




Presenting a Multilevel Model of Organizational Capacities Affecting Brand Positioning of Food Companies with a Mixed Approach

Zahra. Khorasani¹, Mehdi. Rouholamini^{2*}, Shiba. Masoumi²

¹ Ph.D. student, Department of Management, Babol Branch, Islamic Azad University, Babol, Iran

² Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Babol Branch, Islamic Azad University, Babol, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: Rouholamini.mehd@gmail.com

Article Info

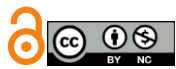
Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Khorasani, Z., Rouholamini, M., & Masoumi, S. (2024). Presenting a Multilevel Model of Organizational Capacities Affecting Brand Positioning of Food Companies with a Mixed Approach. *International Journal of Innovation Management and Organizational Behavior*, 4(3), 180-191.

<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijimob.4.3.21>



© 2024 the authors. Published by KMAN Publication Inc. (KMANPUB), Ontario, Canada. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

ABSTRACT

Objective: The main objective of this study was to present a multilevel model of organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies using a mixed approach.

Methodology: The present research is applied in terms of objective and mixed in terms of methodology. The statistical population of this study includes senior managers and marketing and sales managers active in the food industry. The sampling in this study was conducted theoretically. The sample size for the data was collected based on interviews with 13 managers from various levels (middle and senior) of well-known and active companies in the food industry. For data analysis, MAXQDA - Excel software was used. Additionally, a structural-interpretive approach was employed.

Findings: The results of open coding of qualitative data collected through interviews indicated that the initial codes were categorized into 16 main categories, including perceived quality, perceived value, brand satisfaction, company public relations, market research and market creation, production capability, company networking, organizational learning, innovation, employee commitment, the ability to interact intelligently with customers, the intellectual and strategic thinking of senior managers, the ability to convey goals to company employees, management commitment to enhancing employee capabilities, knowledge integration, organizational activities, and management consultability.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that the multilevel model of organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies has several levels of priority, allowing policymakers to focus on the more important levels.

Keywords: *organizational capacities, brand positioning, food companies*

1 Introduction

Today's contemporary world is witnessing strategic changes parallel to the macro environment globally due to the increasing competition in the national and international food industry. These changes impact the policies, structures, guidelines, and management methods of these institutions. Consequently, the performance of the food industry is also affected by these transformations. Therefore, utilizing marketing knowledge as one of the elements of modern management systems in the food industry seems crucial. This is precisely why the concept of branding in service marketing holds a more prominent position compared to other sectors and is considered a determinant factor in the selection process in the service sector (Rasooli & Esfandyarpour, 2018).

In this regard, it is believed that a brand creates value for companies by presenting a strong image and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. This is especially true because the effect of brand equity in the service sector is quite evident due to the characteristics of heterogeneity, intangibility, and inseparability of the service provider from the services themselves. Based on this logic, in developed countries, major companies and marketing campaigns focus their strategies on improving brand image and enhancing it to improve short-term and long-term performance (Thakshak, 2018). They are well aware that their brand helps market their product and sell it at the highest price because the general public has a positive perception of valuable brands. This means that when a brand has a favorable image, the purchase intention around that brand also increases (Barreto, 2010).

A brand is not just a name, logo, or symbol; it is created to represent a product or service. Therefore, creating brand awareness for consumers to better understand the company's products is essential. This demonstrates that brand awareness is the first step for any product or brand choice offered by a company. Thus, without brand awareness, no communication effect can occur (Irpan & Raspanti, 2020). It has been emphasized repeatedly that the most valuable asset of a company for improving marketing productivity is the knowledge created around the company's brand in the minds of consumers (Chang et al., 2018). This indicates that the availability of information about the company affects the level of awareness and perception of customers about the company's brand. In other words, as consumer awareness of the company's brand increases, the perceived risk associated with services decreases.

While creating appropriate communication tools to enhance the company's brand positioning and manage the brand is crucial, unfortunately, evidence suggests a lack of willingness among many companies to engage in this area, focusing their efforts primarily on improving service quality and facilities (Mourad et al., 2020).

Overall, research conducted on company positioning can be categorized into two approaches: consumer-centric and organization/management-centric. The predominant approach in previous research has been consumer-centric, examining consumer perceptions of a brand relative to competitors based on specific indicators. In this approach, brand position evaluation sometimes focuses on tangible product features (Vriens & Hofstede, 2000), sometimes on key and primary product attributes such as quality and innovation (Snelders & Schoormans, 2004), occasionally on product functionality and benefits such as durability and ease of use, and sometimes on symbolic benefits like satisfying the consumer's sense of respect or the enjoyable experience derived from using the product (Keller, 1993).

A successful brand must simultaneously pay attention to both tangible aspects (such as product specifications) and intangible aspects (such as the company's image, symbolic aspects of the brand, services) (Hankinson & Cowking, 1996). One of the intangible aspects is organizational competencies, which, based on a resource-based approach and dynamic capabilities approach, significantly impact company performance (Zott, 2003). However, very limited research has been conducted to identify the capacities influencing brand growth and development and provide a cohesive framework for recognizing brand-building capacities as a dynamic process (Ni & Wan, 2008). Therefore, researchers believe that to properly understand a brand, it is essential to recognize and evaluate the company's brand capacities, focusing on intangible aspects, as companies shape their brand positioning based on their capacities (Beverland et al., 2007). Using the organizational capacities approach as a new strategic management approach influenced by the resource-based approach in the brand domain enables the provision of a cohesive and strategic framework for brand management (Whitelock & Fastoso, 2007).

Most research on this general topic has focused on specific aspects and has yet to find an acceptable conceptual and theoretical framework that thoroughly explains the organizational capacities process based on different components in a manner that aligns with other organizational elements. While all organizations are not identical and

differences can be found in various programs and development actions of managers due to the nature and type of organizations and their strategic positions, it is due to the different contexts and environments these organizations are placed in, which influences various dimensions and impacts they encounter.

Most books, review articles, and research have viewed brand positioning from a detailed and micro perspective, such as introducing criteria for measuring brand positioning. Others have introduced systems from their perspective for measuring brand positioning. However, if an organization intends to move towards choosing its brand positioning, what path and model should it follow? What prerequisites and requirements must it consider before starting? What will be the phenomenon and brand positioning of the company, and what capacities are needed for this positioning?

Therefore, it can be said that the current research design is innovative in identifying and prioritizing organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies. The model ultimately derived from this research will help identify and prioritize organizational capacities impacting the brand positioning of food companies. Hence, in this study, there is a necessity to identify and prioritize the components of organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies.

Miri et al. (2022) found that the Servqual components positively and significantly impacted the brand positioning of Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams. The findings suggest that sustainable brand development for the Tehran-based football teams, Persepolis and Esteghlal, requires focusing on improving Servqual and its components, which ultimately leads to brand positioning and solidifying the brand's position in the minds and hearts of fans (Miri et al., 2022).

Asadi Kavan et al. (2021) concluded that structural prerequisites, strategic management prerequisites, business prerequisites, macro external prerequisites, brand personality, club symbols, sensory aspects, event aspects, fan strategies, marketing information strategies, marketing management strategies, empowerment strategies, and executive management strategies are among the factors influencing branding (Asadi Kavan et al., 2021). Rasooli et al. (2018) found that human capital and informational capital positively affect management capabilities, while relational capital and organizational capital do not affect management capabilities. Customer orientation and internal marketing positively impact market orientation. Finally, brand

management capabilities and market orientation positively affect brand performance (Rasooli & Esfandyarpour, 2018).

Azemi et al. (2022) examined customer perceptions of brand positioning for luxury fashion brands from mobile marketing: evidence from multiple communication and marketing channels. Their study, based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model and a socio-structural perspective, conducted 37 in-depth interviews with mobile customers of luxury brands in Generation Z (Azemi et al., 2022). Iyer et al. (2019) linked market orientation (active and responsive) with various positioning strategies and brand performance. Bentol et al. (2019) explored the role of routine stress aspects and performance in establishing dynamic capabilities at different organizational levels, demonstrating that the pattern of aggressive or performance routine aspects in establishing dynamic capability at the selected organizational level matches that related to operational capabilities at the same level (Iyer et al., 2019).

Natarajan et al. (2018) showed that pleasure, arousal, cognitive effort, and liking a star do not directly affect brand recall but do indirectly through character identification, which plays a crucial role in brand memory placement. Audiences highly engaged with entertainment content and characters can recall brands in the content. This engagement with content and characters ultimately leads to brand recall, allowing marketers, production houses, and brand placement agencies to target the memory of audiences of branded movies through media characters (Natarajan et al., 2018).

By examining the factors influencing organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies, it is clear that multiple factors influence it, and the impact intensity varies under different conditions. Therefore, knowing the prioritization of these factors based on their impact level significantly aids in improving organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies. Thus, this research identifies the factors influencing organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of food companies and prioritizes them using essential techniques to rank them for better planning. Given the existing gap, this research seeks to explore and examine the brand positioning of companies by adhering to a resource-based approach in strategic discussions and the concept of organizational capacities influenced by this approach.

Therefore, the main objective of this research is to classify the organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of companies. To achieve this objective, two fundamental questions must be answered: First, what are the factors influencing the organizational capacities affecting

the brand positioning of food companies? Second, what is the priority of each factor affecting the organizational capacities influencing the brand positioning of food companies?

2 Methods and Materials

This research follows the steps of Saunders' research onion from an interpretive philosophical basis, inductive approach (Grounded Theory - Fuzzy Delphi), case study strategy, and interview tool. The statistical population of this study includes senior managers and marketing and sales managers active in the food industry. Senior managers and marketing and sales managers are chosen because they have a strategic perspective on the research issue. These individuals are directly involved in decision-making and decision-forming processes related to the brand positioning of their company. The sampling in this research was conducted theoretically. The sample size for the data was collected based on interviews with 13 managers from various levels (middle and senior) of well-known and active companies in the food industry.

Each interview approximately lasted between 45 to 70 minutes. Except for four interviews, due to the interviewee's dissatisfaction, the remaining interviews were digitally recorded for coding, revisions, and feedback collection. The interviews were conducted at the interviewees' workplaces and included a series of implicit notes for each interview, reflecting the interviewer's perceptions and interpretations.

The data analysis for this study involved a meticulous process following the grounded theory approach. Initially, qualitative data were gathered through interviews with 13 senior and middle managers from well-known and active companies in the food industry. These interviews were transcribed and subjected to open coding using MAXQDA and Excel software to break down the data into the smallest conceptual units. A total of 164 open codes were identified and categorized into 16 main categories. This was followed by axial coding, where these categories were organized within a meaningful framework to establish relationships among them, particularly focusing on the central category's connection with other categories. The resulting codes and categories were further validated through iterative discussions with experts to ensure the robustness of the findings. This comprehensive analysis provided a detailed understanding of the organizational capacities influencing brand positioning in food companies, forming the basis for the proposed multilevel model.

Further analysis in this study involved several additional steps to refine and validate the identified categories and relationships. Following the axial coding, selective coding was performed to integrate and refine the categories into a cohesive theoretical model. This stage focused on identifying the core category that ties all other categories together and elaborating on how these categories interact to influence brand positioning.

To determine the hierarchical structure and interrelationships of the identified categories, the Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) method was employed. This involved constructing a self-interaction matrix based on expert inputs, where criteria were compared pairwise to determine their directional influence on each other. The self-interaction matrix was then converted into a reachability matrix by coding relationships as binary values (0 and 1). Through iterative steps of matrix multiplication and comparison, the reachability matrix was refined to identify levels of influence and dependency among the categories.

The criteria were then classified into different levels, and the relationships between them were mapped to create a comprehensive ISM model. This hierarchical model illustrated the structure of the organizational capacities and their impact on brand positioning. Additionally, cross-impact analysis was conducted to examine the strength and significance of the relationships between the categories.

Finally, the theoretical model was validated through feedback from industry experts and compared with existing literature to ensure its reliability and relevance. This multi-step, rigorous analytical approach ensured a robust and comprehensive understanding of the organizational capacities influencing brand positioning in food companies, providing valuable insights for strategic management and decision-making.

3 Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the stages of open and axial coding. The goal of open coding is to break down the collected qualitative data into the smallest possible conceptual components. The subsequent tables describe and examine the open coding. In open coding, the smallest conceptual units in the qualitative data collected through interviews were extracted using an exploratory approach based on causal, contextual, intervening factors, strategies, and outcomes levels in the grounded theory strategy. The results of the open coding of qualitative data collected through

interviews showed that 164 open codes were identified among the concepts in the interviews. In axial coding, separate categories are placed within a meaningful

framework, and the relationships among them, especially the relationship of the central category with other categories, are identified.

Table 1

Open and Axial Coding

Row	Axial Code	Open Code
1	Perceived Quality	Continuous improvement of services and products Informing about new products Service quality Close relationship between buyer and seller Brand promotion High-quality services Facilities and equipment Service quality Modern products Product quality
2	Perceived Value	Desirable and favorable features in mind Valuable suggestions Attractive promotional offers Matching proposed discounts with purchase requests Ease of product recognition Product prices
3	Brand Satisfaction	Satisfaction with service quality Satisfaction with employee performance Good feeling from purchase Meeting buyer expectations Aligning working hours with customer needs Fulfilling customer needs without delay Satisfaction with product quality
4	Company Public Relations	Customer requests Solving customer problems Quick response to purchase requests Employee neatness Employee ability to perform duties Immediate and prompt service Helping customers Friendly and polite employees Employee accessibility Listening to customer suggestions and criticisms
5	Market Research and Market Creation	Identifying competitors and competitor products Reviewing competitor product specifications Collecting and regularly organizing market change information Collecting and analyzing competitor behavior in the market (distribution, settlement methods, etc.) Transmitting market information to company managers at various levels Following innovations made by competitors Segmenting consumers and providing products suitable for each segment Using targeted environmental advertising Choosing the right time to enter the market Comprehensive and timely distribution of products (market coverage) Updating the company's distribution system Using information technology to identify the market and increase sales
6	Production Capability	Flexibility in production according to seasonal conditions and customer needs Speed of production in presenting new products Reducing production costs by using advanced equipment Increasing product quality Customizing and distinguishing product features like taste and flavor

7	Company Networking	<p>Ability to produce diverse products in terms of size, shape, and volume</p> <p>Collaboration agreement for licensed production</p> <p>Modifying procedures based on the partner company's feedback to strengthen cooperation with foreign companies</p> <p>Constantly evaluating suppliers and selecting the best ones</p> <p>Establishing long-term relationships with suppliers by providing relevant information</p> <p>Implementing a procedure for selecting suitable suppliers</p>
8	Organizational Learning	<p>Identifying and collaborating with reputable distribution companies</p> <p>Employees' proactive efforts to learn current topics</p> <p>Providing feedback to colleagues about their performance</p> <p>Encouraging employees to take risks</p> <p>Proactively collecting and analyzing information about company performance and the market</p> <p>Employees' proactive interaction with academic and market environments (universities, associations, etc.) to learn current topics</p>
9	Innovation	<p>Team-building for new product development and improvement</p> <p>Producing a completely new product in terms of taste, flavor, etc.</p> <p>Improving previous products with tangible and perceptible changes</p> <p>Improving company processes like new sales or product distribution methods</p> <p>Using information technology to improve company processes</p> <p>Establishing a research and development unit</p>
10	Employee Empowerment and Commitment	<p>Investing in establishing a modern and reference laboratory</p> <p>Employee training</p> <p>Norm acceptance by employees through training</p> <p>Specialized recruitment tests</p> <p>Designing and implementing a sales school by the company</p> <p>Type of employment contract with company employees</p> <p>Using foreign companies or personnel to train company employees</p> <p>Designing and implementing a reward system, especially for frontline employees (like sales representatives)</p>
11	Ability to Interact Intelligently with Customers	<p>Using specialized advertising companies</p> <p>Collaboration agreement to measure customer attitudes with advertising companies</p> <p>Advertising in specific locations according to customer groups</p> <p>Using a specific organizational color or company logo on all products and even distribution vehicles</p> <p>Investing in sales information systems</p> <p>Attending specific conferences</p> <p>Establishing customer clubs</p> <p>Establishing a sports team and recruiting members</p> <p>Establishing specific chain stores</p> <p>Inviting specific retailers to visit the factory</p> <p>Holding seasonal or annual conferences with retailers and representatives</p> <p>Organizing visits for specific consumer groups like students from the production line, etc.</p>
12	Senior Manager Strategic Thinking and Intellectuality	<p>Manager foresight</p> <p>Determining company activity orientations</p> <p>Manager's clear and transparent thinking about activities</p> <p>Specializing the company's business areas</p> <p>Proficiency in understanding and recognizing the market</p> <p>Identifying new ideas</p>
13	Ability to Convey Objectives to Company Employees	<p>Clarifying objectives for employees</p> <p>Using appropriate tools like meetings, conferences, and company slogans to convey the company's vision and objectives to employees</p>
14	Management Commitment to Enhancing Employee Capabilities	<p>Belief in investing in employee training</p> <p>Giving employees and managers autonomy</p> <p>Supporting employee opinions</p> <p>Managers' accountability</p> <p>Managers' decision reliability</p> <p>Managers' empathy</p> <p>Consistency between behaviors and promises made by managers</p> <p>Managers' social responsibility</p>

15	Knowledge and Organizational Activities Integration	Managers' commitment to company growth and development
		Team-building for solving issues and performing activities
		Encouraging a culture of collaboration among employees
		Encouraging employees to spontaneously share experiences and knowledge with others
16	Senior Management Consultability	Investing in new systems like IT for easy and cohesive information transfer among individuals and units
		Creating a cohesive organizational structure
		Using appropriate consultants to improve company performance
		Relying on information provided by the consultant to the company
		Utilizing previous company experiences and experiences of other companies

In the previous step, all research factors were introduced and approved by experts. In this section, the levels of influence and affectedness of factors are examined using the ISM method, as shown below.

In the first step, the self-interaction matrix of the research is formed using respondents' opinions. Experts consider the criteria in pairs to form the self-interaction matrix and respond to pairwise comparisons based on the following scale:

- V: Row factor i causes the realization of column factor j.
- A: Column factor j causes the realization of row factor i.
- X: Both row and column factors cause the realization of each other (factors i and j have a bilateral relationship).
- O: There is no relationship between the row and column factors.

The self-interaction matrix is presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Self-Interaction Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1		A	V	O	A	A	A	A	X	V	X	V	A	V	O	A
2			A	O	X	O	A	V	O	X	A	V	A	V	O	A
3				V	V	O	A	V	O	O	V	O	A	V	V	A
4					A	O	A	O	O	O	A	O	V	A	V	V
5						A	A	O	O	O	V	O	V	O	A	V
6							V	O	V	O	V	O	A	V	A	V
7								A	V	O	V	O	O	X		
8									V	V	V	O	V	O	X	
9										A	A	V	A	A	V	X
10											V	V	A	V	V	O
11												O	A	A	V	O
12													O	V	V	O
13														V	A	V
14															A	V
15																A
16																

In the second step, the initial reachability matrix must be formed by converting the self-interaction matrix into binary values (zeros and ones). The following rules are used:

If cell ij contains the symbol V, place 1 in that cell and 0 in the symmetric cell.

If cell ij contains the symbol A, place 0 in that cell and 1 in the symmetric cell.

If cell ij contains the symbol X, place 1 in both the cell and the symmetric cell.

If cell ij contains the symbol O, place 0 in both the cell and the symmetric cell.

The initial reachability matrix is presented in [Table 3](#).

Table 3

Initial Reachability Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
5	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
6	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
7	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
8	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
10	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
11	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
13	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
15	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
16	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

In the next step, we calculate the input (prerequisites) and output (reachability) sets for each criterion and identify the common factors. The criterion with the highest level is the one where the output set equals the common set. After identifying this variable or variables, we remove their rows and columns from the table and repeat the process for the

other criteria. The outputs and inputs are extracted from the compatible initial reachability matrix. For this, the number of 1s in each row represents the output, and the number of 1s in the column represents the input. The results for determining the first level are shown in [Table 4](#).

Table 4

Level 1 Criteria

Row	Output	Input	Common	Level
1	1-2-3-4-5-8-9-10-11-12-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-8-9-10-11-14-15-16-	
2	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-	
3	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-11-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-11-13-14-15-16-	
4	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-11-13-14-15-16-	
5	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-15-16-	
6	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	3-4-6-9-10-11-12-15-16-	3-4-6-9-10-11-12-15-16-	
7	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-13-14-15-16-	2-3-4-5-7-8-9-13-14-15-16-	
8	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-16-	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-16-	
9	1-2-3-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1
10	1-2-4-5-6-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-15-16-	1-2-4-5-6-8-9-10-11-13-15-16-	
11	1-2-3-4-5-6-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1
12	4-5-6-9-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-16-	5-6-9-11-12-13-14-16-	
13	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	
14	1-2-3-4-7-8-9-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-7-8-9-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1
15	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-	1
16	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-	1

To determine the second-level criteria, we remove the rows and columns of these five criteria from the compatible

initial reachability matrix and recalculate the outputs and inputs. The results are shown in [Table 5](#).

Table 5

Level 2 Criteria

Row	Output	Input	Common	Level
1	1-2-3-4-5-8-10-12-	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-4-5-8-10-	
2	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-13	
3	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-13	
4	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-13	2
5	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	2
6	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-12-13	3-4-6-10-12	3-4-6-10-12	
7	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	2-3-4-5-6-7-8-13	2-3-4-5-7-8-13	
8	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-13	
10	1-2-4-5-6-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-4-5-6-8-10-13	
12	4-5-6-12-13	1-2-3-5-6-7-8-10-12-13	5-6-12-13	
13	1-2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-12-13	2-3-4-5-7-8-10-12-13	

To determine the third-level criteria, we remove the rows and columns of these criteria from the compatible initial

reachability matrix and recalculate the outputs and inputs. The results are shown in [Table 6](#).

Table 6

Level 3 Criteria

Row	Output	Input	Common	Level
1	1-2-3-8-10-12	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-8-10-	
2	1-2-3-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	
3	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-13	
6	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-12-13	3-6-10-12	3-6-10-12	
7	1-2-3-7-8-10-12-13	2-3-6-7-8-13	2-3-7-8-13	
8	1-2-3-7-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	
10	1-2-6-8-10-12-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-6-8-10-13	
12	6-12-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-12-13	6-12-13	3
13	1-2-3-7-8-10-12-13	2-3-6-7-8-10-12-13	2-3-7-8-10-12-13	

To determine the fourth-level criteria, we remove the rows and columns of these criteria from the compatible

initial reachability matrix and recalculate the outputs and inputs. The results are shown in [Table 7](#).

Table 7

Level 4 Criteria

Row	Output	Input	Common	Level
1	1-2-3-8-10-	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-8-10-	4
2	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	4
3	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-13	
6	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	3-6-10-	3-6-10-	
7	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	2-3-6-7-8-13	2-3-7-8-13	
8	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	4
10	1-2-6-8-10-13	1-2-3-6-7-8-10-13	1-2-6-8-10-13	4
13	1-2-3-7-8-10-13	2-3-6-7-8-10-13	2-3-7-8-10-13	

To determine the fifth-level criteria, we remove the rows and columns of these four criteria from the compatible initial

reachability matrix and recalculate the outputs and inputs. The results are shown in [Table 8](#).

Table 8

Levels 5 and 6 Criteria

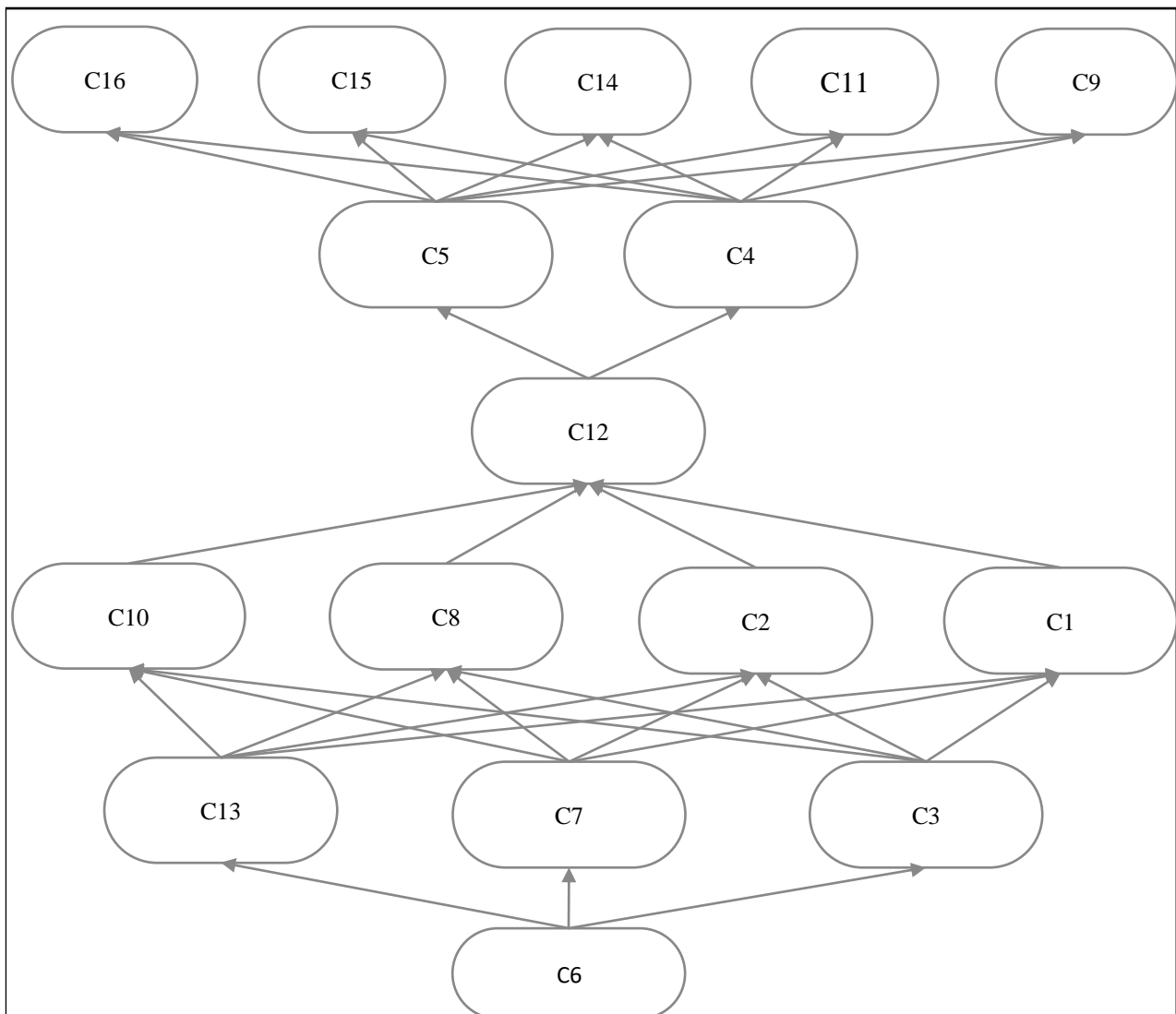
Row	Output	Input	Common	Level
3	3-6-7-13-	3-6-7-13-	3-6-7-13-	5
6	3-6-7-13-	3-6-	3-6-	6
7	3-7-13-	3-6-7-13-	3-7-13-	5
13	3-7-13-	3-6-7-13-	3-7-13-	5

In the final step, using the levels obtained from the criteria, the ISM interactions network is drawn. If there is a relationship between two variables i and j, it is shown with a

directed arrow. The final diagram created, with transitivity removed and using the obtained level segmentation, is shown as follows:

Figure 1

Final Model



4 Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to provide a multilevel model of organizational capacities affecting the brand positioning of

food companies using a mixed approach. The results from axial coding revealed that 140 initial codes were categorized into 16 categories. The findings of this study are consistent

with the prior studies (Adibpour et al., 2018; Iyer et al., 2019; Rasooli & Esfandyarpour, 2018).

In explaining the results, it should be noted that understanding and paying attention to individual characteristics and customer preferences for the required services is one of the issues that always occupies the minds of managers and employees of service and product providing organizations. Market saturation, increased competition, and changes in customer tastes and needs have posed numerous challenges to large retail stores in their activities. With the rapid growth of large retail stores in recent years, the retail industry has become highly competitive; therefore, new methods are needed to manage such businesses. The accelerating pace of changes in the environment surrounding organizations, due to the continuous changes in customer needs, has led to competition in the market to meet customer needs. In this context, stores that can identify customer needs in the shortest possible time and respond to them in the quickest manner will undoubtedly achieve success. Large retail stores seek to employ logical and innovative approaches to continue their survival and growth in this dynamic environment, which has somewhat increased in the context of globalization. Creativity and innovation are two concepts that can help organizations enhance their organizational capabilities in this environment.

Regarding the limitations of this research, it should be mentioned that this study pertains to a specific sample, and the validation results using the quantitative method were not possible due to financial and time constraints, so the results should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, participants may not have fully committed to their responses, and they might have answered the interview questions superficially. Based on the results, the following recommendations are proposed:

Having a strategy and defining long-term, medium-term, and short-term goals, in addition to clarifying the path of progress, resource allocation, and other frameworks, provides a suitable basis for measuring organizational performance. Considering knowledge as a vital factor for survival and competition, and creating a serious perspective on the use of intra-organizational networks, allows the organization to increasingly benefit from the advantages of change management, competitive ability, innovation, and productivity in the context of new investments and attracting customers.

Efficient, capable, and knowledgeable human resources form the foundation of any organization's and activity's success. The growth and advancement of employees and

their alignment with the principles of change management guarantee success. The high efficiency and capability of the workforce in any institution enable that institution to demonstrate the necessary flexibility to environmental changes and gain significant competitive advantages by leading the market. Therefore, it is recommended that food companies and their managers take steps to make training more practical, align it with the specific expertise of individuals, and conduct a precise educational needs assessment within the food companies to develop human resources for better service and product offerings and to attract new customers.

Support from senior management for optimal structural changes is one of the most critical success factors for change management, as no activity begins or succeeds without the commitment and attention of senior management.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

References

- Adibpour, M., Ferdosi, S., & Moshabaki, A. (2018). Influencing Factors in Attitudes towards Homogeneous Brand Extension the Case of: Shirin Asal Company. *New Marketing Research Journal*, 8(1), 21-34. <https://doi.org/10.22108/nmrj.2018.100221.0>
- Asadi Kavan, H., Sajjadi, S. N., Hamidi, M., & Rajabi, H. (2021). Brand Positioning in Iran Football Professional League [Applicable]. *New Trends in Sport Management*, 9(33), 117-130. <http://ntsmj.issma.ir/article-1-1611-en.html>
- Azemi, Y., Ozuem, W., Wiid, R., & Hobson, A. (2022). Luxury fashion brand customers' perceptions of mobile marketing: Evidence of multiple communications and marketing channels. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 66, 102944. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.102944>
- Barreto, I. (2010). Dynamic Capabilities: A Review of Past Research and an Agenda for the Future. *Journal of Management*, 36(1), 256-280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309350776>
- Beverland, M., Napoli, J., & Lindgreen, A. (2007). Industrial global brand leadership: A capabilities view. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(8), 1082-1093. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2006.08.007>
- Chang, Y., Wang, X., & Arnett, D. B. (2018). Enhancing firm performance: The role of brand orientation in business-to-business marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 72, 17-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.01.031>
- Hankinson, G., & Cowking, P. (1996). *The Reality of Global Brands: Cases and Strategies for the Successful Management of International Brands*. McGraw-Hill. <https://books.google.com/books?id=whCOKQEACAAJ>
- Iyer, P., Davari, A., Zolfagharian, M., & Paswan, A. (2019). Market orientation, positioning strategy and brand performance. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 81, 16-29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.11.004>
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
- Miri, S., Jaberi, A., & Ghahreman Tabrizi, K. (2022). The Partial Role of SERVQUAL Dimensions in the Brand Positioning of Persepolis and Esteghlal Football Teams. *Sport Management Journal*, 14(1), 216-194. <https://doi.org/10.22059/jsm.2021.310933.2583>
- Mourad, M., Meshreki, H., & Sarofim, S. (2020). Brand equity in higher education: comparative analysis. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(1), 209-231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1582012>
- Natarajan, T., Balasubramaniam, S. A., Stephen, G., Jublee, D. I., & Kasilingam, D. L. (2018). The influence of audience characteristics on the effectiveness of brand placement memory. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 44, 134-149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.06.008>
- Ni, N., & Wan, F. (2008). A configurational perspective of branding capabilities development in emerging economies: The case of the Chinese cellular phone industry. *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(6), 433-451. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2008.10>
- Rasooli, R., & Esfandyarpour, I. (2018). Analysis of Effective Factors on the Brand Performance in Food Industry Factories. *Iranian Journal of Trade Studies*, 22(86), 165-188. https://pajooeshnameh.itsr.ir/article_31801_d79a9383c6f865a05e8ea34dc6cd6e79.pdf
- Snelders, D., & Schoormans, J. P. L. (2004). An exploratory study of the relation between concrete and abstract product attributes. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 25(6), 803-820. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2003.08.004>
- Thakshak, A. (2018). Analysing customer based airline brand equity: Perspective from Taiwan. *Future Business Journal*, 4(2), 233-245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fbj.2018.07.001>
- Vriens, M., & Hofstede, F. T. (2000). Linking Attribute, Benefits, and Consumer Values. *marketing research*, 12(3). <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jml=10408460&AN=4449349&h=6sNXVT8HOS4YggQQnsIzdMMye7wY08ic3z5MoOGO2kpeCAQ46uGd9FB4ie9DJWEboleQngkTagTB%2FkNMXoWSrIQ%3D%3D&crl=c>
- Whitelock, J., & Fastoso, F. (2007). Understanding international branding: defining the domain and reviewing the literature. *International Marketing Review*, 24(3), 252-270. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330710755285>
- Zott, C. (2003). Dynamic capabilities and the emergence of intraindustry differential firm performance: insights from a simulation study. *Strategic management journal*, 24(2), 97-125. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.288>