



Identify and Prioritize Marketing Methods by IPA-G-FGAHP Technique

Amirhossein Okhravi^{a*}, Yousef Ramezani^a, Tahereh Heydarnejad^b, Hossein Zamani Noghabi^c

^a Department of Management, Faculty of Humanities, University of Gonabad, Gonabad, Iran.

^b Department of English Language, Faculty of Humanities, University of Gonabad, Gonabad, Iran.

^c Department of management, Islamic Azad University, Torbat Heydariyeh Branch, Torbat Heydariyeh Iran.

How to cite this article

Okhravi, A., Ramezani, Y., Heydarnejad, T., Zamani Noghabi, H. 2023. Identify and Prioritize Marketing Methods by IPA-G-FGAHP Technique, *Journal of Systems Thinking in Practice*, 2(3), pp.97-116. doi: 10.22067/jstinp.2023.81738.1056. URL: https://jstinp.um.ac.ir/article_44351.html.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and prioritize the influential variables in the marketing tactics used by Bank Melli Iran. Key elements impacting Bank Melli Iran's marketing strategies have been employed to identify the system's various components and sub-components. Then, in order to adapt these factors to the situation of the studied bank, the opinions and collective agreement of the experts of the studied bank, in the form of a 15-member decision team, were taken on the influential factors in the studied bank. In the next step, the weight of each component and subcomponent was determined using the group-fuzzy hierarchical analysis process and experts' participation. Following this step, the decision team of the National Bank of the Khorasan Razavi Province filled out the present situation appraisal questionnaire. This research analyzed a comprehensive set of 5 components and 22 subcomponents. By assessing the weight of these aspects and quantifying their deviation from the planned condition, the balanced gap was calculated to establish the priority for improvement. Based on the results, the subcomponents of sales meetings, television marketing, and the press and media were identified as the top three factors. Therefore, it shows that the bank has a good capability in these sub-components, and suitable infrastructures are also available. Also, fourteen sub-components of awareness in the stadium, catalogs, films and tapes, written and verbal advertisements, placing advertisements on buses, specialized magazines and brochures and booklets, doing charity work, presenting services in person, selling with catalogs, contests and entertainment, low-interest credits, prizes and gifts, business negotiations, raffles, and annual reports are of low importance or at a favorable level of the status quo.

Keywords

Marketing methods, Fuzzy Analytical hierarchy process, Improvement priority.

Article history

Received: 2023-03-27

Revised: 2023-09-21

Accepted: 2023-09-29

Published: 2023-10-14

Number of Figures: 3

Number of Tables: 4

Number of Pages: 20

Number of References: 36



1. Introduction

The contemporary global landscape is now seeing many transformations due to heightened rivalry across several sectors, with markets being particularly prominent. Change is a well-recognized concept that may lead to positive outcomes, such as growth and development, and negative consequences, such as worry and tiredness. These effects are seen when change is encountered in different societal and professional contexts, where it interacts with possibilities and dangers. According to [Weinreich \(2010\)](#), nations and enterprises that aspire for dynamism see construction and development in the act of change. Conversely, a faction satisfied with the existing state of affairs exhibits apprehension towards any alteration in the status quo. It will exhibit substantial opposition until compelled to acknowledge and embrace it. Marketing is essential for both nations and enterprises in the forthcoming marketplace and the era of unrestricted competition. Individuals, institutions, and diverse communities all need the practice of marketology, market formation, and market management to ensure their survival ([Kotler & Keller, 2016](#)). The importance of marketing in the contemporary market cannot be overstated, particularly for any purposeful and unbiased initiative. The progressive manifestation of commercial globalization is a noteworthy phenomenon.

The phrase "think global, act local" encapsulates the contemporary marketing motto for entrepreneurs, managers, and professional marketers ([Weinreich 2010](#)). Marketing encompasses a range of strategic efforts firms undertake to provide potential buyers with informative content about a product's perceived worth and attractiveness, ultimately influencing their purchasing decisions in favor of the promoted product within a certain industry ([Wymer and Samu, 2009](#)). Marketing has a crucial role in business, particularly in Islamic banking. The marketing idea of Islamic banks is mainly similar to the prevailing marketing notions, as stated by [Aravik et al. \(2022\)](#). According to [Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#), marketing may be defined as a social and managerial process that involves individuals and groups fulfilling their wants and aspirations by creating, offering, and exchanging valued and beneficial items with others. Moreover, according to [Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#), it has been said that the marketing department is responsible for making the most arduous business choices. The marketing movement's core philosophy is to avoid squandering resources and facilities and determine the most appropriate market positions for products or companies.

Banks, as one of the country's economic pillars, seek to improve the effectiveness of their marketing activities in recent years due to the competitive banking services in the market, the emergence of private banks one after the other, the presence of foreign banks soon, and the need

to survive in that time. A bank's success may be greatly influenced by the implementation of effective marketing operations (Pirayesh and Alipour, 2012). In the contemporary banking sector, achieving success by commercial banks necessitates a growing dependence on marketing strategies, plans, and programs (Sarmad and Jamshidian, 2012). In the current competitive landscape, banks must establish a solid rapport with their clients to distinguish themselves and sustain a consistent presence. Establishing and sustaining a long-term connection necessitates deliberate effort and suitable marketing methods (Evans and Laskin, 1994). The effectiveness of marketing activities is considered crucial to a bank's success. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the key elements that influence the effectiveness of marketing strategies (Nazaritehrani and Mashali, 2020).

The banking sector is a significant and intricate industry that has immense importance on a global scale. Economic operations in the twenty-first century have been organized to render their sustainability attainable with the indispensable support of financial institutions, namely banks. Hence, the banking sector is widely recognized as a fundamental pillar of national economies. The dynamism, efficacy, and competence of banking systems have significant implications for the corporate environment and the broader external environment, including macroeconomic and commercial factors (Egbunike and Okerekeoti, 2018). The banking sector in Iran plays a crucial role in facilitating economic operations, making it one of the nation's most influential pillars. The growth and development of the country's economy will heavily rely on the efficiency and efficacy of operations within this sector (Tarkhani et al., 2020). Like other commercial enterprises, banks aim to profit from their activities and establish a competitive advantage. According to Nazaritehrani and Mashali (2020), the contemporary consensus among experts in the banking business is that the attainment of success for banks is contingent upon the implementation of a marketing plan that is both successful and efficient.

Historically, the banking business in Iran needed more integration of marketing science and technology due to factors such as monopolistic practices and inadequate privacy measures. However, a significant transformation has occurred, leading to the emergence of a competitive environment in recent years. Islamic banks often provide a diverse range of goods tailored to meet the community's specific requirements. The provision of their respective goods engenders rivalry between Islamic and conventional banks, necessitating the formulation of marketing strategies for each of these banking institutions (Rahma and Nasution, 2022). Despite being cognizant of the competitive landscape and fundamental changes within the banking industry, financial institutions persist using non-specialized viewpoints when addressing marketing

obstacles, employing outdated methodologies, and exhibiting unprofessional dispositions. The primary aim and function of a marketing strategy is to provide clarity on the future trajectory of the business landscape, thus entailing the ability to forecast future outcomes. Therefore, it is essential that marketing serves as the fundamental principle directing all phases, operations, and activities within the banking industry. Due to elucidate, within banking organizations, various activities are commonly undertaken in specific domains, including but not limited to planning, allocating, and distributing budgets, designing services, identifying the market or target markets, providing consultation on optimal communication and advertising channels, establishing and inaugurating branches, and recruiting human resources. Marketing has a significant role in establishing a company's rules and procedures. In addition to executive actions, it is responsible for promoting uniformity throughout different divisions of the firm (Hund et al., 2021).

The absence of competitiveness in the banks' working environment allows for the operation of supply and demand dynamics and financial intermediation within the banking sector. Nevertheless, a complication develops when the competitive dynamics among depositors, facility seekers, and banks inside the triangle result in the elimination of a monopolistic market position. In this particular scenario, as each bank endeavors to attract consumers via two distinct approaches, namely capital absorption and distinctive provision of facilities, comprehending and prioritizing the factors that influence both approaches may greatly enhance the performance of banks. This study will focus on examining the marketing strategies that are most suitable for Melli Bank. Additionally, given the bank's limited resources, how these marketing tactics are prioritized inside Melli Bank has been studied.

2. Literature review

2.1. Marketing mix

The first investigation of the marketing mix was conducted at Harvard College in 1929. These investigations aimed to establish the connections between marketing activities and duties inside a food industry enterprise. Subsequently, research was undertaken by James Collinton to investigate this matter, resulting in diverse outcomes and finally identifying marketing managers as the key decision-makers, artists, and ingredient mixers. The concept of "marketing mix" was invented by Harvard professor Neil Borden, who drew inspiration from Collinton's perspective (Dominici, 2009). The marketing mix management paradigm has been the prevailing approach since 1990, with McCarthy introducing the concept in 1999 and

subsequently refining it into the concepts currently recognized as the 4P framework (Dominici, 2009). The marketing mix is a strategic framework firms use to achieve their marketing goals within specific target markets effectively. The concept consists of four essential components: product, price, marketing, and location. The use of the phrase "marketing mix" was based on the premise that the selection of each ingredient should be in harmony with the other three (Constantinides, 2006). The formulation of marketing mix choices should be aligned with the distribution networks and end consumers. Several elements of the marketing mix have the potential to be adjusted within a relatively short timeframe. For instance, a company can modify its pricing strategy, sales personnel, and advertising scope in the immediate future. However, in the long term, the organization may also develop novel goods and implement alterations to its distribution systems.

2.2. Different types of marketing mix models

2.2.1. Social marketing mix

Social marketing is a collaborative endeavor characterized by enduring partnerships that mutually benefit the participants and the larger society. This approach serves to establish connections between the company and non-monetary goals. The abovementioned advertising has shown efficacy and has garnered significant popularity in contemporary times. The emergence of social marketing may be traced back to the 1970s. Marketers engage in extensive research to effectively promote their goods, using certain ideas and tactics to get desired outcomes. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), in order to influence the connections of others, individuals should adhere to principles and guidelines and do thorough research to promote their perspectives and convictions in the marketplace effectively. The definition of social marketing, as articulated by Cutler and Anderson, is as follows: Social marketing encompasses more than the mere attainment of the marketer's or organization's objectives; it also entails the manipulation of social behavior to provide advantages for both the marketer and the broader target market. Weinreich (2010) asserts that social marketing, similar to commercial marketing, primarily centers on clients, aiming to fulfill their demands and requirements rather than just promoting produced goods.

According to empirical research, social marketing strategies have been found to improve the customer's level of brand awareness, cultivate a positive brand perception, and positively influence the customer's overall attitude toward the company. Social marketing may be considered a mutually beneficial technique as it leverages the customer's social interests to

foster loyalty towards the firm. The community emerges as the beneficiary of enhanced financial contributions, while the corporation attains success using customer relationship management strategies. McCarthy's original framework of the 4Ps, which encompasses product, price, place, and promotion, has been expanded in social marketing. This revised social marketing mix incorporates new ideas and introduces a few extra Ps. The following section describes each P under this framework.

Public groups: To achieve effectiveness, social marketers must tailor their campaigns to suit diverse audiences. In the words of Weinrich, public groups may be classified into two categories: external and internal. External groups include several stakeholders, such as target and secondary audiences and politicians, among others. Conversely, internal groups include people who use social marketing initiatives differently. Consequently, due to the inherent focus on individuals and collectives within social marketing endeavors, public groups have been included as a constituent element of this amalgamation (Baptista et al., 2021).

Partnership: Katsioloudes et al. (2007) view health and community issues as complex problems that a single entity cannot solve. According to them, organizations must collaborate with other businesses to be more efficient and seek out organizations with similar goals and collaborate with them. Social marketing (Baptista et al., 2021) identifies collaboration with other organizations as crucial.

Policy: Weinrich (2010) describes social marketing programs as an incentive for altering individual behavior and argues that these programs can only be implemented in an environment that facilitates these alterations. For this reason, he believes that political change is required to achieve this objective, as attracting the attention of legislators and stakeholders to the implementation of social programs is of great assistance and requires the use of political strategies (Baptista et al., 2021).

Pure strings: The majority of organizations aim to develop a social marketing campaign and acquire government grants and donations. Katsioloudes states that the first step in implementing social marketing is determining how to support the campaign (Baptista et al., 2021).

4C marketing mix: It is worth noting that the 4P tool represents the sellers' perspective on impressing buyers; however, from the buyer's perspective, every marketing tool is intended to provide advantages to the customer (Kotler and Keller, 2016). The 4P concept is a marketing approach focused on the product, not the customer. Latin Borna claimed that each element should be examined from the customer's viewpoint (Baptista et al., 2021).

2.2.2. 5V marketing mix

[Bennett \(1997\)](#) defined a concept comparable to supplier marketing. This concept identifies the purchase process, which is essentially the actions performed by the customer to locate the appropriate resources to cover their needs. A distinguishing element of this perspective is that the client is more concerned with the supplier's services than the product itself. Five criteria define the buying process, collectively called the 5V marketing mix, and represent the buyer's perception of a product or service. The following is a brief overview of each component.

Value: Apart from the prominent features such as quality, appropriateness for the purpose, and reliability, the buyer also considers the supplier's pricing, performance, and reputation ([Wu, 2017](#)). When discussing value, [Bennett \(1997\)](#) considers more than just money and other important factors to buyers. He also thinks the physical effort, persistence, and time it takes to find a good source of product supply, as well as problems like multiple product intermediaries and the monopoly of the source of the supply, help customers think the product is worth more. *Efficiency:* [Bennett \(1997\)](#) considers characteristics such as brand strength and reputation, repeatability, purchase outcomes, and shelf shape as helpful for efficiency. According to him, efficiency happens when the customer has general access to the provider following his expectations.

Volume: [Bennett \(1997\)](#) defines volume as the sum of quantity, number, divisibility, stability, spare parts, and package size. He introduced one of the issues with the targeting approach: the restricted availability of some products (goods and services) for delivery to the consumer. For instance, a mechanic needing a part must purchase the entire set. It is an example of economies of scale in stores and does not appear to attract customers. Indeed, economies of scale are costly to the consumer, and the manufacturer must devise strategies to offset these losses.

Variety: Customers require freedom of choice. The ability to choose is frequently "ignored" by manufacturers, service providers, and marketers. Selecting is the customer's inalienable right and critical for good marketing ([Bennett,1997](#)).

2.2.3. Comprehensive marketing communications

As a guiding concept, comprehensive marketing communications enable organizations to pursue their relationship with their target market. Comprehensive marketing communications aims to coordinate and regulate the diverse components of the promotion mix - advertising, personal selling, public relations, and reputation management, direct marketing, sales promotion - to provide a customer-focused message and to generate and accomplish a variety of organizational objectives ([Mangold and Fold, 2009](#)).

2.2.4. *Elements of the marketing communication mix*

Advertisements: A separate section will discuss advertising in full detail.

Sales promotion: Sales promotion is the spread of information to persuade potential buyers (Kim and Hyun, 2010). Sales promotion uses tools and events to encourage people to stimulate and purchase more for a limited period (Guizani et al. 2011).

Public relations: Professor Lawrence W. Lang and Professor Vincent Hazleton provided the most remarkable definition of modern public relations. They describe public relations as "a management communication task by which a company adopts, modifies, or preserves its identity with the surrounding environment to accomplish its objectives (Baptista et al., 2021).

Face-to-face sales: Face-to-face sales are those made through interpersonal communication. The emphasis on face-to-face sales varies for each company, depending on the nature of the product or service being promoted, the size of the organization, and the industry. Face-to-face sales are often playing a significant role in industrial organizations. In contrast, they play a lesser role in other companies, such as those that create less durable items cheaply. In most industries, these roles are changing toward a more balanced approach, emphasizing other promotion program aspects. In an integrated marketing communication program, face-to-face sales complement other promotional mix elements and are not used as an alternative (Belch and Belch, 2003).

Direct marketing: Direct marketing uses direct communication channels with customers to locate customers and provide products and services without marketing intermediaries. Direct marketing helps a marketer to acquire more direct reactions from clients, better aim at the target market, and sell a product without going through the long and expensive process of traditional channels (Keller, 2001).

Packaging/point of sale: Refers to preparing and designing attractive shop signs, showcases (stands), and shelves to introduce a product. Because of the formed connection with the buyer by its color, size, and dimensions, the packaging is one of the marketing communication mix elements (Biranvand, 2013).

2.2.5. *Banking marketing*

The level of development of its activities determines the significance of marketing within the bank's organizational structure. As competition intensifies, systematic efforts are required to assess profitability or provide additional services, and the bank recognizes that traditional marketing divisions cannot meet these demands. In this situation, the concept of incorporating

a marketing department into middle management is being considered, and activities such as marketing research, advertising, crediting, and establishing relationships with service providers are crucial. In this situation, the marketing department has strategic responsibilities, such as identifying the bank's long-term objectives regarding activity type, target market specifications, and actual and potential clients. In addition, it must develop and implement strategies to achieve these objectives (Shamloo, 2015).

2.3. Identify factors based on theoretical and experimental background

In order to enhance their performance within the contemporary complex, dynamic, and volatile landscape, banks must devise and execute strategies aimed at improvement. In a highly competitive market, the survival of banks is contingent upon their ability to stay competitive and adapt to evolving and dynamic competitive circumstances. Bank executives will assess the consequences of their strategic choices by examining performance measures. Examining and comparing observed performance in relation to historical patterns, rivals, and industry benchmarks provide useful insights for informing future decision-making processes. Consequently, enhancing marketing methods has emerged as a critical objective for banks, aiming to make ongoing improvements over time (Table 1).

Table 1. Factors affecting marketing in the bank

| Row | Groups | Row | Indicator definition | Extracted indicator | Source |
|-----|-----------------|-----|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Advertisement | 1 | Using banner advertisements and marketers to interact with potential clients face to face | Written and oral advertisements | Davari et al. (2015) |
| | | 2 | Using catalogs, promotional CDs and audiotapes to introduce banking services and their benefits | Catalogs, films and tapes | Biranvand (2013) |
| | | 3 | Production and distribution of specialist magazines and booklets among customers to make them aware of the benefits of Bank Melli Iran services | Specialized magazines, brochures and booklets | Tabibi et al. (2011) |
| | | 4 | Introducing Bank Melli Iran's services and benefits in intercity buses | Installing Ads on buses | Davari et al. (2015) |
| | | 5 | Using ads at stadiums | Advertisement at the stadium | Dominici (2009) |
| 2 | Sales promotion | 1 | Conducting competitions and entertainments in which those with knowledge of bank services can participate and win | Competition and entertainment | Sarmad Saedi and Abdollahi (2015) |
| | | 3 | Consideration of prizes and gifts for customers who accumulate a certain number of points through the use of Bank Melli Iran services | Gifts and prizes | Egbunike and Okerekeoti (2018) |
| | | 4 | Providing customers who use Bank Melli Iran's banking services and meet certain criteria with a low-interest loan | Low-interest loans | Asghari zade and Amin (2017) |
| | | 5 | Using entertainment programs to increase bank customers loyalty | Entertaining programs | Sarmad Saedi and Abdollahi (2015) |

| Row | Groups | Row | Indicator definition | Extracted indicator | Source |
|-----|--------------------|-----|--|---|------------------------------------|
| | | 2 | Using newspapers and magazines to promote banking services | Press and media | Rafiei et al. (2011) |
| | | 3 | Providing the public with access to the bank's financial statements, profits and losses | Annual reports | Experts |
| | | 4 | Organizing charitable events to attract public donations and advertising Bank Melli Iran services through these events | Charitable and social affairs | Gao et al. (2021) |
| 4 | Face-to-face sales | 1 | Recruiting marketers in the bank branches to introduce services and attract potential customers | Face-to-face representation of services | Van Esch et al. (2021) |
| | | 2 | Holding face-to-face meetings with the bank's important customers and introducing the bank's services to them | Sales meetings | Rafiei et al. (2011) |
| | | 4 | Using television and audio-visual media to introduce and encourage customers to use the bank's services | TV marketing | Sanayei et al. (2016) |
| 5 | Direct marketing | 1 | Using professional marketers to meet with consumers outside of the bank to advertise services | Sales through catalogs | Sarmad Saeedi and Abdollahi (2015) |

3. Methodology

The current research employs a combined qualitative-quantitative methodology, characterized by a purposeful approach and a descriptive-exploratory implementation and nature. The components and sub-components that define the marketing tactics of Bank Melli Iran have been identified by considering the key elements that influence them. The viewpoints and consensus of a group of fifteen bank specialists, who were participants in the Delphi panel, were then solicited to assess the elements influencing the bank and tailor these aspects to the specific circumstances of the bank being examined. All elements received from sources and references were verified, and no supplementary factors were included. Therefore, the components listed in Table 1 were used as the basis for further research. The weight of each component and subcomponent was determined via a systematic procedure, including the collaboration of experts and the group-fuzzy hierarchical analysis method. The total inconsistency rate for each table and the inconsistency rate for all tables completed by experts were found to be below 0.1. Following completing the current state assessment questionnaire, a decision panel consisting of fifteen senior, middle, operational, and expert members from the Melli Bank of Khorasan Razavi Province participated in this step. The content and face validity of the questionnaire were established by using the field of literature and the situation of the bank under study. The

data analysis methodology used in this research is known as IPA-G-FGAHP (Figure 1).

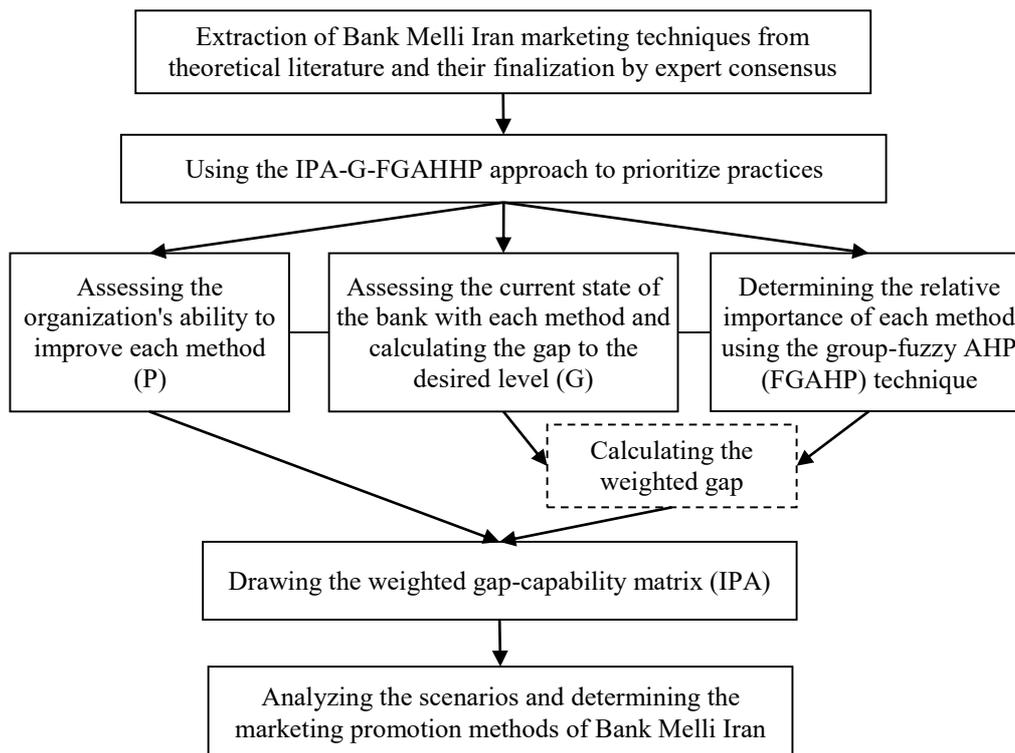


Figure 1. Research model

As mentioned above, the approach may be succinctly outlined in four sequential stages (Figure 1). In the first phase, the process entails using a group-fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to compare issues pairwise. Experts are responsible for assessing and assigning weights to each problem during this stage. The last phase involves evaluating the company's present condition in each domain, a process undertaken by experts on a Likert scale from 1 to 7. In the third step, a weighted gap is derived by integrating the outcomes from the first and second phases. In other words, this particular stage's result yields the same data used in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) matrix. The fourth stage assesses the organization's capacity to improve its current situation on each issue using a 1 to 7 Likert scale.

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptive information of the decision team

The organizational structure of the decision team consists of eleven specialists, three operational managers, one middle manager, and three middle managers. Three individuals are older than 45, while the other twelve are aged 35 and 45. There are three bachelor's degree holders and twelve master's degree holders in the group. In addition, each of them has more than 15 years of working experience (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----|--|-------------------|----|
| Organizational position of decision team members | Senior manager | 0 | Age of decision team members | Less than 25 | 0 |
| | Middle manager | 1 | | Between 25 and 35 | 0 |
| | Operational manager | 3 | | Between 35 and 45 | 12 |
| | Expert | 11 | | More than 45 | 3 |
| | Total | 15 | | Total | 15 |
| Education of decision team members | Associate degree | 0 | Work history of decision team members | Less than 3 | 0 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 3 | | Between 3 and 9 | 0 |
| | Master's degree | 12 | | Between 9 and 15 | 0 |
| | Doctorate | 0 | | More than 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 15 | | Total | 15 |

4.2. Final weights of components

Comments from industry professionals were solicited to assist in the organization of Bank Melli Iran's marketing strategies. The professionals agree that marketing techniques should be categorized according to the components and sub-components indicated in the relevant body of literature. Some experts suggested some items as recommended parameters; however, all of these suggestions were already included in the indicators in this table; thus, no new indicators were added to the suggested items. Table 3 shows the final data after the software performed the calculations.

Table 3. Weight, status quo, and improvement capability for each marketing approach

| Components | Components' weight | Code | Indicators | Indicators' weight | Normal weight | Current state | The gap to the desired level | Weighted gap | Capability |
|--------------------|--------------------|------|---|--------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| | A | | | B | C=A×B | D | E=7-D | Y= C×E | X |
| Advertisements | 0.26 | C1I1 | Written and oral advertisements | 0.23 | 0.06003 | 3.07 | 3.93 | 0.236 | 5.73 |
| | | C1I2 | Catalogs, films and tapes | 0.22 | 0.05742 | 3 | 4 | 0.229 | 6.2 |
| | | C1I3 | Specialized magazines, brochures and booklets | 0.21 | 0.05481 | 3.07 | 3.93 | 0.215 | 6.06 |
| | | C1I4 | Installing ads on buses | 0.15 | 0.03915 | 1.2 | 5.8 | 0.227 | 5.73 |
| | | C1I5 | Ads at stadiums | 0.19 | 0.04959 | 2.07 | 4.93 | 0.244 | 6 |
| Sales promotion | 0.20 | C2I1 | Competition and entertainment | 0.19 | 0.03819 | 2.2 | 4.8 | 0.183 | 5.93 |
| | | C2I2 | lottery | 0.24 | 0.04824 | 4.33 | 2.67 | 0.128 | 6.13 |
| | | C2I3 | Gifts and prizes | 0.23 | 0.04623 | 4.07 | 2.93 | 0.135 | 5.86 |
| | | C2I4 | Low-interest loans | 0.19 | 0.03819 | 2.4 | 4.6 | 0.175 | 5.8 |
| | | C2I5 | Entertaining programs | 0.15 | 0.03015 | 1.53 | 5.47 | 0.164 | 5.13 |
| Social relations | 0.173 | C3I1 | Ceremony | 0.33 | 0.05676 | 2.4 | 4.6 | 0.26 | 5.66 |
| | | C3I2 | Press and media | 0.31 | 0.05332 | 2.13 | 4.87 | 0.259 | 6 |
| | | C3I3 | Annual report | 0.05 | 0.0086 | 1.8 | 5.2 | 0.044 | 5.73 |
| | | C3I4 | Charitable and social affairs | 0.31 | 0.05332 | 3.13 | 3.87 | 0.206 | 6.06 |
| Face-to-face sales | 0.257 | C4I1 | Face-to-face services presentation | 0.157 | 0.040349 | 2.4 | 4.6 | 0.185 | 6.06 |
| | | C4I2 | Sales meetings | 0.447 | 0.11487 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 0.478 | 6.33 |
| | | C4I3 | Trading meetings | 0.111 | 0.02853 | 2.47 | 4.53 | 0.129 | 6 |
| | | C4I4 | TV marketing | 0.29 | 0.07453 | 3.27 | 3.73 | 0.278 | 6.2 |
| Direct marketing | 0.11 | C5I1 | Sales through catalogs | 0.38 | 0.0418 | 2.53 | 4.47 | 0.186 | 5.8 |
| | | C5I2 | Sales through postal mail | 0.17 | 0.0187 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 0.078 | 4.2 |
| | | C5I3 | Sales through fax | 0.19 | 0.0209 | 1.33 | 5.67 | 0.118 | 4.06 |
| | | C5I4 | Sales through email | 0.26 | 0.0286 | 1.53 | 5.47 | 0.156 | 4.66 |

The weight of the components is indicated in column A, followed by several indicators. The numbers in this column are derived from group-fuzzy AHP calculations. The weight of the indicators is calculated using group-fuzzy AHP calculations in column B. Column C is the result of multiplying column A by column B, and it represents the normal weight of all factors in comparison to one another. The higher a factor's normal weight, the more important that indicator is. In column D, the results of the current status questionnaire are expressed using a 7-point Likert scale. The higher the current status number, the better the current status of that factor and the smaller the gap to the desired level (column D). Column Y is the product of multiplying normal weight (column C) by the gap to the intended level (column E); the number resulting from this multiplication is known as the weighted gap and is located on the vertical axis of the IPA matrix. The number for column X is also obtained from the improvement ability questionnaire for each factor; the higher the number of capabilities for a factor, the higher the organization's potential and capability to improve that factor. The number for this column is also located on the X-axis of the IPA chart. The study of the scenarios presented in the weighted gap-capability matrix (Figure 2) in four areas is as follows:

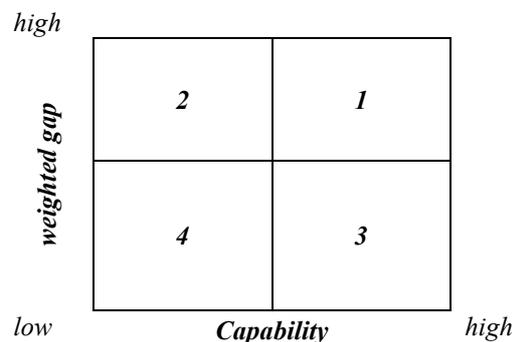


Figure 2. Weighted gap – capability matrix and its four areas

Area 1: First, the elements in this area are essential; second, the gap between them and the desired level is considerable. Third, the company can enhance it since the essential infrastructure is available. As a result, these components are a priority for improvement.

Area 2: The weighted gap is vast, and the organization's capacity to handle these issues and provide the required infrastructure must be strengthened. As a result, this area is the second priority.

Area 3: Although the organization can improve the elements of this area, it does not require as much attention and improvement as areas 1 and 2. It is because it has a smaller weighted gap; that is, the issue is minor, the existing condition is favorable, or even both.

Area 4: If there is a problem in this area, it indicates that it was unnecessary to enhance it or

insufficient infrastructure and capability to do so.

The weighted gap-capability diagram for the research factors is displayed in Figure 3 using the data from the preceding table and data obtained from the horizontal (X) and vertical (Y) axes.

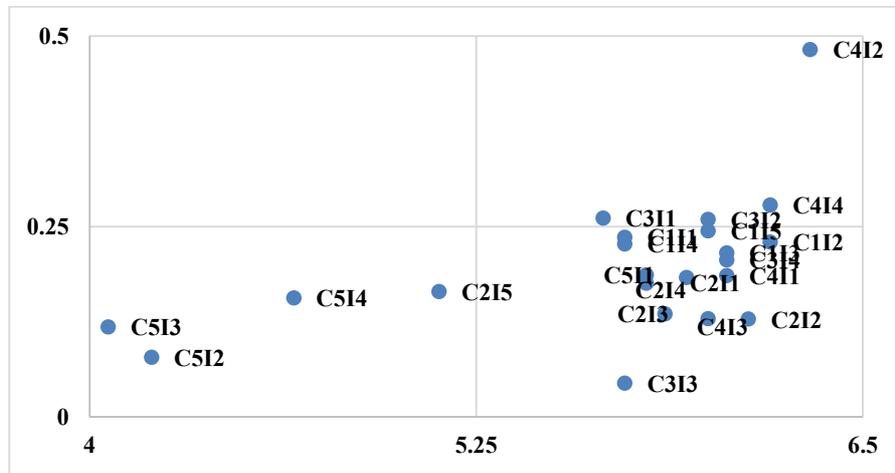


Figure 3. The weighted gap - capability diagram

While the categorization offered for the four sections of this diagram is an approximation (Figure 3), it was also said that the order of priority for the elements in areas 2 and 3 depends on the decision team's preference and the organization's requirements. The outputs of the weighted gap-capability matrix are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of weighted gap-capability prioritization chart

| Area | Desired behavior | Codes | Indicators |
|--------|---|-------|--|
| first | It is the first priority and needs the company to focus on enhancing it. | C412 | Sales meeting |
| | | C414 | TV ads |
| | | C312 | Press and media |
| | | C311 | Ceremony |
| third | While the organization has the capability to enhance them, they do not require the same level of attention and improvement as Area 1. | C115 | Ads at stadiums |
| | | C112 | Catalogs, movies, and tapes |
| | | C111 | Written and oral ads |
| | | C114 | Installing ads on buses |
| | | C113 | Specialized magazines, brochures, and booklets |
| | | C314 | Charitable and social affairs |
| | | C411 | Face-to-face presentation of services |
| | | C411 | Sales through catalogs |
| | | C211 | Competition and entertainment |
| | | C214 | Low-interest loans |
| | | C213 | Gifts and prizes |
| | | C413 | Trading meetings |
| | | C212 | Lottery |
| | | C313 | Annual reports |
| fourth | It does not require improvement and lacks the infrastructure and capacity to do so. | C215 | Entertaining programs |
| | | C414 | Sales through email |
| | | C413 | Sales through fax |
| | | C412 | Sales through postal mail |

The elements in the four categories were identified using Figure 3 and Table 4. None of the cases in this research appeared in area 2.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

In the current research, the third category includes fourteen sub-components. These sub-components include advertisements in stadiums, catalogs, films and tapes, written and oral advertisements, installation of advertisements on buses, specialized magazines, brochures and booklets, charity, presentation of face-to-face services, selling with catalogs, competitions and entertainment, low-interest loans, prizes and gifts, trading meetings, lotteries, and annual reports. As a result, while the organization can enhance the components described in this area, the elements do not need as much concentration and development as the first and second areas do since the weighted gaps in these areas are very modest. Consequently, it suggests that the sub-components mentioned above are either unimportant or are performing at the expected level given the circumstances now at play.

Based on the study results, placing a sub-component in the fourth region suggests that its enhancement was deemed superfluous. Secondly, there is a deficiency in infrastructure and capacity to enhance this sub-component. The existence of the subcomponents in the third and fourth zones does not suggest their lack of importance. However, considering the actions taken inside the organization, there is a minimal disparity between the current and planned states for these subcomponents (Okhravi, 2014).

The fourth domain included four subordinate elements about disseminating entertainment programs and sales via electronic mail, facsimile transmission, and conventional postal services. Consequently, the positioning of these sub-components inside this region suggests that their enhancement is not deemed imperative, indicating a deficiency in the organization's infrastructure and capability to address such improvements. Considering the actions used by the organization, there is now a slight disparity between their present state and their intended outcome.

The following recommendations are based on the questionnaire results and interviews with bank experts.

The findings from the data analysis indicate that sales meetings play a crucial role due to the presence of essential infrastructure, and a substantial disparity exists between the present and intended levels. This objective may be achieved by extending invitations to key clientele of banking services and organizing regular gatherings to encourage their use of those services.

Furthermore, the bank has the potential to enhance its sales meets by enlisting external marketers who are not affiliated with the bank and compensating them via commissions for successfully promoting the bank's services to consumers.

Moreover, concerning the allocation of television marketing in region one, it is recommended that bank managers enhance their television advertising expenditures. Market segmentation is often advised as a strategy to minimize the inefficient allocation of resources. Therefore, the first step in advertising is to identify the target market based on the specific service being promoted, followed by strategically disseminating a relevant message at an appropriate time. For example, if the service's target audience comprises corporate executives, who typically have limited leisure time for television or other media consumption and often rely on radio for information during their morning commutes, it would be most effective to advertise during early morning hours through radio channels. If the target demographic comprises individuals who begin their workday in the early morning, it is advisable to refrain from advertising during the late nocturnal hours. These results are consistent with the findings obtained from the research of [Wong et al. \(2022\)](#). The increase in the level of knowledge and awareness of the audience due to the broadcasting of suitable commercial messages can influence the attitude, and the person's attitude can lead to a behavior aligned with the goals of the sender of the message.

The study results show that the use of newspapers and other media forms is a significant component of Bank Melli Iran's marketing tactics. When making decisions regarding press advertisements, bank managers should consider several factors. These include the range of available publications, their circulation figures, the target audience of each publication, the associated costs of advertising, the dimensions of the advertisement, the specific section within the publication where the advertisement will be placed, the potential use of colors and the specified color range, the frequency of advertisement printing, and the time intervals between each publication. This result is consistent with [Nilson's \(2013\)](#) and [Petur Samundsson's \(2012\)](#) research results. From the American consumers, word of mouth (recommendations from familiar people) took the first place with 84% of the votes, followed by the websites of famous brands and traditional mass media such as television, newspapers, and magazines with a difference of 15% less. Are. However, the European audience chose print as the most reliable advertising medium.

In order to provide novel services, managers may choose to organize social gatherings, extend invitations to key clientele, and proffer their services for their consideration. Significantly, the rewards and presents are situated inside the third category, showcasing the bank's competence in this domain and its comparatively lesser importance. The bank can reduce a fraction of the

gifts and prizes it distributes to customers annually through the lottery. The third domain encompasses the constituent elements of advertising inside stadiums and on buses. Due to the coordination of these elements' effects with television advertising, it is proposed that the bank lower its advertising budget at stadiums and buses and increase its budget for television advertising.

The use of catalogs, videos, cassettes, specialist periodicals, brochures, and booklets is situated within the third domain. Moreover, it should be noted that the expenses associated with replicating and publishing these components are substantial across all sectors. Hence, it is advisable to minimize the use of such technologies inside banking institutions and allocate resources towards hiring personnel for each branch to address inquiries and facilitate the introduction of bank services via face-to-face sales interactions.

The most important limitation of the research is its scope. Considering that this research was carried out in the National Bank of Khorasan province, it may be necessary to generalize its results to other branches in other regions due to the different types of attitudes and some norms. Also, considering that the obtained results are related to the situation of the National Bank, the results of this research cannot be generalized to other banks. Another limitation of this research is the decision team's busy schedule and delay in answering questions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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