




Identification and Analysis of Personal Development Dimensions among Managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran Using Thematic Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present research is to identify and analyze the dimensions of personal development among managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran using an exploratory mixed-methods approach. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was applied to extract the components and core themes of personal development. The statistical population in this phase consisted of human-resource experts, senior managers, and experienced specialists of the Agricultural Bank, from whom 12 participants were selected through purposive sampling to participate in semi-structured interviews. The collected data were analyzed using MAXQDA software, resulting in the identification of 75 initial codes, 14 subthemes, and 4 main themes (organizational, managerial, environmental, and individual factors). In the quantitative phase, the conceptual model derived from the qualitative findings was tested using a researcher-developed questionnaire administered to 315 managers and specialists of the Agricultural Bank. Data analysis was carried out using structural equation modeling based on the partial least squares (PLS) method and SmartPLS software. The results indicated that all structural paths of the model were statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level, and that the validity, reliability, and model-fit indices ($GOF = 0.625$) exceeded acceptable thresholds. Based on the path coefficients, organizational factors ($\beta = 0.345$) and managerial factors ($\beta = 0.332$) had the greatest influence on personal development, whereas individual factors ($\beta = 0.0344$) had the least impact. Overall, the findings indicate that the personal development of managers in the Agricultural Bank of Iran is influenced primarily by organizational structures and policies as well as managerial styles. Therefore, prioritizing the establishment of a learning-oriented organizational culture, supporting development-focused training, and enhancing leadership competencies can provide a sustainable pathway for individual and professional growth among managers.

Keywords: *personal development, Agricultural Bank, organizational factors, managerial factors, environmental factors, individual factors*

1. Introduction

The personal development of organizational managers has become a central theme in contemporary management research, particularly as organizations confront rapid technological change, shifting labor-market demands, and heightened expectations for adaptability, continuous learning, and leadership maturity. The conceptual roots of personal development within organizations can be traced to classical human motivation theories such as Maslow's hierarchy, which emphasizes self-actualization as a core developmental need (Maslow, 1943), and to psychosocial developmental models such as Erikson's framework, which highlights the lifelong progression of identity formation and personal competence (Erikson, 1963). These foundational theories established the premise that individual growth is neither spontaneous nor incidental but rather shaped by structured opportunities for learning, relational contexts, and the interaction between psychological needs and environmental demands. Subsequent theoretical advancements, particularly Bandura's social cognitive theory, further underscored the role of self-efficacy, personal agency, and reciprocal determinism in shaping individuals' capacity for intentional growth (Bandura, 1986). Together, these early perspectives created a theoretical bridge to modern organizational research, where personal development is increasingly conceptualized as a dynamic and competency-based progression shaped by both internal and external organizational forces.

Human capital theory similarly positioned personal development as a strategic investment that enhances organizational productivity and long-term competitiveness (Becker, 1964). From this perspective, managerial development is not merely a peripheral activity but a mechanism for building core competencies that enable organizations to innovate, solve problems, and respond effectively to environmental uncertainty. This logic aligns with competence-based strategic management frameworks, such as those proposed by Prahalad and Hamel, which argue that the sustainability of organizational advantage depends on cultivating unique capabilities embedded in the skills and knowledge of employees and managers (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). As organizational environments have become increasingly knowledge-driven and digitally transformed, the imperative for structured personal development pathways has intensified. Goal-setting research, particularly the work of Locke and Latham, further demonstrates that clearly articulated developmental goals improve

performance, motivation, and persistence in professional contexts (Locke & Latham, 1990). These theoretical principles underscore a broad consensus: personal development is a critical enabler of organizational resilience and managerial effectiveness.

Contemporary scholarship expands these classical foundations by positioning personal development within the broader context of learning theory and adult development. Kolb's experiential learning model conceptualizes learning as a cyclical process of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation, offering a powerful lens through which managers construct meaning from professional challenges and translate these insights into enhanced competencies (Kolb, 1984). Self-determination theory, articulated by Deci and Ryan, adds that intrinsic motivation and autonomy-supportive environments are essential drivers of sustained personal growth, underscoring the need for organizational cultures that empower managers to take ownership of their development trajectories (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These perspectives help explain why modern organizations have increasingly implemented structured developmental systems, coaching models, and mentoring frameworks designed to cultivate reflective practice, leadership capability, and interpersonal effectiveness across managerial roles.

More recent research highlights how personal development is shaped by evolving work environments, digitalization, and the rise of new organizational forms. Studies examining new work characteristics show that flexible structures, autonomous roles, and knowledge-based tasks significantly enhance informal learning and self-development behaviors among employees (Graßmann & Decius, 2023; Kraiger & Dischereit, 2023). This is consistent with emerging evidence that continuous learning has become a foundational expectation in modern professional contexts, particularly in service-oriented and technology-driven organizations (Budinarsih et al., 2023). Parallel developments in psychology and educational research emphasize that personal growth contributes not only to performance but also to well-being and adaptability, especially in contexts marked by uncertainty or rapid change (Orosz, 2024). The integration of personal development into organizational systems therefore reflects a broader shift toward building future-ready workforces capable of navigating complexity, fostering innovation, and sustaining strategic competitiveness.

In the banking sector, the need for structured personal development has become particularly salient. As financial

institutions face intense competition, regulatory pressures, digital transformation, and rising customer expectations, managerial roles have expanded beyond traditional administrative functions to encompass strategic thinking, knowledge management, and people-centered leadership. Studies show that banking managers' professional growth is strongly influenced by high-performance work systems, supervisor support, and organizational knowledge processes (Revuelto-Taboada et al., 2023). This aligns with broader evidence that developmental systems—rather than isolated training programs—are more effective in promoting sustained leadership growth and behavioral change (DeRue & Ashford, 2024). The shift toward developmental systems positions personal development not as a linear or program-specific construct but as an ongoing process shaped by organizational structures, managerial practices, workplace learning opportunities, and environmental conditions.

Scholars focusing on individual development plans (IDPs) provide additional insight into how personal development can be operationalized in professional settings. Research in higher education and professional training environments demonstrates that IDPs are effective tools for aligning personal goals with organizational expectations, enhancing accountability, and supporting long-term career planning (Gee et al., 2019; Tsai et al., 2018; Vanderford et al., 2018). These studies highlight that structured developmental planning not only improves clarity and goal attainment but also increases engagement and retention, particularly when supported by organizational coaching or mentoring systems. Similar findings emerge in work examining professional development in teaching and public-sector organizations, where continuous professional learning is shown to improve performance, leadership competencies, and organizational adaptability (Özer et al., 2020).

Research in Iran and comparable national contexts has also addressed the importance of individualized development pathways within managerial roles. For example, studies proposing models for managerial development emphasize the need for alignment between personal growth initiatives and formal organizational strategies (Afshari et al., 2023). Qualitative research in academic institutions confirms that managerial development is shaped by a constellation of structural, relational, and individual factors—including organizational support, leadership style, motivation, and developmental readiness (Jaan Ahmadimarian et al., 2024). Complementary work highlights the influence of mentoring programs and communication skills training on individual growth,

emphasizing that structured relational support enhances competence, emotional regulation, and professional identity formation (Firooghi et al., 2022). These findings reinforce the broader argument that personal development is a multi-dimensional construct requiring integrated policies, systemic support, and a conducive organizational culture.

Cross-cultural research also contributes to understanding individual development within globalized and digitally mediated workplaces. Comparative analyses demonstrate that developmental programs vary widely across countries, reflecting differences in cultural values, organizational norms, and institutional expectations (Pakzad, 2022). In some contexts, personal development is tightly linked to innovation capacity and readiness for Industry 4.0 transformation, particularly in management roles requiring technological fluency and strategic agility (Ramadhinta et al., 2022). Other studies show that longitudinal patterns of personal growth are linked to cognitive functioning, reflective capacity, and emotional stability, emphasizing the developmental implications of psychological and neurocognitive processes across the lifespan (Toyama, 2022). Meta-analytic evidence also demonstrates that personal growth initiative—a central construct in personal development—is significantly correlated with self-efficacy, social support, and adaptive coping strategies, illustrating the importance of both internal and external resources in sustaining developmental progression (Jiao et al., 2024).

Leadership development research provides additional insights into how organizational factors interact with personal development. Strategic leadership competencies, for instance, are shown to influence not only performance outcomes but also leaders' own developmental trajectories (Mistarihi, 2021). Emotional intelligence, introduced by Goleman, remains a cornerstone of contemporary leadership models, emphasizing the role of emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation in personal and interpersonal effectiveness (Goleman, 1995). Cognitive empowerment theory similarly explains how intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and meaning-making processes enhance engagement and developmental readiness (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). These frameworks help clarify why personal development is strongly dependent on managerial support, empowerment structures, and workplace cultures that promote autonomy, psychological safety, and learning.

Within organizational practice, the interplay between personal development and performance management is receiving renewed attention. Human resource development strategies increasingly emphasize individualized learning

pathways, competency-based assessments, and systems designed to cultivate reflective, self-directed, and continuously improving managers (Jouri & Soleymanzadeh, 2025). This reflects a strategic view of development as a driver of organizational excellence and long-term competitive advantage. Managerial research also shows that developmental opportunities influence employees' motivation, engagement, and alignment with organizational goals, suggesting that personal development serves both individual and organizational outcomes (Orosz, 2024). As organizations evolve toward flatter, more agile, and more interconnected structures, the relational aspects of development—such as coaching, mentoring, and collaborative learning—have become increasingly important in shaping professional growth trajectories.

Further contributions in the field suggest that personal development encompasses not only cognitive and skill-based competencies but also psychological resilience, behavioral adaptability, and value-driven decision-making. Studies on personal growth and well-being highlight that developmental activities contribute to higher levels of life satisfaction, reduced stress, and stronger coping mechanisms, which are essential for managerial functioning in complex environments (Toyama, 2022). In the context of organizational transformation and digital transition, the role of personal development becomes even more crucial, as managers must constantly update their knowledge, refine their interpersonal skills, and respond effectively to emergent challenges. Therefore, the literature collectively illustrates that personal development is multi-dimensional, contextually embedded, and deeply intertwined with organizational structures, leadership dynamics, and socio-cultural influences.

Despite extensive studies across diverse contexts, gaps remain in understanding how personal development manifests within specific organizational systems—particularly in large, structured, state-influenced sectors such as banking. The Agricultural Bank of Iran operates within a regulatory and economic environment that demands high levels of adaptability, strategic competence, and managerial learning, yet empirical studies examining the developmental dimensions of managers within this institution remain limited. Given the complexity of the banking sector, the interplay between individual attributes, managerial practices, organizational culture, and broader environmental factors requires systematic investigation supported by empirical evidence. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by identifying and analyzing

the dimensions of personal development among managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran using a mixed-methods design grounded in thematic analysis and structural equation modeling.

The aim of the study is to identify and analyze the individual, managerial, organizational, and environmental dimensions influencing the personal development of managers in the Agricultural Bank of Iran.

2. Methods and Materials

The present study was conducted within the framework of a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (qualitative → quantitative), such that the first phase involved qualitative analysis through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to extract the dimensions and components of managers' personal development. In the second phase, the resulting conceptual model was operationalized and evaluated quantitatively through a researcher-developed questionnaire.

In the qualitative phase, the study population consisted of academic experts and senior and middle managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran, who were selected through purposive sampling complemented by snowball sampling. Interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, resulting in a total of twelve in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol was developed based on a review of the literature and an initial conceptual framework. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analytical procedure included repeated readings of the transcripts, extraction of initial codes (open coding), clustering of codes into subthemes (axial coding), and finally synthesizing subthemes into overarching themes (selective coding).

From the open-coding stage, a total of 75 initial codes were extracted. These codes were subsequently aggregated into 14 subthemes and then into four core themes (individual factors, managerial factors, organizational factors, and environmental factors). MAXQDA software was used for organizing and documenting the codes and themes, and interim coding outputs were stored in MAXQDA project files.

To enhance the validity and dependability of the qualitative findings, several procedures were followed: summaries of findings were returned to several interviewees for feedback; analytical results were reviewed by colleagues and academic supervisors; and coding procedures were

independently reviewed and merged by two separate coders to confirm inter-coder agreement.

In the quantitative stage, the statistical population included all employees and managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran, determined according to the bank’s human-resource distributions and statistical records. Sampling was conducted in this phase, and ultimately 315 valid questionnaires were included for quantitative analysis. The researcher-developed questionnaire was designed based on the themes extracted from the qualitative phase and contained the main dimensions of the model (individual, managerial, organizational, and environmental factors), with several items representing each dimension. The measurement scale was a five-point Likert scale.

To examine the validity and reliability of the quantitative instrument, content validity was first confirmed by ten experts and faculty members; then construct validity was assessed through factor analysis along with convergent and discriminant validity measures. Reliability was calculated using Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability, both of which demonstrated acceptable levels. Analysis of the conceptual model and structural paths was conducted using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS).

3. Findings and Results

In this study, semi-structured interviews with experts and senior managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran were first subjected to thematic analysis to identify the dimensions and components of personal development. Subsequently, in the

quantitative phase, the conceptual model derived from the qualitative findings was validated using structural equation modeling (PLS).

In the qualitative section, after conducting twelve interviews and analyzing their content, a total of 75 initial codes were extracted from the participants’ statements. In the axial-coding stage, semantically related codes were grouped into 14 subthemes, which were finally merged into four core themes. The main themes included individual factors, managerial factors, organizational factors, and environmental factors.

For example, among the individual themes, components such as willingness to learn and advance, cognitive maturity, professional ethics, and self-efficacy appeared with the highest frequency. Managerial themes included mutual trust, delegation of authority, managerial support, and motivation enhancement, indicating the critical role of organizational leaders in personal development. In the organizational dimension, themes such as organizational structure, teamwork, organizational support, and learning culture were identified. Finally, in the environmental dimension, family and social conditions emerged as influential external factors. Personal development is a multidimensional construct shaped by the interaction of individual (internal), managerial (behavioral), organizational (structural), and environmental (social) factors. Based on the thematic analysis results, the initial conceptual model for the personal development of Agricultural Bank managers was designed, which then formed the basis for constructing the questionnaire used in the quantitative stage.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Identified Factors

Dimension / Indicator	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
Individual Factors					
Desire for Learning & Advancement	4.59	0.60	0.71	3.59	4.78
Mental Maturity	2.48	0.98	1.00	2.00	5.00
Professional Ethics	3.56	0.64	1.50	1.16	4.50
Self-Efficacy	3.20	0.60	2.00	2.00	4.50
Overall Individual Factors	3.48	0.58	1.79	—	3.11
Managerial Factors					
Manager Reliability	3.32	0.67	3.50	1.00	5.00
Delegation of Authority	3.17	0.40	3.57	1.83	5.00
Motivation	4.56	0.27	3.40	2.00	5.00
Managerial Support	3.57	0.15	3.23	1.33	5.00
Overall Managerial Factors	4.54	0.47	3.12	1.83	4.27
Organizational Factors					
Organizational Structure	3.25	0.59	3.00	1.00	5.00
Teamwork	3.71	0.31	4.00	1.50	5.00
Organizational Support	3.27	0.66	3.00	1.50	5.00
Organizational Culture	3.20	0.37	3.00	1.00	5.00

Overall Organizational Factors	3.58	0.57	3.25	1.67	4.63
Environmental Factors					
Family Conditions	3.40	0.52	3.25	1.00	4.20
Social Conditions	3.67	0.42	3.33	2.00	5.00
Overall Environmental Factors	3.54	0.51	3.60	1.50	4.20

The merged descriptive statistics show that within the individual factors, the highest mean belonged to desire for learning and advancement ($M = 4.59, SD = 0.60$), followed by professional ethics ($M = 3.56, SD = 0.64$), while mental maturity had the lowest mean ($M = 2.48, SD = 0.98$); the overall individual-factor score averaged 3.48 ($SD = 0.58$). Among managerial factors, motivation displayed the highest mean ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.27$), and managerial reliability also scored moderately high ($M = 3.32, SD = 0.67$), with managerial factors overall showing a relatively elevated mean of 4.54 ($SD = 0.47$). In the organizational dimension, teamwork had the highest mean ($M = 3.71, SD = 0.31$), followed by organizational support ($M = 3.27, SD = 0.66$), while organizational culture and structure exhibited slightly lower but comparable means; collectively, organizational factors averaged 3.58 ($SD = 0.57$). For environmental factors, social conditions had the highest mean ($M = 3.67, SD = 0.42$), and family conditions exhibited a similar but

slightly lower mean ($M = 3.40, SD = 0.52$), with the overall environmental factor mean calculated at 3.54 ($SD = 0.51$).

In this model, personal development was defined as the central variable, and the four dimensions above served as explanatory variables. In the quantitative phase, data collected from 315 managers and employees of the Agricultural Bank of Iran were analyzed.

In the next step, construct validity and the reliability of the instrument were assessed using structural equation modeling based on partial least squares (PLS). Results from confirmatory factor analysis indicated that all factor loadings exceeded 0.60, AVE values for all dimensions were higher than 0.50, and composite reliability (CR) values were above 0.70. These results confirm the convergent validity and reliability of the scales. Furthermore, the HTMT index for assessing discriminant validity was below 0.90 for all dimensions, suggesting that the dimensions are empirically distinct (Table 2).

Table 2

Validity and Reliability Indices of the Personal Development Model Constructs

Model Dimension	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha	HTMT
Individual Factors	0.660	0.796	0.79	0.72
Managerial Factors	0.698	0.771	0.78	0.74
Organizational Factors	0.827	0.841	0.84	0.77
Environmental Factors	0.465	0.637	0.52	0.69

To assess the overall model fit of the personal development framework for managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran, the GOF index was used. This index follows the recommendation of Wetzels and Chin (2009) and is calculated using the mean average variance extracted (AVE) and the mean coefficient of determination (R^2). The GOF formula appears as Formula 1:

$$GOF = \sqrt{(\text{Average Community} \times \text{Average } R^2)}$$

In this study, based on measurement-model and structural-model results, the average AVE value for the main constructs was 0.61, and the average R^2 value for endogenous variables (particularly the personal development variable) was 0.64. The GOF value calculated from this formula was 0.625 (Table 3).

Table 3

Overall Model Fit Indices for the Personal Development Model of Managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran

Index	Value	Criterion	Interpretation
Mean AVE of Constructs	0.61	> 0.50	Adequate convergent validity
Mean R^2 of Endogenous Variables	0.64	> 0.30	High explanatory power
$GOF = \sqrt{(0.61 \times 0.64)}$	0.625	> 0.36	Strong overall model fit

The obtained GOF value (0.625) is substantially higher than the threshold of 0.36, which—according to the Wetzels and Chin (2009) criterion—indicates strong overall model fit. This result confirms that the personal development model for managers of the Agricultural Bank of Iran exhibits satisfactory fit, and that the combination of individual,

managerial, organizational, and environmental constructs significantly predicts the personal development variable.

Path coefficients indicated that all relationships were statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level. According to the results, organizational factors exerted the greatest influence on managers’ personal development (Table 4).

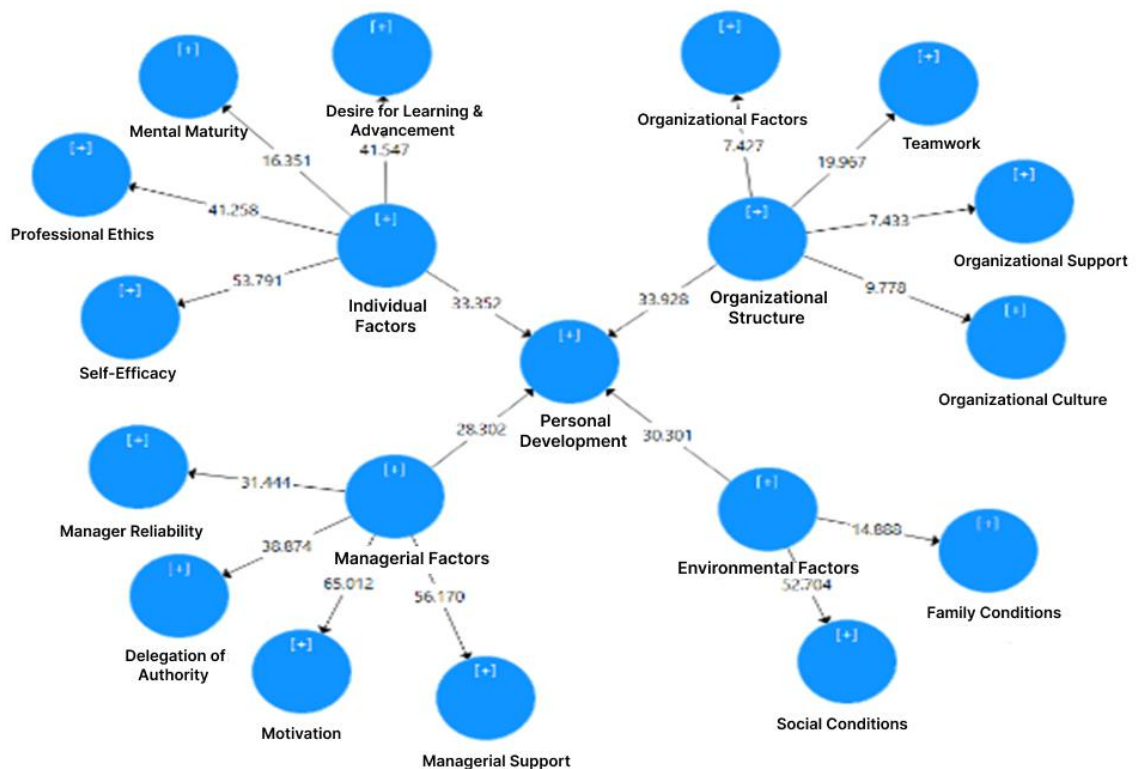
Table 4

Results of Path Analysis

No.	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Value	p-Value	Result
1	Organizational Factors → Personal Development	0.345	33.129	0.000	Significant
2	Individual Factors → Personal Development	0.0344	33.436	0.000	Significant
3	Environmental Factors → Personal Development	0.241	31.321	0.000	Significant
4	Managerial Factors → Personal Development	0.332	22.3212	0.000	Significant

Figure 1

Results of Path Analysis



Based on the path-coefficient values (β), it can be concluded that organizational factors, with a path coefficient of 0.345, have the strongest influence on the personal development of managers in the Agricultural Bank of Iran. Managerial factors ($\beta = 0.332$) and environmental factors ($\beta = 0.241$) follow in descending order. In contrast, individual factors, with $\beta = 0.0344$, show the least effect in the final model.

This finding indicates that in the banking environment, managers’ personal development is shaped more by organizational structure, human-resource development policies, and prevailing managerial styles than by individual traits and motivations. In effect, organizational support mechanisms, targeted training systems, and participatory management form the primary foundation for managers’ personal growth. In other words, the roles of the organization and management in facilitating learning, enhancing

competencies, and promoting professional advancement override the influence of individual components. This result aligns with the structural nature of the Agricultural Bank, which operates under formal rules and hierarchical systems, confirming that personal development in such institutions is guided more by organizational structures than by individual motivation.

Therefore, although personal development is a multidimensional phenomenon, in the Agricultural Bank of Iran it is shaped primarily by managers' internal characteristics and motivations as well as by the supportive and cultural environment created by the organization. The final model of personal development for managers of the Agricultural Bank is presented in Figure 1, confirming the empirical validation of the proposed conceptual model.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the dimensions of personal development among managers in the Agricultural Bank of Iran using a sequential mixed-methods design. The findings indicated that personal development is shaped by four major dimensions—organizational, managerial, environmental, and individual factors—with organizational factors exerting the strongest influence, followed by managerial and environmental factors, while individual factors displayed the lowest effect size. These results provide a comprehensive empirical understanding of how personal development is formed in a large, structured, and system-dependent banking environment. The findings align closely with long-standing theoretical frameworks in human development, learning theory, and leadership studies, and are consistent with recent empirical research in organizational science, banking, education, and human resource development.

The strong predictive effect of organizational factors on personal development is theoretically and empirically consistent with the extensive body of literature that views human resource development as an organizational system rather than an individual-level phenomenon. The results correspond directly with Becker's human capital theory, which conceptualizes individual development as a strategic organizational investment that yields returns in performance and productivity (Becker, 1964). Moreover, the identified influence of organizational structures, learning culture, and support systems is in line with Prahalad and Hamel's competence-based framework, which emphasizes that core capabilities are cultivated through systemic organizational

arrangements and knowledge-based processes (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Recent evidence also supports these claims; for example, high-performance work systems in banking environments have been found to significantly enhance intrapreneurial behavior and skill expansion when combined with strong knowledge management processes and supervisor support (Revuelto-Taboada et al., 2023). The current study's findings similarly show that organizational support, structured training systems, and a learning-oriented culture form the backbone of managerial development in the banking sector.

Managerial factors emerged as the second strongest predictor of personal development. This aligns with theoretical paradigms that highlight the role of leadership, empowerment, and interpersonal influence in fostering managerial growth. Bandura's social cognitive theory positions observational learning, feedback, and social reinforcement as central mechanisms shaping developmental trajectories (Bandura, 1986). Consistent with this, the present findings show that managers' trust-building behaviors, support mechanisms, motivational practices, and delegation strategies significantly contribute to the development of subordinate managers. Empowerment theories likewise affirm that managers' cognitive interpretations of meaning, competence, and self-determination strongly shape their motivation to engage in developmental activities (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). In support of these results, Mistarihi demonstrated that strategic leadership competencies influence both individual capability development and organizational effectiveness, especially in public-sector and state-regulated institutions (Mistarihi, 2021). Moreover, DeRue and Ashford reconceptualized leadership development as a social process grounded in relationships, feedback, and identity work, a perspective strongly reflected in the current study's findings regarding the centrality of managerial support and relational dynamics (DeRue & Ashford, 2024).

The role of environmental factors—particularly social and familial conditions—as significant predictors of personal development is consistent with broader psychological, sociological, and educational research. Erikson's developmental theory situates psychological growth within the interplay between internal drives and external social contexts, suggesting that personal development is never exclusively an individual endeavor (Erikson, 1963). Longitudinal studies also indicate that external social stimulation, community interaction, and broader life conditions significantly influence personal

growth potential (Toyama, 2022). Findings from higher education settings similarly reveal that external support networks enhance the utility and effectiveness of individual development plans by reinforcing accountability, motivation, and emotional resilience (Tsai et al., 2018; Vanderford et al., 2018). The current study confirms these claims within a managerial population, demonstrating that personal development is partly anchored in contextual and environmental realities beyond the organizational boundaries.

Individual factors were found to have the weakest direct influence on personal development. Although personality traits, self-efficacy, and individual motivation are traditionally acknowledged as determinants of personal growth, the reduced effect size found in this study may reflect the structural and hierarchical nature of the banking system. Such settings often regulate learning opportunities and career paths, limiting the extent to which individual initiative alone can shape developmental outcomes. Nonetheless, the prominence of factors such as desire for learning, maturity, and ethical commitment is theoretically consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which highlights the human drive toward growth and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Similarly, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory asserts that intrinsic motivation and autonomy facilitate sustained learning, but also notes that such motivation requires an enabling context—a condition that may explain why organizational and managerial factors were more predictive (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Research on performance improvement in HRD settings likewise confirms that individual motivation translates into actual development only when systems and structures facilitate the learning process (Jouri & Soleymanzadeh, 2025).

The integrated findings also align with experiential learning theory, which posits that meaningful growth arises from structured reflection, practice, and organizational learner-centered environments (Kolb, 1984). Managerial development in particular relies on access to challenging assignments, mentorship, and reflective processes, all of which depend heavily on organizational support. Studies of self-development in twenty-first century workplaces similarly emphasize the importance of new work structures—such as autonomy, flexibility, and digital learning resources—in enabling individuals to engage in informal learning and competency development (Graßmann & Decius, 2023; Kraiger & Dischereit, 2023). In alignment with these findings, the current study demonstrates that

individual factors, although conceptually vital, exert limited predictive influence when organizational systems dominate the developmental landscape.

International studies further reinforce the findings. For example, research in Indonesia's banking system highlights that continuous learning and personal mastery require institutional structures that actively cultivate developmental readiness and long-term skill enhancement (Budinarsih et al., 2023). Similarly, research on individual development programs in global organizations indicates that systemic approaches—rather than isolated training sessions—result in stronger behavioral change and sustained competency growth (Pakzad, 2022). Studies of mentoring programs in educational institutions also demonstrate that development is shaped by structured guidance, communication, and pedagogical support, all of which parallel the organizational and managerial dimensions identified in the present study (Firooghi et al., 2022). These findings collectively emphasize that personal development is not simply the accumulation of individual attributes but the outcome of multi-level interactions between individuals, managers, organizations, and environments.

The findings also correspond with contemporary trends in strategic human resource development. As organizations transition into knowledge economies and increasingly digitalized workplaces, personal development has become a central strategic priority, linked to employee engagement, innovation capability, and organizational adaptability. Studies by Orosz reveal that personal development activities enhance psychological well-being and resilience, indicating parallel benefits in work settings where individuals face complexity and ambiguity (Orosz, 2024). Meanwhile, research on faculty development in universities demonstrates that personal development is strongly influenced by external factors such as organizational culture, leadership practices, and institutional opportunities for professional growth (Jaan Ahmadimarian et al., 2024). These findings support the argument that even highly self-directed individuals require structural scaffolding to achieve meaningful developmental outcomes.

In sum, the present study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that personal development in the Agricultural Bank of Iran is fundamentally shaped by systemic and relational factors rather than individual characteristics alone. Organizational and managerial dimensions appear to create the essential conditions through which personal growth is activated, stabilized, and sustained. This dynamic is consistent with psychological theories of agency,

organizational theories of competence, and developmental systems theories of leadership. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of supportive structures, leadership roles, and socially enriched environments in cultivating managerial capability within a complex and multi-layered banking institution.

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the data were collected within a single state-owned banking institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to private banking sectors or other industries with different organizational cultures and managerial structures. Second, the cross-sectional design of the quantitative phase prevented examination of developmental changes over time, making it impossible to assess temporal stability or longitudinal developmental trajectories. Third, the qualitative phase, although rigorous, involved a relatively small sample of experts and managers, and future studies may benefit from broader sampling to capture greater diversity of perspectives. Finally, all quantitative data were based on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability biases, perceptual distortions, or self-evaluation inaccuracies.

Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs to assess how personal development evolves over different stages of managerial careers and under varying organizational conditions. Comparative studies across private and public banking institutions could illuminate how governance structures, market pressures, and cultural contexts influence developmental outcomes. Researchers may also explore how digital transformation and remote work environments shape personal development pathways for managers, particularly as technology-driven competencies become more central to leadership effectiveness. Additionally, future studies could integrate multi-source assessment tools, such as 360-degree evaluations or observational measures, to capture more objective indicators of managerial development. Expanding research to include gender-based, regional, or generational comparisons may also yield deeper insights into personal development patterns within the banking industry.

Banking institutions should design integrated development systems that combine structured training, mentoring programs, reflective learning opportunities, and continuous performance feedback. Organizational leaders can foster personal development by creating psychologically safe environments that encourage experimentation, dialogue, and initiative-taking. Strengthening managerial support systems and embedding learning culture into

institutional practices can enhance developmental pathways for managers. Finally, the bank should align its human resource policies with long-term developmental objectives, ensuring that opportunities for growth, advancement, and capability enhancement are accessible to all managerial levels.

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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