Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This section provides a review of the methodological procedures involved in the research study. It firstly provides the justification for the research methodology adopted for the study. It then expands on the various research procedures involved in the study, including the definition of the universe, the sampling procedures, questionnaire design and administration, data analysis procedures and the limitations to the study. Finally, the ethical considerations adopted in the research study are clarified.

3.1 Research objective

The entire study of the role of HR in post-mergers and acquisitions started with exploring the theoretical framework and the research questions to be answered.

To recap, the research questions were:-

• What is the role of HR of the acquiring company in a post-merger integration stage?
• What were the interventions used by HR of the acquiring company?
• What is the impact of mergers and acquisitions on different employees and how do employees of different organisations perceive the interventions used by HR?
• Are there any HR practices at the integration stage which are worth being replicated? (recommended to other organisations)
3.2 Research Design

The research questions were addressed in two ways. The first two research questions were addressed by garnering the organisational perspective, the third question was addressed by considering the employee perspective and the last question was addressed by integrating the two perspectives.

In order to understand the organisational perspective an exploratory approach was adopted.

“The goal or objective, in exploratory studies is the exploration of a relatively unknown research area” (Terre Blanche et al., 1999: 39). Exploratory studies are usually conducted for the following reasons:-

- Gain new insights into the phenomenon
- Undertake a preliminary investigation prior to a more structured study of the phenomenon.
- Explicate the central concepts and constructs.
- Determine priorities for future research
- Develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon

The literature review gave insights into the role of HR in mergers and acquisitions. Therefore there was a comprehensive idea of the conditions in a post-merger scenario and the role HR plays during this time. However, not much research was available regarding a post-merger scenario specifically, in the Indian context. Given the collectivist nature of the country, the people management processes are likely to be different from the West. Hence it was deemed necessary to understand the activities carried out by HR in a post-merger scenario through an exploratory method.
Though HR interventions may be the same across contexts, it was important to understand if there were differences in the frequency, intensity, salience and impact of these interventions across various sectors.

The study being exploratory in nature did not have any hypotheses in the beginning. However, based on the findings of the study, some hypotheses for future research have been proposed.

It was felt that a feedback on HR interventions would give an insight on the employee’s perception. It would also help to frame recommendations for HR practitioners. Thus an employee perception was taken from the employees on HR interventions. However this wasn’t the main part of the study. For this part three hypotheses were framed which have been discussed later. The study had both qualitative as well as quantitative data.

The first part of the study had closed and open ended questions which were qualitative in nature. The first advantage of qualitative data is the focus on naturally occurring events that provide a greater depth and richness of information (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The second advantage of keeping open ended questions for qualitative data was that it enabled gaining a greater understanding of the interventions used by the HR post mergers and acquisitions and their outcomes. Finally, the advantage of qualitative data is its ability to allow the investigator to gain depth and detail, and to address the ‘how and why’ questions (Yin, 2003). Thus qualitative data in this case would yield important insights into the phenomena of mergers and acquisitions.

Methodology

The research methodology was ‘Mixed Method Design’. These are studies that are products of the pragmatist paradigm that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process. There
may be single applications within phases of the study, such as quantitative (experimental) design, followed by qualitative data collection, followed by quantitative analysis after the data are converted. In this application, the qualitative data was converted to numbers using the ‘quantifying’ technique described by Miles and Huberman (1984).

There could also be multiple applications within phases of the study, such as the following:

- A research design that calls for a field experiment and extensive ethnographic interviewing to occur simultaneously and in an integrated manner
- Data collection that includes close-ended items with numerical responses as well as open-ended items in the same survey (Tashakkori, 1998)

Authors from multiple fields initially defined mixed methodology designs under the general heading of method triangulation. As Creswell (1995) has recently noted, mixed method designs now serve purposes beyond triangulation (i.e., defined as the convergence of results). It should be noted that the term mixed methods typically refers to both data collection techniques and analyses given that the type of data collected is intertwined with the type of analysis that is used.

The research study approach was ‘Parallel/Simultaneous Mixed Method Designs’. In parallel/simultaneous mixed method designs, the quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time and analysed in a complementary manner. While Creswell (1995) contends that quantitative results would not necessarily relate to or confirm qualitative results (and vice versa) in these designs, most studies using this approach generate numerical and narrative data that answer similar questions.
As discussed earlier, both questionnaires sought feedback on organisational structure post mergers, employee related issues handled post-merger and HR policies, processes & systems post-merger.

3.3 Questionnaire Design

To be consistent a list of broad questions based on the literature review was compiled to identify those practices recommended and used by academics, practitioners and merger experts. These practices were explored from two perspectives: a) HR’s role and actions concerning these practices and b) employee’s perception about these practices.

The following chart depicts the approach used to design and administer instruments for both the perspectives.
Face and Construct Validity

Extant Knowledge

**Research: Review of Literature**

**Item Generation**

Discussions with two HR merger specialists who had handled a couple of mergers and acquisitions in the past

**2 sets of Questionnaires**

- **For HR professionals**
  - Pre-testing through meetings with 5 HR professionals
  - Meetings with 4 HR professionals and researchers
  - 35 HR professionals were interviewed

- **For Employees**
  - Pilot Study on 60 employees
  - Meetings with 4 HR professionals and researchers
  - Perception gathering of 435 employees from acquired/acquiring companies

**Practice:**
- Interviews with HR professionals and practitioners about their prior experiences in mergers and acquisitions
- Interviews with the employees (of both the entities) of companies which had undergone M&A.

**Content and Face Validation**

**Content and Validity assessment**

**Reliability & Content Validation**

**Face and Construct Validity**
35 HR professionals were interviewed

Reliability testing of Collected Data

Data Analysis

Close-ended Questions
(Frequency Tables and Mean Scores)

Open-ended Questions

Preparation of transcripts → Coding Key
excerpts → Identification of Issues and
 corresponding Interventions → Theme
formulation → Qualitative and Quantitative
analysis

Analysis of data sets from three random
study participants by two PhD colleagues
of the researcher who had experience in
qualitative study

Analysis by two of the TAC committee
members

Validation of analysis of Qualitative data

Work-colleague of the researcher picked out five
random transcripts out of a master list of 35 HR
professionals’ interview recordings, which were sent
to the five respective HR professionals for their review

Fig. 9 Research Design
3.3.1 Steps followed in the Instrument Design

According to Hinkin (1995), item generation in the instrument is the first step to be followed in designing an instrument. As quoted in the paper “Questionnaires are the most commonly used method of data collection in field research” (Stone, 1978). Over the past decades hundreds of scales have been developed to assess various attitudes, perceptions, or opinions of organizational members in order to examine a prior hypothesized relationships with other constructs or behaviors. As Schwab (1980) points out, measures are often used before adequate data exists regarding their reliability and validity.

a) Parameters for the study were developed through the literature review, both for HR professionals and for employee perception. The items i.e. questions that were generated were discussed with two HR merger specialists who had handled a couple of mergers and acquisitions in the past.

b) Also, inputs regarding the experiences gained by the employees were taken from ten employees (of acquiring, acquired and merged entities at different levels)

c) With the inputs and suggestions from the HR professionals and employees, two broad based questionnaires were prepared.

3.3.2 Pre-test of the HR questionnaire

According to Hinkin (1995) pre-test is helpful to assess content validity of the instrument. A pre-test of the questionnaire was done on five HR professionals. Pre-test is done to gain insight, allow the depth of knowledge and explore the phenomenon. It also helps to develop and validate the data collection instrument. These five HR professionals had been involved in at least two mergers and acquisitions in the past and were not a part of the final study.
Justification for Five Pre-test Interviews

A decision was made initially to allow for replication logic (Yin 1992, 95) to be followed. Replication logic implies that each case is selected in order to predict similar results, which would indicate actual replication. This is not the same as survey sampling logic, where the sample size is chosen with the expectation that it is representative of the larger population. According to Yin (1994), each case in the multiple case studies is a replication which will allow the researcher eventually to achieve certainty (that each respondent’s experience predicts similar results). Yin indicates that: If you want a high degree of certainty, you may press for five, six or more replicators.

These five pre-test interviews were highly effective in uncovering the salient variables involved in a complex phenomenon (Glares and Stratus 1967, Eisenhardt 1989). They were useful in unravelling causal mechanisms of variable thought to explain a certain phenomenon. They enabled closer examination of the phenomenon, a better understanding of the complexities, challenges and uncertainties and furnishing of details of the role of HR in post-merger and acquisition process.

Thus, from the interviews which served as an exploratory discussion, the instrument for interviewing the HR professionals was prepared.

The pre-test also provided some key learning points-

1. Preparation is crucial: Not only must access be arranged, but also a clear statement of the terminology must be made. Practitioners do not, for example, understand what a core- or key capability is. Neither do they understand ‘academic concepts’ such as resource-based theory or resource combinations. In addition, with the short amount of time each interviewee was willing to commit to, open-ended questions were too general, and caused some dialogue to flow naturally.
2. **Conducting interviews requires skill and experience:** The ability to listen and ask pertinent follow-up questions to gain deeper, more reflective insights from interviewees is important.

3. **The role of archival or documentary evidence:** Before the interviews it was important to know some details about the merger in a given firm. In addition, background information about a business, collected through public sources, saved interview time because interviewees did not have to provide background information about the company.

4. **Analysing interview text data:** The volume of data was large enough for only five interviews, and it was found desirable that the questionnaire comprise mostly of close ended questions, so that while collecting data for a larger sample size it would not be strenuous.

5. **Precaution:** During the pre-test itself keen attention was paid to the response given to the question to ensure that the interviewees were interpreting the questions based on the intent. Additionally a preliminary content analysis on the data was done to further ensure that the intent behind the research questions was being targeted.

The pre-test with five HR professionals showed that it was necessary to make some changes in the questionnaire. Based on the literature review and the pre-test interviews, the final questionnaire was prepared. It was divided into two parts:

a. **Context questions:** These gave a general understanding about the merger and acquisition.
b. **Relationship questions**: These had close and open ended questions which were under five headings:

1. General Context Questions
2. Organisational structural issues
3. Employee related issues
4. HR policies and processes issues
5. Communication

The questionnaire had both close and open ended questions. The close ended questions were used to quantify the data. The open ended questions provided a better understanding of the interventions used by the HR professionals post-merger and acquisition.

A structured interview technique was used to collect the data. Structured interviews frequently appear in quantitative studies as they include a fixed set of closed-end questions answered by each participant. With structured interviews the control is on the questions posed which are very specific and therefore the responses to these questions are often specific.

### 3.3.3 Validity testing of the Instrument

In mixed methods where qualitative approach is used not everything is riding on the single interview or observation. So front end instrumentation can be revised, in fact, should be revised. Instrumentation can be modified steadily to explore new leads, address a revised research question or interview a new class of informant. Continuously revising instruments puts qualitative research at odds with survey research, where instrument stability (for example, test – retest reliability is required to assure reliable measurement. In such kind of research issues on instrument validity and reliability ride largely on the skills of the researcher. (Miles and Huberman, 1984, Tashakkori, 1998)
The meetings with HR professionals and pre-testing were done for the validation of the instrument. According to Miles and Huberman (1984) the validity of your instrument becomes stronger if the researchers have the following characteristics present:

a) Some familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting under study.
b) Strong conceptual interests.
c) A multidisciplinary approach as opposed to a narrow grounding or focus in a single discipline.
d) A good “investigative” skill, including doggedness, the ability to draw people out, and the ability to move toward premature closure.

The author/researcher has a rich experience of conducting behavioural interviews and is a certified professional in the same. This helped in getting the details pertaining to the post-merger and acquisition issues and interventions faced by HR professionals and designing of the final questionnaire.

**Face and Content validity of the instrument**

1. To assess face and content validity prior to the administration of the questionnaire it was sent to four HR professionals and researchers who had participated in mergers and acquisitions in the past. They were asked to comment on the readability, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire.

2. The three member thesis advisory committee also reviewed the interview questionnaire for validity. After several rounds of revision the final instrument prepared was a structured questionnaire.
Reasons for using Structured Interview

If interview schedules or observations schedules are not focused and structured, too much superfluous information will be collected. Data overload will then compromise the efficiency and power of analysis. Heavy pre-instrumentation emphasizes internal validity, generalizability and manageability, all worthy causes. Further front-end instrumentation and its degree of structure helps in construct and contextual validity. Finally the third stance is both contingent and ecumenical; the idea being that it is unhelpful to reach for absolute answers in relative instances. (Miles and Huberman, 1984)

3.3.4 Employee Perception Instrument (Appendix 4)

1. The instrument used in this part of the research was developed based on the literature review, with two HR merger experts and after meeting ten employees who had experienced mergers and acquisitions in the past (of acquiring, acquired and merged entities at different levels).

2. A questionnaire consisting of 63 items with nine independent variables, with employee satisfaction as the dependent variable, was prepared. The following were the nine independent variables.

1. Organisational Structure
2. Talent Management
3. Communication
4. HR Policies
5. Training
6. Performance Management
7. Compensation
8. Culture
9. Employee Stress
3. A five point summative rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used, where 1 meant ‘Strongly Agree’ and 5 meant ‘Strongly Disagree’. The study was to explore the affective domain of the respondents (employees) in two dimensions: the employees’ perception of the interventions used by HR in respect to the variables used post M&A, and then their overall satisfaction.

4. **Reliability and validity of the Questionnaire**: According to Churchill (1992) and Hinkin (1995) reliability and validity of the instrument is considered as a part of testing stage of the newly developed measure. Although reliability can be calculated in a number of ways, the most commonly accepted measure is internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha (Price an Mueller 1986).

Reliability score of the questionnaire depicts the internal consistency of items. The Reliability co-efficient was identified using the Cronbach alpha.

a) Face validity and construct validity have been addressed. Face validity also known as content validity is a subjective but systematic evaluation of how well the content of a scale represents the measurement task at hand. It focuses on the adequacy with which the domain of the characteristic is captured by the measure (Churchill1992) Face validity was addressed by showing the questionnaire to several experts to determine if items were relevant or not. The experts suggested keeping all the items in the questionnaire. Construct validity addresses the question of what construct or characteristic the scale, in fact, is measuring (Malhotra, 2006). Construct validity lies at the very heart of scientific progress. While the measurement of constructs is vital to scientific progress, construct validity is the most difficult type of validity to establish. Through plans and procedures used in developing the instrument, we should adequately sample the domain of the construct and check if there is internal consistency among the items of the domain. This was also taken care of.
b) A pilot study of the questionnaire was done on 60 employees. Reliability test was administered. Reliability is a criterion that refers to the consistency of data stemming from the use of a particular research method. A measure is reliable to the extent that repeated application of it under the same conditions (by different researchers) gives the same result. (Malhotra, 2006) Reliability test was carried to determine whether to remove any parameter from the study, which would increase the efficiency of the results. Reliability and validity are related to each other. If a research methods lacks reliability it can hardly be high on validity since its application leads to varying outcomes. However a reliable method is not necessarily a valid method. The Cronbach value of the total instrument before pilot study came to 0.960 and after pilot study it came to 0.969 and individual parameters before pilot study were all above 0.768. No parameters were removed from the instrument. (Appendix 5)

c) After the pilot a cross checking was done with the respondents to understand if they found any questions difficult to interpret. The feedback from the respondents was that the questionnaire was straightforward and easy to understand.

3.4 Sample Design

The time difference from the moment the integration commences (generally immediately after the M&A deal closing), and the estimated integration final time is generally not always easy to know. Thus we cannot exactly determine the least time in which integration is completed. Angwin (2004) maintains that following the difficulty in determining when the integration was completed, most M&A researches focus on the examination of the integration process during a given period of time, such as the first year or the first one hundred
days, from the beginning of the integration. Further the difference between domestic M&A and cross-border M&A has been investigated in many researches, primarily in the context of the impact of the differences of national culture and the companies involved in the course of the success (Chatterjee et al., 1992; Datta, 1991; Weber, 1996).

**Reason for retrospective study**

All those companies where M&A occurred in the years 2008 and 2009 were identified. The data collection started in January 2011. A minimum period of one year was taken into account, so as to allow time for the integration in HR systems and practices. Merger and acquisition were considered as same.

**3.4.1 Sample for the Role of HR interview**

**3.4.1 (a) Selection of companies:**

a) The database of the companies who had been into mergers and acquisitions in the year 2008 and 2009 in India was first obtained from Deal Tracker, Grant Thornton. The following table lists down the number of domestic and cross-border deals in India for the year 2008 and 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deals</th>
<th>In 2008</th>
<th>In 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross Border Deals</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Deals</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Deals</strong></td>
<td><strong>454</strong></td>
<td><strong>320</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Deal Tracker, Grant Thornton (2009)\(^{35}\))

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\(^{35}\) Providing business owners with M&A market insight, Deal Tracker Report, Grant Thornton, Jan 2009, Volume1
b) ‘Cross border mergers’ are excluded from the study. The focus was only on ‘domestic mergers’. The following table highlights the number of domestic mergers and acquisitions in 2008 and 2009.

Tab. 3.2 Number of domestic deals in 2008 and 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Deals</th>
<th>In 2008</th>
<th>In 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mergers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitions</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>172</strong></td>
<td><strong>164</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Deal Tracker, Grant Thornton (2009)\(^{36}\))

c) Companies were then stratified in terms of horizontal and vertical Mergers. The following table highlights the number of domestic horizontal acquisitions in the year 2008 and 2009.

Tab. 3.3 Types of M&A Deals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquisitions</th>
<th>In 2008</th>
<th>In 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conglomerate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>167</strong></td>
<td><strong>148</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Deal Tracker, Grant Thornton (2009)\(^{37}\))

\(^{36}\)Providing business owners with M&A market insight, Deal Tracker Report, Grant Thornton, Jan 2009, Volume 1

d) Only those companies which had undergone Horizontal acquisitions or Mergers in India in the year 2008 and 2009 were considered as a part of the study. Horizontal M&As which pursue market synergy require the greatest degree of organisational integration and typically involve all types of integration – including procedural, physical, managerial, and socio-cultural integrations – as former competitors try to eliminate redundant functions (Shrivastava, 1986)

e) This group was further classified into two categories:

1. All the mergers and acquisitions which had a stake below 51% were excluded from the study. The reason for excluding this group was that acquiring companies otherwise would not have the power of changing the management style of the acquired company.

2. Companies which had increased their stake in the acquiring company to more than 51% from the previously held stake were excluded from the study as they would not give importance to HR interventions in integration.

Tab. 3.4 Horizontal Acquisitions and Mergers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stake</th>
<th>In 2008</th>
<th>In 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Stake</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 51%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 51%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Deal Tracker, Grant Thornton (2009))

38 ibid
f. Tab 3.5 identifies the population for the study. The number of deals considered for the study was 38 acquisitions and 5 mergers in the year 2008; and 22 acquisitions and 16 mergers in the year 2009. Thus, the population for the study was 81 deals.

Tab. 3.5 Horizontal Acquisitions and Mergers- Population for study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stake</th>
<th>In 2008</th>
<th>In 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitions above 51%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mergers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Deal Tracker, Grant Thornton (2009) ³⁹)

³⁹ ibid
Fig. 10 Sampling process for HR interview-selection of companies

- 172 M&As
  - 5 Mergers
  - 167 Acquisitions

- 164 M&As
  - 16 Mergers
  - 148 Acquisitions

- 41 Vertical M&As
- 113 Horizontal M&As
- 13 Conglomerate M&As

- Increase in stake - 54
- Less than 51% - 21
- Above 51% - 38
- Increase in stake - 82
- Less than 51% - 24
- Above 51% - 22
3.4.1 (b) Selection of HR professionals.

The population comprised of HR professionals that had handled an Indian merger in the years 2008 and 2009. The following criteria determined their selection:

1. A specific participant selection criterion from within the population was a function of the sampling methodology applied.

2. Subjects were chosen for interviews based on purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, one or more pre-defined groups or characteristics are required. In the study, HR professionals of the acquiring company were interviewed because they had in-depth knowledge about the organisational structure, processes and policies before the merger; and about proposed changes and problems after the merger and acquisition. They were the people who were responsible for planning and implementing the human resource issues post mergers and acquisitions. Thus all these HR professionals had handled the mergers and acquisitions in their respective organisation and were responsible for the people issues in their organisation.

Post-merger the HR department of the acquired company gets merged with the HR department of the acquiring company. Thus, the HR respondents selected were only from the acquiring company.

3. Over a period of 1 year (January 2011 – December 2011) data was collected from senior HR professionals of the 35 companies identified. During this period, the following steps were followed for data collection:

   a) All the 81 companies were called up and data of HR professionals (name, e-mail ids and contact numbers) who were a part of the mergers and acquisitions was collected.

   b) An official letter from the NMIMS University was arranged stating that the study was being conducted for academic purposes as part of a
PhD study in the area of Role of HR post M&A. It clearly mentioned that all the information collected was purely for research purposes and no names of individuals or organisation (in any form), including the deal type and value would be mentioned in the thesis.

c) The official letter received from NMIMS was scanned and sent to all HR professionals requesting them for an interview. The same letter was sent with a covering note to those professionals who had left the organisation and whose details could be retrieved.

d) Mail reminders were continuously sent to all these HR professionals regarding the meeting.

e) After three mail requests and telephone calls for participation HR professionals from 35 companies agreed to participate in the interview survey. The following table shows the response from these 81 companies.

![Figure 11](image)

Fig. 11 Participant response to the interview requests
Out of the 81 companies identified, all of them were contacted. 16 HR professionals declined a meeting stating the data was confidential and it would not be possible for companies to divulge the information. 30 HR professionals did not respond even after being sent three e-mail reminders.

Thus 35 HR professionals were the final respondents. The following table (Tab. 3.7) identifies the employment sectors of the respondents:

Tab. 3.6 Employment sectors of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMCG</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking and Finance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT &amp; ITES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample size of the companies: 35
3.4.1 (c) Demographic details of sample

The following table (Tab. 3.7) shows descriptive statistics related to the HR respondents’ current position, experience, level of education and sex.

Tab. 3.7 Demographic details of sample (HR professionals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current position</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director HR</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>11.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP HR</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head HR</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Manager HR</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mergers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>97.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of years in Current position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5 yrs</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>25.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 yrs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 yrs</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 yrs</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of years in the organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5 yrs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 yrs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 yrs</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>11.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 yrs</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>14.29</td>
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Sample size of the Acquiring companies: 35
3.4.1 (d) Interview Process

Out of these 35 interviews, four interviews were telephonic interviews. Two HR professionals were in Gurgaon, two in Bangalore. The remaining interviews were face-to-face. The following procedure was adopted:

a) To understand the context of M&A for each responding organisation, background information on what, when, why etc. was collected.

b) All the HR professionals were sent an interview questionnaire in advance to the interview. Sending the interview questionnaire to the HR professionals in advance, helped them to recollect the past experiences and be better prepared to provide clear information.

c) All the face-to-face interviews were in the official premises of the company.

d) All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Permission to record the interview was obtained from the interviewees including the telephonic interviews. Additionally, after the transcription, notes were checked with the interviewee in order to verify what had been recorded and to check for any misunderstanding.

e) While the interviews varied in length depending upon the response by the HR professionals, each interview generally lasted for one hour to one hour and fifteen minutes.

f) In cases where the recording was not clear or due to time constraints of the HR professionals, the researcher requested the HR professionals for a second meeting.
3.4.2 Employee perception survey

3.4.2 (a) Sample for employee perception survey

The population for this survey would be all employees who were present at the time of merger.

a) Permission was obtained from all the 35 companies to administer the questionnaire to the employees.

b) The actual size of the population, post-merger could not be known as many employees had left the current organisations and new people had joined. Convenience sampling was followed as the organisations were reluctant to divulge information about the people who had left.

c) All the companies had their offices in Mumbai and therefore the questionnaire was administered in the Mumbai office.

d) Respondents were categorised into line, middle and top levels. Sample from acquired, acquiring and merged entities were taken.

e) A total of 480 questionnaires were administered out of which 435 questionnaires were completely filled out (90.6%).
3.4.2 (b) Demographics and Target of the study

Tab. 3.8 Demographics and Target of the study (Employees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Middle level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition</td>
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<td><strong>Type of Acquisition</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquiring company</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>43.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merged company</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample size of the companies: 35
Total respondents: 435
3.4.2 (c) Data Collection Process

a) The entire questionnaire was administered in the form of a hard copy.
b) The questionnaire was self-administered to all the employees.
c) All the questionnaires were administered in the company’s office. Questionnaires to the line and middle level managers were administered in the company’s board room in a group. In the case of the top management the questionnaires was filled out by the employees in their respective chambers.
d) The purpose of the study was explained to all the employees and ethical issues regarding the study were explained.
e) No respondent spoke to each other during the entire process, neither were any discussion carried out post the data collection.

3.5 Reliability of the data collected from HR professionals

To ensure reliability in the data transcriptions, the researcher asked a work colleague to choose five transcripts from a master list of 35 HR professionals. The five transcripts were sent to the respective HR respondents, requesting them to review the attached interview transcriptions for accurate representations of what they had shared during their interview.

Of the five transcriptions that were sent to the study participants, only three minor word changes were recommended in two of the transcripts.
3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Data Analysis for HR’s perspective

As discussed the questionnaire had two kind of questions to be analysed

a) Close ended questions: For these questions, the number being small, only frequency tables and mean scores were taken. In some context questions certain themes were identified and questions were classified into these themes.

b) Open ended questions: Following the recommendation of Miles & Huberman (1984) and Glasser & Strauss (1967), the qualitative data which was collected through open ended questions was transcribed and data analysis begun by reading through all transcripts and coding key excerpts or passages.

- Responses to descriptive open ended questions relating to ‘What were the issues’ and ‘How did you resolve it’ i.e. what were the interventions used, were read and categorized.
- Respondent’s descriptive content responses to open ended questions were read and categorized as per the issues in each heads and interventions used by HR professionals.
- After analysing each participant’s response to each of these questions (i.e. issues and interventions were looked across all participants) colour coding of the theme was done.
- Upon identifying the recurrent themes, frequency was identified. Frequency was written in percentages.
- As Miles and Huberman (1984) mentioned, “coding is analysis.” This part of analysis involves you differentiate and combine data you have received.
- After the frequency was identified, a framework was made from the most frequent to less frequent activities.
• Overall, the data obtained through interviews was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. As discussed, quantitative data was used to provide basic statistical description whereas qualitative was used to produce the rich test description and provide examples.

In summary the following represented the data analysis process for the interviews:

a) Participants’ responses  

b) Organisation of responses based on all open ended questions.  

c) Content analysis based on each open ended question  

d) Colour coding the emergent themes for all the open ended questions  

e) Identified frequency of the emergent themes  

f) Displayed results based on the issues (open ended questions).  

g) Supplemented results with percentages.  

h) Supported some data with comments.  

Thus for all the questions which had issues and interventions, a final frequency table was prepared. At the end of each section, a table was designed which had a list of issues and specific interventions which were taken-up by HR. In many cases it was not possible to put percentages as certain issues had more than one intervention.

Validation of the Qualitative data

Tactics for testing or confirming findings: According to Miles and Huberman (1984) the problem in qualitative research is that there are no cannons, decision rules, algorithms or even agreed upon heuristics to indicate whether the findings are valid and procedure robust. The issue is there are a long research tradition showing that human judgments are consistently less accurate then statistical /actuarial ones.
However there are some guidelines which can be used for confirming conclusions which are aimed at assuring the basic quality of the data. A combination of these would make the results more valid. These guidelines are: a) checking for researcher’s effects b) triangulating across data sources and methods c) deciding which kinds of data are most trustable d) checking the meaning of outliers using extreme cases, are all tactics that test a conclusion about a “pattern” by saying what it’s not like; e) replicating a finding f) checking out the rival explanation g) looking for negative evidence are all ways of submitting our beautiful theories to the assault of brute facts, or to a race with someone else’s beautiful theory.

Further According to Tashakkori (1998) traditionally, internal validity has been conceptualised as the degree to which we can trust the conclusions/inferences of the researcher regarding the ‘causal’ relationship between variables/events.

According to this broader conceptualisation of internal validity, your conclusions regarding the relationship between variables or events have internal validity if you are confident that the obtained relationship (causal or otherwise) between variables is real, rather than spurious (as a result of other variables). Internal validity is determined through a careful examination of the inferences that are drawn by the investigator.

Krathwohi (1993) has summarised this process of evaluation in five judgements: The first of these, explanation credibility and transition fidelity, constitute the conceptual evidence linking the variables of a study. The next two, demonstrated results and alternative explanations eliminated constitute the empirical evidence linking the variables. Finally, there is the judgement of whether there is a credible result. This last considers consistency with previous research and judgement of strength of both the conceptual and empirical evidence.
Tashakkori (1998) has added the sixth variable as inferential consistency audit. This is the degree to which the inferences and interpretations are consistent with the analysis of obtained data/information and with other inferences/conclusions made in the same study.

The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? Different methods for determining the trustworthiness of qualitative research results are:

1. Prolonged engagement
2. Persistent observation
3. **Use of triangulation techniques**: Traditional post-positivist research has relied upon triangulation, including the use of multiple methods, as a method of validation. This model implies a fixed point of reference that can be triangulated.
4. Peer debriefing
5. Negative case analysis
6. Referential adequacy
7. **Member Checks**: This occurs either during the investigation or at its conclusion, and constitutes the most important credibility check. If the informants or audience members agree with the interpretations of the investigators, then this provides evidence for the credibility of the results.
8. **Thick Description**: This technique provides evidence for the transferability of interpretations and conclusions from QUAL investigations.
9. Dependability audit
10. **Conformability audit**: Conformability audit concerns the product of the inquiry (i.e. attesting that the findings and interpretations are supported by the data and are internally coherent).

11. Reflexive journal

The validation of the data was done using guidelines proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984) and Tashakkori (1998).

- The data obtained through interviews were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. As discussed, quantitative data was used to provide basic statistical description whereas qualitative data was used to produce the rich test description and provide examples.
- Though a structured questionnaire was used in the interview, people made comments. Permission was obtained to include these in the thesis. The thick description further helped in validation of the data.
- To help validate the researcher’s analysis of the data, two PhD colleagues who had experience in qualitative study were requested to analyze data sets from three random study participants. They were oriented on the research questions before they were given the data sets. Upon completing the analysis their findings were compared with the analysis of the same three respondents. There was complete agreement between the researcher and the faculty colleagues regarding the factors identified in the data text.
- Two of the TAC committee members also were requested to analyze the qualitative data. The same process was followed to validate the data further. All the above added as validation where Inferential consistency audit or conformability audit and member checks.
- The chapter on summary has ensured the triangulation of the results of HR respondents and employee perception.
3.6.2 Data Analysis for Employee perception

The analysis of the data has been conducted using descriptive statistics using mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics using correlation, regression and analysis of Variance. The data was analyzed using Statistical Packages of Social Science (SPSS 18). The techniques were used to analyse, organise, and summarise the data, including the demographic data of the respondents.

Three hypotheses were framed in this study:-

- **Employee satisfaction with HR interventions will depend upon whether they belong to acquired, acquiring or merged entity**
- **The effect of HR interventions on employee satisfaction is dependent on the hierarchical level of the employee in the organisation.**
- **There will be a significant positive correlation between HR interventions and Employee satisfaction**

3.7 Limitations

1. Since the data was very confidential, the HR professionals were reluctant for meetings. Taking permission from a single company sometimes took more than a month. In some of the questions it was seen that many HR professionals did not divulge the information stating that data was very confidential and it was a company policy.

2. As the study pertained to the year 2008 and 2009, there were employees who had left the organisation and therefore getting a larger sample was very difficult. The 435 sample was selected by the HR professionals and therefore the results could be biased.
3.8 Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality

Participant confidentiality was paramount in this study. Ethical etiquette demanded that no participants or their organisations in this study experienced exposure to embarrassment or harm in any way (Christians, 2000). There were two related elements to confidentiality. First, anonymity prevented the identity of participants from entering the public domain (Newman, 2003); to ensure anonymity, participant names did not appear in print. Second, confidentiality required that any information obtained about participants stayed absolutely confidential.