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How Subordinates Describe Their Leader's Political Skill and Their Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) During a Merger in the Airline Industry in Arizona: A Descriptive Perspective

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How Subordinates Describe Their Leader's Political Skill and Their Organizational
Citizenship Behavior (OCB) During a Merger in the Airline Industry in Arizona: A
Descriptive Perspective

by
Conrado Dela Cruz, Jr.

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
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and School of Criminal Justice in Partial
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Approval Page

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Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

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Conrado Dela Cruz, Jr.

Name

January 12, 2023

Date

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Dr. John Kellmayer, thank you for checking on me and never giving up on me even though at times I gave up on myself, you always believed in me. Dr. Matthew Delaney, thank you for being a part of this journey, I appreciate having you on my team and your guidance. Dr. Mary Diez, thank you for helping me align my document with NSU dissertation standards. To the ten subjects who participated in this study, thank you for sharing your experience and supporting the need for more consideration for the human side of mergers and acquisitions.

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Abstract

A Qualitative Study of How Subordinates Describe Their Leader's Political Skill and Their Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) During a Merger in the Airline Industry in Arizona: A Descriptive Perspective. Conrado Dela Cruz, Jr., 2023: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: leader political skill, organizational citizenship behavior, merger, acquisition, culture integration, organizational culture

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. This study aimed to provide further exploration on leader political skill relating to mergers in the airline industry and if leader political skill can positively influence merger outcomes by increasing subordinate OCB levels during a merger through the breadth of information provided by the participants of this study.

The study used a qualitative methodology with a descriptive design to capture the rich descriptions of how subordinates from a merged airline company in Arizona described their leader's political skill and their own OCB during the merger. Due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the interview sessions took place virtually via WebEx. Each interview sessions were 60 – 90 minutes long and open-ended interview questions based on leader political skill and OCB instruments were used to capture the true essence in descriptions surrounding leader political skill and OCB.

The target population for this study were subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona. The participants responded to research flyers posted in public areas such as nearby restaurants and shops. Of those who responded to the research flyers, 10 subjects were selected who met the criteria to participate in the research study. Due to the confidentiality and complex nature of mergers and acquisitions, the investigator of this study is committed to the protection of the subjects who volunteered to participate and has generalized the demographic information of the subjects.

The findings in this research study were able to link communication as a central pivotal skill for a leader during a merger to promote inclusion and understanding which were categories of a leader's political skill. The findings in this study also associated communication as an essential skill to promote team building and encourage cooperation during the merger phase which positively influenced merger outcomes. And finally, through communication, leaders can build trust during mergers when uncertainty and doubt seem to be at their highest.

The potential limitations of this study are that the subjects of this research only included subordinates who were still with the merged company or were there through most of the merger process. In addition, the subjects who participated in this study were back-office employees in the project management, engineering, and analyst roles. Future studies should include front-line employees who served as gate agents, baggage handlers, flight attendants, and pilots.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

It is not known how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Martin and Butler (2015) believed that manager political skill has a moderating effect during uncertainty in mergers and acquisitions (M&A) and that political skill is the ability to understand people at workplaces and how they can use this knowledge to motivate and enhance people and company objectives. Edwards and Edwards (2015) found organizational citizenship behavior, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most during M&As. This study explored how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The findings in this study can provide a practical solution to the low OCB levels and the high failure rate found among M&As. Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) stated in their study that merging companies have a failure rate between 40%-90%. According to Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017), M&As from 2016 tallied over \$5 trillion dollars around the world and over \$700 billion were from the United States. However, M&As are widely criticized, as the data from literature suggests that there is a high failure rate among these types of investments (Nandi & Nandi Latha, 2017).

Additionally, Brueller et al. (2016) argued that M&A failures often originate from culture issues to the tune of 30% among all M&A failures. Martin et al. (2017) stated that there is little exploration of political skill relating to the M&A process and that if political skill can positively influence the relationship between M&As and OCB levels. Yet, Martin and Butler (2015) stated that the leader's ability to show consideration for employee morale, wellbeing, develop trust, create accountability, and align

communications with strategic M&A goals are found to be measurable through the Political Skill Inventory. Thus, it would be interesting to discover if perceived leader political skill is described positively or negatively among subordinates in the airline industry in Arizona during an M&A event. The findings of this study found evidence that leader political skill did have a positive effect on subordinates' OCB and organizational leaders should focus on enhancing leader political skill on future M&As.

Phenomenon of Interest

Martin and Butler (2015) believed that traditional leadership roles must evolve as work environments evolve specifically during a merger. According to Semrau et al. (2017), managers are coaches and facilitators that coordinate worker skills, talents, and motivation to increase team and individual performances. This is important during post-merger integration phases where Brueller et al. (2016) argued that culture clashes begin to unfold. Culture clashes can affect both employees and organizations negatively as teams try to navigate merging companies through the chaos of M&A. Martin et al. (2017) discussed how managers who showed consideration for employees during an M&A event have been found to have low turnover rates suggesting that leadership roles in M&As are critically important. Specifically, Martin et al. believed that manager political skill has a moderating effect during uncertainty in M&As. Political skill is the ability to understand people at workplaces and how they can use knowledge to motivate and enhance people and company objectives (Martin et al., 2017). Furthermore, Martin et al. suggested that future researchers should study leader political skill and its consequences on employee OCB during an M&A event. Consequently, it is not known how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Background and Justification

Leaders play a pivotal role in M&A for communication, coordination, fixing issues, and conflict management. Managers who are unprepared for M&A integration have been found to show more arrogance and defensiveness towards merged or acquired firms causing culture clash (Martin et al., 2017). Martin et al. argued that more research is needed on employee organizational citizenship behaviors and how leader political skill impacts these levels as they could have profound positive effects on M&A outcomes.

In the airline industry, Manuela et al. (2016) suggested a wave of mergers and acquisitions in the airline industry that began in 2005 due to airline financial distress. Manuela et al. (2016) cited that one of the main challenges for airline mergers is workforce integration. Perhaps this is where leader political skill can have a positive moderating effect as suggested by Martin et al. (2017). Manuela et al. found that pilots, flight attendants, and mechanics often oppose (resist) mergers due to the possibility of loss of employment, seniority, and possible changes in wages.

Appelbaum et al. (2017) found that resistance to change is a major factor in the overall performance of an M&A event stating that it is turbulent to the process of integration. The authors also found that communication, support from management, employee perception, and participation can help manage and control these types of behaviors. Mehta et al. (2017) stated that resistance to change can be both personal and organizational suggesting that social identity and organizational identity are at play when it comes to M&A activities.

Appelbaum et al. (2017) found that management support promotes trust and open communication informs participation towards M&A activities. While resistance is a negative byproduct of M&A events, there are ways to suppress their negative impact with

communication, management support, and establishing trust to improve employee perceptions to encourage employee participation. Appelbaum et al. (2017) added that fair and just managerial behaviors minimize change resistance during an M&A integration effort because it improves employee perception.

Friedman et al. (2016) added to the discussion of resistance stating that executives who don't communicate and offer transparency to organizational members often can spark resistance validating findings from Appelbaum et al. (2017) that lack of communication can invoke a lack of trust that cascades down to resistance to change. Friedman et al. (2016) argued that supportive communication from both managers and executives can help merged employees identify with the new organization lifting the barriers of resistance and decreasing stress and anxiety often experienced in M&As.

Stress and anxiety are positively associated with M&A events often referred to as "merger syndrome" (Brueller et al., 2016). The complicated nature of M&A has a huge impact on employees and managing these is a critical component to M&A success. Stress and anxiety can be a direct result of uncertainty as explained by (Sung et al., 2017). Joshi and Goyal (2015) found that behavioral sciences have observed M&As as the source for heightened stress and anxiety levels among employees involved in M&A activity. It is important to note that these increased levels of stress and anxiety during M&A activity are natural in the event there is lack of communication to inform the current and future state of the company. Mehta et al. (2017) stated that stress and anxiety levels can even be higher when it involves downsizing and re-organizing of organizational structure.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

The gap explored in this study is how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Martin et

al. (2017) argued that there is little to no research on political skill relating to M&As. Political skill has been found to have a positive influence on employee OCB and merger outcomes. Further, Martin et al. argued that political skill can moderate employee uncertainty, stress, and anxiety during M&A. The high failure rate among all merger activities point to issues with culture integration and largely, OCB is most affected during M&A. Lam et al. (2017) later added that employees who receive social support, social inclusion, and emotional support have a lesser level of uncertainty than without. During M&A, employees are often disassociated with their groups and become isolated during the merger process. In addition, Manuela et al. (2016) suggested that workforce integration was a primary challenge in airline industry M&As. This brings to light the need for more focus on the human side of the business when it comes to mergers.

Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) found that M&As have a failure rate between 40%-90%. This high failure rate presents a financial threat to merging companies looking to strengthen their business through M&A. Martin and Butler (2015) and Semrau et al. (2017) discussed leader political skill as a critical skillset which can be enhanced and developed to help moderate some or all the negative effect inherent with M&A activities. Leader political skill can enhance merger success rates and can have a positive effect on employee OCB during a merger as suggested in M&A literature. Manuela et al. (2016) highlighted the increased waves of M&A activity in the airline industry beginning in 2005 and the workforce integration challenges. This study explored leader political skill, OCB, and mergers as it relates to the airline industry. Martin et al. (2017) suggested that future researchers should study leader political skill and its consequences on employee organizational citizenship behaviors during an M&A event as it may provide practical direction towards M&A success.

Audience

It is important to note that Martin and Butler (2015) found that political skill is something that can be learned and assessed. The authors used the political skills inventory, which was tested and validated by Ferris et al. (2005). The results suggested that certain degrees of development and training are required during M&A for merging companies to be more successful. In addition, Martin and Butler argued that managers who showed interests in employee welfare and morale can decrease uncertainty, employee turnover, and change resistance.

Furthermore, Martin and Butler (2015) found that the leader's capacity to show concern for employee morale, wellbeing, and developing trust can have a profound positive influence on employee OCB and M&A outcomes. Managers are critically important to employees and overall M&A success, specifically certain skillsets that can be learned through training and development (Martin et al., 2017). Leader political skill can be measured through the political skill inventory and merging organizations can develop training programs to enhance this skill when needed. Martin et al. concluded in their study that assessed front line managers that managers and executives who possess competencies that include political skills can help offset the employee issues such as culture conflict during M&A activities. This includes moderating job uncertainty, job satisfaction, trust, communication, consideration for morale, consideration for welfare, turnover intent, and job stress (Martin et al., 2017). This study was an exploration of how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates

described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The gap explored is that there is little exploration of political skill relating to M&A process and that if political skill can positively influence M&A outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). Studies from Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) stated that leader political skill can be effective in moderating uncertainty, stress, anxiety, and low employee OCB levels during M&A. The gap was explored by interviewing subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona to determine how they described their leader's political skill and their OCB during the M&A event. The researcher recruited ten subordinate employees from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona. The ten subordinate employees were interviewed by the researcher using a semi-structured set of questions surrounding leader political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Martin et al. (2017) posited that future studies should focus on leader political skill and its relation to employee OCB during a merger event as it may provide a solution for the high failure rates in mergers.

Definition of Terms

The following section defines the study constructs and provides a common understanding of the technical terms, exclusive jargon, variables, phenomena, concepts, and technical terminology used within the scope of this research study.

Acquisition is an organizational activity describing the procurement of one or more companies into a parent company (Welbourne et al., 2012). This M&A activity is commonly used by the parent company to acquire assets and enter new markets for the purposes of company growth (Welbourne et al., 2012).

Culture integration is the integration of one company into another or the combining of two separate cultures into a new organization (Weber et al., 2011). Culture

integration is planned in pre-merger and is executed in post-merger (Gerhamn, & Jonsson, 2017).

Mergers are defined by Aktas et al. (2013) as the combination of two or more companies into one single entity. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are commonly used synonymously, however, they have two very different meanings.

Organizational citizenship behavior is both the positive and constructive actions and behaviors not specifically defined in an employee's job function that promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988). M&A's impact on organizational members can be severe and of these, employee turnovers can be the most impactful. Edwards and Edwards (2015) stated in their study that employees felt they did not have a voice and representation in time of M&A integration, and this can lead to increased employee turnover. Drawing upon organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), Edwards and Edwards (2015) found OCB levels, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most during M&As.

Organizational culture is the shared norms, shared values, and shared assumptions in how organizations function (Schein, 1996). Schein stated that organizational cultures are unique based on the history of the organization that shifts and changes over time.

Political skill is the ability to understand people at workplaces and how they can use knowledge to motivate and enhance people and company objectives (Martin & Butler, 2015). Martin and Butler (2015) believed that manager political skill has a moderating effect during uncertainty in M&As.

Post-merger is the execution of the integration strategies decided upon during pre-merger (Gerhamn, & Jonsson, 2017). Post-merger is where culture integration

happens and where 30% of recent M&A failures have fallen according to Brueller et al. (2016).

Pre-merger is the preparation for M&A stage that discusses business strategies, synergies, and culture integration strategies (Gerhamn, & Jonsson, 2017). Pre-merger activities include culture assessments, acculturation strategies, and post-merger stage preparation (Gerhamn, & Jonsson, 2017).

Stress and anxiety are positively associated with M&A events often referred to as merger syndrome (Brueller et al., 2016). The complicated nature of M&As has a huge impact on employees and managing these is a critical component to M&A success. Stress and anxiety can be a direct result of uncertainty as explained by Sung et al. (2017).

Turnover or leaving a job voluntarily is often caused by decreased job satisfaction and increased job stresses. Martin and Butler (2015) further validated the issue of voluntary turnover during M&As. Martin and Butler suggested that managers can moderate this issue by utilizing political skills to understand the employee perspective and know how to motivate and manage from a social perspective so that employees can focus more on the company objectives.

Uncertainty is caused by a lack of knowledge of the current and future merger (Pazmany, 2018). Dramatic organizational changes such as an M&A event can cause a feeling of uncertainty over jobs and ability to adapt to new roles (Sung et al., 2017).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The goal of Chapter 1 was to provide a robust background of the challenges in M&As specifically on the human side of the business. Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) argued that more research is needed around political skill and its impact on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) specifically during M&As. Martin et al. described political skill as the ability to understand people at work and how leaders can use this knowledge to motivate and enhance people towards company objectives. Furthermore, Martin et al. argued that leader political skill has a moderating effect on subordinates during the uncertainties experienced during M&A events.

This qualitative descriptive study explored how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Mergers and acquisitions are used to accelerate growth, expand capabilities, and reduce competition (Brueller et al., 2016). Mergers are defined as the combination of two or more companies into one company (Aktas et al., 2013) while acquisitions are defined as the procurement of one or more companies by another company (Welbourne et al., 2012). M&As account for over \$3 trillion dollars in business transactions across the world since 2015 and evidence shows that this number is rising (Nandi & Nandi Latha, 2017). Yet, decades of literature on M&A suggests a failure rate in the 40-90% range (Martinez & Garcia-Gomez, 2017). Further, 30% of the reported failures occur because of culture integration issues (Brueller et al., 2016). Brueller et al. stated that personnel and workplace issues arise because of M&A post-merger integration and that exploring the human side of M&As must be further researched.

Martinez (2016) found that change resistance, lack of employee motivation, poor communication, and loss of key talent are some of the common causes of post-merger

integration issues. M&As often cause anxiety, uncertainty, tension among individuals, and frustration among merged cultures which causes low productivity and efficiency (Martinez, 2016). Furthermore, Martinez added that M&As involve more than just integrating systems, acquiring assets, and technology; it involves two different cultures, processes, and styles making the human side of M&As more complex.

In recent studies, Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) suggested that leader political skill can have positive moderating effects during an M&A. Additionally, Martin and Butler (2015) posited that leader political skill is something that can be learned and developed through training. Further, Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) found that leader political skill does in fact have positive moderating effects during mergers. The authors used the political skills inventory, which was tested and validated by Ferris et al. (2005). The results suggested that certain degrees of development and training is required during M&A for merging companies to be more successful. Martin et al. (2017) concluded in their study that assessed front line managers found that managers and executives who possess competencies that include political skills can help offset the employee issues such as culture conflict during M&A activities. This includes moderating job uncertainty, job satisfaction, trust, communication, consideration for morale, consideration for welfare, turnover intent, and job stress (Martin et al., 2017).

Chapter 2 includes an expansion of the gaps identified in the field of M&As, explicitly, the challenges surrounding the people negatively impacted by an M&A event and how political skill can help moderate these challenges. This section also describes how the literature was collected and how the construct of the framework was developed for the study. In addition, this section also encapsulates in the literature review, how

certain leader skills are required to moderate the personnel challenges experienced during an M&A as well as coupling political skill and OCB. Martin and Butler (2015) found that developing trust, creating accountability, and aligning communications with strategic M&A goals are found to be measurable through the political skills inventory. Martin et al. (2017) argued that managers are critically important to employees and overall M&A success, specifically certain skillsets that can be learned through training and development.

Identification of the Gap

According to Martin and Butler (2015), leadership roles must evolve as traditional workplaces evolve, specifically during a merger and acquisition (M&A) where there are inherent negative impacts to organizational personnel. In addition, Semrau et al. (2017) added that leaders and managers are mentors and facilitators that promote worker skills, talents, and motivation to increase team and individual performances. This is critically important during a merger process where two companies are undergoing massive organizational changes. Martin et al. (2017) explained how managers who showed consideration for employees during an M&A event have been found to have low turnover rates suggesting that leadership roles in M&As are very important. Furthermore, Martin et al. (2017) argued that manager political skill has a moderating effect during uncertainty in M&As. Political skill is the ability to understand people at workplaces and how to use knowledge to motivate and enhance people and company objectives (Martin et al., 2017). Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) stated that more research is needed on leader political skill during M&As and how this impacts OCB.

This study is based upon two major themes that includes leader political skill and OCB during M&As. Other themes include the inherent negative impact on the

organization of M&As including stress, turnover, and uncertainty which affects OCB. Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) believes that literature is scarce regarding the research of leader political skill and its impact on organizational leadership behaviors during an M&A. Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) stated that M&As from 2016 tallied over \$5 trillion dollars around the world and over \$700 billion were from the United States. Additionally, Brueller et al. (2016) argued that M&A failures often originate from culture issues to the tune of 30% among all M&A failures.

Martin et al. (2017) stated that there is little exploration of political skill relating to M&A process and that if political skill can positively influence the relationship between M&As and OCB levels. Yet, Martin and Butler (2015) found that wellbeing, develop trust, and create accountability were found to be positively impacted by leader political skill. Thus, it would be interesting to discover if perceived leader political skill is described positively or negatively among subordinates in the airline industry in Arizona during an M&A event.

The gap explored in this study stems from the studies of Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) who argued that there is little to no research on political skill relating to mergers and acquisitions. Further, Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) also argued that political skill can moderate employee uncertainty, stress, and anxiety during M&A. Lam et al. (2017) later added that employees who receive social support, social inclusion, and emotional support have a lesser level of uncertainty than without.

Additionally, Manuela et al. (2016) suggested that workforce integration is a primary challenge in airline industry M&As. Employee turnover remains one of the causes for the high failure rates among M&As. The main causes for high turnover are job

instability, uncertainty, and low organizational citizenship behaviors because of the M&A event. Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) posited that leader political skill can be used to moderate low organization citizenship behaviors (OCB) as these leaders understand how to align employee and organizational objectives. Drawing upon OCB, Edwards and Edwards (2015) found OCB levels, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most during a merger.

This study draws upon Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior which is defined as the behavior of employees as going above and beyond also known as "good soldier syndrome." Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) are often negatively impacted by M&As due to the uncertainty, anxiety, and stress experienced by employees also known as merger syndrome resulting in culture clashes (Brueller et al., 2016). Culture clash has been widely considered as a major component for M&A failures in the past as discovered by Antoine and Kleiner (2015). Antoine and Kleiner explored the impact of cultural clash during M&As and its future impact on the overall company.

Edwards and Edward (2015) investigated employee perception on whether they felt they had a voice and representation opportunities after a merger. This was particularly important as it can impact employee OCB, job stability, and employee satisfaction. The survey was longitudinal covering employees from both companies over a two-year time span. Tarba and Cooper (2016) added that management turnover also has a significant impact on M&A performance suggesting that employee commitment to key managers leaving the company due to M&A can also lead to high turnover rates. Employee turnover has negative effects on the overall performance of the merged company and replacing tribal company knowledge can be very costly.

This study also draws upon Ferris et al. (2005) political skill which is defined as a pattern of social competencies with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations which have direct positive effects on merger outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). Martin et al. stated that top management political skill has been shown to have positive influence on M&A success because they understand what people do at work and how to influence them positively towards organizational objectives. Martin et al. argued that political skill is needed for managers to successfully facilitate an M&A integration effort as it has a moderating role to avoid culture clash. Specifically, one of the main challenges of M&As in the airline industry is workforce integration (Manuela et al., 2016).

Overall, Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) suggested a high failure rate among M&As as high as 90%. Furthermore, M&A events often include a huge organizational change undertaking, which can result in the displacement of employees from their previous groups. This can cause social disassociation from the organization which can lead to employee turnover. Semrau et al. (2017) stated that managers are coaches and facilitators that coordinate worker skills, talents, and motivation to increase team and individual performances. Managers and leaders are critically important to the M&A process to facilitate a successful merger process and mitigate the negative impacts inherent to the M&A process.

Martin and Butler (2015) argued that more research is needed surrounding employee issues experienced because of a merger event. Martin et al. (2017) also argued that leader political skill can be enhanced and can be used to suppress merger syndrome and even gain important resources from merging or acquired firms for M&A success. It is important to note that Martin et al. (2017), Martin and Butler (2015), and Semrau et al. (2017) each used the validated Political Skill Inventory developed by Ferris et al. (2005)

in their studies and found that the social competencies that lie within leader political skill are important for M&A's and improving their success rates. Finally, Martin et al. (2017) also argued that leader political skill can positively impact employee organizational citizenship behavior during an M&A.

Mergers and acquisitions have certainly had a breadth of history and have become a major part of organizational growth. However, failure rates among M&As have been astonishing to the tune of 40-90% according to Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017). Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) found that M&As from 2016 tallied over \$5 trillion dollars around the world and over \$700 billion were from the United States, but M&As are widely criticized, as data shows that there is a high failure rate among these types of investments.

Brief M&A History

According to Ching (2019), mergers and acquisitions in the United States occurred in five waves starting in 1897. This helped shape and grow the world economy creating cross border synergies becoming a critical part of corporate strategies today. The first wave occurred between 1897 and 1904 caused by the industrial revolution just before the start of World War I (Ching, 2019). The first wave spawned the Sherman Act and Clayton Act preventing the monopolization of industries (Hills, 2018).

The second wave occurred between 1920-1929 in response to the new laws and regulations governing the monopolization of industries (Ching, 2019). This wave was led by merging companies that are in the same supply chain and involved mergers between companies in completely different industries and markets (Ching, 2019). By this time, mergers and acquisitions were gaining momentum towards shaping economies all around the world.

The third wave occurred between 1965-1975 which began the diversification of products when companies began to expand outside their markets. Ching (2019) stated that this era was caused by economies of scale due to mass production of consumer goods. By this time, mergers and acquisitions had become a critical part of corporate strategies that were striving for growth and relevance in and out of their respective markets.

The fourth wave began in 1984-1988. This represented a slowdown in M&A activity in the United States (Ching, 2019). By this time, globalization was becoming more and more common in preparation for a technology boom. In the fourth wave companies focused on synergies merging with production activities with similar or same technologies (Ching, 2019).

The fifth and final wave began in 1995-present according to (Ching, 2019). The fifth wave has been driven by cross border mergers and acquisitions thanks to technology which made it easier for companies to merge and acquire companies across the world. Technology has shaped the world making it easier to achieve globalized markets. Lattanzio et al. (2019) described merger and acquisition activities between 1995-2001 as an epic surge. By 2015, mergers and acquisition activities reached a value of over \$2 trillion dollars and rising (Lan et al., 2017).

Vazirani (2015) discussed the merger and acquisition waves in her article stating that M&As are a key component for companies looking to grow in their current and new markets. Further, Vazirani (2015) stated that M&As represent a key part of business strategy that helps improve organizational performance and profits. Vazirani (2015) found that between 2008 and 2010, M&A activities declined due to an economic descent in the United States. However, Vazirani admitted that M&As will remain a key

component strategy for not just domestic businesses in the United States but global businesses around the world and should continue to increase to create new waves of mergers and acquisitions in highlighting M&A significance. M&As have certainly had their role in shaping today's organizations and expansion through cross borders.

Technology has had a major role in international M&As making the whole process more complex.

Mergers and acquisitions have had an enormous impact on the world economy and the strategies companies use for growth, increasing profits, reaching new markets, attaining human assets, attaining technological assets, and even eliminating competition (Min, 2017). However, this widely used strategy is not without flaws. Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) reported to have found mergers and acquisitions having high failure rates between 40%-90%. Martinez and Garcia-Gomez added that culture differences and employee resistance are the main causes for M&A failure. Brueller et al., (2016) stated that culture integration issues account for 30% of all M&A failures. Companies looking to leverage M&As to grow their company should take note of previous merger statistics surrounding cost, failure rates, and the reasons for failure as the cost of M&As have begun to reach the trillions range in 2015.

M&A Challenges

Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017) stated that leadership and management undertaking the process of M&A integration must have a clear vision of the culture of the new organization. Without clear vision, the inherent social displacement of employees can only increase the stress and uncertainties surrounding M&As. Combining two or more companies can be complex as Schein (1993) suggested that each company has its own unique culture made of norms, values, and beliefs. Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017)

compared culture integration to acculturation which explains how immigrants adapt to a new country. Similarly, the concept of culture integration and acculturation are fundamentally the same, although culture integration is an M&A term and acculturation is an anthropological term associated with the social movement theory (Gerhamn & Jonsson, 2017).

Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017) stated that in pre-merger stages, leaders and managers must decide to adopt one of the two cultures or take the best of the two cultures and creating a new culture. Organizations must emphasize the importance of direction early in the process of M&A integration regarding culture and the strategies around implementing it. Worst case scenario is the two companies merge financially, however, culturally remain independent causing long term issues.

Münster (2017) explored mergers in public libraries as part of a consolidation effort by the state of Maryland. Münster found that the two libraries experienced difficulties in the integration process. First, the staff from both libraries were found to have opposed the effort and leadership of both entities had a lack of understanding and vision (Münster, 2017). This highlights the importance of pre-merger activities specifically around the strategies involving culture integration by leadership and managers (Gerhamn & Jonsson, 2017). Münster highlighted the culture clashes between the two libraries adding that it could have been avoided with better planning. Further, Münster stated that managers from both sides lacked understanding of how to make the integration work and were unable to establish alignment as both continued with separate objectives.

Culture is critically important to consider regarding M&A activity. In fact, Graham et al. (2016) surveyed executives in the United States regarding corporate

culture, the findings were interesting. Graham et al., (2016) found that of the 1,900 surveyed, 91% of the executives believed that corporate culture is very important. Seventy-nine percent of the executives ranked culture as the top five most important considerations within their firms (Graham et al., 2016). Of the executives surveyed, 54% perceived cultural fit as a critical factor in M&A activities and that if the fit was not there, they would leave the deal at the table. It is important to note that Graham et al. (2016) also found that 33% of the executives would ask for discounts if cultural fit did not match and still pursue it.

Furthermore, of the 1,900 executives surveyed, 92% believed that improving culture would increase firm value. In addition, Graham et al. (2016) found that 85% of the executives believed that poorly implemented cultures tend to have employees acting unethically. Findings from Graham et al. (2016) were eye opening regarding culture and signify the importance of culture integration in M&As. Ultimately, humans make up a culture whether in a corporate or social setting (Schein, 1990). This highlights the importance of the human side of M&A as well. The need to explore leader political skill surrounding mergers and its impacts on OCB are clear.

Culture Integration

Ilgili and Eckhardt (2017) who sought to identify the factors that affect organizational commitment behaviors in an IT organization during the merger process, found that when employees from a merged company felt that they were part of a new company they had higher retention rates. Strong culture can be concluded as part of this success and or having mergers and acquisitions as part of the company and how it builds business. This is due to the transparency shown during the mergers and acquisitions (Ilgili & Eckhardt, 2017). Ilgili and Eckhardt studied a company that performed M&A

activities regularly for growth and it was important to note that due to the number of mergers and acquisitions, experience can have a positive influence on merger outcomes. It is acceptable to think that these types of changes have become part of the company and the employee culture. Due to the repetitiveness and frequency of mergers and acquisition, the software company has found a good process to follow and find success. M&A, specifically post-merger integration (PMI), can be a part of an organization's culture.

Podgorski and Sherwood (2015) highlight people integration in their study finding that to achieve successful M&A PMI, people elements must be incorporated into the plan, a strong human resource management team is important, and an integration leader must be appointed to oversee the PMI activities. Podgorski and Sherwood added that a well-planned PMI brings value to the firm and increases the likelihood of meeting M&A strategic goals. Furthermore, Podgorski and Sherwood suggested integration plans that include a playbook, communication plan, human resource plan, cultural assessments, talent assessments, and employee engagements. This is consistent with the literature finding that suggested clear vision and planning is important to M&A outcomes to be successful.

Culture integration in the context of organizational culture (Schein, 1990) is very complex when it involves two unique organizations combining into one (Graham et al., 2016). Min (2017) states that organizational culture plays a significant part for every company and that each organization has its own sets of beliefs and value systems. It is important to note that combining two companies is complex, it becomes even more difficult when cultures begin their acculturation processes during a merger. Min studied mergers in higher educational settings and found the following as causes for most conflicts in M&As: (a) loose organizational structures, (b) unequal treatment, and (c) lack of conflict

management. Min used the dual concern model to find five ways to manage conflicts that include collaborating, avoiding, compromising, dominating, and obligating.

Conflict Management

Each person in the organization has some form of conflict management skill to fix conflict issues during an M&A event. Furthermore, Min (2017) found in their study that the merging entities he studied did not have conflict management strategies specifically as it relates to merger processes. Min suggested that conflict management is a key skill specifically needed by managers to facilitate success during a merger.

Floyd et al. (2017) studied the employee responses when an organizational merger occurs. The researchers studied responses from 599 employees and found that M&A events are so dramatic that they impact their careers (Floyd et al. 2017). Furthermore, Floyd et al. found that organizational identity theory and social identity theory apply to the experiences of their sample. Mergers have been found to be transformational for merging companies, this highlights that they are also transformational for individual employees as mergers can impact entire careers in the long term.

Organizationally, merged employees remain attached to their pre-merger organizations that could result in employee turnover because of the merger. Socially, groups impacted by M&A will create displacement of social identity forcing people to join new groups which ultimately affects identification organizationally. Floyd et al. (2017) argued the need for organizational leaders to highlight both organizational and personal benefits during M&A to increase organizational identification to reduce turnover.

Bereskin et al. (2017) suggested that merging companies must do their due diligence before embarking on M&A, arguing that culture assessments must take place

prior to sealing the deal and that cultural similarity has positive association with M&A success. In their study of evaluating cultural similarity effects on mergers and acquisitions, Bereskin et al. found that this component eases post-merger integration efforts. The authors cite the AOL-Time Warner and Daimler-Chrysler merger as a failed M&A due to cultural mismatch (Bereskin et al., 2017).

Post-Merger Integration

Merger and acquisition failure rates occur between 40% and 90% among all recorded mergers (Martinez & Garcia-Gomez, 2017). Literature suggests that companies who engage in M&A frequently have a more mature PMI process and that the success rate are higher (Ilgili & Eckhardt, 2017). Post-merger integration occurs after pre-merger when the agreement to merge or sell a company and all the legalities have been signed off. Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) argued that there is a lack of understanding among scholars and researchers in the field of post-merger integration specifically in the planning and implementation of strategic organizational change.

Bodner and Capron (2018) stated that PMI is a crucial stage in M&As to find synergies in product and service lines, to reconfigure the organization, and to adjust organizational culture. Bodner and Capron added that if PMI is executed successfully, companies who undertake the process of M&A become more successful and profitable. However, if PMI fails, merged companies often fail to the tune of 40%-90% (Martinez & Garcia-Gomez, 2017).

Facilitating a successful post-merger integration is complex as it often involves the human side of M&A. Amarah (2015) suggested that PMI requires collaboration between managers and stakeholders to facilitate smooth transition and promote growth. Stakeholders are both internal and external which includes all organizational members

involved. Amarh added that cultural involvement is key and must be encouraged during the integration phases of M&A. This also suggests that employees must have an open mind and adjust to new organizational culture, business practices, and human resource management. Amarh argued that organizational leaders and managers are responsible for the successful implementation of post-merger integration strategies to implement new organizational values, structure, and brand.

Min (2017) stated that M&As involve creating new organizational identity, mission, value, cultures, and policies and that this needs to be considered throughout the entire M&A process including pre- and post-merger. Min added that post-merger integration requires an understanding of pre-merger cultures to create a detailed plan to implement a post-merger culture. Min warned that a weakness in leadership and management can impede building of trust among organizational members and ultimately negatively affect the new company.

Buick et al. (2018) also discussed the importance of post-merger activities in M&A events, and that culture integration is given little to no consideration when it comes to pre and post-merger phases. Buick et al. argued that failure in PMI can lead to isolation and separation between cross functional groups which then leads to problems with coordination and cooperation which can continue past PMI phases. Further, Buick et al. recommended a dedicated M&A integration team be established to better facilitate integration activities that focus on people. In addition, the authors also suggested that the dedicated M&A integration team have members from both merging companies to enable a broader understanding of both merging cultures to create a new one. Buick et al. emphasized the importance of communication and transparency. Communication and transparency have had positive effects on building trust among merged companies (Buick

et al., 2018).

Communication and dedicated integration teams as suggested by Buick et al. (2018) are relatively emphasized throughout literature. Post-merger integration can generate conflicts between merging organizations. Managers and leaders must utilize good conflict management to refocus organizational members towards the PMI plans. Tarba and Cooper (2016) found that there is no clear best practice to address conflict resolution during M&A activities. This highlights the importance of leadership and management teams to facilitate the M&A process closely to mitigate issues that may arise early on.

Tarba and Cooper (2016) believed that speed is key during M&A PMI phases and that this varies depending on the change readiness of each merging company. Tarba and Cooper found that fast human integration between two companies has a positive impact on M&A while fast task-oriented integration has a negative effect. Speed it seems regarding human integration phases seem to favor faster processes than slower ones according to Tarba and Cooper.

To add to some of the M&A failures, Duvall-Dickson et al. (2016) explored the leadership challenges in M&A integration. Duvall-Dickson et al. began by stating that companies engage in M&A activities to gain efficiency, reduce redundancies, and gain more profitability adding that both merging cultures should be considered in creating a new culture from the merger. Duvall-Dickson et al. found that leaders and employees both recall culture clashes and the release of valuable employees even though they were valuable contributors. There are unintended psychological consequences from M&A that include decreased morale, distrust, decreased loyalty to the company to name a few (Duvall-Dickson et al., 2016).

Duvall-Dicken et al. (2016) suggested that M&A integration often creates unintended negative side effects on everyone involved. Duvall-Dickson et al. also suggested more transparency and honesty during M&As and that leaders should take time to consider how actions will be perceived. However, Duvall-Dickson et al. argued that while integration is often mentioned and planned for in M&As, it does not receive as much attention as the financial and sales reports during the M&A integration. The authors further argued that culture and integration should receive the same level of attention as finance and operational (Duvall-Dickson et al. 2016). They conclude that humans often determine the future of the organization, and that more attention should be given to the human factors specially during M&A's (Duvall-Dickson et al., 2016).

McGee (2015) found the same common theme in his article regarding M&A integration and its key role. McGee argued that to be successful with M&As, merging companies must do their due diligence with a well-planned strategy that not only accounts for the financials but everything in the operations. Focus on finance and profits and not enough attention for everything else is becoming redundant in M&A literature, however, M&As are still experiencing high failure rates (Brueller et al., 2016) even though scholars and researchers have suggested more attention on integration is needed.

M&A's have a failure rate between 40%-90% as suggested by Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017). McGee (2015) later argued that a formal M&A plan with defined synergy targets is required to be successful along with a dedicated M&A integration team, measurement criteria, and a sound communication plan. Despite the high failure rates, M&As continue to be a strategy for companies for growth, financial gains, attain assets, reach into new markets, and maintain relevancy.

Mahadewi (2018) stated that M&A PMI involves significant transformational

change that requires development, communication, implementation, and harmonization. Mahadewi argued that merging companies must enable capabilities by developing competencies regarding culture integration. Mahadewi also found that the main obstacle for M&A PMI is often culture clash and soft factors. The need for developing culture integration and conflict management competencies for managers is coming to light. This makes sense as managers are in the forefront of M&A PMI, handling and managing people who are being merged to a foreign culture. I will highlight managers and their role more later in this chapter.

Steigenberger (2017) suggested that integration begins when the M&A deal is completed and that integration itself takes years. Steigenberger recommended that integration planning begins prior to the closing the deal and culture assessments should be analyzed to determine fit. Steigenberger also suggested that companies with prior experience with M&A integration tend to have higher success rates. Steigenberger argued that the human side of the merger and acquisition requires on-going management to eliminate resistance and find synergies quicker and faster. Steigenberger also argued that managers' focus is limited, and neglect tends to happen hampering ability to control M&A integration. Literature evidence suggested that managers are integral to the M&A integration process and that their development surrounding competencies on culture integration and conflict management is critical.

Lam et al. (2017) explored the impact of M&As in a salesforce setting and found that strategic fit and sociocultural issues have a direct impact on M&As. Lam et al. also found that company image mismatch can have a negative effect on merging companies. For example, if Company A who has a positive external image merged with Company B with lower external image, this impacts the company with a positive image from a sales

force perspective. Lam et al. suggested leaders and managers must build organizational identity in the context of M&A through communication and identified key managerial skills that can help facilitate M&A success.

Managers emphasize organizational culture and promote an increase of organizational identity (Lam et al., 2017). Lam et al. added that manager strategic intent is extremely critical to the integration process. This empirical evidence suggested managers must have culture integration knowledge and political skill to be successful in M&A.

Graebner et al. (2017) reviewed post-merger integration in their article citing that while there have been over 300 articles and studies on PMI since 1985, there is still a consensus among scholars that there is still a lack of attention from research on the post-merger events. The authors' goal in their review of literature was to find theoretical concepts and recommend future research in that matter of post-merger integrations. Graebner et al. began by defining sociocultural as various social, cultural, and human aspects of post-merger integration and found that to achieve post-merger integration success, leaders must manage everyone involved to address issues quickly to maintain focus on integrating two cultures. Graebner et al. also found that interaction and communication were key components for success. Interaction and communication can help establish trust; as Graebner et al. explained, distrust is often present in M&A PMI stages. Furthermore, Graebner et al. established a need for better tools for post-merger integration that includes development for negotiation and trust building.

Stein and Cuadrado (2016) stated that M&A failure is due to a lack of defined leadership, lack of integration plan, lack of employee motivation, poor communication, and loss of employees through turnover. Stein and Cuadrado (2016) added that lack of

research on the people factors in M&As are due to a need for qualitative research to effectively study people factors to evaluate and manage impact. Stein and Cuadrado understood the effects of M&As on human factors and argued that intensifying downward communication is pivotal to not just the human side of M&As but also the overall success of the M&A itself.

The impact of M&As on organizational members can be severe and employee turnovers can be the most impactful. Edwards and Edwards (2015) stated in their study that employees felt they did not have a voice and representation during M&A integration, and this led to increased employee turnover. Drawing upon OCB, Edwards and Edwards found OCB levels, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most. Edwards and Edward investigated employee perception of whether they felt they had a voice and representation opportunities after a merger. This is particularly important as it can impact employee OCB, job stability, and employee satisfaction. The survey was longitudinal covering employees from both companies over a two-year time span.

Tarba and Cooper (2016) added that management turnover also has a significant impact on M&A performance concluding that employee commitment to key managers leaving the company due to M&A can also lead to high turnover rates. Employee turnover has negative effects on the overall performance of the merged company and replacing tribal company knowledge can be very costly. Human resource management (HRM) played a key role in employee retention during an M&A event. Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017) stated that the effective use of HRM and communication in M&As can create an encouraging atmosphere to live the new brand of the merged company.

Alternatively, companies who embark on frequent M&A activities tend to have dedicated M&A teams to facilitate integration better and faster. The study explored managers from

such a company and hoped to uncover what practices work through the lenses of frontline managers.

Human Side of M&A

According to Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017), M&As from 2016 tallied over \$5 trillion dollars around the world and over \$700 billion were from the United States. However, M&As are widely criticized as data shows that there is a high failure rate among these types of investments (Nandi & Nandi Latha, 2017). Scholars such as Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017), Brueller et al. (2016), and Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017) who suggested that culture integration is a critical piece for success in the M&A process. Furthermore, Min (2017), Waight (2015), and Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) suggested that development and training can be a source of improvement specifically in the culture integration and conflict management approaches in M&As. This study heavily considers the human factors in M&As and how they affect members of the organization during culture integration.

Friedman et al. (2016) studied the micro-behavioral sources of M&A failures. Friedman et al. found that cultural fit was necessary to predict M&A success and that faulty integration processes have all contributed to the increasing number of M&A failures. Friedman et al. defined M&A failure as low shareholder value return with negative return on equity and assets along with lowered stock price. Friedman et al. also found that human biases exist including the top-level executive staff favoring one side over the other. The authors cited the Volvo-Renault merger in 1993 as having such biases that resulted in negative shareholder returns. These biases can create culture clashes and negative feelings among organizational members according to Friedman et al. The authors also argued that employees want to be engaged and involved in the M&A

activities, however, communication breakdown was found to affect participatory levels as it creates distrust and lowered performances.

It is important to note that employees are found to be willing to participate in post-merger activities to help facilitate the merger process so that they can be consulted, provide feedback, participate in decision making, and to have a voice (Friedman et al., 2016). This suggests that a breakdown in planning and integration execution that includes communication, promotion of participation, establishing trust, and performing towards organizational objectives can be moderated with political skill.

Sung et al. (2017) sought to compare three concept models based on social identity theory and exchange theory to determine the employee merger reactions. Sung et al. asked how employees perceived change in their jobs and roles and how that affected organizational identification, attachment attitudes, and turnover. The authors used three models. The first model is that organizational identification and organizational attachment develop independently and have distinct antecedents. The second model posited that organizational identification mediates the relationships between change in organizational and personal valence and change in attachment and turnover (Sung et al., 2017). The third model posited that change in personal valence moderates the relationship between changes in organizational valence and in organizational identification and attachment (Sung et al., 2017). The authors surveyed 599 employees experiencing corporate mergers. This was a sizable sample and had a lot of data to perform several analyses regarding mergers and acquisitions.

Sung et al. (2017) found that the employees' organizational identification and organizational attachment, including voluntary turnover, can ultimately impact the success of a merger (Sung et al., 2017). The authors' conclusions also suggested that

executives need to highlight both the organizational and personal benefits of the merger to increase the success of the merger. Sung et al. argued that communication is a key factor in the merger process, specifically when executives and management highlight the benefits for both the business and the employees. This has been found to increase organizational identification and attachment which in turn reduces employee loss. Sung et al. posited that highlighting benefits for the employees decreases the resistance to the merger while also decreasing the levels of stress, job uncertainty, and turnover.

Lee et al. (2018) explored the human side of mergers and acquisitions in their study, specifically, that similarity in cultures or human capital can be a key factor in M&A success. Lee et al. described human capital as rented whereas assets are owned. This was an important note in this study as it studied human capital relatedness as a key factor for M&A so that companies can better find synergies and have an option to layoff or redeploy human capital to different positions creating further value from the M&A integration. The authors draw from the property rights theory based on finding significant pairs or complimentary human assets to find better synergies because of a merger.

Lee et al. (2018) found that merging companies with complimentary human assets have higher post-merger performance data. While this study did not consider the human factor, it does however shed light on why companies do not focus more on human elements as factors in M&As. However, this study did not highlight the negative effects of change resistance, anxiety, culture clash, and uncertainty on post-merger integration. This study was limited in the fact that not all mergers and acquisitions are alike and the success of these types of mergers relies heavily on sheer number of employees to find synergies that create M&A value.

Similarly, Tate and Yang (2015) studied the human factors in acquisitions the

same way as Lee et al. (2018) seeing people as rental assets to be used to improve synergies. Furthermore, Tate and Yang referred to organizational members as human capital investments in an M&A situation. Human factors in their study were used for facilitating cross-industry reallocation and collaboration (Tate & Yang, 2015). This means, merging companies leverage human capital as a source of value from a diversification perspective. This study provided examples of merging companies retaining highly skilled employees who enable the M&A company's opportunities to utilize skills and knowledge throughout the company.

Tate and Yang (2015) found that having the ability to transfer skilled employees from one part of the company to another regardless of industry or market gives the organization the highest return of value. This is also beneficial to the organizational members as they find their jobs more satisfying and gives a feeling of high achievement and raises organizational identity. Because the focus of the study from Tate and Yang does not really focus on the human side of M&A, this researcher felt it was important to shed light as to why for some M&A situations, the human side of the merger does not apply. However, this is not true for all M&A activities.

Jap et al. (2017) found in their study that employees often felt distrust during M&A integration, and this affected their sensemaking and lowered perception of themselves within their roles. Jap et al. stated that providing support and shared identity helps the human factors in M&As be more successful. Jap et al. suggested strong leadership during M&A activity and continuous engagement are key components for success in M&A integration. Engagement suggests interactions with direct managers must be positive throughout with a foundation of transparency and honesty to build trust that includes constant communication and ability to manage conflicts as they arise.

Managers are suggested to have a pivotal role as they are often the frontlines in terms of communication, M&A integration, conflict management, operational decision making to name a few. The level of readiness that managers have from merging organizations is key to addressing human factors in M&A and a foundation for having a good strategy around M&A integration.

Dramatic organizational changes such as an M&A event can cause a feeling of uncertainty over jobs and ability to adapt to new roles (Sung et al., 2017). Pazmany (2018) defined uncertainty as a lack a knowledge of the current and future. M&As create a heightened sense of uncertainty as the dramatic change in organizational culture leaves many worrying about their job security including social and organizational identity displacement. According to Martin and Butler (2015) one third to over half of all merger failures occur not because of financial reasons but because of the issues experienced by employees. Uncertainty can lead to high turnover rates, job stress, conflict between employees, decrease in job satisfaction, and absenteeism (Martin & Butler, 2015). Martin and Butler argued that more research is needed surrounding employee issues experienced because of an M&A activity as well as the area of leader political skill.

The feeling of uncertainty has been linked to increased job stress which leads to job dissatisfaction which then leads to decreased job commitment. Uncertainty has a cascading negative effect and according to Antoine and Kleiner (2015) often leads to culture clashes between the merging companies. Stein and Cuadrado (2016) stated that employee turnover cannot be explained in just the number of people who leave because of M&A, leaders and managers must also account for the loss of productivity due to the stress and anxiety. Researchers such as Martin and Butler (2015), Antoine and Kleiner (2015), and Min (2017) offered insight on the value of communication during M&A

integration and how it alleviates uncertainty among organizational members so that they can focus more on the opportunities ahead.

Stress and anxiety are positively associated with M&A events often referred to as merger syndrome (Brueller et al., 2016). The complicated nature of M&As has a huge impact on employees and managing these is a critical component to M&A success. Stress and anxiety can be a direct result of uncertainty as explained by (Sung et al., 2017). Joshi and Goyal (2015) found that behavioral sciences have observed M&As as the source for heightened stress and anxiety levels among employees involved in M&A activity.

It is important to note that these increased levels of stress and anxiety during M&A activity are natural in the event there is lack of communication to inform the current and future state of the company. Mehta et al. (2017) stated that stress and anxiety levels can even be higher when it involves downsizing and re-organizing of organizational structure. The unknown in the case of M&As is a predictor of heightened levels of stress and anxiety. Therefore, M&A post-merger integration teams must focus on suppressing the unknowns and uncertainties to facilitate a culture integration with little to no stress and anxiety related issues during integration. This study acknowledged these findings, and the investigator conducted this study on an exploration of how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their citizenship behaviors during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Appelbaum et al. (2017) found that resistance to change is a major factor in the overall performance of an M&A event stating that it is turbulent to the process of integration. The authors also found that communication, support from management, employee perception, and participation can help manage and control these types of behaviors. Mehta et al. (2017) stated that resistance to change can be both personal and

organizational suggesting that social identity and organizational identity are at play when it comes to M&A activities.

Appelbaum et al. (2017) added that management support promotes trust and open communication informs participation towards M&A activities. While resistance is a negative byproduct of M&A events, there are ways to suppress their negative impact with communication, management support, and establishing trust to improve employee perceptions and to encourage their participation. Perhaps through leader political skill, M&A events can suppress employees' feelings of uncertainty and maintain or increase organizational citizenship behaviors. Appelbaum et al. (2017) added that fair and just managerial behaviors minimize change resistance during an M&A integration effort because it improves employee perception.

M&A events are documented as complex and often lead to failure according to researchers such as Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) and Brueller et al. (2017). The present study explores how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behaviors during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Waight (2015) explored learning and development during the integration phases of an M&A. Their goal was to identify what learning occurred during M&A and how it happened through the perspectives of learning and development professionals.

Waight (2015) stated that learning and development stands as the most promising future for M&A activities to improve capabilities. Waight added that the post-merger integration process is about learning and knowledge transfer. Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) argued that with development and training, leader political skill can be enhanced. Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) argued that the area of leader political skill needs more research to determine if it can be a moderating factor

with the inherent negative impacts of M&As.

Waight (2015) also found that training and development has a positive influence of M&As specifically during the post-merger phases. In fact, deliberate training focusing on M&A knowledge specifically on integration can increase the success of M&As (Waight, 2015). In their qualitative phenomenological research, Waight found that there are four opportunities for training and development that includes learning about the change, learning how to manage the change, learning for work, and learning from experiences. This would explain why companies who perform M&A activity regularly are more successful at integration. Waight recommended more exploration surrounding learning and development for M&A activities and argued for more qualitative research in M&As to gain a deeper meaning.

Rifai and Waight (2006) researched training and development in M&As and stated that little to no research is found in literature regarding training and development during M&As. Rifai and Waight (2006) added that the role of training and development and their practitioners in M&As support human resources and human resource development departments in mergers and acquisitions. Furthermore, Rifai and Waight stated that training and development can help facilitate the managing of cultures. Rifai and Waight found that training and development also helped facilitate culture integration. Rifai and Waight (2006), Martin and Butler (2015), and Martin et al. (2017) further validated that culture integration, political skill, and culture fundamentally can be taught and explained so that merging companies have a deeper understanding as they embark on the M&A initiative. Martin and Butler (2015) pointed to leadership political skill as a component to reduce these employee issues thus reducing the employee loss leading to improved job satisfaction and reduced job stress.

Rifai and Waight (2006) also found that managerial issues were found to be a cause for some M&A failures and that training and development can help make this more successful by building competencies specifically around human related issues which were major causes of failure in M&As (Rifai & Waight, 2006). Rifai and Waight further argued that often in the M&A integration process, managers from both merged companies tend to operate at the same model as their old company rather than operate and manage in the new culture. This suggests that training and development can help align managers to the new culture, new vision, and new mission of the company and unify the way managers manage their employees during merger.

Martin and Butler (2015) investigated how turnover intent, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and job strain stem from the uncertainty of mergers thus causing employee issues during M&A. The intent was to bring light to the importance of research that specifically looks at employee issues that spawn from mergers and acquisitions. Political skill, job uncertainty, job strain, employee turnover, absenteeism, and job satisfaction were some of the key concepts of Martin and Butler's (2015) article. Martin and Butler ventured to explore management political skill impact on employees during a merger and acquisition. Management political skill can reduce employee stress, reduce employee turnover, absenteeism, and job stress according to Martin and Butler. The authors argued that management political skill can increase the success of organizational integration during merger and acquisition and that it can be learned and acquired as a skillset for management. Martin and Butler studied previous literature by Carey (2015), Ding (2015), and Schweiger and DeNisi (1991). Carey studied merger and acquisitions in Silicon Valley. Ding studied the Kraft Foods and Heinz merger. Schweiger and DeNisi studied communication effects to reduce job uncertainty during a merger and acquisition. Martin

and Butler concluded that management political skill can help minimize employee job stress which increases employee retention to promote a smooth organizational integration during a merger and acquisition. Political skill can be acquired through training and experience according to Martin and Butler (2015).

Martin and Butler (2015) also found that management and leadership preparedness specifically around political skill as it can be used to alleviate employee issues during a merger and acquisition. Further, servant leadership can be leveraged as the primary leadership style during a merger and acquisition as it could raise employee organizational citizenship behaviors and employee performance. Decreasing or eliminating employee job stress during a merger can lower the feeling of uncertainty, employee turnover, absenteeism, and increase job satisfaction.

Methodology and Instrumentation/Data Sources/Research Materials

The final section of Chapter 2 focuses on the methodologies and instrumentation in the empirical studies reviewed in Chapter 2. Unlike the methodology and instrumentation sections in Chapters 1 and 3, this section provides a clear overview of how the empirical studies in the literature review were conducted. This provides evidence for the methodology and instrumentation for the present study.

Martin and Butler (2015) examined the moderating effects of political skill during mergers and acquisitions. M&A events are found to have negative impacts on employees that include high levels of stress, uncertainty, turnover, and potential changes to job or job loss all together to name a few. Martin and Butler (2015) cited social identity theory in their article to suggest that group membership contributes to one's social identity. In the case of M&As, these group memberships can experience massive changes through re-organization of groups causing a cascading effect of negative to employees.

Later, Martin et al. (2017) studied the data on mergers and acquisitions to further solidify their point on the importance of leader political skill during M&A events. The authors studied mergers and acquisitions between 2004 and 2013 and reported that most of the companies experienced failure to achieve expectations. The authors used Ferris et al. (2005) Political Skills Inventory as an instrument to measure social competencies with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations which can affect outcomes specifically during M&A (Martin et al., 2017). Martin et al. cited organizational citizenship behaviors during M&A as a possible component leader political skill can positively impact. Job stress, uncertainty, absenteeism, and turnover are all related to low organizational citizenship behaviors and Martin et al. argued that leader political skill can be a moderating component.

Edwards and Edwards (2015) found organizational citizenship behavior levels, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most. Edwards and Edward also investigated employee perception on whether they felt they had a voice and representation opportunities after a merger. This is particularly important as it can impact employee OCB, job stability, and employee satisfaction. Martin et al. (2017) cited Organ's (1988) as a measurement and definition for organizational citizenship behavior. The researcher of this study draws upon Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior theory utilizing Podsakoff et al. (1990) organizational citizenship behavior instrument that measures altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and courtesy. Organizational citizenship behavior is otherwise known as *good soldier syndrome*.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a detailed examination of the literature history on mergers and

acquisitions and the failures that existed. The history of M&A was recently observed by Ching (2019) who classified the first wave of mergers between 1897 and 1904 as being caused by the industrial revolution. Ching added that the second wave was from 1920-1929 as a response to new laws and regulations governing the monopolization of industries. The third wave, according to Ching began in 1965 lasting through 1975. Ching described the era as a diversification of products where organizations began to expand outside their respective markets. The fourth wave lasted between 1984 to 1988 which represented a slowdown in M&A activity in the United States according to Ching. Ching added that the fourth wave also began the globalization era due to the technology boom. The fifth wave brings us to present day which began in 1995. According to Ching this era is driven by cross border mergers and acquisitions as technology begins to shape global markets. Furthermore, according to Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017), M&As from 2016 tallied over \$5 trillion dollars around the world and over \$700 billion were from the United States.

This chapter also highlighted the complexities that are inherent with mergers and acquisitions and the negative impact on employees as well as the overall organization. Edwards and Edwards (2015) highlighted in their article that high turnover rates are common among M&A and that they can be the most impactful. Edwards and Edwards posited that organizational citizenship behaviors are a cascading negative affect that contribute to the high turnover rates observed because employees often feel loss of job stability and loss of job satisfaction. Historically, companies engaging in M&A activities often overlook the human side of the companies involved. Friedman et al. (2016) studied the micro-behavioral sources of M&A failures. Friedman et al. found that cultural fit is necessary to predict M&A success and that faulty integration processes have all

contributed to the increasing number of M&A failures. Scholars such as Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017), Brueller et al. (2016), and Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017) suggested that culture integration was a critical component for success in the M&A process.

Furthermore, Min (2017), Waight (2015), and Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) suggested that development and training can be a source of improvement specifically in the culture integration and conflict management approaches in M&As.

This chapter also introduced an overview of the theoretical foundation as well as the identification of the gap. This includes the concepts of political skill (Martin et al., 2017), organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), and their impact in the M&A process. The study draws upon Organ's organizational citizenship behavior which is defined as the behavior of employees as going above and beyond also known as good soldier syndrome. Organizational citizenship behaviors are often negatively impacted by M&As due to the uncertainty, anxiety, and stress experienced by employees also known as merger syndrome resulting in culture clashes (Brueller et al., 2016). The study also draws upon Ferris et al. (2005) political skill which is defined as a pattern of social competencies with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations which have direct effects on outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). Martin et al. stated that top management political skill has been shown to have positive influence on M&A success because they understand what people do at work and how to influence them positively towards organizational objectives. The gap the present study explored is that there is little investigation on political skill relating to M&A process and that if political skill can positively influence M&As outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). Studies from Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. stated that leader political skill can be leveraged during

times of uncertainty, heightened stress, increased anxiety, and low employee OCB levels during M&A.

Research Questions

Mergers and acquisitions are an important process for companies looking to improve their organizations, to gain presence in new markets, and financial stability through improved efficiencies, productivity, and more importantly global market competitiveness. However, evidence from Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) as well as Brueller et al. (2016) suggested high failure rates among M&A events. Further, uncertainty during M&A integration can cause higher levels of stress, anxiety, and resistance leading to high employee turnover due to low organizational citizenship behaviors (Martin & Butler, 2015; Martin et al., 2017; Pazmany, 2018; Sung et al., 2017). Recently, Martin et al. (2017) argued the positive influence leader political skill has on M&As, specifically on the human side of the business.

Martin et al. (2017) suggested future research on leader political skill as an antecedent of or consequence of organizational citizenship behaviors. I will explore how subordinates from the airline industry describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior during an M&A event in Arizona. The theoretical framework for this study includes Ferris et al. (2005) political skill and Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior. Culture clash is widely considered as a major component for M&A failures in the past as discovered by Antoine and Kleiner (2015). Antoine and Kleiner explored impacts of cultural clash during M&As and its future impact on the overall company. Martin et al. (2017) stated that top management political skill has been shown to have positive influence on M&A success because they understand what people do at work and how to influence them positively towards

organizational objectives.

RQ1: How do subordinates describe their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?

RQ2: How do subordinates describe their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. In this chapter, the researcher outlined the statement of the problem, research questions, the methodology, and the design. In this chapter, the researcher also discusses the sample selection, instrumentation, and materials used for this research study to provide context for how and why the sample was chosen as well as how the interview questions were developed to answer the research questions.

The gap that was explored is that there is little exploration of political skill relating to M&A process and if political skill can positively influence M&As outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). Current research from Martin et al. suggested that leader political skill can have positive influence on employee OCB, specifically, during a merger and acquisition. Further, current research from Manuela et al. (2016) in the airline industry mergers suggested that many employees impacted by the M&A event often oppose mergers due to possible loss of employment and possible changes in benefits including pay. Brueller et al. (2016) added that organizational citizenship behavior is often negatively impacted by M&A's due to the uncertainties it brings. Recently, Martin et al. (2017) discovered that leader political skill could provide a positive moderating affect to the inherent negative nature of M&A activities.

Qualitative Research Approach

The approach for this research study is a qualitative methodology to explore how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behaviors during a merger in the airlines industry in Arizona. Yilmaz (2013) stated that

quantitative studies examine the realities that can be compared to show the relationships that exists between variables. However, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that questions geared towards gaining a better understanding of experiences would call for a qualitative study which stems from asking about specific experiences in a social and cultural context. In addition, qualitative methodologies are used to investigate a set of research questions, in which the researcher, through interviewing participants, encourages descriptive retrospective of the phenomenon that is being investigated (Merriam, 2002). This research study explores a gap that emerges from Martin et al. (2017) who stated that there is little to no research on political skill relating to M&As and their influence on employee OCB.

Creswell (2009) posited that the purpose of a qualitative study is gain a truthful and credible account of how a particular situation is interpreted. Further, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued that in a qualitative study, researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences and how they construct their worlds. Rutberg and Bouikidis (2018) stated in their article that quantitative research uses a rigorous and controlled design to test a particular problem or research questions using precise measurement and not through experiences. To explore the experiences of employees from a merged organization, the data collected must be in the form of a narrative and not in the form of numbers to gain a deeper understanding. The results can provide rich descriptions of leader political skill and employee organizational citizenship behavior through the lenses of subordinates during a merger from an airline industry in Arizona. Therefore, a qualitative method was the more appropriate methodology for determining how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

The design of this qualitative study is descriptive. My aim was to explore how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Lambert and Lambert (2012) described descriptive studies as comprehensive summarization of specific events experienced by individuals or groups. Descriptive studies have similarities to phenomenological studies in that they both explore individual or group experiences. Early (2016) described phenomenological studies as effective in revealing how individuals describe their lived experiences. Abayomi (2017) added that phenomenological studies allow the research participants to divulge their lived experiences as they experienced them truthfully and without fear. However, this study is appropriate suited for descriptive design as the investigator aims to provide straightforward descriptions of experiences and perceptions particularly in areas where little is known about the topic under investigation (Doyle et al., 2020).

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive research was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Martin et al. (2017) said that there is little to no research on political skill relating to M&As and their influence on employee OCB. This study will interview subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona to determine how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their OCB during the merger.

Other designs were considered but were not selected include narrative, case study, and grounded theory. Yin (2014) stated that a case study includes variables, relationships, and triangulation which are not intended to gain an understand of how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry

in Arizona. Lastly, grounded theory involves building, introducing, testing, and visualizing a new concept or model intended to create theories (Martin & Turner, 1986), the present research does not offer models or theories for the body of knowledge.

Participants

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The gap explored was that there is little exploration of political skill relating to M&A process and that if political skill can positively influence M&A's outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). Johnson and Christensen (2012) stated that it is important that researchers who use convenience sampling must describe the characteristics of the participants to be selected in the research. In this research study, the target population is subordinates from a merged organization in the airline industry in Arizona. Martin et al. (2017) posited that more research is needed on leader political skill specifically during a merger to determine if political skill is a mitigating factor to the negative inherent impact of M&A. Johnson and Christensen (2012) posited that researchers use convenience sampling to include people who are available and willing to volunteer who can be easily recruited. This research study has had difficulty with site authorizations due to legal and proprietary knowledge and companies are often unwilling to participate in these types of studies because it might disclose company secrets on M&A processes, integration processes, and other confidential information that could damage the company's competitive balance. To increase feasibility, I will use convenience sample to directly recruit subordinates from a merged organization in the airline industry in Arizona who are willing to participate and are available. Johnson and Christensen added that convenience sampling is not an

optimal selection process as the results are often not generalizable. Rather, for this research study, I will utilize convenience sampling to better understand how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behaviors to advance the knowledge on political skill and OCB.

Qualitative Sample Size

Quantitative research requires a larger sample than that of qualitative studies. Sample sizes for qualitative descriptive studies range from 5 participants to 25 participants according to O'Halloran et al. (2018). O'Halloran et al. added that in qualitative descriptive designs, the research aims for the real-life experiences relevant to the phenomenon of interest rather than the size of the sample. In addition, O'Halloran et al. stated that the sample is evaluated by the breadth, completeness, and quality of the information provided by the participants. Therefore, the sample size for the study was eight to ten. The interviews were 60-90 minutes in length which provided rich descriptions for analysis.

Data Collection and Instruments

The primary source of data for this research study is the qualitative data obtained from interviewing subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona. I conducted a semi-structured interview process to collect the data for this research. I developed the interview questions based on Ferris et al. (2005) Political Skill Inventory to capture how subordinates describe their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. In addition, I included interview questions based on Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior to capture the subordinate's perceived organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Exploring and understanding how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger event in the airline industry in Arizona could determine if leader political skill can impact subordinate OCB levels. Martin et al. (2017) suggested that more research is needed in political skill and OCB as the research aimed to understand in this research study. This provided insight into the gaps surrounding political skill and its impact on subordinate OCB during a merger process and highlighted the importance of leader political skill during M&A.

Procedures

This qualitative descriptive study began by gaining IRB approvals to begin the sample recruitment process of subordinates from a merged organization in the airline industry in Arizona. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. I developed the semi-structured interview questions based on Ferris et al. (2005) Political Skill Inventory and Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior. I obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Nova Southeastern University as prescribed by the Nova doctoral process.

After IRB approval was obtained from Nova Southeastern University, I created flyers to hand out to prospective participants from a merged organization in the airline industry in Arizona. I contacted all potential participants by email as a formal recruitment inquiry and to confirm the participants interest in the research study as well as provide a detailed explanation of what the study entailed and the participants' privacy rights and protection. Once I obtained the confirmation of interest and a signed recruitment letter, I sent the participants letters of permission to take part in this study. The letter described

the purpose of the study and a confirmation of the date and time for the interview. The investigator clearly explained that the study will utilize semi-structured interviews that will range from 60-90 minutes and that they were to be conducted online using recorded WebEx sessions with each participant.

Once the permission letters and confirmation data/time were digitally signed by the participant using DocuSign, the research used WebEx to conduct and record the interviews as a primary source of data collection. I understood that the interview process was time intensive as described by Queirós et al. (2017) and wanted to be respectful of the participants' time and delivered the interviews electronically for all participants. I recorded and took electronic notes during the interview process to capture the breadth of information to include emotional expressions by the participants. Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed and prepared the data for analysis. Each participant received a copy of their transcribed interview data via email. I sent a copy of each participant's transcribed interview data so that they could review.

The data management process for the study included utilizing secure storage for digitally signed documents using DocuSign to secure participant forms and agreements. The study also utilized secure storage for recorded interview data using WebEx account. Each participant's data were kept separate, and participants did not have access beyond their own data. My MacBook Pro is encrypted using Apple's FileVault which utilizes AES 256bit encryption and is also password protected to further protect research and participant data. Upon completion of the study, the researcher will retain research data for the length prescribed by Nova Southeastern University guidelines about thirty-six months. Once the lifecycle of the data has matured in accordance with Nova Southeastern University policy, the researcher will destroy all relevant data used for the study.

The data collection process was structured using the following steps: (a) obtain IRB approvals, (b) post flyers at nearby restaurants and shops to obtain a sample of approximately 10-20 subordinates (See Appendix B), (c) identify eligible participants, (d) send participant recruitment emails (See Appendix C), (e) send participant consent form (See Appendix D), (f) conduct semi-structured interviews following the interview protocol (See Appendix A). According to Moustakas (1994), the investigator must clearly disclose the purpose of the study, informed consent, as well as the requirements for the research study.

The flyers and participant recruitment emails provided a clear description of the purpose of the research study. Flyers were posted in public areas such as nearby restaurants as well as nearby shops. Flyers included information on how to participate in the research study as well as the purpose and requirements. The participant recruitment emails, and consent forms were delivered electronically to eligible participants. The consent forms were signed via DocuSign online. The target population for the research study consisted of subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona. 10 subordinates made up the sample size for the research study. Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that when qualitative interviews serve as a data source, six participants are often enough to reach data saturation and capture the real-life experiences of the participants.

Once the consent forms and confirmation date/time were digitally signed by the participant using DocuSign, WebEx conferencing was utilized to conduct and record the interviews. The interview process was time intensive as described by Queirós et al. (2017), and the investigator of this study wanted to be respectful of the participants' time and deliver the interviews electronically for all participants. The individual interviews

followed the interview protocol which provided consistency for each participant (See Appendix A). The semi-structured interviews ranged from 60-90 minutes in length. The interview sessions were recorded during the interview process to capture the breadth of information to include emotional expressions by the participants.

At the start of each interview, each participant was reminded that the interview sessions were recorded. Before the interview began, the investigator of this research reviewed the purpose of the research, the information contained in the consent form, and a reassurance that the data retrieved would only be used for the purpose of the study with each participant. The first portion of the interview questions covered political skill. The second portion of the interview questions covered organizational citizenship behaviors following the interview protocol (See Appendix A). Upon completion of the interviews, the data was transcribed and prepared for analysis. Each participant received a copy of their transcribed interview data with researcher analysis via email.

Data Analysis

This section describes the data analysis procedures and states the research questions for the research study. The interview questions are designed to determine how subordinates perceived their leader's political skill and their own organizational citizenship behaviors during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona (See Appendix A). The unit of analysis for the research study is the rich descriptions of subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry describing their perceived leader's political skill as well as their own organizational citizenship behavior during the merger. The target general population for the research study are adults 18 years old or older who were employed during a merger in the airline industry.

RQ1: How do subordinates perceive their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona? The selected 10 participants described how they perceived their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The interview included probing questions based on Ferris et al. (2005) Political Skill Inventory to determine how subordinates perceived their leader's political skill during the merger (See Appendix E). Semrau et al. (2017) stated that there is little to no research on leader political skill and its influence on worker productivity. The political skill probing questions were based on the following four categories as described by Ferris et al. (2005): (a) networking ability, (b) social astuteness, (c) apparent sincerity, and (d) interpersonal influence (See Appendix E).

RQ2: How do subordinates perceive their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona? The selected 10 participants described how they perceived their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The interview included probing questions based on Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) to determine how subordinates perceived their OCB levels during the merger (See Appendix F). The organizational citizenship probing questions were based on the following four categories as described by Organ (1988): (a) satisfaction with supervisor, (b) altruism, (c) compliance, and (d) satisfaction with task (See Appendix F). Edwards and Edwards (2015) stated that OCB levels were often affected most during M&A.

For each research question, the relevant data obtained using the political skill interview questions and the organizational citizenship behavior interview questions was to see if leader political skill had positive impact on merger outcomes. Specifically, political skill could positively influence employees during a heightened time of stress and

uncertainty, and leaders could leverage this skill to align employee objectives as well as organizational objectives to achieve positive merger outcomes. Using Clarke and Braun's (2017) thematic analysis approach will achieve a data driven analysis of the interview data that mitigates researcher bias and or pre-existing assumptions as described below.

The transcribed data was analyzed to ensure each research question was addressed in the research. MAXQDA was used as a tool to organize the transcribed data and prepare data for analysis. MAXQDA is an approved and available program for Nova Southeastern University learners. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing the transcribed data in this research study.

Clarke and Braun's (2017) thematic analysis approach was used for the data analysis portion of this research, which contains six phases. This approach includes (a) becoming familiar with the data by reading and analyzing it, (b) creating initial codes, (c) identifying themes, (d) reviewing the themes, (e) honing or refining the themes, and (f) producing a report. Thorough analysis was critical for the research study to explore how subordinates perceived their leader's political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Analyzing the Data

The individual interview data were transcribed verbatim and loaded into MAXQDA. This enabled initial familiarity and analysis of the data. The transcribed data was read multiple times in their entirety. This provided an opportunity for reflection, understanding the participant's point of view, and preliminary ideas for initial codes.

Initial Codes

Creating initial codes began with first reading and familiarizing the data (Braun & Clarke, 2017). An initial list of ideas about what was in the transcribed data as well as

what was interesting about them involved the production of initial codes. Initial codes identify parts of the data that appears interesting and organizing them to meaningful groups as well as identifying the initial themes.

Identifying Themes

Through initial coding, the major themes of the data were uncovered. According to Clarke and Braun (2017), identifying the themes includes grouping initial codes together into potential themes. The initial codes will form overarching categories to form the themes during the data analysis phase of the research study. At this stage, MAXQDA was used to document the themes and allow for review and refinement.

Reviewing Themes

This involved reviewing the initial themes and inspecting them to ensure they represented unique ideas surrounding the perceived leader's political skill and OCB. This involved using MAXQDA to review the codes and the themes. Additionally, the transcribed data was read again to ensure that the MAXQDA data clearly represented the participant feedback and their meaning.

Refining Themes

At this stage a thematic map of the themes was identified. According to Clarke and Braun (2017), this phase included defining themes and refining them as part of the process. At this point, the relationship of the themes relative to the research questions was clearly identified. Additionally, this stage required a written analysis of the themes and their meaning. The results of the analysis are included in the final report.

Producing a Report

Producing a report of the data began with a final analysis and a written report (Braun & Clarke, 2017). A report of a thematic analysis told the complex story of the

data in a way that convinced the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis. At this stage, the themes and analysis began to form a construct of how leader political skill affected organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Ethical Considerations

Ethically, I am responsible for ensuring that the data collected, and the data presented in this research is accurate as prescribed by Nova Southeastern University guidelines and the Belmont Report (Wood, 2017). Prior to conducting the research study, Nova Southeastern University IRB and AQR approvals were obtained. All necessary documents were signed by the participants who participated in the study before collecting any data. At this point, CITI training has been completed, which stands for Collaborative institutional training initiative, which provides information on ethical behaviors surrounding human subjects and the protection of their information and identity. Furthermore, the identities of the participants were redacted and assigned a designator (e.g., Participant 1) in the results to protect identities and privacy.

Moreover, the three foundations included in the Belmont Report to establish respect for person, beneficence, and justice were followed in the study as described by Wood (2017). Additionally, each participant was informed of the nature of the study, its purpose, and possible contributions to the field of M&As. In parallel, prior to the start of the study, all participants were made to understand that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point. The first contact with the participants was in the electronic mail (email) form, informing the participants of the purpose and nature of the study. This email also assured all participants of the protection of their confidentiality. All instrumentations used for this research study did not reveal

information that was identifiable to the participants and or their companies.

At this juncture, the participant recruitment emails, and consent forms were delivered electronically and digitally signed via DocuSign by the eligible participants. To further protect the participants and their confidentiality, the research data were encrypted, and password protected. Under Nova Southeastern University research standards, the data used for this study will be maintained for a minimum of five years after the study. The risks of participating in this research study are minimal as the instrumentation does not collect confidential company data or personal data. Instead, the study measures perceived leader political skill, employee organizational citizenship behavior, and employee perceived organizational support. Finally, there was little to no chance of identifying the participants in this research as the collected data was safeguarded, and the names of the participants were redacted.

Trustworthiness

Several factors contributed to the trustworthiness of this research study. Johnson and Christensen (2012) defined trustworthiness as the validity of the research, specifically in qualitative studies and those traditional qualitative researchers have generally contested that reliability and validity do not apply to qualitative research. Furthermore, this qualitative descriptive study did require factual accuracy of the phenomenon being reported by the interviewees. This research study was highly dependent on the preciseness in the reporting of the descriptive information from the lenses of the subordinates of a merged organization in the airline industry in Arizona. In the research study, participant feedback was utilized to achieve trustworthiness. Participant feedback is the discussion of the researcher's interpretations and conclusions with the study participants for verification, insight, and deeper understanding (Johnson &

Christensen, 2012). Each participant viewed only their own transcribed data and not each other's. This process ensured that the participant accounts and descriptions were reported as accurately as possible

First, the participant feedback process began with the transcription of the interview data. Second, the transcribed data for each participant was shared with each interviewee to allow for correction and or additions to clear up any misunderstandings or misinterpretations. The transcribed data was shared electronically via encrypted file with each participant. Third, the participants reviewed their own transcribed data to allow for feedback on how the interview was transcribed and that the true essence of the lived experience was truly captured.

Credibility

Credibility is ensuring that the research study findings accurately represent the description of the participants. Cope (2014) defined credibility as the reality as noted by the participants' explanation and how the researcher interprets it. In the research study, participant feedback was utilized to increase the authenticity of the final transcripts. This included sending a copy of the transcribed data to each participant. It was important to note that the transcribed interview data shared with each of the participants was their own data. This ensured the protection of each participant's privacy and data throughout the research project. Once the participants had a chance to review their own transcribed interview data, the participants were encouraged to provide any edits or additions to promote authenticity to the final transcribed data.

Transferability

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined transferability as the extent to which findings of a qualitative study can be generalized to other people or contexts. Transferability can

also be described as the evidence and descriptions that enable generalizations across similar samples. This qualitative descriptive was inherently not generalizable. The authenticity and truthfulness were achieved through participant feedback to capture the authenticity of the participants' lived experiences through a merger from an airline industry in Arizona.

Dependability

Dependability is interchangeable with transferability and replicability. Bengtsson (2016) explained that the key to dependability is careful research analysis. To achieve this in this study, the investigator provided a record of how data was collected and alignment with the gap. This research study also included full transcripts of transcribed interview data that were reviewed by the participants as well as the audit trail documentation that described the inquiry process throughout the research project.

Potential Research Bias

This qualitative descriptive study was not without threats. One of the threats to the reliability and validity of the research was the possible biased responses from the research participants. Each participant was notified that confidentiality was and will be maintained for each participant to promote honest feedback during the interview process. The participants received a copy of their own transcribed interview data so that a review and feedback could take place to ensure the trustworthiness, dependability, and transferability of the data that were analyzed. Researcher bias is another threat that was addressed in this study. To address the idea of researcher bias in a qualitative study, the researcher practiced reflexivity, or “turning the lens back on oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one’s own situatedness within the research and the effect it might have” on the setting, participants, and results of the study (Berger, 2013, p. 2).

Limitations

This section discusses, in detail, the limitations and delimitations related to the research methodology and design and potential effects on the results. The section also describes any limitations and delimitations related to the methods, sample, instrumentation, data collection process, and analysis. Other methodological limitations and delimitations of the study may include issues regarding the study design, sample in terms of size, population and procedure, instrumentation, data collection processes, and data analysis. This section also contains an explanation of why the existing limitations are unavoidable and are not expected to affect the results negatively.

Qualitative explorations study the world as it naturally occurs. This research study was not without limitations as it utilized a qualitative methodology with a descriptive design. Emerson (2015) stated that various limitations exist within all research methods. One limitation of this study was that the results are not generalizable within a larger population. However, qualitative methodology is useful to gain a better understanding of how subordinates perceived their leader's political skill during a merger and their own organizational citizenship behaviors as the event took place in the airline industry in Arizona.

This research study will utilize convenience sampling, and according to Etikan et al. (2016), there are inherent limitations to this sampling technique as it could be subjective in the selection process from a researcher perspective. However, Etikan et al. (2016) added that this form of sampling could be beneficial when there are limitations in resources, time, and availability. Furthermore, the authors added that this form of sampling is useful when the aim is not to generalize to larger populations. Instead, it can capture a breadth of information that can capture the essence of a phenomenon.

Instrumentation in this research study also has limitations. The research study will utilize open-ended interview questions as the instrumentation to capture true essence that describes leader political skill and subordinate organizational citizenship behaviors during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Queirós et al. (2017) found that qualitative interviews are limited in nature because they are time-intensive and are not generalizable. The research study aimed to understand the link between leader political skill and subordinate organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The investigator will begin the presentation of the findings in this research by restating the framework for this study, the research approach, as well as the establishment of credibility that the data captured was true in essence. The information gathered from the interviews will answer the research questions to understand how leader political skill is perceived and how that impacts subordinate OCB levels during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The research data presented in this chapter will include quotes from the interviews with participants as evidence of significant findings and themes. The themes were generated from the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts to discover what emerges pertaining to leader political skill and subordinate OCB.

This study centered around qualitative questions based on the leader Political Skills Inventory created by Ferris et al. (2005) and the OCB instrument created by Podsakoff et al. (1990). This study consisted of twenty qualitative questions to attain the rich descriptions from subordinates about their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The gap that was explored was that there is little exploration of political skill relating to M&A process and whether political skill can positively influence M&As outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). The gap was explored by interviewing subordinates from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona to determine how they describe their leader's political skill and their OCB during the M&A event.

This study was qualitative with a descriptive design. The data was collected via

one-on-one interviews through a web conferencing platform called WebEx. The 10 participants selected for this study were encouraged to share their experiences openly and honestly without stating their names and the names of the merging companies involved. This was for the protection of the individual and the companies they were involved with during the merger to protect their identities. The interview data was transcribed and shared with each of the participants to allow for reflection and feedback to ensure the true essence of the lived experience was captured and establish credibility that the data was accurate. The collected data were aimed to answer the research questions below:

RQ1: How do subordinates describe their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?

RQ2: How do subordinates describe their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?

The 10 participants answered interview questions pertaining to leader political skill and OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The leader political skill interview questions centered around four categories which included networking, social astuteness, apparent sincerity, and interpersonal influence following Ferris et al. (2005) leader Political Skills Inventory instrument. The OCB interview questions centered around four categories which included satisfaction with supervisor, altruism, compliance, and satisfaction at work following Podsakoff et al. (1990) OCB instrument. Additionally, each of the participants were asked if they wanted to share any additional details before the end of the interview. The interviews were recorded via the web conferencing platform called WebEx and transcribed then analyzed with MAXQDA. In total there were six themes that emerged from this research study. The three major themes that emerged for leader political skill were (a) communication, (b) inclusive, and (c) understand. The three

major themes that emerged for OCB were (a) extended hours, (b) trust, and (c) togetherness. Interestingly, the communication theme was a common in that it positively related to all the emerging themes surrounding leader political skill and OCB through the descriptions of the subjects. Communication stems as a theme from leader political skill which would suggest a positive connection to subordinate OCB during a merger as suggested by Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017).

The investigator of this research study was committed to the protection of the subjects who volunteered to participate in this study. A general demographic data is included below this section to provide the reader more information regarding the subjects. Following the demographic information is a restatement of the research question and the themes that appeared to be of significance.

Table

Demographic Information of Participants

Identifier	Gender	Job Function	Age
Participant 1	Male	Lead	40's
Participant 2	Female	Analyst	50's
Participant 3	Male	Engineer	70's
Participant 4	Male	Architect	30's
Participant 5	Male	Architect	30's
Participant 6	Male	Principal Architect	40's
Participant 7	Male	Engineer	30's
Participant 8	Male	Senior Engineer	50's
Participant 9	Male	Project manager	50's
Participant 10	Female	Lead	30's

RQ1: How do subordinates describe their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?

Theme 1 Political Skill: Communication

The 10 participants in this study discussed their leader's political skill based on

their perception during the merger. While each response was unique in many ways, there were commonalities that emerged as significant and important. Each experience had a profound impact for each of the 10 participants, however, communication or lack thereof had a cascading effect on their OCB levels during the merger. For some, communication helped ease stress and anxiety during the merger. For others who received less communication, they felt fear of uncertainty and doubt during the chaos of marrying two companies into a single organization. Appelbaum et al. (2017) found that through communication, management support can promote trust which results in encouragement of participation towards merger activities. Participant 8 shared his experience regarding his manager's communication abilities during the merger:

He was very open to input from all of employees. He listened to feedback and was willing to give feedback, positive feedback to myself and others to help with any kind of transition or better ways to improve the process. He definitely enforced team camaraderie and gatherings, to help the cooperation amongst other teams and team members.

Communication in this example promoted participation and, in some cases, even improved merger perceptions. Friedman et al. (2016) argued that supportive communication can help merging employees identify with the newly merged company and helps lift barriers such as resistance to change. It is important to note that change resistance during a merger event is largely caused by employees becoming disassociated with their previous groups which causes stress and anxiety. Participant 7 recalled his perception regarding his supervisor's communication abilities and how he managed relationships during the merger:

He (supervisor) was good. He had a good relationship with other teams and other managers. So, what he did is, like, he reached out to the other managers and pull out the resources that he needed to get the job done. And at that time, there was a project going on, we needed some people who can work on those things (merger tasks). So, he worked with other managers, to borrow resources to get the job done.

The manager's ability to network across multiple groups to promote merger activities was crucial for Participant 7 and his group. Not only was his manager able to recruit help from other teams, but he was also able to promote cross functionality which has many benefits. In Participant 7's case, he became satisfied with his job during the merger. Martin et al. (2017) found that moderating job satisfaction is a big part of leader political skill which also included moderating uncertainties during the merger, establishing trust, and communication. Participant 6 added his recollection regarding his manager's communication abilities and how she was able to understand the merging groups:

I mean, you know, being part of network organization, you have to have networking skills. You have to be talking to a lot of the other groups and organizations out there to understand, you know, what their dependencies and what their requirements are, especially for the merger, she did a pretty good job at doing that. I believe.

Participant 6 understood the importance of networking abilities regarding communication. Leaders who possess this leader political skill can not only network in and outside of groups but also understand what each person does in their roles. Martin et al. (2017) posited that understanding people at workplaces can help a leader know how to

motivate and enhance their people towards company objectives. Participant 4 expanded on the importance of communication especially when the two companies are headquartered in separate cities:

We were, a team of probably like 10 members, I believe, and half of our team is in one city, and half of the team is in the other city. So, with the distance and all and also like, the different time zones, I think our manager was able to, um, uh, was able to, uh, you know, have the teamwork as a team. Like a combined collective effort, right? The manager had open communication and being, flexible and, maintain a good network.

Often, merging companies are displaced geographically. This can cause communication issues if the leader does not possess the skills required to bring groups together from different locations. Today, technology helps cross border mergers become more successful, in fact the surges in merger activities observed by Lattanzio et al. (2019) between 1995 and 2001 were due to the technologies available. It is critically important for managers to be able to navigate through the merger integration process when merging companies are displaced geographically. Participant 1 recalled his manager having good communication and networking skills but was not very good with corporate politics:

He, I would say, he wasn't a very good politician within, uh, within corporate politics. However, he did communicate, did do those things that that he needs to do for his job to get things done to make sure he had good relationships, within the team as well as within the other departments of the organization. So, uh, as far as describing what he did cross functionally to get things done, he would work along with the other teams within company A. I would say company A, as a company that I worked for. He would make sure that their needs were met, um, as

far as the merger goes, he would also work along with company B, as far as the cross functional team that we represent the same team that I worked for her work along with that team to make sure that the companies were taking into account the, the proper steps to make sure the merger was a success.

There were cases during this research study where participants reported their leader as not having good communication with the team. In these cases, the subjects observed having felt the uncertainties often experienced during merger events as explained by Antoine and Kleiner (2015) which often led to culture clashes. Min (2017) argued that communication positively alleviates the feeling of uncertainty among merged employees during a merger. Participant 2 recalled her manager as not having good communications and feeling that information was either false or misleading during the merger. To add a little color to the picture, Participant 2 felt she endured sexism during the merger as well as fear of job loss and uncertainty:

Okay, so my manager's networking ability during the time of the merger, if we look at networking is a good thing, which it normally should be on a scale of 1, to 10. 1, being poor and 10 being amazing. I would give him a 0. Do you want me to expand? It felt like the information that was being given to the team was coming from a good place where networking was occurring, but in fact, in retro, it was actually coming out of his or her own opinions of what things will be should be or could be. Yeah, there was definitely communication, but after the fact, and when the truth came out and light was shined on things, it was clearly false communication.

Participant 9 recalled a negative experience regarding his manager's communication skills. Participant 9 admitted his manager during the merger did not have

experience as a leader and was new to the role:

My manager had a very poor networking ability. He came, as an individual contributor as a senior engineer, and was promoted into management, without much competition. Or without much due diligence. So, he didn't have a lot of skill when it came to leadership. He did make an effort to try to, to gain the understanding of how the team was but he kept favoring the people that were in one city and it was very apparent that he was doing that. He was a very smart individual contributor engineer and had very low social skill. He was probably the lowest (social skill) I've ever seen in in a leader before.

Several participants in this study reported their manager as having good communication skills which translated to the team being able to cross function with other teams during the merger to complete merger tasks on time and with little to no process rework. In fact, eight of the ten participants reported their manager as having good or adequate communication skills, which interestingly aligns with the same eight reporting being satisfied with their manager during the merger. There were several factors discovered that contributed to subordinates' satisfaction with their manager. Communication was on top of that list. Appelbaum et al. (2017) found that a lack of communication can limit a manager's ability to establish trust which can lead to resistance to change. Communication through the perspective of the subjects in this study has had a profound positive impact in not only establishing trust, but also getting the collective together to work towards a unified goal of merging the companies together. In addition, where mergers have potential to disassociate merging employees from their groups both from a technical and social standpoint, Friedman et al. (2016) argued that supportive communication can help merged employees identify with the new

organization lifting the barriers of resistance. The subjects provided rich descriptions and examples of how their manager's leader political skill, specifically around communication which made the most impact in their experiences. Participant 10 reported that she was satisfied with her manager, stating,

We don't have any kind of fear (during the merger), like, we are professionals in our space, and he would support us day and night. And that made me really, really satisfied. He was very, very supportive. So, I was very satisfied.

Theme 2 Political Skill: Inclusive

A secondary theme that emerged from the interview data collected was inclusive. To be inclusive is treating people equally and fairly no matter what to promote participation. During data analysis through initial coding, through initial themes, and refining themes, inclusive began to emerge through descriptive words such as openness, teamwork, cross training, and encouragement. Several of the 10 participants in this study used the word inclusive to describe their manager. However, through thematic analysis, key words and phrases were grouped to form this theme. Buick et al. (2018) discussed the importance leaders taking part during the integration phases to alleviate the feeling of isolation and separation between groups. As discovered through literature, mergers can often cause employees to feel disassociated and separated from their groups both technically and socially. This has been found to increase stress and anxiety which can ultimately lead to voluntary turnover. Some examples of inclusion were given by the subjects of this study, Participant 7 was new to the team and was moved from a different team early during the merger. Participant 7 not only had the challenge of being a new team member, but he also had to face the chaos of a merger event. Participant 7 recalled:

I was coming from a different team or something at that time. What was important for me is, like, you know, to get the accepted in the new team. So, when I joined the team, I was accepted, completely as like, the new member. The manager made sure everyone knew me and introduced me to all the team.

Simple gestures like having a manager take a new member and introducing them to all the current members can have a profound positive impact as described by Participant 7. The feeling of being accepted for this new opportunity for Participant 7 gave way to his full participation during the merger which ultimately benefited the team. Participant 4 was able to find new opportunities within the team because of the merger. Participant 4 recalled his manager being very encouraging in seeking these opportunities to grow their careers. Participant 4 recalled:

My manager was open with me and, you know, encouraged me to see if I fit into any other role with another team, or within the same organization, right. If there is any exciting opportunity that I'm interested in, he encouraged me to go explore it. I think that's the case with anyone within the team. He was always trying to encourage us in different directions that might be, you know, uh, helpful in achieving our goals.

In most cases, merger events can present new opportunities for merged employees. Min (2017) discussed how if only merged employees can get passed the uncertainties, organizational members can focus more on the opportunities ahead. As companies merge, and teams combined, new roles could open because of the merger. Participant 6 admittedly recalled an instance where the team made a mistake during a critical merger task, and surprisingly the team was not met with reproach or scolding but rather further encouragement from his manager. Participant 6 recalled:

Basically, we messed up possibly bring down both sides of the airline and she, you know, basically just said, hey, you know, this is you guys have done your due diligence. You're ready for it. We have your back. It just felt like, you know, she, she really wanted us to succeed, and she shared it with us.

Continued inclusion through encouragement was apparent through the descriptions of some of the participants. There were also examples where the manager showed inclusion through promoting cross teamwork and in some cases cross training to build the teams skills and capabilities through the merger. Buick et al. (2018) found that integration groups must focus on people which includes more training to make merger activities more effective during merger. Participant 10 described an instance where cross training was needed, stating,

A very big scenario where the analysts are very intimidated. Right? Because they're like, okay, I don't know anything about this technology and I'm not going to do well, there's like, so much fear and everything. Right. Um, but I think that's where you bring those people have the conversation have, like, training where that inspired them to do that kind of work. He (manager) saw my efforts and he knew I had potential. And he basically made me the lead to train people when it came to that.

Cross training not only increases the capabilities of an employee but also the group entirely. In addition, cross training promoted inclusion. Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) suggested in their earlier study that development and training can be a source of improvement specifically in the culture integration phases of mergers where uncertainty is at its highest. However, the participants in this study shared that there was employee loss which varied across the participants, which then impacted the dynamic of the team

and its ability to complete merger tasks. Managers were reported to recruit people outside of their teams to help and to do so, had to give them training. This inclusive activity was one of many examples shared by the participants and while it would seem this was a necessity; it was clear how the feeling of being included would be perceived.

Theme 3 Political Skill: Understand

Mergers can be a stressful time and it is evident from the failure rates reported in the literature review of this study. Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017) found that mergers are widely criticized for their high failure rates. Further, Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) added that merger failure rates ranged between 40% and up to 90%. Complications such as culture clash, stress, anxiety, among others have contributed to these rates. Mahadewi (2018) discussed culture clashes as main obstacles during mergers and that this factor contributes to the high failure rates among all mergers. What became prevalent and critically important for the participants in this study was the manager's ability to understand can positively influence the merger cause. It is important to note that the term "to understand" has two meanings. The first is the manager understanding of what was being said and communicated from a technical perspective. Of the 10 participants in this study, a handful reported that it was very helpful to not have to explain merger tasks in fine detail as this would take time and likely result in frustration for the people completing the tasks. The second meaning is understanding the people and what they do. This is important so that managers can appropriately manage merger tasks, assign the correct resources, and the stress that stems from the merger. Participant 3 shared his thoughts for this theme,

If your manager understands what you're saying, you don't have to break down what you're trying to communicate to the manager. I think it was difficult for him

(manager) because he truly didn't understand some things, we tried explained to him. He did try, but of one case where it was laid out for him in detail, and he didn't understand it and then he passed it on incorrectly. That time was wasted, just simply because of that.

Participant 3 had multiple managers during the merger and the manager from this specific example was later relieved of his duties. Participant 3 added, "If the manager doesn't understand what you've said, you're at a real disadvantage." This is where leader political skill can shine in merger events as it requires the ability to understand people at workplaces from both a technical and personal perspective, which gives the leader knowledge on how to use the people resources to take advantage of their strong skills (Martin et al., 2017).

For a merger this size, it was expected that some individuals and even leaders would have a hard time grasping the details even at a high level because the merger process is so chaotic. However, it is critical for managers to understand so that the people being merged do not have to share the details which they have probably already discussed several times with other team members for many hours. Martin et al. (2017) explained that leader political skill requires the ability to understand people in what they do and what motivates them to streamline and enhance team objectives. Participant 6 shared the importance of managers understanding:

Having her understand, what's happening within an organization is, you know, merger tasks and so on, I think, is definitely helpful. Right. Kind of helps try to protect you in that environment. She understood that we knew what we were doing and kind of didn't try to micromanage. Right? Which is something I definitely like and excel in whenever that happens.

Interestingly, several of the subjects in this study noted that being micromanaged was highly unproductive. However, the term micromanage could be confused with a leader just trying to understand what is going on with a merger task, which is why it is important for leaders to have an understanding of what is going on to begin with so that the feeling of being micromanaged can be alleviated. A leader's ability to understand the team, what they do as a team, and how everyone on the team functions was one of the components of leader political skill as described by Ferris et al. (2005). There is a dynamic that is to be understood when dealing with teams and it is much more than just understanding the business aspects of it. Participant 7 described his manager's ability to understand stressful situations:

You know, again, understanding the amount of hours and effort that we're putting in and understanding the stresses of what it was that we were doing and how it was going to affect the business and being sympathetic to that and being understanding and, and not asking anything above and beyond that, um, to induce more stress. Not calling meetings every morning at 8 o'clock and saying, hey, you know, I know you guys did 10 tasks last night and you were up until, you know, 3a.m., I need you to do it again, you know, not doing stuff like that. Being very sympathetic as to the amount of work that was getting done and not chastising any individuals for any kind of mistakes.

Understanding the human side of the merger so that the manager can act accordingly was important to the participants in this study. So much so, that many the responses to the OCB questions "During the merger, describe how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with your supervisor?" and "Can you describe an example where you were satisfied with your manager during the merger?" could be linked back to

previous responses to the leader political skills questions. Therefore Martin et al. (2017) proposed further investigation on leader political skill around mergers and how it moderates employee OCB during a merger. As the investigator and performing the analysis on the data collected, answers can be predicted to the responses to the OCB questions mentioned based on the descriptions from the leader political skill questions prior for each participant. The following section brings us to the second research question for this study.

RQ2: How do subordinates describe their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?

Theme 4 OCB: Extended Hours

This theme has been long documented in literature as one of the major causes for employee stress and anxiety during mergers. In fact, the stress and anxiety levels have been some of the causes of employees choosing to leave during a merger, causing merger success rates to decline. Martin and Butler (2015) discussed how employee stress, employee turnovers, absenteeism, and overall job stress can be reduced with leader political skill. What's important for this theme, in this study, is that while each of the 10 participants experienced the long hours of a merger event, it was expected. Adding to their stress and anxiety that may have had an impact on their mental and physical health during the merger. However, it is important to note that most of the participants stayed through the merger and most are still currently with the merged company. Extended hours are to be expected even without a merger event going on. It is important to shed light and color on the type of stress the 10 participants experienced. Participant 3 shared:

I remember one case in particular, we were, we were trying to install some equipment and we had a problem with it, and I was there for 36 hours straight.

Another instance, we actually had to swap out some major pieces of equipment, and then see how well they worked. I was there for probably a good 25 or 30 hours straight on that, too. I mean, it, it needed to be done by somebody and, you know, I've done the majority of the work on preparing for it. If I hadn't done it, then I would have gotten yelled at probably.

Participant 6 recalled taking on additional roles during the merger because previous employees had abandoned their posts. Most of the 10 participants in this study regularly performed duties outside of their roles whether they realized it or not. Roles varying from additional duties and even some leadership roles that were not official or were even compensated for. Sung et al. (2017) described how new roles could cause a feeling of uncertainty due to adaptability and more duties during a merger. However, most of the subjects in this study took those opportunities head on and thrived in their careers. Most would describe their manager's leader political skill as positive and meeting all the capabilities described in the instrumentation. Participant 6 stated:

I definitely took on extra hours, uh, took on quite a bit different more roles, right? I started taking on architecture work for the team. I believe we lost our Architect, only like a week or two after I arrived, I'm not sure exactly what happened in that situation, but that's where, I think, that partnership that, you know, their architect on their side, basically started working with me, and since I didn't really have a preference either way right. I just wanted to get work done. I just made it happen, which, you know, they were appreciative of, and I think it helped me growing my career. Just because they saw that I could get done.

Another example of one of the subjects in this study taking on additional roles and extended hours was Participant 7, who recalled his extended hours during the merger but

added that his manager was understanding in that if extended hours were worked the night before, that he would not ask for more until the team had a chance to recoup. This had a positive impact for the participant as well as others in the study. This theme of understanding lead to the subjects knowing that no matter what, their leader would have their back. Participant 7 shared:

It was discussed several times during a lot of the merger activities. Um, obviously we're working a lot of a lot of hours. A lot of late nights into early mornings.

Gosh, I think it was like, maybe a month into the merger, being on site during the merger. Um, we, we had some big work scheduled for that evening. And during, during some work, one of the teammates got pulled away on something an emergency or whatever. And people were freaking out, they're like, they wanted to cancel the work that he was scheduled to do. Right? And I told them, like, I'll step in. I can do it. And I remember one of the supervisors was like, are you sure? I'm here so I just stepped in took it over and took care of the work. No problem.

In times of merger chaos, as stated by many of the ten participants, there were a lot of merger tasks that needed to be done to complete the merger. And in that chaos, what is lost are these types of experiences and examples where the employees being merged are often overextended for the good of the company. In some cases, it was for the good of their teammates. What merging companies need to understand is it is not just about the merging companies; it is also about the people that make up those companies that matter. Graebner et al. (2017) suggested that to achieve merger success, leaders must manage each team member and address issues quickly so that teams can keep moving forward. Managing the chaos is managing workers through extended hours of work as suggested by several of the participants. Even as meager as additional rest after a long

night of working can have profound mental and physical benefits during a merger.

The 10 participants in this study were dealing with airline equipment which is critical to airline operations which could impact navigation systems, flight safety, and/or the underlying technology equipment. These impacts can result in loss of revenue or worse, it could impact the safety of the passengers. As disclosed with the 10 participants, this study will not disclose information that could lead to their identities being revealed, however, it is important to note that each of the ten participant's roles within the merging companies in this study involved functions and tasks that can impact critical airline systems that revolve around booking systems to navigation systems. The stakes were high for the 10 participants involved in this study. Therefore, naturally the stress was high as well.

Theme 5 OCB: Trust

The next theme uncovered in this study was trust. The participants in this study who mentioned trust in their responses also related to positive comments on communication, openness, and inclusion when asked about their leader's political skill. Trust and showing it mutually between manager and employee can create a "safe place" as described by the participants. The "safe place" is referred to a feeling of comfort that seemed to shield the participants who reported from fear of job loss, heightened stress, and heightened anxiety during the merger in this study. Additionally, the participants in this study who reported little to no trust between employee and manager often feared losing their jobs during the merger. This is where management support comes in as it relates to leader political skill as suggested by Appelbaum et al. (2017) who discussed promoting trust and open communication can promote active participation towards merger activities. Trust is established by keeping an open communication between

employee and leader as mentioned by the participants. Friedman et al. (2016) discussed that if leaders do not communicate and offer transparency during the merger, this would often spark towards change resistance. Appelbaum et al. (2017) added that lack of communication can result in lack of trust which then leads to distrust, heightened stress levels, and anxiety. Through the descriptions of the subjects, clearer view of how the emerged themes in this study are intertwined with each other with communication at the paramount. It was also evident that if there was a strain in any of the emerged themes, issues can arise.

Participant 2 reported that her manager during the merger often gave inaccurate or misinformation to his employees and overall failed to establish trust. Participant 2 mentioned a reason for why she did not trust him due to some audit situation, “My manager asked people to lie about some audit stuff. It’s the extent that a manager would go to cover their own...” Participant 2 admitted that at some point during the merger her OCB levels were so low that all she really cared about was collecting her paychecks, “Because I have house payment, car payment, kid in college. So, I just wanted to do whatever it took to keep the job that I thought I loved.” While Participant 2 did not indicate that she ever feared losing her job, it was evident that she was doing everything she could, even taking on additional roles, to preserve her place in the company. While Participant 2 had seemingly difficult situation in her hands, she surprisingly still took on additional duties to help her cause. This would benefit the team in the long term and in addition, Participant 2 is one of several to still be with the merged company.

Many of the participants in this study shared examples of their experience relating to trust that shed a different light from what Participant 2 shared. A manager’s ability to establish trust through their networking skills, social astuteness, showing sincerity

towards employees, and their ability to cross function among other groups within the company can make merger events that much easier for employees. Stein and Cuadrado (2016) discussed intensifying downward communication to establish trust for the human side of mergers as pivotal. Participant 10 shared her perspective on how her manager showed trust in her during the merger:

Not going to brag, but I love to be the hero of the group. He (manager) let me be that. And I think that was my biggest satisfaction from him (manager), you know, like, he, he heard my input. He let my voice be there and be able to lead people. Even if I was new, even if I was probably the least experienced in the group. But he didn't let that bother him in any way shape or form. He let me speak. He let me lead the team. He let me understand the different architectures on different sides and figured out. What makes sense. He gave me critical projects even during the merger. When he probably could have given it more seasoned worker, but that trust that he had with me, I think was the biggest satisfaction I could have ever gotten.

Establishing trust was important for Participant 10, showing it was also part of the task for the leader which led her to become successful later and during the merger.

Friedman et al. (2016) suggested that trust helps employees to participate further during the merger and can be positive towards the objectives of the company which can be moderated with leader political skill. Participant 5 shared his recollection of the merger specifically surrounding how his manager showed trust in his abilities:

I joined the company, halfway through the merger, it was a mess and in order to streamline a lot of things, a lot of changes were needed, and we had at least, I had the permission to go ahead and fix where, where it was needed, so, in that sense,

he gave me that opportunity to fix those things and not have to worry about getting permission and those type of things.

There are varying degrees of trust that can be established between manager and employee. In the prior examples, it seemed any level of trust was better than zero trust. On the one hand we had a participant where the manager and employee trust did not exist, and her OCB levels appeared to be lower than the other participants. The other participants where trust was established, five of the 10 participants received promotions during, towards the end, and or post-merger. It is important to note that eight of the 10 participants are still with the company during the time of the interviews. Perhaps this is what Gerhamn and Jonsson (2017) suggested in their article when talking about trust through communication and how it can create an encouraging environment during a merger.

Theme 6 OCB: Togetherness

Participants in this study had a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, age, merger experience, professional experience, college degree levels, and job functions. While this study did not include a survey of demographics, based on the one-on-one interviews, these demographic variances had no bearing on this theme. Each of the 10 participants in this study considered their team during the merger, even though some did not mention it specifically, their actions did. Appelbaum et al. (2017) discussed how employee participation was important to establish through trust and communication with leader political skill and that employees become more willing to relate to new social and organizational identities as a result. It was interesting to find that it did not matter how the leader political skill was described or the subject's own OCB levels, the team always mattered and was always considered when making decisions for the participants in this

study.

The participants understood the challenges of merging with another company and met those challenges with success. Participant 3 shared in several instances that he worked over 20 hours consecutively to complete a merger task. He worked with at least two managers during the merger and at the post-merger phase he was still there while his managers during the merger have moved on to new opportunities outside of the merged company. Tarba and Cooper (2016) discussed manager turnover as a challenge during mergers and believed that it has a significant negative impact on merger performance. In addition, Participant 3 reported that the team at least consisted of 10 members, but because he had the most tenure and knew the environment the most, he took on most of the critical projects even if it meant working extremely long hours for the team. Others who specifically mentioned togetherness included Participant 4 who prior to the merger mentioned that the team had already a good bond and their desire to stay together:

When this merger happened, we didn't see any kind of, headcount loss. We didn't see any team members leaving out of fear or anything like that. So, um, uh, I think we really did a good job in that, keeping the team together.

Participant 2 who would seem to have had the most challenging time during the merger, also gave feedback on the bond she shared with her teammates even in the face of adversity:

I had the least amount of experience with mergers than other folks that were there. They had been around and had already gone through another merger. And so, um, I would look to them for advice, and we were all on the same page. Like, we knew what we all knew what was going on, but, I mean, it seemed to me, like, we came together as a team better, because we bonded kind of almost against the

manager. You know, we were all in the same boat, having the same kinds of issues with the same person. So, we actually bonded over being disgruntled, but being quiet, and just doing our job to get a paycheck.

Participant 9 shared a realization through all the turmoil of merger activities and the challenges of his manager during the merger, that bottom line his team was so critical that if they can manage to be successful some of the other teams will benefit as a result.

Participant 9 shared:

We were working with some technologies that were brand new, that nobody at the company, or industry had ever used it before. I think that our teams were very influential, and we were a base group, and so what we did mattered. If we weren't successful, all the other application teams were not going to be successful. During the merger we were able to implement some new technologies that saved lots of money and lots of time.

The 10 participants selected for this study shared their experiences openly and candidly to produce a collection of data rich in description to accomplish the aim of this study which was to determine how the 10 participants described their leader's political skill and their own OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Stein and Cuadrado (2016) recommended a need for qualitative studies to effectively study people factors during a merger. Stein and Cuadrado also understood the impact of a merge on the human side of the business and advocated merging companies to give more communication to the people and be more transparent. Of the 10 participants who shared their experiences and participated in the one-on-one interviews, six of the 10 perceived their manager as having all the components listed in the political skills inventory. Of the six who reported, several were eventually promoted to leadership positions during and or

post-merger. Further, all six participants from this group are still with the company today. This would indicate the positive effect of leader political skill during a merger as posited by Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017). In addition, through the chaos of a merger event, leader political skill as described by the subjects in this study had a positive impact on the employees starting with the theme of communication which has a positive influence on all other subsequent themes that emerged from this study.

The four participants who reported their leader as not having all the required components of leader political skill; social astuteness, read and anticipate situations, and interpersonal influence were among the skills that were lacked by their leader. This often led to the subjects' describing times of stress and uncertainty during the merger. Rifai and Waight (2006) found that managerial issues are a cause for merger failures which is streamlined with the discussions from Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) as well as Martin et al. (2017) surrounding merger failures. Of the four participants who reported their leader as not having all the required components, two are still with the company, one has retired, and the other has moved on to a new opportunity. It is important to note that two managers described by the subjects in this group did not have prior leadership experience. Additionally, all four of the managers referenced in this group were eventually no longer with the company during the merger and or post-merger, only one was voluntary because he found a new opportunity.

Regarding organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), the analyzed data reveals that of the 10 participants, only four had high OCB levels during the merger. The four participants in this group had shorter tenures than the rest of the participants. Of the four participants in this group who showed high levels of OCB, three of the four went on to receive promotions during and or post-merger. This indicates that the findings from

Martin and Butler (2015) who suggested that leader political skill can enhance people and motivate them towards company objectives to be true. In addition, Edwards and Edwards (2015) found that OCB levels are impacted negatively during mergers, however, some participants in this study seem to have had a positive impact on their OCB during the merger, perhaps due to their leader's political skill as suggested by Martin et al. (2017). Of the six who showed lower levels of OCB, five were dissatisfied with their manager. Of the five who were not satisfied, two were willing to break rules to accomplish the goals of the merger. Of the six who showed lower levels of OCB, one has moved on with another company and the other has retired, four are still with the company during the time of the one-on-one interviews.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive was achieved thanks in part to the 10 participants who volunteered to participate in this study. The participants gave their time willingly and gave an abundance of descriptive data relating to their leader's political skill and their own OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Of the six themes that appeared prevalent from this study, three related to leader political skill, and three related to OCB. The themes that emerged included (a) communication, (b) inclusive, (c) understand, (d) extended hours, (e) trust, and (f) togetherness. Chapter 5 will discuss the meanings and understandings behind these emerging themes including the implications of and relevance to prior literature. Chapter 5 will also discuss the interpretations, reflections, and significance from this research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. This chapter contains a discussion of conclusions for each of the two research questions surrounding the themes that emerged from this study. The themes included (a) communication, (b) inclusive, (c) understand, (d) extended hours, (e) trust, and (f) togetherness. This chapter also includes a discussion on the meanings and understandings that centers on the implications as well as the relevance of this study. Further, discussions surrounding the limitations of this study, the interpretations and reflections that consider the significance, importance to discipline, and a critique of the findings with recommendations were also included.

The 10 participants who volunteered for this study shared their stories and their lived experiences during a merger event with the investigator. It is important to note that this study did not include a survey to uncover the demographics of the 10 participants. However, through the one-on-one interviews, eight of the 10 participants were male and two were female. Additionally, three participants appeared to be above the age of fifty, two were in their forty's, and five were in their thirties. Eight of the participants began their merger journey with the smaller of the two companies while only two began with the larger company. Another important note as shared by the participants, the smaller company had a stable financial history while the larger company had challenges.

Conclusions

This study explored how subordinates described their leader's political skill as well as their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Based on the anecdotes, stories, and the emerged themes from the 10 participants' rich descriptions,

leader political skill does positively influence subordinate OCB during a merger as suggested by Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017). Additionally, the findings of this study also support Lam et al. (2017) who suggested that employees who receive social support, social inclusion, and emotional support have a lesser level of uncertainty that stem from merger events. While the central focus of this study was to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger, the findings can support and validate findings pertaining to leader political skill, OCB, and mergers from the review of literature included in Chapter 2.

Conclusions to Research Question 1

How do subordinates describe their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona? Martin et al. (2017) posited that there was little to no exploration on leader political skill relating to merger process. Additionally, Martin and Butler (2015) argued that showing consideration for employee and establishing trust can have a moderating effect on low OCB levels during a merger. The three major themes that emerged for this section of this qualitative descriptive study were (a) communication, (b) inclusive, and (c) understand. Interestingly, communication skill was a key piece of the data for all three emerging themes surrounding leader political skill. The conclusion for research question one is as follows.

A leader's ability to network is not only critical to merger activities, but also to the leader as well as the people they lead. Buick et al. (2018) stated that failure to network can lead to isolation and separation between cross functional groups during a merger. Additionally, Buick et al. emphasized that through transparency and communication, leaders can build trust among teams during merger events. The evidence from the study seem to support the importance of trust and how it is established which

will be discussed later in this chapter. Regarding networking, some of the 10 participants in this study described in their examples how their manager was able to recruit the help of other teams to complete their merger tasks. Additionally, descriptions from some of the 10 participants in this study also showed that failure to establish networking early in the merger process resulted in culture clash, push back, and/or isolation. One example described how a simple merger task resulted in a delay of over a month, because the two teams could not agree.

As stated in Chapter 4, six of the 10 participants in this study reported their manager as having leader political skill. These six participants described situations during the merger where they felt inclusion positively influenced them directly. Obviously, as the teams converge and merge together, group memberships can go through massive changes. Martin and Butler (2015) cited social identity theory in their article to suggest that group membership contributes to one's social identity. Mergers can lead to employees feeling isolated and disassociated from their teams as the merger progresses. Participant 3 felt his manager went out of his way to encourage teambuilding and encouraged the team to get to know each other during the merger. Participant 4 recalled his manager as being highly social and was able to understand people inside and outside of her team. Participant 5 shared how his manager had been with the company for a long time and that she knew a lot of people which resulted in her being good at reading situations to adapt. Participant 6 was new to the team during the merger and his manager took the time to introduce him to everyone to show warm welcome and this relieved some of the participant's anxiety of joining a new team. Participant 7 described how his manager communicated early and often which resulted in understanding people better. Finally, Participant 10 shared that her manager was always open, honest, and understood

his audience. Four of the six participants in this section later received promotions and are still with the merged company at the time of the interviews.

Political skill is the ability to understand people at workplaces and how they can use knowledge to motivate and enhance people and company objectives (Martin et al., 2017). Of the 10 participants who volunteered for this study, four found their manager as having deficiencies in social astuteness. Additionally, each of the four participants also found their manager as not being able to adapt and anticipate situations. Conversely, the six participants who reported their manager as having all the competencies of leader political skill, also reported their manager as being able to adapt and anticipate. Naturally, social astuteness would lead to knowing and understanding teams and people which would lead to being able to adapt and anticipate. Of the four participants who reported their manager as not having all competencies relating to leader political skill, the four reported that they were dissatisfied with their manager. Participant 1 stated that during the merger his team was to combine with another team, however, the manager was only able to work with one of the teams involved which caused some delays in project delivery. Participant 2 reported that employee feedback was taken but was not met with action. This led participant 2 to have perceived loss of employee voice along with her team. Participant 3 had multiple managers during the merger, he reported barriers and silos at the beginning of the merger because the manager at the time was unable to network and socialize with the other teams. Participant 9 shared that while he had a good relationship with the manager, he observed favoritism and lack of communication with certain team members by the manager. Participant 9 admitted that the manager had no prior experience in leading teams and perhaps he was not the right fit as a leader during a merger.

Conclusions to Research Question 2

How do subordinates describe their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona? Edwards and Edwards (2015) found OCB levels, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most during a merger. This study used Podsakoff et al. (1990) organizational citizenship behavior instrument that measures altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and courtesy as part of the qualitative questions. Among these, the 10 participants were asked to describe their satisfaction with their manager and to provide specific examples. The three major themes that emerged for this section of this qualitative descriptive study were (a) extended hours, (b) trust, and (c) togetherness. Surprisingly, communication skill remained as a key piece of the data for all three emerging themes surrounding OCB. The conclusion for research question 2 is as follows.

The 10 participants in this study provided descriptive examples of when and how they went above and beyond during the merger. Additionally, the 10 participants also described how they considered other team members as well as their attendance levels during the merger among other questions. It came as no surprise that I found each of the 10 participants stated that they worked extended hours during and into post-merger. OCB is often negatively impacted by M&As due to the uncertainty, anxiety, and stress experienced by employees also known as merger syndrome resulting in culture clashes (Brueller et al., 2016). However, through further analysis from the participant responses, working extended hours was not an issue. Further, the data suggests that the manager for each subject had no relation to how well the team would bond together during the merger. In fact, satisfied or not with the manager, each of the 10 participants reported working well with other team members to complete the merger. To conclude, leader political skill

had partial effect on subordinate OCB during the merger for the subjects based on the investigator's interpretations. Individually, the leader's political skill impacted the subjects from a personal perspective (happiness at work, satisfaction with manager, and the isolation). From a team perspective, the leader's political skill as described by the subjects in this study seemed to have no impact. Regardless of the subject's satisfaction of the leader and how they described their leader's political skill, the participants were able to bond with their teammates during the merger even when sexism, favoritism, and anti-social characteristics were observed.

Stress due to working long hours could affect employee stress levels and anxiety as part of the merger process if not managed appropriately by a manager. Participant 7 stated that he and his team would often work evenings and into the early mornings to complete a task. Participant 7 added that his manager was often aware of these activities and would make it a point to not overextend when these occurred. In one extreme case, Participant 3 stated that he recalled working 36 hours straight at one point, but he knew that this was a critical task and had no issue doing it for the team. To offer a little more color into Participant 3's example, he noted that there were others on the team, but he had the most experience at the company and had a higher probability for success than the others. Participant 3 retired shortly after post-merger.

It is reasonable for the investigator of this study to feel sympathetic towards the participants as they shared their experience surrounding extended hours during the merger. Surprisingly, each of the 10 participants were happy to help anyway they could. The data analyzed surrounding OCB suggests that at least four participants were not satisfied with their manager, and so, the investigator of this study is left to believe that the participants worked extended hours for the team in general.

Establishing trust during a merger process is one of the hardest ordeals for a leader to do due to the chaos that occurs when the event begins. Appelbaum et al. (2017) believed that management support promotes trust along with open communication that informs participation towards M&A activities. Additionally, Appelbaum et al. found that lack of communication can lead to lowered levels of trust which leads to resistance. In this study, 10 participants shared how they felt about their manager, their willingness to go above and beyond their call of duty, how they considered the needs of their team, the rules they followed, their attendance levels, their productivity levels, and provided examples.

The willingness of the 10 participants in this study to describe their OCB levels presented the investigator with interesting results. It is important to note that the theme of trust in this study is reciprocal between manager and employee. The descriptive data provided by the 10 participants in this study reveals and validates many of the sources cited in the literature review. For example, Appelbaum et al. (2017) found that fair and just managerial behaviors minimize change resistance. Participant 9 observed unfair treatment by his manager during the merger toward other teammates which he called favoritism. Participant 9 admitted that he and the manager had a good working relationship. However, because the favoritism caused isolation among the team members, Participant 9 reported he was dissatisfied with the manager during the merger. In addition, Participant 9 recalled that the manager only socialized with the people he favored on the team.

Along the same lines of trust, Participant 2 reported that her manager during the merger gave incorrect information, was selfish, and was manipulative towards his agenda only. This caused a clash between employees and manager which ultimately resulted in

employees feeling fear, loss of employee voice, and heightened stress. Participant 2 confessed that in time, the team bonded even closer together not just for the good of the company but against the manager all together. The team used townhalls and other channels to voice their concerns and eventually improvements were made. Min (2017) cautioned that a weakness in leadership and management can impede building of trust among organizational members. On the contrary, from the perspective of Participant 2 in this study, the group bonded together closer.

Martin and Butler (2015) stated that the ability to show consideration for employee morale, wellbeing, developing trust, creating accountability, and aligning communications with strategic merger goals can be very productive. Participant 5 was given autonomy to recommend and implement changes to processes as his teams merged. Participants 4, 6, and 10 were each shown trust during the merger; as a result, each became high performers and were promoted sometime during or post-merger. Trust can be established several ways as shared by the participants, but the constant was the managers ability to communicate. The willingness of a leader to communicate openly, honestly, transparently, and as often as possible had a positive effect. Friedman et al. (2016) argued that supportive communication from both managers and executives can help merged employees identify with the new organization lifting the barriers of resistance and decrease stress and anxiety often experienced in mergers. In addition, for the participants who mentioned establishing trust with their managers during the merger, these employees flourished.

Like trust, the final emerging theme from this study surrounding OCB is understanding, which also had multiple angles. Understanding from the perspective of the 10 participants was not just understanding people, business processes, it also included

understanding situations. Martin and Butler (2015) discovered that managers can moderate the employee turnover issue during mergers by trying to understand the employee perspective.

Participant 8 described how his manager would know when her employees would work extended hours in the evenings and would accommodate them by not requiring them to be in meetings early in the next morning. Simple gestures like these made an impact for Participant 8 among others because he lived far from the office at the time and the manager would offer work from home during these times. Participant 4 used the term flexible to describe a nature of understanding for his manager. In Participant 4's descriptions, his manager was always flexible with schedules, and she understood that the team was not only working long hours, that they were also stressed due to the complexity of the merger tasks they were assigned. Participant 3 who admitted his dissatisfaction for his manager during the merger, shared that it added to the frustrations that he and others had to explain in detail to the manager the work that needed to be done to complete a task. In this example, it would help if the leader was knowledgeable about the business processes that his team used.

Meanings and Understandings

The two qualitative research questions that drove this study were: How do subordinates describe their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona? And how do subordinates describe their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona? The qualitative questions derived from both the leader Political Skills Inventory created by Ferris et al. (2005) and the OCB instrument created by Podsakoff et al. (1990). This study consisted of 20 qualitative questions in total to collect the rich descriptions from subordinates about their

leader's political skill and their OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. The intent of this study was to explore a gap in literature identified by Martin et al. (2017) who stated that there is little exploration of leader political skill relating to M&A process and that if leader political skill can positively influence M&As outcomes. Additionally, this study explored the OCB levels of the 10 participants in the study to see if leader political skill had an impact.

This study was based on Ferris et al. (2005) leader political skill and Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), these served as the framework for this study. This study is qualitative in nature with a descriptive design. The major themes that emerged from the data collected were communication, inclusive, and understand which related to leader political skill. The other themes that emerged from the data collected were togetherness, extended hours, and trust which related to OCB. Below are the themes that emerged from the research question one, "How do subordinates described their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?"

Communication

Martin et al. (2017) found that leader political skill includes an understanding of building connections and relationships with people. Ferris et al. (2005) leader Political Skill Inventory included networking as part of an instrument used for this study to determine a leader's political skill. Eight of the 10 participants in this study reported their manager's networking ability positively, while two reported negatively. As two merging companies came together to create a new organization, it is natural that teams work together to combine cultures, processes, technologies, and personnel to complete the marriage of the two companies. Weber et al. (2011) called the integration of one company into another or the combining of two separate cultures into a new organization

as culture integration. Communication is a key component of the leader political skills inventory (Ferris et al., 2005) that spans across multiple inventory components and the participants in this study further validated this skill as a key requirement for merger success.

Inclusive

Lam et al. (2017) explained that employees who receive social support, social inclusion, and emotional support have a lesser level of uncertainty than without. This study revealed that the theme inclusion served as a critical component for most of the 10 participants as described in Chapter 4. Inclusion was found to have been used by managers in this study as part of integrating two separate teams and even the integration of a new team member. Inclusion was described by the participants in this study in multiple ways. Inclusion through team building, formal introductions, and in some cases just regular communication that kept the team up to date on the merger progress. These had a positive influence on several of the 10 participants in this study. Additionally, inclusion was also shown through conversations about new opportunities that were opening within the company as part of the merger and how some of the participants could fill them because of the merger. Of these, a handful of the participants did advance their careers furthering their growth.

Understanding

This study continued to reveal that the leader's ability to understand people at work can be used to motivate and enhance people as described by Martin and Butler (2015). The descriptions provided by the 10 participants of this study showed how critical it was for their manager to know what work was being done, when it was being done, and the level of effort it required to complete. In some extreme cases, several of the 10

participants described long hours worked as part of the merger process. In most of these cases, the manager was able to accommodate extra time to rest so that the participants did not burn out. Semrau et al. (2017) suggested that managers are facilitators who coordinate worker skills, talents, and motivation to increase team and individual performances. Several of the participants described how their manager was able to understand their team needs. Specifically, leaders were able to identify skills gaps because of the merger and encouraged cross training to bridge this challenge. This not only made it easier for the merging teams, but it also enhanced individual skills that allowed the merger tasks to be spread out evenly.

Leader political skill was discussed by Semrau et al. (2017) as a critical skillset which can be enhanced and developed to moderate the negative effects inherent from mergers. The leader political skill questions used during the one-on-one interviews in this study solidified how it moderates the negative impacts that occur from mergers. The themes that emerged from this section of the study were found to have cascading effects on the second research question which was, “How do subordinates describe their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?”

Extended Hours

It is widely documented that the merger process can be very stressful to merging employees. OCB is often negatively impacted by mergers due to the uncertainty, anxiety, and stress experienced by employees also known as merger syndrome (Brueller et al., 2016). The 10 participants in this study reported working extra hours during the merger. In one extreme case, a participant reported working over 24 hours to complete a merger task. However, not a single participant reported having an issue with extended hours. In

fact, most welcomed and anticipated extended work hours as part of the merger. The participants shared that their manager was able to allow additional rest and schedule flexibility to help ease worker stress. Management political skill can reduce employee stress, reduce employee turnover, absenteeism, and job stress according to Martin and Butler (2015). This study observed the reduction of employee stress, employee turnover, absenteeism, and overall job stress because the participant's manager had all the skills present from the leader Political Skill Inventory (Ferris et al., 2005). As a result, the OCB levels reported by these participants were high. The manager's ability to understand the situation help them make decisions that alleviated heightened stress due to long hours worked. Understanding was an emerging theme from the leader political skill section of this study. However, where the participants who described their manager as not having all the skills present from the leader Political Skill Inventory, two exhibited fears of losing their jobs, one participant reported their leader as having no experience, and the other participant reported their manager as business focused and did not show sincerity towards employees. These participants reported lower OCB descriptions during the merger.

Trust

Interaction and communication can help establish trust, as Graebner et al. (2017) explained. Of the 10 participants who described the establishment of trust during the merger, they also reported their manager as having good networking ability, social astuteness, and showed sincerity towards them. The establishment of trust through communication also resulted in employees feeling they had a voice which made the participants feel important. Communication was an emerging theme for leader political skill in this study and as a result, trust was established. Friedman et al. (2016) argued that

employees want to be engaged and involved during the merger, however, communication breakdown is found to affect participatory levels as it creates distrust and lowered performances. This was the case for some of the participants in this study and as a result, the feeling of not being included, favoritism, and sexism were observed.

Togetherness

Mergers offer a unique experience for employees to be involved in combining two separate companies into one. Buick et al. (2018) argued that failure in merger integration can lead to isolation and separation between cross functional groups which then leads to problems with coordination and cooperation. The 10 participants in this study all experienced the integration of their teams with another team. In some cases, the participants were new to the company, and some were re-organized to join other groups separate from their own. Several of the participants in this study recalled initial culture clash and resistance early in the merger. In one case, a participant reported delays in merger tasks that he considered simple and could have been accomplished on time had there been no initial culture clash. Several of the 10 participants reported their manager encouraging team building and getting to know one another during the merger. Further, several of the participants also shared that their manager promoted cross training individuals to increase team capabilities. This form of inclusion resulted in extraordinary efforts by entire teams to merge the two companies together. Inclusion was an emerging theme for the leader political skill section of this study. Additionally, some of the participants reported that their manager included them in decision-making meetings that involved complex systems being able to communicate together.

Implications and Relevance of the Study

The 10 participants in this study provided a wealth of descriptions through one-

on-one interviews which were transcribed and analyzed for themes. The central question that drove this study was, “How do subordinates describe their leader’s political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?” The gap this study explored was that there was little to no exploration surrounding leader political skill relating to mergers as discussed by Martin et al. (2017). In addition, Edwards and Edwards (2015) found OCB levels, job stability, and job satisfaction to be impacted the most during mergers. Further, Martin and Butler (2015) discussed how leader political skill could be effective in moderating low employee OCB levels during mergers. The themes that emerged from both the leader political skill and OCB sections relate to one another.

Based on the data provided by the participants, togetherness which was an OCB theme from this study was made possible by the inclusive nature of their manager during the merger which was an emerged theme from leader political skill section. Semrau et al. (2017) found that leaders are facilitators that promote worker skills, talents, and motivation to increase team and individual performances. Trust is positively and emphatically established by the leader’s ability to communicate as described by the participants. Trust is an emerged theme from the OCB section of this study and communication was a theme derived from the leader political skill section. Martin and Butler (2015) stated that the ability to show consideration for employee morale, wellbeing, developing trust, creating accountability, and aligning communications with strategic merger goals are found to be measurable through the political skills inventory. And finally, while each of the 10 participants expected extended hours during the merger process, most cited their leader’s ability to understand as a positive motivator that helped them through it all. Understanding not just the employee but also situations was a

contributing factor in reducing employee stress and ensuring the success of the merger. Extended hours emerged as a theme from the OCB section of this study and understanding was an emerged theme from the leader political skill section. Brueller et al. (2016) posited that OCB is often negatively impacted by mergers due to the uncertainty, anxiety, and stress experienced by employees. The participants in this study noted many stressors during the merger and extended hours was a frequent and common theme.

Significance and Substance

The central question that drove this study was, “How do subordinates described their leader’s political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?” Brueller et al. (2016) found that merger failures often originate from culture issues to the tune of 30% among all merger failures. The interview data revealed that the several of the 10 participants did experience culture issues, and this was largely moderated by the manager’s leader political skill through networking, social astuteness, showing sincerity, and the ability to adapt to difficult situations during the merger. Martin et al. (2017) stated that there is little exploration of political skill relating to M&A process and that if political skill can positively influence the relationship between mergers and OCB levels.

The investigator of this study was able to interpret the meanings and descriptions of the participant data and can link the emerged themes from the OCB section of the study to the leader political skill emerged themes. Manuela et al. (2016) found that one of the main challenges for airline mergers is workforce integration. This study included 10 participants from a merged company in the airline industry in Arizona. Employees from merging companies play a key role in the merger process. Edwards and Edwards (2015) stated in their study that employees who felt that they did not have a voice and or had

representation in time of mergers, lead to increased employee turnover.

Of the 10 participants interviewed in this study eight are still with the merged company. Four participants flourished under their leader's political skill and have since been promoted to elevated positions. Six of the 10 participants who reported their manager as having all the competencies required for leader political skill also reported higher levels of OCB than the four who reported their manager as having deficiencies in leader political skill through the semi-structure interviews. Martin and Butler (2015) and Martin et al. (2017) argued that the area of leader political skill needs more research to determine if it can be a moderating factor with the inherent negative impacts of M&As. This study confirms from the target population of 10 participants interviewed for this study that leader political skill does have positive influence on OCB and merger outcomes.

Limitations

In addition to the limitations discussed in Chapter 3, this study unintentionally only included participants who were still with the merged company or were there through most of the merger process. It would be interesting to compare the perspectives of the participants in this study to the individuals who were either released or chose to leave prior to the merger. During the recruitment of the 10 participants, the investigator was not able to directly engage in the recruitment of the participant due to the nature of the merger process and its complex legal bureaucracy. It would be interesting to see if merged companies, if any, would be willing to openly participate in a study like this to explore how leader political skill impacts merger outcomes and subordinate OCB. Another limitation is the fact that the participants in this study were not directly involved in airline operations. It would also be interesting to see how flight attendants, pilots,

baggage handlers, gate agents, and flight operations personnel described their leader's political skill and their own OCB during a merger.

Recommendations for Future Research

Researching mergers is important for business and organizational leaders to pivot the merger success rates towards the positive side. Martinez and Garcia-Gomez (2017) found that merging companies have a failure rate between 40%-90%. According to Nandi and Nandi Latha (2017), mergers and acquisitions from 2016 tallied over \$5 trillion dollars around the world and over \$700 billion were from the United States. Merging companies is an expensive endeavor to undertake, decreasing failure rates could save billions of dollars lost if research could find a practical solution to some of its failures. Brueller et al. (2016) argued that merger failures often originate from culture issues to the tune of 30% among all merger failures. Martin et al. (2017) stated that there is little exploration of political skill relating to merger process and that if political skill can positively influence the relationship between mergers and OCB levels. This study has taken a step towards relating leader political skill and its connections to subordinate OCB levels during a merger. Future studies should include not just merging companies from the airline industry but all industries. Leader political skill and OCB are elements of individuals who make up the company regardless of industry, state, or country. In addition, research should be conducted both at an explorational and quantifiable levels to see if leader political skill has other moderating effect on merger outcomes. Finally, research around training and development should be conducted to see how not just merging companies but all companies can enhance and develop the skills identified in the leader Political Skill Inventory (Ferris et al., 2005).

Conclusion to the Study

In conclusion, this study fortified the arguments made by Martin et al. (2017) and Martin and Butler (2015) regarding leader political skill and its moderating effect on merger outcomes and OCB. Specifically, through the emerging themes from leader political skill and OCB, the investigator of this study was able to link and associate how each of the themes moderate each other from the 10 participants in the airline industry. Additionally, Manuela et al. (2016) found that one of the main challenges for airline mergers is workforce integration. The data collected from the 10 participants of this study revealed that while there were initial workforce integration challenges early during the merger process, participants who reported their manager as having the competencies of leader political skill was able to navigate through these challenges. Further, Brueller et al. (2016) stated that personnel and workplace issues arise because of merger integration and that exploring the human side of the merger must be further researched. In this study, the investigator found that leader political skill was able to moderate personnel integration challenges through communication, inclusive, and understanding. Amarah (2015) suggested that mergers require collaboration between managers and stakeholders to facilitate smooth transition and promote growth. Collaboration requires communication as reported by several of the 10 participants. Often what is lost in the chaos of a merger process is the consideration for the human side of the business. Graebner et al. (2017) found that to achieve merger integration success, leaders must manage everyone involved to address issues quickly to maintain focus on integrating two cultures. Graebner et al. also found that interaction and communication were key components for success. In most cases, the participants in this study expressed communication as a key skill their leader possessed which alleviated most of their concerns during the merger. The investigator of

this study links communication as a central pivotal skill that leads to the inclusion of personnel during a merger when most would feel disassociated from their groups.

Through communication, the leader can understand people and situations so that they can positively influence merger objectives by knowing how to motivate and drive their personnel. The leader's ability to build a team and encourage cooperation helps moderate the culture clashes and resistance is established through communication. Finally, trust, the very foundation of any relationship to which Appelbaum et al. (2017) posited that establishing trust improves employee perceptions and encourage their participation.

Establishing trust for the 10 participants in this study was critically important, so much so that the participants who reported their manager as having the competencies of leader political skill thrived in their careers during and post-merger.

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Appendix A
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

1. Participant Invitation Process: Participants will be invited to participate in the initial portion of the study via an email communication sent by the researcher. They will be provided with a brief explanation of the study topic, purpose of the study, importance of the study, and how they study may benefit the participants. The initial portion of the study will involve a brief online questionnaire and Resilience Scale. Participants will be given the opportunity to provide their contact information if they would agree to participate in an interview via telephone or teleconference.

2. Interview Setup and Location:

Interview Location: Via Webex teleconference, with video. The WebEx interview will be recorded.

Materials: Hard copy of interview questions for researcher, notebook for field notes to be taken by researcher during interview.

Interviewer: Conrad Dela Cruz – primary researcher

3. Interview Overview:

Study purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore how subordinates perceived their leader's political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Value of the participant's information: Your information is valuable to this study as it will determine if leader political skill has positive influence on organizational citizenship behaviors during a merger.

How you will share study results with participants: Each participant will be provided with a transcribed copy of their interview data including the interviewer's notes.

Length of interview: approximately 60-90 minutes.

Process for the interview: The researcher will ask each question and provide the participant with the opportunity answer it in full and will ask follow up questions. The interview will be digitally recorded.

End this section with the question: Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

4. Consent Form/Ethical Considerations:

Cover the conditions in the Consent Form, whether they have previously signed it or not especially points such as the following.

How/if confidentiality will be maintained: Your confidentiality will be maintained if/when any information from the interview is published in the final study. If you are quoted, an alias name will be assigned for anonymity. All transcripts and recording of the interview will be housed on private, password-protected computer, accessible only to the researcher.

Their ability to stop at any time without any consequences: You may end the interview at any time without any consequences.

5. Interview Questions:

Research Questions: List each of the Research Questions separately since you will be developing two or more interview questions for each research question.	Theoretical Foundation Model or Theory: Describe it, identifying the sub-dimensions or components of the model or theory	Interview Questions: Develop primary interview questions for each RQ, using the Theoretical Model or Theory to guide their development	Probing Questions: Identify general or specific probing questions, you can use to gain additional information or to keep the conversation going.
RQ1: How do subordinates perceive their leader's political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?	Political Skill Inventory: Networking	During the merger, describe your manager's networking ability?	Can you describe an example where he/she worked cross-functionally between other teams?
	Political Skill Inventory: Social astuteness	During the merger, describe your manager's social astuteness?	Can you describe an example where he/she read and anticipate situations to adapt to what needed to be done?
	Political Skill Inventory: Apparent sincerity	During the merger, describe your manager's apparent sincerity	Can you describe an example where he/she showed

		when dealing with personnel?	sincerity towards you during the merger?
	Political Skill Inventory: Interpersonal influence	During the merger, describe your manager's interpersonal influence?	Can you describe an example where he/she inspired the team to complete company objectives?
RQ2: How do subordinates describe their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona?	Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Satisfaction with supervisor	During the merger, describe how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with your supervisor?	Can you describe an example where you were satisfied with your manager during the merger?
	Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Altruism	During the merger, describe how often you went above and beyond what was expected of you?	Can you describe an example of where you went above and beyond what was expected of you?
	Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Altruism	During the merger, describe how you considered the impact of your actions on coworkers?	Can you describe an example of how you considered the impact of your actions on coworkers?
	Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Compliance	During the merger, how do you describe your attendance levels?	Can you describe the importance of your attendance levels?

	Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Compliance	During the merger, describe how you obeyed company rules and regulations even though no one was looking?	Can you describe an example of the rules and regulations you obeyed even though no one was looking?
	Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Satisfaction at work	During the merger, would you describe yourself as a productive employee or a classic “squeaky wheel” that always needs greasing?	Can you describe an example of you being productive?

6. Summary/Closing: Close the interview ensuring you cover the following points:

1. Let them know how and when you will share the information from the study (e.g., provide them an overview, how they can get a copy of the final study/dissertation, etc.)
2. Thank them for their time and valuable input.
3. **Reviewing Interview Guide/Questions with Experts:** It is important to get feedback on your interview guide before using it for research. Identify 2-4 people to review it. This can include: Your content expert, faculty who are experts in the area, authors of articles on this topic, professionals, or people in the field you are studying, etc. Send the complete guide to them so they can see that the Interview Questions are to come out of the Theoretical Foundation and Research Question.

Appendix B
Research Flyer

Research Flyer

Nova Southeastern University
College of Education
Research Study



Study Title: How subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

Were you part of an organization that merged with another company in the airline industry in Arizona? I am conducting a research study to explore how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Participants will not be paid as part of this research.

I am recruiting individuals that meet these criteria:

- >18 years old
- Must be able to devote 60-90 minutes for interview
- Must be English speaking
- Was a subordinate employed by a company in the airline industry in Arizona involved in a merger.
- Willing to participate in an interview to discuss your leader's political skill and your own organizational citizenship behavior during the merger.

The activities for this research project will include:

- 1:1 interview ~60-90 minutes recorded WebEx session

Please contact Conrad Dela Cruz at (800-518-3965) or email cd2120@mynsu.nova.edu

Appendix C
Recruitment Email

Recruitment Email

Dear M&A Participant,

My name is Conrad Dela Cruz, and I am a doctorate candidate at Nova Southeastern University.

I am writing to inform you about a research study you may be qualified to participate in. The research is a qualitative descriptive phenomenological study on mergers and acquisitions specifically on leader political skill and your own organizational citizenship behavior during the time of the merger.

I am contacting you because you have expressed interest via a recruitment campaign (recruitment flyer response). I am conducting a study to explore how subordinates described their leader's political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. Your participation will require a 60-90 minute interview utilizing WebEx as a vehicle to capture your responses. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected during the life-cycle of the study to ensure your immunity.

If you have any questions or problems at any time, you may email me, Conrad Dela Cruz, at cd2120@mynsu.nova.edu or call my cell phone at 480-616-3962. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Conrad Dela Cruz

Appendix D
Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INTRODUCTION

The title of this research study is, How subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their own organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

I am Conrado Dela Cruz Jr. a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Kellmayer in the College of Education at Nova Southeastern University. The purpose of this study is to explore how subordinates describe their leader's political skill and their organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

RESEARCH

KEY INFORMATION

This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this research study.

- How do I know if I can be in this study?
 - o >18
 - o Must be a subordinate of a company in the airline industry in Arizona during a merger
- What am I being asked to do? If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
 - o Participate in a 60-90 minute interview.
 - o The interview will be scheduled after the researcher has obtained IRB approval. The interview will take place approximately on or after December 1, 2022.
 - o The interview will be conducted using WebEx, a teleconferencing tool.
 - o The interview will be recorded with video and audio.

Audiotaping:

I would like to use a WebEx to record your responses. You can still participate if you do not wish to be recorded. Your recorded interview session will only be viewed by the researcher and protected from unauthorized viewing. The transcribed data will be encrypted at rest and protected with a password.

Videotaping:

I would like to use WebEx video to record your actions. Because this recording will show who you are, these extra steps will be taken: Your recorded session will be stored securely on an encrypted drive and password protected computer. You can still participate if you do not wish to be recorded. Your recorded interview session will only be viewed by the researcher and protected from unauthorized viewing.

- Who will have access to my information? The researcher will have access to the WebEx recorded interview session and transcribed data. The participant will have access to their own interview session and not each other's.

Participation is voluntary. However, you can leave the study at any time, even if you have not finished, without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you

decide to stop participation, you may do so by emailing the researcher at cd2120@mynsu.nova.edu or calling the researcher at 480-616-3962. If so, I will not use the information I gathered from you.

- Any possible risks or discomforts? There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study and or any physical or psychological risks/discomforts.
- Any direct benefits for me? No
- Any paid compensation for my time? No
- How will my information and/or identity be protected? The researcher will protect the participants and their confidentiality by encrypting the interview data and password protect the access. The researcher will also ensure that only he will have access to the interview data. The researcher will ensure that the interview data does not contain the actual names of the interviewees so that it is not identifiable.

PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION COLLECTED

The results of this study will be published as a dissertation upon review and approval of the dissertation committee and the Dean's signature. The data will be analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of leader political skill and employee organizational citizenship behavior during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona.

PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

- Will researchers ever be able to link my data/responses back to me? No, the identities of the interviewee's will be obfuscated to ensure their confidentiality. The researcher will ensure all transcribed data is unidentifiable to the interviewees to protect their identities.
- Will my data include information that can identify me (names, addresses, etc.)? No
- Will researchers assign my data/responses a research ID code to use instead of my name? Yes
 - o If yes, will researchers create a list to link names with their research ID codes? The researcher will create research ID codes to be randomly assigned to each of the participants.
 - o If yes, how will researchers secure the link of names and research ID codes? How long will the link be kept? Who has access? Approximate destroy date? The researcher will encrypt the link of names and research ID codes in a file stored on the researcher's computer. The file will only be accessible to the researcher for approximately three years. The approximate destruction date of the file along with the interview data is May 2025.
- How will my data be protected (electronic and hardcopy)? Where? How long? Who will have access? Approximate destroy or de-identification date? Answer each question. The data from this research will be kept electronically and encrypted at rest on the researcher's hard disk. The researcher's computer will be password protected to ensure there is no unauthorized access of the interview data. The interview data will be kept for three years, and the researcher will only have access. Approximate destruction date of the interview data is May 2025.
- Where and how will the signed consent forms be secured? The signed consent forms will be kept electronically in the same fashion as the interview data. The consent forms from this research will be encrypted at rest on the researcher's hard disk. The researcher's computer will be password protected to ensure there is no unauthorized access of the interview data. The

consent forms will be kept for three years, and the researcher will only have access. Approximate destruction date of the interview data is May 2025.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Once identifiers (name, address, etc.) are removed from the data collected for this study, results could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

STUDY CONTACTS

Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Conrado Dela Cruz Jr via cd2120@mynsu.nova.edu.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- You have been given an opportunity to read and discuss the informed consent and ask questions about this study.
- You have been given enough time to consider whether or not you want to participate.
- You have read and understand the terms and conditions and agree to take part in this research study.
- You understand your participation is voluntary and that you may stop participation at any time without penalty.

Your signature means that you understand your rights listed above and agree to participate in this study

Signature of Participant or Legally Authorized Representative

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. I have provided (offered) you a copy of this signed consent document."

(Your signature indicates that you have ensured the participant has read, understood, and has had the opportunity to ask questions regarding their participation.)

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix E

Permission Letter to Use the Political Skill Inventory Instrument

Permission Letter to Use the Political Skill Inventory Instrument

Political Skill Inventory 1

GF Gerald Ferris <gferris@business.fsu.edu>
 Mon 10/14/2019 5:03 PM
 Conrado D Dela Cruz ✓

👍 ↶ ↷ → ...

Yes, you have my permission to use the OSI in your research. GRF

Sent from my iPhone

...

Are the suggestions above helpful? [Yes](#) [No](#)

C Conrado D Dela Cruz
 Apologies Dr. Ferris. I meant to attach the article to my previous email. Please see attached. Thank you. 📎
 Mon 10/14/2019 4:44 PM

C Conrado D Dela Cruz
 Mon 10/14/2019 4:44 PM
 gferris@business.fsu.edu ✓

👍 ↶ ↷ → ...

Hello Dr. Ferris,



My name is Conrad Dela Cruz and I am a doctorate student at Grand Canyon University. I'm interested in using your Political Skill instrument for a qualitative study to explore leader political skill during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. I plan to use the instrument in qualitative form to capture how subordinates described their leader's political skill during a time of heightened levels of stress inherent to mergers and acquisitions and how leader political skill can positively impact OCB during M&A.







I've attached the article in this email and I hope to gain your permission to use the instrument for my study.


Respectfully,
 Conrad Dela Cruz

Appendix F

Permission Letter to Use the OCB Instrument

Permission to use OCB questionnaire  1 


 Podsakoff, Philip <philip.podsakoff@warrington.ufl.edu>     







Tue 10/15/2019 6:56 AM
Conrado D Dela Cruz 


Conrad:


Yes, you have my permission to use OCB instrument, as long as it is for research purposes.

Phil Podsakoff



 Conrado D Dela Cruz     

Mon 10/14/2019 4:38 PM
philip.podsakoff@warrington.ufl.edu 

 SSRN-id1007644.pdf
2 MB

Hello Dr. Podsakoff,

My name is Conrad Dela Cruz and I am a doctorate student at Grand Canyon University. I'm interested in using your OCB instrument for a qualitative study to explore subordinate OCB during a merger in the airline industry in Arizona. I plan to use the instrument in qualitative form to capture how subordinates perceived their OCB levels during a time of heightened levels of stress inherent to mergers and acquisitions and how leader political skill can positively impact OCB during M&A.

I've attached the article in this email and I hope to gain your permission to use the instrument for my study.

Respectfully,
Conrad Dela Cruz