





Validation of the Brand Reconstruction Model of Refah Bank of Workers

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, with the rapid advancement of digital technologies, the transformation of customer behavioral patterns, the emergence of new fintech companies, and the increasing level of transparency in the expectations of key stakeholders, the banking industry has come under greater pressure to maintain and strengthen its brand position. These challenges have not only intensified competition but have also underscored the necessity of brand reconstruction as a vital strategic approach. Brand reconstruction, as a powerful tool, plays a fundamental role in ensuring the sustainable success of businesses and preserving their competitive advantage, especially in dynamic environments such as banking, which require continuous adaptation to change. The objective of this research was to determine the validity of the brand reconstruction model of Refah Bank of Workers. This study, based on its purpose, was applied research conducted using a survey method. The statistical population consisted of deputy managers and managers of Refah Bank of Workers across the country, totaling 1,200 individuals, from which a sample of 291 respondents was selected according to the Morgan table using cluster sampling. The data collection instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. Validity and reliability were confirmed using convergent and discriminant validity criteria and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.983. For data analysis, SmartPLS 3 software and structural equation modeling were employed. As a result, the GOF value was 0.605, indicating that the designed model possesses appropriate validity.

Keywords: brand, brand reconstruction, Refah Bank of Workers, model validity

Introduction

In recent years, rebranding has emerged as one of the most complex and strategically significant processes in organizational brand management, particularly in sectors where trust, long-term relationships, and service quality shape customer expectations, such as the banking industry. With increasing competition, the diffusion of digital technologies, disruptive market forces, and dramatically shifting consumer behaviors, financial institutions have been compelled to revisit and reconstruct their brand identity, brand equity, and customer experience strategies (1). The global landscape of branding has undergone profound transformation, driven by rapid technological advancement, heightened awareness of service quality, and the growing necessity for institutions to distinguish themselves in a highly saturated marketplace (2). In this evolving environment, banks must respond not simply by



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refining visual identity elements but also by restructuring internal processes, improving customer interfaces, and redefining the strategic role of their brand in shaping organizational performance (3).

Rebranding in the banking sector is especially critical due to the service-based nature of financial activities and the high level of customer involvement in long-term decision-making. Previous research has demonstrated that brand repositioning, brand revitalization, and brand restructuring have strong effects on customer loyalty, perceived value, and trust, which collectively determine the long-term sustainability of financial institutions (4). As corporate rebranding becomes an organizational imperative rather than an isolated marketing tactic, scholars emphasize its multidimensional nature, encompassing strategic communication, identity renewal, cultural realignment, and corporate governance practices (5). In service industries, where intangible value propositions dominate, rebranding serves as a mechanism for restoring customer confidence, responding to crises, and reinforcing the symbolic meaning of the brand within society (6).

The challenges of rebranding are not solely external but are deeply embedded in organizational structures. Studies on organizational culture, human resource empowerment, and brand identity co-creation reveal that successful rebranding requires internal alignment and employee participation in shaping brand meaning (7). Employees are central actors in rebranding outcomes because they interact directly with customers and embody the promises conveyed by the new brand identity. Banking institutions that ignore the role of employees in the rebranding journey risk inconsistencies between brand claims and customer experience, which ultimately weakens brand trust (8). Accordingly, comprehensive brand rebuilding efforts frequently rely on internal communication frameworks, leadership engagement, and participatory culture development (9).

At the market level, rebranding is influenced by structural changes in the financial services environment, including digitalization, online service adoption, and competitive pressures from fintech actors. Evidence indicates that digital transformation reshapes customer expectations regarding ease of access, service reliability, and personalized banking experiences (10). In particular, online service rebranding has been shown to significantly enhance customer satisfaction and service delivery in banking, thereby reinforcing the need for strategic identity renewal as part of broader digital development initiatives (11). Similarly, the emergence of disruptive digital business models, particularly in developing economies, has forced banks to reconsider their brand positioning as customers increasingly compare financial services not only against traditional competitors but also against technology firms with superior digital interfaces (12).

Within the Iranian banking context, research on brand recovery, brand revitalization, and brand identity design has gained momentum. Studies have demonstrated that Iranian banks face unique challenges associated with regulatory constraints, cultural expectations, political-economic fluctuations, and evolving customer demands (13). Efforts to enhance brand equity in Iranian banks frequently emphasize strategic brand communication, organizational culture improvement, environmental adaptation, and customer-centric brand practices (14). Brand management studies in Mellat Bank, Bank Melli, Bank Saderat, and other major Iranian institutions highlight the importance of integrating cultural elements, technological advancement, and innovation in brand-building efforts (15-17). These findings collectively underscore that banks must design rebranding strategies tailored to local needs while remaining aligned with global branding trends.

Rebranding processes have been extensively examined through global case studies. For example, the repositioning of Banco Inter in Brazil demonstrated how rebranding could serve as a catalyst for digital transformation and expansion into new market segments (18). In Europe, the Addiko Bank case highlighted the

importance of reputation management, customer trust recovery, and brand repositioning following organizational crises (19). Similarly, in Iceland, post-crisis bank rebranding illustrated the role of identity reconstruction in restoring public trust after systemic financial failures (6). In the Middle East, the national brand rejuvenation patterns in Syria and the rebranding initiatives in UAE Islamic banks further illustrate the strategic depth required for rebranding in culturally sensitive financial markets (8, 20).

Rebranding efforts also respond to crises triggered by external events, regulatory changes, or organizational misconduct. The case of Swiss franc loan controversies in Poland emphasizes how rebranding can be employed to mitigate reputational damage and regain customer confidence following legal or financial disputes (21). Furthermore, market integration and macroeconomic policy shifts, such as those discussed in the Capital Markets Union rebranding study, demonstrate how rebranding can reflect structural reorientation at the national or supranational level (22). These broader contexts reaffirm that rebranding is not merely a visual redesign but an integrated strategic response to economic, technological, and reputational challenges.

Customers' perceptions are central to rebranding outcomes. Research shows that brand image, perceived quality, and emotional associations significantly influence customers' purchase intentions and loyalty behaviors in financial and digital services (23, 24). Customer-centric rebranding requires understanding customer concerns, motivations, and decision-making processes, which shape expectations regarding service reliability, transparency, and brand authenticity (25). Social and environmental responsibility is increasingly recognized as a core component of brand value and an essential factor in customer trust, particularly in the banking sector, where customers seek socially responsible financial partners (26). As such, rebranding initiatives must incorporate sustainability messaging, transparency, and ethical commitments, which are central to corporate legitimacy (27).

Rebranding strategies operate through multiple organizational dimensions, including leadership, employee development, technological modernization, environmental adaptation, cultural enrichment, and competitive capability enhancement. Effective brand reconstruction in banks involves improving internal culture, empowering employees, enhancing the physical and visual environment of branches, and ensuring consistent brand experience across touchpoints (14, 28). Digitalization also requires rethinking technological infrastructure, as updated technology is crucial for ensuring that the new brand identity is reflected in service delivery and customer interaction practices (29). Similarly, forward-looking leadership significantly supports organizational readiness for rebranding and ensures that the process is aligned with long-term strategic goals (30). Organizations that maintain strong monitoring, feedback systems, and customer-orientation tendencies can achieve better alignment between rebranding objectives and customer expectations (10, 31).

International experiences reinforce the idea that rebranding requires carefully balancing continuity and change. Studies on corporate identity evolution argue that while rebranding should refresh the brand, it must retain familiar elements that preserve brand recognition and emotional customer connections (32). Research on country-of-origin effects further demonstrates that national perception and cultural context also shape the success of corporate rebranding in global markets (2). Furthermore, scholarly work on customer experience models in banking emphasizes that customer-centric rebranding strategies must incorporate service quality, transparency, and social responsibility to remain effective in competitive markets (25).

In the context of Iranian banking, where political, economic, and cultural factors influence customer expectations, brand reconstruction must be grounded in comprehensive models that integrate environmental adaptation, customer understanding, strategic change, and organizational restructuring. Studies on the Iranian automotive and

banking industries show that brand decline and brand revitalization occur through identifiable stages involving environmental shifts, competitive pressures, and customer dissatisfaction (26, 28). Therefore, brand reconstruction in Iran must be rooted in systemic analysis, organizational culture development, and the enhancement of internal capabilities (15).

Given these extensive findings across international and domestic studies, it becomes evident that a comprehensive, context-specific, and empirically validated model is essential for understanding how brand reconstruction can support the long-term development of banks operating in rapidly evolving environments. Accordingly, the aim of the present study is to determine the validity of a comprehensive model for brand reconstruction at Refah Kargaran Bank.

Methods and Materials

The present research was designed and conducted as a quantitative study with the aim of determining the validity of the brand reconstruction model of Refah Bank of Workers. Since the purpose of the study was to test hypotheses and examine the relationships between the variables of the conceptual model, a deductive research approach was adopted. Such an approach enabled the collection of reliable quantitative data and the application of statistical analyses for model validation, aligning with the research objectives concerning the measurement and confirmation of the conceptual structure.

The statistical population of this study consisted of all managers, deputy managers, and branch heads of Refah Bank of Workers. Given the wide geographical distribution of the research population, which included all managers, deputy managers, and branch heads of Refah Bank of Workers across the country (approximately 1,200 individuals), a multistage cluster sampling method with proportional allocation was employed. In the first stage, the country was divided into five geographical regions: northwest, northeast, central, southern, and western. Each region was considered a cluster. In the second stage, based on the approximate share of each cluster (region) from the entire population, the required sample size for each region was determined using proportional allocation. In the third stage, within each region, simple random sampling was conducted among managers, deputy managers, and heads of branches selected from Refah Bank of Workers. To determine the overall sample size, based on the Morgan table, 291 individuals were selected from the statistical population of 1,200. The table below presents the distribution of the population and the sample.

The research timeline was considered cross-sectional, meaning that the data were collected within a specific and relatively short period, corresponding to the years 2023–2025. This approach allowed for the assessment of the current situation and validation of the model within a defined timeframe and was consistent with the research objectives, which focused on validating the conceptual model.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts. Content validity was examined both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the qualitative assessment, experts' feedback regarding the clarity, accuracy, and relevance of each item to the research objectives was collected, and the questionnaire was revised accordingly. In the quantitative assessment, the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and the Content Validity Index (CVI) were used. Each item was evaluated by experts using a three-point scale ("necessary," "useful but not necessary," and "unnecessary"). The results indicated that all items had a CVR greater than 0.62 and a CVI greater than 0.79, demonstrating acceptable content validity. Additionally, construct validity was assessed using factor analysis within

the framework of structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine convergent and discriminant validity and confirm the conceptual structure of the model.

Regarding instrument reliability, the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Cronbach's alpha was employed to measure the internal consistency of the items and showed that the questionnaire items exhibited strong inter-item correlations. Composite reliability was calculated using SmartPLS and exceeded 0.70 for all constructs, indicating strong internal consistency and high reliability of the measurement instrument. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as 0.971, demonstrating high dependability for testing the model's hypotheses.

The collected data were analyzed using two types of statistical methods: descriptive and inferential statistics. In the descriptive analysis, indicators such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to provide an overview of the statistical population and the characteristics of the respondents. This analysis enabled the researcher to identify the data distribution and characteristics of the sample and provided preliminary information for inferential analyses. Inferential analyses were conducted using SmartPLS software and the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique. This method allowed the simultaneous examination of relationships among the model variables, assessment of the constructs' validity and reliability, and validation of the conceptual model. Due to its capability to process complex models with first- and second-order constructs, SEM was suitable for this study. Through this analysis, the researcher was able to assess the model's goodness of fit and evaluate the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable, thereby testing the research hypotheses.

Findings and Results

The research sample consisted of 291 employees, the vast majority of whom (98.6%, equivalent to 287 individuals) were male, while only 1.4% (4 individuals) were female. Regarding educational level, 72.5% (211 respondents) held a bachelor's degree or lower, and 27.5% (80 respondents) held a master's degree or higher. In terms of age distribution, 52.9% of respondents were 40 years old or younger, 33.3% were between 41 and 45 years old, and 13.7% were above 45 years of age. Additionally, with respect to work experience, 48.8% had up to 15 years of service, 33% had between 16 and 20 years, and 18.2% had more than 20 years of experience. This composition reflects a predominantly male and relatively young population (more than half under 40 years old), with moderate to high educational levels and moderate work experience (nearly half with up to 15 years), which imposes specific characteristics on the subsequent analyses of the research.

To assess the construct validity of the questionnaire, confirmatory factor analysis was employed. For model validation, structural equation modeling (SEM) using the partial least squares method and SmartPLS 3 software was applied. To justify the use of this test, skewness and kurtosis values were examined, indicating that the variable was non-normal. To assess the reliability of the outer model, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability criteria were utilized.

Table 1. Results of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7	Composite Reliability > 0.7	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5
Change in Competitive Position	0.957	0.961	0.694
Customer Identification and Understanding	0.856	0.894	0.584
Customer Interaction and Close Communication	0.933	0.947	0.749
Creative Marketing and Advertising	0.923	0.937	0.680

Development of Competitive Capability	0.929	0.940	0.613
Adaptation to External Environment	0.929	0.938	0.713
Social and Environmental Responsibility	0.879	0.912	0.676
Collaboration and Interaction with the Environment	0.839	0.886	0.609
Systemic Environmental Analysis and Understanding	0.911	0.930	0.655
Change in Strategy	0.929	0.937	0.655
Creation of a Rich Organizational Culture	0.884	0.920	0.743
Empowerment and Human Resource Development	0.886	0.911	0.595
Strengthening the Physical and Visual Environment	0.831	0.882	0.602
Diversity and Breadth in Services	0.837	0.881	0.555
Change in Ownership Structure	0.962	0.964	0.694
Systemic Monitoring and Feedback	0.932	0.946	0.746
Use of Updated Technology	0.925	0.941	0.726
Future-Oriented Management and Leadership	0.943	0.951	0.617
Customer Orientation and Need-Centeredness	0.890	0.914	0.604
Brand Reconstruction of Refah Bank	0.983	0.983	0.817

As shown, the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all variables are acceptable and above 0.70. Additionally, the AVE values of all variables exceed the threshold of 0.50. Therefore, it can be inferred that the reliability and convergent validity of the studied variables are acceptable and satisfactory.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Results (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Var	CCP	CIU	CIC	CMA	DCC	AEE	SER	CIE	SEA	CS	ROC	HRD	PVE	DBS	COS	SMF	UTT	FML	CON
CCP	0.833	0.614	0.628	0.642	0.691	0.712	0.603	0.587	0.621	0.781	0.566	0.573	0.551	0.532	0.826	0.612	0.641	0.622	0.658
CIU	0.614	0.764	0.653	0.667	0.621	0.598	0.611	0.589	0.573	0.612	0.587	0.594	0.566	0.551	0.604	0.583	0.601	0.574	0.643
CIC	0.628	0.653	0.865	0.712	0.701	0.644	0.631	0.662	0.648	0.693	0.659	0.642	0.611	0.598	0.677	0.659	0.701	0.688	0.723
CMA	0.642	0.667	0.712	0.825	0.718	0.623	0.644	0.601	0.594	0.663	0.638	0.621	0.592	0.583	0.689	0.633	0.701	0.672	0.718
DCC	0.691	0.621	0.701	0.718	0.783	0.645	0.628	0.602	0.621	0.674	0.641	0.627	0.598	0.571	0.721	0.651	0.677	0.652	0.702
AEE	0.712	0.598	0.644	0.623	0.645	0.845	0.682	0.671	0.698	0.721	0.644	0.638	0.601	0.584	0.744	0.662	0.673	0.641	0.694
SER	0.603	0.611	0.631	0.644	0.628	0.682	0.822	0.694	0.663	0.618	0.671	0.633	0.591	0.574	0.686	0.652	0.659	0.622	0.681
CIE	0.587	0.589	0.662	0.601	0.602	0.671	0.694	0.780	0.649	0.603	0.661	0.612	0.579	0.561	0.674	0.633	0.647	0.629	0.669
SEA	0.621	0.573	0.648	0.594	0.621	0.698	0.663	0.649	0.809	0.682	0.672	0.628	0.612	0.594	0.711	0.623	0.644	0.601	0.688
CS	0.781	0.612	0.693	0.663	0.674	0.721	0.618	0.603	0.682	0.809	0.637	0.628	0.593	0.571	0.792	0.662	0.681	0.649	0.713
ROC	0.566	0.587	0.659	0.638	0.641	0.644	0.671	0.661	0.672	0.637	0.862	0.674	0.612	0.598	0.699	0.633	0.672	0.656	0.701
HRD	0.573	0.594	0.642	0.621	0.627	0.638	0.633	0.612	0.628	0.628	0.674	0.772	0.589	0.577	0.687	0.621	0.641	0.629	0.683
PVE	0.551	0.566	0.611	0.592	0.598	0.601	0.591	0.579	0.612	0.593	0.612	0.589	0.776	0.571	0.663	0.598	0.621	0.603	0.667
DBS	0.532	0.551	0.598	0.583	0.571	0.584	0.574	0.561	0.594	0.571	0.598	0.577	0.571	0.745	0.654	0.577	0.593	0.582	0.627
COS	0.826	0.604	0.677	0.689	0.721	0.744	0.686	0.674	0.711	0.792	0.699	0.687	0.663	0.654	0.833	0.672	0.694	0.662	0.721
SMF	0.612	0.583	0.659	0.633	0.651	0.662	0.652	0.633	0.623	0.662	0.633	0.621	0.598	0.577	0.672	0.864	0.701	0.674	0.689
UTT	0.641	0.601	0.701	0.701	0.677	0.673	0.659	0.647	0.644	0.681	0.672	0.641	0.621	0.593	0.694	0.701	0.852	0.692	0.713
FML	0.622	0.574	0.688	0.672	0.652	0.641	0.622	0.629	0.601	0.649	0.656	0.629	0.603	0.582	0.662	0.674	0.692	0.785	0.671
CON	0.658	0.643	0.723	0.718	0.702	0.694	0.681	0.669	0.688	0.713	0.701	0.683	0.667	0.627	0.721	0.689	0.713	0.671	0.777

CCP: Change in Competitive Position; CIU: Customer Identification & Understanding; CIC: Customer Interaction & Close Communication; CMA: Creative Marketing & Advertising; DCC: Development of Competitive Capability; AEE: Adaptation to External Environment; SER: Social & Environmental Responsibility; CIE: Collaboration & Interaction with Environment; SEA: Systemic Environmental Analysis & Understanding; CS: Change in Strategy; ROC: Rich Organizational Culture; HRD: Empowerment & Human Resource Development; PVE: Strengthening Physical & Visual Environment; DBS: Diversity & Breadth in Services; COS: Change in Ownership Structure; SMF: Systemic Monitoring & Feedback; UTT: Use of Updated Technology; FML: Future-Oriented Management & Leadership; CON: Customer Orientation & Need-Centeredness.

As observed, the square root of the AVE values of the latent variables, which appear in the diagonal cells of the matrix, is greater than the correlations among them, which appear in the lower-left cells. Therefore, it can be stated that in the above model, the constructs (latent variables) interact more strongly with their own indicators than with other constructs. In other words, the discriminant validity of the model is adequate.

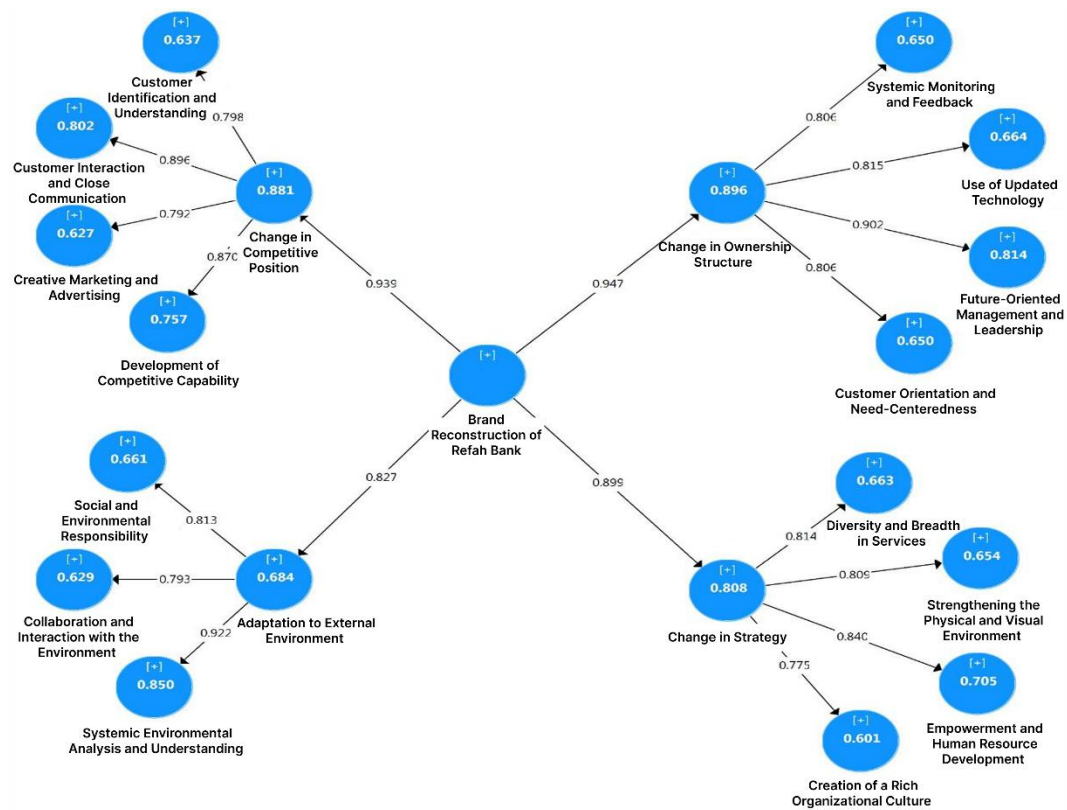


Figure 1. Standardized Path Coefficients in the Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

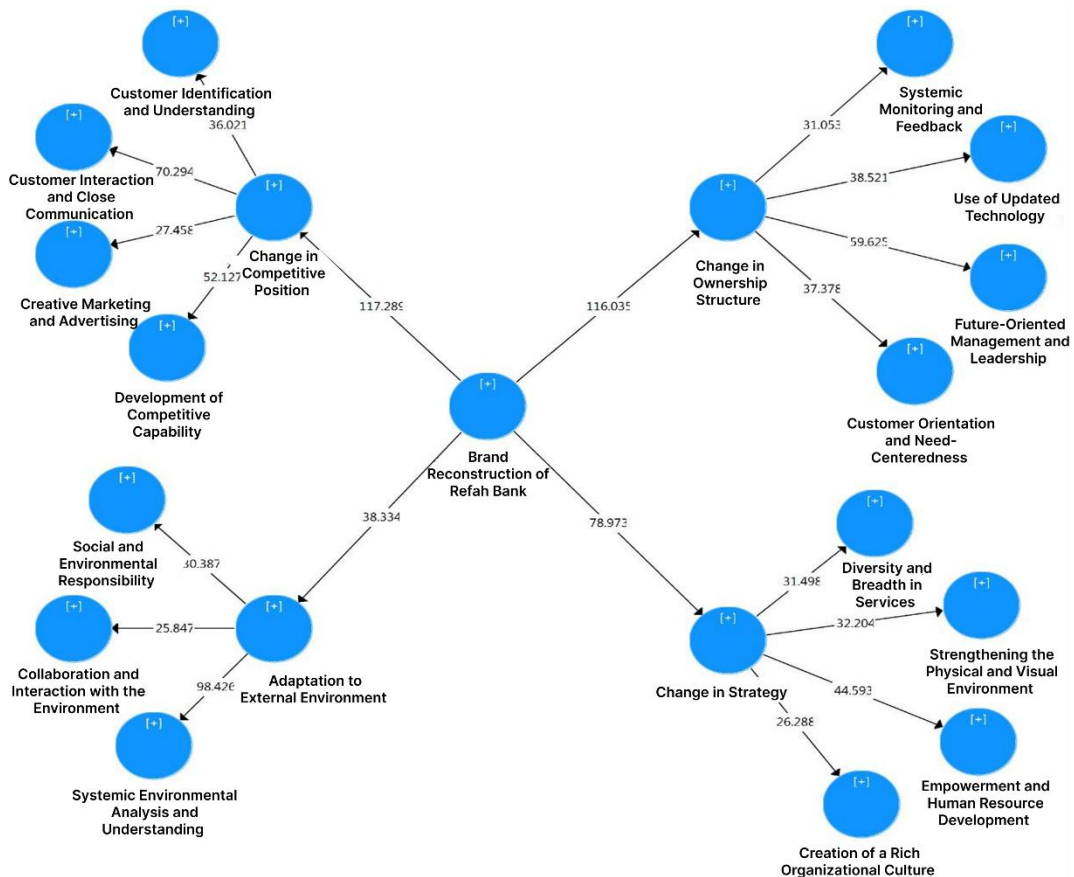


Figure 2. T-Statistics of Path Coefficients in the Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

Table 3. Model Fit Indices with Path Coefficients and T-Values for Relationships Between Variables

Paths	Path Coefficient	T-Value	Significance Level	Dependent Variable R ²	Dependent Variable Q ²
Brand Reconstruction → Change in Competitive Position	0.939	117.28	0.00	0.881	0.394
Brand Reconstruction → Adaptation to External Environment	0.827	38.33	0.00	0.684	0.312
Brand Reconstruction → Change in Strategy	0.899	78.97	0.00	0.808	0.317
Brand Reconstruction → Change in Ownership Structure	0.947	116.03	0.00	0.896	0.408

GOF = $\sqrt{((\text{Communalities} \times R^2))} = \sqrt{(0.510 \times 0.718)} = 0.605$; SRMR = 0.09

As shown in the table above, brand reconstruction at Refah Bank has been examined from four dimensions or factors (change in competitive position, change in external environment, change in strategy, and change in ownership structure). The T-values and significance levels determine whether these components are confirmed or rejected. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the relationships between the variables are statistically significant. It is noteworthy that each of the four mentioned factors includes several sub-components, all of which demonstrated statistically significant relationships with their respective primary constructs ($p < .05$).

To examine the model's goodness of fit in the partial least squares method, the GOF criterion is used. The GOF index was developed by Tenenhaus et al. (2004), and it is calculated using the formula provided in the table. Values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36 are introduced as weak, moderate, and strong levels of GOF, respectively. As shown in the table above, the GOF value of 0.605 was obtained, which—based on the stated classification—indicates a strong model fit. Additionally, the SRMR index is within an acceptable and desirable range. Therefore, the proposed model for brand reconstruction at Refah Bank is appropriate and demonstrates strong explanatory power.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to validate a comprehensive model for the brand reconstruction of Refah Kargaran Bank, incorporating multidimensional indicators related to competitive repositioning, environmental adaptation, strategic transformation, and ownership structure. The empirical findings demonstrate that brand reconstruction exerts a strong and statistically significant influence on these four dimensions, with path coefficients exceeding 0.82 in all cases. The model exhibited excellent reliability and validity, confirmed by high Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values, as well as robust convergent and discriminant validity indexes. The GOF value of 0.605 further indicates a strong level of model fit, verifying that the proposed conceptual framework effectively captures the structural relationships required for successful brand rebuilding within the banking sector.

The significant relationship between brand reconstruction and change in competitive position aligns with research emphasizing that rebranding is a strategic response to intense market competition, digital disruption, and evolving customer expectations. Prior studies in various banking contexts confirm that rebranding enhances competitive strength and improves brand presence in markets undergoing substantial transformation (13, 31). For example, investigations into commercial banks in Iran show that rebranding contributes to renewed brand equity and strengthens competitive differentiation in environments characterized by technological advancement and regulatory pressures (14). Similarly, research on international institutions such as Banco Intermedium (Banco Inter) demonstrates that brand repositioning supports organizational transition toward digital banking and facilitates competitive expansion (18). These findings resonate with the present study's results, which show that brand

reconstruction significantly enhances Refah Kargaran Bank's ability to reposition itself in a highly dynamic financial market.

The strong effect of brand reconstruction on adaptation to the external environment reflects the rapidly changing conditions of contemporary banking markets. Consistent with earlier studies on Iranian and international banking institutions, environmental adaptation emerges as a central requirement for maintaining brand relevance amid regulatory changes, economic fluctuations, and technological disruptions (3, 16). Research on the rebranding of financial organizations during national or global crises also underscores the strategic necessity of environmental scanning and adaptation for maintaining customer trust (6). Studies from Kenya, Ghana, and the broader African financial sector likewise indicate that rebranding enables banks to respond to competitive pressures and shifting customer expectations in ways that enhance overall performance (31, 33, 34). These perspectives support the present findings that rebranding at Refah Kargaran Bank promotes greater alignment with external environmental conditions, facilitating improved responsiveness to market changes.

Furthermore, the results reveal that brand reconstruction significantly influences strategic transformation within the organization. This relationship is consistent with theoretical and empirical work demonstrating that rebranding often initiates or accompanies fundamental strategic change, affecting organizational mission, vision, and operational priorities (5, 32). For example, case studies of Indian banks highlight the transformative nature of rebranding, showing how institutions undergoing brand renewal frequently revise their service offerings, restructure operations, and reposition themselves to achieve greater strategic clarity (35). Studies in the tourism and hospitality sectors further underscore that rebranding supports long-term strategic strengthening and resilience in service-oriented organizations (30). The present study's findings therefore affirm that brand reconstruction serves as a catalyst for strategic reorientation within Refah Kargaran Bank.

The fourth major result—the strong relationship between brand reconstruction and changes in ownership structure—provides an important contribution to the understanding of banking brand dynamics in the Iranian context. Previous studies attest that ownership structure influences public perception, organizational legitimacy, and brand reputation (17). Research on corporate identity restructuring and rebranding processes also emphasizes that modifications in ownership or governance require clear brand communication and repositioning strategies to maintain customer trust (22). International evidence, such as the rebranding of Icelandic banks following the financial crisis, suggests that ownership changes often demand comprehensive brand rebuilding to restore institutional legitimacy (6). This supports the present findings that organizational ownership transitions at Refah Kargaran Bank necessitate deliberate brand reconstruction to preserve trust and reinforce internal and external perceptions of stability.

In addition to validating the relationships between major structural components of the model, the study contributes to the broader literature on rebranding by demonstrating that customer-related constructs—such as customer identification, customer interaction, and customer-centeredness—play a vital role in the success of brand reconstruction. These results align with several studies emphasizing that customer experience and customer understanding must lie at the core of rebranding efforts for banks operating in highly competitive markets (23, 25). Customer-related constructs are further supported by findings from social media analyses, such as the public reaction to Facebook's transition to Meta, which highlight the importance of customer perception, sentiment, and transparency during major brand changes (36). The alignment of the present findings with such research confirms

that customer-centered approaches strengthen the credibility of brand reconstruction and enhance long-term brand loyalty.

The findings also reinforce the importance of organizational and cultural factors such as internal collaboration, leadership, organizational culture, and human resource development. Previous studies confirm that employee involvement and organizational culture alignment are pivotal to successful rebranding, as staff members are responsible for delivering the renewed brand experience (7, 9). Research in both public and private sectors demonstrates that cultural enrichment, staff empowerment, and leadership support are vital for ensuring that rebranding initiatives are implemented cohesively across organizational layers (8). The present results validate these prior findings by highlighting the significant role of organizational culture, empowerment, and leadership development in facilitating the brand reconstruction journey of Refah Kargaran Bank.

Similarly, the results concerning the importance of technological modernization and systemic monitoring confirm patterns observed in recent studies, which emphasize that modern technology is essential for supporting new brand identities and enhancing customer experience in digital banking environments (11, 29). Updated technology allows for more efficient service delivery, while monitoring systems ensure consistent brand performance across organizational units. The alignment of these findings with the existing literature underscores the multifaceted nature of rebranding, requiring coordinated improvement across service design, information technology, management systems, and customer interaction channels.

International comparisons further reinforce the generalizability of the current study's findings. For example, corporate rebranding in Central Europe and Eastern European financial systems has demonstrated that reputational repair, digital transformation, and customer-centered communication are integral components of successful rebranding efforts (19, 21). Similar conclusions are found in Middle Eastern contexts where national branding, tourism branding, and financial sector rebranding are shaped by post-crisis reconstruction needs and strategic repositioning pressures (20). These studies collectively validate the conceptual foundation underpinning the present work, showing that the multidimensional constructs examined in the model are consistent with global patterns of bank rebranding.

Finally, the study's results align with broader theoretical contributions on brand identity renewal, digital branding, and artificial intelligence-driven branding strategies. Scholars emphasize that modern branding processes increasingly rely on data-driven insights, AI integration, and strategic design thinking to create immersive and customer-responsive brand experiences (1). In this respect, the present results contribute to emerging discussions on technology-enabled brand reconstruction and reinforce the argument that banks must integrate digital transformation into brand strategies to remain competitive in the global financial ecosystem.

This study is subject to several methodological and contextual limitations. First, the data were collected exclusively from managers, deputies, and branch heads of Refah Kargaran Bank, which may limit the inclusion of perspectives from other key stakeholders such as customers or frontline employees. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the study prevents the analysis of long-term changes in brand reconstruction outcomes, which may evolve over time due to organizational, economic, or technological shifts. Third, cultural, regulatory, and economic conditions in Iran may restrict the generalizability of findings to banking institutions in other national environments. Finally, although structural equation modeling provides robust statistical validation, qualitative insights could further enrich understanding of internal processes and cultural dynamics influencing brand reconstruction.

Future studies could adopt a longitudinal research design to observe the evolution of brand reconstruction effects over time. Researchers may also incorporate customer perspectives to assess how brand reconstruction influences customer satisfaction, loyalty, and emotional engagement. Comparative studies across different banks or across countries could reveal important contextual differences in rebranding outcomes. Additionally, expanded mixed-methods approaches incorporating qualitative interviews, experimental designs, or big data analytics could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms through which brand reconstruction shapes organizational performance. Finally, future research could explore how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and digital platforms influence brand reconstruction strategies and customer perceptions in the banking sector.

Banks undertaking rebranding initiatives should ensure strong alignment between brand strategy and organizational culture, emphasizing employee engagement and leadership commitment throughout the process. Clear and consistent communication with customers is essential to maintaining trust during brand transitions. Organizations should invest in technological modernization to support the renewed brand identity and enable enhanced customer experience across digital channels. Continuous monitoring systems should be established to ensure that brand performance indicators remain aligned with strategic goals. Finally, banks should adopt a holistic approach that integrates strategic, cultural, technological, and customer-centered components to achieve sustainable and effective brand reconstruction.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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