




Identification of Criteria for Selecting Branch Managers at Bank Melli Iran

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the aim of identifying the criteria for selecting branch managers at Bank Melli Iran. The research strategy is qualitative and based on thematic analysis. The statistical population includes three groups: academic experts, experienced professionals, and senior managers of Bank Melli Iran. Purposeful and snowball sampling methods were used to select participants, and based on the principle of saturation, the study was completed after conducting 16 interviews. Data were analyzed using the three-phase approach of thematic analysis with the help of MAXQDA2020 software. Based on the data analysis, a total of 57 basic themes, 11 organizing themes, and 2 overarching themes were identified. According to the findings, the selection criteria for branch managers at Bank Melli Iran fall into two main categories: "general criteria" and "specialized criteria." Overall, the study demonstrates that the selection of branch managers at Bank Melli Iran is a multidimensional and complex process requiring simultaneous attention to both sets of fundamental criteria—namely, general and specialized indicators. The results indicate that successful managers in the banking environment must possess a combination of personal, ethical, behavioral, and social competencies on one hand, and technical skills, field experience, legal knowledge, and strategic decision-making capabilities on the other.

Keywords: *Manager Selection, Managerial Competencies, Bank Melli Iran.*

1. Introduction

In today's competitive and highly regulated financial landscape, the role of competent managerial leadership in banking institutions has become a critical determinant of organizational success. Banks, particularly those with expansive networks like Bank Melli Iran, are increasingly required to ensure that their branch managers possess not only technical expertise but also strategic, ethical, and interpersonal competencies. The process of selecting and appointing these managers must be grounded in scientific,

evidence-based frameworks that reflect the dynamic nature of banking operations and the complex challenges faced by contemporary financial institutions. As several scholars have noted, competency-based selection systems help align managerial capabilities with organizational goals, ensuring consistency, meritocracy, and performance enhancement (Castillo Arias, 2021; Souza & Vasconcelos, 2021).

The evolution of competency models in public and private organizations has underscored the significance of developing customized frameworks tailored to specific

institutional contexts. In the Iranian public sector, research has shown that traditional appointment systems often suffer from inefficiencies, ambiguity, and a lack of alignment with organizational objectives (Farhadinejad et al., 2022; Ghadiri Zefreh et al., 2022). As a response, numerous attempts have been made to transition from subjective appointment practices to competency-based models grounded in empirical analysis and participatory design. For instance, Dehghanpour Farashah et al. (2023) proposed a systematic competency model for managers of the Iranian Planning and Budget Organization, arguing for greater objectivity and transparency in the selection process (Dehghanpour Farashah et al., 2023).

Competency models serve as strategic tools to identify, develop, and promote human capital in alignment with long-term institutional visions. In the banking sector, this becomes even more pressing due to the necessity for high accountability, public trust, and regulatory compliance. The work of Reisi and Daneshfard (2024) highlights the urgent need for optimal models of appointment and promotion in Iranian public banks. Their study emphasizes the importance of both general and specialized competencies, including decision-making, customer relations, legal knowledge, and risk management, especially in sensitive institutions like Refah Bank (Reisi & Daneshfard, 2024).

In the international context, similar transitions are evident. Schoonjans et al. (2024) explored gender dynamics and appointment patterns in director selection, underscoring the need for structured and inclusive approaches (Schoonjans et al., 2024). Likewise, Oliveira et al. (2024) conducted a case study in the private sector, highlighting how effective recruitment and selection strategies can directly impact organizational performance (Oliveira et al., 2024). These studies collectively affirm the global shift toward competency-oriented selection mechanisms and provide valuable insights for adaptation in the Iranian banking context.

Meanwhile, scholarly critiques of traditional, often politically-influenced appointment systems remain central to understanding the dysfunction in public sector selection processes. Ghasemi et al. (2020) emphasized the political dimension of managerial appointments in state-owned enterprises, particularly within the National Iranian Oil Company, calling attention to the risks associated with appointments lacking meritocratic foundations (Ghasemi et al., 2020). Jafarpour et al. (2023) further dissected the pathology of business manager appointments in Iranian state-owned companies, identifying structural flaws and

proposing systemic reforms based on competency principles (Jafarpour et al., 2023).

The development of such models is not limited to economic institutions. Educational and cultural sectors have also been focal points for competency modeling. Abbaspour et al. (2020), for instance, designed a competency framework for high school principals, highlighting the need for ethical, interpersonal, and pedagogical competencies in addition to administrative capabilities (Abbaspour et al., 2020). Similarly, Zarei et al. (2022) analyzed upstream policy documents in Iran's educational system to derive a formalized competency model for school principals (Zarei et al., 2022). These examples affirm the cross-sectoral relevance of competency-based appointment systems and underscore the importance of context-specific modeling.

Cultural and political factors further complicate the implementation of competency-based models in Iran. Studies such as those by Pargol et al. (2022) and Khomideh et al. (2022) illustrate the difficulties in aligning selection practices with broader organizational values and national developmental goals. Pargol et al. (2022) developed a model for selecting educational managers within the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, emphasizing the need for ethical fidelity and professional integrity (Pargol et al., 2022). Khomideh et al. (2022), using a grounded theory approach, proposed a redesigned appointment model for Social Security Organization managers, integrating contextual cultural dimensions into competency frameworks (Khomideh et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on emotional intelligence, leadership resilience, and adaptive decision-making has expanded the traditional understanding of managerial competence. Research conducted by Ghamooshi et al. (2021) through a meta-synthesis approach emphasized ethical competence as a core dimension of university managers' effectiveness, which is equally applicable to the banking sector (Ghamooshi et al., 2021). Emotional intelligence, in particular, is increasingly seen as critical to managing teams, resolving conflicts, and maintaining organizational harmony in stressful environments, as emphasized in recent HR literature (Ramsay & Macdonald, 2023; Saki, 2023).

From a methodological perspective, the validation of competency models is essential to ensure their practical applicability. Kandarani et al. (2025) employed a robust design and validation process to construct a specific competency model for the Iran Oil Terminals Company, demonstrating the value of stakeholder involvement and

iterative model testing (Kandarani et al., 2025). Stefanica et al. (2025), in their study of diversity and equity in Romanian sports management, demonstrated that fair and structured selection practices lead to more sustainable and inclusive leadership outcomes (Stefanica et al., 2025).

Beyond technical skills, the human element in recruitment and appointment has been a focal point of contemporary scholarship. Van and Phuong (2021), in their review of human resource development in Vietnam, argue that national progress is highly contingent on the ability to systematically identify, train, and deploy competent human capital across all administrative levels (Van & Phuong, 2021). Similarly, NgaAssia and Okon Effanga (2021) employed dynamic programming to propose optimal manpower recruitment and promotion policies, showing how mathematical models can complement human judgment in complex decision-making systems (NgaAssia & Okon Effanga, 2021).

In sum, the literature reviewed establishes a strong conceptual and empirical foundation for designing

competency-based selection frameworks within Iranian banks, particularly Bank Melli Iran. This study responds to the documented deficiencies in traditional appointment practices by proposing a model based on qualitative thematic analysis derived from expert interviews.

2. Methods and Materials

This study is qualitative in nature. The dominant paradigm of the research is the interpretivist–constructivist paradigm. The qualitative strategy of this study is based on thematic analysis. The statistical population includes three groups: academic experts, professional specialists, and senior managers of Bank Melli. Sampling was conducted purposively using the snowball technique, resulting in the selection of 16 participants. The sampling process continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Detailed characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Research Participants

Code	Gender	Age	Education	Organizational Position	Experience (Years)
1	Male	43	PhD in Business Management	Senior Manager	14
2	Female	48	PhD in Human Resource Management	Expert	12
3	Male	49	PhD in Strategic Human Resource Management	Associate Professor	16
4	Female	51	PhD in Policy Making	Expert	17
5	Male	53	PhD in Human Resource Management	Assistant Professor	11
6	Male	54	PhD in Change Management	Assistant Professor	19
7	Female	46	PhD in Banking Management	Senior Manager	13
8	Male	55	PhD in Research and Development Management	Senior Manager	20
9	Male	48	MA in Performance Management	Expert	13
10	Male	51	PhD in Human Resource Management	Assistant Professor	16
11	Male	57	PhD in Business Management	Executive Manager	18
12	Male	41	PhD in Public Management	Associate Professor	7
13	Male	55	PhD in Entrepreneurship Management	Expert	13
14	Male	44	PhD in Business Management	Senior Manager	20
15	Male	52	MA in Banking Management	Senior Manager	17
16	Male	46	PhD in Strategic Management	Associate Professor	18

Data collection was conducted through a semi-structured interview tool, applied in a deductive manner. In other words, an initial general question was asked regarding the criteria for selecting branch managers of Bank Melli Iran, followed by more detailed questions based on the perspectives and responses of the interviewees, in line with the research objective. Data analysis was performed using the three-stage thematic network process, including: text segmentation, theme abstraction, and identification and

description of the thematic network, utilizing MAXQDA2020 software.

To ensure the validity of the study, that is, the accuracy of the findings, several actions were taken. To assess transferability, the research process from sampling to interpretation of findings was described in detail. To enhance the credibility of the results, interviews were reviewed multiple times. Given that thematic analysis involves an iterative process of data analysis, with the assistance of supervisors and advisors, and through

reviewing multiple relevant articles and studies, the analysis results were verified. Finally, the results of the thematic analysis were presented to six experts with full familiarity in the fields of public management and human resource management, and were confirmed by them.

To determine reliability, Holsti's formula was used. Holsti is one of the key figures in content and thematic analysis. In this method, the texts were coded in two stages. The total number of coded items by the first and second coders was 152 and 131 codes, respectively. The number of agreed codes between the two coders was 127. Substituting these values into Holsti's formula yielded a reliability coefficient of 89%, indicating reliable results. As shown, Holsti's reliability coefficient for the thematic analysis related to the first research question exceeds 0.70 and stands at 0.80, confirming its reliability.

3. Findings and Results

This section presents the research findings derived from the interviews and their content analysis. The analysis process was conducted in accordance with the three main stages of the "thematic network" framework: text processing, theme identification, and theme integration, which are explained in detail below.

1. Text Analysis: In the initial step, after revisiting the literature, the purpose of analyzing the interviews was clearly defined, and the interviews were reviewed. All interviews were fully transcribed and documented. Following the identification of significant sentences within the interviews, each sentence was assigned a specific code and categorized under a conceptual cluster (basic theme). This process was carried out individually for each interview, and if similar themes appeared in previous transcripts, the same codes were reused as identifiers. In total, 470 initial codes were extracted and categorized under basic themes. Table 2 presents samples of the initial coding of the conducted interviews.

Table 2

Sample Initial Coding of Conducted Interviews

No.	Interview Text	Basic Theme
1	A branch manager must have full command of financial concepts. When reviewing customer financial statements or balance sheets, they should immediately identify strengths or potential risks. Financial knowledge is the foundation for sound decision-making.	Financial Knowledge
2	Banking is impossible without a deep understanding of risk. A manager who cannot analyze credit or operational risk is incapable of making correct decisions or defending the bank's interests.	Risk Management
3	A branch manager should be familiar with banking laws and legal issues related to contracts, customer obligations, and potential litigation. Legal unawareness can expose the bank to serious risks.	Legal and Regulatory Knowledge
4	Central Bank regulations are constantly being updated. A successful manager is one who can align with circulars and properly implement them in the branch.	Awareness of Banking Regulations
5	A manager with prior banking management experience can make better decisions in complex situations. Management is a skill learned in practice, not just in training.	Previous Managerial Experience in Banking
6	We need branch managers who have direct experience in managing financial resources, budgeting, and cost control. This skill is essential for efficient and economical branch operations.	Experience in Financial Management
7	Rotational work across different branches broadens managerial vision. Someone who has only worked in one type of branch is not adequately prepared to handle diverse issues.	Experience Across Various Branches
8	Dealing with corporate and institutional clients requires deeper understanding of their financial needs and credit structures. Managers with such experience can create greater value for the bank.	Experience with Corporate and Institutional Clients
9	A manager must be able to analyze customer behavior or branch financial performance based on statistical data. Decisions made without data analysis are usually incorrect and costly.	Data Analysis Skills
10	In crisis situations, a manager must make quick decisions. Delayed decision-making can lead to missed opportunities or financial damage.	Decision-Making Speed
11	Banking challenges cannot be solved with repetitive solutions. A successful manager is one who can offer innovative and practical solutions for complex problems.	Providing Creative Solutions
12	A competent manager is one who can identify early warning signs of a crisis and take preventive actions. This predictive ability is highly valuable.	Problem Anticipation
13	In interactions with delinquent clients or during resource mobilization, negotiation skills are key. A manager must know how to protect the bank's interests without conflict and within ethical boundaries.	Negotiation Ability
14	One of the main challenges in branch management is effective communication with staff and clients. A manager must be a good listener and able to clearly articulate demands and instructions.	Verbal and Listening Skills
15	In any branch, disagreements may arise among employees or between the bank and clients. A successful manager is one who can manage and constructively resolve these conflicts.	Conflict Management Skills

2. Theme Transformation: In this phase, following the extraction of basic themes, the organizing themes were categorized through axial coding. The goal at this stage was to reorganize the basic themes into more abstract categories that could guide us toward more overarching, inclusive, and central themes. In practice, the labels of some conceptual

categories (basic themes) were updated, and various scattered points mentioned by interviewees in their responses were clustered and classified together. In this stage, 57 basic themes and 11 organizing themes were extracted, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Formation of Organizing Themes

Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Interpersonal Competencies	Negotiation Ability Verbal and Listening Skills Conflict Management Skills Effective Customer Communication Awareness of Cultural Behaviors
Emotional Intelligence	Self-awareness Self-control Empathy with Staff Understanding Customer Needs Tolerance of Environmental Pressure
Adherence to Professional Ethics	Loyalty to Organizational Values and Mission Respect for Stakeholders' Rights Transparency in Decision-Making Confidentiality of Customer and Organizational Information
Organizational Responsibility	Task Follow-up Operational Transparency Accountability Readiness Commitment to Organizational Goals Receptiveness to Criticism
Innovation and Resilience Capability	Stress Tolerance Positive Competitive Spirit Commitment to Continuous Improvement Stability in Crisis Creative and Innovative Thinking Flexibility and Adaptability Personal Learning and Development
Information and Knowledge Management	Financial Report Analysis Understanding Performance Indicators Customer Behavior Analysis Market and Trend Analysis Customer Feedback Review Use of Banking Information Systems Branch Information Updating Optimal Use of Data Competitive Information Evaluation
Banking and Legal Competencies	Financial Knowledge Risk Management Legal and Regulatory Knowledge Awareness of Banking Regulations
Practical Experience and Banking Management	Prior Banking Managerial Experience Experience in Financial Management Experience Across Branches Experience with Large and Institutional Clients
Team Leadership Skills	Ability to Lead Staff Delegation of Responsibilities Ability to Motivate Staff Promoting Team Spirit

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills	Building Trust Among Staff
	Data Analysis Ability
	Decision-Making Speed
	Provision of Creative Solutions
	Problem Anticipation
Managerial Competencies	Staff Performance Management
	Talent Management
	Employee Empowerment
	Financial Management
	Strategy Formulation and Implementation

According to Table 3, once the organizing themes were identified, the process moved to the third step—theme discovery and description.

3. Discovery and Description of the Thematic Network: At this stage, after refining the themes, all basic themes were organized under their corresponding organizing and global themes. Any basic themes unrelated to the research objectives and questions were eliminated.

Organizing themes represent categories derived from basic themes, while global themes encapsulate the overarching principles governing the entire text as a whole. Through analysis of the basic, organizing, and global themes, the themes were structured into a thematic network, in which the prominent themes at each of the three levels are illustrated, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Formation of Global Themes

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
General Criteria	Interpersonal Competencies	Negotiation Ability Verbal and Listening Skills Conflict Management Skills Effective Customer Communication Awareness of Cultural Behaviors Self-awareness Self-control Empathy with Staff Understanding Customer Needs Tolerance of Environmental Pressure Loyalty to Organizational Values and Mission Respect for Stakeholders' Rights Transparency in Decision-Making Confidentiality of Customer and Organizational Information
	Emotional Intelligence	Task Follow-up Operational Transparency Accountability Readiness Commitment to Organizational Goals Receptiveness to Criticism Stress Tolerance Positive Competitive Spirit Commitment to Continuous Improvement Stability in Crisis Creative and Innovative Thinking Flexibility and Adaptability Personal Learning and Development Financial Report Analysis Understanding Performance Indicators Customer Behavior Analysis Market and Trend Analysis Customer Feedback Review Use of Banking Information Systems Branch Information Updating
	Adherence to Professional Ethics	
	Organizational Responsibility	
	Innovation and Resilience Capability	
	Information and Knowledge Management	

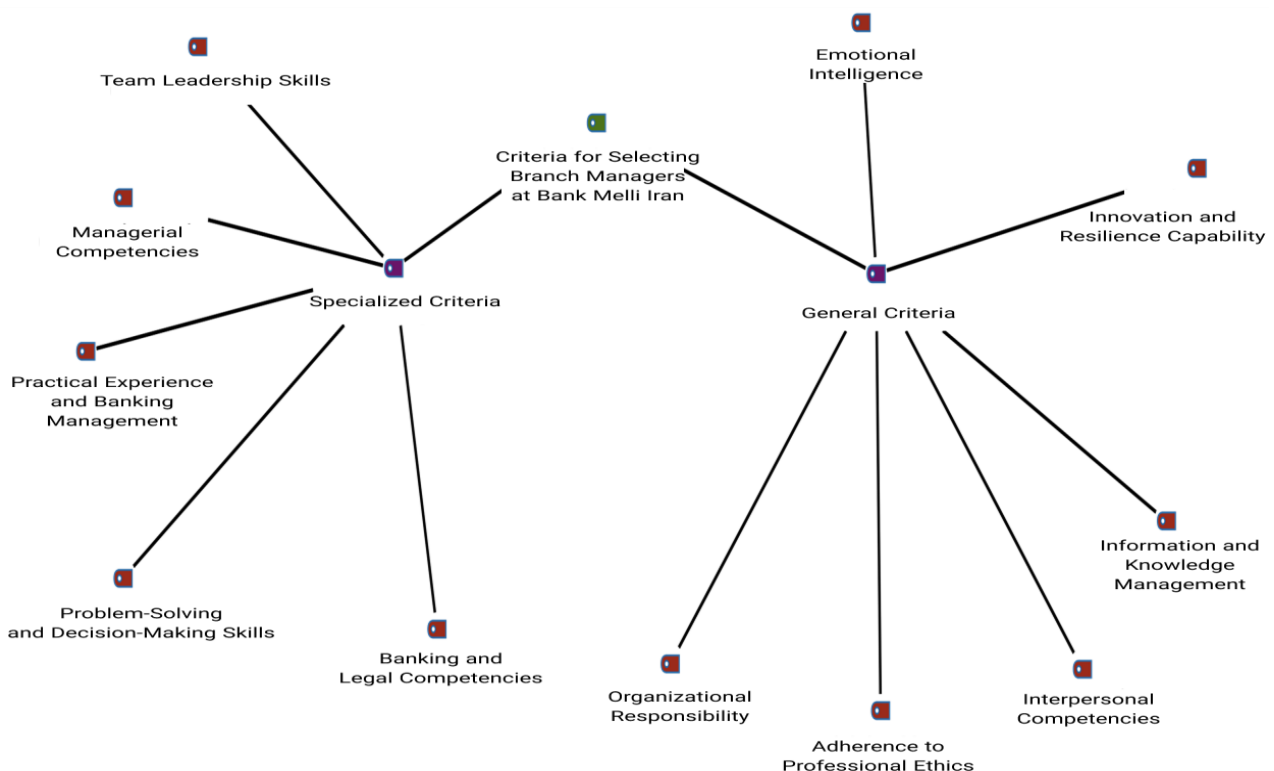
Specialized Criteria	Banking and Legal Competencies	Optimal Use of Data Competitive Information Evaluation Financial Knowledge Risk Management Legal and Regulatory Knowledge Awareness of Banking Regulations
	Practical Experience and Banking Management	Prior Banking Managerial Experience Experience in Financial Management Experience Across Branches
	Team Leadership Skills	Experience with Large and Institutional Clients Ability to Lead Staff Delegation of Responsibilities Ability to Motivate Staff Promoting Team Spirit Building Trust Among Staff
	Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills	Data Analysis Ability Decision-Making Speed Provision of Creative Solutions Problem Anticipation
	Managerial Competencies	Staff Performance Management Talent Management Employee Empowerment Financial Management Strategy Formulation and Implementation

According to Table 4, the categorized results of concepts and codes demonstrate that the criteria for selecting branch managers at Bank Melli Iran consist of 57 basic themes, 11

organizing themes, and 2 global themes. The thematic network is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Thematic Network



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify and categorize the selection criteria for branch managers at Bank Melli Iran using a qualitative, thematic analysis approach. The results of the study yielded 57 basic themes, 11 organizing themes, and 2 overarching (global) themes, classifying selection indicators into two major categories: general competencies and specialized competencies. General competencies encompassed elements such as interpersonal competencies, emotional intelligence, ethical conduct, organizational responsibility, innovation and resilience, and information management. Specialized competencies included banking and legal expertise, practical and managerial experience in banking, team leadership, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and broader managerial capabilities.

The emergence of general competencies as a central category in the selection of bank managers reflects a growing recognition of the importance of behavioral, ethical, and cognitive abilities alongside technical knowledge. For instance, interpersonal skills such as negotiation, conflict resolution, and effective communication were strongly emphasized by participants. These findings are consistent with the meta-synthesis conducted by Ghamooshi et al. (2021), which emphasized ethical and interpersonal competencies as foundational for managerial success, particularly in institutions with complex human relations such as universities (Ghamooshi et al., 2021). Moreover, emotional intelligence—including self-awareness, empathy, and stress management—was considered essential for maintaining employee morale, addressing customer needs, and responding effectively to crises. This aligns with the competency frameworks discussed by Ramsay and Macdonald (2023), who found that emotional and behavioral dimensions significantly shape the effectiveness of leadership in sports governance (Ramsay & Macdonald, 2023).

Another dominant category of general competencies involved professional ethics and organizational responsibility. Participants repeatedly stressed values such as loyalty to institutional missions, transparency, and accountability. These findings are echoed in Pargol et al. (2022), who highlighted ethical conduct and stakeholder respect as essential criteria in the selection of educational managers in the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Pargol et al., 2022). Additionally, the emphasis on

responsibility, particularly in terms of operational follow-through, accountability, and openness to criticism, reinforces the shift toward value-based governance, as also discussed by Souza and Vasconcelos (2021), who questioned whether meritocratic systems in public institutions reflect reality or remain aspirational (Souza & Vasconcelos, 2021).

The category of innovation and resilience further reinforces the multidimensional expectations placed on bank managers. Traits such as adaptability, crisis stability, creative thinking, and continuous learning were among the most cited indicators. These findings correspond with those of Khomideh et al. (2022), who found that adaptability and dynamic learning capacity are critical for managing social security institutions amidst changing regulatory and social environments (Khomideh et al., 2022). Similarly, Castillo Arias (2021) emphasized in his model for competency-based management that resilience and innovation are key factors in the institutional development of higher education systems (Castillo Arias, 2021).

In the domain of specialized competencies, legal and banking knowledge was identified as a core requirement. This includes familiarity with financial analysis, risk management, contractual law, and central bank regulations. These results corroborate the findings of Reisi and Daneshfard (2024), who developed a promotion model for Refah Bank, highlighting specialized knowledge as non-negotiable for sound financial governance in the public banking sector (Reisi & Daneshfard, 2024). Similarly, Jafarpour et al. (2023) argued that neglecting legal and procedural knowledge in appointing managers in state-owned enterprises often results in systemic inefficiency and legal vulnerabilities (Jafarpour et al., 2023).

Experience-related competencies formed another critical pillar in the specialized category. Participants emphasized the importance of direct experience in financial management, branch rotation, and engagement with large corporate clients. These insights align with the findings of Ghasemi et al. (2020), who concluded that managerial experience and operational exposure are indispensable in appointing leaders in politically sensitive and operationally complex organizations like the National Iranian Oil Company (Ghasemi et al., 2020). The emphasis on practical managerial experience also mirrors conclusions drawn by Farhadinejad et al. (2022), who argued for mapping existing managerial capacities before structuring future appointments

in Iranian governmental institutions (Farhadinejad et al., 2022).

Leadership and decision-making skills were also among the key criteria. These included the ability to guide teams, delegate responsibilities, foster motivation, and make timely and creative decisions. Kandarani et al. (2025) also stressed the centrality of these competencies in their validated model for managers of Iran's Oil Terminals Company, arguing that strategic leadership must be both contextually relevant and skillfully executed (Kandarani et al., 2025). Furthermore, the emphasis on predictive problem-solving aligns with the competency dimensions identified in the study by Stefanica et al. (2025), which explored equitable selection practices in Romanian sports management and emphasized strategic foresight as an essential leadership trait (Stefanica et al., 2025).

Finally, the general managerial capabilities such as talent management, staff empowerment, financial control, and strategic planning serve as the integrative elements of the proposed model. These attributes reflect the findings of Abbaspour et al. (2020), who in their model for high school principals, noted that strategic alignment, empowerment, and performance management must function as overarching capacities that bind all other competencies together (Abbaspour et al., 2020). Similarly, the strategic planning dimension of this study echoes the recommendations made by Dehghanpour Farashah et al. (2023), who emphasized long-term strategic orientation in their model for the Planning and Budget Organization (Dehghanpour Farashah et al., 2023).

Despite the rich qualitative insights this study provides, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study's reliance on purposive and snowball sampling, while suitable for exploratory qualitative research, limits the generalizability of its findings to other banks or sectors. The participants were all associated with Bank Melli Iran, and thus the competency framework derived may reflect the unique institutional culture, operational expectations, and strategic priorities of this particular organization. Additionally, while efforts were made to reach theoretical saturation, the final sample size ($n = 16$) may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives within Iran's broader banking sector. Finally, the study was confined to qualitative methods; the absence of a quantitative validation phase means that the reliability and predictive power of the model have not yet been empirically tested.

Future studies should aim to empirically validate the identified competency model using quantitative techniques

such as exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis on a larger sample across multiple banks. A comparative analysis between public and private sector banks would also offer insights into sector-specific competencies and help refine the model further. Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking managerial performance based on the proposed competencies would enhance the model's predictive validity. Integrating psychometric assessments and 360-degree feedback tools could also strengthen the robustness of the selection criteria and contribute to data-driven decision-making processes in executive appointments.

Organizations such as Bank Melli Iran should institutionalize the use of structured competency frameworks in their recruitment and promotion systems. This involves embedding the identified indicators into performance appraisal systems, training programs, and leadership development pathways. HR departments should collaborate with senior executives and behavioral experts to design competency-based interviews and assessment centers that align with strategic goals. Moreover, a feedback loop should be established to continuously update the model based on evolving environmental demands and internal performance audits. By doing so, institutions can ensure that managerial appointments are not only transparent and equitable but also strategically aligned with organizational excellence.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

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.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

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

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