

-RESEARCH ARTICLE-

THE HUMAN RESOURCES VOICE AND ITS ROLE IN INVESTING IN THE BENEFITS OF MERGERS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS

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—Abstract—

In the Iraqi corporate climate, organizational mergers are prevalent. This merger aims to obtain long-term gains by creating a competitive edge. The current study aims to evaluate the significance of the voice of human resources in the investment of merger advantages. This study's framework is intended to contribute to the literature by enhancing the understanding of the benefits of organization mergers from the standpoint of human resource voices. A rating scale questionnaire is used to recruit a sample from the telecommunications industry for this quantitative study. The findings indicate that it would be advantageous for merging organizations to consider human resource values. The opinions and observations of the personnel can facilitate a successful merger. This research has practical consequences that are crucial for the management of organizations to appreciate the importance of organizational personnel in merging companies for their continued viability. Consequently, this research yields novel results. The future directions of this research are offered considering the study's limitations to provide a path for researchers to advance the field significantly.

Keywords. Human resource voices, organizational merger, employee objective, employee performance, employee action

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1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the need to gain a competitive advantage in corporate operations, mergers between companies are crucial today (Christofi et al., 2019). The organizational culture has shifted, and strategic measures are bringing about various forms of mergers (González-Torres et al., 2020). The management is strongly committed to enhancing the business by establishing various organizations' current and collaborative goals for long-term job viability (Kwilinski et al., 2019). Indeed, firms that merge with larger corporations enjoy several advantages in the long run (Bari et al., 2019). In addition, it is vital to comprehend the organization's culture, and a suitable procedure should be devised before the merger (Čirjevskis, 2019). Mergers can provide a durable organizational culture if the organizations are linked for improved business success (Hughes et al., 2020). The organization's culture is flexible when businesses merge for sustainability progress (Arnold, 2019). Consequently, Iraqi organizations combine for sustainable development and to keep a competitive edge in the modern market (Yen et al., 2019). Due to a shift in strategic working, the organizational culture is advancing over time (Kiessling et al., 2019). Iraq is among the nations where the business climate is expanding (Khurana et al., 2019). (Albuquerque et al., 2019) report that local businesses are merging to compete with several global corporations in Iraq to gain greater benefits. In addition, the business climate in Iraq is always evolving due to various socioeconomic and political issues (Cao et al., 2019). To address these issues, the strategic action teams are developing policies to consolidate firms (Degbey et al., 2021). When the merging is effective, and each works correctly to boost the organization's performance, the business environment can be sustained (Phukon et al., 2019). Indeed, combining enterprises is not a simple operation, but the employees' opinions are crucial in this case (Strobl et al., 2020). The successful development of the firm is possible through the strategic evolution of the business environment at various phases (Khan, Soundararajan, Wood, et al., 2020). Previous research has disregarded the perspectives of human resource professionals in organizational mergers (Bianconi et al., 2019).

The research conducted by Chung et al. (2020) indicated that a firm's sustainability is achievable if strategic activities merge businesses vertically to achieve a competitive advantage. The research conducted by Beaulieu et al. (2020) also shows that firms that are sustainably grown and progressed can meet their customers' needs to achieve higher success. The study by Sarala et al. (2019) stated that firms should be combined into the same product category to achieve success if they are formed to capture the market and if market sustainability cannot be reached owing to certain obstacles. According to Coccoresse et al. (2020)'s study, a business can be sustainable if it strives for long-term advantages attained with adequate working conditions. These studies have examined the

many types of business mergers required for the business environment's sustainability. Nonetheless, this research illuminates a gray area in the corporate merger literature from the standpoint of organizational personnel. Consequently, this study aims to analyze the role of the voice of human resources in investing in the advantages of mergers between firms. This study's framework is intended to contribute to the literature by enhancing the understanding of the benefits of organization mergers from the standpoint of human resource voices. Moreover, this research has practical implications that are crucial for the management of the organizations to grasp the significance of organizational employees in the merging of the businesses to ensure the organizations' longevity. Consequently, this research yields novel results. In addition, the future directions of this research are offered considering the study's limitations to provide a path for researchers to advance the field significantly.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 1897, when the industry began to grow, the voice of human resources also began to emerge (Christofi et al., 2019). It evolved with human resources-related innovations, such as the creation of labor unions, collaborative decision-making frameworks, and collective bargaining, until it reached its current stage (González-Torres et al., 2020). In 1984, however, two academics applied it as a management concept in human resource management through social bargaining and labor unions (Kwilinski et al., 2019). Bari et al. (2019), Čirjevskis (2019), and Hughes et al. (2020) define the voice of the human resource as the degree to which the human resource engages directly or indirectly via others in the judgment activity within the organization. The allowed methodologies have definitions that vary and overlap. This concept illustrates the significance of embracing human resources' thoughts and recommendations when influencing organizational decisions (Arnold, 2019; Kiessling et al., 2019; Yen et al., 2019). The human resources voice has been defined as one sort of organizational citizenship that helps the creation of the organization's social system and enhances the level of cohesion among its human resources, with an emphasis on the behavioral aspect (Albuquerque et al., 2019; Cao et al., 2019; Degbey et al., 2021). This notion emphasizes that the voice of human resources is one of the tools that encourage excellent organizational behaviors, such as a focus on enhancing the organization's reputation and assisting coworkers when delaying task completion (Khan, Soundararajan, & Shoham, 2020; Phukon et al., 2019; Strobl et al., 2020). The human resources voice has also been characterized as providing human resources with the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions regarding the nature of the activities they perform and the degree to which they relate to the organization's goals (Bianconi et al., 2019; Khan, Soundararajan, Wood, et al., 2020; Strobl et al., 2020). Importantly, the term "human resources voice" has nothing to do with or is a synonym for "human resource participation," which was defined as a feedback mechanism in this article (Beaulieu et al., 2020; Chung et al., 2020). The voice of human resources does not depend on influence or power; it is utilized whenever there

is an opportunity to express an opinion in a formal or casual context (Coccoresse et al., 2020; Sarala et al., 2019). Human resources can now express themselves through various advancements, led by social media, that promote their growth and development in tandem with the Internet industry's continual evolution (Cartwright et al., 2022). The ability of human resources to communicate their perspectives on the opportunities and problems they face to address concerns that may obstruct their diverse operations has been referred to as their "voice" (Christofi et al., 2019). This notion highlighted the value of the voice of human resources in addressing the opportunities and challenges they face at work (González-Torres et al., 2020). (Arnold, 2019; Hughes et al., 2020; Yen et al., 2019) define the voice of human resources as the extent to which human resources can express their dissatisfaction with their interactions and activities with their supervisors within the organization in a manner that enables them to manage their conflicts and handle them as needed. Consequently, the human resources department's voice is utilized to resolve internal concerns.

The practice allows human resources to share their perspectives and preferences when collaborating or to work in teams (Bari et al., 2019; Kwilinski et al., 2019). This concept reinforces the importance of the viewpoint of human resources to the success of cooperation in modern organizations (Khurana et al., 2019; Kiessling et al., 2019; Yen et al., 2019). Therefore, the voice of human resources indicates the ability of human resources to express their ideas and proposals regarding how their organization's operations are implemented and to make the crucial decisions necessary to govern its affairs (Cao et al., 2019; Degbey et al., 2021; Phukon et al., 2019). This definition makes clear that the substance of the voice of human resources represents the philosophical foundations of the participatory management strategy (Khan, Soundararajan, & Shoham, 2020; Strobl et al., 2020). The researcher can describe the notion procedurally after discussing past techniques for enhancing the voice of human resources (Cartwright et al., 2022; Coccoresse et al., 2020). One of the modern trends that allow the organization's human resources to express their opinions and suggestions when formulating its objectives to devote all their efforts and resources to enhancing performance within it, and then ensures that their description is favored within it, is that the organization's human resources can express their opinions and suggestions when formulating those objectives (Sarala et al., 2019). The merger is an implemented notion rather than a philosophical one that has been developed in response to alterations in the business's external environment, internal environment, and management philosophy (Bari et al., 2019). Consequently, depending on density and complexity, it can take various forms, such as licensing, alliances, and corporations, as well as joint initiatives with diverse directions and methods (Cartwright et al., 2022). This definition can be relied upon because it depicts a series of measures made by the organization to continue operations by finding another organization to merge with (Christofi et al., 2019). It was characterized from a strategic standpoint as One of the strategies the organization employs to achieve compatibility and alignment between the changes in its external

environment and the changes it makes to its internal environment to achieve long-term strategic balance and sustainability, is to try to achieve compatibility and alignment between the changes in its external environment and the changes it makes to its internal environment (Bari et al., 2019; Kwilinski et al., 2019). This notion demonstrates the relevance of mergers' role in assisting businesses to reach strategic equilibrium (Khurana et al., 2019; Kiessling et al., 2019). Focusing on the concept of competitive advantage has been regarded as one of the company's modern strategies for maintaining its competitive edge by providing all the necessary resources to strengthen and preserve it.

In contrast, a merger is a process through which two or more organizations join forces to form a new, independent organization (Cartwright et al., 2022). Mergers illustrate the various events that an organization may undergo during its lifespan as it enters the stages of decline and seeks new ways to revitalize itself and advance to further stages (Coccorese et al., 2020; Sarala et al., 2019). Human resources assist and conclude the three steps of the merger (Chung et al., 2020). They provide helpful suggestions during the planning phase. During the integration stage, his objective is to attain organizational and cultural harmony. During the implementation phase, they achieve what is necessary for the success of these efforts (Degbey et al., 2021; Phukon et al., 2019; Strobl et al., 2020). Supervisors can instill a sense of ownership in their firm and treat it more like a business than a place of employment when they pay attention to the input of human resources (Phukon et al., 2019). This will result in psychological and emotional readiness for them to face all potential merger consequences. Based on this critical literature assessment, we develop the following hypothesis (see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 1: Employees' objective has a direct influence on organization merger.

Hypothesis 2: Employees' performance has a direct influence on organization mergers.

Hypothesis 3: Employees acting has a direct influence on organization merger.

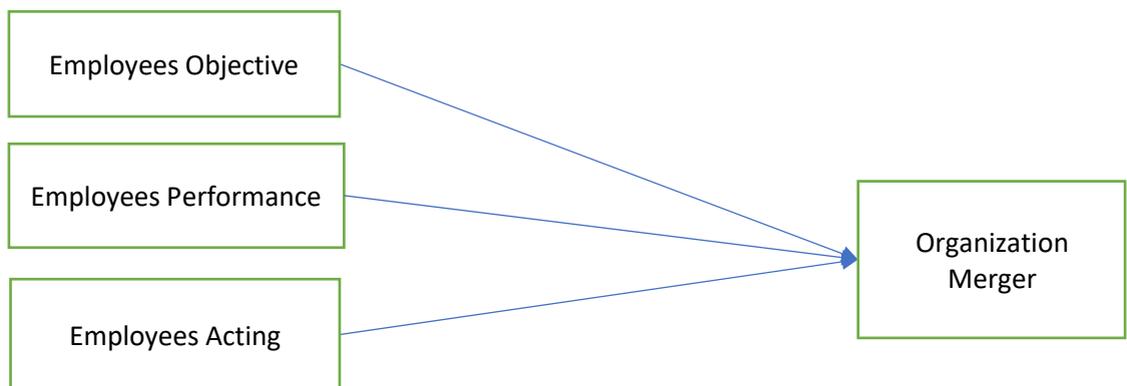


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

In this research, a "quantitative" questionnaire and a "Likert scale" questionnaire were used to collect data. The "items" for this investigation are derived from earlier studies. The researchers [Akbar et al. \(2018\)](#) changed the scale items for organization mergers to determine their relationship with the employee's objective, performance, and activities. In addition, this study has adopted the "scale items" from the study by [Qasim et al. \(2012\)](#) to quantify the direct effect of the organizational merger on employees' objectives. Second, this study has adapted the "scale items" from the 2018 study by Kiruja and Kabare to quantify the direct impact of employee performance on an organizational merger. This study has adapted the "scale items" from [Wu et al. \(2019\)](#)'s work to quantify employee activities' direct influence on organization mergers. In addition, testing of the questionnaire's "validity and reliability" was conducted before it was given to eleven arbitrators with competence in business administration, and all concurred. This was done to guarantee that the questionnaire was compatible with current research trends and the intended environment.

Thanks to the selection of "Atheer Communications Company," the research's practical component was implemented inside the telecommunications industry. Perhaps the primary reason for selecting it is that it had previously merged with "Iraqna Company" to form a single entity and then went through the merger process, in addition to being one of the successful companies in Iraq that were able to continue working and achieve numerous successes despite the extreme environmental conditions. The research sample consisted of (95) employees from the company's human resources department selected using the "simple random sampling method."

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The findings of "Smart PLS" were utilized to determine the "normality of the data" Thus, the "skewness and kurtosis" data are incorporated into the research. [Royston \(1992\)](#) states that "skewness is a measure of symmetry, or more precisely the absence of symmetry, and kurtosis is a measure of whether the data are heavy-tailed or light-tailed relative to a normal distribution." According to [Babbie et al. \(2022\)](#), "a general rule of thumb for skewness is that if the number is greater than +1 or less than -1, this indicates a significantly skewed distribution, and for kurtosis if the number is greater than +1, the distribution is too peaked." The findings of this "normal" study are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Data Normality

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
EO1	3.205	1.946	-0.830	0.484
EO2	3.272	1.896	-0.814	0.494
EO3	3.234	1.920	-0.809	0.456
EO4	3.238	2.047	-1.017	0.482
EO5	3.314	2.043	-0.975	0.462
EP1	3.230	1.928	-0.921	0.453
EP2	3.276	1.868	-0.708	0.477
EP3	3.084	1.855	-0.750	0.463
EP4	3.213	2.006	-0.969	0.427
EP5	3.213	1.846	-0.840	0.383
EA1	2.929	2.199	-0.676	0.882
EA2	2.808	2.229	-0.657	0.915
EA3	2.971	2.167	-0.701	0.839
EA4	2.883	2.095	-0.514	0.896
EA5	2.883	2.326	-0.816	0.898
OM1	2.762	2.103	-0.279	1.054
OM2	2.866	1.929	-0.283	0.895
OM3	2.787	1.934	-0.121	0.975
OM4	2.845	2.172	-0.557	0.935
OM5	2.874	2.060	-0.451	0.907

Table 2: Factor Loadings

The following step involves testing the "factor loadings" of each scale item. According to [Shevlin et al. \(1998\)](#), "factor loading demonstrates how accurately an item represents the underlying construct and must be greater than 0.70." [Table 2](#) presents the appropriate "factor loadings" for the investigation.

The research has relied on "Cronbach's alpha (α)," "composite reliability (CR)," "and average variance extracted (AVE)" for validity and reliability. According to [Tavakol et al. \(2011\)](#), "Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$) is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability." According to [Raykov \(1997\)](#), "composite reliability (CR > 0.70) is a measure of internal consistency in scale items, much like Cronbach's alpha." Also, according to [Alarcón et al. \(2015\)](#), "average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50) is a measure of the amount of variance that is captured by a construct about the amount of variance due to measurement error." This research has "reliability," and its findings are reported in [Table 3](#).

Table 2: Factor Loadings

Constructs	Indicators	Factor Loading
Employees Acting	EA1	0.916
	EA2	0.936
	EA3	0.907
	EA4	0.929
	EA5	0.910
Employees Objective	EO1	0.939
	EO2	0.928
	EO3	0.913
	EO4	0.923
	EO5	0.927
Employees Performance	EP1	0.896
	EP2	0.913
	EP3	0.930
	EP4	0.941
	EP5	0.907
Organization Merger	OM1	0.902
	OM2	0.911
	OM3	0.884
	OM4	0.931
	OM5	0.920

Table 3. Reliability and Validity

Constructs	α	CR	AVE
Employees Acting	0.955	0.965	0.846
Employees Objective	0.958	0.968	0.858
Employees Performance	0.953	0.964	0.842
Organization Merger	0.948	0.96	0.827

This study has established "discriminant validity." According to [Alarcón et al. \(2015\)](#), "discriminant validity tests whether concepts or measurements that should not be related are unrelated." Heteritrait-Monotrait (HTMT) is a measure of the similarity of latent variables, according to [Ab Hamid et al. \(2017\)](#). [Gold et al. \(2001\)](#) state that "the HTMT threshold is debatable, with the majority of publications recommending a value below 0.90." The research has "discriminant validity," and [Table 4](#) summarizes its findings.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Employees Acting	Employees Objective	Employees Performance	Organization Merger
Employees Acting				
Employees Objective	0.507			
Employees Performance	0.524	0.594		
Organization Merger	0.492	0.475	0.495	

The hypotheses were determined using "PLS Bootstrapping" computations in this study. Similarly, this study employed the "t and p" values recommended by F. Hair Jr et al. (2014) for the hypotheses test. The outcomes of the first hypothesis are accepted, and employee goals directly and favorably affect the organization's merger. The conclusions of the second hypothesis are accepted, and employee performance has a direct and favorable effect on the organization's merger. Thirdly, the findings of the third hypothesis are accepted, and employee behaviors directly and positively affect the organization merger. The outcomes are shown in Table 5 and Figure 2.

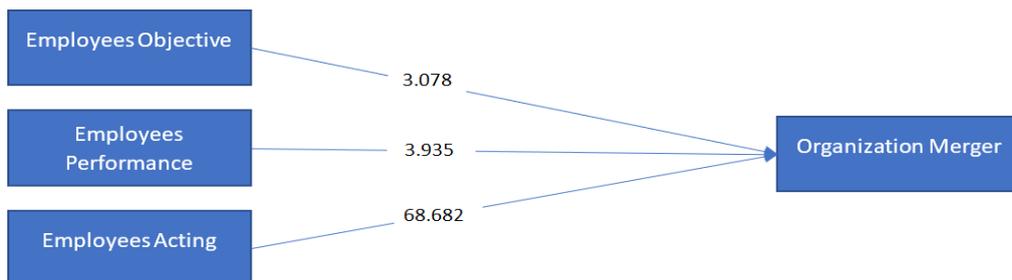


Figure 2. Structural Model

Table 5. Hypotheses Results

Direct Path	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Employees Objective -> OrganizationMerger	0.234	0.076	3.078	0
Employees Performance ->Organization Merger	0.303	0.077	3.935	0
Employees Acting -> OrganizationMerger	0.945	0.014	68.682	0

Significant "t > 1.96 and p < 0.05"

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study found that the conclusions of the first hypothesis are accepted and that employee objectives have a direct and good effect on the organization merger. However, these results are compared to past research to assess their validity and corroboration. It evolved alongside changes in human resources, such as the rise of labor unions, collaborative decision-making procedures, and collective bargaining, until it reached its status (Coccorese et al., 2020). The human resources voice has been defined as the extent to which human resources participate directly or indirectly in an organization's decision-making process (Sarala et al., 2019). The descriptions of permitted approaches vary and may overlap (Beaulieu et al., 2020). This topic highlights how important it is to incorporate the opinions and suggestions of human resources when influencing company decisions (Chung et al., 2020). The human resources voice is described as one of the types of organizational citizenship that increases the level of cohesion among the company's human resources and contributes to the development of the organization's social system, with an emphasis on the behavioral element (Khan, Soundararajan, Wood, et al., 2020). This demonstrates that the voice of human resources supports positive organizational behaviors, such as enhancing the organization's reputation and assisting coworkers when tasks are taking longer to complete than anticipated (Phukon et al., 2019). It is also known as the voice of human resources when human resources professionals are allowed to share their views and opinions regarding the nature of the activities they engage in and the degree to which they are relevant to the organization's goals. Unlike "human resource participation," defined here as a feedback mechanism, "human resources voice" has nothing to do with it and is not a synonym. The voice of human resources is utilized whenever there is an official or informal opportunity to express an opinion independent of influence or authority. As the communication industry continues to develop, human resources can now express themselves through several innovations, led by social media, that foster their growth and development (Christofi et al., 2019). The voice of human resources has been defined as their ability to share their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges they face to address issues that may impede their different operations. This concept underlined the importance of the voice of human resources in assisting employees in dealing with opportunities and challenges at work. Human resources' ability to communicate their dissatisfaction with their interactions and activities with their supervisors inside the organization in a manner that helps them to manage and resolve their problems is another characterization of their voice. Consequently, the human resources department's voice is utilized to resolve internal concerns. In this way, the comparison with other studies indicates validation, and this theory contributes to the body of knowledge.

The second observation of the current study is that the findings of the second hypothesis are accepted, and employee performance has a direct and positive effect on the organization's merger. However, these results are compared to past research to assess

their validity and corroboration. Human resources voice is demonstrated as a technique that enables human resources to communicate their preferences and viewpoints when cooperating or working in teams (Christofi et al., 2019). (González-Torres et al., 2020) This notion emphasizes the significance of the human resources perspective to the success of teams in modern enterprises. The human resources voice reflects the channels through which human resources can communicate their ideas and recommendations regarding how their organization's activities are carried out; and the channels through which human resources can make crucial decisions to manage its affairs (Bari et al., 2019). This description makes apparent that the philosophical grounds of the participatory management strategy are represented in the substance of the voice of human resources (Arnold, 2019). After discussing the earlier techniques that were used to increase the voice of human resources, the researcher can procedurally describe the concept of one of the contemporary trends that enable the human resources of the business to express their thoughts and ideas while establishing its goals to concentrate all of their resources and efforts on enhancing performance within it and then ensures that their description is chosen within it (Kiessling et al., 2019; Yen et al., 2019). As an organization's external and internal capacities and managerial philosophy evolve, a merger becomes more of a practical concept than a philosophical one. As a result, depending on density and complexity, it can take on several forms, including licenses, partnerships, and corporations, as well as cooperative efforts with various focuses and approaches. It may be relied upon as an appropriate definition because it displays the actions taken by the business to identify a merger partner to maintain operations (Cao et al., 2019; Degbey et al., 2021). Similarly, the comparison with past investigations provides confirmation, and this idea contributes to the body of knowledge.

The current study has determined that the third hypothesis is supported and that employee actions directly and positively affect the organization's merger. However, these results are compared to past research to assess their validity and corroboration. It was explained from a strategic perspective as one of the organization's methods for creating interoperability and alignment between external changes and the alterations it makes to its organizational setting to achieve strategic balance and long-term sustainability (Arnold, 2019; Hughes et al., 2020). This explanation clarifies the significance of mergers in assisting firms in attaining strategic equilibrium (Albuquerque et al., 2019). Moreover, bearing in mind the concept of competitive advantage, it has been characterized as one of the corporation's contemporary tactics to preserve its competitive advantage by providing all the resources necessary to strengthen and maintain it (Phukon et al., 2019; Strobl et al., 2020).

On the other hand, a merger is defined as the process through which two or more organizations unite to form a new, autonomous organization. Consolidations also represent the complex events that an organization may undergo when it enters the phases of decline and begins to explore new ways to reinvigorate itself and enter new stages during its lifecycle (Beaulieu et al., 2020; Chung et al., 2020).

Human resources aid in and finish all three phases of the merger. Employees contribute valuable suggestions to the planning process. In addition, during the integration period, personnel strive for internal and intercultural harmony (Sarala et al., 2019). In the last step, personnel complete the duties required for the implementation phase of these projects to be effective. Supervisors may build a sense of pride in their company and view it more as a business than a workplace if they pay attention to the contributions of human resources (Bari et al., 2019). This will make them psychologically and emotionally prepared to absorb any potential repercussions of mergers. In this way, the comparison with other studies indicates validation, and this theory contributes to the body of knowledge.

6. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research has considerably contributed to the body of knowledge by demonstrating that the organizational merger is significantly and positively influenced by the organizational employees' objectives, as these employees play a crucial part in the organization's development. Importantly, previous studies did not focus on the connection between employee ambitions and organization mergers. Similarly, this research has considerably contributed to the body of knowledge by demonstrating that the organizational merger had a significant and favorable effect on the organizational employees' performance because these people are essential to the organization's development. Earlier studies did not focus on the association between employee performance and organizational mergers. This research has expanded the literature greatly as it has proved that the organizational employees' actions significantly and positively influence the organizational merger because these employees play a crucial part in the organization's development. The earlier investigations did not elaborate on the relationship between employees' behavior and the organization's merging. This study's framework is intended to contribute to the literature by enhancing the understanding of the benefits of organization mergers from the standpoint of human resource voices. Therefore, this study provides fresh addition to the literature on organization mergers.

This study elucidates that the organizational performance following a merger will be enhanced if the roles of organizational personnel are deemed acceptable. The research indicated that senior management must be aware of organizational personnel before making judgments regarding the merger of two firms. This research also revealed that organizational values are suited for better employee opinions and organizational merger objectives. According to the findings of this study, employee performance is extremely important in the merger of firms, as dissatisfied employees create negative attitudes toward organizational culture and working conditions. In this approach, the research revealed that the organization's employees are the most important stakeholders, and their input should be carefully considered for a sustainable merger. The role of the top management is to comprehend the organization's culture, which can be enhanced

productively for the betterment of the company environment's sustainable growth. In addition, the researchers stressed that the three variables of employee objectives, employee performance, and employee actions are essential to the success of an organization.

7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

However, the findings indicate that it would be advantageous for merging firms to consider human resource values. Moreover, the thoughts and observations of employees can contribute to the merger's success. In this way, this research has practical consequences that are crucial for the management of the organizations to grasp the significance of organizational employees in the merging of the companies for the sustainability of the organizations. Moreover, this research yields novel results. However, the future directions of this research are offered in light of the study's limitations to provide a path for researchers to advance the field significantly. This research is limited in that only the direct impact of employee objectives, performance, and actions on organization mergers has been seen. However, additional research is required to determine the mediating effect of organizational politics between employees' objectives, employees' performance, and employees' action and organization mergers. Determining the moderating impact of workers' working behavior between employees' objectives, employees' performance, and employees' acting and organization merger will also require future research. Future research must establish top management effectiveness as a mediator between employee objectives, employee performance, employee behavior, and organization merger. Consequently, these guidelines are anticipated to result in a substantial increase in the body of literature.

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