



CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hawkins (1998) as well as Meyer and Allen (1997), reported that there have been “hundred of studies where researchers analyzed the relationship between affective organizational commitment and variables that were predicted to account for some degree of affective organizational commitment”. A great number of them concluded that personal characteristics such as gender, age, education, job position and satisfaction, organizational tenure and organizational characteristics are antecedents to organizational commitment. The researchers also assumed that most of the organizational commitment research efforts had been directed toward the discovery of predictors and outcomes of organizational commitment (Becker, 1990; Hawkins, 1998).

In Asian context, studies produced evidence that demographic variables such as years in organization, level of education and the duration of leadership can have significant impact on organizational commitment. Especially in Korea, studies found that those with higher position who had been in the same job longer and who were older, had a greater level of commitment (Lok & Crawford, 2004).

Vocational High Schools in Taiwan’s Educational System

Vocational high schools occupy an important place in Taiwan’s educational system as they prepare students for their carriers and entrance at the post-secondary education. In 2005 (fall semester) there were 157 vocational high schools listed by the Ministry of Education.

Prosser (1925), one of the pioneers of vocational education field’s 16 theorems related to the vocational education efficiency have been perceived as the

“foundation-stone for vocational programs” (Lai, 1991). Those theorems stated that vocational school effectiveness is essentially based on 16 *sine qua non* conditions which are summarized as follows.

1. The suitability between learners training and working environment.
2. Similarity between the training procedures, tools, materials and those of the occupation itself.
3. Direction of the training toward the thinking and manipulative habits required in the occupation itself.
4. Capitalization of interests, aptitudes and intrinsic intelligence to the highest possible degree.
5. Suitability between vocational education programs and needs, wishes and benefits for the training subjects.
6. Condition “that the specific training experiences for forming right habits of doing and thinking are repeated to the point that these habits become fixed to the degree necessary for gainful employment”.
7. Condition that the instructor “has had successful experience in the application of skills and knowledge to the operations and processes he undertakes to teach”.
8. Assumption that each occupation has a minimum of ability required and individual must possess this minimum.
9. Suitability of the training programs and the demands of the job market.
10. Effective establishment of process habits in any learner “secured in proportion as the training is given on actual jobs and not on exercises or pseudo jobs”.
11. Being aware that experiences of masters of an occupation are the only reliable source of content for specific training in this occupation.
12. Knowing that every occupation has its body of content suited to that occupation.

13. The more Vocational Education meets the specific training needs of the members at the right moment, the more it will render efficient social service.
14. The more Vocational Education takes into account the different characteristics of different groups, the more it will be socially efficient.
15. “The administration of vocational education will be efficient in proportion as it is elastic and fluid rather than rigid and standardized”.
16. Being aware that effective vocational education has a minimum per capita cost below which vocational education should not be attempted (Lai, 1991, pp.33-36).

These theorems underline the importance of vocational education and the seriousness which prevail in the management and administration of vocational schools. In Taiwan, the Vocational education is organized, administered and structured as follows:

1. Vocational High Schools

A vocational high school is defined as “a specialized secondary school that offers a full-time program of study in both academic and vocational subjects and in which all or a majority of the students are enrolled in vocational education programs” (<http://www.ask.com/web?o=8001&qsrc=6&q=What+is+a+Vocational+High+School%3F>). Vocational high schools aim to give basic technical skills to students between the age of 15 and 22 and help them become workers with good ethics.

2. Junior Colleges

Junior colleges are part of Taiwan’s Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) system. They are categorized following their different specialization, including industry and business, paraprofessional, commerce, industrial and business management, maritime studies, medical care and pharmacy, food and catering, and foreign languages. The main purpose of these colleges is to train various categories of mid-level technical personnel (Ministry of Education, 2005). There are two categories of junior colleges: a

five-year junior college and a two-year junior college. Each of them has a different set of admission requirements. “Five-year junior colleges admit junior high school graduates and offer courses of five-year completion time. Two-year junior colleges admit senior vocational graduates and offer courses of two-year completion time” (Ministry of Education, 2005, p.16-17).

3. Colleges/Universities of Technology

“In general, colleges and universities may offer secondary-education, primary school and kindergarten teacher education programs, and the duration studies shall be two years” (2003 Education in the Republic of China). In Taiwan, there are some universities and independent colleges established and run either by the government or the private sector. There are also some normal universities and teacher colleges in charge of the training and education for teachers of secondary and primary schools and kindergartens (2003 Education in the Republic of China). “Colleges and Universities of Technology have undergraduate (including extension division), master’s, doctoral and workforce training programs” (Department of Technological and Vocational Education, Ministry of Education, R.O.C., 2004). Public and private universities of good standing are also allowed to establish graduate schools upon approval of the Ministry of Education.

Taiwan educational system provides education for physically and mentally challenged people through special schools. There are also “supplementary and continuing education schools with six levels: adult basic education, senior (vocational) high, junior college, and university continuing education. And finally, there are national and municipality open universities that provide adults with advanced and continuing education through audio-visual mass communication media” (2003 Education in the Republic of China, 2003).

Programs are divided as follows:

1. Daytime programs “are for junior high school graduates and last for three years. On completion of these programs, qualified students receive a diploma.” (Vocational High Schools, 2006).
2. Evening programs are “also for junior high school graduates and last for three years. A diploma is given to qualified students on completion of one of these programs” (Vocational High Schools, 2006).
3. Cooperative education programs are “administered by schools in cooperation with companies” (Vocational High Schools, 2006). Graduates need to pass an entrance examination and an interview given by the company in order to gain admission. “Programs usually last three years, with the school responsive for providing theoretical courses while the company providing practical experience” (Vocational High School, 2006).
4. Practical Skills Programs “are designed to provide junior high school graduates who do not intend to continue their formal education with opportunity to learn marketable skills” (Vocational High Schools, 2006). The program duration is one to three years and “certificates are issued to qualified students at the end of each program, but students receive a certificate verifying completion of the courses at the end of a three-year program. Those who complete a three-year program and pass a qualification exam receive a certificate equivalent to a vocational high school diploma.” (Vocational High Schools, 2006)
5. Special Technical Skills Programs “offer regular three-year courses and one-year practical skills programs. Junior high schools graduates with minor learning difficulties are given an opportunity of acquiring skills. Candidates are selected for admission”. (Vocational High Schools, 2006).
6. Supplementary Education Programs “are designed to meet the needs of junior high school graduates who are currently employed or plan to begin a career, so there is

no age restriction for admission. Most classes are held in the evening, and students who complete a three-year program and pass an examination are issued a certificate equivalent to a vocational high school diploma.” (Vocational High Schools, 2006). The 2003-2004 statistics represented in Table 2.1 shows a total number of 164 Vocational High Schools and 94 Senior High Schools Offering Vocational Programs.

Table 2.1. Number of vocational high schools (VHS) and senior high schools offering vocational programs (SHS-Voc) in 2003-2004 Academic Year

Area	VHS	SHS-Voc	VHS+SHS-Voc
Northern Area	49	44	93
Middle Area	40	20	60
Eastern Area	17	4	21
Southern Area	56	25	81
Pengu, Kinmen, Matsu	2	1	3
Total Number	164	94	258

Sources: A Brief Introduction to the Technological and Vocational Education of the Republic of China 2004.

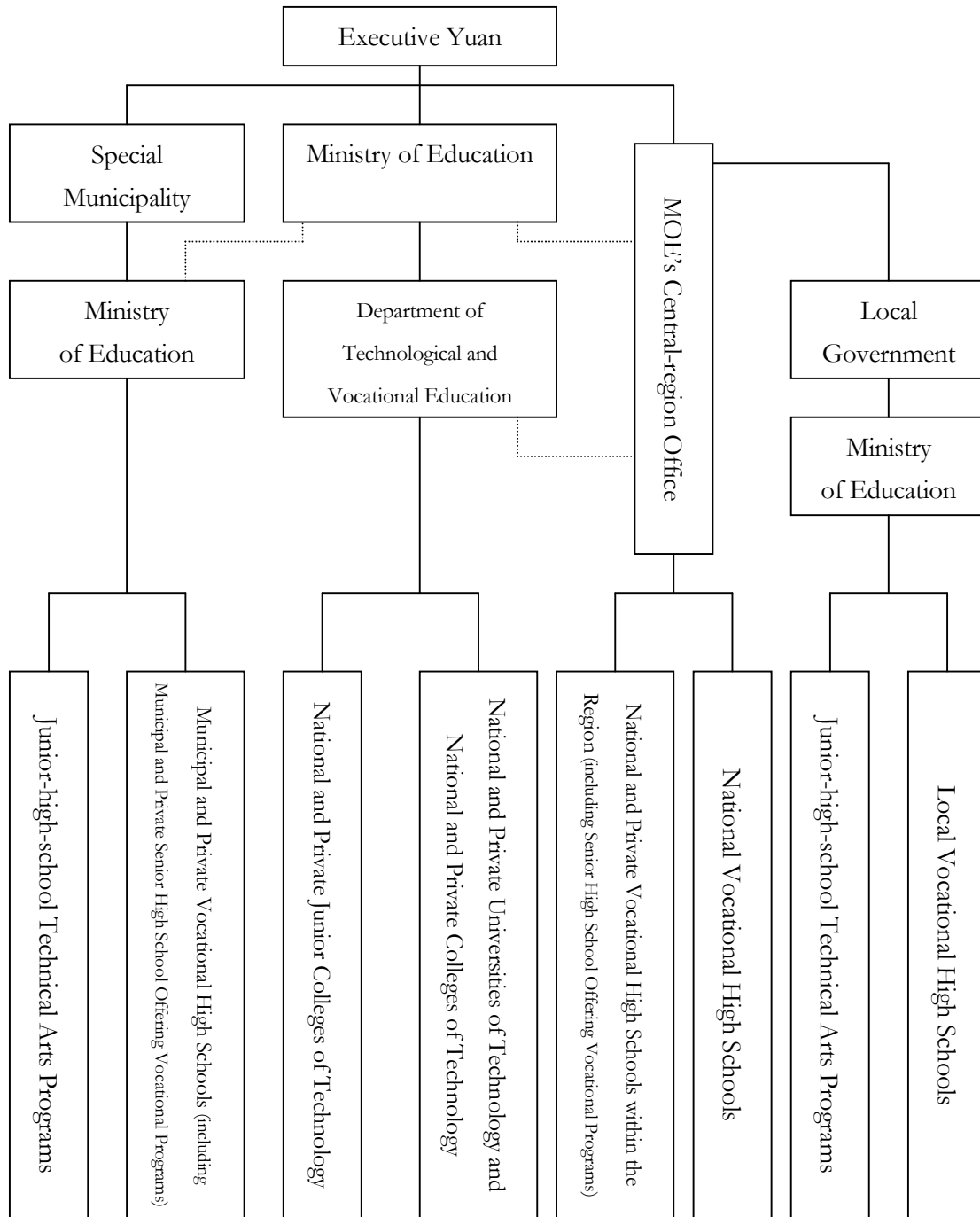


Figure 2.1. Educational Administration System in Taiwan

Sources: A brief introduction to the technological and vocational education of the Republic of China, 2004.

Personal Background Characteristics and Affective Organizational Commitment

Personal characteristics include those such as gender, age, education and organizational tenure. These characteristics had been examined by previous researchers as possible predictors of employees' organizational commitment.

Age and affective organizational commitment

Previous literature has shown that employee age is a strong, sometimes weak predictor of affective organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1984), Bowen, Radhakrishna and Keyser (1994) assumed that older workers become more committed to an organization for a variety of reasons, among them greater satisfaction with their jobs and better position in the organization. In term of professional commitment, Lee et al., (2000) assumed that age and occupational tenure were associated with professional commitment "because of cumulated investments in one's occupation, greater occupational identity, and less career options for more seasoned and older employees". It might therefore be reasonable to examine whether or not age has an influence on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1-1: Increased age leads to increased attachment to the organization.

Gender and affective organizational commitment

Aven, Parker, and McEvoy (1993) completed a meta-analysis of studies of the relationship between gender and organizational commitment. The overall results negated the argument that there are gender differences with respect to organizational commitment. The researchers concluded that similar commitment can be won from both males and females when organizations treat all employees fairly. In another meta-analytic study, researchers (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Parasuraman and Nachman, 1987) discovered a correlation that indicated a strong, although weak, advantage for

female employees with respect to organizational commitment. The reason found is that females have more difficulties than males to obtain job opportunities. Kushman (1992) used the job-model research approach and the results of the study indicated that gender was not a factor that influenced or determined organizational commitment.

Nevertheless, considering the cultural background in Chinese society in Taiwan, it is obvious that women in the organizational level are expected to put family responsibilities above their achievement in work. Kuo and Jen (2004) assumed that in Taiwan, female employees have lower organizational commitment and professional commitment than male employees. Examining the consistence of such findings in the educational administration seems to be reasonable.

Hypothesis 1-2: Women tend to demonstrate lower organizational commitment than men.

Education and Affective Organizational Commitment

Previous studies found a relationship between employees' education level and organizational commitment. Highest educated level worker tend to demonstrate less organizational commitment. According to Mowday et al. (1982), the reason of this observation may be found in the fact that highly educated workers have higher expectations than their less educated peers, expectations that the organization may be unable to meet. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) also explained that this category of employees may have more career alternatives open to them, and that they were less likely to become closely attached to any position or organization. And because the impact of American culture is growing in Taiwan nowadays (Mouse, 2005), it will be interesting to examine the impact of western and eastern styles and the level of education on principals' organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1- 3: A higher level of education shows lower organizational commitment.

Organizational tenure and affective organizational commitment

Most of the time, we guess that employees who remain a long time with a particular organization are more willing to acquire a better benefit and a better sum of skills and know how. Nevertheless, researchers are not unanimous whether there is a relationship between organizational tenure and organizational commitment. While some of them (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) believe that increased organizational tenure increases organizational commitment, others (Ker et al. 1977; Clifford, 2003) observed a negative relationship between professional commitment and organizational tenure even if they found an increased organizational commitment. Clarifying this ambiguity seems to be possible through the examination of the relationship between principals' organizational tenure and their organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1-4: Increased organizational tenure leads to increased organizational commitment.

Organizational Management, Leadership Style and Affective Organizational Commitment

Organizational management variables include pays and rewards system satisfaction, organizational support, fairness and autonomy. Leadership styles were related to the way principals lead their schools. Researchers have tried to determine the relationship between these variables and employees' commitment to their organization.

Organizational Management and Affective Organizational Commitment

Jeng, Chen and Chen (2001), defined the school management as course wherein "human resources, material resources, financial resources, etc. are effectively combined

by planning, organizing, harmonizing, administering, controlling, and other activities. The main purpose of school management is to achieve an excellent education and foster learning activities. To achieve the related objectives, a great attention must be paid to students learning achievements, principals' leadership, school atmosphere, learning techniques and strategies, school culture and values, and personnel development" (Jeng, Chen and Chen, 2001). The main management systems in achieving effective goals in schools include:

- The Management By Objective (MBO); the MBO includes a set of activities that allowed leaders to discuss the school objectives with the subordinates, give administrative help and evaluate the degree of achievement according to schedule. The advantages of MBO (Jeng, Chen and Chen, 2001), are related to the fact that the organization' members have specific objectives and they participate together to achieve the organizational goals.
- The Process Management; there is a general assumption that all organization products its processes; the most frequently used production quality standardization system is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9 000.
- The Management by Client Satisfaction; According to Jeng, Chen and Chen (2001), one of the most important problem of schools is to find the way to satisfy their clients that means students, graduated school fellows, parents, company employer (or society). Total Quality Management (TQM) simplified in Figure 3, is used to reach this goal.
- Management by Organizational Learning; this management system includes five basic practices Jeng, Chen and Chen (2001): (1) systematic consideration; use a systematic dynamic concepts to understand the force of the system actions and their mutual relations. (2) Self-improvement; includes organizing members to learn how to expend their capacity and to create an anticipated future. (3) common prospect;

organize members in order to build a common anticipated objective and contribute with one heart to achieve this objective.

(4) intelligent mode; where members should continuously mediate the thoughts in mind and attitude in order to take rational actions through self-control. (5) the group study; allows the transformation of the thinking ability of the group and combine the intelligence and ability of every member to learn and develop together. In their study, Jeng, Chen and Chen (2001), conclude that school teachers in Taiwanese industrial programs mostly prefer the management by objectives.

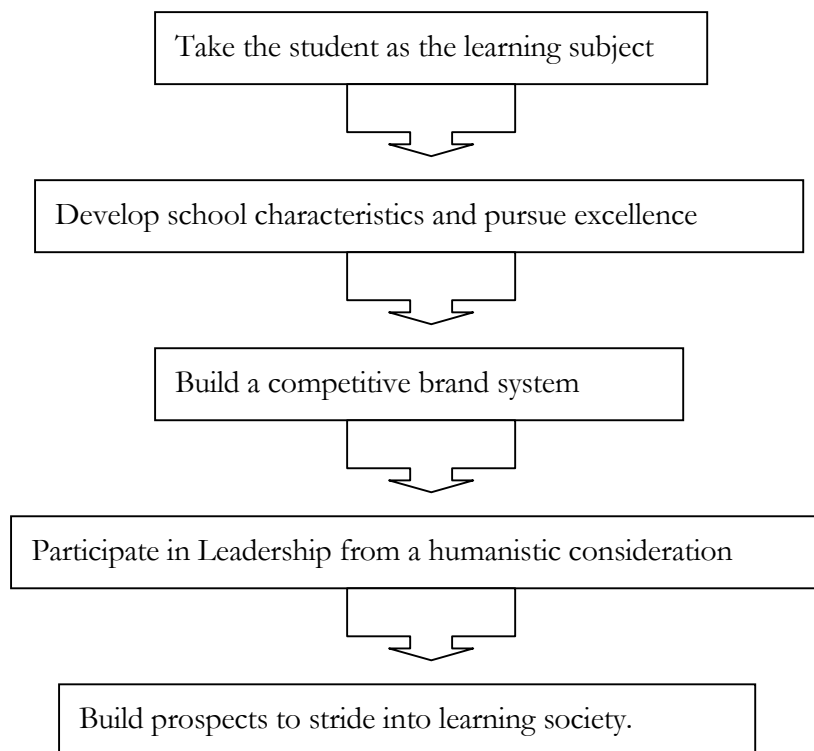


Figure 2.2. Total Quality Management in Vocational High School
Source: Jeng, Chen & Chen, 2001.

1. Pay satisfaction and affective organizational commitment

Lawler (1971) defined pay satisfaction as “a discrepancy between the pay one believes one deserves, and the amount actually received, and these, it is suggested, are

influenced by personal variables such as length of service and environmental variables such as job characteristics”. Kuo and Jen (2004) reported in their study based on 365 engineers from R&D departments from 57 private electronics companies in Taiwan, that pay satisfaction is positively related to organizational commitment and perceived unfairness in pay will result in negative perceptions of the organization and then, a low or negative commitment. They concluded that every year in Taiwan, a high percentage of engineers change companies and sometimes careers because of the long working hours for a low pay. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) also reported a positive correlation between salary and organizational commitment. The reasons were that according to their findings, higher salary levels increase feeling of self-esteem. In addition, employees with high income might have more to lose in leaving the organization. Therefore, they are less likely to leave and demonstrate more commitment to the organization. The researcher assumes that in Taiwan, principals’ organizational commitment may also be affected by their pay satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2-1: The more satisfied a principal is with his or her pay, the higher his or her organizational commitment.

2. Organizational support and affective organizational commitment.

Researchers have discovered a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mottaz, 1988). The support that is provided by the organization (school district, administration) is directly related to employees’ commitment. Employees exchange commitment to the organization for greater care, concern, and support from the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sava, 1986). Researchers concluded that organizational support is an important factor with respect to employee organizational behavior (Hawkins, 1998; Shore & Wayne, 1993). The researcher then

infers that principals who receive more support from their administration are more committed to their school.

Hypothesis 2-2: The more support a principal receives from his or her administration, the higher his or her organizational commitment.

3. Perceived fairness and affective organizational commitment

Previous studies found a correlation between perceived fairness and affective organizational commitment. Perceived fairness concerns the way in which employees are treated by the employer (Martin & Bennett, 1996; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997). In a study concerning fairness, Moorman, Niehoff, and Organ (1993) reported a correlation between affective commitment and procedural justice (fairness).

Hawkins (1998) in his study of high school principals (p.63) discovered that “of all the independent variables, fairness resulted in the highest correlation with affective organizational commitment. This correlation between principals ($n = 202$) perceived fairness and affective organizational commitment was $.69, p < .05$ ”. It seems to us that examining the perception of fairness among principals’ may have its importance in determining their commitment level.

Hypothesis 2-3: The more the principal’s perceived fairness in his or her administration, the higher his or her organizational commitment.

4. Autonomy and perceived organizational commitment

Autonomy is recognized as a salient factor in the study of affective organizational commitment. Researchers found that the two are positively related (Hawkins, 1998; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mottaz, 1988; Poseln, 1988) and that reasonable autonomy creates an organizational climate where affective organizational commitment can be nurtured and developed.

Studies found that principals with strong affective commitment tend to remain in a school district because they want to remain. Principals with strong continuance commitment tend to remain in a school district because the options to do otherwise are limited. Principals with strong normative commitment tend to remain in a school district because they feel a moral obligation to remain in the school district (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Whether most of the previous researches found a relationship between affective organizational commitment and variables that were predicted to account for some degree of affective organizational commitment, it is obvious that the degree of this relationship still remain dependent to some environmental, cultural and sociological factors that most of the researches did not examined.

Chen, Beck and Amos (2005) stated also that in Taiwan, most faculty members in Higher Education prefer having academic self- determination and autonomy, in their positions. Plus, individualized consideration is more valued and may have a positive/negative impact on subordinates' job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2-4: Higher feeling of autonomy displays stronger principal's organizational commitment.

Leadership style and Affective Organizational Commitment

This is a fact that no school management is separated from its leadership. Nevertheless, as stated Lee and Lai, 2006, "Both leadership and management are important and overlap, but they are not the same [...] Compared to management which tends to be a science and is focused on planning and organizing, motivating and controlling, as well as directing human and material resources, leadership is closer to be an art and is more focused on influencing people" (p.2). Bass and Avolio (2000) proposed that collectivist culture in Chinese society provide leaders with ready-made

opportunities to become transformational leaders. For female leaders, the opportunity is mostly related to their gender role in a traditional society. They tend to be supportive and inspirational toward their subordinates, empathetic with their followers different needs, and willing to encourage subordinates' expression of ideas (Pan, Liang & Chen, 2000).

Plus, Chinese society is hierarchically structured and this fact tends to make them prefer leaders with a great expertise and talents to behave as role model as well as to define clear tasks and goals for subordinates. In Taiwan, the leader is intended to be able to thoughtfully consider all relevant factors before making decision instead of reprimanding subordinates when deviation happens (Dorfman & Howell, 1997).

Wu (2000) found in a study related to organizational commitment in the Taiwanese context that transformational leadership such as charisma and intellectual stimulation reveals a strongly positive relationship with employee commitment, whereas transactional leadership, including contingent reward leadership, shows a degree of influence on personal commitment, depending on the situation. According to some researchers, the more the leader is a relation-oriented leader, the higher employees' job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness (Lee & Lin, 1999). And, as a result of the western culture influences, it is postulated that a dilemma is occurring in Taiwanese organizations between traditional and western leadership styles influenced by different perspectives held by two generations, Baby Boomers born before 1965 and X Generation (Xers) born after 1964 about how an organization should be managed (Mouse, 2005). We then assume that the level of principals' organizational commitment depends in a great part on his or her operational margin and the whole organization's culture.

Hypothesis 2-5: A democratic (participative) leadership style increases principal's organizational commitment.

School Setting Characteristics and Affective Organizational Commitment

School characteristics are those such as school status, location, type and size. There is few literature related to the relationship between school size, status and organizational commitment. And because we assume that management practices in the education administration context are enabled and constrained by a variety of organizational factors including the school status, location, type and size, it was of interest to examine this relationship.

Hypothesis 3-1: Principals in the public schools are more committed to their organization than those of the private schools.

Hypothesis 3-2: Principals of schools located in big cities are more committed to their organization than principals of schools located in small cities.