




Designing an Organizational Customer-Oriented Culture Model for Employees of Ofogh Kourosh Chain Stores with Emphasis on Motivational, Educational, and Behavioral Factors

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Purpose: The present study aimed to design a paradigmatic model of organizational customer-oriented culture for employees of Ofogh Kourosh chain stores with an emphasis on motivational, educational, and behavioral factors.

Methods and Materials: This study was conducted as an applied research with a descriptive-analytical design using a qualitative approach. Data were collected through a systematic review of scientific documents, including peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, managerial reports, and relevant academic sources related to organizational culture, customer orientation, and human resource management. The research adopted a meta-synthesis strategy and employed qualitative content analysis based on the conventional approach. The extracted data were analyzed using the Strauss and Corbin paradigmatic model, through which concepts were coded and categorized into causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, central phenomenon, strategies, and consequences. The sampling process involved selecting relevant and high-quality sources based on predefined inclusion criteria, and the analysis followed iterative coding, constant comparison, and conceptual abstraction procedures.

Findings: The findings revealed that motivational factors (including customer-oriented reward systems, organizational justice, and intrinsic motivation), educational factors (such as customer communication training, behavioral skills development, and product knowledge), and behavioral factors (including service-oriented attitudes, responsibility, and organizational commitment) function as primary causal conditions in shaping organizational customer-oriented culture. Contextual conditions such as organizational structure, human resource policies, and industry environment, along with intervening factors including leadership style, organizational support, workload pressure, and performance evaluation systems, significantly influence the formation and implementation of this culture. Furthermore, the adoption of customer-oriented strategies—such as continuous training, reinforcement of positive sales behaviors, and managerial role modeling—leads to outcomes including enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty, improved organizational performance, increased employee motivation, and sustainable competitive advantage.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the development of a customer-oriented organizational culture requires an integrated and systemic approach that simultaneously addresses motivational, educational, and behavioral dimensions within a supportive organizational context, thereby enabling chain stores to achieve superior performance and long-term competitive sustainability.

Keywords: *Organizational customer-oriented culture; chain stores; motivational factors; educational factors; behavioral factors; qualitative content analysis.*

1. Introduction

In the contemporary competitive landscape of the retail industry, organizations are increasingly compelled to move beyond traditional product-centric strategies and adopt customer-oriented paradigms that prioritize value creation through sustained customer relationships. Customer-oriented organizational culture has emerged as a critical determinant of long-term success, enabling firms to align internal processes, employee behaviors, and strategic objectives with customer expectations. The growing intensity of competition, particularly in chain store environments, has amplified the need for organizations to cultivate a culture that systematically reinforces customer-centric values across all operational levels. Empirical evidence suggests that organizations that effectively institutionalize customer-oriented culture demonstrate superior performance outcomes, including enhanced customer satisfaction, increased loyalty, and improved financial indicators (Bahramzadeh & Meskin, 2025; Vareth et al., 2025).

The concept of customer orientation has evolved significantly over the past decades, transitioning from a narrow focus on customer service to a comprehensive organizational philosophy encompassing strategic decision-making, employee engagement, and cultural alignment. Contemporary literature conceptualizes customer orientation as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that collectively shape how organizations perceive and respond to customer needs (Wang, 2023; Zhao, 2022). Within this framework, customer-oriented culture is not merely an operational tool but a strategic asset that influences organizational adaptability, innovation, and competitive positioning. Studies have demonstrated that firms with strong customer-oriented cultures are better equipped to navigate environmental uncertainties and maintain resilience in dynamic markets (Brahm & Poblete, 2024; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024).

In the context of chain stores, the importance of customer-oriented culture becomes even more pronounced due to the direct and continuous interaction between frontline employees and customers. Frontline employees

play a pivotal role in shaping customer experiences, as their attitudes, behaviors, and competencies directly influence service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction levels. Research indicates that employees' customer-oriented behaviors, including empathy, responsiveness, and proactive service delivery, significantly contribute to positive customer outcomes (Dong & Hon, 2025; Supramaniam et al., 2024). Furthermore, the alignment between employee orientation and organizational service climate has been shown to enhance both employee commitment and customer loyalty, highlighting the importance of congruence between individual and organizational values (Tremblay & Parent-Rocheleau, 2025).

The role of human resource management in fostering customer-oriented culture is particularly critical, as HR practices serve as the primary mechanisms through which organizational values are communicated, reinforced, and internalized. Recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and reward systems must be strategically aligned to promote customer-oriented behaviors among employees. Evidence suggests that reward alignment and performance-based incentive systems significantly enhance employees' motivation to engage in customer-focused activities (Madhani, 2021). Similarly, internal marketing strategies and supportive organizational environments have been identified as key drivers of customer-oriented behavior among frontline employees (Shaikh, 2018). These findings underscore the necessity of integrating motivational, educational, and behavioral dimensions into a cohesive framework for developing customer-oriented culture.

Motivational factors constitute a foundational component of customer-oriented culture, as they influence employees' willingness to prioritize customer needs and deliver high-quality service. Intrinsic motivation, organizational justice, and perceived fairness in reward systems have been shown to significantly impact employees' engagement and performance in customer-facing roles (Boroumand et al., 2022; Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021). Additionally, job satisfaction among sales staff has been linked to higher levels of customer satisfaction, indicating that employee well-being is a critical antecedent of customer-oriented outcomes (Tekei & Tekei, 2021). These findings highlight

the importance of designing motivational systems that not only incentivize performance but also foster a sense of ownership and commitment among employees.

Educational factors also play a crucial role in shaping customer-oriented culture, as they equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively interact with customers. Training programs focused on communication skills, product knowledge, and service delivery techniques have been shown to enhance employees' ability to meet customer expectations and create positive service experiences (Hüttel, 2021). Moreover, continuous learning and development initiatives contribute to the development of adaptive capabilities, enabling employees to respond effectively to evolving customer needs and market dynamics. The integration of educational interventions into organizational practices is therefore essential for sustaining customer-oriented behaviors over time.

Behavioral factors, including attitudes, values, and interpersonal competencies, represent another critical dimension of customer-oriented culture. Employees' attitudes toward customers, their level of empathy, and their commitment to service excellence significantly influence the quality of customer interactions. Research has demonstrated that customer-oriented behaviors, such as proactive problem-solving and personalized service delivery, are strongly associated with increased customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ershad et al., 2016; Zia, 2024). Furthermore, employee-customer identification and emotional engagement have been identified as key mechanisms through which service quality is enhanced, reinforcing the importance of behavioral alignment in achieving organizational objectives (Schwepker Jr & Dimitriou, 2024).

In recent years, the emergence of digital transformation has introduced new dimensions to customer-oriented culture, requiring organizations to integrate technological capabilities with human-centered approaches. Digital tools and platforms enable organizations to collect and analyze customer data, personalize service offerings, and enhance customer engagement. However, the effectiveness of these technologies is contingent upon the presence of a strong customer-oriented culture that guides their implementation and use. Studies have highlighted the synergistic relationship between digital transformation and customer focus, emphasizing their combined impact on organizational agility and performance (Maarefi & Mortezaei, 2025). Additionally, the integration of customer-oriented strategies with environmental and social considerations has been linked to improved corporate reporting and stakeholder

engagement, reflecting the broader implications of customer orientation in contemporary business contexts (Bose et al., 2025).

The broader organizational and environmental context also plays a significant role in shaping customer-oriented culture. Factors such as leadership style, organizational structure, and market conditions influence the extent to which customer-oriented practices are adopted and sustained. Leadership, in particular, has been identified as a critical determinant of cultural transformation, as leaders serve as role models and change agents who drive the adoption of customer-centric values. Research indicates that supportive leadership and organizational adaptability are essential for fostering a culture that prioritizes customer needs (Salamatina, 2021; Yashchenko et al., 2024). Moreover, external factors such as competitive pressure and market dynamics necessitate continuous adaptation and innovation, further underscoring the importance of customer-oriented culture in achieving organizational resilience.

Customer-oriented culture also has significant implications for organizational performance and strategic outcomes. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that customer orientation positively influences firm performance, including profitability, market share, and operational efficiency (Moradi et al., 2019; Samiei et al., 2023). Additionally, the integration of customer relationship management practices has been shown to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby contributing to long-term business success (Salajegheh & Shiasi Ghaleh Maleki, 2022). These findings highlight the strategic value of customer-oriented culture as a driver of sustainable competitive advantage.

Despite the extensive body of research on customer orientation, there remains a need for comprehensive models that integrate motivational, educational, and behavioral factors within a unified framework. Existing studies often examine these dimensions in isolation, limiting their ability to capture the complex interactions that underpin customer-oriented culture. Furthermore, the majority of research has been conducted in developed economies, with limited attention to emerging markets and specific organizational contexts such as chain stores. This gap underscores the necessity of context-specific studies that account for the unique characteristics and challenges of different industries and regions (Turkson & Ackaah-Kwarteng, 2025; Zhao, 2022).

In the context of chain stores, particularly those operating in highly competitive retail environments, the development of a robust customer-oriented culture is essential for achieving differentiation and sustaining growth. Chain stores are characterized by standardized processes, high customer volume, and diverse employee profiles, which present both opportunities and challenges for cultural development. The effective integration of motivational, educational, and behavioral factors can enable these organizations to create a cohesive and adaptive culture that enhances customer experiences and drives performance outcomes. Moreover, the alignment of organizational practices with customer-oriented values can facilitate the development of strong brand identities and foster long-term customer relationships (Ashrafi et al., 2025; Bozorgpour, 2023).

Given the increasing importance of customer orientation in contemporary business environments, there is a critical need for research that systematically examines the underlying mechanisms and develops practical models for implementation. Such research can provide valuable insights for managers and practitioners seeking to enhance organizational performance through customer-centric strategies. By integrating theoretical and empirical perspectives, it is possible to develop a comprehensive framework that addresses the multifaceted nature of customer-oriented culture and its implications for organizational success.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to design a paradigmatic model of organizational customer-oriented culture for employees of Ofogh Kouros chain stores with an emphasis on motivational, educational, and behavioral factors.

2. Methods and Materials

In general, research methods in the behavioral sciences can be classified based on two criteria: the purpose of the research and the method of data collection. In terms of purpose, the present study is applied, and in terms of method, it is descriptive of a correlational type. This study is descriptive because its aim is to provide an objective, realistic, and systematic description of events, phenomena, and issues related to the research domain. Descriptive research seeks to describe the conditions or phenomena under investigation. This research is categorized as applied research, as it is designed to develop an organizational customer-oriented culture model. Due to the absence of

laboratory access, it is also classified within descriptive studies. In terms of its nature, the study is considered evaluative research. The required data and information were collected using a library-based method, which constitutes a critical stage in developing the theoretical foundations of the research. This involved referring to various academic and research centers, reviewing valid scientific journals (both domestic and international), conference proceedings, reports, and findings of prior research projects and studies. Additionally, relevant materials were extracted through internet searches and referring to related websites. Content analysis was used as the primary technique for data analysis.

3. Findings and Results

This qualitative study was conducted among existing research on designing organizational customer-oriented culture models. To analyze the data, qualitative content analysis with a conventional approach was employed. The present research method is descriptive-analytical, specifically based on content analysis. Content analysis refers to any systematic and objective technique used to extract the characteristics of messages.

The first step: Formulating the research question. In this stage, the research questions along with the parameters under investigation were specified as follows: the study population consisted of research related to the design of organizational customer-oriented culture models; the core question addressed how such a model is designed; the temporal limitation was the year 2025; and the methodology included document analysis, identification and coding, concept and code generation, and categorization of codes.

The second step: Systematic review of the literature. In this step, all texts relevant to the research objectives were examined. Studies that met the inclusion criteria were selected for meta-synthesis. In meta-synthesis studies, secondary data derived from qualitative methods within the research domain are utilized.

The third step: Selection of appropriate categories. At this stage, the researcher evaluated the quality of the collected sources based on selected keywords related to designing an organizational customer-oriented culture model.

The fourth step: Extraction of textual data. In this stage, using the qualitative meta-study (meta-synthesis) approach, the researcher selected one of the nine available methods based on the nature of the topic and the collected sources. In this study, content analysis was employed as the method for extracting information from the final sources.

The fifth step: Analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of qualitative findings. In this step, after extracting data in the previous stage based on content analysis, the researcher proceeded to analyze, interpret, and synthesize qualitative findings derived from previous studies to present an

integrated and systematic interpretation with a novel perspective (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Accordingly, all identified codes were categorized into groups based on conceptual similarities.

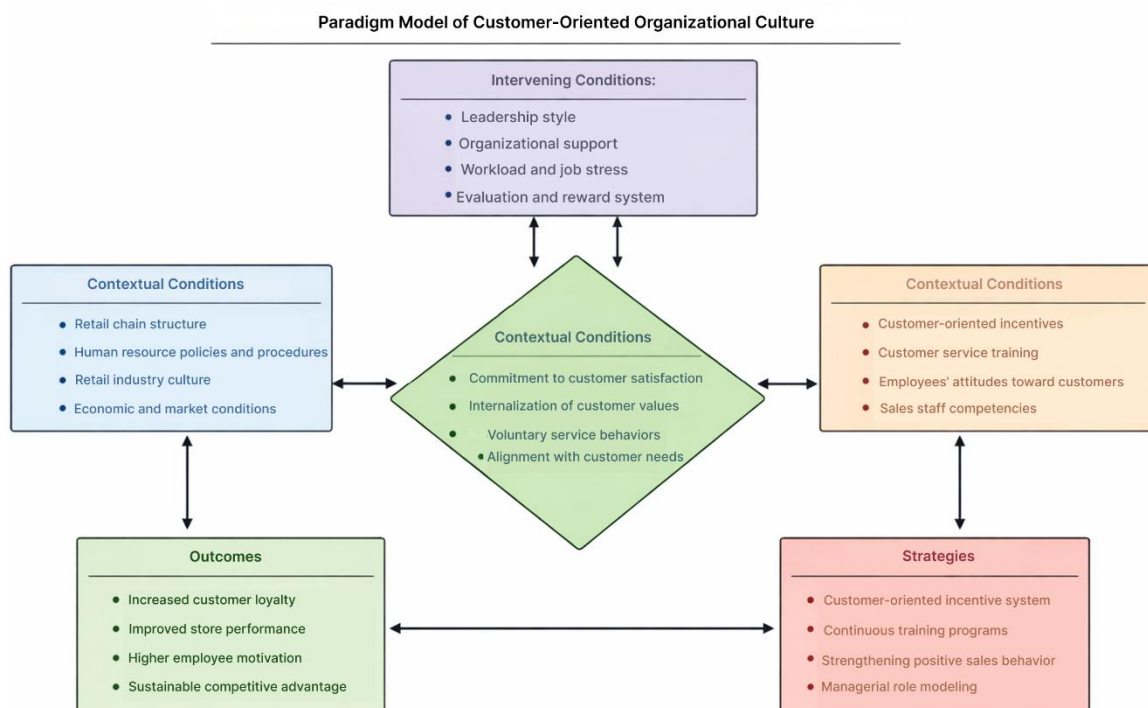
Table 1

Codes and Categories of Research Components in the First Stage (Comparative Approach)

Paradigmatic Component	Subcomponents
Contextual factors	Organizational structure of chain stores Human resource policies and procedures Culture prevailing in the retail industry Economic and competitive market conditions
Causal factors	Customer-oriented performance-based motivational system Customer communication skills training Employees' attitudes toward customers Behavioral competencies of sales staff
Intervening factors	Leadership style and behavior of store managers Level of organizational support for employees Work pressure and daily task volume Evaluation and reward system
Organizational customer-oriented culture	Employees' commitment to customer satisfaction Internalization of customer-oriented values Voluntary service-oriented behaviors
Strategies	Alignment of individual goals with customer needs Design of customer-oriented motivational systems Implementation of continuous and applied training Strengthening positive sales behaviors
Outcomes	Managerial role modeling in customer-oriented behavior Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty Improved store performance Enhanced employee commitment and motivation Creation of sustainable competitive advantage

Figure 1

Research Thematic Network



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study revealed that the formation of an organizational customer-oriented culture among employees of chain stores is a multidimensional and dynamic process shaped by the interaction of motivational, educational, and behavioral factors within a structured organizational context. The results indicated that motivational factors, including reward systems aligned with customer-oriented performance, perceived organizational justice, and intrinsic motivation, play a fundamental role as causal conditions in fostering customer-oriented culture. This finding is consistent with prior research demonstrating that aligning reward mechanisms with customer-centric objectives significantly enhances employees' commitment to customer satisfaction and service excellence (Boroumand et al., 2022; Madhani, 2021). Moreover, the observed influence of intrinsic motivation supports evidence that employees who internalize customer-oriented values are more likely to engage in discretionary service behaviors that exceed formal job requirements (Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021).

The study further identified educational factors, particularly customer communication training, behavioral training, and product knowledge development, as essential drivers of customer-oriented culture. The results suggest that continuous and applied training programs not only enhance employees' competencies but also facilitate the internalization of service-oriented values. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing that training interventions are critical in developing frontline employees' customer orientation and improving service quality outcomes (Hüttel, 2021). Additionally, the role of knowledge and skill acquisition in shaping employees' ability to deliver personalized and responsive services corroborates findings that highlight the importance of competence development in customer-oriented organizations (Dong & Hon, 2025; Supramaniam et al., 2024).

Behavioral factors, including service-oriented attitudes, responsibility, and organizational commitment, were also found to be central to the emergence of customer-oriented culture. The findings indicate that employees who demonstrate proactive service behaviors and align their personal goals with customer needs significantly contribute to enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. This is consistent with previous studies showing that customer-oriented behaviors, such as empathy and responsiveness, are

directly associated with improved customer experiences and positive behavioral intentions (Ershad et al., 2016; Zia, 2024). Furthermore, the importance of employee-customer identification and emotional engagement supports research indicating that such relational dynamics strengthen service quality and organizational performance (Schwepker Jr & Dimitriou, 2024).

The results also highlighted the critical role of contextual and intervening factors in shaping the intensity and direction of customer-oriented culture. Organizational structure, human resource policies, and the broader retail industry environment were identified as contextual conditions that provide the foundation for cultural development. This finding is in line with studies emphasizing that organizational culture is embedded within structural and environmental contexts that influence its evolution and effectiveness (Brahm & Poblete, 2024; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Additionally, intervening factors such as leadership style, organizational support, workload pressure, and performance evaluation systems were found to significantly affect the implementation of customer-oriented strategies. The influence of leadership, in particular, reinforces prior evidence that leaders play a pivotal role in modeling customer-oriented behaviors and fostering supportive work environments (Salamatina, 2021; Yashchenko et al., 2024).

Another important finding of the study is the identification of strategic actions that facilitate the development of customer-oriented culture, including the design of customer-focused motivational systems, the implementation of continuous training programs, the reinforcement of positive sales behaviors, and managerial role modeling. These strategies were found to mediate the relationship between causal conditions and outcomes, suggesting that effective implementation mechanisms are essential for translating organizational intentions into tangible results. This is consistent with research indicating that the alignment between customer orientation and service climate enhances employee commitment and customer loyalty (Tremblay & Parent-Rochelleau, 2025). Moreover, the role of customer empowerment and involvement in shaping customer-oriented practices highlights the importance of engaging customers as active participants in value creation processes (Turkson & Ackaah-Kwarteng, 2025).

The outcomes of the study demonstrated that the successful implementation of customer-oriented strategies

leads to significant organizational benefits, including increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, improved store performance, enhanced employee motivation, and the creation of sustainable competitive advantage. These findings are strongly supported by prior research showing that customer orientation positively influences firm performance and market outcomes (Samiei et al., 2023; Vareth et al., 2025). Furthermore, the integration of customer relationship management practices and social media engagement has been shown to strengthen customer relationships and enhance overall service effectiveness (Bozorgpour, 2023; Salajegheh & Shiasi Ghaleh Maleki, 2022).

The study also contributes to the growing body of literature on the strategic importance of customer-oriented culture in the context of digital transformation and contemporary business environments. The findings suggest that customer orientation not only enhances traditional performance metrics but also supports organizational agility and adaptability in rapidly changing markets. This is consistent with research highlighting the synergistic relationship between digital transformation and customer focus in improving organizational performance (Maarefi & Mortezaei, 2025). Additionally, the broader implications of customer-oriented culture, including its impact on corporate reporting and ethical practices, underscore its relevance in addressing emerging challenges such as sustainability and stakeholder engagement (Ashrafi et al., 2025; Bose et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, the present study extends existing models of customer-oriented culture by integrating motivational, educational, and behavioral dimensions within a comprehensive paradigmatic framework. This integrated approach addresses limitations in previous research that often examined these factors in isolation, providing a more holistic understanding of the mechanisms underlying customer-oriented culture. The findings also reinforce the importance of considering both internal organizational dynamics and external environmental factors in analyzing cultural development. This aligns with the broader literature emphasizing the multidimensional nature of customer orientation and its implications for organizational success (Wang, 2023; Zhao, 2022).

In addition, the study provides empirical support for the role of customer-oriented culture in enhancing organizational resilience and competitiveness in the retail sector. The results indicate that organizations that effectively integrate customer-oriented practices into their strategic and

operational frameworks are better positioned to respond to market challenges and sustain long-term growth. This is consistent with prior findings that highlight the relationship between customer focus, organizational performance, and strategic adaptability (Brahm & Poblete, 2024; Moradi et al., 2019). The study also underscores the importance of fostering a supportive organizational environment that encourages employee engagement and innovation, thereby enabling the continuous improvement of service delivery processes (Shaikh, 2018; Tekei & Tekei, 2021).

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. One limitation is the reliance on qualitative data and document analysis, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Another limitation is the focus on a specific organizational setting, which may not fully capture the diversity of practices and challenges in different industries or regions. Additionally, the study does not incorporate direct empirical data from employees or customers, which could provide deeper insights into the practical implementation of customer-oriented culture.

Future research should consider employing mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to validate and extend the findings of the present study. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to examine the evolution of customer-oriented culture over time and its impact on organizational performance. Furthermore, comparative studies across different industries and cultural contexts could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing customer-oriented culture. Exploring the role of emerging technologies and digital platforms in shaping customer-oriented practices also represents a promising area for future research.

From a practical perspective, managers of chain stores should prioritize the development of integrated strategies that align motivational, educational, and behavioral factors with organizational objectives. This includes designing reward systems that incentivize customer-oriented behaviors, implementing continuous training programs to enhance employee competencies, and fostering a supportive organizational culture that encourages innovation and collaboration. Additionally, leaders should actively model customer-oriented behaviors and create an environment that empowers employees to deliver high-quality service. By adopting a holistic approach to cultural development, organizations can enhance customer satisfaction, improve performance outcomes, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed 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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Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were under the ethical standards of the institutional and, or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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