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RESEARCH PAPER

Designing the Integrated Dimensions of the Marketing System using the Fuzzy Delphi Approach

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to design the integrated dimensions of the marketing system. Marketing management faces ambiguity in the boundaries of the discipline and a weakening of its strategic position within organizations, and the lack of an integrated framework has hindered effective planning and the formulation of competitive strategies. This research was conducted with a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review. Due to the complexity of marketing management concepts, initial categories were first identified through a systematic review. Then, using the fuzzy Delphi technique in two stages, the final indicators and components were extracted and refined. In the first stage of the fuzzy Delphi, 18 initial categories were reduced to 11 groups, and in the second stage, with expert consensus, 8 final dimensions were confirmed. The research findings led to the design of a comprehensive model that encompasses the essential components for effective marketing management. These components include: Process and Innovation, Structure and Culture, Assets and People, Technology, Environment and Business Analysis, Stakeholder Interactions, Governance and Strategy, and Value and Performance. In conclusion, by designing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system and applying the fuzzy Delphi method to refine the components, this research has taken an effective step toward systematizing marketing activities. The proposed framework, by creating a common language, transparent processes, clear roles, and comparable criteria, facilitates professional learning and helps organizations, through a correct understanding of the central role of marketing, to formulate more coherent planning and strategy.

Keywords:
Standardization, Marketing System, Systematic Review, Fuzzy Delphi Technique.

1. Introduction

One of the important categories for the success of an organization in competitive conditions is the concept of marketing, for which theorists, marketing writers, and organizations have made

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very great efforts for many years to understand the nature and process of formulating and implementing strategy at the corporate, business, and marketing levels (Noble, 1999). A significant part of the marketing literature has focused on the development of tools, techniques, and executive prescriptions, often assuming the existence of a common and accepted logic behind these activities (Brown, 2003; Shaw and Jones, 2005). In practice, what is observed is a heterogeneous set of approaches, definitions, and processes, each covering a part of the marketing problem, but rarely brought together within a standard, integrated, and generalizable framework (Demirdijan, 1976). This situation has caused marketing, despite its widespread application, to face ambiguity in its boundaries, roles, and position at the theoretical and managerial level (Bartels, 1974; Brookshank et al., 2010). Meanwhile, the main issue is that although numerous and scattered studies have been conducted on the functional areas of marketing and marketing performance measurement, and despite the fact that marketing management has a significant and positive impact on business performance (Jariyachamsit, 2021), research shows that many companies still do not recognize the role of marketing in their overall company performance (Gok, 2018).

On the other hand, a systematic review of the previous research literature shows that although many studies have identified marketing components, most of them have used traditional consensus-building methods and have paid less attention to fuzzy multi-criteria decision-making techniques for refining components (Datane et al., 2026). This is while the opinions of experts in the field of management are always associated with degrees of ambiguity and uncertainty, and the application of fuzzy logic can increase the accuracy and reliability of the results. The present study, utilizing the fuzzy Delphi method in two stages, while refining the components extracted from the systematic review, has achieved theoretical consensus among experts and has demonstrated its methodological innovation in this field. It has been conducted with the aim of designing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system in the organization and will answer the following key questions:

- What are the constituent factors in designing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system?
- What are the relationships between different constituent factors in implementing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system?

In Section 2, after reviewing the existing literature, the existing literature gaps are critically examined and the position of the present study is explained. Then, the research method is described and the conceptual research model is analyzed in Section 3. Finally, the study results are reported in Section 4 and suggestions, and directions for future research are discussed in Section 5.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical foundations and research background in the field of marketing management encompass a wide range of concepts, from performance evaluation and standard setting to information systems, organizational capabilities, and the impact of digital transformations. Understanding this complexity is essential for designing a comprehensive marketing management standard.

At the core of these discussions lies the evaluation of marketing performance. In this context, Haji Heydari et al. (2013), in a pioneering study in Iran's banking industry, developed a comprehensive framework using the meta-synthesis method, which measures marketing performance across five key dimensions: "Customer" (including loyalty, satisfaction, and complaints), "Brand" (including brand recognition, perceived quality, and brand image), "Market" (including market share and relative consumer satisfaction), "Innovation" (including number and profitability of new products), and "Financial" (including sales, profit, and cash

flow). This multidimensional perspective demonstrates the importance of simultaneously considering financial and non-financial indicators. Nevertheless, Katsikeas et al. (2016), in an extensive review study, note that despite the critical importance of determining the value of marketing performance, its conceptualization and operationalization in the literature have been scattered and insufficient.

Convergence around these evaluation frameworks necessitates the existence of professional standards and competencies. In Iran, a step is taken in this direction by auditing the marketing system in insurance companies and developing marketing and sales standards to enhance the effectiveness of the life insurance sales network. Internationally, the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) (2019), in its influential report, presented a capabilities framework that serves as a guide to the skills and behaviors expected of professional marketers at different career levels. This framework categorizes competencies into three main groups: "Core Competencies" (such as insight, strategy, and customer support), "Technical Competencies" (such as brand management, digital marketing, and customer experience), and "Behavioral Competencies" (such as creativity, commercial awareness, and leadership). At a more micro level, Fakhr Al (2016) explored the factors affecting the success of marketing managers in Iranian companies and concluded that factors such as managers' individual skills, alignment of organizational goals, relevant educational level, and the existence of legal support play a decisive role in this success. Tkachenko (2017) correctly notes that to understand the effectiveness of marketing management, it must be considered as a "system" consisting of interconnected components and influenced by a set of internal and external factors. Identifying these components and the links between them is the cornerstone of creating an effective marketing management system. One of the critical pillars of this system is the "Marketing Information System" (MIS). The article by Johansson (2023) specifically emphasizes the vital role of MIS in supporting managers' decision-making processes and shows that the main challenge in today's dynamic environment is providing computer-based support for formulating marketing strategies. In the digital age, these systems have taken on new forms. The article by Kurniawanto and Hanafizadeh (2023) shows that marketing information systems have largely moved towards being web-based and integrated with e-commerce platforms, with their main focus being on improving "customer satisfaction and loyalty" in various industries including banking, tourism, and agriculture.

The final output of these support systems should be manifested in the form of dynamic and tangible marketing capabilities within the organization. Morgan et al. (2009), combining "resource-based theory" and "dynamic capabilities theory," empirically demonstrate that "market orientation" and "marketing capabilities" are complementary assets that together lead to superior organizational performance. Cacciolatti (2016) enriches this discussion by extending the "resource-advantage theory" and shows that the relationship between marketing capabilities and performance is moderated by factors such as marketing strategy, market orientation, and organizational power. One practical solution for developing these capabilities is benchmarking. Vorhies (2005) empirically proves that benchmarking the marketing capabilities of top companies can become a powerful organizational learning mechanism and provide a path to achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

To realize their potential, these capabilities require appropriate organizational structure and coordination. Lee et al. (2015), by introducing the innovative concept of structural marketing, argue that elements of organizational structure design (such as centrality, formalization, and complexity) can be used as strategic marketing variables to achieve marketing goals. Cabello et al. (2014) also empirically demonstrate, using a sample of small industrial firms, that dimensions of organizational structure such as formalization, integration, and focus have a direct and significant impact on the degree of companies' market orientation. Biemans et al. (2022), by presenting a systematic review of the "sales-marketing interface" literature, emphasize the necessity of effective convergence and cooperation between these two key units

to achieve organizational goals. Bartošek (2012) specifically explores the barriers and facilitating factors of cross-functional coordination. Khloud and Yang (2013), applying the "Motivation/Ability/Opportunity" theoretical framework, show that factors such as the use of cross-functional teams, resource interdependence, shared reward systems, and top management support positively influence the level of cross-functional coordination.

In today's world, none of these components have been spared from the profound impact of digital transformations. Chotisarn and Phutang (2025), by analyzing the dynamics of the "marketing technology ecosystem," show how the integration of digital technologies is transforming marketing. Key topics in this area include "artificial intelligence," "blockchain," "digital marketing," and "customer experience". Cioppi et al. (2023), by conducting a systematic review of the digital transformation and marketing literature, present a multidimensional framework and analyze the impact of digital technologies on marketing processes from the perspective of various stakeholders (including customers, business processes, and specifically employees).

To fully understand this complex environment, it is necessary to go beyond a purely customer-centric view. Hillebrand, Driesen, and Cool (2015), by presenting the theoretical framework of stakeholder marketing, argue that modern marketing must consider the complex and interconnected network of all stakeholders (not only customers). Finally, Bahri Nejad et al. (2018), in the context of "Iranian banking marketing," provide a concrete example of the necessity of paying attention to local conditions and the "marketing maturity level" of organizations in designing and implementing effective standards and strategies.

Given the extensive and integrative review above, it can be seen that although the existing literature has examined various dimensions of marketing management (from performance evaluation and professional standards to information systems, organizational capabilities, structure, and technology) separately and in specific contexts, the gap of an integrated standard framework capable of combining these scattered components into a coherent system is clearly felt. The present study, aiming to "design a marketing management standard," seeks to fill this fundamental gap and, relying on the rich theoretical and empirical foundations presented, attempts to provide a model that is both theoretically comprehensive and adaptable to the specific conditions of Iran's business environment.

3. Research Methodology

The present study has examined the existing literature in the field of marketing using the systematic review method. Systematic review method: A systematic review is a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and repeatable methods to identify, select, and critically appraise all relevant research, and to collect and analyze data from the studies included in the literature review. A systematic review answers a focused research question and is in fact a type of literature review that, by focusing on a single question, attempts to identify, appraise, select, and synthesize all the important research evidence related to it (Aromataris, 2014). The systematic literature review includes the following five stages (Brine, 2012):

1. Planning and scoping; 2. Systematic search; 3. Evaluation of search results; 4. Extraction of evidence from items; 5. Analysis. The steps of this method are mentioned below:

Step 1 - Planning and scoping: In this stage, the research questions will be formulated based on the main problem and concern of the research. In this research, the research questions were formulated as follows:

- What are the constituent factors (components) in designing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system?
- What are the relationships between different constituent factors (components) in implementing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system?

In this regard, the keywords marketing process, marketing management process, marketing system, marketing management system, marketing organization, marketing organization structure, marketing framework, marketing structure, marketing department structure, marketing team structure, marketing technology, marketing innovations, marketing context or theme were considered for searching in databases.

Step 2 - Systematic search: In this stage, a systematic search is conducted on articles and texts published in various journals and websites based on the research keywords. In the present study, the databases Taylor & Francis, Springer, Google Scholar, Emerald, Academia, Science Direct, as well as the Iranian Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (Jahad Daneshgahi) database, Noormags, and IranDoc were examined. These databases were selected due to their comprehensiveness in the field of humanities research. In the present study, reputable online databases were searched based on the research keywords within the time period of 1980 to 2024, because since the beginning of the 21st century, marketing has greatly benefited from enormous advancements in information technology, and the use of technology became possible in dimensions previously unimaginable. Therefore, marketing management processes have taken decisive steps since 2000 (Berghoff, Scranton, & Spiekermann, 2012). Hence, this was considered as the starting point for the research examined in this study. As a result of the search and review using the desired keywords and those related to the terms, a number of documents were found. The keywords were searched in both English and Persian. At this stage, 1165 English and Persian documents were found.

Step 3 - Evaluation of search results: In evaluating the search results, criteria were first designed by the researcher, and only those studies that met the research criteria qualified for inclusion in the study, while other studies were excluded from the process. The criteria were: articles published in reputable journals (excluding books and conference articles), availability of the full text of the article, and the relevance of the article's topic to the research. Accordingly, 619 documents remained for review. At this stage, by reviewing the abstracts of the remaining articles, irrelevant articles were removed. Then, by reviewing the full text of the articles and removing articles with irrelevant content, in accordance with the process shown in **Fig 1**, finally 101 articles remained in the research.

This systematic screening followed standard protocols and prioritized methodological quality and direct thematic relevance over exhaustive citation, ensuring that only studies contributing directly to the conceptual extraction and fuzzy Delphi refinement were retained. The selection criteria (reputable peer-reviewed journals, full-text availability, and explicit focus on marketing system dimensions) justified the exclusion of books, conference papers, and thematically peripheral studies, resulting in a focused yet representative corpus.

Step 4 - Extraction of evidence from items: In this stage, each article was examined by reviewing three parts: the article title, the article abstracts, and the full content of the article to answer the research questions. Afterwards, based on content analysis, the answers to the research questions were carefully examined and analyzed. To categorize the articles, the classification of Wacker (1998) was used, in which documents are categorized based on year of publication, type of journal, and study method. The description of the reviewed documents for this research based on year of publication is presented in **Fig 2**. Based on the description of the reviewed documents in the research based on year of publication, it was determined that research after 2010 has had an upward trend and researchers are developing the literature on the subject. On the other hand, with the digital transformation following the pandemic crisis in 2020, a new marketing trend under the title of digital marketing is evident in the research path of marketing management. Accordingly, most of the research after 2020 is related to the keywords "marketing innovation" and "marketing technology.

The reviewed documents were also examined in terms of journals. The status of the documents based on journals is presented in **Table 1**. According to this table, the highest

frequency of documents belongs to specialized marketing journals. This indicates an academic interest in the topic of marketing management, for which more scientific outputs from academic studies can be expected in the future.

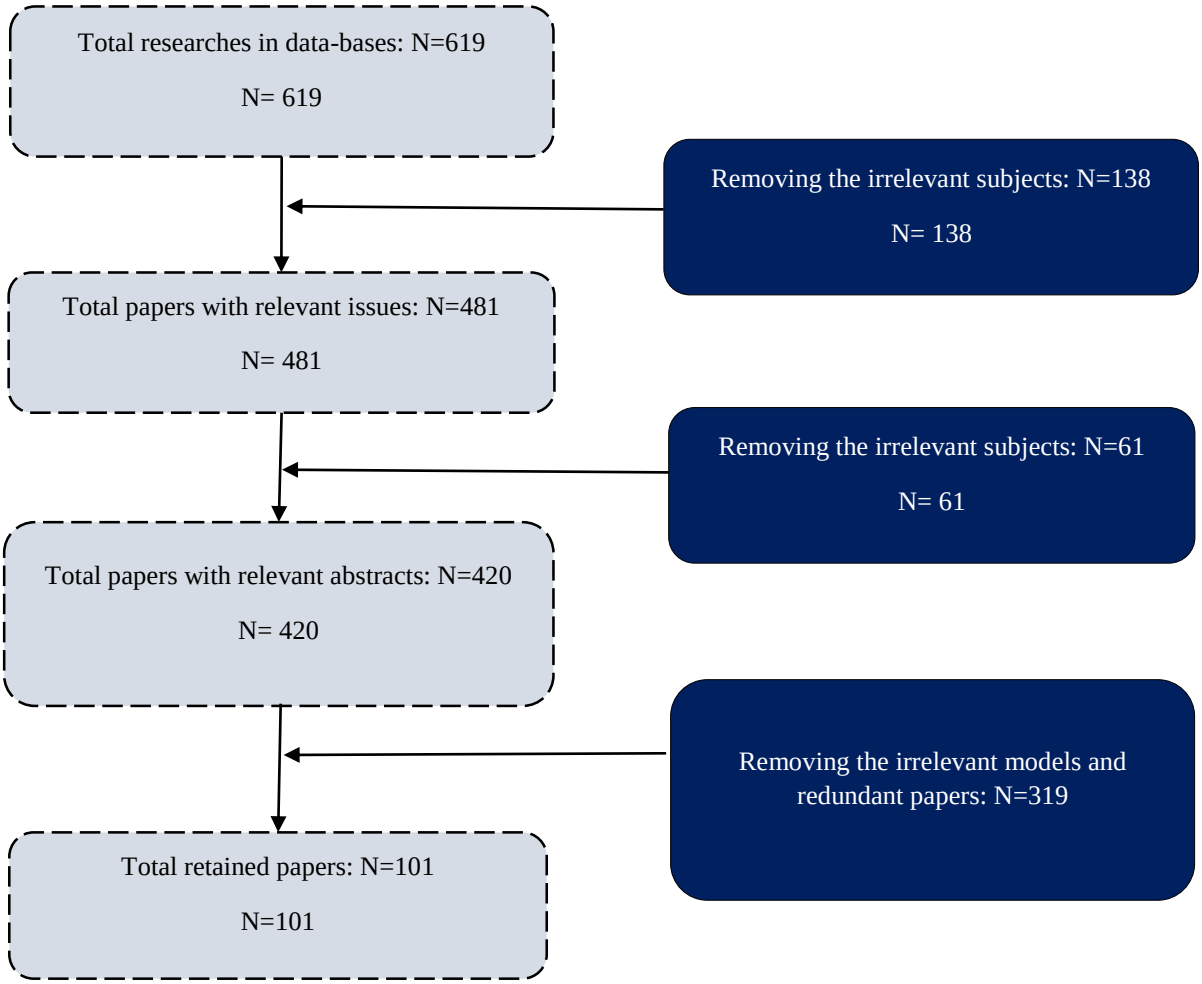


Fig 1. The process of papers' evaluations

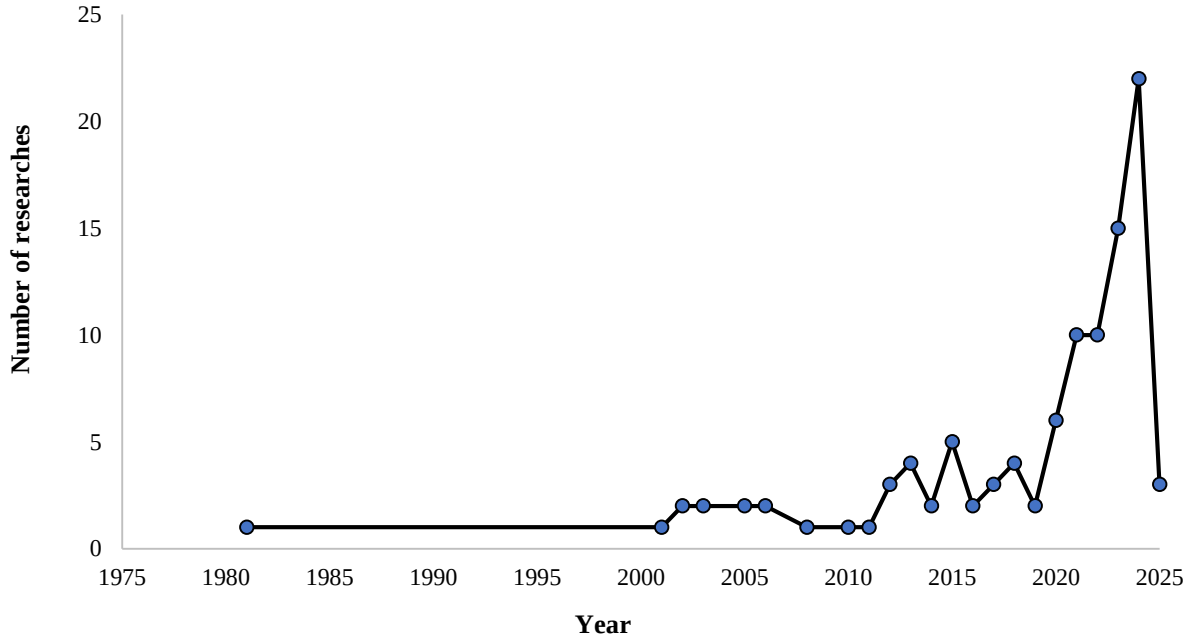


Fig 2. Description of the reviewed documents based on the year of publication

Table 1. Description of the reviewed documents based on the journals

Journal name	Number of papers
New Marketing Research Journal	4
Journal of Business Management	3
Iranian Journal of Management Sciences	1
Iranian Journal of Agriculture Economics and Development Research	1
Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	1
Journal of Value Creation in Business Management	1
The popularization of science	1
Industrial and Organizational Psychology Studies	1
Customer Behavior Studies Journal	1
Management, Economics and Entrepreneurship Studies	1
14th conference on researches in Management and Accounting	1
Journal of Business Research	5
Heliyon	4
Journal of Marketing	4
Industrial Marketing Management	3
Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	2
Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing	2
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	2
Applied Sciences	1
Acta Psychologica	1
Acta academica karviniensis	1
AJN The American Journal of Nursing	1
Baltic Journal of Economic Studies	1
Blockchain: Research and Applications	1
Cleaner Logistics and Supply Chain	1
Cogent Business & Management	1
Computers and Operations Research	1
Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans	1
Complexity	1
Corporate Communications: An International Journal	1
Digital Business	1
Eastern-European Journal of Enterprise Technologies	1
Economics Letters	1
Electronic Commerce Research and Applications	1
Energy Economics	1
Expert Systems with Applications	1
Human Information Interaction	1
International Journal of Bank Marketing	1
International Journal of Information Management	1
International Journal of Information Management Data Insights	2
International Journal of Innovation Studies	1
International Journal of Management Reviews	1
International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management	1
International Marketing Review	1
Italian Journal of Marketing	1
Journal of Advances in Management Research	1
Journal of Business Strategy	1
Journal of Cleaner Production	1
Journal of East European Management Studies	1
Journal of Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS)	1
Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	1
Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship	1
Journal of Sensors	1
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1
Management Science Letters	1
Management Systems in Production Engineering	1

Journal name	Number of papers
Marine Policy	1
Marketing Intelligence & Planning	1
Marketing Management	1
Marketing Theory	1
Менеджмент	1
NIM Marketing Intelligence Review	1
Procedia Computer Science	2
Procedia Economics and Finance	1
Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal	1
Resources, Conservation & Recycling Advances	1
Review of International Geographical Education Online	1
Social Sciences & Humanities Open	1
Strategic Management Journal	1
Sustainability	1
Systems and Soft Computing	1
The International Journal of Management Science and Information Technology (IJMSIT)	1
The International Journal of Organizational Analysis	1
Transport Economics and Management	1
Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing	1
World Journal of Management	1
Book/ book chapter (Emerald, IGI Global, Edward Elgar)	4
Conference papers (Proceedings/Conference)	4

The documents based on document type in terms of method are shown according to **Fig 3**.

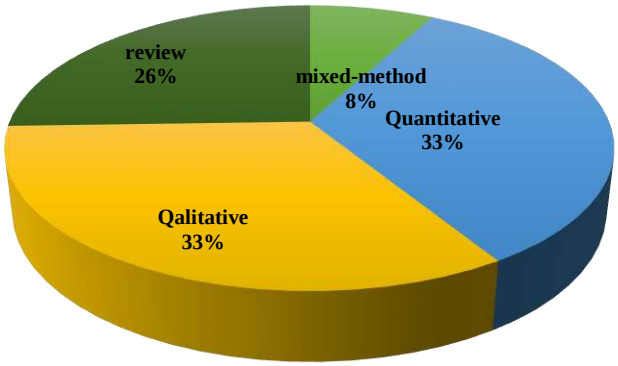


Fig 3. Description of the reviewed documents based on the research methodology

The development trend of studies showed that from 2020 onwards, we witness a focus on topics such as digital marketing and social media, which is due to the digital transformation resulting from the pandemic in 2020. This trend from 2022 to 2024 has shifted towards the concepts of marketing strategies and entrepreneurial marketing, highlighting the importance of these concepts in the marketing literature.

Step 5 - Analysis: Finally, in the analysis stage, based on the research question, the results of each article were summarized in tables, and each was evaluated and classified. At the beginning of the studies, over 280 initial concepts related to marketing management were identified. This number was reduced to 115 concepts through multiple screenings and deletions and mergers. These concepts were initially divided into 18 categories as main categories.

After that, the research team, in further reviews and to downsize the model, reduced the framework to 11 categories. Then, the researcher, with the help of experts in the field of marketing management (including academic experts, marketing management consultants, industry experts, and opinion leaders in the field of marketing management), re-evaluated the

final framework of the integrated dimensions of marketing management and reduced it to 8 categories.

In order to increase scientific accuracy, reduce individual biases, and achieve expert consensus in the process of reducing the model dimensions, the fuzzy Delphi method was used. Classical Delphi was insufficient here because marketing management components involve subjective and vague expert judgments; fuzzy Delphi preserves this inherent ambiguity through triangular fuzzy numbers, preventing premature elimination of relevant dimensions. This method is a combination of the classic Delphi technique and fuzzy set theory, and it enables the conversion of experts' linguistic judgments into quantifiable and analyzable values. The expert panel description for the Fuzzy Delphi Process is as follows: A panel of 14 experts participated in both stages of the fuzzy Delphi. The panel composition was as follows: 5 university professors with research specializations in marketing management and strategic management; 4 senior marketing management consultants each having at least 10 years of industry consulting experience; 3 industry experts currently serving as marketing directors or senior marketing managers in manufacturing and service sectors; and 2 opinion leaders recognized as authorities in Iranian marketing associations and professional bodies. The selection criteria for experts were: (1) holding at least a master's degree (preferably Ph.D.) in marketing, business management, or a closely related field; (2) having a minimum of 8 years of cumulative experience in either academic research or practical marketing management; (3) demonstrated publication or professional record in marketing strategy, marketing systems, or related domains; and (4) voluntary willingness to participate in two full Delphi rounds. All 14 invited experts completed both the first and second rounds of the fuzzy Delphi, resulting in a 100% retention rate. The consensus measurement followed equation (3) on page 10, where a category was retained if the crisp value was ≥ 0.7 and the expert dispersion index was within the acceptable limit. As a result, the fuzzy Delphi process was carried out in two stages: (i) Reducing the dimensions from 18 initial categories to 11 categories, and (ii) Final reduction from 11 categories to 8 main categories (**Fig 4**).

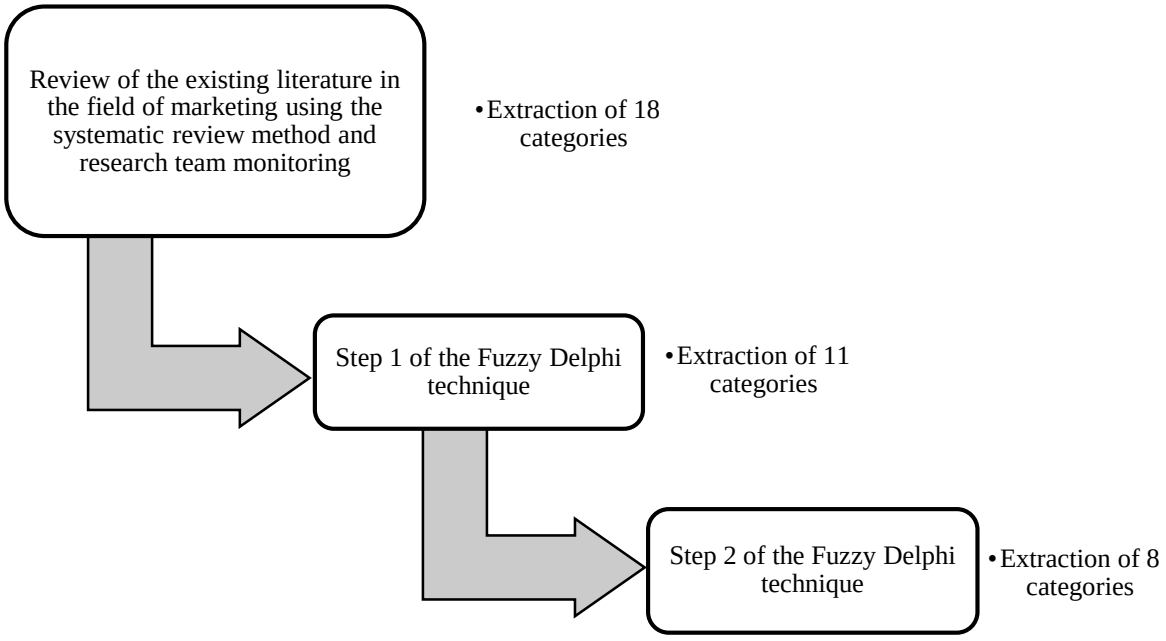


Fig 4. The process of extracting the integrated dimensions of the marketing system

- **Stage 1**: Reduction from 18 to 11 categories using fuzzy Delphi

After extracting the 18 main categories resulting from the systematic review, a questionnaire

based on a five-point Likert scale was designed and provided to the research team members. The experts were asked to evaluate the importance of each category within the integrated marketing management framework. Given that these evaluations were conducted using linguistic variables; for each, a triangular fuzzy number corresponding to what is presented in **Table 2** was defined.

Table 2. The linguistic variables and associated Fuzzy numbers

Linguistic variable	Fuzzy number (l,m,u)
Low	(0,0.25,0.5)
Medium	(0.25,0.5,0.75)
High	(0.5,0.75,1)
Very high	(0.75,1,1)

Next, the fuzzy numbers of the experts for each category were aggregated using equation (1):

$$\tilde{A}_j = (\frac{\sum u_i}{n}, \frac{\sum m_i}{n}, \frac{\sum l_i}{n}) \quad (1)$$

where $\tilde{A}_j$ is the aggregated fuzzy number for category j, and n is the number of experts. Then, in order to convert the fuzzy numbers into a definite value for ranking, the center of gravity method according to equation (2) was used.

$$crisp\ value = (\frac{l+m+u}{3}) \quad (2)$$

For screening in the first stage, categories whose definite value was less than 0.6 were removed. As a result, 7 categories with the lowest scores were eliminated and 11 categories with the highest scores were retained. The results are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Sample results of stage 1 (18→11)

Category	Aggregated fuzzy number	Crisp value	Status
Marketing management processes	0.72,0.88,0.96	0.85	Retained
Marketing team infra-structure	0.7,0.84,0.92	0.82	Retained
Marketing management system	0.68,0.82,0.9	0.80	Retained
Marketing management technologies	0.65,0.8,0.88	0.77	Retained
Marketing culture	0.63,0.78,0.86	0.76	Retained
Beneficiaries' interactions	0.6,0.75,0.84	0.73	Retained
Governance and Strategy	0.58,0.72,0.82	0.70	Retained
Value creation and performance	0.55,0.70,0.80	0.68	Retained
Inter-functional activities	0.52,0.68,0.78	0.66	Retained
Marketing concept	0.5,0.66,0.76	0.64	Retained
Business environment	0.48,0.64,0.74	0.62	Retained
Other 7 categories	< 0.6	-	Eliminated

- **Stage 2**: Reduction from 11 to 8 categories using fuzzy Delphi: In the second stage, the 11 selected categories were placed before the experts in the field of marketing management (including university professors, consultants, industry experts, and opinion leaders). A process similar to the previous stage was implemented, with the difference that two Delphi rounds were conducted. The expert consensus index was also calculated. The acceptance threshold was considered equal to 0.70. The acceptance threshold (crisp value) was set at 0.70, meaning any category with a defuzzified value below 0.70 was eliminated. This threshold follows standard fuzzy Delphi practice where values above 0.70 indicate high expert agreement (Habibi et al.,

2015; Cheng & Lin, 2002). To measure convergence and consensus of opinions, equation (3) was used: Sj = (uj - lj)/3. The permissible limit for dispersion (Sj) was set at 0.20; categories with Sj > 0.20 were sent to the second Delphi round for re-evaluation, as values above 0.20 indicate unacceptable divergence among experts (Habibi et al., 2015). To measure convergence and consensus of opinions, equation (3) was used:

$$S_j = (\frac{u_j - l_j}{3}) \quad (3)$$

and categories whose dispersion exceeded the permissible limit were sent again to the second round. Finally, the results are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Sample results of stage 2 (11→8)

Category	Aggregated fuzzy number	Crisp value	Status
Innovation and process	0.78,0.92,1	0.90	Retained
Culture and structure	0.75,0.88,0.96	0.86	Retained
Asset and human resources	0.72,0.85,0.94	0.84	Retained
Technology	0.70,0.83,0.92	0.82	Retained
Business analysis and environment	0.68,0.82,0.90	0.80	Retained
Beneficiaries' interactions	0.65,0.78,0.88	0.77	Retained
Governance and strategy	0.62,0.76,0.86	0.75	Retained
Value and performance	0.60,0.74,0.84	0.73	Retained
Other 3 categories	< 0.7	-	Eliminated

4. Results

In this section, the findings from the systematic studies are presented, which include a comprehensive and complete list of all concepts and criteria in marketing management. Through systematic studies, over 280 initial concepts related to marketing management were identified. This number of concepts was reduced to 115 concepts, according to **Table 5**, through several rounds of screening, deletion, and merging.

Table 5. Extraction of systematic review concepts

Reference	Reference
(Olson et al., 2005); (Homburg et al., 2008)	(Olson et al., 2005); (Homburg et al., 2008)
(Olson et al., 2005)	(Olson et al., 2005)
(Lee et al., 2015)	(Lee et al., 2015)
(Lee et al., 2015)	(Lee et al., 2015)
(Olson et al., 2005); (Homburg et al., 2008)	(Olson et al., 2005); (Homburg et al., 2008)
(Olson et al., 2005); (Lee et al., 2015)	(Olson et al., 2005); (Lee et al., 2015)
(Lee et al., 2015)	(Lee et al., 2015)
(Lee et al., 2015)	(Lee et al., 2015)
(Lee et al., 2015)	(Lee et al., 2015)
(Ajayi & Morton, 2015)	(Ajayi & Morton, 2015)
(Andersson et al., 2018)	(Andersson et al., 2018)
(Najmi et al., 1391)	(Najmi et al., 1391)
(Matthyssens, 2006)	(Matthyssens, 2006)
(Homburg et al., 2008); (Gupta et al., 2021); (Kartsep, 2021); (Tevdoradze et al., 2023)	(Homburg et al., 2008); (Gupta et al., 2021); (Kartsep, 2021); (Tevdoradze et al., 2023)
(Saeedi et al., 1401)	(Saeedi et al., 1401)
(Olson et al., 2005); (Elhajjar, 2024)	(Olson et al., 2005); (Elhajjar, 2024)
(Cui et al., 2022)	(Cui et al., 2022)
(Ajayi & Morton, 2015) ;(Lee et al., 2015); (Eriksson et al., 2022)	(Ajayi & Morton, 2015) ;(Lee et al., 2015); (Eriksson et al., 2022)
(Matthyssens, 2006)	(Matthyssens, 2006)
(Matthyssens, 2006); (Elhajjar, 2024); (Ajayi &	(Matthyssens, 2006); (Elhajjar, 2024); (Ajayi & Morton,

Reference	Reference
Morton, 2015)	2015)
(Ajayi & Morton, 2015)	(Ajayi & Morton, 2015)
(Çınar, 2013); (Edwin et al., 2026)	(Çınar, 2013); (Edwin et al., 2026)
Gümüş et al., 2013)	Gümüş et al., 2013)
(McAlister et al., 2023)	(McAlister et al., 2023)
(BRUHN, 2002); (Asare et al., 2013)	(BRUHN, 2002); (Asare et al., 2013)
(Gholampur et al., 1398)	(Gholampur et al., 1398)
(BRUHN, 2002)	(BRUHN, 2002)
(Asare et al., 2013); (Hult, 2017); (Trez, 2012); (Cui et al., 2022)	(Asare et al., 2013); (Hult, 2017); (Trez, 2012); (Cui et al., 2022)
(McAlister et al., 2023); (Trez, 2012)	(McAlister et al., 2023); (Trez, 2012)
(Gholampour et al., 2019); (Kaffash et al., 1401)	(Gholampour et al., 2019); (Kaffash et al., 1401)
(Trez, 2012)	(Trez, 2012)
(Trez, 2012)	(Trez, 2012)
(Olazo, 2023); (McAlister et al., 2023); (Nawrocka et al., 2024); (Cherniavska, 2023); (Putranto et al., 2026)	(Olazo, 2023); (McAlister et al., 2023); (Nawrocka et al., 2024); (Cherniavska, 2023); (Putranto et al., 2026)
(Holm, 2006); (Kitchen, 2015); (Singh, 2026)	(Holm, 2006); (Kitchen, 2015); (Singh, 2026)
(Sakaset al., 2024)	(Sakaset al., 2024)
(Alkaraan et al., 2025); (Matarneh, 2024); (Yadav et al., 2024); (Batsis, 2024); (Panigrahi et al., 2024); (Levi-Bliech et al., 2026)	(Alkaraan et al., 2025); (Matarneh, 2024); (Yadav et al., 2024); (Batsis, 2024); (Panigrahi et al., 2024); (Levi-Bliech et al., 2026)
(McAlister et al., 2023); (Asare et al., 2013); (Trez, 2012)	(McAlister et al., 2023); (Asare et al., 2013); (Trez, 2012)
(Talari, 2024)	(Talari, 2024)
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(Hadrian et al., 2021)	(Hadrian et al., 2021)
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(BRUHN, 2002); (Olson et al., 2005)	(BRUHN, 2002); (Olson et al., 2005)
(Olson et al., 2005); (BRUHN, 2002); (Zhang, 2021); (Hossain et al., 2026)	(Olson et al., 2005); (BRUHN, 2002); (Zhang, 2021); (Hossain et al., 2026)
(Olson et al., 2005); (BRUHN, 2002)	(Olson et al., 2005); (BRUHN, 2002)
(Bahri Nejad et al., 2018); (Hejazi et al., 2011)	(Bahri Nejad et al., 2018); (Hejazi et al., 2011)
(Asare et al., 2013)	(Asare et al., 2013)
(Asare et al., 2013); (Ungerman, 2019)	(Asare et al., 2013); (Ungerman, 2019)
(Hult, 2017)	(Hult, 2017)
(Haghighi Kafash et al., 2022)	(Haghighi Kafash et al., 2022)
(Gupta et al., 2021); (Asare et al., 2013)	(Gupta et al., 2021); (Asare et al., 2013)
(Diaz et al., 2021)	(Diaz et al., 2021)
(Elhajjar, 2024)	(Elhajjar, 2024)
(Gupta et al., 2016); (Asare et al., 2013)	(Gupta et al., 2016); (Asare et al., 2013)
(Gupta et al., 2016)	(Gupta et al., 2016)
(Gupta et al., 2016); (Mohd Harif, 2022)	(Gupta et al., 2016); (Mohd Harif, 2022)
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(Wang et al., 2020)	(Wang et al., 2020)
(Huang et al., 2024)	(Huang et al., 2024)
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(Bei Sze et al., 2024); (Treiblmaier, 2023); (Firouzian et al., 2025)	(Bei Sze et al., 2024); (Treiblmaier, 2023); (Firouzian et al., 2025)
(Miskiewicz, 2020); (Abashidze, 2016); (Kumar	(Miskiewicz, 2020); (Abashidze, 2016); (Kumar et al.,

Reference	Reference
et al., 2026)	2026)
(Tan et al., 2023); (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2022)	(Tan et al., 2023); (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2022)
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(Nawrocka et al., 2024); (Cherniavska, 2023)	(Nawrocka et al., 2024); (Cherniavska, 2023)
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(Sporl-Wang et al., 2025)	(Sporl-Wang et al., 2025)
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(Cherniavska, 2023)	(Cherniavska, 2023)
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(Kartsep, 2021)	(Kartsep, 2021)
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(Bafghi et al., 2024)	(Bafghi et al., 2024)
(Hult, 2017)	(Hult, 2017)
(Bafghi et al., 2024); (Talari & Khodayari Sahl Abad, 2023)	(Bafghi et al., 2024); (Talari & Khodayari Sahl Abad, 2023)
(Tevdoradze et al., 2023); (Elhajjar, 2024); (Sá et al., 2022); (Mazzucato, 2024)	(Tevdoradze et al., 2023); (Elhajjar, 2024); (Sá et al., 2022); (Mazzucato, 2024)
(Trez, 2012); (Tkachenko, 2017); (Huang et al., 2024)	(Trez, 2012); (Tkachenko, 2017); (Huang et al., 2024)
(Felix et al., 2017)	(Felix et al., 2017)
(Olson et al., 2018)	(Olson et al., 2018)
(Hejazi et al., 2011)	(Hejazi et al., 2011)
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(BRUHN, 2002)	(BRUHN, 2002)
(BRUHN, 2002); (Ungerman, 2019)	(BRUHN, 2002); (Ungerman, 2019)
(BRUHN, 2002)	(BRUHN, 2002)
(Tevdoradze et al., 2023)	(Tevdoradze et al., 2023)
(Tevdoradze et al., 2023)	(Tevdoradze et al., 2023)
(Sá et al., 2022)	(Sá et al., 2022)
(Mathur et al., 2020); (Sá et al., 2022)	(Mathur et al., 2020); (Sá et al., 2022)
(Mathur et al., 2020)	(Mathur et al., 2020)
(Olazo, 2023)	(Olazo, 2023)
(Luo, 2006); (Lindgreen, 2010)	(Luo, 2006); (Lindgreen, 2010)
(Zaušková et al., 2015)	(Zaušková et al., 2015)
(Crabb, 2014)	(Crabb, 2014)
(Sulich, 2024)	(Sulich, 2024)
(Olsonet al., 2018)	(Olsonet al., 2018)
(Gupta et al., 2020); (Keller, 2003)	(Gupta et al., 2020); (Keller, 2003)
(Hult, 2017) ; (Akter et al., 2024)	(Hult, 2017) ; (Akter et al., 2024)
(Luo, 2006)	(Luo, 2006)
(Polyakov, 2024); (Zhang, 2024); (Daulay et al., 2025)	(Polyakov, 2024); (Zhang, 2024); (Daulay et al., 2025)
(Ratchford, 2012)	(Ratchford, 2012)

After identifying the main marketing concepts, these concepts needed to be divided into main and sub-categories. Initially, these concepts were divided into 18 categories: marketing

strategy, product management, production coordination, packaging innovation, price management, sales, delivery, after-sales service, public relations management, advertising and branding, internal structure of the marketing team, digital marketing management, market research and marketing intelligence management, strategic marketing management, planning, budgeting, marketing monitoring, marketing organization management, structure and process, human resources and internal marketing, infrastructure and marketing systems management, performance and value creation, marketing management system, cross-functional activities, marketing theme, marketing management technologies, environment and business analysis, stakeholder interactions, and knowledge management as main categories. Then, with the aim of simplifying and improving the categorization, the research team, in further reviews and with the help of implementing the first stage of fuzzy Delphi, reduced the main categories to 11 groups. In this reduction, some categories were merged according to the existing literature, and the results are presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Extraction of the integrated dimensions of the marketing system

Review of the existing literature in the field of marketing through systematic studies and research team monitoring	Output of the first stage of the fuzzy Delphi	Output of the second stage of the fuzzy Delphi
1. Marketing strategy 2. Product management, production coordination, packaging innovation 3. Price management, sales, delivery, after-sales service 4. Public relations management, advertising and branding 5. Internal structure of the marketing team 6. Digital marketing management 7. Market research and marketing intelligence management 8. Strategic marketing management, planning, budgeting, marketing monitoring 9. Marketing organization management, structure and process, human resources and internal marketing 10. Infrastructure and marketing systems management 11. Performance and value creation 12. Marketing management system 13. Cross-functional activities 14. Marketing theme 15. Marketing management technologies 16. Environment and business analysis 17. Stakeholder interactions 18. Knowledge management	1. Marketing management processes 2. Internal structure of the marketing team 3. Marketing management system 4. Marketing management technologies 5. Marketing culture 6. Stakeholder interactions 7. Governance and strategy 8. Performance and value creation 9. Cross-functional activities 10. Marketing theme 11. Environment and business analysis	1. Process and Innovation 2. Structure and Culture 3. Assets and People 4. Technology 5. Environment and Business Analysis 6. Stakeholder Interactions 7. Governance and Strategy 8. Value and Performance

The categories defined in the first stage of the fuzzy Delphi which is also depicted in **Fig 5**, were processed and reduced to 11 categories as follows: marketing management processes, internal structure of the marketing team, marketing management system, marketing management technologies, marketing culture, stakeholder interactions, governance and strategy, performance and value creation, cross-functional activities, marketing theme, and environment and business analysis.

Finally, in the second stage of the fuzzy Delphi method and to ensure the defined framework, the researcher, with the help of experts in the field of marketing management (including academic experts, marketing management consultants, industry experts, and opinion leaders in

the field of marketing management), re-evaluated the integrated dimensions of marketing management. Therefore, all dimensions were ultimately reduced to 8 categories: process and innovation, structure and culture, assets and people, technology, environment and business analysis, stakeholder interactions, governance and strategy, and finally value and performance. The design section is the context that provides a basis for action/behavior and includes the main elements of structure, culture, people, assets and processes and innovation and communications (see **Fig 5**).

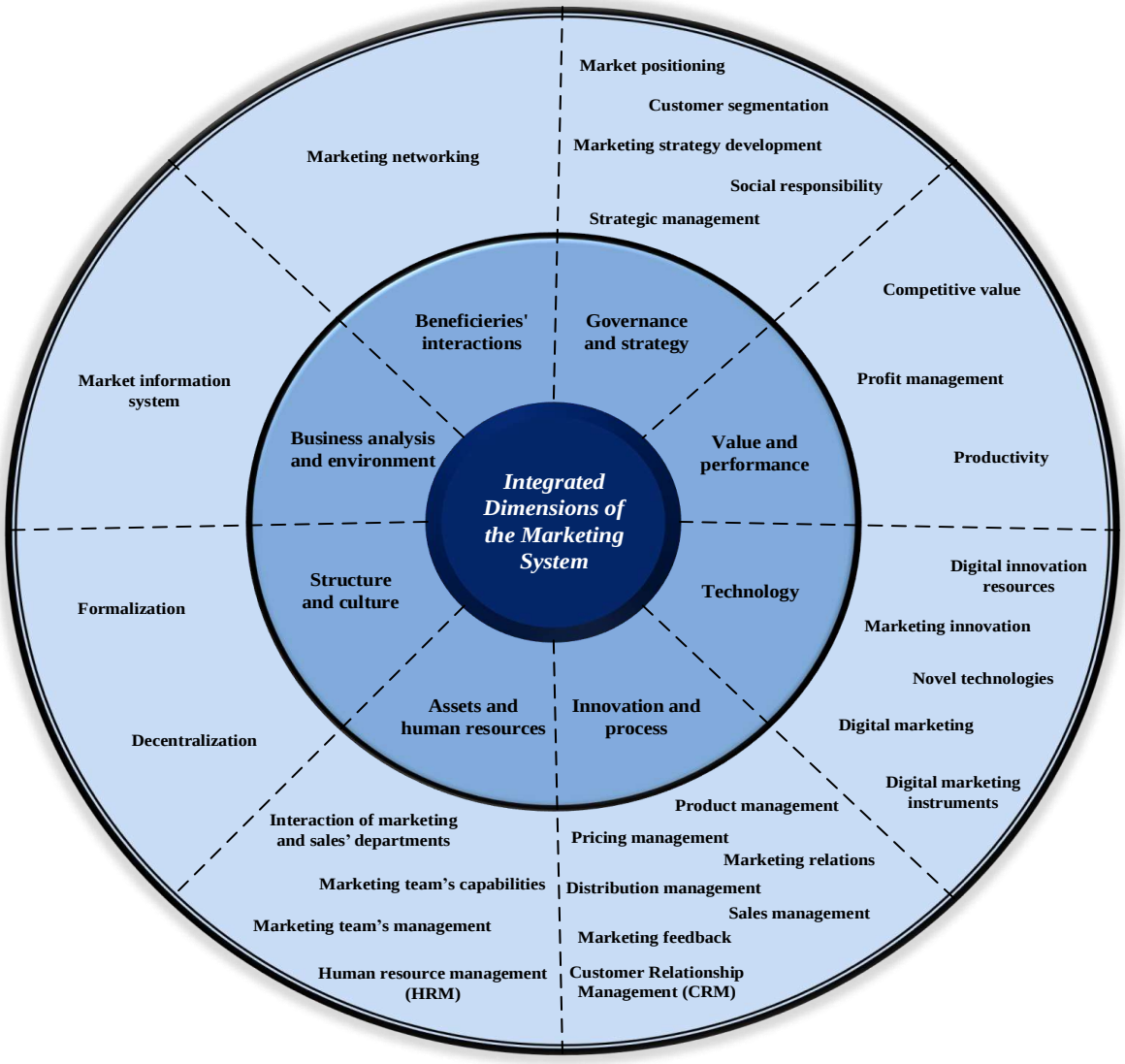


Fig 5. Integrated dimensions of the marketing system after implementing Fuzzy Delphi

5. Conclusions and Future Research Directions

This research was conducted with the aim of designing the integrated dimensions of the marketing system in the organization to fill the existing gap in the field of comprehensive and integrated standardization in this area. Considering the increasing importance of marketing in the success of organizations and the lack of a specific framework for measuring marketing maturity, this research, utilizing a qualitative approach and using a systematic literature review and expert interviews, identified and categorized the key dimensions and components of marketing management.

The research findings showed that marketing management comprises eight main integrated

dimensions: (1) Technology (including digital technology resources, marketing innovation, new technologies, digital marketing, and digital marketing tools); (2) Process and Innovation (including product management, pricing management, marketing communications, distribution management, sales management, marketing feedback, and customer relationship management); (3) Assets and People (including interaction between marketing and sales units, marketing team capabilities, marketing team management, and human resource management); (4) Structure and Culture (including formalization and decentralization); (5) Value and Performance (including competitive value, productivity, and profit management); (6) Governance and Strategy (including marketing strategy development, market positioning, customer segmentation, social responsibility, and strategic management); (7) Stakeholder Interactions (including marketing networking); (8) Environment and Business Analysis (including market information system).

The final presented model can not only serve as an evaluation framework that can be a basis for measuring the marketing maturity level of organizations, but can also serve as a foundation for formulating improvement and development strategies in this area. It should be clarified that the present study does not develop a maturity spectrum or maturity levels; Figure 5 presents the eight integrated dimensions as a static structural framework. The reference to "marketing maturity" in the sentence above is a suggestion for future operationalization, not a claim that a maturity model has been empirically established here. Despite its contributions, this research has several limitations. First, the fuzzy Delphi consensus was achieved with a limited panel of experts (primarily from Iran's business context), which may affect generalizability. Future research should validate the eight dimensions across multiple countries and industries using large-sample surveys. Second, the systematic review was limited to English and Persian documents indexed in the specified databases, potentially excluding relevant studies in other languages. Future work should expand the search to additional databases and languages. Third, the proposed model is static and does not capture the dynamic interactions among the eight dimensions over time. Fourth, although the second research question asked about the relationships among the constituent factors, the fuzzy Delphi method employed in this study was designed only for identification and refinement of dimensions, not for analyzing causal or structural relationships. Therefore, the relationships among the eight dimensions remain unexamined. Future research should employ longitudinal designs or system dynamics modeling to examine how process and innovation, structure and culture, and other dimensions influence each other across different marketing maturity stages. Therefore, to complement the present research, the following can be considered:

- Designing a standard maturity assessment model for the marketing system: developing a multi-level model for measuring and gradually improving marketing maturity in organizations
- Investigating the impact of integrated marketing dimensions with organizational meta-functions

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