

The Role of Business Mergers According to International Accounting Standards in Improving Customer Satisfaction in the Banking Sector – "A Field Study" –

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Abstract:

The research aimed to highlight business mergers according to International Accounting Standards among banks as a new phenomenon in Syrian banks operating in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the role of this phenomenon in improving customer satisfaction with banks and its impact on enhancing the services provided to the customer segment.

Given the problems that banks may face and the desire of some banks to expand, which created a suitable environment for business merger operations in the banking sector, the importance of the research lies in determining the role of merger operations in improving customer satisfaction after a business merger and demonstrating their role in providing a new vision and implementing new services as one of the positive outputs of the merger process.

The research adopted the descriptive approach, where the researcher studied all available references, studies, and research related to the research topic, aiming to crystallize the theoretical framework of the research. Then, the required data were collected to enable testing of the specified hypothesis, through designing and distributing a questionnaire to a sample of bank customers, in addition to conducting personal interviews with them and personal observations from the practical reality.

The collected data were analyzed and the research hypothesis was tested using statistical software for social sciences (the program used in this study is SPSS). The research results were reached based on data analysis, and a set of recommendations were proposed in light of those results. **The study concluded with the following results:**

- There is a positive role for the business merger phenomenon in improving the quality of banking services provided to customers.
- There is a positive role for the business merger phenomenon in providing new services within the branch network for customers.
- There is a positive role for the business merger phenomenon in improving customer satisfaction with the bank.

Keywords: Business Mergers – International Accounting Standards – Syrian Banks – Customer Satisfaction.

Introduction:

The financial and banking sector worldwide has witnessed numerous merger operations, and the Arab banking market has had a significant share of these operations, which have transformed the banking profession by creating stronger banks capable of better securing required services at lower costs.

Business mergers have become a proposed solution to ensure continuity, especially when a bank faces difficulties and weakened competitiveness. Financial reporting standards came to define the nature of business combination operations through IFRS 3, which became effective in 2009 and detailed business combinations for mergers, consolidations, and acquisitions (control).

The reasons behind business mergers are numerous, despite the inherent risks that require thorough knowledge, management capability, and high expertise. Business mergers in the banking sector are a key driver for reconsidering the structure of financial services. The Syrian banking market witnessed two merger operations in the recent past, represented by Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank's acquisition of Bank Audi and Byblos Bank.

Previous Studies:

- **Study (Turki, Hussein, 2024): The Role of Mergers in Enhancing the Financial and Competitive Performance of Banking Institutions - A Case Study of the Merger of Ahli Jordan Bank and Business Bank.**

This study examined the role of mergers as a strategy for improving the financial performance of merged banks by studying the impact on increasing market share, bank productivity, and the effect of the merger process on several indicators such as profitability and capital adequacy indicators. It addressed the case of the merger of Ahli Jordan Bank with Business Bank. The study reached several key results, most notably that the merger process achieved a positive return on financial performance, as profitability, efficiency, and liquidity indicators improved during the period from 2015 to 2021, and the bank's market share increased both in terms of deposits and credit facilities granted relative to the Jordanian banking business market.

- **Study (Baiyousuf, Khadija, 2023): The Impact of Merger Policy on the Financial Performance of an Economic Institution – A Case Study.**

This study aimed to assess the impact of the merger policy on the financial performance of the company (Bahri), which merged with Aramco, using financial ratios for profitability, financial leverage, and liquidity indicators. The study period extended from 2010 to 2015, divided into a pre-merger stage (2010-2012) and a post-merger stage (2013-2015). Study data were primarily collected from financial statements. The study results showed that corporate mergers had a positive impact on financial performance for profitability, financial leverage, and liquidity ratios, with an increase in operational performance.

- **Study (Mousa, and Kanaan, 2022): The Role of Acquisition and Merger in Palestinian Banks in Improving Financial and Operational Performance.**

The study aimed to identify the impact of banking acquisition and merger on financial performance measured by variables (Return on Equity, Return on Assets, Return on Investment) and operational performance measured by variables (Asset Turnover Ratio, Cash Flow Margin, Bank Efficiency Ratio, Credit-to-Deposit Ratio) in Palestinian banks. The study used quantitative analysis and impact measurement through simple regression analysis. The study population consisted of all Palestinian banks that underwent acquisition and merger operations since the inception of the Palestinian banking sector. Financial statement analysis periods were divided into two: the first 5 years for the period before the merger and acquisition, and the second 5 years following the merger and acquisition. The study concluded that there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between banking mergers and financial and operational performance indicators, meaning that banking mergers contributed to improving the financial and operational performance of the banks under study.

- **Study (Baburam, 2023): Analysis of the pre-post-merger and acquisition financial performance of selected banks in Nepal.**

This study evaluated the financial performance of two commercial banks, Kathmandu Bank and Prabhu Bank, in terms of profitability, liquidity, leverage, shareholder wealth ratios, and

significant differences between them, in the period before and after the business merger operation. The study period extended between 2013 and 2020, focusing only on commercial banks. The study results showed that the impact of the merger on financial performance ratios yielded mixed results, despite the positive impact on Return on Assets and Net Interest Margin, with the exception of Earnings Per Share in the pre-merger period. Consequently, the study did not find a clear positive impact of the business merger process between the two banks under study.

- **Study (Nazim, AbuSeman, 2021): Merger and Acquisition in Banking Sector: A Review of the Literature.**

The study addressed merger and acquisition operations, focusing on the business environment in Malaysia, examining the impact of merger and acquisition operations on banking performance, both conventional and Islamic, as well as associated factors leading to successful merger and acquisition activity. The study is theoretical and analytical in nature. Through a literature review, this study provided an account of key theories and findings. The study considered some previous cases of merger and acquisition operations that occurred in different countries such as India, Greece, and the United Kingdom, discussing and analyzing the results and recommendations of these studies. The study concluded that there is a positive impact of merger and acquisition operations on both conventional and Islamic banks. It addressed several different studies on domestic or cross-border merger and acquisition operations. This study is considered one of the very few studies that addressed merger and acquisition operations in the Islamic banking sector.

Research Problem:

Companies in any business sector face significant challenges represented by intense competition. These challenges grow in the banking sector amidst the increasing spread of banking culture, the growing volume of cash and financial transactions, and technological advancement, which they must keep pace with, as well as the expansion of the scope of banking services. These two

factors constitute important elements in achieving competitive advantage and improving bank performance, thereby increasing operating profits, which forces these banks to search for new and modern methods to maintain their continuity in the banking market and grow their capabilities.

Accordingly, the research problem can be formulated through the main question:

- Does the phenomenon of business mergers have a positive role in increasing the level of customer satisfaction by improving services, introducing new products, and improving responsiveness at the branch level?

Research Objectives:

The main objective of this research is to study the nature of the role of business merger operations in the banking sector in improving customer satisfaction. The main objective can be formulated as follows:

To determine the role of business merger operations among banks operating in the Syrian Arab Republic in improving customer satisfaction with the bank.

Research Importance:

- **Scientific Importance:** The scientific importance of the research lies in its address of a sensitive financial economic sector, which is the banking sector. The banking sector plays an important and effective role in achieving economic development, and banks form the basis for building the economy and business in any country and are the engine for all aspects of economic activity.
- **Practical Importance:** The importance of the research lies in determining the role of merger operations in improving customer satisfaction. This research will shed light on the Syrian banking sector and the business merger process it witnessed between Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank and Al-Ahli Credit Bank (formerly Audi) and how the latter's role was in improving service quality and consequently increasing customer satisfaction for Al-Ahli Credit Bank, where Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank acquired the former Audi and became responsible for managing its activity.

Research Hypotheses:

Within the framework of the research problem and to achieve its main objective, the research will be based on the following main hypothesis:

- The phenomenon of business mergers has a positive role in increasing the level of customer satisfaction by improving services, introducing new products, and improving responsiveness at the branch level.

Research Methodology:

The current research, within the framework of the nature of the presented research problem and to test the hypotheses, will adopt the following steps:

- The research will adopt the descriptive approach, where the researcher will study and analyze all available references, studies, and research related to the research topic, aiming to crystallize the theoretical framework of the research.
- Collect the required data that enable testing the specified hypothesis, through designing and distributing a questionnaire to a sample of bank customers, in addition to conducting personal interviews with them and personal observations from the practical reality.
- Analyze the collected data and test the research hypothesis using statistical software for social sciences (the program used in this study is SPSS).
- Reach the research results based on data analysis and propose a set of recommendations in light of those results.

Theoretical Framework of the Research:

First: The Origin and Concept of Banking Business Mergers

Concepts of business mergers in the banking sector have varied and diversified in the field of bank economics, where we find three terms: merger, consolidation, and control (acquisition): (International Financial Reporting Standards, 2024)

- **Merger:** A merger results when one entity acquires another entity, with the legal and corporate personality (liquidation) of the acquired entity ceasing to exist, and its assets, liabilities, and activities transferring to the acquiring entity.
- **Consolidation:** A consolidation results when a new company is formed to which the assets, liabilities, and activities of two or more entities are transferred, leading to the cessation of the legal and corporate personality (liquidation) of the companies entering the consolidation.
- **Acquisitions:** Control, or as it is called acquisition, represents one entity acquiring more than half of the voting rights in another entity (usually by purchasing more than half of its shares), giving it the ability to manage the financial and operating policies of that entity to obtain benefits from its activities. However, the controlled company remains in existence and is not liquidated. The controlling company is called the parent company and the controlled company is called the subsidiary, each having a separate legal and corporate personality.

A banking merger has been defined as: an agreement leading to the administrative union of two or more banks into a single banking entity, and the new entity has a higher capacity and greater effectiveness in achieving goals that could not be achieved before completing the process of forming the new banking entity. (Kanaan, 2022)

Second: Types of Banking Mergers and Their Reasons

Methods of banking mergers are numerous and varied due to the diversity of methods, reasons, circumstances, and future objectives of the merger process. Therefore, the totality of these elements makes for multiple types of banking mergers, each with its own reasons and uses. These types are detailed below:

A. Banking Merger in Terms of the Nature of the Merged Units' Activity: (Raqqoub, 2018)

Types of mergers resulting from the association of two banks, whether they operate in the same activity or in different activities, in addition to the similarity and difference of services provided by each, are divided into three types:

- **Horizontal Banking Merger:** This type of merger occurs between two or more banks operating in the same type of activity or interrelated activities, such as commercial banks, investment and business banks, or specialized banks, etc. This type of merger results in increased monopolies in the banking market due to the increase in mergers between institutions operating in the same

activity, as happened in the United States during the sixties, prompting the legislature to enact laws preventing such monopolies.

- **Vertical Banking Merger:** This type of merger occurs between several small banks in different regions and the main bank in major cities or the capital, so that these small banks and their branches become an extension of the large banks.
- **Conglomerate (Mixed) Banking Merger:** This merger occurs between two or more banks operating in different, unrelated activities, such as a merger between a commercial bank and a specialized bank or between a specialized bank and an investment and business bank. This type of merger encourages integration in activities between banks and also leads to more services for customers, giving them significant competitive advantages.

B. Banking Merger in Terms of the Relationship Between the Parties to the Merger Process: (Bin Ma'touq, 2022)

- **Friendly (Voluntary) Merger:** This is done through the alignment of will and mutual understanding between the boards of directors of the banks participating in the merger process, aiming to achieve the advantages and benefits of a friendly banking merger.
- **Forced Banking Merger:** This type of merger occurs through the monetary authorities (the central bank) when there is a troubled bank, necessitating its merger into one of the successful or strong banks. Forced mergers should be resorted to exceptionally according to the circumstances of the state's monetary authorities to serve the national economy in general and its banking sector. Such a merger is used as a final station to purify troubled banks or those on the verge of bankruptcy and liquidation. For this type of merger to be achieved, it must be accompanied by incentives and advantages such as tax exemptions and granting the merging bank assistance loans in exchange for its commitment to bear all obligations of the merged bank.
- **Hostile Banking Merger:** This type of merger is carried out without the consent or desire of the target bank. Thus, successful and strong companies or banks in the market set their sights on these weak companies or banks to take them over with the aim of replacing weak management with strong and successful management.

C. Legal Forms of Banking Mergers: (Baiyousuf, 2023)

* **Legal Merger:** For example, Bank (A) merges with Bank (B), thereby ending the independent legal personality of the first bank (A), and the second bank continues with its previous personality in exchange for replacing all shares of the merged bank with shares of the merging bank. The merged bank becomes part of the merging bank.

* **Legal Consolidation:** Legal consolidation resembles the previous legal form (legal merger) in that it is carried out according to legal regulations related to reorganization. However, the main difference between them is that in the case of legal consolidation, Bank (A) unites with Bank (B) into a new bank (C), for example. The legal personality of both banks is canceled, and the new bank (C) issues new shares for both merging banks. In the case of legal consolidation, the legal personality of both banks ceases to exist as all their resources are combined and united into one new unit, so that the result is a single entity with a new independent legal personality separate from the banks that united and lost their independent legal personality.

- **Control by Acquisition (Legal Acquisition):** In this case, one bank purchases the majority of voting shares of another bank, its motive being to acquire and control the management of this bank, while both banks retain their independent legal personalities. The merged bank is called the subsidiary company, while the merging bank is called the holding company. (Baiyousuf, 2023)

Third: Stages of Banking Business Mergers

The business merger process goes through specific methodologies using defined methods and techniques. The decision for a banking merger is a strategic, fateful decision subject to precise and comprehensive studies covering all aspects and dimensions to complete it in the best possible way. To achieve this, the merger process in the banking sector goes through the following stages: (Turki, 2023)

Stage One:

Preparing for the business merger process in terms of preparing the bank for the merger, setting preliminary visions for the merger process and its requirements from restructuring the bank, the various determinants of the merger, and negotiation scenarios with the other party participating

in the merger process, and studying it thoroughly in terms of its conditions and position in the banking market. This stage addresses the following:

- Addressing all existing imbalances between the banks intended to be merged.
- All phenomena of imbalance, deficiency, and points of weakness.
- All material and non-material penalties that hinder the success of the intended merger operations.
- Unifying all systems, regulations, and procedures between the merged banks.
- Unifying the incentive, reward, wage, and compensation system in the merged banks.

Stage Two:

Includes announcing readiness for the merger process and confronting the negative and non-negative impacts resulting from this announcement, whether from competing banks, customers, or the banking market as a whole. To ensure the success of the merger process, a set of necessary procedures must be carried out, the most important of which are:

- Forming technical committees from the banks concerned with the business merger process, and the central bank may be represented in them to provide technical assistance to the committees and monitor the implementation stages of the merger project.
- Developing a comprehensive action plan to implement the merger, taking into account the development of an accompanying program to absorb the negatives imposed by the merger process on employees. (Ramzi, 2022)
- Selecting an engineering expert or a group according to appropriate specializations to conduct asset valuation operations for the group of merging banks, with the aim of unifying the foundations and standards of valuation.
- Selecting a single legal audit office for the group of merging banks to carry out technical tasks related to the financial and accounting aspects of the merger operations, aiming to unify the foundations and standards of financial evaluation for the merging banks. A group of audit offices may participate in carrying out these tasks.
- Treating the results of fixed asset valuation according to the controls determined by the central bank.
- Preparing financial statements according to presentation and disclosure standards for the past five years for the purposes of unifying comparison.

Stage Three:

This stage involves estimating and determining the effects generated from the merger process, how to elevate the new banking entity, its impact on the banking market, how to improve performance under the new conditions, agreeing on the new board of directors, and estimating the advantages that will accrue to the new entity after the merger process, as well as achieving the following:

- Increase in size, capacity, and scope.
- Achieving greater economies of scale, higher added value, and greater profitability.
- Significantly increasing resources with a tangible increase in functional capacity.
- Creating and finding better investment opportunities, as well as maximizing confidence and generating a positive impression and a strong mental image in the banking market.

Fourth: Accounting Standards Specializing in Business Mergers:

- **A: International Financial Reporting Standard No. (3): Business Combinations**

This standard came as a replacement for International Accounting Standard No. (22) issued in 1983 and amended in 1993. This amended standard was issued in 2008 and became effective as of 2009. It included important amendments that reinforce the general trend of standard-setters to adopt the fair value concept by abolishing the pooling of interests method and adopting the acquisition method when accounting for business combinations. The standard also came to enhance the relevance, reliability, and comparability of accounting information provided by an entity about business combinations.

- **B: International Financial Reporting Standard No. (10): Consolidated Financial Statements**

This standard was issued in May 2011 and became effective as of 1/1/2013. This standard

replaced the previous International Accounting Standard No. (27) (Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements), as the requirements for preparing consolidated statements were separated to be included in this standard.

The objective of this standard is to establish principles for the preparation and presentation of consolidated financial statements when an entity controls one or more other entities. Therefore, the consolidated statements consider the subsidiary company as part of the parent company as if it were one of its branches.

- **C: International Financial Reporting Standard No. (11): Joint Arrangements**

In May 2011, the International Accounting Standards Board issued International Financial Reporting Standard No. (11) (Joint Arrangements) to replace International Accounting Standard No. (31). Due to the significant increase in competition in various business sectors, the formation of joint ventures between different companies has increased, especially in the field of implementing large projects such as the formation of several contracting companies in a consortium to execute a large project, or the entry of several banks into a joint agreement to provide syndicated loans. This standard came to clarify the accounting treatments and the foundations for recognition, measurement, and disclosure of joint arrangements.

Objective of the Standard:

This standard aims to establish principles for financial reporting and accounting by entities that have interests in arrangements subject to joint control (i.e., joint arrangements).

This standard explains the concept of joint control and requires an entity that is a party to a joint arrangement to determine the type of joint arrangement in which it participates by assessing its rights and obligations and accounting for these rights and obligations according to the type of joint arrangement.

- **D: International Financial Reporting Standard No. (12): Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities**

The International Accounting Standards Board issued this standard in May 2011, based on the importance of information related to a company's stake in other companies for a

wide range of users of accounting information. This standard replaces the disclosures that were included in the previous International Accounting Standard No. (27) (Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements), International Accounting Standard No. (28) (Investments in Associates), as well as the previous International Accounting Standard No. (31) (Interests in Joint Ventures).

Objective of the Standard:

This standard aims to state the disclosure requirements that an entity must present regarding information that enables users of its financial data to provide:

- A. The nature of its interests in other entities and the associated risks.
- B. The effects of those interests on its financial position, financial performance, and cash flows.

- **E: International Accounting Standard No. (28): Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures:**

This standard deals with accounting for investments in associates and entities under joint control. An investment where the investor's ownership percentage in the investee company ranges between 20% and 50% is called an associate in this case, and thus the investor exercises significant influence over the operating and financial decisions of the associate, directly or indirectly through voting power. It is noted here that the requirements for accounting for investments in ventures under joint control have been transferred to this standard, which became effective as of 1/1/2013, as International Accounting Standard No. (31) related to accounting for investments in joint ventures was canceled.

- This standard aims to explain how to account for investments in associates in the investor's books and to present the requirements for applying the equity method when accounting for investments in associates and joint ventures.

Practical Framework of the Research:

- **Research Population and Sample:** The study population includes all Syrian private banks listed on the Damascus Securities Exchange, totaling 14 banks. The researcher chose only one bank (Al-Ahli Credit Bank - formerly Audi) because this bank is among the first banks to be acquired by Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank. The researcher distributed 60 questionnaires to the selected sample and retrieved 60 questionnaires, achieving a 100% response rate, as the questionnaires were presented personally to customers in person. All retrieved questionnaires were valid for analysis.

The following table illustrates the distribution of the study sample, the number of questionnaires distributed and retrieved:

Number	Bank Name	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Retrieved
1	Al-Ahli Credit Bank (formerly Audi)	60	60

Table (1): Sample of the Study from Bank Customers and the Number of Questionnaires Distributed and Retrieved

- **Study Validity and Reliability / Questionnaire Validity**

The validity and reliability of a questionnaire refer to its ability to measure what it was designed for, achieving the study's objectives and answering its questions and hypotheses, and that the results reached would be the same if this study were reapplied to the same sample. This was verified by checking:

Reliability / Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

The researcher used the Cronbach's Alpha method to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, which expresses the average internal correlation between the statements it measures. Its value ranges between 0 and 1, with an acceptable value of 0.60 or higher. The closer its value is to 1, the higher the reliability of the tool and its suitability for use. The results are as shown in the table.

Variable	Number of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Customer Satisfaction	8	0.877

Table (2): Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity and Reliability of the Study / Internal Consistency:

Internal consistency validity refers to the consistency of each item in the scale with the dimension to which that item belongs. The researcher calculated the internal consistency of the questionnaire by calculating the correlation coefficient between each item in the questionnaire's dimensions and the total score of the dimension itself.

Customer Satisfaction		
1- The technological and digital work environment has developed after the business merger process.	Correlation Coefficient	.878**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
2- There is an improvement in the availability of service points, branches, and service centers.	Correlation Coefficient	.892**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
3- There is a positive impact on the quality of banking services after the bank merger process.	Correlation Coefficient	.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
4- There is an effect in favor of the customer regarding commissions and fees after the business merger.	Correlation Coefficient	.863**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
5- The positive reputation of the bank has increased after merging its operations with those of Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank.	Correlation Coefficient	.377**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003
6- The choices of products and services offered by the bank have increased after the business merger.	Correlation Coefficient	.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
7- There is now greater effectiveness in receiving complaints and processing them promptly.	Correlation Coefficient	.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
8- Customers are informed periodically about the changes occurring at the bank.	Correlation Coefficient	.811**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Table (3): Correlation coefficient between each item in the customer satisfaction dimension.

Table (3) shows the correlation coefficient between each item in the customer satisfaction dimension and the total score of the dimension. It illustrates that the correlation coefficients indicated at a significance level of (0.05) and a 95% confidence level ranged between 0.37 and 0.89. Therefore, the dimension is considered valid for what it was designed to measure, based on the correlation coefficient between each statement in the dimension.

- **Results of Descriptive Statistics to Assess the Role of the Merger in Improving Customer Satisfaction:**

To determine the level of assessment of the role of the business merger in improving customer satisfaction for the acquired bank, this was measured through a set of statements highlighting this assessment by extracting arithmetic means, standard deviations, relative importance, and importance level, as follows:

Statement	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Relative Weight %	Statistical Significance
1- There is a positive impact on the quality of banking services after the bank merger process.	60	4.1	0.79	10.77	82	0
2- The choices of products and services offered by the bank have increased after the business merger.	60	3.9	0.68	10.23	78	0
3- The technological and digital work environment has developed after the business merger process.	60	3.85	0.88	7.49	77	0
4- There is an effect in favor of the customer regarding commissions and fees after the business merger.	60	3.45	0.95	3.68	69	0.001

5- Customers are informed periodically about the changes occurring at the bank.	60	3.72	1.06	5.24	74	0
6- There is an improvement in the availability of service points, branches, and service centers.	60	3.4	0.92	3.35	68	0
7- There is now greater effectiveness in receiving complaints and processing them promptly.	60	3.27	0.8	2.61	65	0
8- The positive reputation of the bank has increased after merging its operations with those of Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank.	60	3.27	0.78	2.68	65	0
(Customer Satisfaction)	60	3.62	0.63	7.63	72	0

Table (4): Statistical Significance for Assessing the Level of Customer Satisfaction

The overall arithmetic mean of the sample members' estimates as a whole for all statements related to measuring the impact of business mergers on customer satisfaction reached (3.62) points out of (5) points, a value greater than the standard arithmetic mean value in this study, which is (3) points. The relative importance of agreement with this assessment and adoption among the sample members reached (72%), which corresponds to a **high** level of the impact of

business mergers on customer satisfaction, and is higher than the adopted arithmetic mean percentage in this study, which is (60%). The total standard deviation from the arithmetic mean was only (0.63), indicating that the answers are close and converge around the arithmetic mean, and that this assessment is high. The sample members consider that there is a positive impact on customer service after the business merger process.

In the dimension measuring the impact of business mergers on customer satisfaction from their perspective, the statement ("There is a positive impact on the quality of banking services after the bank merger process") ranked **first**, with a mean response of (4.08), a relative weight of responses of (82%), and an assessment of the adoption of this statement as one indicating a positive impact on customer service performance at a **high** level, statistically significant. It was followed in **second** place by the statement ("The choices of products and services offered by the bank have increased after the business merger") with a mean response of (3.90), a relative weight of (78%), and an adoption level rated as **high**. In **third** place was the statement ("The technological and digital work environment has developed after the business merger process") with a mean response of (3.85), a relative weight of (77%), and an adoption level of **high**. The statement ("There is an effect in favor of the customer regarding commissions and fees after the business merger") ranked **fourth** with a mean response of (3.72) and a relative weight of (74%), also rated as **high**. In **fifth** place was ("Customers are informed periodically about the changes occurring at the bank"), also at a high level with a mean response of (3.45) and a relative weight of (69%). In **sixth** place was the statement ("There is an improvement in the availability of service points, branches, and service centers") with a mean of (3.40) and a weight of (68%), also rated as high. In the last two positions were the statements: ("There is now greater effectiveness in receiving complaints and processing them promptly") and, in the **last** position, the statement ("The positive reputation of the bank has increased after merging its operations with those of Bemo Saudi Fransi Bank") with a mean response of (3.27), a relative weight of (65%), and a **medium** level.

From the above and the analysis of the responses from the bank's customer sample in the study, we note their inclination towards the existence of a **positive impact** on their satisfaction with the services of the bank under study after the business merger process. This was evident from analyzing the trend of opinions among the bank's customer sample members. This impact was

clearly manifested through the customers' firm conviction in achieving a qualitative shift in services, work environment, and satisfaction with the bank's performance towards them, as reported in the questionnaire results.

Results of the Statistical Test for Hypotheses:

There is a significant indication of increased customer satisfaction.

- A **One-sample t-test** was conducted to compare the differences in evaluation between the arithmetic mean of the evaluation and the standard mean in the adopted measurement, as follows:

Test Value = 3							
Std. Deviation	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	df	t
		Upper	Lower				
0.63	3.62	0.78	0.45	0.62	0.000	59	7.63

Table (5): Statistical Significance for Testing the Main Hypothesis

The arithmetic mean in evaluating bank customer satisfaction is (3.62), a value close to agreement and at a high level. The statistical significance for testing this evaluation is (Sig=0.000), which is smaller than (0.05). Therefore, **there is a statistically significant indication of customer satisfaction with the bank's performance, which provides evidence for the existence of a positive role on bank customer satisfaction after the business merger process**, particularly in terms of enhancing communication with customers, introducing new services, the speed of response to complaints, in addition to enhancing the diversity of banking services while maintaining the quality of services provided.

Results:

- There is a positive role for the business merger process in improving banking services through enhancing the type of banking services and products after the merger.
- There is a positive role for the business merger process in improving the quality of current services provided to customers across branch networks, resulting from the positive impact of administrative changes occurring due to the merger.
- Introducing a set of new banking services, in addition to an increase in the bank's positive reputation and an improvement in the mechanism for receiving customer complaints.
- There is a positive role for the business merger process in improving the quality of service provided to customers as a result of the positive impact of administrative changes after the merger.
- The business merger was clearly reflected in customer satisfaction, evident in their satisfaction with the level of banking support provided by the bank to its customers and offering them the best possible capabilities.

Recommendations:

- Supporting business merger operations in the banking sector by the Central Bank of Syria, as the interests of both acquiring and acquired banks converge, leading to the stability of the banking sector.
- Increasing the dissemination of banking awareness among customers regarding the concept of merger operations, as they are the primarily affected party, represented by the board of directors after any type of business merger between banks.

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