  - One branch secretary of the CCP of university,
  - Two vice directors.

The interviews were carried out individually. None of the respondents knew the identity of the other interviewees.

In Group 1, the author conducted the investigation in three steps: first, describing the investigation's purpose and reframing theory. Second, asking respondents to complete the questionnaire. Finally, asking respondents relevant interview questions.

In Group 2, the investigation included two steps: first, describing the investigation's purpose and reframing theory. Second, asking the respondents relevant interview questions. The difference between the two groups was that the author did not show the instrument to respondents. The content of the other two steps was the same. The purpose of making the difference between the two groups was to test whether the questionnaire helps the respondents to understand the concepts more easily or not.

#### 4.3.2 The findings from the pilot study

(1) Comparing the two groups' investigation, the author found that the process of using the questionnaire with members of Group 1 increased their effectiveness when compared with members of Group 2. By filling out the questionnaire, the respondents were able to gain a deeper understanding of the reframing theory before they were asked about the challenges of the merger, as well as to rate the institutional leaders. In particular, they gained a clearer understanding of the concepts of the four frames: structure, human resource, political and symbolic. It was easier for these respondents to follow up the interviewer's questions. In contrast, in Group 2, without the experience of filling in the questionnaire, the respondents' answers were not as easy to understand. When the author asked relevant questions during the interview, it was necessary to spend a lot of time explaining the meanings of each frame. Therefore, the author believes that the questionnaire's function in this study is not only to acquire leadership ratings, but also to make the relevant concepts clearer to respondents, so that they could provide a structural description of the challenges that this merged university faced, as well as comprehending the relevant leadership styles.

(2) The responses from this pilot study indicated that the responses of the vice director/dean were not of sufficient quality to be used in this research. During the

interviews with these vice directors/deans, the author found that they mostly preferred to talk about internal aspects relating to their faculties or departments, and little related to institutional level issues. In particular, they found it difficult to offer comments about the institutional leaders based on their personal opinions. Their comments were based mostly on other people's opinions or impressions. One vice director gave the following explanation as the reason:

*As the vice director, my major tasks are to implement the relevant policies of institution and our faculty. For instance, the arrangement of curriculum and teaching is my main task. I don't have the opportunity or a reason to contact top-level leaders (institutional leaders). I just see them at the middle leaders' meetings involving the whole university, and that might be once per semester. It is not easy for me to rate them on their leadership styles.*

This point was also verified by one director who is currently serving as a member of the CCP Standing Committee at NewU (he is an institutional leader). He mentioned that:

*According to the university's governance structure, normally only the deans and branch secretaries of the CCP have multiple opportunities to come into contact with the institutional leaders, since they always need to report on their work and negotiate relevant issues on behalf of their faculties or departments. In addition, in the Chinese context, this kind of communication between top-level leaders and middle level leaders is always a face-to-face discussion, or via the telephone. Emails are not popular. You can imagine if all the middle level leaders were to have contact with institutional leaders directly, and we have almost three hundred such leaders, how would the institutional leaders be able to handle these meetings and discussions?*

He also suggested to the author that the best way to get objective opinions on the evaluation of the institutional leaders would be to interview only the deans and directors, as well as the branch secretaries. They have first-hand impressions and could make comments about their communication with institutional level leaders. (*Zhengchuj*i leaders, see: governance structure of the university, in Chapter 5).

Regarding the university's challenges, some respondents suggested that the author needed to interview some of the main institutional leaders, because they were able to make sense of the whole university from a macro perspective during the merger.

(3) The scale of respondents: based on the analysis in the above section (2), the author decided that for this study, the respondents should match two conditions. Firstly, he or she must be a *Zhengchuj*i Leader, namely, they should be in the position of a dean or director, or a branch secretary of the CCP at NewU. But that group excludes the middle level leaders of those affiliated organizations, such as hospitals, primary and middle schools, as well as affiliated factories and companies, etc. Secondly, he or she must have gone through the entire process of the merger since 1996, holding the same level leadership position during the entire process. In addition, the author decided to try to contact two of the main institutional leaders to conduct an interview regarding the main challenges and problems they have

been facing during the merger as a supplement to the middle level leaders' interview.

Through checking the relevant documents and discussing with one relevant director who was in charge of the middle level leaders' arrangement and appointment work, the author finally found only 33 middle level leaders as the target interview group, because only these 33 middle level leaders would match the above two requirements.

(4) Interview questions should be open-ended in design. During the pilot interview, some interviewees thought some questions could not cover the reality of their thinking in a manner appropriate to Chinese culture, so they suggested the interviewer should give respondents some free space to explain issues in more depth, beyond the reframing theory. Therefore, the author revised and added some open-ended interview questions (See Appendixes II and III).

(5) *Qualitative vs. quantitative*. The challenge of this study was the research method choice. In the primary research design, the author considered mainly using the quantitative research method, as many other researchers that used Bolman and Deal's reframing theory to measure leadership orientation have done. However, according to the pilot study's findings, as mentioned above, the number of eligible respondents was not big. Choosing the research method became a challenge for the author in this study. Following discussions with colleagues, a combination of the two research methods was chosen.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) argued that the many nuanced traditions of qualitative research can be categorized into those focusing on (a) individual lived experience, (b) society and culture, and (c) language and communication. The most compelling argument emphasizes the unique strengths of the genre for research that is exploratory or descriptive, and that accepts the value of participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon under study (p. 55). In the same book, the authors also mention that "researchers administer questionnaires to some samples of a population to learn about the distribution of characteristics, attitudes, or beliefs. In deciding to survey a group of people, researchers make one critical assumption—that a characteristic or belief can be described or measured accurately through self-reporting. In using questionnaires, researchers rely totally on the honesty and accuracy of participants' responses. Although this limits the usefulness of questionnaires for delving into tacit beliefs and deeply held values, there are still many occasions when surveying can be useful" (p. 125).

Therefore, the author decided to treat the questionnaire as an instrument to explore the institutional leadership orientation, and at the same time, the author believed that the questionnaire would help to reach a deep understanding of the reality and situation of NewU's institutional leadership orientation. The research method follows a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

## 4.4 Methods of data collection

As stated in Section 4.1.2, Cherry (2012), based on Yin (1994) and Stake (1995), summarizes the six major sources from which to collect the data in case study research. They are direct observation, interviews, documents analysis, archival records, physical artefacts, as well as participant observation. Based on the findings of the pilot study, the author mainly used interviews, documents analysis, personal observation, as well as the instrument survey.

### 4.4.1 Introduction of the Instrument

#### *Leadership Orientation Scales*

In the 1980s, Bolman and Deal developed a survey instrument, *Leadership Orientations*, to measure individuals' orientations toward leadership through each of the four frames (structural, human resource, political and symbolic) that they originally developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bolman & Deal, 2012).

Permission to use the “Leadership Orientations” questionnaire for this study was sought and obtained from the authors in 2009. The Leadership Orientations come in parallel versions: **Self** (for people to rate themselves) and **Others** (for ratings from colleagues). Research has found that the validity of self-ratings of leadership is generally low, so there is a considerable advantage in obtaining colleague ratings (Bolman & Deal, 2012). In this study, the author decided to ask the middle leaders to provide a rating of the institutional leader, which meant using the “*Leadership Orientation (Others)*” instrument, in order to enhance validity.

The *leadership orientations* questionnaire used comprises three sections.

*Section I:* This section contains rating scales, and the items are in a consistent frame sequence: structural (items 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29), human resource (items 2, 6, etc.), political (items 3, 7, ...), symbolic (items 4, 8...).

There are also sub-scales within each frame, again in a consistent sequence: analytic (items 1, 9, 17, 25), supportive (2, 10, 18, 26), powerful (items 3, 11, 19, 27), inspirational (4, 12, 20, 28), organized (5, 13, 21, 29), participative (6, 14, 22, 30), adroit (7, 15, 23, 31), charismatic (8, 16, 24, 32). Bolman and Deal give two options to researchers: one is to use 8-item frame measures. The other one is to use 4-item sub-scales for management development rather than research applications.

*Section II.* The second section contains six forced-choice items. The options under each item are arranged in the same sequence: structural, human resource, political, symbolic.

*Section III.* This section has two one-item measures: effectiveness as a manager, and effectiveness as a leader. (Bolman & Deal, 2012 )

#### *The new development of the instrument in the merger context*

In this study, the research purpose is related to the merged university's leadership, therefore, the merger context should be considered when designing the study.

Based on the Chinese university governance analysis in Chapter 2, the Chinese university applies collective leadership. The CCP Standing Committee of the university is the top leadership group. The author will present the components of the leadership group of the case university in this study in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.3). The performance of the leadership group is a very important factor in the merged university. Therefore, the author added the institutional leadership group's performance into the instrument.

Based on Bolman and Deal's questionnaire, the author developed a new questionnaire. In the new questionnaire, *Section III* was changed to give an overall rating of the performance of the institutional leadership group from four perspectives: Structural, Human Resource, Political and Symbolic. The scale for each item is: "1" (Bad performance), "2" (Acceptable performance), "3" (Good performance), "4" (Very good performance).

The new questionnaire in this study was also expanded in *Section IV*, which concerns campus perceptions. The description of the campus is presented in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.1.4).

The whole new instrument is presented as an appendix (See Appendix I).

#### *Reliability of Leadership Orientations Scales*

Regarding the reliability of this instrument, Bolman and Deal have done the statistics for Leadership Orientations based on approximately 1,300 colleague ratings for a multi-sector sample of managers in business and education (Bolman & Deal, 2012) (see Appendix IV).

As suggested in the analysis of the pilot study in the above section, in this study, the instrument was sent to the target respondent groups and they were asked to fill it in before their interview. Using this questionnaire, the respondents were asked to give four ratings: two for rating the two main leaders, one for rating the leader group, the last one for rating the campus perception.

Since the investigation of leaders is a sensitive issue, the author first needed to make clear that this investigation was purely an academic research activity, without any other purpose. Second, all responses were to remain anonymous. These statements were also written on top of the questionnaires. The author sent the leadership orientations questionnaire to 33 persons by email or post. 30 responded. The other three did not want to participate in the investigation.

## 4.4.2 Interview and interview questions design

### *Interviewer vs. Interviewees*

With respect to qualitative interviews, Rubin and Rubin (1995) provide three guiding themes. "First, successful qualitative interviewing requires an understanding of culture. Culture affects what is said and how the interview is heard and understood. Second, interviewers are not neutral actors, but participants in an interviewing relationship. Their emotions and cultural understanding have an

impact on the interview. Third, the purpose of qualitative interviewing is to hear and understand what the interviewees think and to give them public voice” (p. 19). “Qualitative interviewers try to avoid dominating the interview relationship, so the voice and thoughts of the conversational partner can come through ... It is also necessary to ensure the cultural definitions are mutually recognised and to ensure that both interviewer and interviewee can understand one another” (p. 19). As mentioned in a previous section (Section 4.1.3), because of the author’s personal experience, it was possible to fill the culture gap and communicate easily with interviewees and understand what did he or she say. The language of the interview was Chinese.

Finding “the key persons” and conducting high quality interviews is the main task for the researcher in good qualitative research. “Whom you choose to interview should match how you have defined the subject of your research” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 65). “Whom you talk to is crucial in qualitative design, so choose thoughtfully. All the people that you interview should satisfy three requirements. They should be knowledgeable about the cultural area or the situation or experience being studied; they should be willing to talk; and when people in the area have different perspectives, the interviewees should represent the range of the points of view” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 66). In this study, the author considered these requirements. According to the objectives of this study, the interviewing would mainly focus on the middle level leaders of the case university. Meanwhile, as analysed in the pilot study section, the interviewees needed to match two objective requirements: they must be *Zhengchuji* leaders (deans/directors/branch secretaries); and the interviewees must have gone through the entire merger process whilst holding a leadership position at the same level. Based on these requirements, the author chose 33 leaders as the target interviewees. In addition, as earlier discussed, the two main institutional level leaders were also to be interviewed, but with a specific focus on some of the questions relating to the research question (1). During the interview process, the author also posed some questions related to the reframing theory’s four frames.

### *Interview questions*

The interview questions for the middle level leaders comprise four parts (see Appendix II). Part (1) is based on Bolman and Deal’s reforming organization theory concerning the analysis of organizations; Part (2) is intended to elicit interviewees’ ideas about leadership styles, as well as the impact on the integration of the merger. Part (3) consists of questions for middle level leaders to examine the performance of the institutional leadership group. The function of part (4) is to explore the campus perception for the different groups of the merged university.

Part (1) is based on Tables 3.2 and 3.5, and its main purpose is to ask the interviewees to analyse the organizational challenges facing the merger from the four-frames perspective. Therefore, the first section includes four schemes: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. In order to give interviewees more freedom, the author added an open-ended question at the end of the section.

For instance, under the structural scheme frame, the author conducted the interview from some perspectives of the merger, such as rules, regulations, goals, and so on.

Part (2) is about leadership styles and their impact on the integration of the merger. The questions' design is based on Table 3.4 and 3.6. Questions of Part (3) are related to the institutional leadership group. When the interviewees make comments, the author also poses some further questions relating to the comparative perspective between the individuals and the group. The design of Part (4)'s questions is concerning the campus perception, which is based on the typical groups in the new merged university. The purpose is to ask middle level leaders how they think about this issue in different groups.

The two main leaders were also interviewed. The interview questions are enclosed in Appendix III.

Regarding the middle level leaders, three persons of the target group were either unable to accept the offer to be interviewed or to fill out the questionnaire. Therefore, thirty persons was the target group to be interviewed and to reply to the questionnaire.

Because of the author's limited time for visiting the case university, only 17 respondents were interviewed face-to-face. Another 11 interviews were done via telephone, calling from Finland or China. Because making comments about their leaders (bosses) was a very sensitive issue, the author guaranteed that all the interviews would be anonymous. Nonetheless, not all the interviewees permitted their interviews to be recorded. Therefore, the author had to take notes during the interview, and make detailed collections based on the notes after the interview. As for the final two persons, they only returned the questionnaires. Despite making many appointment times, our mutually free time did not match. The appointments were cancelled for reasons of intervening urgent matters, as well as limited time availability because of the time difference between Finland and China. The final number of interviews, therefore, was 28.

The author planned for the interviews to last for 40 to 60 minutes. In fact, all interviews took longer than had been planned. The shortest one was one hour and twenty minutes. The longest of the face-to-face interviews was more than three hours long, and the longest telephone interview was more than two hours long. The two main leaders' interviews were around two hours each.

#### 4.4.3 Document analysis

“Documentary analysis has a long tradition in research. It often has an aura of respectability, perhaps due to the high regard in administrative circles and educational systems in which written text is held. In education, as elsewhere, text is evidence in a way in which speech is not. Text is held to be evidence of past and current realities or future plans, ... in the documentation made available for school inspections and other quality assurance procedures, or in mission statements and policy or strategy documents” (Cortazzi, 2002, p. 196). “More usually,

documentary analysis is seen in qualitative terms, where what matters is how meanings are generated through a certain textual form, with particular textual functions, in certain contexts and with particular effects. Documents can be treated as texts where the focus is on what is said, how it is said, and what that means (p. 197).” “The data for documentary analysis includes policy documents, regulations, official statistics, curriculum documents, schemes of work and course handbooks ... These are all printed or written data, which already exist independently of the researcher, and most can be used for research as they are found. Many documents can be unobtrusively obtained at low cost” (Cortazzi, 2002, p. 201). In this study, documents play a very important role in providing the background and process of the merger in the case university. Through the analysis of the documents, the author tried to understand the impacts of the merger on the case university, and at the same time to explore some challenges of the merger from the leadership perspective. The additional purpose of document analysis was to make the study as objective as possible.

The author collected the majority of the relevant documents on merger schemes which covered the whole merger process at NewU from 1996 to 2000. These documents related to the new leaders’ appointments by the local government; the middle level leaders’ appointments within the new university; the forms of management in the new university; the restructuring of the organization; the strategic plan of the new university, and so on. The author collected 13 major documents. A detailed analysis of these documents has been presented in Chapter 5, which will help readers understand the profile of the merger as well as the process.

#### **4.4.4 Personal experience and observation tools**

The role of personal experience in qualitative research has been discussed in section 4.1.3, in particular in relation to closing the cultural gaps in this study. This material has not been repeated here; this section mainly focuses on observation as a tool.

“Observation as a tool for the researcher can be powerful, flexible and ‘real’. It is not dependent, like questionnaires or interview methods, on respondents’ personal views but seeks explicit evidence through the eyes of the observer either directly or through a camera lens.” ... “Because observed incidents are less predictable there is certain freshness to this form of data collection...” (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 305). Moyles (2002) emphasises that observation is a useful and interesting tool for all researchers including those working in schools and colleges. In particular, if the research purpose is to “see” what happens and what is enacted, he believes this is the best method (p. 188). “Evidence-informed practice is now prominent in research thinking ... Observation is a key means of obtaining both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ evidence about what currently exists in those areas” (Moyles, 2002, pp. 188-189).

Observation is probably most effective when combined with other forms of

data gathering, for example, interviewing or questionnaire surveys, because of the issues of the interpretation of what is observed and of potential observer bias (Moyles, 2002, p. 187). In this study, personal experience and observation played an assistant role to help the author in seeking the most useful documents and relevant information, finding the right respondents, as well as adjustments of the responses of the interviewees during the process of interviewing. In particular, as has been emphasised, for reasons of diplomacy, in the Chinese culture people do not always wish to give a direct answer. This is especially true for conversations with Chinese people about their leaders. Therefore, the author was required to “read” the situation immediately - making sense of the words and observing their body language or interpreting their tone; the aim was to understand what the respondent means behind the “answer”. At the same time, the author needed to ask relevant questions to excavate appropriate evidence. Therefore, personal experience and observation were very useful in this study, in many ways. At the same time, during the data collection the author always kept in mind that the analysis should be made as objective as possible in order to reduce the impact of personal understanding on the results.

## 4.5 Data analysis

“Description, analysis, and interpretation, three somewhat distinct activities, are often bundled into the generic term analysis” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 154; Wolcott, 1994, p. 11). “In the analysis of qualitative research (which is what interests us here) that means making a series of deliberate, critical choices about the meanings and values of the data you have gathered, and making sure that your decisions can be justified in terms of the research, the context in which it was carried out, and the people who were involved in it. Nothing less will do” (Watling, 2002, p. 264). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) describe this collection of processes as bricolage – “a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation” (Watling, 2002, pp. 264-265).

As described in the above section concerning the data collection methods, in this study, the author used interviews, documentary data, personal experience and observation, as well as a leadership styles measurement instrument. As discussed in the previous section, the function of the instrument in this study is to help the respondents to understand the concepts of the reframing theory in four frames, so that the respondents can more deeply and appropriately respond to the interview questions. At the same time, the results obtained from this instrument can also be tested on each other. The final instrument-sourced data available to the author came from 30 respondents (3 did not return the questionnaire), and the analysis tool was SPSS software.

According to Rubin and Rubin’s explanation (2005), “the interview data analysis is the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation for a published report. Analysis entails classifying,

comparing, weighing, and combining material from the interviews to extract the meanings and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative. Researchers construct from this analysis reports that are informed, vivid, and nuanced; these reports can then reflect what the interviewees said and that answer the research question. Though the analysis was based on the descriptions presented by the interviewees, the interpretations in the final reports are those of the researcher.” (p. 201) ... “Analysis in the responsive interviewing model proceeds in two phases. In the first phase, transcripts are prepared and to use these to find, refine, and elaborate concepts, themes, and events. Then it is necessary to code the interviews to be able to retrieve what the interviewees have said about the identified concepts, themes, and events. In the second phase, concepts and themes can be compared across the interviews or combined into separate events to formulate a description of the setting” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 201). In this study, the author followed this two-phase process, by first preparing the data, and making transcripts of the interviews. Second, according to the theory framework to set up the schemes, the author used the computer software NVivo 9.0 (Qualitative analysis software) to code this data.

“Coding schemes must be linked to the theory or the problem under study, which dictates the categories to be included in the scheme” (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976, p. 161). All data include two categories in this study: one is to analyse an organization; the other is to analyse leadership orientation. In each category, the author analyses the data according to the theory’s four frames: structure, human resource, political, and symbolic.

## 4.6 Reliability, validity and triangulation

Research design suggests standards for good and convincing research. “In quantitative research, the standards most frequently used are those of validity and reliability. If research is valid, it closely reflects the world being described. If work is reliable, two researchers studying the same area will come up with compatible observations. Most indicators of validity and reliability do not fit qualitative research. Trying to apply these indicators to qualitative work distracts more than it clarifies” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 85). Easter-Smith et al. (1994) assess the argument that they are inappropriate constructs for interpretive, or qualitative, approaches:

“The language of validity and reliability was originally developed for use in quantitative social science. ... There has been some reluctance to apply these ideas to phenomenological ... research because they might imply acceptance of one absolute (positivist) reality” (Bush, 2002, p. 59; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1994, p. 89). However, Hammersley (1987, p. 73) responds to this proposition by pointing to the increasing use of these notions by researchers from both positive and interpretive traditions: “[use of] the concepts of validity and reliability ... is more frequent in ‘quantitative’ than ‘qualitative’ research, but the basic issues apply

to both”. Broch-Utne (1996) takes a similar view and asserts that they are equally important in both traditions:

*The questions of validity and reliability within research are just as important within qualitative as within quantitative methods though they may have to be treated somewhat differently. The commonly held assumption that qualitative methods pay attention to validity and not to reliability is false.*  
(Brock-Utne, 1996, p. 612)

*Reliability:* Bush (2002) cited Hammersley’s (1987, p. 73) claims that “there is no widely accepted definition of reliability or validity. One finds not a clear set of definitions but a confusing diversity of ideas”. “Despite this claim, there is wide support for the view that reliability relates to the probability that repeating a research procedure or method would produce identical or similar results. It provides a degree of confidence that replicating the process would ensure consistency” (Bush, 2002, p. 60). Yin (1994) notes that “with reliability, the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures – can be repeated, with the same results” (p. 144).

In this study, the questionnaire’s reliability has been tested by Bolman and Deal’s research as mentioned in previous sections (see also Bolman, 2012). In the interview part, Bush (2002, p. 62) argues that in single-handed research such as postgraduate dissertations and theses, the interviewer and researcher are the same person, but the key point is that reliability depends on a highly structured instrument. He believes that structured interviews are similar to questionnaires in their design and both may be regarded as methods within the positivist tradition. They both provide potential for “reliability”. Nisbet and Watt (1984, p. 82) regard the interview as “the basic research instrument” in case study research. They note that in structured interviews, the questions are predetermined, and the approach to reliability is similar to that of a questionnaire survey. When the interviews are undertaken as part of case study research, they may be semi-structured or unstructured, “allowing each person to respond in his unique way” (p. 82). “It is more difficult to ensure reliability using unstructured or semi-structured interviews because of the deliberate strategy of treating each participant as a potentially unique respondent” (Bush, 2002, p. 63). As for the interviews in this study, the author mainly used the structured interview, as noted earlier. At the same time, the results from the instrument have also been used in the analysis of the leadership orientation, which can be treated as the “retest” process in this research.

The documentary analysis method will be used in this study. “The concept of reliability can be applied to documentary analysis, particularly when the approach is based on content analysis; a method which often involves counting words or terms found in the text” (Bush, 2002, p. 64; L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 1994, p. 55). Robson regards reliability as one of the advantages of content analysis using documents. “The data are in permanent form and hence can be subject to re-analysis, allowing reliability checks and replication studies” (Bush, 2002, p. 64; Robson, 1994, p. 243). In this study, the author used the documentary analysis to outline the process of the merger (see Chapter 5), explore the organizational

structure, the human resources arrangements, the governance structure, and so on.

*Validity*: Some definitions of validity have been put forward by scholars. For example, Bell (1987) notes “the validity can tell us whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe. If an item is unreliable, then it must also lack validity, but a reliable item is not necessarily also valid. It could produce the same or similar responses on all occasions, but not be measuring what it is supposed to measure” (p. 51). The validity is the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure (Bush, 2002, p. 65; Sapsford & Evans, 1994, p. 259). “The concept of validity is used to judge whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon which it is intended to describe. The research design, the methodology and the conclusions of the research all need to have regard to the validity of the process. ... Validity, like reliability, is a notion primarily associated with positivist research and has been questioned by those who favour qualitative, or interpretive, approaches” (Bush, 2002, p. 65) .

Validity includes *internal* and *external* validity. “Internal validity relates to the extent that research findings accurately represent the phenomenon under investigation, as Yin (1994, p. 143) suggests that establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions” (Bush, 2002 p. 66). ... “External validity relates to the extent that findings may be generalized to the wider population which the sample represents, or to other similar settings” (Bush, 2002 p. 66). According to the definition given by Brock-Utne (1996), external validity refers to the extent to which findings from research can be usefully generalized. In positivist research traditions, and especially in social survey analysis, this problem has been seen largely in terms of sampling strategies in order to ensure that the people studied are representative of the wider population to which generalizations are desired (p. 617). Bush (2002) cited the work of Lincoln and Denzin (1998) and discussed positivist and interpretive research to point out that validity is not an absolute concept: “Validity represents the always just out of reach, but answerable, claim a text makes for its own authority ... the research could always have been better grounded, the subjects more representative, the researcher more knowledgeable, the research instruments better formulated, and so on, validity is the research’s mask of authority, which allows a particular regime of truth ... to work its way on the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 415). In this study, the author always kept these notions in his mind. When collecting the data, he did so base on a theoretical framework which accounted for cross-cultural aspects and followed up the research purpose. Although the criterion of validity was not applicable to this type of qualitative research, the author did his best to follow the credibility standards of qualitative research provided by Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 85) “*transparency, consistency-coherence, and communicability*” during the interviews. From the respondents’ scale perspective, the study tried to find and use the whole population, however, a few respondents did not participate due to personal reasons. Of course, time limitations, and a part of the interviews having been conducted via telephone, could lead to limitations on the validity of this study.

*Triangulation*: triangulation means comparing many sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena. It is essentially a means of cross-checking data to establish its validity (Bush, 2002, p. 68). Cohen and Manion (1994) explain this concept:

*Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. ... The use of multiple methods, or the multi-method approach, as it is sometimes called, contrasts with the ubiquitous but generally more vulnerable single – method approach that characterizes so much of research in the social sciences ... triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to make out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 1994, p. 233)*

As stated earlier in this chapter, the author used the mixed research method in this case study, namely, he used a questionnaire, other qualitative methods, such as interview and observation, as well as documentary analysis, together. The purpose was to improve validity by using triangulation as a fundamental device to check the data in this study.

## 5 MAKING SENSE OF THE CASE UNIVERSITY MERGER

In Chapter 3, based on the literature review, the author discussed how to make sense of organisations, and followed Bolman and Deal's reframing theory to understand higher education institutions and their leadership. Based on their reframing theory, Bolman and Gollas provide the notions that can be utilised to examine higher education institutions. For example, Tables 3.2 and 3.5 provide the assumptions, potential issues and areas to investigate. In this chapter, based on the documents review, the author presents the merger process and outcomes, utilises the reframing theory to examine the merger of the case university, and tries to find the challenges that arose during the university merger.

### 5.1 The process and outcomes of the merger

Most research divides the merger process into three phases: 1) the pre-merger phase; 2) the transition (implementation) phase; 3) the integration (or post-merger) phase (Eastman & Lang, 2001; Harman & Meek, 2002; Cai, 2007; Wan, 2008, (D. Li, 2004; D. Li, 2010). Under the requirement of the national government, the local provincial government decided to merge University A, University B, College C, and College D to become the new University (NewU) in 1996. In April 1996, the provincial government appointed a new leadership group of the NewU, which meant the merger of these four institutions underwent the implementation phase (see Document No.1 in Table 6.1). The pre-merger phase was very short. In the pre-merger phase, the participants, the name of the merged university, the leadership group, the financial support, and the form of merger of the merged institution were determined. The provincial government conducted most of the work.

In the transition (implementation) phase, the new leaders of the NewU decided on two steps to achieve the merger. The first step achieved the merger of the administrative units, which took until 1997. The second step was the merger of the academic units (faculties and research units), which took three years. Through this investigation, we can see that the merger process of implementation took around five years.

### 5.1.1 The process of the merger application in China

Based on the investigation of this case university as well as the author's previous study on Chinese university mergers, the merger process of Chinese higher education institutions included such things as: seeking the merger, negotiating the specific issues, the actual merger implementation, and the integration, which were divided into the three phases as noted in the section above: the pre-merger phase, the transition (implementation) phase, and the integration (or post-merger) phase.

In *the pre-merger phase*, the procedure mainly includes: designing, application, confirmation, arrangement, etc.

The term “designing” refers to deciding on the participants of the merger, namely which institutions will be merged together. For the merger of local institutions, the local government conducts the “designing”. In a way, with respect to this kind of merger, the local government negotiates with the institutions. If the higher education institutions involved are affiliated with central ministries or the Ministry of Education, then the “designing” is conducted by the central government. For example, in the merger discussed here, the original four institutions of the case university are affiliated with the local province. Therefore, the provincial government designed and decided which institutions would be merged.

The “application” procedure: according to the design of the merger, the local governments or central ministries need to apply for permission for the merger from the Chinese Ministry of Education.

The procedure of the “confirmation”: there is a special department - “Higher Education Institution Establishing Committee of Chinese State Council” in the Ministry of Education, which is in charge of evaluating and confirming the merger plan. If the merger plan passes the evaluation, the Ministry of Education will send the confirmation to the local government or other relevant central ministries (Li, 2004, p. 93).

The arrangement (operation) procedure mainly includes: 1) appointing new leaders of the merged institution (President, the General Secretary of CCP, Vice-presidents, Vice-Secretary, etc. ---leadership group). The local government appoints the leaders of the local institutions; the central government appoints the leaders of the institutions that are affiliated to central ministries. 2) Setting the budget for the merged institutions; this is conducted by the relevant governmental departments.

In *the pre-merger phase*, the participants, the new name, the new leadership group, the sources of financial support, and the merger form of the merged institution are determined. The government conducts most of the work.

In *the transition (implementation) phase*, the procedure includes: negotiating, planning of the merger, financial merging, merging sections of administration, merging academic units and staff, etc. In this period, actions are mainly decided on and implemented by the institutions involved. The government does not intervene, and merely supervises in a way. The details of the merger, concerning finances, facilities, academic units, and human resources, are implemented during this period.

After the transition phase, the new institution begins to enter the integration, or

so-called *the -merger phase*. During this period, the coordination of human resources, disciplines, management, and academic culture, is conducted.

### 5.1.2 The pre-merger and implementation phases of the NewU

In order to understand the detailed process of the case university's merger, reviewing the documents is the most objective and easy way to see the whole picture. Table 5.1 shows the main documents that were related to the merger issues in this case university.

*The pre-merger phase:* as earlier discussed, with the order from the national government, the local provincial government decided to merge four similar higher education institutions into one new university. The study shows that the initial idea started at the beginning of 1996. Through several months' preparation, the local government applied for the merger from the Chinese Ministry of Education. In April 1996, the provincial government received permission from the Chinese Ministry of Education, and then announced the establishment of the NewU in May 1996 (see Document No.1). In this case, the pre-merger phase was very short.

*The implementation phase:* after several months of preparation, the merger moved into the implementation phase. Table 5.1 shows the series of policy documents of the new university.

Table: 5.1 Overview of the relevant documents on the merger issues of the NewU

Document Number	Date	Main content
No. 1 (1996) <sup>5</sup>	May 24 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	1)Forwarding two notifications issued by The Provincial Committee of the CCP, concerning the permit for the merger between University A, University B, College C, College D, to establish the NewU. 2)The merger has been approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education. 3)Establishing new university committee of the CCP, appointing a new standing committee member, General Secretary, Rector, as well as vice secretaries and rectors.
No. 2 (1996)	June 5 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	Based on the decision of the Committee of the CCP of the provincial government, the merger temporary executive office announced the "division of work" of all the institutional leaders (general secretary, vice secretaries, rector, vice-rectors).
No. 3 (1996)	June 18 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	According to the provincial government's decision, the former University A, University B, College C, College D merged to form the NewU on June 6 <sup>th</sup> , 1996. From that day, the new seal <sup>6</sup> of the "NewU Committee of CCP" was officially enabled. The four seals of the antecedent institutions have been disabled simultaneously.

<sup>5</sup> No.1 (1996): Refers to the NewU Committee of CCP documents' order - Number, Year.

<sup>6</sup> Seal: It refers to the official seal. In China, all organizations have an official seal, which is proved by the relevant official authority. When the official documents are issued, they not only need the signature of the representative, but also the seal.

Nos. 4-6 (1996)	June 18 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	No.4: the notification on the enablement of two offices' seals and four campus offices' seals. According to the decision of the joint meeting of the top leaders of the CCP and the administration of the NewU, in order to maintain stability across all campuses at the beginning of the merger, the new university implemented a "one university-four campuses" administration mechanism. All campuses established administration offices, but they do not have the authority of a legal entity. No. 5: according to the decision of the joint meeting of the top leaders of the CCP and administration of the university, the new seal of the "NewU Committee of CCP Office" was enabled. No.6: According to the decision of the joint meeting of the top leaders of the CCP and the administration of the university, the new seal of the "NewU Rector's Office" was enabled.
Nos. 7,8,10,11 (1996)	June 27 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	No. 7: Announcement of the administration team members of the "East campus Administration Committee". No. 8: Announcement of the administration team members of the "West Campus Administration Committee". No. 10: Announcement of the administration team members of the "Education College Campus Administration Committee". No. 11: Announcement of the administration team members of the "Vocational and Technology Normal College Campus Administration Committee".
No. 13 (1996)	July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	Issued "the key points of the working plan for the first semester of 1996-1997"
No. 14 (1996)	Aug. 28 <sup>th</sup> , 1996	Notification of the "Evaluation and Selection of Middle Level Leaders of All Administration Departments", the document issued the principles, requirements, time, target group, etc.
No. 20, (1996)	Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1996	Decision on the new administration organisations within the NewU
No. 22 (1996)	Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1996	Notification of the appointment and removal of leaders of administration organisations.
No. 25 (1997)	May 4 <sup>th</sup> , 1997	Notification of the establishment of the office of academic departments and units to merge.
No. 21 (1997)	June 6 <sup>th</sup> , 1997	Request for instructions on restructuring of the departments and units, as well as the establishment of new faculties. (This file was the report to the Provincial Higher Education Institutions Working Committee and Provincial Education Committee)
No. 22 (1998)	Nov. 12 <sup>th</sup> , 1998	Minutes of the meeting of the expansion of the Standing Committee of the CCP of the NewU. 1) The decision on the departments and units merger, the establishment of faculties. 2) The adjustment of the middle level of the CCP and academic leaders
Document (2000)	Mar. 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2000	Issued the tenth "Five Years" development plan and vision for 2010.

Reviewing the above documents, in the implementation phase the NewU took three main steps: 1) the appointment of the institutional leadership group, and the establishment of the new legal entity; 2) the merger between the administration departments (divisions) and relevant human resources; 3) the merger between the

academic departments and units, establishing the new faculties or schools.

The *first* step: establishing the top leadership group on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1996. After the pre-merger phase, the Provincial government asked for permission from the “Higher Education Institution Establishing Committee of Chinese State Council” of the Chinese Ministry of Education, and then the CCP committee of the provincial government appointed the institutional leadership group of the NewU, which included the General Secretary, Vice Secretaries, Rector, Vice-rectors, etc. The institutional leaders comprised 13 members in total. Among these leaders, nine belonged to the standing members of the CCP Committee of the NewU (see, Document No.1). In this study, the institutional leadership group refers to the CCP Committee. All these decisions were made by the provincial government. After that, a Temporary Comprehensive Executive Office (after here, TCEO) was established. TCEO was responsible for the arrangement of merger matters. On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1996, the CCP committee of the NewU announced the division of work between the 13 institutional leaders. They announced that the NewU would be officially established on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1996, and that the official seal of the “CCP Committee of the NewU” would be enabled. Therefore, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1996 was the official day that the NewU was established, which means the four antecedent institutions were substituted by the new legal entity.

In order to maintain the stability of the normal teaching and learning programmes, based on previous campuses, the NewU established four campus administration committees: the East campus Administration Committee, the West Administration Committee, the College C Campus Administration Committee, and the College D Campus Administration Committee. The directors of these four committees were from the new institutional leaders group; they were vice rectors or vice secretaries of the NewU. These four committees were responsible for matters related to teachers and students. Each campus committee has its own seal, which is used only for report documents sent to the new university central office. These seals can also be used on relevant certifications authorized by the NewU; the purpose is to provide a convenient service for teachers and students when they need some official documents. But these four committees and their seals do not have legal authority. Detailed information can be found from documents Nos. 4-11.

The *second* step was to merge the middle level administration departments (divisions). Since August 1996, the NewU had started to evaluate and select the new middle level leaders and establish a unified set of administration departments (divisions). There were 29 CCP and administration departments (divisions). The total number of these middle level leaders was 128, which included the branch secretaries, vice secretaries, directors and vice directors. With respect to the appointment of some middle level leaders of relevant departments or divisions, before the announcement the university needed to report to relevant provincial governmental departments and ask for permission, which meant some middle level leaders’ appointments needed to be approved by the government. The decision-making was done by the University’s CCP committee.

The *third* step was the merger between the research, teaching and learning

departments or units. The working office of “departments, disciplines, and units” merger was established on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1997. The main task was to plan the mergers of all academic departments or units. After the merger, the NewU covered eight academic fields, 43 departments and 102 academic disciplines. Among these, 59 disciplines duplicated others. Therefore, the departments needed to adjust. As stated in document No.21 (1997), the restructuring plan needed to be reported to the relevant government departments in order to affect the merger. After obtaining a permit from the government, the NewU started to restructure research, teaching and learning organisations, and it appointed new deans, vice deans, branch secretaries and vice secretaries of the CCP in November 1998. At the end of 1998, four new faculties and nine new departments were established. Since 1999, the NewU had revised the middle level leaders several times. The teaching-learning departments that did not merge during the first round were restructured from 1999 to 2002.

In addition, each of the antecedent universities and colleges owned some affiliated organisations before the merger, such as middle schools, primary schools, nursery schools, hospitals, factories, companies, etc. These subsidiary units were merged during the implementation phase.

### 5.1.3 Integration phase

Concerning the integration phase of the merger, some researchers tend to conceptualize integration as taking place on several levels or dimensions (Birkinshaw, Bresman, & Hakanson, 2000; Shrivastava, 1986; Waldman, 2004). For example, Shrivastava (1986) analyses integration as having three dimensions, namely, procedural, physical, and socio-cultural integration. Analyses by Birkinshaw, Bresman and Hakanson (2000) take the form of task integration and human integration. Task integration is defined as the identification and realisation of operational synergies, measured in terms of transferred capabilities and resource sharing. Human integration is concerned primarily with generating satisfaction, and ultimately a shared identity among the employees from the combining organizations (D. Li, 2010). In the study, merger has been defined according to the official Chinese description, which sees “merger” as a set of “five unifications”. A section leader from China’s Ministry of Education, Mr. Ji Baocheng, has stated that the “Five unifications” include one *Banzhi* (single leadership group), one *Jiguo* (single legal personality organisation), one *Zhidu* (administrative system), one *Caimu* (financial administration department) and one *Fazhang Guibua* (unified development plan) (K. Y. Cai, 2002; D. Li, 2010). The government therefore required that all the merging institutions implement this single form of consolidation, namely: merger (D. Li, 2010). Therefore, in this study, the post-merger integration of higher education institutions will be defined in such a way that the new university has a single set of organizational structures and systems. This means that when the university completes the physical merger, then we consider the merger procedure as the start of the procession into the integration phase. Social-culture integration

is a process - such as the identity change of the people involved when conforming to a new organization - whereby the value of the merger is accepted and shared in order to accomplish the merger strategy and other relevant organizational goals. From the investigation, most of the interviewees believed it is a long-term procedure. The new university faces many challenges in these perspectives. Therefore, in this study, the integration phase is defined as the period that completes the physical merger. According to this definition, based on the investigation, the integration phase of the case university started in 2002.

#### 5.1.4 Outcomes

From the size and scale aspects, after the merger, the NewU and its new campus consisted of more than 2 million square meters. There were 2863 staff, 326 professors, and 546 associate professors. One of these professors was a member of the Chinese Academy of Science, and he was the highest scientist in the relevant academic field in China. Amongst these professors, there were 102 provincial level outstanding experts. There were 151 supervisors for doctoral students, 846 master's supervisors. There were 30,985 students at the Bachelor and undergraduate level, 3519 graduate school students, as well as 22,265 adult students. Of course, the number of students had been rapidly increasing towards the end of the 1990s. The merger was only part of the reason; the main factor was the national policy of increasing the recruitment of university students in 1998. Following this, the recruitment of new students increased rapidly at NewU.

The NewU currently comprises 21 faculties (the terms "school" and "faculty" have been used interchangeably in this study) and one independent college. They have 87 undergraduate majors; 49 doctoral study programmes and 131 master's study programmes. The NewU covers nine disciplines: philosophy, law, economics, literature, history, education, management, science and engineering. They own one national key discipline, six post-doctoral research stations, four distinguishing feature disciplines in the provincial government, as well as 15 provincial key laboratories. The NewU owns the Provincial Institute of Vocational Education, the Educational Sciences Research Institute, the Discipline Research Institute, the Ancient Books Research Institute, and various other research institutes. In addition, the university has a national primary and secondary teachers' training base, a key national training base for vocational education teachers, a provincial teachers' continuing education centre, a provincial higher education institutions' teachers' training centre, and the modern education technology centre.

The process and outcomes have been presented in this section. The following sections use Bolman and Deal's reframing theory to examine the NewU from the perspectives of structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames.

## 5.2 Using the structural frame to understand the NewU

According to Bolman and Deal's reframing theory, an organization can be treated as a *factory* or *machine*. "Drawing from sociology, economics, and management science, the structural frame depicts a rational world and emphasizes organizational architecture, including goals, structure, technology, specialized roles, coordination, and formal relationships". "Structures – commonly depicted by organization charts – are designed to fit an organization's environment and technology. Organizations allocate responsibilities "division of labour". They then create rules, policies, procedures, systems, and hierarchies to coordinate diverse activities into a unified effort. Problems arise when structure does not line up well with current circumstances. At that point, some form of reorganization or redesign is needed to remedy the mismatch" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 15-16). In order to diagnose the organizations, we need to answer the question: *what is going on structurally?* (See: Chapter 3). Bolman and Deal (2008) highlight the basic assumptions (see: Tables 3.2 and 3.5) of the structural view with emphasis on two key dimensions: dividing work and coordinating it thereafter. They emphasize how structural design depends on an organization's circumstances, including its goals, technology, and environment. To make sense of the case university, it should first be examined from the structural frame perspective.

### 5.2.1 Goals of the merger

When the author asked questions concerning the goals or objectives of the new university during the interviews, few of the interviewees gave clear answers. However, some responses were related to the motivation for the merger. The motivation of the government was presented in Chapter 2 and the previous section. For example, the old system had four characteristics: nationalization, departmentalization, specialization, as well as regional departmentalization and segmentation. However, the original four universities and colleges were led by the provincial education department, which meant they were controlled by the same governmental section before and after the merger. The ownership did not change. During one interview, the institutional leader L1 mentioned:

*When the provincial government put forward the initial idea concerning the plan to merge our four institutions, not all of these four institutions wanted to accept this plan. Honestly, we did not have enough motivation to merge from the university's perspective. The two larger universities, University A and University B had similar disciplines. The disciplines number, size and level of College C disciplines were smaller and lower than in these two bigger universities, but its teaching and learning contents were almost similar to the others. Only College D had some different vocational disciplines, such as mechanics, tourism management, etc. Their disciplines were different from the other three institutions. However, they also had a teacher training orientation. In a way, this merger plan could not increase the new disciplines or inter-disciplines. From this perspective, it was not easy for these four institutions to accept it at the beginning. Of course, there were also other reasons for opposing the merger.*

Regarding the government's merger plan, another institutional leader (L2) noted:

*This merger plan was made by the provincial government, and the plan was necessary to follow up the national higher education system restructuring. There was less negotiation with the relevant higher education institutions. From the University A aspect, if we had to merge with other universities, our academic society would have supported a merger with the Provincial Medical University and the Provincial University of Science & Technology. If it had done so, we might have had the opportunity to apply for the national "211 Project". In addition, these three university campuses were very close; the disciplines would have covered natural science, social science, medical science, as well as technology, engineering, etc. The merged university would have become a more comprehensive university. Based on the different disciplines cooperation within the new university, it could have presented more interdisciplinary options in a wider range of fields; it would have benefited academic staff and students. On the other hand, these universities were very strong in their fields, and scales were similar. However, the plan of the provincial government authorities was for all the homogeneous universities and colleges located in the capital of the province to merge together. Therefore, the new University (NewU) was established from four normal universities or colleges, whereas the new Provincial University of Science and Technology was established from four institutes (the Provincial Institute of Light Chemical Technology, The Provincial College of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, the Provincial Textile Industry School, as well as the Provincial Textile Workers University). The new Provincial Medical University was established from a merger of three institutions (The Provincial Medical University, The Provincial Chinese Medical University, and the City Medical College). From these merger cases, you can easily see that the purpose of the provincial government was to merge similar types of universities and colleges, so that the government could avoid the need for redundant construction (investment). Regarding our case, it was failure for the provincial government to apply for the merger permit from the MOE the first time. They had tried it and negotiated again, then got the permit in May 1996.*

With respect to the background of the merger, other institutional leaders also gave similar responses. If we were to have an overview of all merger cases during 1995 and 1996, the three typical merged universities were really mergers among similar types of universities and colleges. Another phenomenon is that none of these merged universities that are located in the capital city gained support under the national "211 Project". Only one university obtained the "211 Project", but it is located in another big city, and was a non-merger university.

The response from several middle level leaders evoked a lot of comments on this issue; some of them thought that the problem of the merger was too much intervention from the government.

The government took less consideration of the motivation of the universities and colleges. On the other hand, a lack of negotiation between the government and higher education institutions, as well as negotiation among the involved universities and colleges, are common phenomena during the merging process. Some interviewees said that the communication between policymakers and academic society should have been treated as though it was very important, but unfortunately, horizontal and vertical negotiations and communication with the academic society was never organised.

With respect to the positive perspective of the merger's purpose, all the interviewed institutional leaders and most of the middle level leaders thought that the provincial government had mainly merged similar types of universities or colleges. From the perspective of strategic thinking, the purpose was to increase economies of scale and to avoid wasting resources. In fact, this point of view was highlighted in the provincial government official documents as well as in the case university's documents. However, this purpose raises several important queries. For instance, one department director (M2) argued:

*As the university's staff, we can understand the provincial government's arrangements; on the one hand, this is a national higher education system reform policy, and the provincial government should follow up the central government's policy. On the other hand, there were really some system problems among provincial universities and colleges. It is necessary to restructure these local higher education institutions. Regarding the type of merger, we also can understand that nobody can give a clear answer about whether a merger between similar institutions is better than a merger between totally different ones. The provincial government chose to merge similar ones. We can easily accept this because of the economies of scale that follow. However, we can not understand why some regional hifan Zhuanke Xuexiao<sup>7</sup> (Teachers' schools or colleges) were upgraded to undergraduate university level in the second round of restructuring. I think that upgrading other similar types of college to undergraduate institutions is contrary to producing economies of scale.*

Similar points came from another middle level leader (M9), who argued:

*With the Chinese economic development as well as the Chinese higher education institutions' development in the past fifteen years, I believe that if these four institutions had not been merged, the previous University A and University B might have separately developed to the scale of today's NewU.*

From the above interviews, it is possible to make sense of the background of the merger. The merger happened under the intervention of the government. The “top-down” leadership policy led to passive reactions from the relevant higher education institutions during the reform process. With respect to the goals of the NewU, some leaders supported the merger document: “to develop a comprehensive normal university with – Ordinary Teachers' Education, Vocational Teachers' Education, and Adult Higher Education”, “to establish the biggest normal university in China”, as well as “to develop the research university”, and so on. However, many interviewees thought the goal was unclear at the beginning of the merger.

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<sup>7</sup> Shifan Zhuanke Xuexiao: In all provinces of China, there are provincial national universities or colleges, which provide bachelor's degrees in normal education fields, namely, undergraduate higher education institutions. At the same time, in some regional governments (under leadership of provincial government), there are also some non-degree (sub-degree) teachers' schools (sometimes also called colleges). In other words, this is a three-year specialist education school. In this kind of school, the graduates can only get a diploma, not a bachelor's degree. These schools (colleges) are called Shifan Zhuanke Xuexiao in Chinese.

## 5.2.2 The process of structural change in the new university

According to the documents reviewed in Table 5.1, as well as the description of the merger implementation process provided in the previous section, we find the process was the following: firstly, the institutional leadership group was appointed; secondly, the administrative departments (divisions) were merged and the middle level administration leadership group was adjusted; finally, the academic departments were merged to establish the new schools or faculties, with readjustments being made to the relevant deans and branch secretaries of the CCP. During the merger implementation phase, many of the affiliated organizations also needed to be merged, such as affiliated hospitals, companies and industries run by the university, affiliated middle schools, primary schools, kindergartens, as well as the logistic services organizations (students accommodation, restaurants, etc.), and so on. From this perspective, Chinese universities are different from those in Western countries, and Chinese institutional leaders face more challenges than Western universities. The map outlined above describes the process description at the macro level. In fact, from the analysis of the documents, as well as the interviews, it is possible to see that this is a gradual process. From the perspective of the new university's organization structure and administrative structure, the new university underwent two main stages during the implementation phase: 1) a "one university four campuses" management phase, and 2) a two-tier management system (university and faculty/department) phase.

### ***One University Four Campuses Management model***

As mentioned in the previous section, in order to keep stability in the regular teaching and learning environment, the NewU's management structure was the "one university - four campuses management model". From Table 5.1, we can find the relevant documentary information concerning this management form. The new institutional leaders group appointed four campus administrative teams. They were in charge of the operations on teaching and learning, which meant that all teachers and students would continue to work and study as they did before the merger. In other words, the teaching and learning system did not change yet in this period. The main change was in the university's name. During 1997 and 1998, all the central administration offices (departments, divisions, etc.) were merged. At the same time the new leaders of these offices were selected and officially appointed during this period.

In order to identify the challenges and problems from the structural perspective in this period, the author's interviews were conducted following the structural frame. The author found the main challenges included the organizations' design and middle level leaders' positions design. Even though their scale and size were different, the antecedent four institutions had similar organization structures. Which divisions would be merged in the new university (NewU)? Which would be retained? Which would be closed down? How would the four-campus management mechanism work? These were very sensitive problems at the time, and were often mentioned by the interviewees. For instance, with respect to the new organization

design, many interviewees had a negative response. They thought that the whole new university was in a very messy situation at the beginning of the merger. Most of them attributed the mess to the lack of clarity of the merger plan. Two middle-level leaders gave the following comments:

*Four previously existing institutions merged into one university, the relevant administrative departments needed to adjust, and all the original leaders and staff lost their job security. The administrative staff could not concentrate on their ordinary work. The administration of the new university was inefficient. In addition, the model of four-campus management did not work very well. For example, if our department organised a meeting regarding some policy issues among the deans and branch secretaries in the whole university, it was not enough for us to inform the campus management offices only, but we also needed to inform all the departments and faculties. Otherwise, some middle level leaders might miss our meeting. This is not easy to understand, but it was true. (M9)*

*From the faculty perspective, if they wanted to buy equipment, they had to apply for that from the campus management office, and then the campus management office applied for that from the relevant departments of the new university. This phenomenon shows that the model had been influencing the efficiency of the management. (M7)*

In fact, during this period, even though the main administration departments were merged, at the same time the university declared that administrative staff needed to relocate to the administration building on the “East campus”. It was a challenge for those staff that lived on other campuses. For example, the university also invested a lot of money in transportation; they bought many buses to establish regular bus connections between the four campuses. However, because other campus staff needed to spend around one hour to get to the office, they also felt it was unfair for them, compared to “East campus” staff. Most staff had been used to working in the university and living on or near the campus. The Temporary Comprehensive Executive Office’s task was not like that of equivalent bodies in the Western countries’, which have more power on coordinating the merger.

From the interviews, we also can find that major problems were that the middle level leaders and staff lost their job security, and that the four-campus administration model influenced the efficiency of the operation.

### ***Two-tier administrative structures***

With the merging of all administration departments as well as academic departments/faculties, the NewU realized the “Five Unifications” around 2000, which meant that the NewU realized a virtual merger. All administration offices were moved to the “East campus”. After the adjustment, the social science, art, music, etc., departments and faculties moved to the “West Campus”, and the natural science departments and faculties moved to the “East campus”. The logistic service group, university affiliated companies, factories, and so on, were restructured. The two-tier administrative structure (university-faculties/departments) was formed by 2000, which is shown in the model in Figure 5.1. The Campus Management Committee and offices, as well as the Temporary

Comprehensive Executive Office, were closed down.

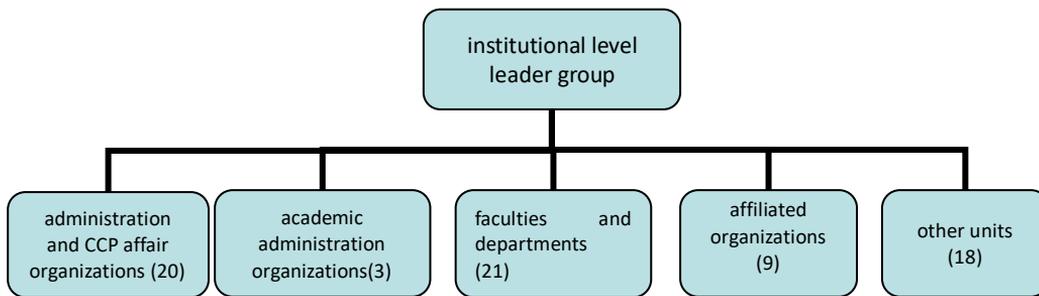


Figure 5.1 Two-tier administrative structures

Table 5.2 Components of the NewU

Administration and CCP affair organizations	1. University Office; 2. Organisation Department of CCP; 3. United Front Department of CCP; 4. Supervision Commission of CCP; 5. Staff Union; 6. Youth League Committee; 7. Human Resource Department; 8. Academic Affairs; 9. Science and Technology Department; 10. Social Science Department; 11. Students' Affair; 12. Department of Admission & Careers Guidance; 13. International Office; 14. Laboratory and Equipment Administrative Department; 15. Financial Department; 16. Audit Department; 17. Campus Construction Department; 18. Security Department; 19. Retired Cadre Department; 20. Centre for Teacher Education.
Academic organisations	1. Academic Committee; 2. Academic Degree Evaluation Committee; 3. Council on Teaching
Faculties and Departments	1. School of Law and Political Science; 2. School of Education; 3. School of Chinese language and literature; 4. School of History and Culture; 5. School of Foreign Languages; 6. School of Music; 7. School of Art and Design; 8. School of Journalism and Communication; 9. School of Business; 10. School of Public Administration; 11. School of Mathematics and Information Science; 12. School of Physics Science and Information Engineering; 13. School of Chemistry and Materials Science; 14. School of Life Science; 15. School of Natural Resources and Environment; 16. School of Sport; 17. School of Information Technology; 18 School of Vocational Technology; 19. Department of Tourism; 20. School of software engineering; 21. An independent College.
Affiliated organisations	1. School of Party and Party Committee of Institution; 2. Graduate School (Academic Degree Administration Office, and Centre of Professional Degree Education); 3. School of Continuing Education and Teacher Training; 4. School of International Culture Exchange; 5. Higher Education Institutions' Teacher Training Centre; 6. Centre of Continuing Education; 7. Office of Institute-owned Enterprises Administration; 8. New Campus Construction Management Office; 9. Department of Education Development Research
Other Units	1. News Centre; 2. Centre of Computer and Internet Service; 3. Analysis and Testing Centre; 4. Library; 5. Editorial Department of the NewU Journal; 6. Logistic Service Group; 7. Chinese Language Weekly; 8. Magazine of Thinking and Wisdom; 9. Hospital; 10. Affiliated Middle School; 11. Affiliated Primary School; 12. Experimental Middle School; 13. Experimental Primary School; 14. School of Nationalities. 15. Foreign Language Teaching Department; 16. Computer Teaching Department; 17. University's Modern Technical Education Centre of The provincial government. 18. Sports Teaching Department. 19. Institute of Vocational Education.

From Figure 5.1, we can see that after the restructuring of the whole university, there were 72 different subordinate units in the NewU. It included 20 administration and CCP affair organisations, 3 academic affair administration organisations, 21 faculties and departments, 9 affiliated organisations, as well as 19 other kinds of units. Table 5.2 provides additional information about these subordinate units in the NewU.

In the NewU case, the top-level leaders were merged at the beginning. At the middle level, in the first two years only the administrative offices were merged. Most of the departments and faculties had not been merged. Most of the original mid-level leaders still remained with their original status and in their original workplaces. Within this environment, the inherent conflicts had not been resolved. Furthermore, many new conflicts and problems emerged. During one interview, institutional leader L1 mentioned:

*“We did not implement the virtual merger (‘Five Unifications’) at the initial stage, which led to our university being on a tortuous journey for several years so that we did not achieve our merger objectives during that period. It also influenced the management’s efficiency and development of the new university.”*

With respect to the “two-tier administrative structure” model, both top institutional leaders believed that the virtual merger and the centralization of the management were necessary for the merged universities in the pre-merger and implementation stages. Whether a similar procedure is rational in the post-merger stage needs to be studied. One leader (L2) said:

*“If we had not realized the centralization, it would have been difficult to promote the merger in the initial stage, because it was rough-and-tumble for everything at the beginning of the merger; the merger was a really complex process.”*

From the above institutional leaders’ answers, we find that the institutional leaders believed that the centralisation was necessary, and they were very supportive of the “five Unifications”. However, the opinions of middle level leaders showed little difference from the institutional leaders. Most of them thought no matter what the campus administrative or the two-tier administrative models were, this model belonged to an organisational structure model. In the whole merger process, the governance model followed the centralization model, in other words, all decision-making was “top- down”. The aim of the merger was to increase efficiency, but the centralization led to low efficiency, which was a reality during the merger. For example, one faculty dean (M13) mentioned:

*The NewU became a multi-campus university after the merger. However, the management and administration style did not adapt to the new situation. For instance, our faculty was merged from three departments. At the beginning of the merger, the teachers and administrative staff were from different antecedent universities and had to move to the main building. We needed to buy some necessary equipment and materials, etc. but because we were no longer the cost centre, we did not have*

*financial authority. Even if we needed to buy a new chair for a newcomer, we had to write a report and apply for it from the relevant administrative office on the East campus. The distance between the two campuses is around 20 Km. Obviously, this was not very rational. So, in a way, the merger increased management costs, and reduced efficiency.*

They also thought that it was not reasonable for the multi-campus university to still use the original single campus' administrative model, and that it was difficult for the NewU to realize that the purpose of the merger was to increase cost-effectiveness. These different opinions affected the actions of the organization and individuals, which certainly influenced the implementation and outcomes of the merger.

### 5.2.3 Governance structure

In Chapter 2, the author introduced the background of governance in Chinese higher education institutions. In China, the unique characteristic is that not only is there a dual system of academic and administration governance, but also a political system. Therefore, the governance and leadership structure is more complex than in other countries. At the institutional and the middle level, there are academic leaders and administrative leaders, such as the rector, vice-rectors, deans, directors, etc. However, there are also the general secretary, vice-secretaries and branch secretaries of the CCP. The governance structure is as shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Governance structure

Institutional level leaders	President (Vice Secretary of CCP)	General Secretary (CCP)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice-President, Research</li> <li>• Vice-President, Education</li> <li>• Vice-President, Personnel</li> <li>• Vice-President, Finance</li> <li>• Vice-President, Logistic Services</li> <li>• Vice-President, Campus construction</li> <li>• Vice-President, Student Affairs (Management and enrolment)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice Secretary, Cadre</li> <li>• Vice Secretary, Promotion</li> <li>• Vice Secretary, Labour union &amp; audit</li> <li>• Secretary of Discipline Inspection Commission</li> </ul>

<b>Middle level leaders</b> <sup>8</sup>	Deans, directors	Branch Secretary (CCP)
	Vice deans, vice directors	Vice branch secretaries
<b>Middle level organisations</b>	(1) Administrative and CCP departments (2) Academic units (3) Faculties and institutes (4) Affiliated organizations (5) Other Units	
<b>Governance principle</b>	Presidential responsibility under the leadership of the CCP Committee	

In Table 5.3, the institutional leadership structure is presented. There were 13 leaders at the NewU after the merger. Normally, the number of university leaders would be fewer than 10 in China, but most Chinese universities had more than 10 institutional leaders at the beginning of the merger. Previously, (see section 2.3.3), the author provided an overview concerning the change of governance within Chinese higher education institutions. According to this background, we know that Chinese higher education institutions have been implemented according to the principle of “The president’s responsibility under the CCP Committee” since 1989. The CCP Standing Committee is the top leadership group. The general secretary is the chair of the CCP Standing Committee. The president is another very important member of this Committee.

According to the NewU document No.1 (1996) shown in Table 6.1, the institutional leaders were appointed by the CCP Committee of the provincial government. Document No.1 comprised the provincial government document. This document consisted of two parts; one was the “Chinese Communist Party Committee of the provincial government Cadre Document No.170 (1996)”, which concerned the party leaders in the NewU. It appointed a general secretary, four vice secretaries, a secretary of the discipline inspection commission, as well as the members of the CCP Standing Committee. The other part was the “Chinese Communist Party Committee of the provincial government Cadre Document No.169 (1996)”, which concerned the appointment of the administrative leaders of the NewU. It outlined the appointment of a president and seven vice presidents. The total institutional leaders included six CCP leaders and eight administrative leaders, because the president doubles as the vice secretary, so the total membership comprises 13 people. The four pre-merger institutions’ leadership positions in the new leadership group are shown in Table 5.4. From this table, we can see that the two larger institutions took the two main positions: general secretary of the CCP and president (who also acts as vice secretary of the CCP) .

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<sup>8</sup> In the middle level units, there are also the director and the Branch Secretary. For example, there are academic leaders (dean and vice-dean) and leaders of the CCP (secretary and vice-secretary) in the faculty or institutes.

Table 5.4: The components of the original leaders in the new leadership group

University A	General Secretary of the CCP (1); Vice secretary (1); Vice presidents (3)
University B	President (1) doubles as vice secretary; vice secretaries (2)
College C	Vice secretary (1); vice president (1); secretary of the discipline inspection commission (1)
College D	Vice president (1)
Other university <sup>9</sup>	Vice secretary (1)

From the above table, it can be seen that the government appointed the institutional leaders under the “balancing” principle. The general secretary of the NewU was from University A, and the president was from University B. The other (smaller) institutions only occupied vice secretary or vice president positions. All the appointment decisions were made by the provincial government.

In Document No.170 (1996), the CCP Standing Committee included the general secretary, four vice secretaries, a secretary of the discipline inspection commission, three vice presidents, the director of the CCP organisation department and the director of the CCP office. The total number was 11 persons. The order of the Standing Committee is shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 The membership of the NewU CCP Standing Committee

1	General secretary	University A
2	Vice secretary (President)	University B
3	Vice secretary	Other university
4	Vice secretary	College C
5	Vice secretary	University A
6	Secretary of the discipline inspection commission	College C
7	Vice president	College D
8	Vice president	University A
9	Vice president	University B
10	Director of the CCP office	University A
11	Director of the CCP organisation department	College D

According to the analysis in Chapter 2, we know that according to Chinese political rule, the Standing Committee is the core leadership group of the university’s party system. The relevant provisions of the CCP’s documents emphasized that all important matters must be discussed and the decision was to be made by the Standing Committee of the University. At the same time, this committee is in charge of appointing the cadres within the university, which includes all deans, directors, branch secretaries, vice branch secretaries, as well as staff from the lower level, such as “branch staff”, “branch chief”, and so on. So,

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<sup>9</sup> This leader was not from the pre-merger four institutions, was from other university of the same province.

we can understand how important the Standing Committee is in the university. If we observe the members of the NewU's Standing Committee in Table 5.5, we find: 1) University A took four seats; University B took two seats; College C took two seats; College D took two seats, and the final one was filled from outside. 2) All vice secretaries and secretary of the discipline inspection commission were involved in the Standing Committee, but only three vice presidents (out of seven vice presidents) were involved in the Standing Committee. 3) Two middle level leaders were involved in the Standing Committee. Therefore, we can conclude that the government's appointments were also made under the "balancing" principle when they made the decision.

#### 5.2.4 Summary

According to the background discussion about mergers in Chinese higher education in Chapter 2, the problems of the previous higher education system, economic reform and political administration reform, and so on, influenced the restructuring of the higher education system policy. The national reform was accepted by the general population. With respect to the case university, the whole merger process was conducted by the provincial government. The four institutions involved did not have strong motivation to merge. Therefore, they did not have clear goals for the merger. In the implementation phase, the university structure rapidly changed, and the university had to employ a campus based management model in order to maintain the stability of the teaching and learning system. Later, with the merger of the administrative departments and faculties, the university established a two-tier administration model. After several years' of adjustment, the university finally achieved the "Five Unifications" governance system, and later it realized the physical merger from a structural perspective. The governance structure of Chinese universities is more complex than in many Western countries, because of the unique characteristic of it also having a political administration system. When the policymakers consider the balance between the merging institutions, they always want to keep balance in the leaders' appointments at both the institutional and middle levels. In this way, a person from one institution will be appointed as the CCP's leader (e.g. branch secretary), whereas a person from another institution will be appointed to an equivalent administrative/academic position (e.g. director or dean, etc.). This kind of arrangement increases the tension between political leaders and administrative / academic leaders, and this influences the integration of the merger.

### 5.3 Using the Human Resource frame to understand the NewU

In Bolman and Deal's reframing theory, the Human Resource is built on core assumptions (see Section 3.3.2, Table 3.1). "The human resource frame highlights the relationship between people and organisations. Organisations need people (for

their energy, effort, and talent), and people need organizations (for the many intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they offer), but their respective needs are not always well aligned. When the fit between people and organizations is poor, one or both suffer: individuals may feel neglected or oppressed, and organizations sputter because individuals withdraw their efforts or even work against organizational purposes. Conversely, a good fit benefits both: individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, P.137). Based on the above relationship between organizations and people, Bolman and Gollas (2011) provide some aspects to investigate higher education institutions (see Section 3.4.2, Table: 3.6). In this section, the author will use the human resource frame to examine the NewU.

“The existential psychologist Abraham Maslow (1954b) developed one of the most influential theories about human needs. He started with the notion that people are motivated by a variety of wants, some more fundamental than others. The desire for food dominates the lives of the chronically hungry, but other motives drive people who have enough to eat. Maslow grouped human needs into five basic categories, arrayed in a hierarchy from lowest to highest. In Maslow’s view, basic needs for physical well-being and safety are ‘proponent’; they have to be satisfied first. Once lower needs are fulfilled, individuals are motivated by social needs (for belongingness, love, and inclusion) and ego needs (for esteem, respect, and recognition). At the top hierarchy is self-actualization- developing to one’s fullest and actualizing one’s ultimate potential. The order is not ironclad. Parents may sacrifice themselves for their children, and martyrs sometimes give their lives for a cause. Maslow believed that such reversals occur when lower needs are so well satisfied early in life that they recede into the background later on” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 124-125). According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, in the study, the starting points are: what are the people’s needs in Chinese higher institutions? And which of their needs are influenced by the merger?

### 5.3.1 Middle level leaders and administrative staff

With respect to middle level leaders, the merger brought rapid change and uncertainty about their positions. After the merger, the organizational structure would be changed. The big problem was the redundancy of administrative staff. From the section above, concerning the structure, we know the functional departments were created from the merger between four departments or divisions from the pre-merger institutions, but the number of new leaders (director, vice directors, etc.) would eventually be less than before. Some former leaders would lose their leadership positions or shift to other departments / units. All of this had imposed major pressures on the administrative leaders, so that they worried about their job security, their salary changing, and so on. As for the ordinary administrative staff, their main concern was about their job security.

*The challenge that the middle level leaders are facing is the security of their tenure in their official*

*position. They hope to keep their current position or to be promoted in the new relevant department.*  
(M18)

*I think the merger has been influencing our normal work and life. As the leader in our department, I have a lot of daily administrative tasks since the institutional leaders always push me to do something. However, before the adjustment of our department, my colleagues and I did not know who will be appointed as the director, the vice directors, and we did not know about staff arrangements, and so, their enthusiasm for work has been influenced. In addition, some senior staff had been working in this department for almost 10 years, and some should be promoted to vice director positions. Because of the merger, the principle of the new university is that we only provide middle level leadership positions to the previous middle leaders.* (M20)

M1, M6, M16, M27 and M26 gave similar answers. From these interviews, we can find: 1) in the beginning of the merger, some middle level leaders worried about security of their tenure in their official leadership positions; 2) some of them worried they would not be promoted after the merger; and 3) the opportunities for promotion for the general staff were limited due to the lack of official positions. In Chinese traditional culture, “*Guan Ben Wei*” (Career oriented to being an official) thinking is very popular. To be an official is an ideology, a value orientation. As an awareness and value orientation, it refers to being official-centred as the guiding principle for the choice of career; everything is subordinated to the achievement of officer-level positions. The purpose of the efforts of some staff that are interested in achieving political positions is to become an official and to be promoted. Generally, people regard becoming an official and being promoted as the highest values of life to pursue, while the authority level of an official position is used to judge a person’s life value. In addition, the difference in official position means a different power over resource control, which is related to one’s salary, allowance, as well as the allocation of other resources. This is the reason why these leaders were very concerned with adjustment of the middle level leadership position caused by the merger.

### 5.3.2 Academic staff

As for academic staff, job security, salary issues, academic ranks, as well as the working locations, etc., were of concern to them. In Chinese higher education institutions, all academic staff become permanent employees as soon as they are hired as an employee. After the merger, some of them were required to teach different courses, which was linked to their job security concerns.

One sensitive issue concerns academic ranks (called “teachers’ academic position ranks” or “professional & technical title”). The categories of academic ranks for teachers in Chinese higher education institutions include: Assistant, Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor. The academic ranks are a very important issue for the academic staff because they are closely linked to their benefits, such as

salary, workload, housing allocation<sup>10</sup>, and so on. In addition, the rate and number of professional and technical title promotions in the university is controlled by the government. For instance, the number (positions) of professors is allocated to the university by the government. At the NewU, since the new university was created from a merger between four institutions, their academic capacities and backgrounds were different. The academic staff members from College C, College D, and University B were worried that they would not be able to compete with academics from University A. So, when the faculties merged together, some staff were very concerned that their academic professional and technical title applications would be influenced by the merger, since they perceived that professor and associate professor positions would be limited. The academic ranks were linked to their benefits. If they could not get the relevant academic rank on time, it would influence their benefits. The biggest benefit impacted by the academic rank was the housing allocation, before the reform of the public housing allocation in Chinese public sectors in 1997. Normally, in universities, the housing allocation principle was directly related to rank, administrative position, as well as years of work experience. For instance, for the university-supplied free houses, a professor was entitled to a house with more square meters than an associate professor.

With respect to the raising of the academic ranks, after the merger, the NewU implemented the unified “professional and technical titles quantitative evaluation method” in 1997. This policy includes several categories: teaching positions; research series; engineering series, laboratory series, political administration, and so on. The common rules in these categories include the following four assessment criteria: (1) education degrees and years of service at the current academic rank; (2) workload and performance assessment; (3) research projects and publications; (4) democratic assessment, namely assessment by colleagues. Based on these benchmarks, an assessment committee adjudicated applicants. The promotion process included three main steps: first, a faculty or department internal assessment and recommendation; second, assessment by the university committee-“professional and technical titles assessment committee”; finally, applications for all the professor and other professional level ranks, as well as other types of senior level titles (equivalent to associate professor level, such as senior engineer, etc.) need to be submitted to the provincial “professional and technical titles assessment committee” for the final assessment. If someone passes the final assessment, then they will be appointed officially.

Academic staff, in particular younger academic staff, have been influenced by this policy since the merger, for instance when a lecturer wants to apply for an associate professorship. According to the criteria of “professional and technical titles quantitative method”, the indicators in categories (2) and (4) are easy to match, and if you work hard, there will not be a big difference compared with

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<sup>10</sup> Housing allocation: namely, welfare housing allocation. In China, staff who work in the public sector, such as governmental office, schools, public factories, etc., could get free houses based on their performance and positions, before 1997.

other colleagues. The main differences are usually in (1) and (3). As for the indicators of group (1), the requirement for a lecturer position is five working years, meaning that fulfilling the requirement is merely an issue of time. As for the degree aspect, a Ph.D. degree is prioritized over a master's degree, and a master's degree is prioritized over a bachelor's degree. The third of the categories concerns the participation in research projects and publications, which means that for research projects and publications, the more the better for applicants. When comparing these four pre-merger "campuses" with young academic staff, we found that the influences were different.

*In fact, before the merger, all four institutions followed the same procedures and similar policies within their schools. The situation changed due to the merger. Because the disciplines were different, College D's departments became more independent after the merger. They did not need to merge with departments from other institutions. Most departments of University B and College C needed to merge with University A's departments. In the merged faculties, young staff must compete with University A's staff. As mentioned before, University A was much stronger than others in research. In particular, College C's staff lacked a research background, since College C was a training school. The staff mainly concentrated on the teaching task, but few of them paid attention to research before. Therefore, it was very difficult for them to apply for the higher professional positions under the tough competition within the faculty or university. For College D, they could easily gain entry to the university's evaluation committee, but normally, they would fail when they competed within the whole university. These issues placed a lot of pressure on young academic staff. Many teachers started to spend much more time on research than teaching. (M15)*

*In our faculty, the people come from University A, University B, and College C. When we organize the assessment regarding the academic ranks, normally, the previous University A's staff had an advantage. On the one hand, they have more publications than colleagues from the other two colleges. On the other hand, they also have a degree advantage. Many of them hold a Ph.D. or master's degree, but, most of the staff from College C has only a bachelor's degree. One impact of the merger was that the younger teachers started to pursue upper level degrees. Many of them participated in degree programmes part time or full time. The impact of this phenomenon was a lack of teachers on the one hand, and on the other hand, we got some complaints from students that some young teachers' teaching quality was not as good as before, since they did not have enough time and energy to spend on the teaching activities. (M23)*

The staff's income was also a very sensitive issue at NewU. In these universities or colleges of the same region, the basic budget salary of academic staff depends on their academic ranks; those ranked at the same level earn the same basic salary. However, the staff's income is not only the salary. Normally, they have some additional sources of income. For instance, some extra income might come from part time students' tuition fees and some adult education training. In some universities, even in the same university, some faculties have more students than others. The relevant faculties can provide payments based on a percentage of the tuition fee. This leads to some faculties being very rich and some being poor. Therefore, the richer faculties can distribute more bonuses than the poorer ones. As one dean of a foreign language faculty on the East campus said:

*Most teachers in our faculty were against the merger, because our faculty was the top one in the provincial government in foreign languages teaching and research. With our brand, we could easily enrol a lot of students to establish a wide range of training programmes. The Western campus language department was good in the Russian language, but their market was very small. Our teachers were worried that our financial resources would be shared with them after the merger, which would influence our income. (M10)*

M5, M16, M28 gave similar responses as M10. Academic staff was also concerned about the working location. In the implementation plan, the overall design was that social sciences, music, art, and other relevant faculties would be relocated to the Western campus; and the natural sciences, sports school, and the faculty of natural resources and the environment, etc. would be located at the Eastern campus. As for the staff of departments or faculties that needed to move, they were used to working and living on the same campus<sup>11</sup>. After the merger, some staff had to go to another campus by bus every day. This was also a major challenge for these staff members at the beginning of the merger.

### 5.3.3 Students and alumni

Other important stakeholders are the students and alumni at the NewU. Coming up to the merger, the policy-makers paid less attention to them. This has been reflected in the interviews. For instance, the director of student affairs (M14), for example, said:

*I was from the original Eastern campus - University A, and at the beginning of the merger, we got a lot of negative feedback from Eastern campus students. They were really concerned about some aspects: 1) they were worried that the merger would influence the normal order and arrangement of the teaching, and they were worried about the quality of some teachers who came from other campuses. 2) They were worried that the new university's reputation would go down due to the merger, since all students will use the name of the new university and the seal on their diploma would be the same. This would lead to difficulties for society to distinguish which students were from the original University A and which were from the other small colleges. They were worried that this phenomenon could influence their employability. 3) Since University A was located in the city centre, some faculties would move to other campuses located in the suburbs. Many students do not like the location. All in all, students thought they did not get enough care from the university and government. Of course, the students from University B and College C were very happy about the merger plan. They hoped that the new university would improve the teaching quality through the merger, and the new name of the university was an extra benefit for them in employability.*

The director (M1) of the university office gave feedback from the alumni:

*“With respect to the merger of the four institutions, we heard a lot of disappointed voices from different*

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<sup>11</sup> In traditional Chinese universities, most staff members' housing (apartments) is located on the university's campus, or near the university.

*alumni units. For instance, University B's alumni worried that University B would disappear after the merger, which means they would lose their home university, and some of them would not easily accept this kind of rapid change. The name of the merged university was the main issue of concern?*

There are also other stakeholders in the NewU, such as the affiliated companies, factories, primary and middle schools, hospitals, publishing houses, and so on. The human resource restructuring was also a major challenge. However, in this study, the author has not considered these groups but has mainly concentrated on faculties, and administration departments.

### 5.3.4 Summary

In using the human resource frame to examine the NewU, the main challenges include: 1) from the middle level leaders' perspective, they felt their future would be uncertain. They worried that their official positions were not secure. After the merger, the main problem was how to manage the administrative staff that came from the different pre-merger institutions, and how to encourage their enthusiasm for work and a positive attitude. 2) From the administrative staff's perspective, they worried not only about their job security, but also about their promotion opportunities. 3) As for academic staff, they were concerned about their professional and technical title promotion, working location, academic competition, as well as the income situation. 4) The biggest worries of students and alumni concerned the reputation of the university after the merger, the quality of teaching, and the location where they would have to study. They were sensitive to the reputation of the new university as well as their future employability. As for the alumni, they mainly considered their historical sense of belonging.

## 5.4 Using the political frame to understand the NewU

“The traditional view sees organizations as created and controlled by legitimate authorities, who set goals, design structure, hire and manage employees, and ensure pursuit of the right objectives” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p.209). As shown in Table 3.2 in Chapter 3, regarding the understanding of organizations, Bolman and Deal (2008) view organizations in the political frame as “roiling arenas hosting ongoing contests of individual and group interests” (p. 194). They provide political assumptions that include “1) organizations are coalitions of assorted individuals and interest groups; 2) coalition members have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality; 3) most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources - who gets what; 4) scarce resources and enduring differences put conflict at the centre of day-to-day dynamics and make power the most important asset; 5) goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiation among competing stakeholders jockeying for their own interests” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 194-195). Therefore, the political view

frames a different world: organizations are coalitions composed of individuals and groups with enduring differences who live in a world of scarce resources. That puts power and conflict at the centre of organizational decision making (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In this section, the political frame has been used to examine the case university and to try to find the challenges faced by the university.

#### 5.4.1 The merged university is a loose coalition

According to Bolman and Deal's theory, universities are coalitions. With respect to a merged university such as the NewU, it is easy to understand that it is a new coalition of the previous smaller coalitions. The pre-merger four institutions constitute the new organization. In this case, as stated in the above structure section, the merger was decided and initiated by the provincial government. From the provincial government perspective, on the one hand, this was required by the national government reform policy. On the other hand, based on the macro structure of the provincial higher education system, the provincial government tried to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education institutions, to improve the economies of scale. As these mergers involved both universities and colleges, their motivations are different. As one leader of the NewU mentioned:

*In our merger case, the original four institutions were running very well. In particular, at the previous University A, we did not have any financial pressure, the quality of teaching, learning and research were very good, and our reputation was good both in national and local areas. Our graduates could easily find jobs at that time. Of course, from the long-term view, the merger would increase our scale, so that we could improve our efficiency, and enhance our competitive capacity. From this point of view, we believed that most of our staff recognized it. However, at the beginning of the merger, the negative voices were louder than the positive ones. I believed that the other three institutions faced the same situation that we faced. Thus, as institutional leaders, we had to follow up the requirement of the government, to promote the national policy, as well as the significance and benefit of the merger in the long-term view. On the other hand, we had to face the very complex situation that the merger brought in. For instance, we needed to face the conflicts among the different interest groups, which was the biggest challenge for us. (L2)*

Many middle level leaders thought that the government undertook too little investigation into the merger, which meant that they thought that before the merger decision was made the government should have communicated with the involved internal communities of the relevant universities, and listened to the voice of the staff rather than only those of institutional leaders. The "Top-down" political administration manner might have influenced the nature and outcomes of the merger.

*The NewU merger was like two families' parents forcing two young people to get married even though the boy and girl do not know each other very well. They can follow up parents' idea to organize one new family, but their marriage is without love. The future of this kind of forced marriage is uncertain. Our four institutions' merger is the same as a forced marriage without love. The difficulty and*

*complexity is something that you can easily imagine. (M25)*

From the above interview, we can understand that although the government announced the merger in May 1996, they had to implement the four-campus management model over a long period, since it was a loose coalition. Thus, the real integration took a long time.

#### 5.4.2 Individuals and interest groups in the NewU

As mentioned above in the section about human resources, the merger affected the interests of individuals. Different groups such as academic staff, administrative staff, all kinds of middle level leaders, as well as the students, have different needs and interests. A university merger disrupts their previously quiet life. They have to face the new challenges.

*As the branch secretary of the CCP in our faculty, I and the dean of the faculty spent a lot of time and energy working out how to keep order in the normal teaching and learning in the new faculty. At the same time, we had to look for external resources to improve the income of our staff, otherwise we would not be able to maintain the stability of teachers in the years after the merger. Even if we did so, some excellent staff left our faculty, and some of them found new jobs in other universities. (M12)*

As the branch secretary M12 mentioned, after the merger, some very good academic staff left the NewU. In fact, this phenomenon had emerged not only among the common academic staff, but it also occurred with some of the middle level leaders, many interviewees mentioned this issue, such as M5, M2, M16, M28, etc. This will be presented in the next section. Regarding the exodus of general academic staff, the main reason is that the merger brought in uncertainty in job and career development.

Another very significant phenomenon was that the merger led to the formation of new interest groups. Before the merger, in every pre-merger institution, there existed different larger or smaller interest groups within academic units and administrative departments. After the merger, some new interest groups were established. A characteristic of these new interest groups was that they were “campus based”, which means in schools or administrative units, and even across the whole university, staff that came from the same pre-merger institution formed informal interest groups due to their closer relationship with each other. From the interviews, the author found that almost all middle level leaders recognized that there were “campus based” interest groups at both the institutional and faculty levels of the organization.

The existence of different interest groups influenced the entire merger process. For instance, some middle levels leaders (M1, M2, M5, M6, M11, M12, M16, M25, M27) give similar opinions:

*With respect to some institution or faculty level adjustment plans, we always receive some “campus-based” complaints or opposition. In other words, within the same pre-merger institutions’ staff, there*

*was a lot of communication behind one's back. Abnormal negotiation or communication impacted our normal administration and management. (M26)*

### 5.4.3 Scarce resources and power struggles

The merging of universities is a complex restructuring process, which needs a great deal of financial support. The investigation of this study shows that a significant amount of laboratory equipment needed to be relocated to other campuses and the space for teaching and learning needed to expand. The staff working equipment also needed to be purchased. Classrooms accommodating 100-120 students were large enough before the merger. However, after the merger, some grade classes contained more than 200 students (and the largest group had more than 400), and the largest faculty (school) had around 4000 students. Thus, every faculty needed larger classrooms. These students needed to live on the universities' campuses, and therefore the university needed to build some new student housing, facilities and restaurants. The student and staff transport system also needed a lot of investment. However, based on the interviews with institutional leaders, the provincial government provided only 5 million RMB per year as extra investments for the merger. The extra funding was granted only for five years. The financial challenge was major for NewU.

*Due to the investment not being nearly adequate, the extra transport costs alone required us to invest several millions every year. We also needed some new buildings. We had to take a loan from the bank, but even then, we could not build many new buildings. When we discussed these resource allocations, the decision-making was very hard because of the "campus-based thinking". We had to seek a balance. For instance, if we planned a new building on the "East campus", then we needed also to build one on the "West campus". (L1)*

*Due to the lack of resources, the power struggle occurred not only among the institutional level leaders, but also at the faculty level. Concerning the academic staff's professional and technical title assessment, research projects applications, curriculum arrangements, financial resource distribution, and so on, all these were challenges for us. We tried to maintain the balance between different interest groups, but it was really not easy. We always received complaints, and some staff even complained to the university leaders. (M23)*

From the human resource arrangement perspective, there existed a significant power struggle, which was particularly apparent in the middle level leaders' arrangements.

As described in the section of the structural frame, the provincial government appointed the institutional leaders. The members of the leadership group were mainly from the four pre-merger institutions. The decision-making principle of the government was to maintain balance among the four pre-merger institutions. For instance, the two main leaders were from the two stronger and larger institutions: the general secretary was from University A, and then the president was from University B. As discussed in Chapter 2, according to the current governance

structure of Chinese universities, the status of the general secretary is slightly higher than that of the president/rector.

When the institutional leaders were making decisions about the middle level leaders, they also followed the balancing principle. For instance, in the implementation phase, the CCP committee adjusted the middle-level leadership twice. The first adjustment related to the administrative and the CCP's departments in 1996 (see Document No.14, 1996) and the second concerned the leaders of faculties, in 1998 (see Document Issue 22, 1998). For instance, as required by Document No. 14 (1996), the university set up the leading group for the middle level administrative cadres' assessment, called "Middle level cadres assessment group". The members of the group are as in the following table 5.6.

From the above table, it can be seen that the cadres' assessment group included 7 leaders. From the previous perspective, we find that the membership included: two from University A (the general secretary and vice general secretary of the CCP committee of the NewU); one from University B (the president of the NewU); two from College C (vice general secretary of the CCP committee of the NewU and secretary of discipline inspection); one from College D (director of the CCP committee organization division) and the final one from another university (vice secretary). Under the leadership group, there was an office. The office of the leadership group started operating in August 1996.

Table 5.6 The members of the middle level cadres' assessment group

Director	The general secretary of the CCP committee of the NewU
Vice director	The president
Members	Vice general secretary (3); Secretary of discipline inspection (1); Director of the CCP committee organization division (1)

The assessment and formal appointment took four months, and finished in December 1996. The leading group finally appointed 36 directors / branch secretaries of the CCP, plus the other kinds of director and vice director level leaders. The total number of administrative departments (including the relevant CCP affairs department) was 128. In 1998, the leadership group restructured the leadership of the faculties and departments. Table 5.2 also shows the affiliated organizations and other units. After these two adjustments, the NewU had 250 middle level leaders; before the merger, the total number of middle level leaders had been 432.<sup>12</sup>

The cadres' appointment was an extremely sensitive issue at the NewU. Even now, when the author asked the interviewees relevant questions, many of them (M3, M4, M6, M9, M15, M19, M21, M26) mentioned that the pressure for all the previous leaders was very heavy.

*I think the cadres' re-appointment was the biggest challenge for the new university leaders. Because of the "campus-based thinking" and the notion of "us-them", the power struggles concerning the*

<sup>12</sup> Resource: the NewU CCP Committee Organization Department statistics, 1998.

*appointing of the cadres were significant. (M24)*

*I think it was unfair for some people in a way. Because of the power struggle among the pre-merger institutions, the institutional leadership decision-making had to follow the balancing principle, which led to many qualified staff losing their positions from the middle level leadership. (M24)*

In Table 5.2, all the administrative departments and the CCP affair organizations, faculties, affiliated organizations, and other units are shown. In the antecedent four institutions, the organizational structures were almost the same. After the merger, the number of sub-units was reduced, which led to the number of middle level leaders being reduced. For instance, in the pre-merger universities and colleges, there were four human resource divisions and relevant subordinates. Every division had a director, vice-director, and section chiefs, and other administrative staff. The total number was around 25 people. After the merger, how many positions should there be in the new human resources division? Who should be the new director, vice- director, section chiefs? These questions were among those the institutional leaders had to face. Due to the scarceness of resources and positions, there naturally existed a struggle among the pre-merger institution groups.

As for the faculties' leaders, in some faculties, political infighting could also be found. In particular, this phenomenon typically occurred because the branch secretary and dean came from different pre-merger institutions. After the merger, some pre-merger middle level leaders who held professional titles were removed from the NewU. Some of them were distinguished scholars. The loss of top scholars was a serious problem during the merger implementation phase. The main reasons were either the tension in the relationship between the leaders (academic and political) in some faculties or the fact that some had not been appointed to satisfactory leadership positions after the merger.

#### 5.4.4 Summary

From the perspective of the political frame to examine the NewU, the author found that the campus-based management model led to the NewU remaining a loose coalition for several years. After the merger, a significant phenomenon was that people from different backgrounds formed different interest groups. Although every previous institution had different kinds of conflict and different interest groups compared to pre-merger, when facing the common challenge of the merger, the people of each pre-merger institution united, and from the macro perspective, they had the same interests. Due to the scarceness of resources, there existed power struggles between these different interest groups. The power struggles forced the institution leaders to seek a balance among these pre-merger institutions, which influenced the efficiency and effectiveness of the merger.

## 5.5 Using the symbolic frame to understand the NewU

“The symbolic frame focuses on how humans make sense of the chaotic, ambiguous world in which they live. Meaning, belief, and faith are its central concerns. Meaning is not given to us; we have to create it. ... Symbols are the basic building blocks of the meaning systems, or cultures we inhabit. We experience our way of life in the same way that fish live in water. Our own cultural ways are often invisible to us because we see them simply as the ways things are – and ought to be. But we can react with revulsion and horror to cultures that are alien or hostile to our own... As symbols often do, the words carry an emotional wallop that may be very positive or very negative, depending on your perspective” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 248). In Chapter 3, Table 3.2 and 3.6 provided five assumptions and potential issues to understand organizations. In this section, the author will seek what the challenges were that influenced the merger of the NewU from the symbolic perspective.

### 5.5.1 Different cultures influencing the integration

When discussing the symbolic perspectives of the NewU during the interviews, many interviewees could understand what the symbolic frame means. The significant factor that many of the interviewees raised was about culture. Because the four antecedent institutions had different histories, different backgrounds, as well as different features, they also owned a different culture. As mentioned in the previous sections, for example, cultural differences were evident even if these four institutions had been observed only from the teaching and research perspective. College C was a training-oriented college; staff members mostly focussed on teaching rather than on research. They were totally different from University A's academic staff; University B's staff members also undertook research. However, they were significantly different from University A's staff, too. College D's staff most concentrated on vocational teacher training. Although they undertook some research, their research activities were mainly oriented towards applied sciences. Since these differences existed, it led to the staff's performance ratings being different. When the merger happened, from the whole university perspective, it was hard to keep a balance among these staff with different backgrounds.

The dean of one natural science school told the author a story about an argument about the academic staff's main responsibility at the beginning of the merger.

*I remember we had a tough debate on the measurement of research and teaching when we had the first meeting of all staff to announce the plan of bonus allocation<sup>13</sup>. In fact, our school leadership group*

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<sup>13</sup> This refers to an additional (extra) income, called *Chuangsbon* in Chinese. This income is derived from e.g. adult education, evening school, as well as other kinds of training. When the school provides this kind of service, the income is divided into two parts, allocated to the university and the school. The school has the autonomy to distribute to staff.

*made the initial plan. The purpose was to find a solution for how to distribute the school's extra income to staff members at the end of the academic semester. The extra income mainly came from our part time adult student and "self-study examination" student training. Our idea was based on the workload involved. Every staff member had the basic (required) workload. The teaching workload was based on the hours of teaching; the research workload was based on publications and research projects. By comparing against the basic workload, it was possible to calculate every staff member's workload and surplus workload. However, the teachers who had been involved in the teaching activities thought that the extra income had been earned by them, and should therefore be mainly distributed to those teachers. Some people thought that researchers with more publications were not economically effective for the school. They got the benefit from their publications when they applied for the promotion, which meant they were working for themselves. As for the teachers in question, they spent a lot of energy and time on teaching activities, so that they had too little time left to do research. So they thought it was unfair to them if researchers got the benefit both from the extra money and promotional opportunities. But from researchers' perspective, they thought that without their research, neither the university nor the school's good reputation would be enhanced. If the university's reputation was not so good, it would be difficult for the university or school to attract these part time students. Therefore, they considered their activities to be more important than teaching. During the debate, you could easily find the same pre-merger institutions' staff supporting each other. I think the main reason is the difference in culture. (M24)*

From this dean's story, it can be seen that the traditional culture is based on the pre-merger institutions' long-term history. Due to their historical backgrounds being different from the teaching and learning perspective, the training colleges placed more emphasis on teaching, whereas University A emphasized research more. After the merger, with respect to the teaching and learning, some people thought that in a normal university, the teaching was very important. Some people thought that academic staff should put emphasis on research, because it would influence the quality of the teaching and the university's reputation. It is very difficult to judge which opinion is right, but we should be aware that these kinds of cultural differences would lead to conflict.

Of course, the difference in culture exists not only in teaching and research activities, but also in many other perspectives. For instance, from the perspective of management culture, we can also find differences.

*After the merger, I found significant differences among our new colleagues. At the beginning of the merger, it was very difficult for our leaders to make all staff feel satisfied with some internal issues. We found that some new colleagues who came from the smaller institutions always complained to the relevant institutional leaders. Within the same situation, the staff that came from Eastern campus (University A) mostly complained to us directly. Some of the complaints were made directly to the top leaders, which led to a lot of challenges that our middle level leaders needed to face, and even caused a lot of contradictions. (M4)*

*We merged with University A and the other two institutions, and since our previous institution was smaller, some former colleagues, of course including me, worried that our interests would not be easily protected. In addition, the main institutional and middle level leaders came from University A and University B, so our situation was like that of children who had lost their mother, which led to a situation where nobody cared about our feelings for the future. Therefore, even though there existed*

*conflicts among our former colleagues, after the merger, facing common interests or challenges, we became more unified than before. We did not have a sense of belonging. (M13)*

Before the merger, in the smaller colleges, such as College C and College D, the staff and institutional leaders were familiar with each other, since most of them were working in the same building or on the same small campus. There were more opportunities to communicate between the leaders and staff. In the bigger universities such as University A, the common staff had less opportunity to meet the institutional leaders. Only middle level leaders, even only directors, deans as well as the branch secretaries had some opportunities to communicate with institutional leaders. Therefore, the larger universities were more hierarchical, so the management culture was different among these four institutions. From the description from M4 and M13, we can find that the smaller institutions' staff worried that their interests would not be taken into account; they were used to ignoring the middle level leaders and communicating with their former leaders. This kind of behaviour really influenced the middle leaders' work. At the same time, these different cultures within the different interest groups led to their identification being different, which also influenced the integration of the merger.

## 5.5.2 Unclear "Mission, Value and Vision"

The merger caused rapid change among the pre-merger institutions. With respect to the future and development of the NewU, most of the staff and students perceived the situation as chaotic and ambiguous. As mentioned in previous sections, they were worrying about job security, academic positions, income, leadership positions, quality of teaching and learning, and so on. Facing this chaotic situation, the new university needed to have a development plan with a very clear mission, value and vision.

Regarding the importance of the plan, as well as the clarity of the mission, value and vision, many scholars have provided relevant analysis in their own studies (Bijlsma-Frankema, 2001; Carlson, 1994; Cartwright & Cooper, 1996; Dai, 2000; Eastman & Lang, 2001; Fielden & Markham, 1997; Harman, 1988; H. R. Hay, Fourie, & Hay, 2001; Millett, 1976; Skodvin, 1999; Tierney, 1993). Bolman and Deal (2008) emphasize that meaning, belief, and faith are central concerns for humans to make sense of the chaotic, ambiguous world. A clear mission, value and vision would have been helpful for understanding and establishing the meaning, belief, and faith among the people in the merged university.

"The values that count are those an organization lives, regardless of what it articulates in its mission statements or formal documents... vision turns an organization's core ideology, or sense of purpose, into an image of the future" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p.255). Through double-checking the relevant NewU documents, we can find two documents that mention value and vision. One is document No.13 (1996) - working plan.

In this working plan, only one sentence is related to vision. It is "to build the

capacity of some leading disciplines ... efforts to enable one or two disciplines to achieve the national ‘211 project’” in item 3.4 of the document. The main content is just concerned with tasks in the coming semester. Strictly, it is not a strategic plan. Another document is “The Tenth Five Year plan and 2010 long term vision” issued on March 31, in 2000. Even though the document did not have a definition about the mission, value and vision of the NewU, we can generalize the relevant points. For example, the “NewU plays a leading role and has major effects on the provincial teachers’ education, constructing and improving the intensive teacher education operating mechanism, developing the new university running model of the balanced development of three types of education – teacher education, vocational teacher education, and adult higher education”, as well as “to realize the integration of education (regular undergraduate education) and training (in-service training for adults)”; ... “Building up the openness in the teacher education system, to make efforts in improvement of the graduates’ innovation and practice capacity”, as well as, “to realize a comprehensive, openness, and research normal university with its own characteristics”; “the comprehensive strength will reach the top level of the same type of universities” (Document, 2000, pp. 5-6)

During the interview, the author could also sense the weakness in this area after the merger. As outlined in Chapter 2, the background analysis of the Chinese higher education institutions’ merger reform, most of the staff at the NewU could accept and understand the national government’s motivation for the restructuring of the higher education system policy. However, as regards the NewU case, many of them voiced a different opinion, such as, why did the authorities choose these four institutions to merge together? Could they add value to these four institutions from the merger? And so on. Regarding these motivational questions, an analysis was presented in the previous section, which does not need to be repeated here. The critical points are mostly related to the implementation phase. For instance, some leaders mentioned:

*We cannot prevent the merger from happening because this is national and provincial policy. But, I think, at least we could do better inside our university. Due to the preparation process of the merger being so short, there were not sufficient careful investigation and studies in the merger plan. These matters caused all involved people to feel that the merger was chaotic and ambiguous. At the beginning of the merger, in order to create a new sense of belonging in the new university, we should have had a clear merger plan and strategic plan. Unfortunately, we did not have these. As a middle leader, I just knew we were the biggest normal university in the whole country at that moment. Afterwards, with other universities merged, we weren’t the biggest one anymore. We could also hear some voices to build up a national class research normal university. Afterwards, the vision was changed again. Without a clear development plan to lead, it was difficult to create and establish the new meanings, beliefs, and faith in the new university. (M2)*

*It is really hard to understand why we would not have a strategic development plan before 2000. We were groping around to implement the merger during that period. From this point of view, we wasted a lot of time, which also had an impact on the integration. (M21)*

### 5.5.3 Lack of ceremonies, rituals, heroes, and stories

“Historically, cultures have relied on ritual and ceremony to create order, clarity, and predictability - particularly around mysterious and random issues or dilemmas. The distinction between ritual and ceremony is elusive. As a rule of thumb, ritual is more everyday. Ceremonies are more episodic - grander and more elaborate - convened at times of transition or special occasions” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 265). Historical heroes or stories are very useful to encourage relevant people, and to arouse their work enthusiasm. Rituals are not popular in Chinese universities. Sometimes they happen in certain companies, such as in insurance companies, where rituals (e.g. sharing success meeting) are organized every morning. Ceremonies are more popular in Chinese universities. For instance, traditionally, university entrance ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, university sports and games, as well as staff New Year parties and New Year Banquets, etc., are held. These traditional ceremonies are helpful in uniting people and enhancing the core of ideologies. Regarding the heroes and stories, in fact, there were some heroes and stories in the history of University A and University B. However, after the merger, the NewU did not use these traditional activities and heroes to promote the merger.

*From the symbolic perspective, actually, the entrance and graduation ceremonies are very good activities in Chinese universities. However, due to the size of the university after the merger being too big, we did not have a big enough space to organize these ceremonies. From another perspective, during the first several years, the university was disorganised, but the management model was campus-based. We lacked whole-of-university ceremonies or other activities. (M9)*

*We had some very successful activities, such as the whole university student and staff sports games in 2000, the 100th anniversary of the NewU, as well as some school-based yearly gatherings or parties which were also very good. Unfortunately, we did not pay attention to these symbols at the beginning of the merger. (M14)*

### 5.5.4 Summary

From the symbolic perspective, culture is a very important indicator. Within the NewU, each pre-merger institution had its own history and culture. The physical merger is easy to manage, but integration of the different cultures is not easy, and is a long-term process. In order to unite the people, and to promote the integration of the merger, the new university needed a good strategic plan, and to make clear the mission, values and vision, so that the relevant people would know the futures of both the individuals and their organization. Unfortunately, at the NewU, they did not have very clear definitions of their mission, values, and vision. Lack of symbolic activities, such as rituals, ceremonies, heroes, stories, etc. which influence the creation of new meanings, beliefs, and faith of the new university. Therefore, these weaknesses influenced the integration of the merger at the NewU.

## 5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the process of the case university merger was presented. Through the documents overviewed, the author explored the pre-merger phase, implementation phase, and integration phase of the case university, as well as the outcomes of the merger. From the process perspective, we find that the preparation phase (pre-merger) was very short, and the implementation phase took several years. In order to make sense of the case university merger, the author based his analysis on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 to examine the case university, and to find the challenges during the merger process.

From *the structural frame perspective*, the goals were not clear since the provincial government conducted the merger, and the institutional motivation was not as strong as the government's. The new structural design was a challenge for the institutional leader. Although the campus-based management model can ensure the stability of teaching and learning, it can also make the merger implementation process longer. The case university firstly merged the administrative departments and then merged the academic units. The whole process to realize the real merger took around five years. The governance structure was based on the two-tier administration model and a reduction in the number of middle level leadership positions. The principle of "stability and balance" used to appoint leaders from the CCP and administrative (or academic) areas led to tensions among CCP leaders and administrative (or academic) leaders.

From *the human resource frame perspective*, within the new merged university, the needs of the relevant stakeholders were different. When their needs could not be met, they felt their situation and future to be uncertain. The relevant issues, such as job security, income, leadership positions, academic rank updating, administrative leader positions, quality of teaching and learning, university name influencing the different groups, and so on, became challenges within different groups of people.

From *the political frame perspective*, because the initial stage of the merger - the physical merger - was conducted step by step, it was a loose coalition. The people that came from different pre-merger institutions formed different interest groups. The scarce resources in finance, leadership positions, academic rank positions, etc., caused a power struggle among the different interest groups.

From *the symbolic frame perspective*, different cultures existed within the four pre-merger institutions due to their different histories and backgrounds, which led to the integration of culture requiring a long-term process. The unexpected merger of these four institutions meant that they did not have very clear definitions of their mission, values, vision, or a reasonable strategic plan and implementation plan. They also did not pay attention to the utilization of rituals, ceremonies, heroes, or successful stories. In other words, the leaders were not good at using symbolic activities to promote the merger. These factors all influenced the process by which a sense of unity and new identity formed.

From this chapter, we can understand the situation that the NewU was facing during the merger process. The author uses the four-dimensional diagnostics model in exploring the merged university case, which provides a deep

understanding of the background and situation of this case university. In the next chapter, the author will focus on the leadership orientation and exploring the impact of leadership on the integration of the merger.

## 6 LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION AND IMPACT ON THE MERGER

In the previous chapter, the complex merger process has been presented. In order to present the whole picture of the merger at the case university, the author employed Bolman and Deal's reframing theoretical framework to examine the outcomes and challenges that the new merged university faced. In this chapter, the author will continue to utilize Bolman and Deal's theoretical framework to examine the leadership orientation and the performance of the institutional leadership group at the new merged university, and to explore the impact of the leadership on the integration of the universities' merger.

### 6.1 The leadership style rating result

As stated in Chapter 4, in the 1980s, Bolman and Deal developed a survey instrument - Leadership Orientations. Based on this instrument, the author developed more questions related to the merger context in two more sections, one concerning measurement of the leadership group performance, and one concerning the 'campus perception' of different staff types at NewU. In the following section, the measured results will be presented. The data analysis was carried out using SPSS software.

#### 6.1.1 Leadership behaviour rating result

According to Bolman and Deal's instrument (see Appendix I), the scale in answering each item is: "1" (Never), "2" (occasionally), "3" (sometimes), "4" (often), and "5" (always). The following tables and figure are the two main institutional leaders' (L1 and L2) leadership behaviour rating results. The statistic Table 6.1 shows the two leaders' leadership behaviour statistics. Table 6.1 presents the means of L1 and L2 in four frames (structural, human resource, political and symbolic), and the Mode, Std. Deviation, Minimum, Maximum, as well as percentiles. From the means of L1 and L2, we can find that all results are between "3" and "4". Moreover, in order to find whether there are differences between L1 and L2 in each frame, the author has conducted a T-test between L1 and L2 in the four frames. The results are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 shows the leadership behaviour significances between L1 and L2 are: structural frame (0,016); human resource (0,008), political (0,412) and symbolic

(0,976). All results are more than 0,005, which means the leadership behaviours of L1 and L2 in four frames (structure, human resource, political, and symbolic) are not significantly different. Figure 6.1 shows the graph of the means of leadership behaviour rating results for L1 and L2, which makes it much easier to compare L1 and L2 in each frame.

Table 6.1 Statistics of L1 and L2 leadership behaviour

		L1_B Mean ST	L1_B mean HR	L1_B Mean PL	L1_B Mean SY	L2_B Mean ST	L2_B Mean HR	L2_B Mean PL	L2_B Mean SY
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.6042	3.6875	3.7958	3.4750	3.3875	3.3792	3.6792	3.3542
Mode		3.38(a)	4.00	3.88	3.25(a)	3.25(a)	3.63	3.75	3.25(a)
Std. Deviation		.43187	.45693	.51222	.46121	.54570	.61630	.69843	.65824
Minimum		2.63	2.38	2.75	2.38	2.00	1.75	1.63	1.88
Maximum		4.38	4.63	4.75	4.50	4.38	4.38	4.50	4.38
Percentiles	25	3.3438	3.3438	3.3438	3.2188	3.0000	3.0000	3.4688	3.0938
	50	3.5625	3.7500	3.8750	3.4375	3.3750	3.5625	3.7500	3.4375
	75	4.0000	4.0000	4.1563	3.6563	3.7813	3.7500	4.1563	3.8750

A Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Table 6.2 Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
					Pair 1	L1B_structure - L2B_structure			
Pair 2	L1B_humanresource - L2B_humanresource	2.467	4.783	.873	.681	4.253	2.825	29	.008
Pair 3	L1B_political - L2B_political	.933	6.147	1.122	-1.362	3.229	.832	29	.412
Pair 4	L1B_symbolic - L2B_symbolic	-.033	6.111	1.116	-2.315	2.249	-.030	29	.976

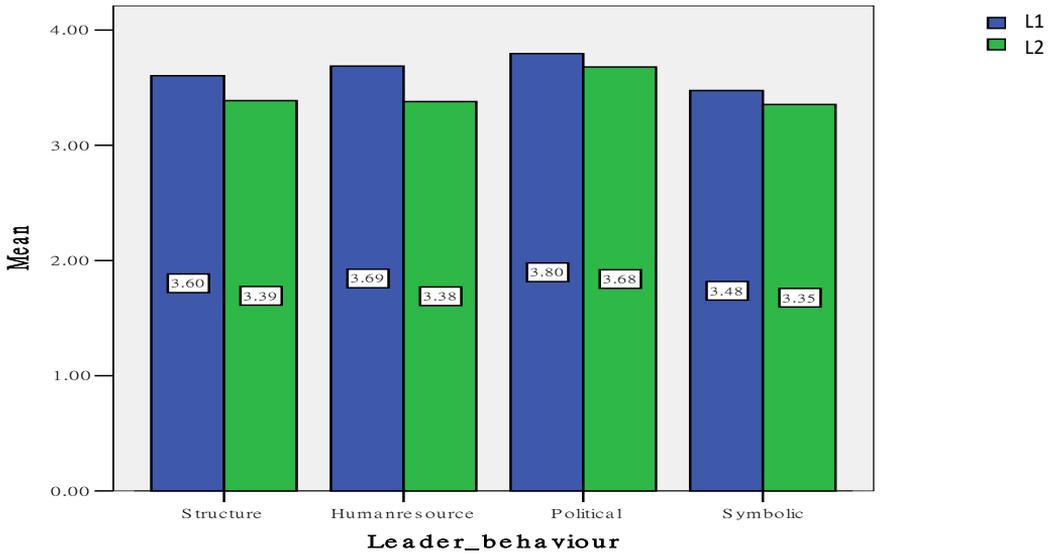


Figure 6.1 The leadership behaviour graph of L1 and L2

### 6.1.2 Leadership styles of L1 and L2 rating results

According to Bolman and Deal's instrument, for each item, give the number "4" to the phrase that best describes this person, "3" to the item that is next best, and downwards to "1" for the item that is least like this person (see Appendix I). The rating results on leadership styles of L1 and L2 are presented in Table 6.3. From this table, we can find the means of L1's leadership styles in four frames. His highest rated one is structural (2,7944), the lowest rated one is symbolic (1,9111); L2's leadership style in the four frames shows that the highest rated one is political (3,1167), the lowest rated one is human resource (1,8667). The T-test comparing L1 and L2 is shown in Table: 6.4. From this table, we find that in the structural frame, the leadership styles of L1 and L2 are not significantly different, but the differences in the other three frames (human resource, political and symbolic) are all less than 0,005. These differences are significant, which means these two institutional leaders' leadership styles are different in the human resource, political and symbolic frames. Figure 6.2 shows these differences in leadership styles between L1 and L2 in the four frames.

Table 6.3 Statistics of Leadership Styles L1 and L2

		L1_S_m ean_ST	L1_S_m ean_HR	L1_S_m ean_PL	L1_S_m ean_SY	L2_S_m ean_ST	L2_S_m ean_HR	L2_S_m ean_PL	L2_S_m ean_SY
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.7944	2.7500	2.5556	1.9111	2.6611	1.8667	3.1167	2.3889
Mode		2.83	2.83	2.33	1.83	2.83	2.00(a)	3.33(a)	2.33
Std. Deviation		.52465	.43274	.49390	.40527	.53513	.44721	.41326	.43403
Minimum		1.67	1.67	1.67	1.17	1.67	1.17	2.33	1.50
Maximum		3.67	3.67	3.50	2.83	3.67	3.00	3.67	3.33
Percentiles	25	2.4583	2.4583	2.1667	1.7917	2.2917	1.5000	2.9167	2.1667
	50	2.8333	2.8333	2.5000	2.0000	2.7500	1.9167	3.2500	2.3333
	75	3.1667	3.0000	2.8750	2.1667	3.0417	2.1667	3.5000	2.7083

A Multiple mode exists. The smallest value is shown

Table 6.4 T-test of Leadership Styles of L1 and L2

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	L1S_structure_mean - L2S_structure_mean	.13333	.79919	.14591	-.16509	.43175	.914	29	.368
Pair 2	L1S_human- resource_mean - L2S_human- resource_mean	.88333	.62537	.11418	.64982	1.11685	7.737	29	.000
Pair 3	L1S_political_mean - L2S_political_mean	-.56111	.64843	.11839	-.80324	-.31898	-4.740	29	.000
Pair 4	L1S_symbolic_mean - L2S_symbolic_mean	-.47778	.57857	.10563	-.69382	-.26174	-4.523	29	.000

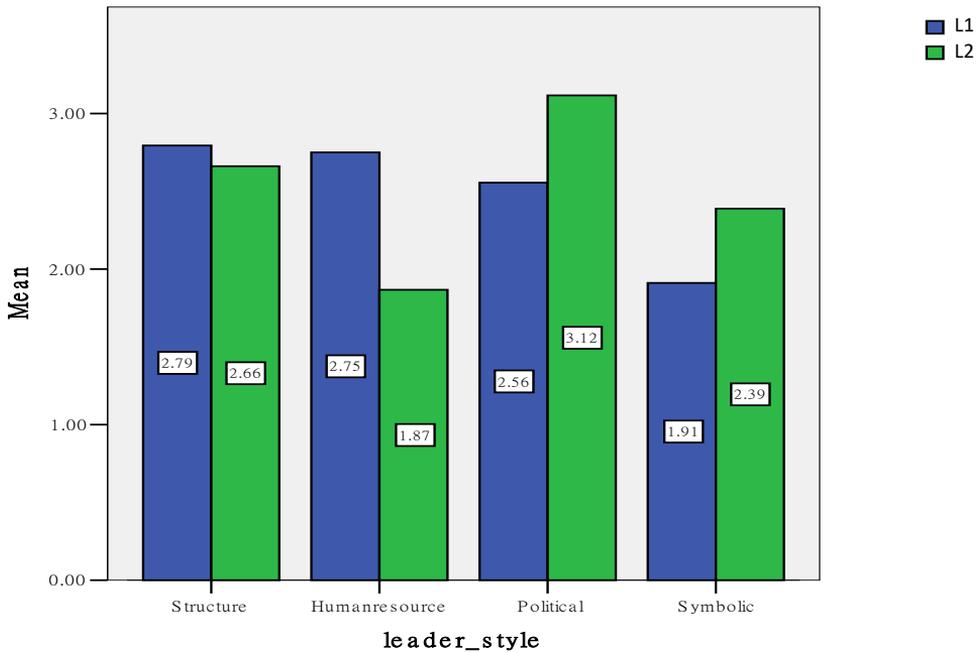


Figure 6.2: The Graph of L1 and L2 Leadership styles

### 6.1.3 Group overview rating result

With respect to the overall rating of the institutional leadership group's performance, the middle level leaders' rating results are shown in Table 6.5. The scale for each item is: "1" (bad performance), "2" (acceptable performance), "3" (good performance), "4" (very good performance) (see Appendix I). The table shows that the highest rated item is structural perspective, with a mean of 2,70, which means the leadership performance is between "acceptable" and "good"; the lowest rated item is political perspective, the mean being 1,30, which shows that the institutional leadership group performance is close to "bad". Figure 6.3 shows the differences in means among the four perspectives. From this figure, we can clearly find that these respondents ranked the leadership group as delivering less than "acceptable" performance in three perspectives: human resource, political and symbolic.

Table 6.5 Statistics of the Leadership Group Overall Rating

		ST	HR	PL	SY
N	Valid	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.70	1.53	1.30	1.43
Mode		3	1	1	1
Std. Deviation		.877	.730	.596	.626
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		4	3	3	3
Percentiles	25	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	50	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	75	3.00	2.00	1.25	2.00

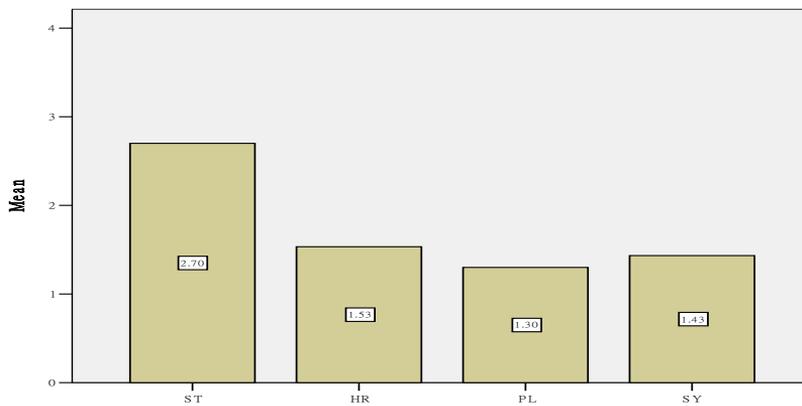


Figure 6.3 Graph of the Leadership group's performance

#### 6.1.4 The “Campus perception”

*The definition of “Campus perception”:*

In this study, “campus perception” refers to the phenomenon of people supporting a staff member who came from the same pre-merger institution. When there are conflicts related to the allocation of perceived advantages, people tend to support or protect colleagues from their pre-merger institutions. This “pre-merger institution perception” is called “Campus-based perception/consciousness” in Chinese terminology. This perception is the basic value behind the formation of different interest groups.

In fact, many of the conflicts or power struggles can also be attributed to campus perception. A higher ‘campus perception’ rating for a group indicates a higher perceived tendency for that group to engage in preferential treatment of their pre-merger colleagues. Therefore, it is a very important factor that influences the integration of the merger. Based on the investigation of the questionnaire from this perspective, the author asked the respondents to give overall ratings to

different groups of people, including: Institutional leaders – IL (Rector, General Secretary of CCP), Vice Institutional Leaders- VL, Middle level leaders- ML (Deans, Directors, as well as Branch General Secretary of CCP), Vice middle leader- VML, Administrative Staff – AdS, and Academic Staff- AS. The detailed information can be found in Section IV of Appendix I. The rating results are shown in Table 6.6 and Figure 6.4

Table 6.6 The rating statistics of “campus perception” among different groups.

		IL	VIL	ML	VML	AdS	AS
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.20	5.07	3.97	5.43	3.23	1.10
Mode		2	5	3(a)	6	3	1
Std. Deviation		.887	.828	.928	.858	.728	.305
Minimum		1	3	3	3	2	1
Maximum		5	6	6	6	4	2
Percentiles	25	2.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	1.00
	50	2.00	5.00	4.00	6.00	3.00	1.00
	75	2.00	6.00	5.00	6.00	4.00	1.00

A Multiple mode exists. The smallest value is shown

From the statistics of the ratings among the different groups, we can easily find the difference among these groups, and the means of these groups. The order of the results from strongest to weakest is the following: middle level leaders who are in vice positions, institutional leaders who are in vice positions, middle level leaders, administrative staff, institutional leaders (rector and the general secretary), and academic staff. The order is graphed in Figure 6.4.

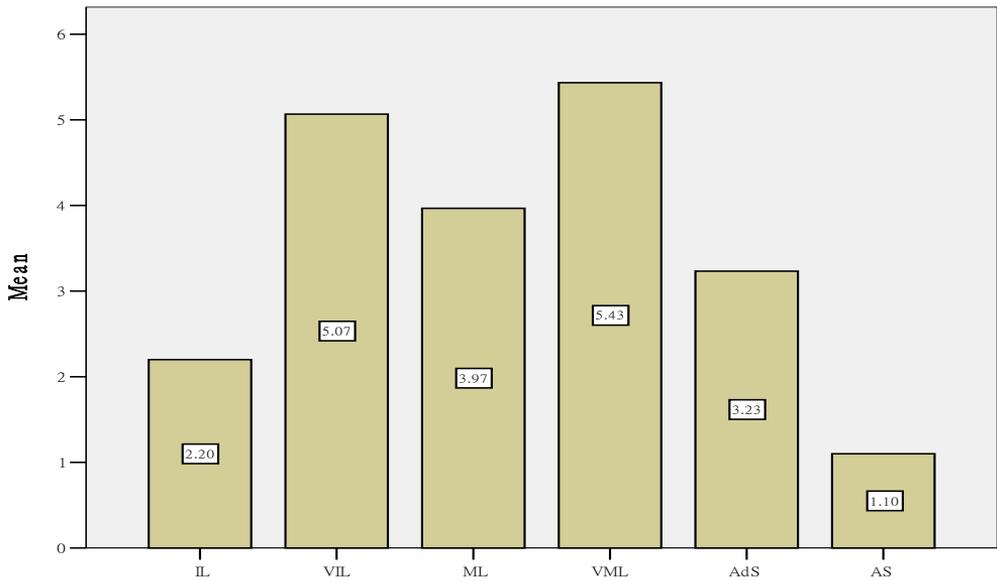


Figure 6.4 Graph of the rating for different groups

From Figure 6.4, we can easily compare these different kinds of groups in general. For instance, the campus perception rating of the vice-directors, vice-deans, as well as the vice-general secretary of the CCP branch is the highest, the mean is 5.42, followed by the rating of the vice rectors/vice general secretaries, which is 5.07. The group with the lowest campus perception rating is the academic staff. A very interesting result is that the two main institutional leaders (rector and the general secretary of the CCP) are the second lowest rated group in the campus perception aspect. In addition, the main middle level leaders, such as deans/directors and the general secretaries of the CCP are not ranked higher than people's normal thinking. What is the reason? This will be analysed in the next section.

### 6.1.5 Summary

In this section, the author presented the survey results of the two main institutional leaders' (L1 and L2) behaviour and styles scale, the overall rating of the leadership group performance with respect to Bolman and Deal's four frames, as well as the campus perception ratings of the different groups. From the leadership behaviour perspective, the survey results show that L1 and L2 do not differ significantly, but are very similar. From the leadership styles perspective, based on the forced-choice questions, the results show that there are significant differences in human resource, political and symbolic frames from the structural perspective.

The overall rating of the institutional leaders group shows that there were

significant differences in performance across the four frames, in contrast to the rating given for the main leaders. According to these results, we can find the main leaders' leadership behaviour, and leadership styles are not correlational with the institutional leaders group's performance or effectiveness at the NewU. What is the underlying reason for this? Regarding campus perception, the result is that the vice deans, directors, and vice rectors/general secretaries of the CCP are the strongest and the second strongest rated at the university. How can we understand this phenomenon? In the following sections (6.2-6.5), the author will use the interviews as a basis to explore these rating results, and explore the links between leadership orientation and the merger, as well as the impact of leadership orientation on the integration of the merger from the four frames perspective.

## 6.2 Structural frame

In Section 5.2 of Chapter 5 the basic structural challenges faced by institutional leaders in NewU are illustrated. How should the work be distributed across roles and units in the institution? Equally important is how the institution will integrate the diverse efforts of individuals, groups, divisions, and departments to ensure quality and alignment with the new university's mission and goals after the merger? Is it better, for example, to centralise or decentralise among these campuses? And once work is distributed, how is coordination supposed to happen? During the interviews, the above questions and similar were raised by both institutional level leaders. In particular, in the new merged university, so many things needed restructuring during that period. Is this a job for these institutional leaders or for the leadership group? It was really hard work to find a correct answer. The analysis of Section 5.2 shows that they were facing structural challenges.

As Bolman and Gallos (2011) note: "in the structural view of academic institutions, college and university leaders play two central roles, they are analysts who carefully study the institution's production processes; and they are institutional architects and systems designers who develop the rules, roles, policies, reporting relationships, and procedures that align efforts with campus goals" (p. 51). And they suggest (see: Table 3.6, in Chapter 3) that the leader should be: (1) structuring their own work; (2) structuring their organisation; and (3) structuring the change process. All are changing, but the likelihood of success is much higher when structure at all three levels is appropriate to the circumstances (Bolman & Gallos, 2.11, pp. 52-53). As for the institutional leaders of the NewU, what were they going on during that period in the merger? What were the leadership orientations of individuals and the institutional leadership group?

## 6.2.1 The leadership orientation from the structural perspective

### *The leadership orientation of the two main institutional leaders at the NewU*

According to the survey results of Section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, we can find the leadership behaviours and styles of the two main leaders L1 and L2 are not significantly different from these two perspectives. Their means are between 3 and 4 points. According to the “Leadership orientation” instrument definition, their leadership behaviours from the structural dimension are between “sometimes” and “often”. Their styles are also less than “3” (the best one is “4”).

### *Performance of the leadership group at the NewU*

In Section 6.1.3, the statistics of the leadership group are presented in Table 6.5. Based on these statistics, as well as Figure 6.3, we find that the overall rating of the performance of the institutional leadership group from the structural perspective is significantly different from the other three perspectives. The mean of the overall ratings is close to the level “3” (good). With the help of SPSS, we can easily acquire further statistics on the frequency of the cases in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5 shows that 14 middle level leaders rate the leadership group’s performance as good from the total of 30 respondents. There are 5 “very good”, 8 “acceptable” and 3 “bad”. In general, most of these respondents thought that the performance of the leadership group was positive from the structural perspective.

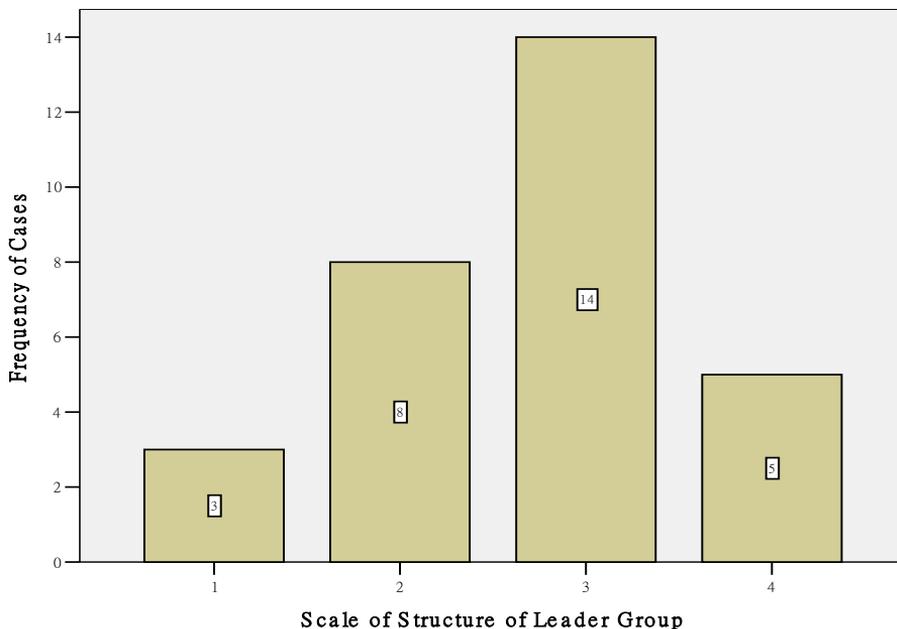


Figure 6.5 Scale of Structure aspect of the Leadership Group

## 6.2.2 Discussion

Through the interviewees' responses, the author received negative and positive opinions. Some opinions from the negative side stated that the leaders just followed up the decisions of the government. It was thought that they did not pay enough attention to internal restructuring. For example:

*At the beginning of the merger, it was very difficult for the whole university because of the lack of a whole reform picture of the new university structure. Our institutional leaders did not design this area carefully. We did not have enough preparation in the pre-merger phase. At the university, nobody knew who would merge or combine with whom at the department/faculty level. As the director of my department, I did not have the information regarding when and where we would need to move. Therefore, I really did not know how to answer when my colleagues asked me about the internal restructuring. This phenomenon really influenced my colleagues' work enthusiasm. All of us became confused with regard to the workload, even job safety. I think it would not have been difficult for the institutional leader group to make a detailed plan and timetable for the implementation of each department, so that they could easily distribute the workload to these relevant departments. I believed this kind of consequence was related to their personal leadership orientation. There were some logical problems. (M17)*

*I do not want to give these leaders individual comments on their leadership orientation, but at least in some aspects, I think they could do better. For instance, regarding the new name of the university, from a reasonable perspective, of course, we should use the original name of University A. I supported this point; it was not because I came from University A. Everyone knew University A had a much better reputation than the others. But I cannot agree with the institutional leader's manner. They suddenly announced the new name in the big meeting for the whole university's middle leaders and emphasized that it was the decision of the provincial government. This was the main reason why the other three pre-merger institutions' people resisted this plan. If they had communicated with the relevant stakeholders in advance, and collected different opinions, I think most of the people from the other three parties would also have chosen the same name. (M19)*

Both directors, M17 and M19, are from two administrative departments of the NewU. M17's response implies that the institutional leaders' work was deficient in "structuring their work" and "structuring their organisation". With respect to structuring their work, Bolman and Gallos (2011) note: "as academic leaders, when they enter an administrative job, they have to forge a path even as they are trying to figure out where they are, where they and their organizations want to go, and what they must do to get everyone there" (p. 53)... As for structuring the organisation, they mention that "every organisation has to answer two fundamental structural questions: 1) the question of differentiation: how do we divide up the work? And 2) the question of integration: how do we coordinate effort once work has been divided?" (p. 56). At the NewU, the institutional leaders did not arrange these two aspects well, which led to the situation as M17 described. M18's response reflects that the institutional leaders did not structure the change with adequate skill.

Regarding the motivations of the merger for these pre-merger institutions, the author also received some negative comments from the different respondents. For

instance, all of the respondents thought that the initial idea to merge did not come from the pre-merger institutions. They did not believe the staff and leaders of these institutions had the motivation for this merger design; some issues were presented by the interview data in previous Section 5.2. They thought the merger took place due to the pressure of the relevant national policies and the motivation of the provincial government. Furthermore, some of the respondents thought that each pre-merger institution would have been better off without the merger, and some thought that another merger design, such as the merger of different types of universities, would have been more beneficial, at least from the interdisciplinary perspective.

Most of the respondents believed that the most flawed part of the merger process was the goal of the merger itself. As stated in Chapter 5, most of them thought the unclear goal of the new university was the major reason for some talented people leaving the university. They worried that they could not have a good future. As for the university, this was a real problem for the management of the university. It was not easy to form the core values and realize mutual-growth.

As for the strategic plan and implementation plan issues, the lack of good planning from both of these aspects led to opinions such as those mentioned above by M17. Many other respondents (e.g. M4, M14, M12, M27, M11, M10, M13, M16, M23, M25, etc.) also raised similar opinions, which reflected that the main leaders could not structure the new merged university or their work. Based on the interviews, the author came to the conclusion that the situation was too messy. The central administration had nearly lost control of the situation before the NewU had realised “Five Unifications” on the management and leadership perspective. However, after the “Five Unifications”, the leadership model was more centralised, and the faculty level did not have any autonomy. Everything had to be reported to the institutional level. These were the main reasons why the respondents did not give a higher rating for the individual leadership orientation.

Even though there were a lot of negative comments, there were still some positive opinions on the individual leadership. From the interviews, the author also got supportive and understanding opinions for the two main leaders, such as M1, M5, M7, M8, M21, M26, etc. The main opinion was that it was unfair to attribute all problems and challenges to these two main institutional leaders. Some comments are the following:

*I had several years of working experience with both leaders. Both leaders are very good leaders. I had a much longer work relationship with L2 than L1, since he was also our rector before the merger. For these leaders, I think they are both skilled leaders from the structural aspect. The reason why the provincial government appointed them as the main leaders after the merger was because their reputation and skills were very good when they were the former leaders in their pre-merger institutions. The support they received was not only from the provincial government, but also from the pre-merger institutions. However, facing the complex merging process, it was not easy for the institutional leaders to operate. For instance, they did not have any power to influence the government's decision in any way. They had to follow up the governmental decision because of the “Top-down” decision-making model. I think they had done their best to promote the merger from the structural perspective. (M15)*

*With their efforts, the university could be acceptable in a way, which was the biggest achievement which should be attributed to these two main institutional leaders. At least, they were fair. They did not have apparent “campus perception” in my opinion. Generally, the majority of the staff in the new university respected their personal behaviours. During the merger process, there were so many new rules, policies, as well as demands from individuals and different groups, which was extremely difficult to manage. If I was in their position, I could have not done as well as they did in the structural aspect. (M18)*

Based on the above points of view, we can understand why these respondents gave a higher rating on the structural perspective than other three aspects. It is also easy to understand why the two main institutional leaders’ results on campus perception are rated the second lowest, as indicated by Figure 6.4.

During the interviews, the author had tried to ask these respondents to make comparative comments between L1 and L2 on leadership behaviours and styles in the structural dimension. The majority of responses the author received from the interviews described that it was difficult to compare these two leaders. The responses of M15 and M18 above reflect the main opinions on them. In Section 6.1.1, the paired samples test (see Table 6.2), as well as Figure 6.1, show that the difference between L1 and L2 is not significant with regard to their leadership behaviours in the structural dimension. With respect to their leadership styles from the structural perspective, the paired samples test (see Table 6.4), as well as Figure 6.2, we can find that the difference in their leadership styles is not significant either. Therefore, these results can help us to verify the interviewees’ opinions. Moreover, the majority of respondents thought that both leaders utilized the structural style in practice.

With respect to the leadership group of the NewU, during the interviews, the author found that the majority of positive comments related to their workload aspects. As described in Chapter 5, the merger process was extremely complex; there were a lot of tasks for the leadership group to deal with. So many new rules and international policies needed negotiation and designing on their part. As a dean mentioned:

*During our merger process, if we review the teaching and learning arrangement, in my opinion, the leadership group did their best to make relevant rules, so that the whole university transitioned smoothly. We also did not receive too many complaints from students. As we know, the leadership group had a lot of work to do during the merger, which was a huge burden. However, they did not forget that teaching and learning were the key tasks. From this point of view, they were good. (M20)*

The negative comments are mostly concerning the design of the organisation structure and implementation of the distribution of work. Some middle level leaders’ comments are similar to M17’s opinion in the above section. Moreover, other major negative comments focus on the strategic plan. Many relevant opinions have been presented in Chapter 5, so they will not be repeated here.

### 6.2.3 Summary

Based on the above analysis, we can generalize some findings: for the two main institutional leaders, from the structural perspective, their leadership behaviours and styles did not differ significantly. From the leadership aspect, they were structural leaders. In general, they sometimes or often utilized structural leadership styles to deal with their work. From the leadership group perspective, the study finds that their performance is mostly ranked as “good” and “acceptable”, even as “very good” by some respondents. Of course, there were problems or weakness in both individuals and the group in some areas, for instance, the goal for the new merged university, the strategic plan and implementation plan, and so on, which had influenced the merger process and outcomes.

### 6.3 Human resource frame

In Chapter 3, based on Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory, the human resource leadership of higher education institutions has been discussed (see: Section 3.4.3). “Human resource leaders need strategies for responding to constituents’ individual and collective needs and for building an environment with characteristics akin to those found in a caring and supportive extended family. The leaders need the combined skills of a servant, catalyst, and coach. The servant’s role is to understand and respond to the best interests of both people and the institutions, seeking ways to bring them into a more harmonious alignment. The work of the catalyst is empowerment - helping people get the information, resources, and leeway that they need. The coach teaches mentors and provides developmental opportunities to sharpen skills and understandings. The payoff, research tells us, is higher levels of employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity” (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Pfeffer, 2007; Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Bolman and Gallos (2011, pp. 93-94) suggest if academic leaders who embrace a human resource view want to build liberating campus environments, they need to allow for the following: “1) open communication, 2) empowerment, 3) effective teams for collective action, 4) support, coaching, and care, 5) hiring the right people” (see Table 3.6).

In the previous chapter, the challenges of the NewU from the human resource perspectives have been presented. Because the merger brought uncertainty to all stakeholders, as the analysis of documents and interview data shows, administrative staff, academic staff, as well as students and alumni had to face some changes and challenges. During the reorganisation process, the restructuring of human resources was the major challenge for the institutional leaders. In this section, the author will utilize the data to explain the NewU’s individual leadership orientation, as well as the leadership group’s performance from the human resource perspective, while at the same time trying to explore how the leadership behaviour and styles influenced the merger.

### 6.3.1 The Leadership orientation from the human resource perspective

*Two main institutional leadership behaviours and styles:* From the human resource dimension, Table 6.1 presents that both L1 and L2 utilization of human resource leadership behaviour was between “sometimes” and “often”. Figure 6.1 shows that L2’s utilization is slightly lower than L1’s. The T-test between L1 and L2 (Table 6.2) shows that the difference is not significant. From Table 6.3, it can be seen that these 30 respondents gave a different rating result for leadership style from the human resource dimension to these two institutional leaders. From Figure 6.2 the difference between them can be easily seen. The T-test in Table 6.4 shows that the difference between L1 and L2 is significant. If we compare the four frames of leadership behaviour, we find that L1’s human resource dimension is not significantly different from the other three, and L2 shows similar results. But, from the leadership style perspective, L1 does not have significant differences from his other three frames while L2’s results are significantly lower than his other three frames. What are the reasons that lead to these differences? Do they have any relevance to the merger?

*The leadership group rating:* From the human resource dimension, the mean of the leadership group is “1,53”, and the mode is “1”, which are much lower than in the structural dimension (see Table: 6.5). These results indicate that the performance of the leadership group from the human resource perspective is between “bad performance” and “acceptable”. The results of the paired samples test between structural and human resource dimensions are significantly different, but the results between human resource and political or symbolic dimensions are not (see Appendix II). Figure 6.3 also shows the same apparent differences between the four frames. The frequencies of respondents’ ratings are presented in Figure 6.6.

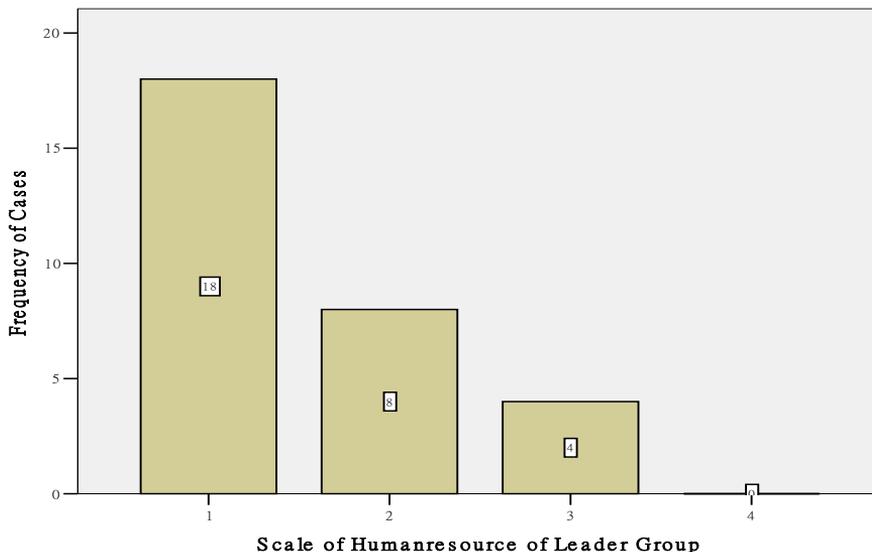


Figure 6.6 Frequencies of Cases in Human Resource aspect of Leadership Group

From the above figure, we find that 18 respondents rated the leadership performance as “1”, which means they think their leadership group’s performance was “bad” from the human resource perspective in the merger. Additionally, none of them gave “4” (very good) as their rating.

Comparing the two institutional personal leadership orientations and the group performance, we find that the two individuals’ leadership orientation scale is better than that of the group in general. What is the reason that led to this result? Does it have any relevance to the merger? In the following discussion section, the author tries to explore and answer these questions.

### 6.3.2 Discussion

#### ***Communication***

Based on the responses from the interviews, the author found that there were many problems from the communication perspective. The majority of respondents thought that open communication was lacking during the whole merger process in different aspects. For instance, before the merger, regarding some very important issues such as the merger design, the new name of the merged university, the goal of the merger, and so on, the institutional leaders or leadership group never had open discussions with the internal communities. All the decisions were made by the government, and perhaps some decision-making involved the main institutional leaders of the four pre-merger institutions. A dean (M23) mentioned the following:

*In the pre-merger phase, in our faculty, almost all staff resisted the merger. In particular, some senior professors were not very satisfied with the merger design. They were against merging the same type of higher education institution together. As the other three institutions were not as strong as us in research, they worried the quality would decrease after the merger. They had even sent a letter clearly opposing the merger to the provincial government. If the government or our institutional leaders had communicated with the representatives of the staff, I think the situation would have been better.*

Some interviewees (e.g. M5, M7, M9, M10, M11, M15, M16, M12, M20, M22, etc.) mentioned that in the implementation phase, the institutional leaders and the leadership group always used the “Top-down” administration style, which also led to many people being dissatisfied within the university internal communities. In fact, if the institutional leaders would have openly communicated in the university, it could have promoted the smooth flow of information between leaders and followers. Unfortunately, they did not communicate openly. Bolman and Gallos (2011) notes that “open communication is a two-way street” (p. 95). In the “Top-down” leadership style, the information only flows in one way, which blocks the channel of information from the community to the institutional level.

*In my faculty, the evaluation and promotion of academic titles was the biggest challenge for me in the first year of the merger. In our new faculty, the composition of academic staff involved three previous institutions (A, B, and C). Because the teaching and research capacities among these different groups of staff were different, we tried our best to keep the balance between the teaching and research, and make*

*one ranking list to submit to the university evaluation committee. However, the majority of the final results were different from our list in the past several years. Because the university did not have any negotiation or communication with the different faculties, they quickly launched the internal rule. Based on that rule, the evaluation committee mainly emphasized publications; they were not familiar with these individuals' other capacities. Although we thought our evaluation method was better than the university's, because of the bureaucratic system, the top-level leaders did not have enough opportunities to acquire opinions from the bottom. These results influenced the enthusiasm of some teachers for teaching at the beginning of the merger. (M7)*

According to these interviews, all interviewees thought centralisation increased after the merger. In particular, with regard to the human resource arrangements and middle level leaders' selection and appointment, the communication mainly took place within the leadership group before decision-making. Formal open communication was lacking between institutional leaders and middle level leaders, as well as among the different interest groups. However, a very interesting phenomenon was that hidden communication within the same pre-merger institution group was very prevalent during the merger process.

*During the merger process, as the director in the department, I always heard some information from our staff concerning decisions or discussion of the institutional leadership group before this information was open to society. On the other hand, some internal issues of the department had already been known by some institutional leadership members before we formally reported to the institutional leadership group. This kind of phenomenon had been influencing our normal work, as well as the integration. (M9)*

Many interviewees described a similar situation. In the merger practice, as discussed in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.3), the majority of staff lost the feeling of security with regard to the job and career development. They were very concerned about their personal interests. They hoped to get support or protection from the relevant leaders both at institutional and middle levels. Therefore, the different interest groups were formed based on "the same pre-merger institutions" at the NewU. This was also the basis for the "campus perception". These different interest groups existed at all levels (institutional, faculty, and street levels) and all faculties, departments, as well as units. Within the same interest group, the information flowed quickly and smoothly. For instance, one director (M19) noted:

*The institutional leadership group had a serious meeting in the morning; sometimes some common staff knew the details of the content in the afternoon, which means that some institutional level leader broke the principle of confidentiality to share this information with some staff.*

Most of the interviewees believed the "vice" positions leaders may have a higher level of campus perception. Some "vice" position leaders at both institutional and faculty level, were the main players spreading this informal information. From this point of view, we can understand the result of overall ratings on "campus perception" (see Section 6.4). The rector, general secretary of the CCP, directors, and deans had more responsibility for the stabilization, operation, and development of the relevant organisations. Therefore, most of them did not

manifest obvious campus perception. They needed to keep a balance among the different interest groups.

Based on the above analysis, we can find that some information was not transparent or open, which led to informal information flows, which enhanced the campus perception and conflicts. Moreover, the lack of open communication influenced the leaders' learning of and response to the staff's needs, as well as their voice. All these influenced the integration of the merger at the NewU.

### ***Empowerment***

In practice, empowerment amounts to providing people the resources they need to get their jobs done in a context of bounded autonomy and accountability. "One key resource is relevant information, which is why transparency and openness are important. Other resources include money, training, staff support, organisational clearances, and whatever else individuals or groups need to work successfully" (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 96). At the NewU, as presented in the previous chapter, under the principle of "Five Unifications", the faculty did not have the right to make decisions concerning human resources and finances in the implementation period. This influenced the management and development of the faculty.

The university implemented these unifications, and in some interviewees' opinion, this policy was beneficial for the university to realise the merger in the earlier period. However, these kinds of unifications only completed one function, which was a "physics" merger of these four pre-merger institutions; it was not a "chemistry" merger or an essential integration. In order to realise the "chemistry" merger, the middle level leaders needed to be empowered. Because it was these deans or directors who faced the internal staff directly, whether their performance was good or bad was directly influential on the integration and effectiveness. As one dean mentioned during the interview:

*After the merger, all financial rights returned to the university, which led to a situation where we did not have any resources to establish new research programmes. All research funding needed to be applied for from the university or relevant external organisations. As for the university's internal research funding distribution, the decision-making mainly focused on previous research and publications. It was difficult to invest in young talented researchers in order to develop their projects. In our natural science field, some research proposals needed new equipment and facilities, and most of them were long term running programmes. But, we did not have the extra resources to invest. Even though some applications were successful, we also needed to retain the balance among the staff that came from the different pre-merger institutions. This kind of situation led to some talented young researchers leaving us. (M22)*

Regarding the financial autonomy, another Secretary of the CCP branch committee (M21) noted:

*"In our faculty, we had a lot of adult education programmes that offered training to society. This was also our main external financial resource to support our operation, which could be used to buy working facilities. We also used a part of this income to distribute to our staff as a bonus*

*every year. Since their budget salary was not very high, the bonus became a very important income for them. After the merger, in order to retain the balance among all parts, our financial account was closed, and all income was to be transferred through the university finance centre directly. Therefore, we did not have any motivation to promote these programmes.”*

The responses of M21 and M22 show that they did not have any autonomy or even bounded autonomy, due to the lack of empowerment from the university during the merger process. Many other interviewees, such as M2, M10, M15, M9, M7, M23, M16, M11, M28, etc., also reflected a similar situation. In addition, some of the interviewees were not satisfied with the university system from the human resource aspect. There is the same situation in most Chinese public universities even nowadays, the staff will get a permanent job as soon as she/he is officially recruited. If they do not make illegal mistakes or have a very serious academic accident, no-one has the right to fire them. Therefore, during the merger process, the whole university was disorganised. Although the deans or directors found that some staff did not concentrate on their normal work, some of them were very lazy, some people were very difficult to deal with, these leaders did not have any human resource rights to make any changes. All the recruitment and layoff rights were located in the institutional human resource department, and mainly controlled by the relevant university leader. Therefore, the deans and directors did not have enough empowerment in either finances or human resources. This led to a situation where they did not have enough power to control or manage difficult people, but they also did not have enough resources to support or care for their staff, or to promote the merger. The majority of middle level leaders were very disappointed with this kind of situation. Therefore, most of them thought the institutional leadership group's performance was not good enough.

### ***Support, coaching, and care***

According to Bolman and Deal's reframing theory, effective human resource leadership is supporting, coaching and caring for individuals as family members. At the NewU, during the merger period, the majority of people did not have a feeling of safety. As presented in the previous chapter, the middle level leaders, administrative staff, academic staff, as well as the students and alumni had been feeling the effects of this. For instance, the middle level leaders worried their administrative positions would be changed or not stable. This applied in particular to some middle level leaders who were only in political positions, such as the general secretaries of the CCP branch committee in the faculties. These leaders do not have an academic background. They are not same as teachers or researchers to hold academic positions (associate professor, or professors). If they lost these leadership positions, it would lead to them losing lots of benefits in the university. Normally, in a Chinese university, an associate professor's budget salary is at a similar level as that of a director who holds a middle level administration position. The professor's salary is a little bit higher than a vice rector level leader's. In addition, all different level leaders earn administrative position allowances based on

their positions every month. If they lost their leadership positions, then their income would be reduced. Of course, some of the younger political middle level leaders had an academic background and held a professorship or associate professorship. If these leaders had lost their positions, at least they could focus on their teaching or research activities. In contrast, those leaders who did not hold academic rank titles would have been in an extremely different situation if they had lost their leadership positions.

During the interviews, some interviewees were also disappointed in the institutional leadership group as well as the individual leaders in terms of how they cared for their people. Of course, they accepted it when the institutional leaders announced that the reform might naturally affect some people's benefits. But they thought that the institutional leaders could perform better on support, coaching and caring for the people. For instance, some interviewees (M1, M3, M8, M12, M13, M15, M16, M14, M20, M23, etc.) pointed out that the middle level leaders' selection and appointment was the most important and sensitive issue in the merger process. As the institutional leadership group, on the one hand, they should do adequate research in advance for the new university, so that they could create a reasonable design. On the other hand, before they launched the relevant selection and appointment policies or principles, they should have a solution regarding "What can they arrange for these previous leaders who would not get the relevant positions?" In the previous chapter, Table 5.1 shows that the university merger announcement was in May 1996, and the document of "Evaluation and Selection of Middle Level Leaders For All Administration Departments" was published in August 1996. This period was very short. The preparation for this work was inadequate when the university leadership group suddenly announced this policy, which led to uncertain feelings for all relevant middle level leaders. M8 emphasized:

*"According to the relevant documents, almost 50% of middle leaders would lose their positions in the new university, which led to feelings of anxiety for all relevant middle level leaders. Most of them could not concentrate on their work anymore, which led to the merger work falling into disorder. I disagreed with the institutional leadership's arrangement. In my opinion, the university should have thought about and found a solution for the current middle leaders who would lose their positions before they issued the number of middle level leaders. For instance, to offer some further training (non-degree or degree) positions paid by the university, or to offer more positions in facilitating service companies as well as in enterprises that were owned by the university, and so on. At least, these people could have a similar income compared with the new middle level leadership positions. Unfortunately, the institutional leaders did not make these kinds of rules or policies."*

M8's opinion reflected many interviewees' feelings that these institutional leaders did not pay enough attention to caring for the university's employees. In addition, the opinions of M21 and M22 in the last section also state that the institutional leaders were not good enough in terms of supporting people.

During the interviews, the author found that the institutional leader L2's position was the chairman of the leadership group. This leadership group was responsible for the design of all the middle leadership positions and the relevant

leaders' selection and appointment. Therefore, some middle level leaders attributed their discontent to L2. This is the reason why L2's leadership style measured results from the human resource frame are lower than L1's. Moreover, the results show that this dimension's rating is also lower than in the other three frames (see Figure 6.2).

### ***Hiring the right People and Team work***

As for hiring people, Bolman and Gallos (2011, p. 102) note that "good hiring depends particularly on three key steps (1) knowing what you are looking for, (2) ensuring a strong candidate pool, and (3) being thorough and systematic in assessing candidates". According to the interviews, the author found that the institutional leadership group also took similar steps at the NewU. For instance, firstly, they used the new university structure as a basis to set up all middle level leadership positions. Then, they organised the "Evaluation and Selection Leadership Group" in charge of the relevant work (see Section 5.4.3 and Table 5.5). Finally, they made choices from candidates to fix these positions. However, the institutional leadership group's decision making was based on the principle of "retaining the balance" among the four pre-merger higher education institutions. In particular, they tried to retain the balance between Universities A and B. For example, all of the schools and departments had two main leadership positions, one of which was the dean or director, and the other one was the branch general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. When they gave one position to someone from University A, they gave another position to someone from University B's staff. The vice leader positions (vice directors, vice deans, etc.) also followed the same principle. This kind of choice and decision-making was different from Bolman and Gallos' step-by-step principle of hiring people.

With respect to the middle level leaders' arrangement in the NewU, the author heard two different opinions during the interviews. One was that the institutional leaders' leadership styles as well as the institutional leadership group's arrangement were understandable. A director whose position was related to the cadres' appointment and adjustment during the merger mentioned the following:

*Regarding the middle level leaders' selection and appointment, in my opinion, the principle of "retaining the balance" was good within that situation. We had two main reasons, 1) since at the beginning of the merger, the people came from four pre-merger institutions, the institutional leaders and common staff were not familiar with these middle level leaders who were from other different pre-merger institutions. 2) This principle was the best option to reduce the conflicts among different parties. Of course, I also recognised there were some problems. For example, it influenced the development of some talents. But, if we had not done so, we would have had more conflicts, and increased the campus perception. (M24)*

Other interviewees focused only on the negative aspects. Many interviewees had questions about what should happen. For example, "who will fill certain positions?"; "Who are the right people for some positions?"; "How does one define the right person?" Many of the interviewees (M2, M3, M4, M8, M13, M14, M23, M26, M28, etc.) felt that some institutional leaders always favoured and supported colleagues from their pre-

merger institution. Meanwhile, due to the lack of transparency, communication, as well as empowerment, in some faculties or administration departments, and in the middle level leaders group, there existed a very painful power struggle, which will be analysed in Section 6.4. The power struggle mainly originated from campus perception, as the previous section discussed; in the daily work, because of a lack of open communication, informal communication always took place within the interest groups. Some vice leaders (vice deans, vice directors, etc.) always communicated with their trustable institutional leaders (from the same pre-merger institution), which led to difficulties in forming an effective middle level leadership group team for collective action.

### 6.3.3 Summary

From the interviews and the rating results we can find that some of the interviewees respected the two main institutional leaders' personalities and behaviours, and they also understood that the institutional leaders had a hard time handling all kinds of challenges in the merger process. At the NewU, the main institutional leaders, on the one hand, needed to promote the merger, and to take care of the development of the university. On the other hand, they also needed to take care of individual needs as well as they could. However, in the merger context, there existed some conflicts between the individual needs and the university's needs. How did they deal with these conflicts and challenges? This question can reflect the effectiveness of the two institutional leaders as well as the institutional leadership group. Based on the analysis in this section, we can find that there were some problems for the NewU's leaders as well as the leadership group. For instance, the lack of open communication not only among these different interest groups, but also between institutional leaders and the middle level leaders, the street level staff and other stakeholders, led to a deepening of the misunderstanding and conflicts; the "Five Unifications" caused the centralisation of the whole university. At the same time, it led to feelings of inadequate empowerment, support, coaching and caring on the middle level leaders' part. The principles and process of the selection and appointment of the middle level leaders led to difficulties in forming the middle level leadership group's team for collective action. According to this analysis, we can understand why the rating results for both leaders' individual leadership styles were lower than the other frames, as well as why 18 respondents rated the institutional leadership group's performance to be of a "bad" level.

## 6.4 Political Frame

"Colleges and Universities are highly political institutions, but that is a statement of fact, not an indictment" (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 72). In Chapter 5, the main challenges from the political perspectives have been presented. After the merger at NewU, the limited resources available, as well as the diversity of values, beliefs,

interests, behaviours, skills, goals, etc., among people from the pre-merger institutions, led to the formation of different interest groups as well as complex conflicts. According to Bolman and Deal's reframing theory, as well as Bolman and Gallos's study, higher education institutions can be seen as a "Jungle". Effective academic leaders use four key political skills: (1) setting agendas, (2) mapping the political terrain, (3) networking and building coalitions, and (4) bargaining and negotiating (see 3.4.3). In this section, based on the middle level leaders' rating results and interviews, the author will explore from these four key political skills perspectives how the institutional leaders' orientation as well as the institutional leadership group's performance influenced the merger process and integration.

### 6.4.1 The leadership orientation rating results

*Individual rating results:* As the previous section's analysis shows, from Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1, we can find that the differences between the two institutional leaders L1 and L2 are not significant, either in behaviour or style, from a political perspective. Their leadership behaviours' rating mean is close to "4", which means they often use political skills. Their leadership styles are significantly different (see Table 6.4 and Figure 6.2); L2 is higher than L1, which means L2 is more politically orientated. If we compare each one's political with their other three frames, we can find that L2's political dimension is higher than his other perspectives. L1's political frame differs significantly only from his symbolic perspective.

*The institutional leadership group's results:* from Table 6.5, we can find that their performance in the political frame is lowest among the four dimensions. The mean is only 1,30, which means that most respondents rated their performance from the political perspective to be "Bad". Figure 6.7 shows the frequency of cases. From this figure, we find that 23 respondents gave the rating scale "1", meaning "bad performance"; only two respondents gave "3", meaning "good"; and none gave the rating "very good" performance.

Checking their individual leadership style or behaviours, we find that they are all political leaders. However, the institutional leadership group's performance rating is "bad" from the political perspective; do the results have any relationship with the merger?

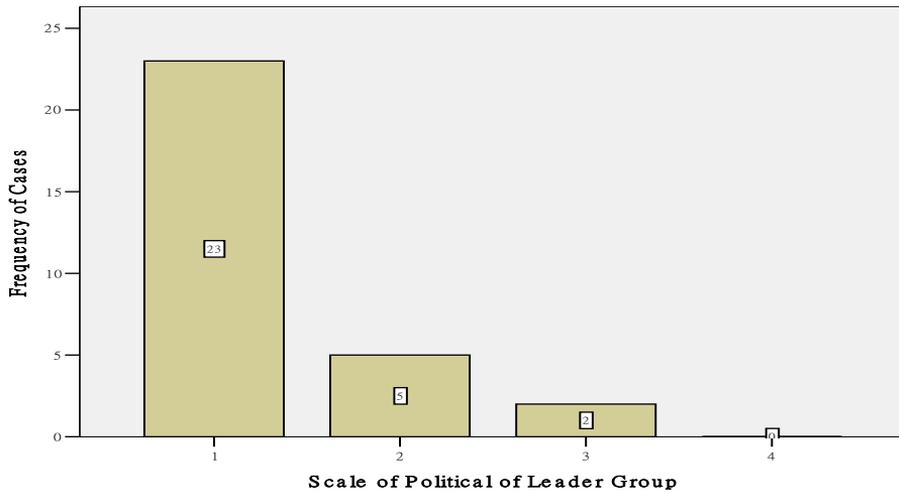


Figure. 6.7: Frequency of cases of overall rating for the leadership group from the political aspect

## 6.4.2 Discussion

### *Setting agendas*

The merger of universities is a complex organisational change process. In the changing organisations, effective leaders need to develop a well-defined agenda that includes (1) a clear vision that balances the long-term interests of key constituents and (2) a detailed strategy for achieving the vision that takes into account competing internal and external forces (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Kotter, 1988). In the previous chapter some major challenges have been presented. In the above two sections of this chapter, we can find that all of the challenges are linked more or less with people's benefits or interests. In other words, the people are the most important factor in the integration of the merger. The merger caused all internal stakeholders to face an uncertain situation. How can the institutional leaders change this kind of situation? Why did these constituents (administrative staff, academic staff, students, etc.) see the merger as a crisis, but not as an opportunity? These questions reflect that the institutional leaders as well as the leadership group did not have enough effective leadership skills from a political perspective. As the analysis in Section 5.2 shows, the university did not have clear goals or a version of the merger. Due to the development goal of the NewU being unclear, most staff had to focus only on temporary interests. For instance, some interviewees (M5, M7, M11, M12, M15, M16, M18, M20, M25, etc.) gave the similar opinions as M22:

*In my faculty, the negative voices from the academic staff mainly concentrated on "what can we get from the merger?" As I mentioned, the merger only enlarged our size with regard to students and staff members, but we did not get more resources such as investment, research projects, etc. The university's development goals were too general, which did not give us a clear picture of how*

*to help us to realise mutual-growth. We could not provide opportunities, even potential ones, to our staff. In fact, the merger led to our resources being much more scarce. All the people were focused on the limited existing resources, which was the main reason for the “brain drain” in our faculty. They could not see the future clearly. Sometimes, I think that maybe these institutional leaders did not have clear goals either. (M22)*

M22’s opinion mainly reflected that the development goals of the university could not match the faculties’ reality. In other words, the relevant academic staff did not know how to make the link between self-career development and the university’s development goals. They could not get extra benefits or add value to the internal and external resources in the short term during the merger. The administrative staff also shared the same feelings. Relating to M8’s opinion in the previous section, another director from the human resource department (M6) mentioned that:

*If the institutional leaders had prepared a good agenda before the middle level leaders’ evaluation and selection, for example, firstly, by designing a training package to offer a number of positions to the middle level leaders who would lose their current positions, and by promising them two options after they completed the degree or training in two or three years. The first option would allow them to apply for the new administration positions; the other would have been to transfer them to teachers’ positions if they had achieved a further degree. If the university had done so, the relevant people would not have been as nervous as they were.*

Of course, the opinions of M6 and M8 are only suggestions that the NewU’s leaders could have considered. If the institutional leaders had prepared a good agenda and communicated openly, they should have had more good solutions. Bolman and Gallos (2011, p. 79) cite work by the organisational scholar Jeffrey Pfeffer’s (1992), which underscores the importance of “sensitivity” as a key political attribute. “Effective academic leaders know how their stakeholders think and what they care about so that campus agendas, resource allocations, and processes can respond to those concerns.” (p. 79) In the NewU leadership’s practice, during the reform of the NewU, some former middle level leaders who lost their previous positions were transferred to some new units, which were idle units. This kind of arrangement led to a waste in human resources and financial resources, which affected these previous middle leaders’ work enthusiasm. This is one of the major reasons why there were 23 respondents who gave an overall “bad performance” rating to the leadership group, and why none gave a “very good” rating.

### ***Mapping the political terrain***

Bolman and Gallos (2011, p. 80) note: “a central challenge in making change stick is mobilizing enough power to move your initiative forward”. ... “Three questions help to map the political terrain for any given issue: 1) Who are the players? 2) What are the interests of each player? And 3) How much power is each player likely to wield?” (see 3.4.3). At the NewU, in order to move the merger forward, it

was very important for the two main institutional leaders L1 and L2 to map the political terrain. The previous chapter has presented some relevant challenges, such as the resource allocation, human resource adjustment, and so on. Some interviewees thought, from the institutional perspective, that the two main institutional leaders had been facing big pressures that came not only from the common staff or the middle level leaders, but also from the vice rectors and vice general secretaries of the NewU.

The merger had also influenced the interests of the vice rectors or vice general secretaries of the CCP. For instance, before the merger, some vice rectors or vice general secretaries of the CCP were top level leaders in the pre-merger institutions; although the institutions were smaller than the NewU, they had been much more powerful there. After the merger, they were only in charge of one or two administrative departments. In a way, the power of some vice rectors or vice general secretaries was reduced. They were similar to a big department-level leader. Therefore, they also felt they had lost something in the merger, and wanted to acquire more resources. In addition, some interviewees pointed out that some vice institutional level leaders were the representatives of the “campus based” interest groups. As previously discussed, the campus perception led to the existence of some different interest groups at different level organisations. Behind each institutional leader, there was a big interest ally. Normally, they shared information within the same interest group so that they could protect their benefits. This is also indicated by the campus perception ratings (see Figure 6.4), as the vice institutional leaders’ campus perception was the second highest.

As the analysis in Chapter 5 shows, power struggles were a significant factor during the merger process (see Section 5.4.3). It not only happened at the faculty level, but also at the institutional level. In particular, many interviewees thought that the internal power struggles of the institutional leadership group had seriously affected the making of many decisions, and also affected the integration of the merger as well as the development of the NewU. In addition, the majority of interviewees thought the two main institutional leaders were experienced leaders; although the leadership group performance was not good (see Figure 6.7), they had done their best in this field.

### ***Networking and building coalitions***

“The networking is a key determinant of leadership effectiveness” (Kotter, 1982; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 82). In fact, in China, all the leaders of higher education institutions know networking is a core factor in various organisations. Most of the Chinese leaders in universities are good at building networks and alliances. This is also one characteristic of the traditional Chinese political culture. At the NewU, under the merger environment, all interviewees believed that all institutional leaders had paid attention to networking and building power alliances. However, during the pre-merger and implementation phases, the majority of networking and alliance building were “campus based” or “faculty based”. That means these institutional leaders (including vice rectors and vice general secretaries of the CCP)

had been building up their personal support networks, the followers being mainly from their pre-merger institutions. They called these “campus based” networks or alliances. The majority of interviewees stated that the smaller the pre-merger institution, the more obvious the coalition was. Namely, the alliances in the College C or D were more obvious than in B or A; the college B’s alliance was more obvious than University A’s. In addition, some interviewees stated that beyond the campus-based alliances, L1 and L2 favoured the respective faculties where they held professorship. The interviewees called these “faculty-based” alliances. For instance, the main institutional leaders had teaching experience in the faculty. When they became the institutional leaders, some of their students became middle level leaders. After the merger, another phenomenon was that some middle level leaders were appointed in key administration departments as directors. In fact, these directors came from the same faculty as L1 or L2. Some interviewees thought these people had additional close “teacher-student” relationships with the institutional leaders. This kind of relationship led to the main leaders being more familiar and trusting with their students. Of course, all these arrangements of middle level leadership followed the principle of “retaining balance” from the other middle level leaders’ perspectives. However, there still existed very negative feelings among respondents.

As for these alliances in the NewU, in fact, they were the different interest groups based on “campus” or in “faculty”. All interviewees thought these alliances or networks led to an enhancement of the campus perception, and an increase in the power struggles among these different interest groups at both institutional and faculty levels. Some interviewees believed if the main leaders and other members of the leadership group had paid attention to networking among these different interest groups to build a coalition in the whole university, the merger process would have been smoother. Unfortunately, under the effects of the campus perception, these institutional level leaders had made some mistakes in this regard, which had also affected the middle level leaders when they were coping with conflicts at the faculty or department levels. These had been influencing the integration of the merger for several years. In general, the interviewees thought that the two main leaders L1 and L2 had done better than the vice rectors and vice general secretaries. Therefore, the overall rating for the leadership group is “bad” performance, but the two main leaders’ leadership styles are rated better from the political perspective.

### ***Bargaining and negotiating***

“Academic leaders continually find themselves engaged in a complex, multiplayer game on a field crowded with other skilled players. Some are natural allies, others are likely opponents, and still others could go either way depending on the issue and the circumstances” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, pp. 85-86). At the NewU, the two main institutional leaders L1 and L2 were facing a similar situation as Bolman and Gallos described. As analysed in the above section, within the institutional leadership group, all leaders were representative of the different interest groups.

With respect to the different issues and circumstances, some leaders as well as their alliances supported either L1 or L2, or sometimes both.

*As I knew, regarding some big issues, such as the middle level leaders' appointment, resource allocation, etc., it was really hard work for L1 and L2 to arrive at agreements. Some decisions always took time and energy out of these leaders. (M24)*

The majority of the interviewees thought the main leaders L1 and L2 had bargaining and negotiating skills. Very often they built agreements that enabled two or more parties to unite around certain initiatives. In fact, after the merger in the NewU, with many issues, they had to retain the balance among these four pre-merger institutions, which was a compromise. Of course, these agreements were rarely perfect; as Bolman and Gallos (2011) pointed out, they do not need to be perfect. They only need to be good enough that the parties find it profitable to work together. It is important to tend to potential opponents in the deal making process (p. 86). From this point of view, many interviewees thought, comparing with other leaders in the group, L2 had done a very good job. From this we can understand the reason why these respondents gave a rating for L2 that indicates that he possessed a much better leadership style from the political perspective.

### 6.4.3 Summary

From the political perspective, the respondents gave a rating for the two main leaders on both leadership behaviours and styles. The results show the two institutional leaders used the political frame between “often” and “sometimes”, and L2 had a significantly political leadership style. However, the overall rating for the institutional leadership group, given by the respondents, indicated a “bad performance”. According to the above discussions, the leaders of the NewU had not done well on setting agendas during the merger process. Although the main leaders knew their political terrain, under the merger circumstances, the main leaders had to face opponents from different campus-based interest groups, even within the leadership group. In the beginning of the merger, campus perception or faculty perception led to the formation of different networks and alliances that were campus-based or faculty-based. The lack of networking and coalitions led to increases in power struggles. The interviewees thought the general secretary of the CCP L2 had done very well on bargaining and negotiation, but the whole institutional leadership performed “badly”. As Bolman and Deal (2008) note, politics is the realistic process of making decisions and allocating resources in a context of scarcity and divergent interests. This view puts politics at the heart of decision-making. The merger process of the NewU was a political struggling process in a way.

## 6.5 Symbolic frame

### 6.5.1 The leadership orientation rating result

Individual rating result: The statistics of L1's and L2's leadership behaviours are presented in Table 6.1. The results in this table show that the scale for leadership behaviours of L1 and L2 is between “sometimes” and “often”. Comparing the leadership behaviours of L1 and L2 through the T-test (see Table 6.2), the difference between L1 and L2 is not significant. Figure 6.1 also shows that L1 and L2 are almost on the same level from the symbolic dimension. With respect to the leadership style, Table 6.3 shows their means are different, and from the T-test between L1 and L2 (see Table 6.4), we find that the difference between L1 and L2 is significant. Figure 6.2 illustrates this clearly.

*The institutional leadership group rating results:* Table 6.5 shows us the respondents gave an overall rating of “1,43” to the institutional leadership group performance, which means the majority of middle level leaders thought the institutional leadership group's performance was between “bad” and “acceptable”. The frequency of cases concerning the overall rating is presented in Figure 6.8.

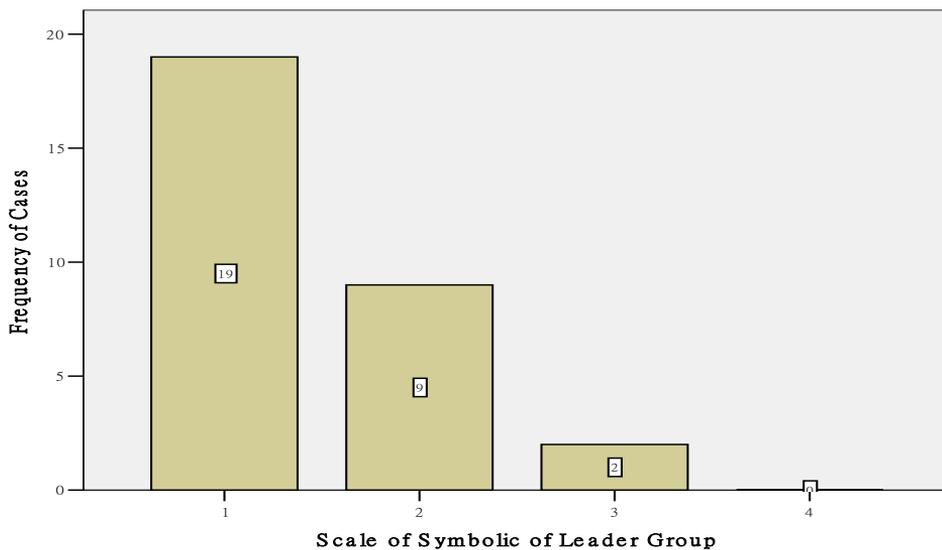


Figure 6.8. Frequency statistics for the Leadership Group from the Symbolic aspect.

From Figure 6.8, we can find that there were 19 respondents who rated the institutional leadership group's performance as “bad”, 9 as “acceptable”, and 2 as “good”. None rated the performance as “very good”.

## 6.5.2 Discussion

From the symbolic perspective, in Chapter 5, based on interviews, some challenges that the NewU had to face have been presented, such as the culture being different among these four pre-merger institutions, an unclear vision, and the scarcity of ceremonies, rituals, heroes and stories at the university. “An organisation’s culture is revealed and communicated through its symbols. ... Symbols take many forms in organisations. Myth, vision, and values imbue an organisation with purpose and resolve. Heroes and heroines, through words and deed, serve as living logos. Fairy tales and stories tender explanations, reconcile contradictions, and resolve dilemmas (P. S. Cohen, 1969). Rituals and ceremonies offer direction, faith, and hope (Ortner, 1973). Metaphor, humour, and play loosen things up” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 254).

The symbolic academic leaders have been discussed according to Bolman and Deal’s reframing theory in Chapter 3. In the merger context of the NewU, Chinese culture has affected different aspects. For instance, the culture of the “teacher-student” relationship in China, where there are more than 2000 years of history of Confucianism. A core value of Confucianism is “respect for teachers”. Under the effect of this traditional Chinese culture, the “teacher-student” relationship is different from that in Western countries. In Western countries, the teachers and students are more individual; the relationship between teachers and students is much looser. However, in China, teachers very much trust their students; the students are very respectful and loyal towards their teachers. One Chinese dictum says: “a teacher for a day is a father for a lifetime”, which means that a student will respect and treat a teacher with whom he or she has even one day of teaching relationship similarly to his or her blood father for their whole life. So, the relationship between teachers and students is much closer than in Western countries. In addition, Chinese people take care of networks, such as the colleagues’ relationships, alumni relationships, etc. When Chinese people make decisions, they always think about relations and networks. Therefore, based on these various “relationship” cultures, it is easier to understand the reasons why there were different interest groups after the merger, that were “faculty-based” or “campus-based” as well as “teacher-student relationship-based”. This culture is a very important factor that influenced the integration of the merger in the NewU.

How could the institutional leaders deal with these conflicts from the cultural perspective? How could they build up a new organisational culture in the merged university? Bolman and Gallos provide us some suggestions or answers on “how symbolic leaders work” (2011, p. 117). “As effective academic symbolic leaders, they construct meaning and foster hope and faith by 1) building on the past for an exciting, new vision of the future; 2) leading by example; 3) constructing a heroic narrative and telling it often, and 4) leveraging the power in ritual and ceremony” (see 3.4.3). In the following sections, the author will present an analysis based on these four perspectives.

### ***Building on the past for an exciting, new vision of the future***

Each pre-merger institution has its own history, culture, as well as achievements. As the previous chapter's analysis shows, the people coming from these institutions were not strongly motivated, as the decision was made by the government. However, the merger had become the reality, and nobody could change it. In the relevant document, the merger goal was to realize mutual-growth, and create additional value for the merger. As the institutional leaders, they should have tried their best to lead this new university to realize this goal. Therefore, a clear mission, value, and vision were needed.

“Values characterize what an organisation stands for, qualities worthy of esteem or commitment. Unlike goals, values are intangible and define a unique distinguishing character. Values convey a sense of identity ... and help people feel special about what they do. ... The values that count are those an organisation lives, regardless of what it articulates in mission statements or formal documents” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 255). They also note that the vision is very important for the organisation. “Vision turns an organisation's core ideology, or sense of purpose, into an image of the future. It is a shared fantasy, illuminating new possibilities within the realm of myths and values” (p. 255). In the NewU, every previous department, unit, and college had its histories. All these organisations needed leading for direction at the moment the new university was founded. The institutional leaders should have studied each history, listen to constituents, and engaged them in developing a new sense of vision, purpose, and possibility. Unfortunately, according to the interviewees' responses, they had not acted in this way. As previous sections' descriptions by some interviews show, the university did not have a clear mission, value and vision.

Due to the lack of mission, value and vision, regardless of the staff, middle level leaders could not figure out a clear road map to make links between the development of the new university and their personal career development. This influenced the formation of the new identity or the culture of the institution. As found from the interviews, the institutional leaders lacked symbolic leadership skills. Some interviewees thought the institutional leaders did not pay attention to the symbolic perspective. From the interviews' results, we can understand the reason why these respondents rated the symbolic perspective much lower than the other three frames.

### ***Lead by example***

“Leading by example” is a basic requirement for different-level leaders at the university, which is easy to find in all relevant documents on the evaluation or appointment of the university's leaders. During the interviews, the majority of interviewees believed that two main institutional leaders (L1 and L2) were working very hard on building and promoting the new university. However, many of them also pointed out that working hard does not mean that an individual is an effective academic leader. As Bolman and Gallos (2011) state: “strong symbolic leaders understand that they are always onstage, and they take advantage of every

opportunity to use themselves as symbols of important values, priorities, and agendas. Doing that takes discipline, planning, and creativity” (pp. 118-119).

During the NewU’s merger process, all individual institutional leaders acted as examples for all staff. Did he or she accept the merger? Did he or she show campus perception and only favour former colleagues? Did the leadership group unite, and reach a consensus on the development of the NewU? ... These questions were naturally raised by the internal constituents. The constituents were observing and following up these leaders at the time. Unfortunately, from the previous sections’ discussions, we find these institutional leaders, in particular, some vice rectors or vice general secretaries, had strong campus perception, which led to their followers strengthening the campus perception and forming their own interest groups.

In a way, the institutional leadership is the implementer of the merger, and no doubt these leaders’ accomplishments become the key factor of whether the overall development of the merged university could be carried out smoothly and the merger could be successful. As one interviewee (M19) stated:

*“The institutional leaders should “lead by example”. If the leaders could not give up the campus-based perception, or faculty-based perception, how could they ask the followers to eliminate these perceptions? Even within the same pre-merger institution group, some leaders only favored their faculty members, and their students. This really affected others’ work enthusiasm.”*

Some interviewees (M2, M4, M5, M7, M9, M11, M12, M16, M20, M21, etc.) thought that the institutional leadership group was not united. On the one hand, they thought some vice position leaders were the reason for this, on the other hand, they mainly attributed it to the two main institutional leaders, L1 and L2. For instance, M2 pointed out that:

*“In a way, the main institutional leaders L1 and L2 were the soul of the new university. If they had had a very clear vision of the merger, or if they had been very confident of the future of the merger and shown they serve the people of the university wholeheartedly, these vice rectors and vice general secretaries of the CCP would have followed them and united. Otherwise, it was not easy to form a collective teamwork.”*

From the above opinions and analysis, we can find that the main institutional leaders’ leadership behaviours and styles were one of the most important factors to influence whether the institutional leadership group united. The institutional leadership group’s performance determined the middle level leadership group, as well as the whole university’s internal society. Therefore, leading by example was a very important factor in the merged university.

### ***Construct a heroic narrative and tell it often and widely***

“Exploits of heroes and heroines are lodged in our psyches. We call on their examples in times of uncertainty and stress. ... We carry lessons of teachers, parents, and others with us. Their exploits, animated through stories serve as guides

to choices we made in our personal lives and at work” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 258-259). “Stories, like folk or fairy tales, offer more than entertainment or moral instruction for small children. They grant comfort, reassurance, direction, and hope to people of all ages. They externalize inner conflicts and tensions” (Bettelheim, 1977; Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 259). “Stories are deeply rooted in the human experience. They are told and retold around campfires and during family reunions” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, P.260; E. Clark, 2004). As an effective leader from the symbolic perspective, he or she needs to be good at constructing heroic narrative or stories to reveal the university culture and to encourage the followers to realize the university’s goals.

In the NewU, these interviewees reflected that the institutional leaders used these kinds of skills, such as using a heroic narrative and telling stories, sometimes but not often. Some interviewees thought there were very good heroic cases which should have been promoted. M21 mentioned the following:

*We have a distinguished professor in our faculty. He is the only one of the whole of NewU who was granted the title of Academician of the Chinese Academy of Science, which was a big achievement in the whole university. When he got the academician title, the university and the provincial government did some promotion in newspapers and Internet websites, as well as other kinds of media. In my opinion, the promotion and commendation were only focusing on the result. If the university emphasized other perspectives, for example, his academic career experience, how he could combine research and teaching together, and so on, I think this would have helped the young academic staff to learn a lot from him. In particular, his successful story would have encouraged some people from different previous institutions to emphasize both teaching and research. It would have also been helpful in integrating people during the merger.*

In Chinese universities, there is another traditional activity, which is to select “outstanding staff” from the faculty and institutional levels every year. The purpose is to reward people who have worked hard or made a big contribution to the faculty or university in the past year. From the symbolic perspective, this is a very good action to construct and promote outstanding staff (as heroes and heroines) so that other staff can learn something from them. In particular, under the merger circumstances, if the institutional leaders had cited them often, this would have been helpful to encourage all staff to work hard. But the interviews show that even the outstanding staff selection had been affected by the campus perception. Sometimes, the university had to retain balance among the pre-merger institutions, which led to a loss of the value of “the outstanding staff” title. From this case, we can see the institutional leaders did not utilize this excellent activity from the symbolic perspective.

### ***Leverage the power in ritual and ceremony***

“Many of the best opportunities for academic leaders to retell their stories are at institutional rituals and ceremonies. Rituals are stylized or scripted patterns of action that recur on a regular basis, such the meetings of a class, the faculty, or a president’s or dean’s cabinet. Ceremonies, on the other hand, are ritualized

occasions that are grander and less frequent, such as commencements, convocations, inaugurations, or ribbon cuttings to launch new initiatives or facilities” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 120). In Chinese higher education institutions, traditionally, there are a lot of rituals and ceremonies. At the NewU, the university has some different kinds of rituals and ceremonies. In the interviewees’ opinions these kinds of activities were useful to the integration of these different pre-merger institutions’ colleagues and students.

For instance, the rituals and ceremonies for students: honours day is held for the new students, and a graduation ceremony for bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral students. Before the merger, each university organised the honours day for the whole university’s students, and the rector and the general secretary gave speeches there. After the merger, due to the number of students being very big, each faculty organised these by themselves. Another big ceremony was the university sports games. Normally, the NewU combined the student sports game and staff sport games, which means they organised it at the same stadium. The general secretary or rector gave a speech at the opening ceremonies. The rituals and ceremonies for staff in at the NewU: the staff union organised some activities, such as a dancing competition, singing competition, etc. Another important ritual was the New Year Reception for the staff, which is faculty-based. Normally, the university leaders or their representatives would participate in all faculties, and give speeches there too. All interviewees believed this was a good opportunity to gather the staff and strengthen the integration of staff after the merger. In addition, through the institutional leaders’ speeches, the leaders promoted the university’s value; it was a very good opportunity to build the new culture and identity. Some interviewees thought that the university leaders and their group were good at leveraging the power in rituals and ceremonies at the beginning of the merger. However, the issue was the lack of rituals and ceremonies for the whole university. An example of this would be the fact that an opening ceremony for the new merged university was not organized. All the interviewees thought it could have been a good way to promote the integration not only for the staff, but also for the students.

### 6.5.3 Summary

In the NewU, four pre-merger institutions merged together. However, their previous histories, beliefs, values, cultures, and so on, were still influencing the new merged university. Therefore, the new university needed to construct a new culture, and build a new value and vision, so that the staff could unite and accept the new identity. In order to achieve these purposes, the NewU needed symbolic leadership. The rating results of the two main institutional leaders’ leadership orientation show that their symbolic scales are between “sometimes” and “often”. The overall rating for the institutional leadership group’s performance from the symbolic dimension is between “bad” and “acceptable”. Based on the interviews, the author found that there were some weaknesses in building the new vision for the future, leading by example, as well as the constructing of heroic narratives etc. The majority of

interviewees were unsatisfied with the institutional leaders' campus perception and faculty perception. They believed that was one of the main reasons that led to the power struggles in the internal leadership group, which also influenced the faculty level leadership group. In addition, the interview results show that the majority of interviewees were satisfied with these rituals and ceremonies after the merger. They believed these activities had promoted the integration of the four pre-merger institutions' staff and students.

## 6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the two main institutional leaders' individual leadership behaviour and leadership style rating results are presented. The statistic results show that the two institutional leaders, L1 and L2, do not significantly differ in their leadership behaviours. Both leaders' four frames rating results are between "3" and "4", which means they utilize each frame between "sometimes" and "often". The two institutional main leaders show a significant difference in their leadership styles. L1's symbolic style is the lowest rated, the others are similar; L2's human resource style is the lowest rated and political is the highest, and differs significantly from the others. Based on the interviewees' responses, the main reason for this is because L2 is a political leader at the NewU, and because he is the general secretary of the CCP committee of the university.

The overall rating results of the institutional leadership group's performance present that only the structural perspective is close to "good performance", and the other three perspectives are at a lower than "acceptable" performance level. These overall rating results show a significant difference from two main leaders' leadership orientation scale. Based on the interview results as well as the "campus perception" rating results, the author finds that the merger had a significant impact on the institutional leadership group. The statistics of the rating on "campus perception" show the vice rectors and the vice general secretary of the CCP to have the strongest campus perception. According to the governance structure of Chinese universities (see Chapter 2), the general secretary of the CCP and the rector are the two main leaders in the leadership group. However, the Organisation Principle of Party is "democratic centralism", which means decision-making is a collective action. Therefore, at the NewU, the institutional main leaders were influenced by other factors when they made decisions during the merger process.

In order to explore how to improve the institutional leadership skills and the performance of the leadership group based on the interview data, the author presented an analysis of the leadership's impact on the merger from the four frames perspectives. Through the analysis, the author found that there were a number of weaknesses for the two main leaders and the institutional leadership group in each frame. Thus, as the leaders of the NewU, they would have needed to reframe their leadership, and utilize multi-frame leadership skills to deal with the challenges that they faced.

## 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 7.1 Findings of the study

#### 7.1.1 The challenges for the NewU in the merger

Bolman and Deal's reframing theory provides a four-frame approach to understanding organizations. In Chapter 5, the author presented an analysis on making sense of the NewU merger process. In that chapter, based on documents and interview data, the author, from structural, human resource, political and symbolic perspectives, explored the challenges that the case university- the NewU had to face. These findings are the answers to the first research question:

*Question 1: How to understand the Chinese case university in the merger context? What were the major challenges that the university had to face during the merger process?*

According to the analysis of Chapter 5, the summary of these major challenges are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 The major challenges of the NewU during the merger

Frame	Challenges
Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The lack of motivation;</li><li>2) The government intervention;</li><li>3) The lack of negotiation between the government and the pre-merger institutions;</li><li>4) The unclear development goals;</li><li>5) The low efficiency of the four-campus management model.</li></ol>
Human resource	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Middle level leaders: uncertain situation for all middle level leaders; the overwhelming workload; the lack of open communication;</li><li>2) Administrative staff: the lost promotion opportunities and work position uncertainty.</li><li>3) Academic staff: uncertain professional title promotion, academic competition, as well as the changed income situation; "brain drain".</li><li>4) Students concerns as to quality of teaching, reputation of the new university; alumni consider their historical sense of belonging.</li></ol>
Political	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The campus-based management model led to a loose coalition;</li><li>2) Campus-based interest groups formed and influenced the integration of the merger;</li><li>3) The scarce resources led to power struggles;</li></ol>

	<p>4) The principle of “retaining the balance” among pre-merger institutions influenced the efficiency and effectiveness of the merger.</p> <p>5) Internal administration used the top-down model; institutional leaders did not have enough information from common staff.</p>
Symbolic	<p>1) The integration of different cultures was a long term process;</p> <p>2) The lack of a clear mission, value and vision;</p> <p>3) The differences of the culture, history, etc. influenced the integration.</p> <p>4) The lack of symbolic activities hindered the university’s ability to create new meanings, belief and faith in the new university.</p>

### 7.1.2 Effective leadership is necessary at the NewU

In this study, through a presentation of the analysis of documents and interviews, it is shown that the NewU merger was a complex process. During the merger, there were a lot of challenges that the university leaders needed to face, as summarized in Table: 7.1. How the university main leaders and their leadership group faced these challenges is an indicator of the efficiency of their work, which is related to the second research question of this study.

*Question 2: What were the prevailing leadership orientations of the main institutional leaders in the merger context? How did the institutional leadership group perform? Did the main institutional leaders need to reframe their leadership styles after the merger in order to deal with these challenges?*

In Chapter 6, the author presented the respondents’ ratings of the two main institutional leaders, and the results showed that they used these four frames “sometimes” or “often”, and L1 was more structurally and human resource orientated, while L2 was more politically and structurally orientated. The results show that the overall performance of the institutional leadership was not good. From the structural perspective, they performed at a more than “acceptable” level, but from the human resource, political, and symbolic perspectives they performed at a lower than acceptable level. Therefore, the main leaders would have needed to reframe their leadership, so that they could deal with the challenges that they faced during the merger. Based on the analysis of Chapter 6, in Table 7.2, the author makes a summary of the weaknesses of the NewU’s leadership, and gives suggestions (solutions) for reframing their leadership.

Table: 7.2 Reframing Leadership in the NewU

Frame	What happened? (weaknesses)	Images of the academic leaders	Areas for improvement (Suggestions or solutions)
Structure	1) they could not rationally	Institutional	1) They need to structure their work;

	structure their work; 2) structuring of the change process wasn't well executed	architect, analyst, systems designer	2) They need to logically structure the change process.
<b>Human Resource</b>	1) Lack of open communication; 2) Lack of empowerment; 3) The teamwork for the leadership group both in the institutional and faculty level was not good enough. 4) Lack of support, coaching and care to the middle level leaders and general academic and administrative staff, as well as students; 5) There were arguments regarding human resource arrangement and management.	Servant, catalyst, coach	1) To increase open communication not only within the leadership group on both institutional and middle levels, but also with the internal and external communities. 2) To empower the middle level, and give these middle level leaders a bounded freedom authority. 3) To communicate within the institutional leadership group, to realize the collective action, and at the same time, build the middle level leaders' teamwork. 4) To pay attention to training and caring for the people who lost middle level leadership positions, senior administrative staff, as well as academic staff. 5) To arrange for the right people to be in the right place without any campus-based perception, or faculty-based perception.
<b>Political</b>	1) A lack of reasonable agendas; 2) They were networking and building coalitions within their own interest groups. 3) The campus perception of different level leaders influenced the integration of the merger. 4) Lack of bargaining and negotiating beyond the interest groups. Losing control of these interest groups. 5) The internal "Top-down" decision making model influenced the integration of the merger.	Advocate, Negotiator, Political strategist	1) To set good and clearer agendas; 2) To build a network and coalitions beyond the different interest groups. 3) To bargain and negotiate beyond the internal different interest groups, as well as external stakeholders. 4) Lack of skills of management for the institutional leadership group and middle level leaders. 5) Decentralization and empowerment, to give more authorities to the middle level leaders, so that they have more power to enhance the integration of their faculties or units.
<b>Symbolic</b>	1) Ignoring the differences of history and culture among the pre-merger institutions; 2) Lack of mission, value and vision for the NewU; 3) Weaknesses in leading by example; 4) Lack of skills in constructing a heroic narrative and integrating different cultures; 5) Without good plan and lack of skills for building the new culture and identity for the NewU.	Artist, Prophet	1) To pay attention to the difference between the four pre-merger institutions' cultures. Promoting new culture and identity for the NewU. 2) To set up suitable values and a rational vision for the NewU; Making a clear mission. 3) Leaders should be highly visible exemplars of their institution's values and of the vision they hope to achieve. 4) To promote the heroic narrative, and to build the new identity of the NewU.

The above table presents the list of weaknesses of the main institutional leadership and their group, as well as suggestions for these leaders on how to improve their leadership skills based on Bolman and Deal's reframing theory. However, there are some special issues related to the Chinese context, which require clarification. Therefore, the following sections will discuss some relevant topics as recommendations for these institutional leaders.

## 7.2 What can other universities learn from the case university?

### 7.2.1 Uniting the institutional leadership group first

As discussed in previous chapters, the unique phenomenon of the Chinese university administration system is that they have a political administration system. The CCP Standing Committee is the top-level leadership group (the institutional leadership group). The governance principle is the rector's responsibility under leadership of the CCP Committee (see Chapter 2). In the merger context, the institutional leadership group makes the majority of important decisions. Therefore, it plays a special role in the merged university. Whether the institutional leadership is united or not, and works collectively, will influence the middle level leadership groups' unity, the integration of the merger, as well as the development of the whole merged university. With respect to the institutional leadership group, it is an essential small political organization. Therefore, we can employ some ideas from Bolman and Deal, as well as Bolman and Gallos' notions.

***The structural frame:*** as the main leaders of the merged university, the general secretary of the CCP Committee and the rector should firstly act as analysts and architects. They should employ strategic thinking, based on the reality of the new university, to guide their followers to make good strategic plans, and build up the vision of the future.

As described in the discussion in Chapter 5, in the pre-merger and implementation phases there were a lot of tasks which needed to be done for the new university. For instance, new rules, regulations, goals, internal policies, roles for different field staff, tasks, new job designs and descriptions, new environment, chain of command, vertical and horizontal coordinating mechanisms, assessment and reward systems, standard operating procedures, authority spans and structures, spans of control, information systems, formal feedback loops, boundary scanning and management processes, etc. (see section 3.4, and the discussion in Chapter 5) - all of these needed to have a good plan. Without a good strategic plan, they could not make the implementation plan. Unfortunately, in this case university experience, the leadership made the implementation plan immediately, before they had a good strategic plan. Due to a lack of reasonable goals and objectives influencing the restructuring of the faculties and departments, the internal structure could not

align with the organizational goals, tasks, and environment. The institutional leadership group was not able to control and ensure the integration of individual and group efforts, which would have had the effect of increasing efficiency and enhancing performance. All in all, these weaknesses influenced the achievement of the goals and objectives of the merger. These are lessons from the structural frame for other universities who want to merge.

***The human resource frame:*** They should work as catalysts and servants, to support and care for other colleagues, through open communication learn what their needs are, they should try to retain the balance between the university's needs and individual needs; the purpose is to build an effective teamwork. Regarding effective teamwork, Bolman and Gallos adapted six key characteristics of high-quality teams based on Katzenbach and Smith' work (1993) (see the human resource leaders in 3.4.3). The main institutional leaders can employ these six key characteristics to build the team.

In the case merged university, due to the merger, some issues and situations from the human resource perspective were different from before the merger for the stakeholders, such as needs of people, relationships, norms, perceptions and attitudes, morale, motivation, training and development, interpersonal and group dynamics, supervision, teams, job satisfaction, participation and involvement, informal organization, support, respect for diversity, formal and informal leadership, and so on (see section 3.4 and the discussion in Chapter 5). As the institutional leaders or leadership group, they should clearly understand these differences. Unfortunately, in the case university, the institutional leaders as well as the leadership group did not pay enough attention to the needs of the relevant stakeholders, such as the relevant people's career development plan, salaries (relevant benefits), and opportunities, which led to the fit between individual and organisation being poor, both suffered and were victims. These influenced the process of the merger and led to the loss of some talented people. These are lessons from the human resource perspective for other universities.

***The political frame:*** Higher education leaders work in a political world (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p.87). In the case merged university, the circumstances were changed after the merger. For instance, the needs of key stakeholders, divergent interests, scarce resources, areas of uncertainty, individual and group agendas, sources and bases of power, power distributions, formal and informal resource allocation systems and processes, influence, conflict, competition, politicking, coalitions, formal and informal alliances and networks, interdependence, control of rewards and punishment, communication channels, etc. (See section 3.4 and the discussion in Chapter 5.) Since all of these factors were different from the previous institutions, as the institutional leaders or leadership group, they should clearly understand these differences, and put all these issues into their day-to-day management account. Unfortunately, they didn't carefully manage these differences in values, beliefs, interests, and campus perceptions; they didn't establish coalitions

of diverse individuals and interest groups; they didn't perfectly allocate the scarce resources; they were not good at bargaining and negotiation among the different interests groups; they didn't make the relevant good development plans for these stakeholders who were involved in the merger. These weaknesses have been influencing the success of the merger.

“Success requires learning how to navigate successfully. To do this, academic administrators first need to confront whatever distaste for politics and ambivalence about power they may have acquired. This does not mean they should lay aside ethics and principles- in fact they should cling even more tightly to their values and vision for higher education. But achieving noble values and principles in a highly political context requires political sophistication, strong skills, empowerment, and personal courage” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, P. 87). The main institutional leaders would have needed enough skills to bargain and negotiate with their opponents to build their network and coalition. As the analysis in the previous chapter shows, networking and building coalitions does not mean this is done only in the pre-merger institution's group, but also in the other interest groups. As for building coalitions and networks beyond these different interest groups, Bolman and Gallos (2011) provide four simple rules:

*Rule 1. Says that there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies in a political world. Opponents today can be partners tomorrow. Effective academic leaders do not hold grudges, take names, or see opposition as personal – no matter how personal the criticism may sound. They keep their eyes focused on the issues and the prize of advancing their institutions and programs. Rule 2. Dates back to the sixth century BCE and Chinese military strategist Sun-Tzu: Keep your friends close and your enemies closer. Rule 3. Comes from leadership guru Ronald Heifetz: Court the uncommitted. Allies and opponents are important, but do not forget the silent majority in the middle. Change affects them too, and their support - or opposition – can make all the difference (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008). O'Neill's famous dictum – All politics is local – is Rule 4 for compassionate campus politician.*

In fact, these rules are very similar to Chinese political culture. They are easy for Chinese institutional leaders to understand. Normally, they know them, but they do not use them often.

***The symbolic frame:*** In the case university, due to the merger, many issues from the symbolic perspective were different, such as culture, rituals, symbols, metaphors, meaning, spirituality, values, vision, charisma, passions and commitment (see section 3.4 and the discussion in Chapter 5). Facing so many uncertainties and ambiguities, the institutional leaders and the leadership group couldn't create symbols to resolve conflict, find direction, and anchor hope and faith. They were not good at the symbolic leadership skills needed to help people find the purpose and passion which influence the creation of the new identity. This led to the cultural integration being a long-term process. These are the lessons from the symbolic perspective for other universities who want to merge.

In the merged university, the main leaders should also be artists and prophets, as

they need to build faith and meaning. They should understand that the new merged university needs a clear vision and mission that excites and energizes constituents at the same time that they guide decision-making. They need to appreciate their role and power in creating and sustaining the new culture. The new culture constructed within the institutional leadership group is most important for improving their collective performance.

*Prescriptions and theories for better teamwork often miss the deeper secret of how groups and teams reach the status of grace and peak performance. Former Visa CEO Dee Hock captured the heart of the issues: "in the field of group endeavor, you will see incredible events in which the group performs far beyond the sum of its individual talents. It happens in the symphony, in the ballet, in the theater, in sports, and equally in business. It is easy to recognize and impossible to define. It is a mystique. It can not be achieved without immense effort, training, and cooperation, but effort, training, and cooperation alone rarely create it"* (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Schlesinger, Eccles, & Gabarro, 1983).

Symbolic perspectives question traditional views that building a team mainly means finding the right people and designing an appropriate structure; the essence of higher performance is spirit. If we were to banish play, ritual, ceremony, and myth, we would destroy teamwork, not enhance it. There are many signs that contemporary organizations are at a critical juncture because of a crisis of meaning and faith (Bolman & Deal, 2008). ... Managers are inescapably accountable for the budget and bottom line; they have to respond to individual needs, legal requirements, and economic pressures. But they can serve a deeper and more durable function if they recognize that team building at its heart is a spiritual undertaking. It is both a search for the spirit within and creation of a community of believers united by shared faith and shared culture. Peak performance emerges as a team discovers its soul (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

**Summary:** As for the institutional leadership group, according to the CCP's organizational principle, they are the "democratic centralism", although they are the chair and vice chair of the group. When they make decisions, the impact of the individuals' campus perception made it difficult to reach agreement in some issues and circumstances. In this section, from structural, human resource, political, and symbolic perspectives, the lessons that can be learned from the Chinese university merger experience were presented.

As for the institutional leaders, what could they do? They needed communication and negotiation among the different interest groups. The essence of negotiation is deal making- building agreements that enable to find the consensus among these different individuals and interest groups. As suggested by Bolman and Gallos in 2011, these final agreements are rarely perfect, but they do not need to be. They only need to be good enough that the parties find it profitable to work together. It is important to tend to potential opponents in the deal-making process. Whenever opponents might derail the initiative, it's worth asking how you can modify your package to make it more attractive or less likely to

wake sleeping dogs. The adage that perfect is the enemy of good is particularly true in political negotiations, where the right package is always imperfect but is the best deal you can actually implement (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p.86).

## 7.2.2 Supporting and leading the middle level leaders

The middle level leaders play a very important role in the university. Bolman and Gallos (2011) note: “to understand administrative life in the middle, Academic leaders live with feet firmly planted in two different camps: the world of academia and the corporate-informed world of administrative performance. Each had its own values, beliefs, and expectations. Each sees its own world as the dominant reality” (p.147). Oskry’ work (2007) cited by Bolman & Gallos (2011) notes that like many higher education administrators, middle managers there want out because the balancing act required in their jobs is ‘too stressful, too demanding, unmanageable, and unrewarding’ (p.2). “Living in two worlds also means that much of the work and accomplishments of those in the middle are invisible to, or dismissed by, one constituent group or another. We all construct our social reality, seeing and valuing what our worldview allows” (Bloman & Gallos, 2011, p.147).

From the perspective of the university’s internal administration system, the middle leadership’s role can be transition. As Bolman and Gallos (2011) mentioned, “a different position in the chain of command means different demands, needs, information, and reactions. Those at the top, for example, are besieged by responsibilities, complexity, pressures, and decisions that can mean organizational life or death.... Middles, on the other hand, need to please both bosses and subordinates to survive: as a result, they are torn, stressed, indecisive, and unable to satisfy anyone adequately” (P153). “Those at the bottom feel powerless, invisible, vulnerable, and sure that their bosses are clueless. Bottoms see little beyond the scope of their own jobs, and they regularly wonder why those above them can not seem to get it right. These behavioral scripts are recreated and played out every day in organizations around the world” (Bolman & Deal, 1979; Oshry, 2007; Bolman & Gallos, 2011, P153).

In the Chinese university governance structure, within the faculty level, there are the dean, the general secretary of the CCP Committee in Branch, the vice deans, as well as the vice general secretary of the CCP Committee in Branch. These middle level leaders also compose a middle level (faculty or department) group. After the merger in the NewU, the normal size of the middle level leadership group was around 4-6 leaders. This leadership group had the function that Bolman and Gallos described as living in the two worlds. From the vertical angle, it is a bridge to link the institutional centre administration and the street level staff. They act as an “information transformation station” or buffers. All the university’s policies, rules and plans need go through this group to reach the common staff and students. At the same time, all staff and students’ feelings, needs, values, beliefs, and expectations, as well as the teaching-learning and research operations information go through this group to reach institutional level leaders. In particular, during the

merger, the implementation effect of the university's policies and plans depended on their performance. In other words, their performance determined the institutional merger's success or failure.

As the institutional leaders, they should openly communicate to learn what the middle level leaders need, and on the other hand, to empower them, support, coach and care for them, to encourage these middle level leaders to make efforts to contribute to the development of the new university. In fact, due to these middle level leaders' daily work with the bottom, they are much more familiar with the common staff and students. They have access to first-hand information. Their ideas and suggestions are very useful to the top leaders' decision making. Therefore, the institutional leaders must learn from these middle level leaders. In addition, the institutional leaders should be fair to these middle level leaders, regardless of whether he or she came from the same or different pre-merger institution. In this way, it would be made easier for the middle level leadership to form effective teams and act collectively.

### 7.2.3 Managing conflicts of the merger

Based on the previous two chapters, we can understand the merger process of the NewU was very complex. The scarcity of resources, different campus perceptions, as well as power struggles led to all sorts of conflicts. In a rapidly changing process, naturally, these conflicts cannot be avoided. As for the institutional leaders, how can they make conflict productive? It is a major task during the whole merger process.

“Conflict is inevitable in the work lives of academic leaders, and studies of occupational stress in higher education over the last quarter century have identified it as a major source of concern” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, P.130; Gmelch, 1991; Gmelch, Lovrich, & Wilke, 1984). “But conflict presents opportunities as well as challenges. It is a crucible that tests and gives birth to great leadership” (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, P.130).

Weiss and Hughes' (2008) study cited by Bolman & Gallos (2011) note “disagreements sparked by differences in beliefs, perspectives, information, or experiences generate much of the value that comes from collaboration and shared decision making; and conflicts well managed can be sources of creative solutions and wise trade-offs among competing goals and objectives” (p.131). “The first step for academic administrators in making conflict productive is to recognize the rich possibilities in disagreements. Equally important are basic skills in conflict management. The goal is not to eliminate conflict- not all disagreements can be fully resolved. It is to create processes that enable individuals to learn and grow from their differences and that allow organizations to extract the creative value buried in them. The critical task for academic leaders is how to orchestrate disagreements so that things do not get too hot or too cold for process” (Bolman & Gallos, 2001, pp.130-131). In the NewU, during the merger process, there existed conflicts among individual academic staff, administrative staff, middle level

leaders, as well as the institutional level leaders, and so on. Significant conflicts came from the different interest groups. These conflicts were the biggest challenges for the institutional leaders, which required the main institutional leaders to lead by example, to recognize the conflicts and utilize political skills, as previously discussed, to find the solution. As Bolman and Gallos (2011, p.141) pointed out “strategies for bringing key players together in open conversation, for facilitating problem solving, and for staying focused on learning are in order”.

### 7.3 Contributions of this study

As introduced in Chapter 1, leadership studies in the Chinese merged university context is an academic gap; this study has drawn a picture of the Chinese merged university from the leadership perspective, and utilized the case study method to provide a systematic study of the leadership aspect. As many scholars' research shows, the merger of higher education institutions is a complex process. This study from the middle level leaders view explored the challenges that the institutional leadership had been facing, and how the institutional leaders dealt with these challenges. Bolman and Deal's reframing theory is a cognitive theory. It provides a diagnostic approach to examine the organisation and leadership orientation. Although Bolman and Deal's theory has been very widely utilized in higher education research, this study is the first study to utilize the reframing theory in the Chinese merged university field. The merger process of higher education institutions is a rapid organisation change process. Bolman and Deal's theory provides a framework to make sense of this kind of change from Structural, Human resource, Political and Symbolic perspectives, and to explore the institutional leadership orientation, as well as the re-impacting between the leadership and the merger.

The governance system of Chinese universities is a very unique system due to the CCP administrative system. Within the Chinese university, the main two institutional leaders are the General Secretary of the CCP Committee, and the rector. The governance mechanism is the rector's responsibility under the leadership of the CCP Committee (see Chapter 2 and 5). Therefore, the CCP Standing Committee is the top institutional leadership, the general secretary of the CCP Committee is the chair of the group, and the rector is vice chair. This group played a very important role in the merger. In this study, the main research aim was to explore the two main institutional leaders, as well as the institutional leadership group. Based on Bolman and Deal's leadership survey instrument, the author added two sections relevant to the merger.

The study used the quantitative and qualitative mixed research method. A significant amount of valuable first hand data concerning the internal affairs of a Chinese merger university was presented in this study. The quantitative part played an assisting role in achieving a deeper understanding of the analysis of the interview data.

This research provided a case Chinese merged university study from the leadership perspective. Although the case university's merger was two decades ago, it happened in the first around the Chinese local key universities' merger wave, it was very typical case in China. The experience of typical universities merger has been influencing the afterwards mergers. Therefore, this study presented a typical merger case to readers. The study explored the effects of the merger on the leadership, as well as the impact of the leadership orientation on the integration of the merger. Meanwhile, through the analysis of the case university's context, the study provides a discussion on how the institutional leaders could have reframed their leadership, so that they could have dealt with the challenges in the merger, as well as improved their leadership effectiveness. These findings and analyses can be taken as a good reference for universities who are planning or implementing mergers. This study also can be used by leaders who are working in a merged university to improve their leadership skills or leadership effectiveness. This study also provides a reference to such scholars who are willing to do research on university leadership, and at least provides a reference for them on how to use Bolman and Deal's reframing theory as a framework to examine the organisation and leadership.

## 7.4 Further study

As introduced in Chapter 1, there were more than 430 merged universities founded in the 1990s. This study is only based on one typical Chinese merged university. It is difficult to determine whether it can represent all the Chinese merged universities, or whether it can reflect all characteristics of other merged universities from a leadership perspective. However, this case study can be easily extended to multi-case research in further studies for the purpose of comparative investigation from the leadership perspective.

With respect to the research aim, in this study, the author focuses on institutional leadership through the middle level leaders' perspective to collect data. In further investigations, the research focus may be modified to target the middle level leaders, namely, leaders of faculties. As previously discussed, the middle level leaders play a very important role in the merger process. They can be seen as the information transformation station. Their performance can influence whether the merger of the universities results in success or failure. The study could collect the data from the academic staff and administrative staff at the bottom. In addition, the study also could focus on both institutional and middle level leaders as the leadership system to study. Further studies could also only focus on the institutional leadership group as the research target. For instance, what is the internal operating mechanism of the institutional leadership group in the merger process?

As for Bolman and Deal's reframing theory, its instrument provides the solution to measure leadership behaviour and styles. In this study, the author did not pay

attention to the relationship between the leadership behaviour and leadership styles. The primary findings of this study indicate that the leadership behaviour does not correlate with the leadership styles. Whether the lack of correlation has any relevance or not, was not the focus for this author. In further studies, this could be a research topic. In addition, in the first section of the instrument (see appendix I), there are eight items in each frame. However, while calculating the statistics, the author found that even among these 8 items, there were a lot of significant differences. However, when putting all eight items results into one frame, the final results did not show these significant differences. Therefore, in further studies, the research should concentrate on the specification of these sub-items within different frames to conduct a comparative study among different leaders.

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# APPENDIX

## Appendix I: Leadership Orientation

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is an instrument to rate your main institutional leaders on leadership orientation as well as relevant issues concerning the merger. The instrument includes four sections: Section 1 and 2 are concerning the two main institutional leaders' behaviours and leadership styles; please give your rating to the rector and the General Secretary separately of the CCP committee; Section 3 is concerning the overall rating on the performance of the institutional leadership group; Section 4 ask you to give the overall rating on the campus perception to each group or people. For additional requirements please double-check the content.

Declaration: The purpose of the questionnaire is only for academic research, I promise to protect the anonymity of both respondents and university in my dissertation.

Thank you very much for your time.

Li Dong

Dong.li@uta.fi

Name of person described: \_\_\_\_\_

Group code (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

## LEADERSHIP ORIENTATIONS (OTHER)

This questionnaire asks you to describe the person that you are rating in terms of leadership and management style.

### I. Leader Behaviors

You are asked to indicate *how often* each item is true of the person that you are rating. Please use the following scale in answering each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Always
	Occasionally		Often	

So, you would answer '1' for an item that is never true of the person you are describing, '2' for one that is occasionally true, '3' for one that is sometimes true, and so on.

**Be discriminating!** The results will be more helpful to the ratee if you think about each item and distinguish the things that the ratee really does all the time from the things that s/he does seldom or never.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ *Thinks very clearly and logically.*
2. \_\_\_\_\_ *Shows high levels of support and concern for others.*
3. \_\_\_\_\_ *Shows exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done.*
4. \_\_\_\_\_ *Inspires others to do their best.*
5. \_\_\_\_\_ *Strongly emphasizes careful planning and clear time lines.*
6. \_\_\_\_\_ *Builds trust through open and collaborative relationships.*
7. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is a very skillful and shrewd negotiator.*
8. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is highly charismatic.*
9. \_\_\_\_\_ *Approaches problems through logical analysis and careful thinking.*
10. \_\_\_\_\_ *Shows high sensitivity and concern for others' needs and feelings.*
11. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is unusually persuasive and influential.*
12. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is an inspiration to others.*
13. \_\_\_\_\_ *Develops and implements clear, logical policies and procedures.*
14. \_\_\_\_\_ *Fosters high levels of participation and involvement in decisions.*
15. \_\_\_\_\_ *Anticipates and deals adroitly with organizational conflict.*
16. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is highly imaginative and creative.*
17. \_\_\_\_\_ *Approaches problems with facts and logic.*
18. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is consistently helpful and responsive to others.*
19. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is very effective in getting support from people with influence and power.*
20. \_\_\_\_\_ *Communicates a strong and challenging vision and sense of mission.*
21. \_\_\_\_\_ *Sets specific, measurable goals and holds people accountable for results.*
22. \_\_\_\_\_ *Listens well and is unusually receptive to other people's ideas and input.*
23. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is politically very sensitive and skillful.*
24. \_\_\_\_\_ *Sees beyond current realities to create exciting new opportunities.*
25. \_\_\_\_\_ *Has extraordinary attention to detail.*
26. \_\_\_\_\_ *Gives personal recognition for work well done.*

- 27. \_\_\_\_\_ *Develops alliances to build a strong base of support.*
- 28. \_\_\_\_\_ *Generates loyalty and enthusiasm.*
- 29. \_\_\_\_\_ *Strongly believes in clear structure and a chain of command.*
- 30. \_\_\_\_\_ *Is a highly participative manager.*
- 31. \_\_\_\_\_ *Succeeds in the face of conflict and opposition.*
- 32. \_\_\_\_\_ *Serves as an influential model of organizational aspirations and values.*

## II: Leadership Style

This section asks you to describe the leadership style of the person that you are rating. For each item, give the number "4" to the phrase that best describes this person, "3" to the item that is next best, and on down to "1" for the item that is least like this person.

1. The individual's strongest skills are:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. *Analytic skills*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. *Interpersonal skills*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. *Political skills*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. *Ability to excite and motivate*
2. The best way to describe this person is:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. *Technical expert*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. *Good listener*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. *Skilled negotiator*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. *Inspirational leader*
3. What this individual does best is:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. *Make good decisions*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. *Coach and develop people*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. *Build strong alliances and a power base*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. *Energize and inspire others*
4. What people are most likely to notice about this person is:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. *Attention to detail*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. *Concern for people*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. *Ability to succeed, in the face of conflict and opposition*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. *Charisma.*
5. This individual's most important leadership trait is:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. *Clear, logical thinking*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. *Caring and support for others*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. *Toughness and aggressiveness*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. *Imagination and creativity*
6. This person is best described as:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. *An analyst*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. *A humanist*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. *A politician*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. *A visionary*

## III. Overall rating on the performance of the institutional leadership group

Compared to the above rating on individuals that you have known with comparable levels of experience and responsibility, how would you overall rate the performance of the institutional leadership group on the following four perspectives?

1. Overall effectiveness in the structure frame (e.g. rules, regulations, goals, policies, roles, tasks, job design, organisation design, spans of control, division of labor, operating the merger procedures, ...) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Bad	(2) Acceptable	(3) Good	(4) Very good
Bottom 25%	25%	25%	Top 25%

2. Overall effectiveness in the human resource frame (e.g. fitting needs, skills, perception, training and development, interpersonal and group dynamics, supervision, teamwork, participation and involvement, support, ...) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Bad	(2) Acceptable	(3) Good	(4) Very good
Bottom 25%	25%	25%	Top 25%

3. Overall effectiveness in political frame (e.g. individual and group agendas, resource allocation, power distributions, influence, control, conflict management, informal or formal communication channels, power struggles, alliances, networks, and coalitions, ...) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Bad	(2) Acceptable	(3) Good	(4) Very good
Bottom 25%	25%	25%	Top 25%

4. Overall effectiveness in symbolic frame (e.g. feeding the new culture, rituals, ceremonies, stories, myths, symbols, meaning, spirituality, values, vision, charisma, passions, ...) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Bad	(2) Acceptable	(3) Good	(4) Very good
Bottom 25%	25%	25%	Top 25%

#### IV. Campus perception

The following six groups (types of) people in your university please give the overall ranking list concerning the campus perceptions they owned during the merger. (The strongest one is “6”, then is “5”, ... the weakest one is “1”).

- ( ) Rector and the General Secretary
- ( ) Deputy institutional leaders, such as, vice rectors, and vice General Secretaries
- ( ) Deans, directors, as well as the general secretaries of CCP Committee in the branch
- ( ) Vice deans, directors,....
- ( ) The common administrative staff
- ( ) The common academic staff

## Appendix II: Interview questions to Middle Level Leaders

### Statement and Declaration:

The aim of the interview is only for academic research, I promise to protect the anonymity of both respondents and university in my dissertation.

According to your questionnaires, hope you have gotten an overall conception and structure regarding the Bolman & Deal' reframing theory. I would like to discuss some questions regarding the university merger based on your personal experience, impression as well as your thinking.

#### **Part 1: To understand the merged university**

1. If we from "Structural" frame to examine the merger of your university, for instance, the motivation, goals, relevant policies, internal rules, tasks, environment, new position, new jobs, etc., how do you think the merger and the process of the merger? What's kind of problems, challenges or benefits for the university and individuals?
2. From "Human resource" aspect, what are your comments and questions for your merged university? For instance, does the merged university fit the needs of individuals, opportunities, personal arrangement, career development, job situation, participation, team work, support from university and leaders, and so on?
3. From "political" frame aspect, how do you understand the merger? What are the problems, challenges, or opportunities in this perspective?
4. From "Symbolic" frame aspect, how do you understand the merger of your university? When the people are facing the change on new environments, different situations, different cultures, values, meanings, etc. what's happen? What do you think about challenges or opportunities? And what are your comments and questions?
5. Do you have any other comments and questions on the merged university?

#### **Part 2: To examine the leadership orientation of two main leaders**

Based on the questionnaires, I would like to ask some questions related to two main leaders: Leader 1 (L1) and Leaders 2 (L2)

1. What do you think about L1 and L2 from structural frame perspective? For instance, how about their work? Do they structure the merged university, and the process?
2. What do you think your two leaders from Human Resource perspective? For instance, communication, empowerment, teamwork, supporting and caring people, as well as the human resource arrangement?
3. What do you think two leaders' political style? For instance, negotiation, internal struggle management, network, etc.; managing the conflicts and interests, etc.
4. What do you think two leaders on symbolic style? How do they manage the culture difference? How do they promote the value, version of the merged university?
5. Other comments and questions?

#### **Part 3: To the institutional leadership group**

Based on the questionnaires III part, what do you think the institutional

leadership group?

Could you please give the comments from four frames (structure, human resource, political and symbolic)? Other comments please?

**Part 4: Concerning the campus perception**

Based on the questionnaires, you have given the rating on campus perception to different groups. Could you please give more detail explain what do you think about these different groups on the campus perception perspective? Do you have any other comments on that?

Thank you very much for your time.

## Appendix III: Interview questions to the two main institutional leaders (L1 and L2)

### **Statement and Declaration:**

The aim of the interview is only for academic research, I promise there will be anonymity both respondents and university in my dissertation.

1. With four higher education institutions merging together, what are main challenges from internal and external of the university during the merger process (the pre-merger phase, implementation phase, and the post merger phase)?
2. What are the main benefits and opportunities for the new merged university?
3. Do you have any other comments on the merger? How about management, administration, as well as leadership?
4. Do you have any other comments?

Thank you very much for your time.

## Appendix IV: Research using Leadership Orientations Survey Instrument

**To:** Potential Users of Leadership Orientations Instruments

**From:** Lee Bolman

**Subject:** Permissions and How to Use

### I. Permission

On request, we routinely grant permission for non-commercial, research use of the Bolman and Deal Leadership Orientations Survey Instruments. We do ask that users agree to provide us with copies of any research reports that they produce using data from the Instruments, and that they submit to us, if we request it, a copy of their data file.

### II. Using the Instruments

The Leadership Orientations comes in parallel versions: *Self* (for people to rate themselves) and *Others* (for ratings from colleagues). They can be downloaded in [MS Word](#) format. Research has found that the validity of self-ratings of leadership is generally low, so there is a considerable advantage in getting colleague ratings.

Both versions have three sections:

#### *Section I:*

This section contains rating scales, and the items are in a consistent frame sequence: structural (items 1,5,9,13,17,21,25,29), human resource (items 2, 6, etc.), political (items 3, 7,...), symbolic (items 4, 8...).

There are also sub-scales within each frame, again in a consistent sequence: analytic (items 1, 9, 17, 25), supportive (2, 10, 18, 26), powerful (items 3, 11,19,27), inspirational (4,12,20,28), organized (5,13,21,29), participative(6,14,22,30), adroit(7,15,23,31), charismatic (8,16,24,32). In our own research, we have primarily used the 8-item frame measures. We have primarily used the 4-item sub-scales for management development rather than research applications.

#### *Section II.*

The second section contains six forced-choice items. The options under each item are arranged in the same sequence: structural, human resource, political, symbolic.

#### *Section III.*

This section has two one-item measures: effectiveness as a manager, and effectiveness as a leader. (Expanding the number of items to measure effectiveness would be a good way to strengthen the instrument, and we encourage users to do that.)

**Reliability of Leadership Orientations Scales:**

Reliability statistics for Leadership Orientations (Based on approximately 1,300 colleague ratings for a multi-sector sample of managers in business and education).

**Structural Frame (Section I)**

Data below are based on 1309 complete cases for 8 data items.

**TEST SCORE STATISTICS**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total/8</b>	<b>Odd</b>	<b>Even</b>
Mean	32.493	4.062	16.412	16.081
Standard Deviation	5.703	0.713	2.917	2.974
Standard Error	0.158	0.020	0.081	0.082
Maximum	40.000	5.000	20.000	20.000
Minimum	8.000	1.000	4.000	4.000
Number of Cases	1309	1309	1309	1309

**INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA**

Split Half Correlation: .875

Spearman Brown Coefficient .933

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .933

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .920

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .856

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .834

**ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS** (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Label</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Item/total R</b>	<b>Index</b>	<b>R excl. item</b>	<b>Alpha</b>
<b>1</b>	1 THI	4.204	0.761	.733	.589	.710	.911
<b>2</b>	9 LOG	4.120	0.867	.829	.719	.771	.906
<b>3</b>	17 FA	4.159	0.843	.852	.718	.802	.904

4	25 AT	3.872	0.964	.781	.753	.700	.912
5	5 CAR	4.061	0.924	.823	.761	.759	.907
6	13 CL	4.008	0.903	.845	.763	.789	.904
7	21 SP	3.988	0.949	.795	.755	.720	.910
8	29 CL	4.081	0.902	.716	.646	.625	.918

### Human Resource Frame (Section I)

Data below are based on 1331 complete cases for 8 data items.

### TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	32.458	4.057	16.334	16.124
Standard Deviation	6.303	0.788	3.267	3.256
Standard Error	0.173	0.022	0.090	0.089
Maximum	40.000	5.000	20.000	20.000
Minimum	8.000	1.000	4.000	4.000
Number of Cases	1331	1331	1331	1331

### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .867

Spearman Brown Coefficient .929

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .929

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .931

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .902

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .843

### ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R item excl.	Alpha
1	2 HIG	4.226	0.866	.853	.738	.807	.919
2	10 HI	4.064	1.005	.864	.867	.813	.918
3	18 HE	4.116	0.908	.870	.791	.827	.918
4	26 GI	4.077	1.011	.758	.767	.676	.929
5	6 BUI	3.925	1.002	.844	.846	.788	.920
6	14 HI	3.936	0.959	.780	.748	.708	.929

7	22 LI	4.067	0.935	.838	.783	.784	.921
8	30 HI	4.046	0.974	.783	.763	.710	.926

### Political Frame (Section I)

Data below are based on 1268 complete cases for 8 data items.

### TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	31.391	3.924	15.875	15.517
Standard Deviation	5.739	0.717	2.961	3.027
Standard Error	0.161	0.020	0.083	0.085
Maximum	40.000	5.000	20.000	20.000
Minimum	8.000	1.000	4.000	4.000
Number of Cases	1268	1268	1268	1268

### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .837

Spearman Brown Coefficient .911

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .911

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .913

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .839

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .842

### ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R excl. item	Alpha
1	3 MOB	4.039	0.889	.794	.705	.725	.901
2	11 PE	3.812	0.922	.793	.732	.721	.901
3	19 GE	4.006	0.883	.798	.705	.730	.900
4	27 DE	3.956	0.927	.786	.729	.711	.902
5	7 SKI	3.909	0.915	.779	.712	.702	.903
6	15 AD	3.731	0.964	.789	.761	.711	.902
7	23 PO	3.922	0.920	.775	.713	.697	.903
8	32 SU	4.018	0.859	.795	.683	.728	.901

## Symbolic frame (Section I)

Data below are based on 1315 complete cases for 8 data items.

### TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	31.382	3.923	15.923	15.459
Standard Deviation	6.325	0.791	3.137	3.384
Standard Error	0.174	0.022	0.087	0.093
Maximum	40.000	5.000	20.000	20.000
Minimum	8.000	1.000	4.000	4.000
Number of Cases	1315	1315	1315	1315

### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .882

Spearman Brown Coefficient .937

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .936

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .931

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .846

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .887

### ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R item excl.	Alpha
1	14 INS	4.064	0.906	.830	.751	.776	.920
2	12 IN	3.805	0.995	.872	.868	.825	.916
3	20 VI	4.084	0.931	.805	.750	.743	.923
4	28 GE	3.935	1.000	.846	.846	.790	.919
5	8 CHA	3.806	1.027	.760	.780	.677	.928
6	16 HI	3.769	0.937	.798	.749	.734	.923
7	24 SE	3.968	0.925	.815	.754	.755	.922
8	32 MO	3.951	0.983	.842	.827	.786	.919

### Structural Frame (Section II forced-choice)

Data below are based on 1229 complete cases for 6 data items.

### TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	15.773	2.629	8.543	7.230
Standard Deviation	4.955	0.826	2.570	2.893
Standard Error	0.141	0.024	0.073	0.083
Maximum	24.000	4.000	12.000	12.000
Minimum	6.000	1.000	3.000	3.000
Number of Cases	1229	1229	1229	1229

### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .644

Spearman Brown Coefficient .783

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .780

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .841

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .743

Coefficient Alpha 9 (Even Items) .782

### ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R item excl.	Alpha
1	II1 ANALY	2.716	1.134	.819	.929	.718	.795
2	II2 TECHN	2.271	1.212	.729	.884	.578	.825
3	II3 MAKEG	2.854	1.040	.666	.692	.521	.833
4	II4 ATTEN	2.340	1.168	.751	.877	.616	.816
5	II5 CLEAR	2.972	0.984	.690	.678	.561	.826
6	II6 ANALY	2.619	1.084	.825	.894	.731	.793

### Human resource frame (Section II forced-choice)

Data below are based on 1233 complete cased for 6 data items.

### TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	16.369	2.728	8.018	8.351
Standard Deviation	4.852	0.809	2.412	2.765
Standard Error	0.138	0.023	0.069	0.079
Maximum	24.000	4.000	12.000	12.000
Minimum	6.000	1.000	3.000	3.000
Number of Cases	1233	1233	1233	1233

### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .755

Spearman Brown Coefficient .861

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .856

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .843

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .626

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .792

### ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R item excl.	Alpha
1	II1 INTER	2.721	1.075	.785	.844	.673	.808
2	II2 GOODL	2.682	1.065	.728	.775	.595	.823
3	II3 COACH	2.450	1.030	.467	.481	.277	.878
4	II4 CONCE	2.828	1.069	.829	.887	.737	.795
5	II5 CARIN	2.847	1.083	.842	.912	.754	.791
6	II6 HUMAN	2.841	1.254	.826	.953	.722	.797

### Political frame (Section II forced-choice)

Data below are based on 1218 complete cases for 6 data items.

### TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	14.300	2.383	6.720	7.580
Standard Deviation	4.720	0.787	2.747	2.358
Standard Error	0.135	0.023	0.079	0.068
Maximum	24.000	4.000	12.000	12.000
Minimum	6.000	1.000	3.000	3.000
Number of Cases	1218	1218	1218	1218

### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .708

Spearman Brown Coefficient .829

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .824

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .799

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .680

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .602

### ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R item excl.	Alpha
1	II1 POLIT	2.264	1.148	.800	.919	.681	.736
2	II2 SKILL	2.656	1.004	.670	.673	.525	.774
3	II3 BUILD	2.432	1.214	.681	.826	.501	.781
4	II4 ABILI	2.730	1.010	.559	.565	.385	.802
5	II5 TOUGH	2.025	1.155	.714	.825	.557	.767
6	II6 POLIT	2.194	1.140	.800	.912	.681	.736

### Symbolic frame (Section II forced-choice)

Data below are based on 1221 complete cases for 6 data items.

## TEST SCORE STATISTICS

	Total	Total/8	Odd	Even
Mean	14.400	2.400	9.663	7.135
Standard Deviation	5.413	0.773	3.147	2.517
Standard Error	0.155	0.022	0.090	0.072
Maximum	24.000	4.000	16.000	12.000
Minimum	6.000	1.000	4.000	3.000
Number of Cases	1221	1221	1221	1221

## INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DATA

Split Half Correlation .825

Spearman Brown Coefficient .904

Guttman (Rulon) Coefficient .892

Coefficient Alpha (All Items) .842

Coefficient Alpha (Odd Items) .701

Coefficient Alpha (Even Items) .682

## ITEM RELIABILITY STATISTICS (Item excluding standard total reliability this item.)

Item	Label	Mean	Deviation	Item/total R	Index	R excl. item	Alpha
1	II1 ALIBI	2.410	1.054	.736	.776	.624	.816
2	II2 INSPI	2.514	1.132	.841	.952	.760	.793
3	II3 ENERG	2.375	1.116	.789	.880	.688	.806
4	II4 CHARI	2.241	1.118	.605	.677	.447	.843
5	II5 IMAGI	2.246	0.963	.566	.545	.426	.844
6	II6 VISIO	2.498	1.027	.615	.631	.475	.838

(Resource: <http://www.leebolman.com/orientations.htm> )