

Developing a multidimensional scale of post-merger identification (PMI) for hospitals

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Mohini Yadav

Sri Venkateswara College, New Delhi, India

Mahima Thakur

*Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Management Studies,
University of Delhi, New Delhi, India, and*

Sunil Budhiraja

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

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Abstract

Purpose – This study develops and validates a multidimensional scale of post-merger identification (PMI) through an integrative research model suited for the hospital industry. The model also examines the influence of this scale on key employee outcomes, including readiness to change, employee knowledge-sharing behavior and intention to stay in the post-merger context.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative research approach, grounded in a postpositivist paradigm, was employed to test the model on a sample of 398 employees from Indian private hospitals who had experienced Merger and Acquisition (M&A) in the last five years.

Findings – The findings elicit that seven reflective lower-order dimensions, namely (1) transformational leadership, (2) pre-merger identification, (3) sense of continuity, (4) organizational justice, (5) perceived organizational support, (6) satisfaction with HR support and (7) M&A potential, form a formative higher-order construct of PMI. Among these dimensions, Organizational Justice and M&A potential emerged as the strongest contributors to PMI and played a dominant role in linking other dimensions to PMI. Furthermore, the developed scale of PMI was found to influence significant employee outcome variables, including readiness to change, employee knowledge-sharing behavior and intention to stay.

Originality/value – Strengthening PMI is particularly important in hospital M&As, where unified post-merger identity supports effective collaboration, continuity of patient care and overall M&A outcomes. This study is among the first to explain PMI in hospital settings through the lenses of identity, relationships, leadership and justice. It offers novel insights into how organizational justice and M&A potential can shape identification in post-merger hospitals.

Keywords Post-merger identification, Organizational identification, Merger, Hospitals, M&A

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

The identification of employees with their organization following change has become an important concept in organizational studies, especially in the change management literature (van Knippenberg *et al.*, 2002; Bartels *et al.*, 2006; Weber, 2019). This discourse is particularly salient in the Indian healthcare sector organizations (HCOs), which consist of hospitals (public and private), pharma companies, allied medical services, insurance players, wellness and preventive care, and technology companies providing digital support. The sector has evolved and transformed in the last couple of decades, particularly with respect to the rise of multispecialty private hospitals. Most of the private hospitals (including Apollo, Max, Manipal, etc.) have experienced M&As during their expansion as well as consolidation phase. The most common reasons for M&As include rising costs, technological innovations, regulatory pressures and demands for integrated patient care (Burmeister, 2023; Asper *et al.*, 2025). Unlike many other sectors, M&As in private hospitals involve not only the integration of administrative systems but also the alignment of professional logics, patient-centric missions and deeply rooted clinical practices (Choi *et al.*, 2012). These distinctive features make post-



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