

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

POST-MERGER CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH
PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY IN QATAR

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Post-Merger Impact on Service Quality Perception and Customer Satisfaction in the Banking Industry in Qatar.

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Mergers, in the banking industry, occur all over the world. Recently, the first merge in Qatar occurred between Barwa Bank and International Bank of Qatar (IBQ). A new entity emerged from this merger and was branded as Dukhan Bank. Dukhan bank is now an Islamic bank which means that the business model of IBQ is no longer in practice. In banks, service quality is on top of all other elements of business development and customer satisfaction. Service quality has a strong and direct relation to costs, profitability, customer satisfaction, customer retention, and positive word-of-mouth. This research adopts a different approach to the matter of mergers among banks. Mergers among banks are often studied from financial and strategic point of view without fair focus on the level of service quality and customer satisfaction. This study discusses and analyzes the post-merger impact of banks on customer perception of service quality and customer satisfaction.

The literature review provided in this research presents a theoretical background about the topic of mergers in the banking industry. It also attempts to define customers' satisfaction and service quality. The research presents the service quality dimensions model as a model to examine the perception of service quality among the customers of the two banks. Accordingly, the research develops five hypotheses to measure the service quality perception, linking it to the range of

services, service channels, and ethical considerations. The research also links the service quality dimensions to customers' satisfaction and satisfaction to customers' behavioral intentions. In order to collect the research data, a questionnaire was distributed to 287 customers, in which 157 are former IBQ customers and 130 from Barwa bank customers.

The research findings were analyzed using SmartPLS software. The AVE measurement model, the discriminated validity model, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to test the validity and reliability of the results. The three models verified and approved the standards of validations, providing strong support for the reliability and validity. The bootstrapping technique was used to examine the significance of the variables. Four out of the five hypotheses of the study were supported. However, the service quality dimensions, and service channels (hypotheses 2 and 4) were partially supported. One of the most important findings in this study was that IBQ customers were less considerate of ethical standards and its relations to service quality dimensions in two dimensions (Tangibility and Responsiveness) which support the idea that customers of Islamic banks are the ones considerate of ethical standards compared to traditional banks.

It was concluded that mergers and acquisition has a direct and significant impact on the level of service quality perceived by the customers and their satisfaction level. It was also concluded that all the variables are interrelated and would affect customers' behavioral intentions. Accordingly, the study provided a set of theoretical and managerial implications based on the research findings and discussion. There is also a problem of generalization in the study due to the fact that it is a unique case in a

unique country. The customers, included in the study, have already chosen to remain after the merger, which indicates that the results will be different if it was possible to interview the people that left the bank. It was suggested that future studies should study the service quality and satisfaction level before and after the merge. Future studies can also compare this study to other bank mergers in other countries.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Within banking industry, merger is a mainstream drift which is an indication of inorganic process of growth (Sufian & Habibullah, 2009). An increasing trend of mergers have been experienced in recent years, which have been triggered by various factors such as high competition, liberalization of capital, integration of region and national financial systems (Sufian & Habibullah, 2009). A merger is a strategy in which two firms integrate their operations on coequal basis, whereas acquisition is a tactic in which one firm will buy 100 percent of interest in another firm and the acquired firms will be a subsidiary within its portfolio (Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson, 2006).

In Banks, service quality is on top of all other elements of business development and customer satisfaction. Service quality has strong and direct relation to costs, profitability, customer satisfaction, customer retention, and positive word-of-mouth (Sachdev & Verma, 2004; Rajcic & Ciric, 2008). In service organizations such as banks, service quality defines the strength of the organization and the way it maintains existing customers and acquires new customers (Tsiotsou & Wirtz, 2012). Service quality is essential for banks. With proper implementation of service quality dimension, a bank can reach a high level of customer satisfaction. High level of customers' satisfaction means profitability, retention, and more significant market share which will eventually have a positive impact on the organizational performance (Rajcic & Ciric, 2008; Tsiotsou & Wirtz, 2012).

This research approaches the matter of mergers among banks from the customer point of view. Mergers among banks are often studied from financial and strategic point of view without fair focus on the level of service quality and customer satisfaction. However, it is without doubt that maintaining high level of customers'

satisfaction for both merging banks is critical to avoid dissatisfaction and poor service quality. Accordingly, this study discusses and analyzes the post-merger impact of banks on customer perception of service quality and customer satisfaction.

1.1 Background of the Study

The concept of banks' mergers' impact on customer satisfaction unfolds various sub-concepts, including perceived quality and customer satisfaction (Suchanek et al., 2017). It is important to clarify these concepts before moving forward with the research introduction, aims, and objectives.

Customer satisfaction is considered to be one of the main concerns in the business world according to Oliver (1999). Customer satisfaction varies depending on several criteria, which have to be taken into account to meet their needs. Reichheld et al. (2000) considers that customer satisfaction is achieved whenever expectations are met by the service provider. He also stated that customer satisfaction can be achieved when the service provider has exceeded the expectations of customers.

Customer satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluation of service (Abdallat & Emam, 2015). Companies look at customer satisfaction with high level of importance as a primary indicator of success. Customers consider their satisfaction as an evaluation rate tool for the services provided to them (Suchanek et al., 2017). The definition of customer satisfaction is internationally debated. It also differs from one industry to another and from one organization to another. Below are some of the frequently repeated definitions of customer satisfaction:

- *“Customer satisfaction is emotional response to the experience provides by particular products of services purchased”* (Sharmin, 2012; p.17).

- *“Customer Satisfaction is a judgment that product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment”* (Giese & Cote, 2002; p.4).
- *“Customer satisfaction is the general psychological feeling which reflects a positive or negative way on the evaluation of the relationship between the customer and the company”* (Blesic et al., 2011; p.6).

From the above definitions, it can be noted that customer satisfaction is a process related to customers as an evaluation stage. However, it is directly related to the evaluation of the service provided by the organization. Regarding the understanding of customer expectation, Blesic et al. (2011), stated that service quality will only be attainable if and only if the service provider were able to know exactly what the potential receiver of this service in hand wants or desires. Based on this point of view, one would be able to design or adapt the service according to the perception of the customers which could have the ability to change their impression of the service quality according to the level of quality being received previously by them. This will indirectly affect their level of satisfaction. In explaining the best way to design the service that shall lead to customer satisfaction, Zeithaml et al. (2006) re-evaluated the concept of expectations and how important it is for customer satisfaction. Zeithaml et al. (2006) defined Customer expectations as *“beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards or reference points against which performance is judged* (Zeithaml et al. 2006, p. 81). Knowing what a customer expects is a very important piece of knowledge to be acquired when delivering the right service at the right time.

Outcome perception is the second phase in customer satisfaction. This perception is the middle phase between expectations and satisfaction. Sufficient

perceiving outcomes lead to satisfaction while insufficient perceiving outcomes lead to dissatisfaction. Solomon (2006) defines perception as “*The process by which physical sensations are selected, organized and interpreted. The eventual interpretation of a stimulus allows it to be assigned meaning*” (Solomon et al. 2006, 38). According to Solomon’s definition, customers perceive products and services in terms of their quality and how satisfied they are with their overall experiences. Companies today, recognize that they can compete more effectively by distinguishing themselves with respect to service quality and improved customer satisfaction. Perception of quality is one of the most important perceived outcomes of the service process. To explain the importance of quality into service perception processes, Zeithaml mentions that “*Service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects customer perceptions of elements of service such as interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. These elements could be evaluated based on specific service quality dimensions* (Zeithaml et al. 2006, p. 15).

This study focuses on understanding how banks’ merger could impact the level of service quality perception and customer satisfaction. How bank customers accept the merge? And how the merge between Islamic and Non-Islamic banks affect customers’ perception of the service provided with regards to ethical consideration and past experience. The following section explains the field study implication of this academic research in the banking industry in Qatar.

1.2 Field Study Application

A recent bank merger was made in Qatar between The International Bank of Qatar (IBQ) and Dukhan (Barwa) Bank. The study uses the existing and recent case of these two banks to facilitate the field study for the academic research. The International Bank of Qatar (IBQ) is one of the oldest banks in Qatar. It was established in 1956 under the name of the Ottoman Bank (IBQ, 2018). The bank has been successful and growing since then.

Dukhan (Barwa) Bank announced, in the first half of February 2020 the completion of the merge with IBQ. As announced by Dukhan (Barwa) bank, the combined entity's total assets are around 80 billion Qatari Riyals. The name of the new organization is Dukhan Bank. This is the first merger ever between two Qatari banks. Initially, Masraf AlRayyan was aiming to become a part of the merger, but later, only Barwa and IBQ went through with the deal. Some experts, such as Sheikh Mohamad Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Chairman of Dukhan Bank (Former Chairman of Barwa Bank), said that the merger will reshape the financial sector in Qatar and will strengthen the banking industry. Both banks promised smooth merger and flawless services throughout and after the merger process (Barwa Bank, 2020).

By looking at Qatar GDP growth reports, it can be noted that IBQ is in the bottom of Qatari Banks' lists of deposits, assets, and financial records (Tribune News Network, 2017). Throughout the years and due to strong market competition, IBQ lost a significant portion of its retail banking clientele base. Being a Qatari bank with deep historical roots in the country, and at the same time having a very small market share compared to newer banks, might mean that the bank is not delivering the right service quality to its customers or it is not successful in making new ones. Others would

argue that a good merge deal is accepted regardless of the bank's financial records and ranking in the local market (Tribune News Network, 2017).

It is important to mention here that Barwa and IBQ have entirely different natures. Barwa is Islamic bank while IBQ is a conventional bank. The study of Sufian and Habibullah (2009) shows that merger activities in banking industry have been increasing rapidly due to financial deregulation, and competition in developed and developing countries. However, a latest inclusive assessment on this vibrant matter is still not well-recognized, particularly in some segments of the banking industry, such as the Islamic banks. Moreover; due to differences in operational activities and characteristics between Islamic and non-Islamic banking, it is very hard to be merged. However, there is a possibility in terms of Islamic subsidiary of conventional banks (Askari, et al., 2011). The merger studied in this research had, for sure, various impacts on all aspects such as employees, marketing, sales, customers, et cetera. However, this study focuses only on customers' satisfaction in the post-merger time.

The case studied in this research represents a double interest. It is the first merger in the banking sector in Qatar, but it is, to our knowledge, one of the very rare case of merger between an Islamic bank and a conventional bank, leading to the adoption of Islamic finance rules by the new entity and all the services it is offering for costumers (both former IBQ customers and former Barwa customers).

1.3 Problem Statement and Research Objectives

The processes of merger might have an impact on service quality perception, on the level of customer satisfaction, and consequentially, it might affect customers' behavioral intentions. The research problem statement is: *Investigating the post-*

merger customer behavior and its relationship with perceived service quality in the banking industry in Qatar.

The research objectives are as follows:

- To understand the post-merger customer behavior impact on perceived service quality.
- To understand the post-merger customer behavior impact on customer satisfaction.
- To understand how the Islamic aspect in the new bank will affect perceptions service quality and satisfaction.
- To provide managerial implications to improve customers satisfaction and perceived quality in post-merger situation.

1.4 Rational of the study

The banking industry in Qatar experienced the first merger in its history. Studying service quality and its sequential actions such as behavioral intentions can be a strong topic and an important issue in bank mergers. This study can be a reference to future mergers and can also help the current merger to overcome problems related to customer satisfaction and service quality. Also, such a study can pave the way for future studies on mergers and acquisitions, not only in the banking industry, but also among other similar service providers. The main contribution of this study is the fact that it studies a merger between two different banks in nature which rarely occurs and thus, rarely studied. The next chapter discusses the major key words and concepts presented in the introduction chapter and research objectives. The literature review presents academic approach to these concepts, defines them, and explains the previous studies findings about the relationship among them.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This section describes and presents, in depth, the theoretical background of the concepts introduced in the previous chapter. It starts by explaining the concept of mergers in the banking industry and how it can affect the services quality. The chapter also describes the concepts of customer satisfaction and service quality and explains how service quality is operationalized in service literature. The present chapter prepares for the third chapter which presents the research hypotheses, research model, and relationship between variables.

2.1 Mergers in Banks

A number of theories have been used to examine the concept of merger, particularly in banking. Among these theories, the Efficiency Theory (ET) and Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) have been widely used (Wadhwa&Syamala, 2015). Efficiency Theory explains that the mergers are planned however it will come into existence when there is expectation of enough possible synergies, which makes the deal valuable for both parties. These synergies would be in terms of increasing revenue or reducing cost. RDT defines effect of outside factors on organizational behaviors. According to RDT, firms merge to reduce competition, manage interdependence by observing the resources and diversify their operations (Abdul azeez et al., 2016; Wadhwa & Syamala, 2015).

The study of Liu and Tripe (2003) proved efficiency gains in the post-merger period in four out of six banks in New Zealand. Lo et al, (2006) proved that mergers and acquisition positively impacted the bank's profitability due to an increase in resources, management's skills, business progression and total assets. They concluded that the service quality models in the merged financial institution attracted more customers. The study of Abdul Azeez et al., (2016) proved an improved financial

performance in Nigerian banks after merger and acquisition that led to financial efficiency because of the increase in the number of customers. Moreover, Okpanachi (2011) examined the financial efficiency of three selected banks before and after merger and acquisition in Nigeria. Using gross earning, profit after tax and net assets as indices and t-test statistics, the findings proved improvement in financial efficiency in post-merger and acquisition period. The improvement was led by an increasing number of customers. Correspondingly, Sufian & Habibullah (2014) also found that acquiring banks have been comparatively more prolific.

Moreover AlSharkas et al., (2008) investigated the cost and profit efficiency in US banking sector after merger and acquisition. The findings highlighted that merged banks performed cost efficiently due to effectual use of available technology. Obaid et al (2010) examined the post-merger performance of two private banks, Al-Faysal Investment Bank Ltd and Atlas Investment Bank Ltd in Pakistan. They compared 4-years pre and post-merger using profitability, capital adequacy and solvent, and found an average improvement in the performance of Al-Faysal Investment Bank Ltd in post-merger period. Awan and Mehmood (2015) empirically investigated the trends of merger and acquisition in banking sector in Pakistan and concluded that performance of banking sectors improved in short-period. However, there could be a chance that this deal may impact in the long-run period. It can be noted that despite the abundance of research dealing with banks merger, little attention was paid to the marketing consequences in term of perceived quality and customer satisfaction and in term of costumers' reaction to the merger.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been defined as the difference between expectation and perceived performance of the quality of service or goods (Njei, 2018). It is a feeling which comes from the process of evaluation when a customer compares what he/she receives to what he/she expects. However; if the expectations are not fulfilled according to their expectations, then they will be dissatisfied (Kotler et al., 2009; Brunner et al., 2008). Customer satisfaction is predetermined beliefs regarding service delivery as a point of reference through which overall performance of the product and service are judged by customers (Supphellen & Nysveen, 2001). Furthermore; satisfaction level indicates a strong bond between customer and service provider which further leads to positive behavior from customers and stimulate a long-term connections between customer and service providers.

Commonly, price, quality reliability and responsiveness are major factors that contribute significantly to determine satisfaction level of customer satisfaction (Gajjar 2013). In addition, value of service quality, emotions of costumers, personal and situational factors, product or service characteristics, fairness and equal treatment are some factors that influence the satisfaction level of customers (Chi, 2005). Customer behavioral intentions are not easy to evaluate. Even if the customer seems to be satisfied with the service or products hence; brand image and awareness, service quality, price strategy and customer satisfaction are major players in consumers' behavioral intentions (Njei, 2018). However, there is a strong correlation between satisfaction level and positive behavioral intentions as positive behavioral intentions will increase when satisfaction achieves a desired level. Nevertheless, falling satisfaction level will automatically drop customer interest (Chi, 2005).

In a highly competitive business environment; it is necessary to have fulfilled customers' needs and to retain them in order to sustain in market for long term. It is not possible for any business or an organization to grow while ignoring or disregarding the needs of their customers (Tao, 2014), because customer satisfaction is directly linked with repurchased intentions, possibility of recommending a service or product, and profitability. Moreover; satisfaction ensures purchase of good and service over an extended time and gives assurance of not switching to other service providers. Moreover, it also encourages customers to avail the service or products repeatedly (Duffy, 2003). A satisfied customer may serve as an imperative factor of marketing mechanism while arbitrating and refereeing their service provider to more people, and in this way, prevailing customers contribute towards increasing customer base and market share (Duffy, 2003). According to Saravanan and Rao, (2007) providing quality service helps to maintain existing customers, invites new ones, improves corporate image and ensures survival and profitability.

Previous studies have proved significant and direct relationship between service quality and satisfaction (Yee et al., 2010; Yee et al., 2011). However; it is not enough to have satisfied customers. They must be very satisfied (Bowen & Chen, 2001). The relationship among customer satisfaction and service quality gives innovative ideas to improve the quality of service and to achieve a competitive dominance in service industry, especially in the banking sector (Siddiqi, 2011). Provision of high service quality is considered one of the key success factors which affect competitiveness. When employees quickly resolve the issues, it may increase satisfaction. It is more important to uphold existing costumers before attracting new customers (Yee et al., 2011).

Many studies explored the perceptions of customers and emotional response regarding service characteristics in order to undertake the consideration of customers in effective and efficient manners. Kumar et al (2009) stated that providing high quality service ensures high level of satisfaction. Caruana, (2002) also agreed that provision of quality service brings competitive advantage for survival of the business. Moreover; in the context of banking sector, many studies have proved positive and predictive relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality (Choudhury, 2014; Krishnamurthy et al., 2010; Selvakumar, 2016). The findings of Firend and Abadi, (2014) and Rijwani, et al (2017) also found that the delivery of better service quality leads to increase customer satisfaction among the users of the service. The study of Shi et al., (2014) tested the relationships among service quality and customer satisfaction. The findings proved that service quality has direct effects on satisfaction and indirect effects on consumer behavioral intentions.

2.3 The Service Quality

The service quality has been the highlight concern of many marketers and researchers in the area of the services industries. This is due to the fact that quality has become one of the essential concerns of the customers which they search for in relation to their monetary value (White and Yu, 2005). Having different competitors and choices in the market, customers can search for the best value in every purchased item or service. *“Customers judge service quality relative to what they want by comparing their perceptions of service experiences with their expectations of what the service performance should be”* (Sureshchandar et al., 2002). Nitecki et al. (2000) defined service quality in terms of *“meeting or exceeding customer expectations, or as the difference between customer perceptions and expectations of service”*. According to Gronroos (2004), there are three dimensions of service quality, the

technical quality, the function quality and the corporate image. Each of these elements presents different points of view regarding the service quality. For instance, the technical quality presents the received service as presented; the functional quality dissects the manner the service has been delivered by. “*Corporate image dimension of quality is the result of how consumers perceive the firm*” (Gronroos, 2004). This is meant to be the result of the service quality and its influence on the general image production in the eyes of the clients.

There is a significantly positive link between service quality and satisfaction of customers (Ojo, 2010). While reviewing various research, causal relationship has been proved between service quality and satisfaction (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Kumar et al., 2009; Yee et al., 2010; Ojo, 2010; Yee et al., 2011; Firend&Abadi, 2014; Rijwani, et al., 2017). The study of Gera (2011) investigated the causal relationship between quality of service, values, behavioral intention, customer satisfaction and recommendation for public banks in India. It has been concluded that the provision of service quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and perception regarding values.

Service quality has been considered as an important area of research due to its significance in the service sector. Therefore, various models have been developed to measure it. Although it is claimed to be difficult in order to measure because it cannot be quantified, there are two major approaches, such as the European and American approaches. The European approach deals with three dimensions of service quality in terms of technical, functional and corporate image (Hussain et al., 2020; Cheah, et al., 2020) whereas; the American perspective suggests five dimensions such as tangible, reliability, responsibility, assurance and empathy (Aghdai and Faghani, 2012; Gaikwad and Gwalani, 2019). Shrestha and Koirala (2012) measured the link

between customer satisfaction and the five service quality dimensions of service quality of commercial banks. The findings proved that all five dimensions have significant part in determining service quality and customer satisfaction in commercial banks. Zafar et al, (2012) explored the various dimensions of service quality in the banking sector that influence customer satisfaction. The findings of the study highlighted positive impact of various service quality dimensions of service quality on customer satisfaction. Considered as the most used approach to measure service quality, in the current work, the American approach was adopted with a focus on Service Quality model (SERVQUAL) that is presented in the following section.

2.4 Service Quality Model SERVQUAL

The present research takes into consideration two models to study service quality. The first model is the Service Quality Dimensions' model (The ServQual Model) presented in 1988 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Bitner and the second model is the Omni-channel Integration Quality model (Hossain et al., 2020). The reason the two models are reviewed is because they both introduce variables that might have an impact on the service quality perception in service organizations such as banks. The ServQual model presents the standardized service quality dimensions while the INQ introduces retail related concepts that are applicable for the merger case of this study, as bank offer multiple channels to the costumers. The service quality dimensions (SERVQUAL Model) is more standardized and fit to any service industry while the INQ components were slightly different based on the nature of the service being researched. In fact, both models share similar sub-concepts such as reliability, and assurance of service (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Hossain et al., 2020). Accordingly, the theoretical framework is developed in a way that avoids repetition in concepts where selective INQ components are directly linked to satisfaction.

SERVQUAL Model is recognized as an important tool that is used to evaluate service quality in service sector, particularly in the banking industry. Specifically, SERVQUAL highlights all dimensions that should be covered in assessing service quality in banks. The perception of customer is a very complicated procedure, hence; multiple measurements have been developed and suggested (Brady & Cronin, 2001). It basically highlights the gap between the expected and received service quality and has been extensively used in exploring customer's perspective of service quality. At the initial level, ten dimensions had been developed that were later reduced to five dimensions. According to Ladhari, (2009), SERVQUAL model can be used in measuring service quality in various sectors. However; it is more appropriate to select the most significant dimension of this model that may fit in assessing service quality which is actually being measured for assuring the reliable and effective results.

Lu, et al., (2009) also suggested that SERVQUAL is an appropriate tool for determining and improving the service quality in the banking sector. The customer judgment regarding service quality is defined as perceived service quality which is actually based on the difference between expectation from the service provider and the actual service which the customer receives. Nevertheless, the banking industry has very specific characteristics; hence SERVQUAL model should be adopted based on the most determining factors that have been proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). A brief explanation of these dimensions is presented in table 1 (Blery et al., 2009).

Table 1: Five Dimensions of SERVQUAL Model (Blery et al., 2009)

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Description</i>
Tangibility	It measures the service facilities in terms of physical, equipment and presence of personnel of the organizations.
Reliability	It measures the ability to perform the services more accurately.
Responsiveness	It measures the willingness of service providers for helping the client and consumer through providing prompt service
Assurance	It measures the information and courteousness of staffs and their capability to instigate trust and confidence.
Empathy	It measures taking care of customers by providing separate care and effectively addressing their concerns and special needs.

Kumar and Manshor (2009) re-examined the modified SERVQUAL model using four critical factors such as tangibility, reliability, competence and convenience from banking customers in Malaysia. The findings identified a gap between expectations and perceptions of costumers. Furthermore; tangibility has the lowest gap, whereas convenience has the highest gap. The study suggests that competence and convenience can diminish the gap in perceived service quality as much as 76 percent. Another study by Kumar et al., (2010) investigated the service quality gap in traditional and Islamic banking using modified SERVQUAL model in Malaysia. The findings pointed out that the expectations of costumers were diverse regarding competence and convenience between Islamic and conventional banking. The findings also suggested that competence and convenience were dominating the dimensions of service quality in both types of banks, which can minimize the gap, an extent of 72 percent in conventional banking and 85 percent in Islamic banking.

Various studies have been conducted using SERVQUAL model for analyzing service quality in banking industry. The study of Islam (2011) investigated banking service in Bangladesh and its impact on customer satisfaction. The Findings proved positive impact of service quality on customer satisfaction that led to increase customer loyalty. The survey, carried out by Culiberg and Rojsek (2010), showed positive and significant impact of service quality in customer satisfaction in retail banking in Solvenia. The study of Lau et al., (2013) also proved a significant relationship between service quality of banking and customer satisfaction in Hong Kong. Moreover; among all five factors, responsiveness and tangibility have more impact on customer satisfaction.

Using SERVQUAL model, Albarq (2013) investigated the service quality of banking industry in Riyadh from those respondents who were using banking services. The Findings revealed that responsiveness has the most significant impact of customer satisfaction. Moreover; the research findings of Raza (2009) also proved that customer satisfaction from banking services is mostly effected by responsiveness and reliability in Pakistan.

Using, SERVQUAL measurement tool, Kakouris and Finos (2016) conducted a survey regarding perception of customers of some leading banks in Serbia. The findings displayed a big gap between expectations and perceptions regarding service quality, which asserts that a shortfall does exist in service quality. Gaikwad and Gwalani (2019) also assessed the service quality of major public sector banks using SERVQUAL model in Nashik City. The findings of the study also revealed a gap between expectations and perceptions regarding public sector banks. Moreover; it also highlighted shortfalls in the quality of service which involved more careful

consideration. Lau, et al., (2013) found the most significant traits of service quality in retail banking from the customers of Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) using SERVQUAL measurement tools. The outcomes indicated that all five dimensions have positive impact on customer satisfaction. However, empathy has the least impact on customer satisfaction compared to other dimensions.

The recent study of Ananda and Devesh (2019) has investigated using five-dimensional SERVQUAL model for identifying the service quality gap between perception and expectation of customers. The findings confirmed significant association between all five dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction. However it also revealed that the expectations of customer were high. The highest service quality gap was identified in empathy dimension, whereas the lowest gap was found in the dimension of tangibility. In the context of Pakistani Islamic banking, Ali and Raza (2017) have examined the link between customer satisfaction and quality of services using a modified model of SERVQUAL model while compliance taking a new dimension. The findings proved a positive link between service quality and customer satisfaction. Moreover, the dimension of compliance proved the most significant and highest contributing factor in the model that may support policy makers to understand the interactive intention of customers in Islamic banking.

The next chapter discusses the research model and hypotheses development. The discussion in the next chapter is done by linking the concepts presented in the theoretical background to the issue of mergers in the banking industry. Linking both concepts is used to develop the research hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH MODEL

3.1 Introduction to Research Model

This section presents a summary of the link(s) between the different concepts presented in the literature review including customer satisfaction, perceived service quality and behavioral intentions. The presentation of concepts is linked to the retail banking and Omni-channel integration quality when applicable. The figure 1 represents the theoretical framework of the study followed by an explanation of the different links between the concepts summarized in the form of research hypotheses. This framework highlights the five dimensions of service quality which determines customer satisfaction in Barwa bank after the merge. Based on the five dimensions of SERVQUAL model, the framework explains the impact of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy on consumer satisfaction. Taking into account the specificity of the studied bank merger, the framework also presents ethical consideration of Islamic banking, service range (Sharma, 2018), and service multiple channels use (Ekong et al., 2007; Ebimobowei & Ekankumo, 2012; Johnsons et al., 2015) as antecedents of service quality perception.

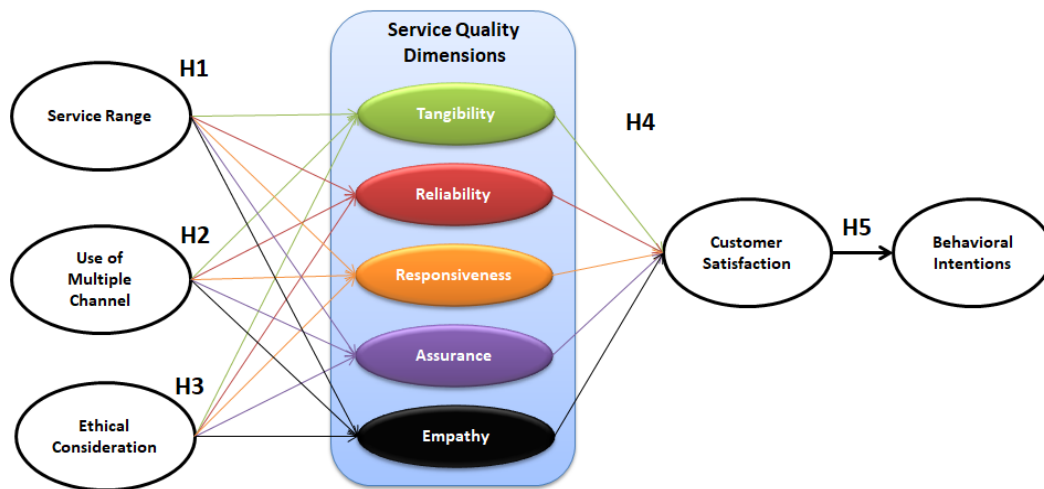


Figure 1: Research model

The research discusses the impact of merger on Barwa existing customers, including those who have been customers of IBQ. In the banking context, customer satisfaction is considered a key factor for success, growth and profitability (Belas & Gabcova, 2014; Belas, Cipovova & Demjan, 2014). On the basis of comparison between the expectation of consumers and perceived performance of service quality, customer satisfaction is described and taken into account (Herington & Weaven, 2009). A significant relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction has already been evident by previous studies (Yee et al., 2011; Brunner et al., 2008). Satisfaction level can lead to different scenarios of customers behavioral intentions due to rational and risk adverse behavior of people to avoid risk and stay with the service providers if they have a good experience in past (Belas & Gabcova, 2016; Coelho & Henseler, 2012). This research model shows that effective delivery of fine service can bring long-term impact on customer's satisfaction and thus, positive behavioral intention of customers. The following section presents in more details the relations between the different variables included in the model.

Based on the literature review and evaluation of different concepts and models, the research model presented five different hypotheses to be tested. The

hypotheses tend to study the perceived quality and customer satisfaction in the post-merger of Barwa and IBQ. Taking into account the specificity of the new Dukhan bank, the research model suggests three variables that can have an impact on perceived quality and customer satisfaction based on the SERVQUAL model.

3.2 Effects of Service Range

Customers may perceive the quality differently when they test and receive various services. This means that the range of services could affect the way customers perceive these services (Albarq; 2013; Lau, et al., 2013; Ananda and Devesh, 2019). Better realization of quality service in the context of mergers and acquisition is very important to analyze the different services offered by the company because; it could considerably impact the assessment of service quality (Obaid et al., 2010). The pre- and post-effects on merger should be approachable by financial institutions and banks in order to make sure that the banking merger has not impacted negatively the range of service, although the entire business performance depends on consumer feedback and satisfaction level. Hence, provision of wider range of service is essential particularly in service industry like banks. Yao et al. (2016) highlighted differences in service range before and after merge. Sometimes, it brings conflicts for instance; one firm focuses on revenue generation to measure customer service range, whereas the other firm emphasizes on customer satisfaction rather than the range. Furthermore; firms use different method for customer communication and problem solving, which creates difficulties for merged firms or banks to serve their customers who are not used to new products and services. Bigné et al. (2003) indicated, in the context of health multiple-service, that the global perception of quality depends on the use of the multiple services and their evaluation. Surprisingly, despite the fact that banks are offering different types of services, little research studied the question of multiple-

services use and the type of services used by costumers. Bahya and Nantel (2000) considered that the range of services offered by banks is a dimension of bank service quality. In automated bank service context, Al-Hawari (2005) measured service quality, considering the different types of automated serviced used by consumers. Sharma (2018) indicates that increasing the range of products available for customers after bank merger leads to better perception of quality and satisfaction. In this context, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 1: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of service quality. Hypothesis one has 5 sub-hypotheses under it to match each of the ServQual dimensions:

- H1a: Multi-Service > Tangibility: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of the tangibility dimension.
- H1b: Multi-Service > Reliability: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of the reliability dimension.
- H1c: Multi-Service > Responsiveness: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of the responsiveness dimension.
- H1d: Multi-Service > Assurance: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of the assurance dimension
- H1e: Multi-Service > Empathy: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of the empathy dimension.

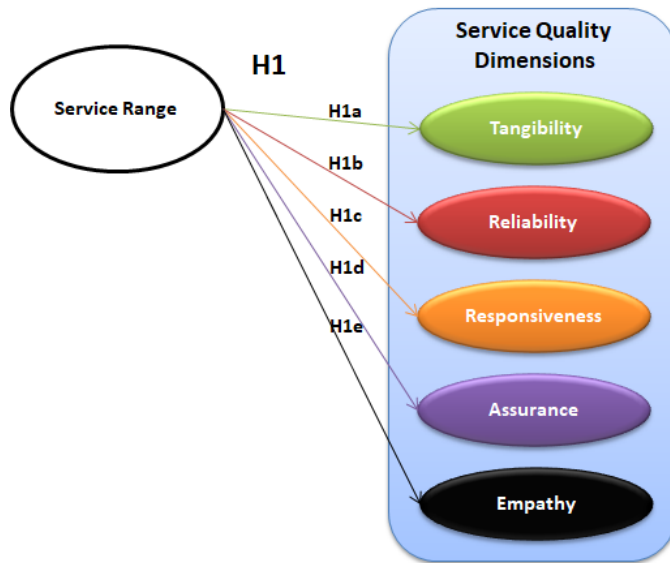


Figure 2: Hypothesis 1 Illustration

It has been argued by Vispute, (2008) that service should be provided by banks in competitive environment. This means that the service quality dimensions must be observed and maintained throughout the service. Moreover; after mergers, consumer should not be discouraged from receiving loan, deposits or any other financial services because of declining number of service provider. Mergers have a significant positive influence on the delivery of service, tough increasing capital gain and performance. While offering competitive advantage, mergers enables banks to grow those results in increasing efficiency and improving service quality. However; in the absence of any proper guidance and standards, the post mergers merged service may prove unpredictable service, even the organizations may behave inappropriately to new consumers (Beitelspacher et al., 2011).

3.3 Effects of Service Channels Use

Customers may perceive the quality differently when they test and receive the services through various channels. This means that the service channel could affect the way customers perceive these services (Albarq; 2013; Lau, et al., 2013; Ananda

and Devesh, 2019). The use of multiple service channels by banks is essential, especially with the rapid technological involvement in the banking services. A research by Ayo, Ekong, Fatudimu, and Adebisi (2007) also confirmed a significant impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on post-merged service provision in banking which enhanced the efficiency and led to the utilization of techno products and services, such as internet, mobile banking and electronic cards. Moreover; Johnson et al., (2015) examined the impact of mergers and acquisitions on the impact of mergers on service quality of banks in Ghana which proved positive impacts of mergers on customer's satisfaction through an advancement of service excellence in organization. Another post-merger perception of quality has been studied by Sharma, (2018) which concluded that consumers have more benefits in terms of low competitive interest rate because of increasing capital base and advancement in technology. It benefited the banks to enlarge technology-related changes, such as ATM service and increasing branch networking. Considering previous studies results (Ekong et al. 2007; Albarq; 2013; Lau, et al., 2013; Sharma, 2018; Ananda and Devesh, 2019), thus, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 2: The use of Multi-Channels has a significant positive impact on service quality perception.

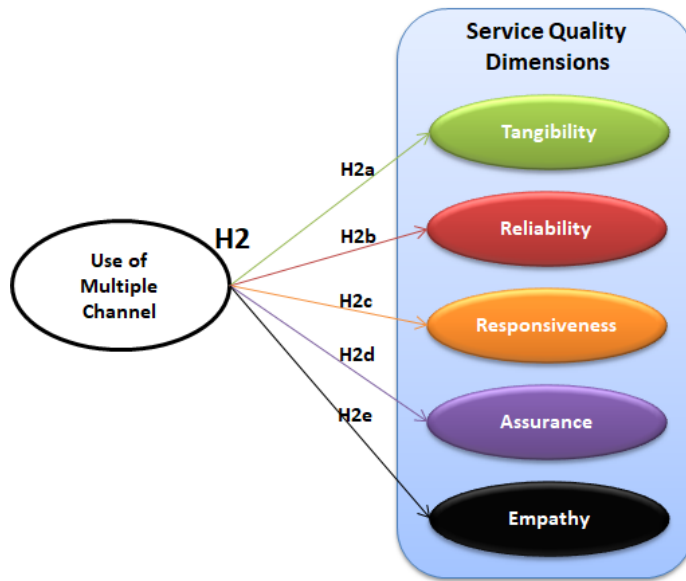


Figure 3: Hypothesis 2 Illustration

Hypothesis two has 5 sub-hypotheses under it to match each of the ServQual dimensions:

- H2a: Multi-Channel > Tangibility: The use of Multi-Channel has a significant positive impact on the perception of the tangibility dimension.
- H2b: Multi- Channel > Reliability: The use of Multi-Channel has a significant positive impact on the perception of the reliability dimension.
- H2c: Multi- Channel > Responsiveness: The use of Multi-Channel has a significant positive impact on the perception of the responsiveness dimension.
- H2d: Multi- Channel > Assurance: The use of Multi-Channel has a significant positive impact on the perception of the assurance dimension
- H2e: Multi- Channel > Empathy: The use of Multi-Channel has a significant positive impact on the perception of the empathy dimension.

Yeboah et al (2015) examined the relationship between service quality and mergers in merged banks. They concluded that merger and acquisition have positive impact on overall service quality. However; the study revealed a gap between perception and expectation of costumer in terms of service delivery and service

channels in both banks. On the other hand, this gap declined after the merger and acquisitions exercise, which suggested that the merger had brought about favorable impacts in the delivery of service in both banks. The merger should ensure the satisfaction of new customers through providing high quality product and services that lead to develop trust and confidence between customer and service provider.

3.4 Ethical Considerations of Islamic Bank

Being an Islamic bank, the post-merger entity will have wider range of services that would affect the relationship between the two variables (Fang & Foucart, 2014; Mpinganjira & Maduku, 2019). There is no doubt that Islamic banks have made many gains since their emergence in the beginning of the seventies. These achievements have appeared to the world during the global financial crisis, which we are still experiencing some of its aftermath effects. In terms of size and superiority in quantitative growth, the latest statistics indicate that the rate of growth in assets of conventional banks during the year 2018 amounted to 6.08 percent, while the growth rate in Islamic banks reached 28.6 percent, and in terms of growth in the number of operating Islamic banks, it jumped from 3 banks (AltAleb, 2019). At the beginning of the seventies of the last century, there were about 500 Islamic banks distributed in more than 75 countries worldwide, 40 percent of which were located in the Arab countries (Mpinganjira & Maduku, 2019).

People are attracted by the glamorous slogans and principles of Islamic banks. The principles, on which Islamic banks were based and gave them the strength and confidence to become a real competitor to the existing banks, were built on the principle of ethical financing. This principle dictates not to provide any kind of financing for projects that violate Islamic law or to produce any forbidden commodity that could harm society. Accordingly, Islamic banks are bound by the approach of

Islamic behavior, and what is meant here by behavior is to adhere to all the ethical standards mentioned in the Islamic Sharia. These criteria include: non-monopoly, exploitation of the needs of people and the necessities of society, refraining from extravagance, not withholding zakat, which is tantamount to legal tax, and the like (AlZamil, 2011). Since Dukhan is an Islamic bank and was merged with the traditional bank of IBQ, it was necessary to understand the relationship between the ethical considerations of Islamic banking and its potential impact on the level of customer satisfaction.

In the context of Financial Services Industry, Román S. (2003) indicates that perception of Ethical Sales Behavior will lead to better satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, in the context of Corporate Services Brands, Sierra et al. (2017) indicate that Customer perceived ethicality of the service brand leads to higher quality perception and higher loyalty. For retail banking, Poolthong and Mandhachitara (2009), indicate that higher perception of corporate social responsibility will lead to perception of higher service quality and higher loyalty toward the bank. Therefore, it is expected that the specific post-merger context of IBQ (conventional Bank) and Barwa (Islamic bank), which has perception of higher ethicality of Islamic banks, will impact positively the perception of service quality of Dukhan Bank (the post-merger Islamic Bank). Thus, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 3: The perception of higher Islamic bank's ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the level of customers' perception of service quality.

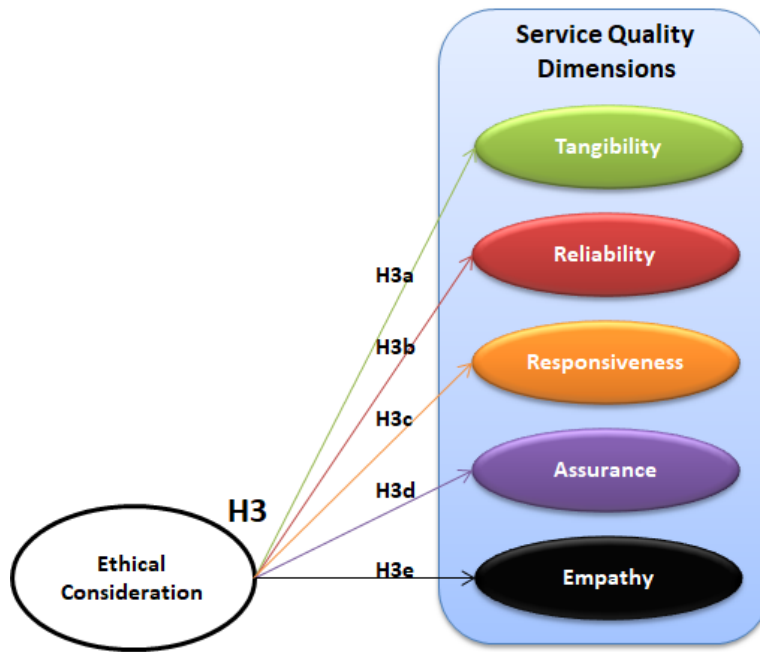


Figure 4: Hypothesis 3 Illustration

Hypothesis three has 5 sub-hypotheses under it to match each of the ServQual dimensions as following:

- H3a: Ethical Considerations > Tangibility: The perception of higher Islamic bank’s ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the tangibility dimensions.
- H3b: Ethical Considerations > Reliability: The perception of higher Islamic bank’s ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the reliability dimension.
- H3c: Ethical Considerations > Responsiveness: The perception of higher Islamic bank’s ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the responsiveness dimension.
- H3d: Ethical Considerations > Assurance: The perception of higher Islamic bank’s ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the assurance dimension
- H3e: Ethical Considerations > Empathy: The perception of higher Islamic bank’s ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the empathy dimension.

3.5 Effects of service quality on Customer Satisfaction

The way customers perceive the service affects their level of satisfaction. Service quality is measured through the five service quality dimensions (Patel, 2016). Service quality is the key word in service organizations. All service providers claim to provide the best service quality to their customers. Service quality is defined as "meeting customers' needs and requirements" (Naik et al., 2010). However, famous authors in the field of service quality management such as (Kasper, 1999) stated that quality cannot be defined; because each person may have his or her own definition of service quality based on his or her needs and expectations. It was also stated that quality is zero defects. This means that services must be done right at the first time. Services cannot be provided without quality. Quality is a fundamental requirement for services. There are five dimensions for service quality that are highly needed for customer satisfaction. According to Kiran and Diljit (2017), service providers try to know external and internal customers. However, according to service providers, customers, majorly, care for service quality. Thus, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 4: The service quality dimensions have a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction. Hypothesis four has 5 sub-hypotheses under it to match each of the ServQual dimensions as following:

- H4a: Tangibility > Satisfaction: The tangibility dimension has a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.
- H4b: Reliability > Satisfaction: The reliability dimension has a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.
- H4c: Responsiveness > Satisfaction: The responsiveness dimension has a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.
- H4d: Assurance > Satisfaction: The assurance dimension has a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.

- H4e: Empathy > Satisfaction: The empathy dimension has a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.

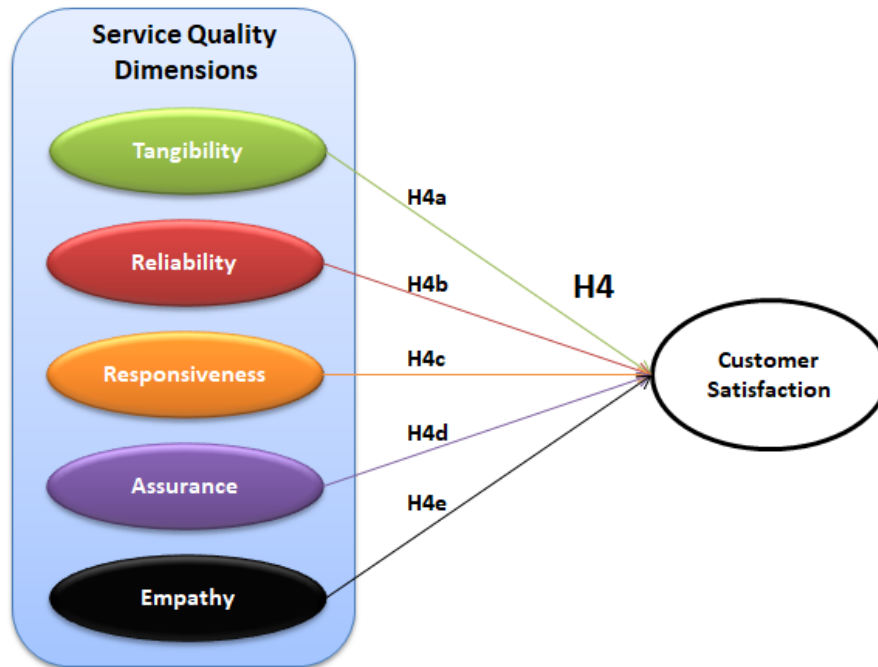


Figure 5: Hypothesis 4 Illustration

3.6 Effects of Satisfaction on Behavioral Intentions

After perceiving the service, customers will have future behavioral intentions towards perceiving it again, or promoting it through word-of-mouth (Thozhur et al., 2007; Oberg, 2008). The post-satisfaction behavior is basically a state of mind and attitude of the customer towards service or products. It is also defined as the rational assessment of past experiences with service providers. Despite the low expectation of merged banks, customers' demands are consistent and seamless. Hence, they expect certain level of service quality from the start. It is very necessary for both merger and merged to concentrate their efforts in order to respond effectively customers' reactions after M&A. Not fulfilling the certain requirements or demands of the customers might affect the performance negatively and may cause the merger and acquisition to fail (Oberg, 2008).

Furthermore; understanding the customer demand and the mind-set of the customer is crucial for merging banks in order to maintain current customers. However; during the merger and acquisition process, customers are ignored as other matters i.e. legal and financial details are given more consideration. Maintaining satisfied customers is a long period process that requires a consistent experience and expectation of service after M&A (McLelland & Goldsmith, 2014). Bank mergers have increased the pressures on banking industry in order to develop customer loyalty (Lam & Bojei, 2007). The extent, to which customers are satisfied with the service of a bank, will control their future intentions towards the bank and will determine whether they will choose another bank or remain loyal (Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2016; Oberg, 2008; McLelland & Goldsmith, 2014; Iglesias et al., 2019). Thus, it is expected that that:

Hypothesis 5: The level of customer satisfaction has a significant positive impact on the customers' behavioral intentions.

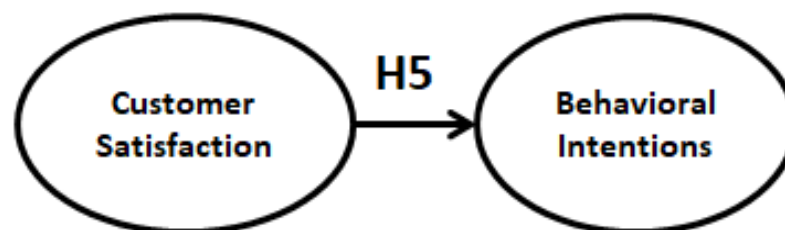


Figure 6: Hypothesis 5 Illustration

3.7 Merger Effects

Considering the improved quality of service quality increases the possibility of customer satisfaction; however, all mergers are not eagerly accepted by customers when their reaction is not considered (Papathanasiou, et al., 2018). Merger bring both positive and negative impacts on customers, employees and other stakeholders, however; it depends on industry and market competition. Several research studies have explored the impact of merger and acquisition in the context of customer satisfaction. The study of Fashola, (2014) rated better score for the customer of acquisition banks as compared to merged banks. The research revealed that the majority of the customer was more satisfied after post-acquisition. Moreover; merger and acquisition have benefitted customers while offering better features of financial products and services. Joash and Njangiru (2015) argued that merger and acquisition have improved the effectiveness and efficiency of operations and functions of bank; thus, led to an increase in customer satisfaction level. Furthermore; mergers and acquisitions enhanced capital base which enabled the organization to avail more resources, mainly credit facilities.

The recent study of Papathanasiou et al (2018) also examined the customer satisfaction through service quality dimensions in banking sector of Greek due to its re-organization after mergers and takeover during the financial crisis of 2009-2015. The findings revealed that all dimensions of service quality have positive impact on customer satisfaction in banking. The findings of Sharma, (2018) proved significant positive impact of mergers and acquisitions of banking and financial institutions in Nepal in terms of credit clients rather than depositors. Sharma, (2018) also noted that the efficiency gains through mergers can be obtained for merged banks, which transferred these benefits to their customers while reducing lending rate and margin of

interest. Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) have also been acknowledged as a common approach of corporate restructuring. Sharma, (2015) has pointed out that when a bank experiences mergers and acquisition, there will be a need to make some changes in operational and management practices, which might affect the perception of customers. Sometimes, it marks a shifting of customer loyalty. The findings of the study proved customer satisfaction in post-mergers and acquisitions period while accepting the changes. Another study of Ebimobowei and Ekankumo (2012) examined the impact of M&A on customer satisfaction and proved considerable improvement on the satisfaction level of customer in the post-M&A period.

Oberg (2008) researched the impact of merger and acquisition for M&A parties and perception of customers. It has been concluded that the customers are the major reason of merger and acquisition. Customers have given their responses after the announcement of M&A and they have inquired if it involves organizations that customers do not want any relation with, based on observe experiences. Conversely, various studies examined the negative impact of merger and acquisition on customer satisfaction. For instance; Homburg and Burcerius (2005) proved an unfavorable and adverse impact of M&A on customer satisfaction. Moreover; it has also been confirmed by Shukla and Gekara (2011) that merger and acquisition have resulted in the shifting of management and strategies for profitability and market power, thus caused a decrease in customer satisfaction. Oberg and Anderson (2002) pointed out that management practices that emphasized on the transaction while ignoring the effects on costumers after M&A have resulted in poor customer satisfaction.

According to Portela and Thanassolis, (2006), there are limited empirical studies which have explored the relationship between bank merger, quality of service and satisfaction. However; some literatures have focused on efficiency of bank

branches. Moreover; for customer retention, quality service is considered a key factor to accomplish customer satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions. The impact of merger and acquisition can have negative impacts, if the concern, demands and perception of stakeholders, such as customers, are disregarded. Customers, particularly from merged banks, may experience uncertainties regarding their future association with their merging banks, which ultimately increases their dissatisfaction level. Taking into account the specific characteristics of the merger studied in the present research (first merger in the banking sector in Qatar and a merger between a conventional and Islamic bank) I do not present a specific hypothesis regarding the moderating possible effect of merger, rather I present the following research question:

Q1: How will the pre-merger behavior (being a customer of IBQ or Barwa) moderate the different relations between the variables in our research model?

3.8 Conclusion

The previous sections presented a description of the concepts involved in the study and the extent to which each concept is related to the other concepts which are all related to customer satisfaction. The following table (Table 2) summarizes the hypotheses of this research:

Table 2: Summary of Research Hypotheses

Main Hypotheses	Sub-Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H1a: Multi-Service > Tangibility. - H1b: Multi-Service > Reliability. - H1c: Multi-Service > Responsiveness.

Main Hypotheses	Sub-Hypotheses
quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H1d: Multi-Service > Assurance. - H1e: Multi-Service > Empathy.
<p>Hypothesis 2: The use of Multi-Channels has a significant positive impact on service quality perception.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H2a: Multi- Channel > Tangibility. - H2b: Multi- Channel > Reliability. - H2c: Multi- Channel > Responsiveness. - H2d: Multi- Channel > Assurance. - H2e: Multi- Channel > Empathy.
<p>Hypothesis 3: The perception of higher Islamic bank’s ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the level of customers’ perception of service quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3a: Ethical Considerations> Tangibility. - H3b: Ethical Considerations > Reliability. - H3c: Ethical Considerations > Responsiveness. - H3d: Ethical Considerations > Assurance. - H3e: Ethical Considerations > Empathy.
<p>Hypothesis 4: The service quality dimensions have a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4a: Tangibility > Satisfaction. - H4b: Reliability > Satisfaction. - H4c: Responsiveness > Satisfaction. - H4d: Assurance > Satisfaction. - H4e: Empathy > Satisfaction.
<p>Hypothesis 5: The level of customer satisfaction has a significant positive impact on the customers’ behavioural intentions.</p>	<p>No Sub Hypotheses</p>

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and philosophy. It also presents the data collection methods, the population, and sampling techniques. The methodology chapter also explains how the research data is being collected and how it is analyzed. The methodology chapter paves the way for the research results and analysis. It explains how the data were validated and measured.

4.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a system of assumptions and views about the progress of knowledge. It is basically a viewpoint to explain the extension of research in order to develop the knowledge in the precise field. There are different types of research philosophy which are adopted such as positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism. A researcher needs to define the research philosophy of the study. This study adopts positivism research philosophy because it restricts the role of a researcher in data collection and interpretation. The research findings are quantifiable which lead to statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). This research philosophy focuses on the results that are usually evident and quantifiable. Under this philosophy, a researcher is unbiased, which means that his/her personal views will be unbiased to get neutral results. This implies less interaction with the research respondents during the research. Moreover; in this philosophy, theories are used to develop hypothesis; hence, positivist philosophy, various theories related to bank merger and acquisition, service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty have been studied as well (Descombe, 2014).

4.2 Research Approach and Methods

There are two types of research approaches, namely, deductive and inductive approaches. The Inductive approach is used to generate new theories that emerge from data, whereas the deductive approach is concerned with testing theories and hypotheses. The positivism research philosophy adopts the deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009). The deductive approach basically identifies links and associations among variables; thus, it is widely employed in quantitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As the main objective of this study is to examine how the bank merger and acquisition affect customer satisfaction using service quality dimensions; hence, quantitative data will be more suitable for this research. This quantitative data is used to test the hypotheses through proposed statistical techniques and used for interpretations and to draw conclusions.

Different methodological choices are available. However, quantitative and qualitative are the two main methodological choices (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Garrett, 2008; Sarantakos, 2005; Saunders et al., 2012). The quantitative approach is applied to test theories and establish relationships among variables, while the qualitative approach is preferred to seek opinions and perspectives of people towards a particular social phenomenon. For examining the hypotheses; various research choices are applied. In mono method studies, the researcher can apply one research method, either qualitative or quantitative. In a mixed method, two or more research methods are used through systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data to create a single dataset. With multi-methods, the research method is divided into separate segments to produce different dataset using different methodologies. This study adopts quantitative research method which identifies structure, cause and effect relationships among variables.

4.3 Research Strategy and Time Horizon

A research strategy is defined as the process through which a researcher carry out the investigation using different tools and devices, such as surveys, interviews, experimental research, action research case study or systematic literature review (Saunders et al., 2012). In this study, a survey was conducted to collect the data through a structured questionnaire from the customer of the merged bank. Conducting a survey through questionnaire is widely used for primary data collection and certainly the most extensively applied method in quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). Based on time horizon, studies are categorized by two types, namely cross-section and longitude. The time horizon of this study is cross-sectional study due to the fact that the collection of the data took a short period of time.

4.4 Data collections and Instrumentation

For data collection, a researcher can choose either primary or secondary sources. Primary data is gathered through interviews or survey which is based on recent analysis. On the other hand, secondary data are obtained through published sources, such as books, journals and the internet. However; primary data are more challenging and time-consuming. This study is based on primary data collection through questionnaire survey from Dukhan customers (post-merger). Moreover; based on the theoretical framework, a questionnaire is designed to asses all dimensions of service quality, customer satisfaction. The questionnaire measures have been adopted from previous research studies on the SERVQUAL model.

4.4.1 Population and Sampling

Dukhan bank has thousands of individual and corporate customers. This number is large and cannot be entirely covered. Therefore, it is decided to use the

customers of two main branches in which one of them is Dukhan and the other is IBQ that was changed to Dukhan. The reason is to provide chances for the customers of both banks to be part of the study. The sample was chosen randomly from the two branches. The study collected responses from 287 customers, in which 157 are former IBQ and 130 from Dukhan. The people who were included in the study are those who have been IBQ customers before the merge and also existing Dukhan Bank customers who might have been customers of Barwa Bank. The respondents were asked if they have been IBQ or Barwa customers before the questionnaire starts to distinguish between the two types of customers.

4.4.2 *Questionnaire Design*

The questionnaire has been designed to investigate dependent variables and derived statements related to customer satisfaction using five Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was divided into three sub sections. Section (A) covered the service channels, service ranges, and the customers' bank. Section (B) covered all the service quality dimensions along with behavioral intentions, ethical considerations, and customers' satisfaction. The items covered the quality dimension based on SERVQUAL model and the questions were chosen based on previous studies as explained in chapter three. The last section presented the general questions, such as gender, age, nationality, occupation, and monthly income. The questionnaire template is attached in appendix A.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure reliability of the questionnaire and construct, various techniques have been used. Validity means that the measure is actually measuring what it is supposed to measure, whereas reliability refers to the consistency of research

instruments that ensure similar outcomes which have been produced in other research by using the same research instruments (Saunders et al., 2012). The research questionnaire was discussed with experts from Qatar University and according to their comments; the questionnaire was modified and amended. Pilot test was performed before finalizing the questionnaire to improve reliability and validity by testing the research instruments in a real scenario which ensure that the questions are easily understood, whereas any ambiguous items and improper procedures identified by the pilot studies have been refined and mended. For internal consistency of the questionnaire; Cronbach's alpha was used. The rang of alpha varies between 0 to 1, where greater value indicates higher internal consistency of the questionnaire. A value 0.7 and above is commonly considered acceptable (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012).

The methodology chapter explains the processes which were followed to collect the data. It also justified the population and the selection of the sample out of this population. The chapter also describes how the research primary data should help in meeting the research objectives and answering its questions and hypotheses. The numerical part, including validity, and reliability is also described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DATA AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction to Results

The research results are presented in this chapter as planned earlier in the theoretical framework and research structural model. As mentioned previously, the research evaluates the banking experience of Dukhan Bank after the merge with IBQ bank. The structural model starts with three variables which affect the service quality of the bank. These variables are service range, service channels, and the ethical considerations. The study measures the direct impact of these variables on the service quality dimensions. The service quality dimensions impact on satisfaction is then measured. The final step was to measure the direct impact of satisfaction on the behavioral intentions of the customers. Below is a simplified representation of the model.

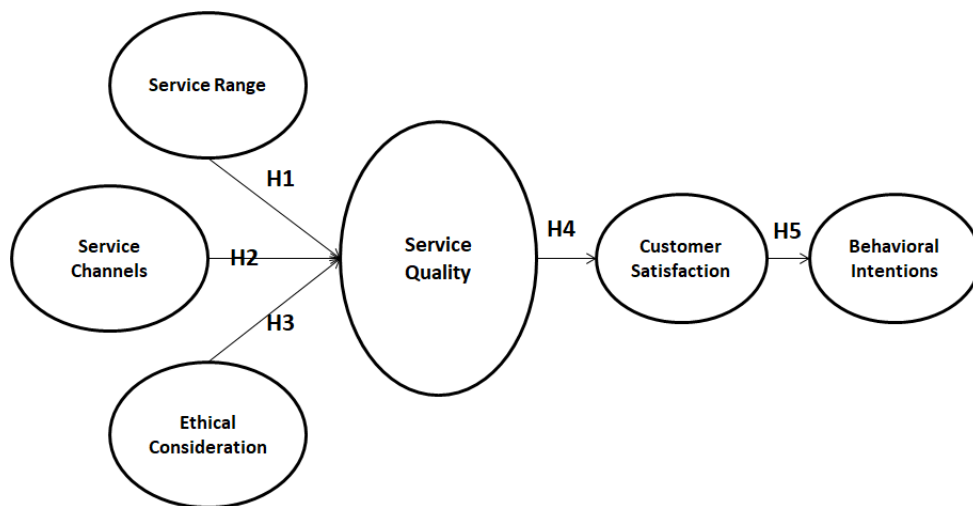


Figure 7: Simplified Research Model

The research model above is a simplified version of the model presented in the methodology chapter. A detailed SmartPLS model is attached to the appendices. To test the research model, a questionnaire was distributed to the customers of Dukhan

Bank through different locations in which some of the locations were formerly IBQ and some were Barwa. A total of 287 questionnaires were collected and used in the analysis section.

5.2 Data Analysis and Results

The research model was tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling using SmartPLS adopted from Fornell and Cha (1994). This allowed the research to test the reliability and validity of the study (psychometric properties) and estimate the strength and the direct impact of the relationships amongst the different model variables and the parameters of the structural model. The software used for the analysis was SmartPLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2015).

In the analysis process of SmartPLS, the reflective measurement assessment model relies on three criteria which are 1) individual item reliability (outer loadings), 2), internal consistency, and 3), validity (Duarte and Raposo 2010; Hair et al.2014). For the test of individual item reliability, the outer loadings were examined (loading of the measures on the constructs they intend to measure). Using the threshold of .7, only 5 out of the 34 indicators did not reach a level of acceptable reliability and was therefore excluded (These indicators were in the formative scales of service channels (website 0.481, business related services 0.624, and branches visits 0.410) and the service range (saving accounts 0.469 and corporate services 0.434). The composite reliability for the remaining indicators is between .72 and .94 (see Table 3), and this is greater than the minimum acceptable value of .70 (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 2014).

Table 3: Construct Validity

<i>Constructs and Items</i>	<i>Outer Loading</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Service Channels			
SerChn1: Electronic Banking (ATMs).	0.843		
SerChn2: Mobile Application.	0.726		
SerChn3: Website.	0.481		
SerChn4: Business Related Services.	0.624		
SerChn5: Branches Visits.	0.410		
Service Range			
SerRng2: Current Account	0.819		
SerRng3: Saving Account	0.469		
SerRng6: Credit Card Facilities	0.724		
SerRng8: Corporate Services	0.434		
Tangibility		0.901	0.752
Tangibility1: The bank facilities are easy to access.	0.864		
Tangibility2: The bank facilities are visually appealing.	0.908		
Tangibility3: The bank representatives are well dressed and neat.	0.827		
Reliability		0.926	0.758
Reliability1: The services are always on time.	0.853		
Reliability2: The bank helps solving my problems.	0.878		
Reliability3: The staff members are dependable.	0.892		
Reliability4: The bank keeps accurate records of my services.	0.860		
Responsiveness		0.914	0.842
Responsiveness1: The bank services are prompt.	0.918		
Responsiveness2: The bank always shows willingness to help.	0.917		
Assurance		0.932	0.873
Assurance1: The bank is trustworthy	0.930		
Assurance2: The bank representatives are polite.	0.938		
Empathy		0.905	0.761
Empathy1: I am getting individual attention from the bank.	0.881		

<i>Constructs and Items</i>	<i>Outer Loading</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Empathy2: The bank completely understands my needs.	0.914		
Empathy3: The operating hours are convenient.	0.818		
Customer Satisfaction		0.947	0.817
CusSat1: The perceived services match my expectations.	0.889		
CusSat2: Dealing with Barwa Bank meets my expectations about how banks should deal with their customers.	0.906		
CusSat3: Even if another bank offers the same services, I will still choose Barwa Bank.	0.909		
CusSat4: All in all, I am very satisfied with this bank.	0.912		
Behavioral Intentions		0.957	0.846
BehInt1: I will continue to use the services of Barwa Bank.	0.906		
BehInt2: I am more likely to say positive things about Barwa Bank to others.	0.918		
BehInt3: I would recommend Barwa Bank to friends and family.	0.933		
BehInt4: I would choose Barwa Bank if I had to choose a bank again.	0.923		
Ethical Consideration		0.933	0.822
Ethical1: Islamic finance can be seen as a type of ethical finance	0.932		
Ethical2: Islamic finance promotes more socially responsible form of finance	0.941		
Ethical4: In general, Islamic Banks are ethical in its dealing with customers	0.843		

The AVE for the measurement model use is greater than 0.50 for all the variables as shown in the table 1 above. Accordingly, the measurement model verifies and approves all the three conditions suggested by prior research (Gefen and Straub 2005; Hair et al. 2014), providing strong support for its reliability and validity.

The next test was for the discriminant and convergent validity. This indicates the extent to which a given construct differs from other latent constructs (Duarte and Raposo, 2010) which require the correlation of the latent variable scores with the measurement items shows an appropriate pattern of loadings, one in which the measurement items load highly on their theoretically assigned factor and not highly on other factors” (Gefen and Straub 2005, p. 93). Also, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) for each construct must exceed the threshold of .50 (Hair et al. 2014). In addition, the square root should be larger than the correlations of the specific construct with any other construct in the model (Hair et al. 2014).

Table 4: Discriminant validity, according to the Fornell and Larcker’s (1981) criterion

	<i>ASSU</i>	<i>BI</i>	<i>EMP</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>REL</i>	<i>RES</i>	<i>SAT</i>	<i>TAN</i>
Assurance (ASSU)	0.934							
BI	0.624	0.920						
Empathy (EMP)	0.646	0.725	0.872					
Ethical Consideration (EC)	0.410	0.465	0.411	0.907				
Reliability (REL)	0.708	0.710	0.715	0.456	0.871			
Responsiveness (RES)	0.675	0.607	0.634	0.322	0.698	0.917		
Satisfaction (SAT)	0.665	0.838	0.758	0.402	0.718	0.700	0.904	
Tangibility (TAN)	0.418	0.400	0.398	0.284	0.492	0.460	0.466	0.867

The square roots of the AVE (on the diagonal) are greater than any other values, in support of the discriminant validity of the measurement scales. It also shows that the indicators are correlated more with their own latent variables than any other variables in the model (Hair et al. 2014). A new measurement approach was also

used, which is based on the multitrait-multimethod matrix and called the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT), has been noted to provide a superior performance than the previously adopted Fornell-Larcker criterion. By testing this model, the HTMT assessment indicates that all the construct correlations hold for the most conservative criterion as shown in tables 4 and 5, which suggests that discriminant validity is established.

Table 5: Discriminant validity, according to the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	<i>ASSU</i>	<i>BI</i>	<i>EMP</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>REL</i>	<i>RES</i>	<i>SAT</i>	<i>TAN</i>
Assurance (ASSU)								
BI	0.697							
Empathy (EMP)	0.760	0.814						
Ethical Consideration (EC)	0.469	0.509	0.474					
Reliability (REL)	0.809	0.775	0.823	0.511				
Responsiveness (RES)	0.811	0.694	0.766	0.377	0.821			
Satisfaction (SAT)	0.747	0.897	0.856	0.443	0.788	0.808		
Tangibility (TAN)	0.486	0.450	0.469	0.317	0.566	0.556	0.528	

5.3 Structural Model

After confirming that the measurement model is valid and reliable, the next step was to assess the results of the structural model. Step one in this assessment is to test collinearity to ensure that the results are valid (Hair et al. 2014). Accordingly, for each predictors set, the variance inflation factors (VIF) greater than 5.00 would indicate overly high collinearity (Hair et al. 2014). In the predictor constructs of this study, the VIF's are between 1.031 and 4.396. This means that collinearity does not appear to be an issue.

Table 6: Mode Evaluation (VIF)

<i>Constructs and Items</i>	<i>VIF</i>
Service Channels	
SerChn1: Electronic Banking (ATMs).	1.493
SerChn2: Mobile Application.	1.642
SerChn3: Website.	1.463
SerChn4: Business Related Services.	1.566
SerChn5: Branches Visits.	1.246
Service Range	

<i>Constructs and Items</i>	<i>VIF</i>
SerRng2: Current Account	1.190
SerRng3: Saving Account	1.031
SerRng6: Credit Card Facilities	1.243
SerRng8: Corporate Services	1.117
Tangibility	
Tangibility1: The bank facilities are easy to access.	2.778
Tangibility2: The bank facilities are visually appealing.	3.213
Tangibility3: The bank representatives are well dressed and neat.	1.536
Reliability	
Reliability1: The services are always on time.	2.290
Reliability2: The bank helps in solving my problems.	2.589
Reliability3: The staff members are dependable.	2.857
Reliability4: The bank keeps accurate records of my services.	2.344
Responsiveness	
Responsiveness1: The bank services are prompt.	1.875
Responsiveness2: The bank always shows willingness to help.	1.875
Assurance	
Assurance1: The bank is trustworthy	2.253
Assurance2: The bank representatives are polite.	2.253
Empathy	
Empathy1: I am getting individual attention from the bank.	2.237
Empathy2: The bank completely understands my needs.	2.631
Empathy3: The operating hours are convenient.	1.715
Customer Satisfaction	
CusSat1: The perceived services match my expectations.	2.979
CusSat2: Dealing with Barwa Bank meets my expectations about how banks should deal with their customers.	3.380
CusSat3: Even if another bank offers the same services, I will still choose Barwa Bank.	3.490
CusSat4: All in all, I am very satisfied with this bank.	3.501
Behavioral Intentions	
BehInt1: I will continue to use the services of Barwa Bank.	3.301
BehInt2: I am more likely to say positive things about Barwa Bank to others.	3.768

<i>Constructs and Items</i>	<i>VIF</i>
BehInt3: I would recommend Barwa Bank to friends and family.	4.433
BehInt4: I would choose Barwa Bank if I had to choose a bank again.	3.973
Ethical Consideration	
Ethical1: Islamic finance can be seen as a type of ethical finance	4.101
Ethical2: Islamic finance promotes more socially responsible form of finance	4.396
Ethical4: In general, Islamic Banks are ethical in its dealing with customers	1.905

In SmartPLS (PLS-SEM), the model evaluation depends on the coefficients of determination (r-square) for the dependent constructs (endogenous variables) and the effect size (f^2), significance level, and t-values for the structural path coefficients (Fornell and Cha 1994). A bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples using the replacement method (Hair et al. 2014) was performed to test the statistical significance of each path coefficient, the standard errors, and the t-values.

5.4 Direct Effects

Fourteen out of the twenty one path coefficients are positive and significant, in support of the direction of the hypothesized relationships. The following sections discuss the relationship significance of each of the hypotheses mentioned in the methodology chapter and presented below are the results of direct effects:

- **Hypothesis One: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the level of service quality provided.**

Table 7: Hypothesis 1: Multi-Services > Service Quality Dimensions

<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path Coeff.</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t-Statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
H1	Multi-Services Use → Service Quality Dimensions				
H1a	Multi-Services Use → Tangibility	-0.039	0.075	0.515	0.607
H1b	Multi-Services Use → Reliability	0.065	0.049	1.332	0.183
H1c	Multi-Services Use → Responsiveness	0.079	0.063	1.242	0.214
H1d	Multi-Services Use → Assurance	0.003	0.069	0.041	0.967
H1e	Multi-Services Use → Empathy	0.140	0.054	2.595	0.009

Multi-service use has a significant positive effect only on the empathy perceived by the customers ($\beta = .140, p < .01$) in support of H1e. The H1a ($\beta = -0.039, p > .01$), H1b ($\beta = .0065, p > .01$), H1c ($\beta = .079, p > .01$), and H1d ($\beta = .003, p > .01$) were not supported and thus Hypothesis 1 is rejected since only one out of the five sub-hypotheses was supported.

- **Hypothesis Two: The use of Multi-Channels has a significant positive impact on the level of service quality provided.**

Table 8: Hypothesis 2: Multi-Channels > Service Quality Dimensions

<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path Coeff.</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t- Statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
H2	Multi-Channel Use → Service Quality Dimensions				
H2a	Multi-Channel Use → Tangibility	0.119	0.073	1.632	0.103
H2b	Multi- Channel Use → Reliability	0.212	0.062	3.441	0.001
H2c	Multi- Channel Use → Responsiveness	0.163	0.067	2.424	0.015
H2d	Multi- Channel Use → Assurance	0.187	0.068	2.742	0.006
H2e	Multi- Channel Use → Empathy	0.124	0.056	2.201	0.028

Multi-channel use has a significant positive effect on four of the service quality dimensions which are reliability (H2b: $\beta = .212$, $p < .01$), Responsiveness (H2c: $\beta = .163$, $p < .01$), Assurance (H2d: $\beta = .187$, $p < .01$), and Empathy (H2e: $\beta = .124$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, the tangibility dimensions again in this hypothesis seems to be insignificant (H2a: $\beta = .119$, $p > .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is partially supported since four out of the five sub-hypotheses were supported.

- **Hypothesis Three: The bank's ethical considerations and standards have a significant positive impact on the level of service quality provided.**

Table 9: Hypothesis 3: Ethical Consideration > Service Quality Dimensions

<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path Coeff.</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t- Statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
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<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path Coeff.</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t- Statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
H3	Ethical Consideration → Service Quality Dimensions				
H3a	Ethical Consideration → Tangibility	0.246	0.073	3.366	0.001
H3b	Ethical Consideration → Reliability	0.355	0.061	5.822	0.000
H3c	Ethical Consideration → Responsiveness	0.237	0.072	3.271	0.001
H3d	Ethical Consideration → Assurance	0.335	0.070	4.820	0.000
H3e	Ethical Consideration → Empathy	0.327	0.062	5.265	0.000

The ethical consideration showed a direct relationship and significance to all of the service quality dimensions which means that the service quality dimensions are directly affected by the ethical consideration of the bank and the way customers' perceive it. The ethical considerations have a significant positive effect on the five quality dimensions, which are Tangibility (H3a: $\beta = .246, p < .01$), Reliability (H3b: $\beta = .355, p < .01$), Responsiveness (H3c: $\beta = .237, p < .01$), Assurance (H3d: $\beta = .335, p < .01$), and Empathy (H3e: $\beta = .326, p < .01$). This means that the third hypothesis is supported since all the sub-hypotheses were stand approved.

- **Hypothesis Four: The service quality dimensions have a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.**

Table 10: Hypothesis 4: Service Quality Dimensions > Satisfaction

<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path Coeff.</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t-Statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
H4	Service Quality Dimensions → Satisfaction				
H4a	Tangibility → Satisfaction	0.079	0.045	1.762	0.078
H4b	Reliability → Satisfaction	0.157	0.064	2.460	0.014
H4c	Responsiveness → Satisfaction	0.227	0.053	4.257	0.000
H4d	Assurance → Satisfaction	0.110	0.061	1.814	0.070
H4e	Empathy → Satisfaction	0.399	0.051	7.790	0.000

Three out of the five service quality dimensions have a significant positive effect on the level of customer satisfaction which are Reliability (H4b: $\beta = .157$, $p < .01$), Responsiveness (H4c: $\beta = .227$, $p < .01$), and Empathy (H4e: $\beta = .399$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, the tangibility and Assurance dimensions in this hypothesis seem to be insignificant (Tangibility: H4a: $\beta = .079$, $p > .01$) and (Assurance: H4d: $\beta = .110$, $p > .01$). Thus, H4 is partially approved since three out of the five sub-hypotheses were supported.

- **Hypothesis Five: The level of customer satisfaction has a significant impact on the customers' behavioral intentions.**

Table 11: Hypothesis 5: Satisfaction > behavioral Intentions

<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path Coeff.</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t-Statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
H5	Satisfaction → Behavioral Intentions	0.838	0.016	51.544	0.000

The fifth hypothesis stands correct since customer satisfaction shows a direct impact and relationship on the behavioral intentions of the customers as shown, (H5: $\beta = .838$, $p < .01$), Thus, the hypothesis is supported.

To assess the model performance, the research used the explanatory power (R^2) and the predictive relevance (Q^2). This is because SmartPLS cannot generate meaningful fit indices because it calculates the R-Square measures for each endogenous variable in the structural model with cutoff points of 0.75 (Substantial), 0.50 (Moderate), and 0.25 (Weak). The following summarizes the R-Square results and confirms that the model is weak to moderate.

Table 12: Model Fit: R² and Q² Results

<i>Variables Latent Constructs</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>Q²</i>
ServQual - Tangibility	0.292	0.249
ServQual – Reliability	0.258	0.189
ServQual – Responsiveness	0.339	0.306
ServQual – Assurance	0.398	0.357
ServQual – Empathy	0.410	0.374
Satisfaction	0.684	0.549
Behavioral Intentions	0.703	0.588

If the PLS-SEM models and Q-Square values are greater than zero, then it implies that the path model's predictive relevance for the variable. The blindfolding procedure was conducted to identify the Q-Square in which, according to table 12, are all above zero and this supports the predictive relevance for the variables.

5.5 Moderation Effects

The research presents the previous experience of the customer as a moderation effect to test the merger impact on the level of customer satisfaction. To test the moderator effect, the PLS multi-group analysis (PLS MGA) was applied on all the path's coefficients. It was found that the ethical considerations (being an Islamic bank with Islamic principles) are more significant to Dukhan (Barwa bank) customers compared to IBQ bank.

As shown in table 13 below, the former customers of IBQ are less considerate of ethical considerations, especially in the tangibility (diff- β = 0.282; p = 0.231), and responsiveness (diff- β = 0.192; p = 0.053). As for the impact of service quality

dimensions on satisfaction, both categories of customers (Barwa and IBQ) shared insignificant results with assurance (Barwa: $\beta = 0.129$; $p = 0.075$) and (IBQ: $\beta = 0.071$; $p = 0.193$). It was also noted that Barwa bank group of respondents showed insignificant results with regards to tangibility (Barwa: $\beta = 0.053$; $p = 0.218$) while IBQ group of respondents did not signify reliability (IBQ: $\beta = 0.140$; $p = 0.078$). For satisfaction impact on customers' behavioural intentions, it was noted that it is significant for both groups with very similar β values (Barwa= 0.846, IBQ= 0.833).

Table 13: PLS-MGA Moderation Effect

	<i>Path Coefficients (Barwa)</i>	<i>Path Coefficients (IBQ)</i>	<i>p-Value (Barwa)</i>	<i>p-Value (IBQ)</i>
Ethical Consideration -> Tangibility	0.370	0.088	0.000	0.231
Ethical Consideration -> Reliability	0.467	0.242	0.000	0.000
Ethical Consideration -> Responsiveness	0.325	0.133	0.002	0.053
Ethical Consideration -> Assurance	0.432	0.205	0.000	0.006
Ethical Consideration -> Empathy	0.373	0.248	0.000	0.000
Tangibility -> Satisfaction	0.053	0.106	0.218	0.042
Reliability -> Satisfaction	0.190	0.140	0.014	0.078
Responsiveness -> Satisfaction	0.268	0.179	0.000	0.014
Assurance -> Satisfaction	0.129	0.071	0.075	0.193
Empathy -> Satisfaction	0.355	0.451	0.000	0.000
Satisfaction -> BI	0.846	0.833	0.000	0.000

5.6 Summary

This section provides a simple and straightforward display of the major findings of the study and the direct effect of variables. The representation of findings is provided in this section through table (Table 14) and illustration (Figure 8). The path coefficient of each affect line is mentioned next to each of the sub-hypothesis and color coded for easier tracking.

Table 14: Summary of Direct Effects

<i>Stand</i>	<i>Main Hypotheses</i>	<i>Sub-Hypotheses / Path Coefficients</i>	<i>Sub-Hypotheses Stand</i>
Rejected	Hypothesis 1: The use of Multi-Services has a significant positive impact on the perception of service quality	- H1a: Multi-Service > Tangibility (-0.039). - H1b: Multi-Service > Reliability (0.065). - H1c: Multi-Service > Responsiveness (0.079). - H1d: Multi-Service > Assurance (0.003). - H1e: Multi-Service > Empathy (0.149).	H1a: Rejected H1b: Rejected H1c: Rejected H1d Rejected H1e: Supported
Partially Supported	Hypothesis 2: The use of Multi-Channels has a significant positive impact on service quality perception.	- H2a: Multi- Channel > Tangibility (0.119). - H2b: Multi- Channel > Reliability (0.212). - H2c: Multi- Channel > Responsiveness (0.163). - H2d: Multi- Channel > Assurance (0.187). - H2e: Multi- Channel > Empathy (0.124).	H2a: Rejected H2b: Supported H2c: Supported H2d Supported H2e: Supported
Supported	Hypothesis 3: The perception of higher Islamic bank's ethical considerations and standards has a significant positive impact on the level of customers' perception of service quality.	- H3a: Ethical Considerations > Tangibility (0.246). - H3b: Ethical Considerations > Reliability (0.355). - H3c: Ethical Considerations > Responsiveness (0.237). - H3d: Ethical Considerations > Assurance (0.335). - H3e: Ethical Considerations > Empathy (0.327).	H3a: Supported H3b: Supported H3c: Supported H3d Supported H3e: Supported
Partially Supported	Hypothesis 4: The service quality dimensions have a significant positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction.	- H4a: Tangibility > Satisfaction (0.079). - H4b: Reliability > Satisfaction (0.157). - H4c: Responsiveness > Satisfaction (0.227). - H4d: Assurance > Satisfaction (0.110). - H4e: Empathy > Satisfaction (0.399).	H4a: Rejected H4b: Supported H4c: Supported H4d: Rejected H4e: Supported
Supported	Hypothesis 5: The level of customer satisfaction has a significant positive impact on the customers' behavioural intentions.	No Sub Hypotheses (0.838)	H5 Supported

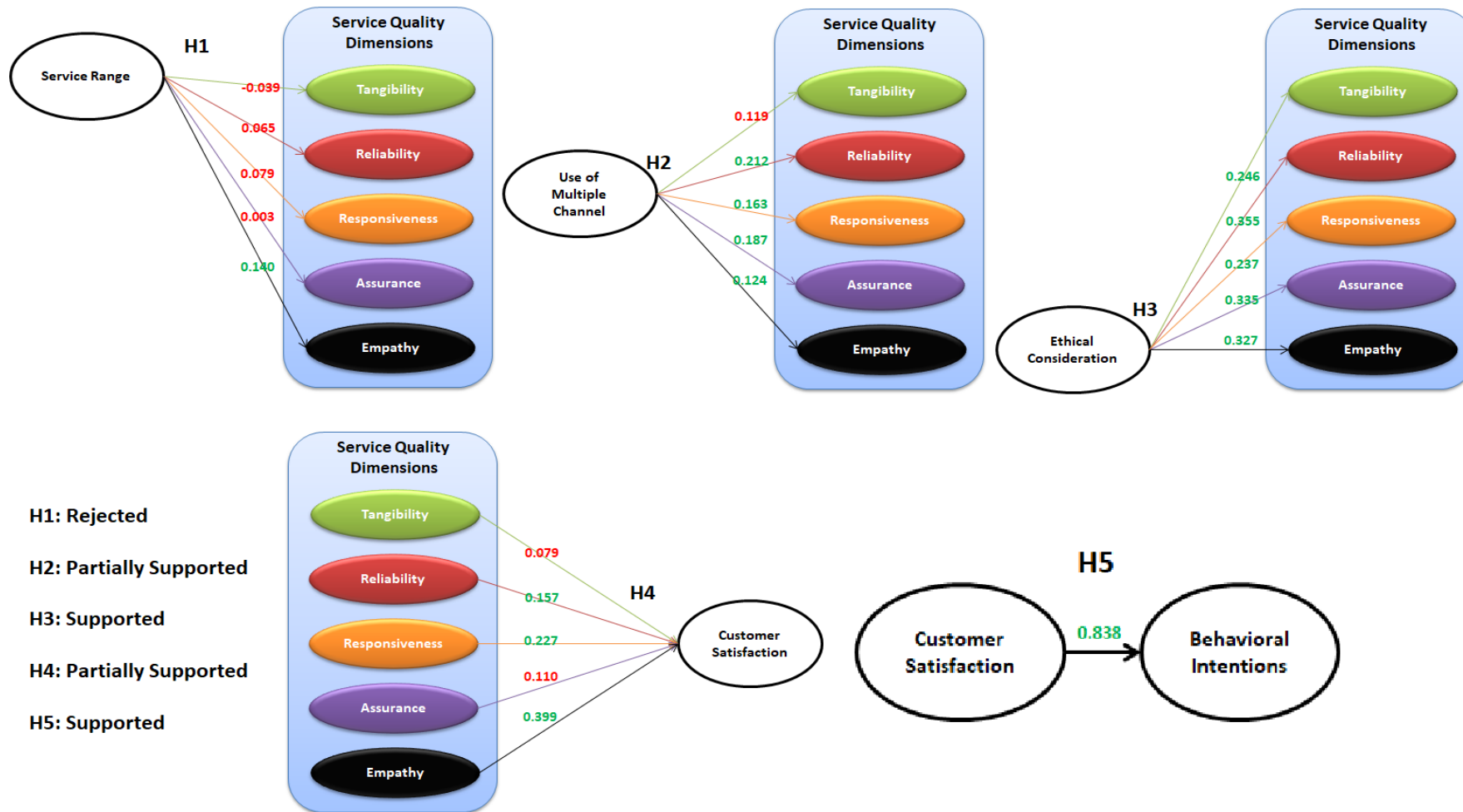


Figure 8: Direct Effects Summary Illustration

5.7 Discussion of Results

This section discusses the results in alignment with the research hypotheses and the literatures reviewed about the concepts presented in the study. It should be mentioned first that the results showed a positive correlation between all the variables and were supported in terms of validity and reliability. The research did not find a direct influence or a significant relationship between the service range in banks and the level of service quality perception. In simple words, customers did pay great attention to the range of services as they evaluated the service quality dimensions of the bank. The hypothesis of service range impact on the perception of service quality was rejected. However, this does not necessarily mean that the result is absolute or it should be acknowledged in all banks. This is because previous studies (Obaid et al., 2010; Albarq; 2013; Lau, et al., 2013; Ananda and Devesh, 2019) all concluded that customers may perceive the quality differently when they test and receive various services. This means that the range of services could affect the way customers perceive these services. Thus, it is not the research mission here to report the actual findings, rather than overlapping previous studies conclusion, especially when the study is focusing more on merging banks and not a traditional bank in regular circumstances.

The service channels hypothesis was significantly related to the level of service quality perception. However, one of the sub-hypothesis was not significant (tangibility). This means that the use of multi-channels has a significant positive impact on the level of service quality perception. This is in line with what scholars has reported (Albarq; 2013; Lau, et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2015; Ananda and Devesh, 2019). These authors suggested that customers may perceive the quality differently when they test and receive the services through various channels. This means that the

service channel could affect the way customers perceive these services. The role of information technology and electronic/web-based service channels was mentioned by many scholars also as an important diversification factor in the service delivery and perception and that it has a direct effect on customers' perception of the service.

As for ethical consideration, the hypothesis was accepted by the study as it was found that there is a significant relationship between the ethical considerations of the bank and the way customers' perceive its services. It can be concluded here that customers of Islamic banks do consider ethical factors in banks more than those from traditional banks. As an Islamic bank, Dukhan bank must maintain its ethical standards as it was proven important factor, along with service delivery and customer perception of service quality. Being an Islamic bank, Dukhan Bank will have wider range of services that would affect the relationship between the two variables.

As expected, there was a significant relationship between the service quality dimensions and the customer satisfaction. In fact, all the reviewed literatures supported this anticipation and all concluded that there is always a significant relationship between service quality and satisfaction. The new fact in this study is that tangibility and assurance factors were slightly insignificant. In simple words, customers focus more on the attitude of the employees than on promises or physical appearances. The way customers perceive the service affects their level of satisfaction. Service quality is measured through the five service quality dimensions. Many scholars such as Papathanasiou, et al., (2018) and Sharma (2018) supports the same exact finding. The level of customer satisfaction has a significant impact on the customers' behavioral intentions as concluded by the results. This means that when customers want to take decisions about their next purchase order, next purchase

intention, next service provider, and whether they want to shift their service provider, the level of satisfaction with the service quality provided will determine this decision. In this study, it was found that bank mergers increase the pressure on the merged banks as they try to maintain customers' loyalty and anticipate their future behavior.

It was also noted that the previous experience of the customers (whether they formerly Barwa or IBQ) has a significant impact on the way these customers perceive the services. One of the most important findings in this regards is that IBQ customers were less considerate of ethical standards and its relations to service quality dimensions in two dimensions (Tangibility and Responsiveness). As for Barwa customers, the ethical standards were significant with all the service quality dimensions. This supports the idea that customers of Islamic banks are more considerate of ethical standards compared to traditional banks.

As for the impact of service quality on customers' satisfaction, customers from both banks did not regard assurance as a significant variable. This can conclude that assurance was not very important to determine the level of customer satisfaction among the selected target audience. However, the results confirmed that customers' satisfaction for both banks is a very important factor in determining their future behavioral intentions. This supports the hypotheses that customers' satisfaction plays an important role in customers' intentions and dissatisfaction and it may result in negative decisions from customers towards the bank.

5.8 Theoretical implications

The results of this research present some important and noticeable theoretical implications. To be more specific, the results link the service quality dimensions model with merger in the banking industry in which it states that the service quality in

case of mergers can be measured before, after, and during the merge between banks. This reflects the importance of the service quality dimensions model as a suitable model to be adopted in service quality research (Albarq; 2013; Lau, et al., 2013; Ananda and Devesh, 2019).

It also indicates that the range and type of services provided by a bank has an impact on the way customers' perceive the service, but it is not a critical one. The reasons behind the low importance of service channels and service range is the fact that many customers will care only about their own needs without having a zoom-out review on the entire services provided by the bank.

It was also noticeable through the moderation tests that customers of Islamic banks such as the case of Dukhan (Barwa) focus on the ethical aspects of the services more than other aspects. This means that ethical consideration is a main factor in customers' satisfaction and thus, behavioral intentions (Fang & Foucart, 2014; Mpinganjira & Maduku, 2019).

A unique theoretical implication that can be observed in this research is that in the case of merges between banks, the customers of the merged bank who happen to see themselves the customers of a bank they did not chose in the first place, are more likely to be dissatisfied with the service quality provided as the results showed dissatisfaction among IBQ customers and disregard of the ethical considerations of Barwa bank as an Islamic bank.

Finally, all the service quality dimensions were noticeable as important in different degrees when linked to service range, service channels, and ethical considerations. The tangibility dimension was the least significant while reliability of the service was the most significant.

5.9 Managerial Implications

Mergers and acquisitions among banks are sometimes essential and critical for the success and profitability of these banks (Lo et al., 2006; Okpanachi, 2011; Abdulazeez et al., 2016). However, the most important managerial implication that can be learned from this study is that in times of mergers and acquisition in banks, the level of service quality and customers' satisfaction must be carefully maintained and further improved. According to Papathanasiou, et al., (2018) not all mergers are accepted by customers whereas; however, their reaction is not considered by the banks. Accordingly, it is very important for banks, which are about to practice a merge, to include these customers in the merge process. This can be done through involving the customers of both banks in the merge processes, provide added-value services to those who accept the merge and keep them well-informed about the merge benefits, not only to the banks, but also to the customers.

Joash and Njangiru (2015) explain that merger and acquisition must improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations and functions of the banks. Accordingly, it is very important for the banks to adopt the most advanced technologies and service methods from both banks and come up with the best possible service quality model that would lead to an increase in the level of satisfaction among the customers.

It was noted that Barwa bank and IBQ did consider the impact of ethical consideration on the perception of service quality among the customers. Islamic banks are bound by the approach of Islamic behavior, including the adherence to all the ethical standards mentioned in the Islamic Sharia. These ethical standards are highly considered by many customers, especially those who are customers of Islamic banks in the first place, such as the case of Barwa. Accordingly, if an Islamic bank is

merging with a traditional bank, it is very important that it communicates to its customers the commitment to ethical considerations including money sources and ethical behavior. This shall provide a sense of trust to the existing Islamic banks' customers and also encourages traditional banks' customers to be part of these ethical values.

The perception of the service quality dimensions were also tested and were found significantly related to customers' satisfaction levels. This means that customers will start to evaluate and compare the level of services provided to them as their bank is changed. Accordingly, new merged entity should make sure that all the service quality dimensions are covered and that customers' expectations are met. This can be done through quality control processes including studying customers' expectations, finding the gap in the service delivery system, and close these gaps.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study discussed and analyzed the post-merger impact of banks on customer perception of service quality and customer satisfaction. The concept of merger is greatly popular in the banking industry. This research studies the case of the merge between Dukhan (Barwa) and International Bank of Qatar (IBQ). Dukhan Bank purchased and acquired IBQ and took control over its customers' accounts, branches, and all service mediums. The research adopted the idea that customers' satisfaction and future intentions are affected by the perception of the service quality dimensions of the bank. The study also considered the service range and service channels as formative scales to measure the perception of the service quality dimensions. The research assumed that the service quality of the new merged bank is affected by the merge. Thus, it studies the level of service quality among the customers of the new merged bank and, at the same time, distinguishes them from the other customers and consider their past experience as a moderating factor. The research distributed a questionnaire to 287 customers of the new entity (Dukhan Bank) and found that the service quality dimensions are extremely important elements to investigate when studying customer satisfaction in the case of mergers among banks. It was also concluded that the ethical standards and practices of the bank are of great importance to all type of customers, but in particular to those who chose to be clients of Islamic banks. This chapter concludes the research and presents a set of recommendations to all banks to maintain in times of merger and acquisitions. Banks need to always maintain high level of customers' satisfaction. In the case of mergers between banks, the controlling bank needs to make sure that it maintain and even exceed the level of service quality provided by the previous bank in order not to lose customers as a result of the merge. It is also important to match the ethical standards

of the customers in all cases. Maintaining all the five service quality dimensions is of a critical importance, especially the reliability dimension as it was the most significant dimension for customers from both Dukhan and IBQ.

6.1 Research limitations

The research was conducted in time of the Corona Pandemic. This has created a large number of problems and hindered some of the research procedures, especially those concerning data collection. The data collection processes took a lot of more time than estimated and prevented the collection of more data. Also, the fact that the research happened after the merge makes it hard for future studies to use these results from scratch without having to study the case before the merge. There is also a problem of generalization due to the fact that it is a unique case in a unique country. The customers included in the study have already chosen to remain after the merger; which means that the results will be different if it was possible to interview the people who left the bank. This means that the study can serve banks only after the merge has occurred.

6.2 Suggestions for Further Studies

It is very important for future research, especially in Qatar, to study customer satisfaction in times of mergers before the merge occurs. It is also important to conduct a desk research about the level of customers' satisfaction from the banks' previous data and compare it with the results of the study to give an indication of the customers' satisfaction level, which is built on service quality and see whether it has improved or not. Future studies can also compare this study to other bank mergers in other countries. What if the Islamic bank was the one to lose its business model and get merged with a traditional bank? This must be researched in the future.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATE

Section A: Services Related Questions

1. Before the merger I was a customer of

IBQ Barwa

2. Service Channels

Please indicate your frequency of usage of the following Barwa channels

	Never	Rare	Moderately frequent	Frequent	Very Frequent
2.1 Electronic Banking (ATMs) is	1	2	3	4	5
2.2 Mobile Application is	1	2	3	4	5
2.3 Website is	1	2	3	4	5
2.4 Business Related Services	1	2	3	4	5
2.5 Branches Visits are	1	2	3	4	5

3. Service Range

Please indicate your frequency of usage of the Barwa services

	Never	Rare	Moderately frequent	Frequent	Very Frequent
3.1 Personal Loan	1	2	3	4	5
3.2 Current Account	1	2	3	4	5
3.3 Saving Account	1	2	3	4	5
3.4 Car Loan	1	2	3	4	5
3.5 Business Loan	1	2	3	4	5
3.6 Credit Card Facilities	1	2	3	4	5
3.7 Debit Card Facilities	1	2	3	4	5
3.8 Corporate Services	1	2	3	4	5

Section B: Service Quality Related Questions

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
B1. Tangibility						
4	The Bank facilities are easy to access.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The Bank facilities are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The bank representatives are well dressed and neat.	1	2	3	4	5
B2. Reliability						
7	The services are always on time.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The bank helps solving my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The staff members are dependable.	1	2	3	4	5
10	The bank keeps accurate records of my services.	1	2	3	4	5
B3. Responsiveness						
11	The bank services are prompt.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The bank always shows willingness to help.	1	2	3	4	5
B4. Assurance						
13	The bank is trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5
14	The bank representatives are polite.	1	2	3	4	5
B5. Empathy						
15	I am getting individual attention from the bank.	1	2	3	4	5
16	The bank completely understands my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
17	The operating hours are convenient.	1	2	3	4	5
B6. Customer Satisfaction						
18	The perceived services matches my expectations	1	2	3	4	5
19	Dealing with Barwa Bank meets my expectations about how banks should deal their customers	1	2	3	4	5
20	Even if another bank offers the same services, I will still chose Barwa Bank	1	2	3	4	5
21	All in all, I am very satisfied with this bank	1	2	3	4	5
B7. Behavioral Intentions						
22	I will continue to use the services of Barwa Bank	1	2	3	4	5
23	I am more likely to say positive thinks about Barwa Bank to others	1	2	3	4	5
24	I would recommend Barwa Bank to friends and family	1	2	3	4	5
25	I would chose Barwa Bank if I had to choose a bank again	1	2	3	4	5
B8. Ethical Considerations						
26	Islamic finance can be seen as a type of ethical finance	1	2	3	4	5
27	Islamic finance promotes more socially responsible form of finance	1	2	3	4	5
28	At practical level, there is no real difference	1	2	3	4	5

<p>between Islamic and conventional finance</p> <p>29 In general, Islamic Banks are ethical in its dealing</p>	1	2	3	4	5
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Section C: General Questions

30. Gender

- Male Female

31. Age Group

- 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61+

32. Nationality

- Qatari Other Nationality

33. Occupation

- Government Employee
 Private Sector Employee
 Business Owner
 Unemployed
 Student

34. Monthly Income (QAR)

- Less than 10,000
 11,000-20,000
 21,000-30,000
 31,000-40,000
 41,000-50,000
 51,000 +

APPENDIX 2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AT ITEM LEVEL

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Number of Observations Used
SerChn1	3.801	4.000	0.987	287.000
SerChn2	3.683	4.000	1.184	287.000
SerChn3	2.561	3.000	1.216	287.000
SerChn4	2.241	2.000	1.187	287.000
SerChn5	2.892	3.000	1.165	287.000
SerRange2	3.556	4.000	1.283	287.000
SerRange3	3.167	3.000	1.351	287.000
SerRange6	2.955	3.000	1.412	287.000
SerRange8	1.822	1.000	1.266	287.000
Ethical1	3.617	4.000	1.026	287.000
Ethical2	3.620	4.000	0.994	287.000
Ethical4	3.638	4.000	0.949	287.000
Tangibility1	3.937	4.000	0.912	287.000
Tangibility2	3.854	4.000	0.914	287.000
Tangibility3	4.094	4.000	0.892	287.000
Reliability1	3.669	4.000	0.947	287.000
Reliability2	3.735	4.000	0.879	287.000
Reliability3	3.739	4.000	0.951	287.000
Reliability4	3.707	4.000	1.015	287.000
Responsiveness 1	3.603	4.000	1.006	287.000
Responsiveness 2	3.948	4.000	0.907	287.000
Assurance1	3.979	4.000	0.973	287.000
Assurance2	4.087	4.000	0.939	287.000
Empathy1	3.422	4.000	1.046	287.000
Empathy2	3.530	4.000	1.022	287.000
Empathy3	3.728	4.000	1.054	287.000
CusSat1	3.631	4.000	1.000	287.000
CusSat2	3.693	4.000	0.982	287.000
CusSat3	3.620	4.000	1.025	287.000
CusSat4	3.777	4.000	1.055	287.000
BehInt1	3.742	4.000	0.982	287.000
BehInt2	3.666	4.000	1.029	287.000
BehInt3	3.669	4.000	1.078	287.000
BehInt4	3.606	4.000	1.102	287.000

APPENDIX 3: CORRELATIONS AT ITEM LEVEL

	Assurance	BI	Empathy	Ethical Consideration	Multi-Services Use	Multi-Channel Use	Reliability	Responsiveness	Satisfaction	Tangibility
Assurance1	0.930	0.582	0.587	0.356	0.159	0.305	0.659	0.623	0.606	0.354
Assurance2	0.938	0.584	0.620	0.409	0.135	0.296	0.663	0.639	0.636	0.426
BehInt1	0.580	0.906	0.672	0.474	0.267	0.367	0.656	0.540	0.762	0.341
BehInt2	0.579	0.918	0.658	0.393	0.226	0.331	0.661	0.526	0.747	0.362
BehInt3	0.587	0.933	0.657	0.422	0.176	0.365	0.651	0.577	0.792	0.349
BehInt4	0.550	0.923	0.682	0.423	0.211	0.349	0.646	0.587	0.782	0.420
CusSat1	0.591	0.710	0.689	0.321	0.143	0.298	0.641	0.653	0.889	0.431
CusSat2	0.600	0.714	0.656	0.380	0.195	0.323	0.656	0.635	0.906	0.422
CusSat3	0.571	0.791	0.700	0.364	0.173	0.331	0.612	0.598	0.909	0.440
CusSat4	0.642	0.810	0.693	0.390	0.161	0.361	0.686	0.646	0.912	0.393
Empathy1	0.578	0.638	0.881	0.416	0.241	0.264	0.637	0.526	0.664	0.404
Empathy2	0.595	0.676	0.914	0.345	0.194	0.278	0.667	0.603	0.723	0.380
Empathy3	0.514	0.578	0.818	0.312	0.276	0.260	0.562	0.528	0.589	0.245
Ethical1	0.402	0.421	0.394	0.932	0.217	0.374	0.420	0.306	0.370	0.282
Ethical2	0.369	0.437	0.377	0.941	0.258	0.383	0.428	0.319	0.378	0.266
Ethical4	0.344	0.407	0.347	0.843	0.209	0.325	0.392	0.246	0.346	0.221
Reliability1	0.581	0.611	0.599	0.383	0.133	0.319	0.853	0.634	0.589	0.427
Reliability2	0.584	0.637	0.649	0.370	0.204	0.347	0.878	0.605	0.655	0.425
Reliability3	0.657	0.622	0.616	0.395	0.233	0.330	0.892	0.593	0.627	0.457
Reliability4	0.641	0.603	0.625	0.440	0.241	0.322	0.860	0.602	0.626	0.404
Responsiveness1	0.581	0.562	0.632	0.246	0.236	0.233	0.632	0.918	0.662	0.396
Responsiveness2	0.658	0.551	0.531	0.344	0.130	0.293	0.649	0.917	0.623	0.447
SerChn1	0.292	0.331	0.242	0.354	0.216	0.843	0.317	0.207	0.290	0.214

	Assurance	BI	Empathy	Ethical Consideration	Multi-Services Use	Multi-Channel Use	Reliability	Responsiveness	Satisfaction	Tangibility
SerChn2	0.226	0.312	0.231	0.297	0.309	0.726	0.263	0.219	0.289	0.152
SerChn3	0.085	0.190	0.168	0.185	0.164	0.481	0.157	0.175	0.195	0.171
SerChn4	0.166	0.223	0.225	0.211	0.339	0.624	0.237	0.224	0.227	0.065
SerChn5	0.161	0.102	0.095	0.163	0.206	0.410	0.187	0.112	0.152	0.030
SerRange2	0.181	0.200	0.197	0.173	0.819	0.238	0.175	0.189	0.145	0.007
SerRange3	0.040	0.093	0.153	0.143	0.469	0.198	0.118	0.078	0.130	0.017
SerRange6	0.065	0.169	0.201	0.199	0.724	0.297	0.172	0.140	0.101	0.142
SerRange8	0.073	0.134	0.130	0.139	0.434	0.296	0.141	0.031	0.109	-0.010
Tangibility1	0.301	0.325	0.345	0.165	0.077	0.171	0.426	0.400	0.398	0.864
Tangibility2	0.340	0.364	0.360	0.200	0.076	0.149	0.397	0.388	0.405	0.908
Tangibility3	0.429	0.348	0.329	0.350	0.029	0.202	0.447	0.403	0.404	0.827