

***The role of Corporate branding in achieving Business excellence
-Evidence from a local food Company-***

دور علامة الشركة في تحقيق التميز في الأعمال - دراسة بشركة محلية للمنتجات الغذائية-

تاريخ التسليم: (/ /)، تاريخ التقييم: (/ /)، تاريخ القبول: (/ /)

Abstract

الملخص

Corporate branding has become an indispensable asset in modern companies in the age of globalization, where competition is fierce and the environment changes constantly. Hatch and Schultz's claimed that corporate branding is based on three pillars, Strategic vision, organisational Culture and stakeholders Image. All companies aim to excel in their businesses and out-perform their competitors. In this context arises the question we investigate in this paper: Is there a positive direct influence of corporate branding on business Excellence in Algerian food firms ?.

Following the descriptive analytical approach, The adopted methodology is based on a survey to which 100 member in the managing staff have taken part.

Using structural equation modeling, the proposed model is tested and data analysis reveals that there is a particularly significant relationship between corporate branding and business Excellence in the firm.

Keywords: Corporate branding, Business Excellence, Food firm, SEM.

أصبحت العلامة التجارية عنصرا لا غنى عنه في الشركات الحديثة في عصر العولمة، حيث المنافسة شرسة والبيئة تتغير باستمرار. اعتبر Hatch و Schultz أن العلامات التجارية للشركات تقوم على ثلاث ركائز هي الرؤية الاستراتيجية، الثقافة التنظيمية وصورة المؤسسة. وتهدف جميع الشركات إلى التميز والتفوق في أعمالها وتحقيق أداء أفضل من منافسيها.

في هذا السياق تطرح إشكالية هذه الدراسة: هل للعلامة التجارية للشركات دور مباشر وإيجابي في تحقيق التميز في الأعمال في شركات الأغذية الجزائرية؟ اتباع المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، تعتمد منهجية الدراسة على استبيان موجه لكوادر إدارية في شركة الأغذية Prolipos .

باستخدام التحليل العاملي، تم التأكد من وجود دور إيجابي للعلامة التجارية (الرؤية الاستراتيجية ، الثقافة التنظيمية وصورة المؤسسة) في تحقيق التميز في الأعمال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلامة التجارية، التميز في الأعمال، شركة المنتجات الغذائية، التحليل العاملي.

Introduction

Corporate branding is a multifaceted concept that gained researchers' attention in recent years, its provision ensures high level of performance and adds value in corporations. Accordingly, corporate branding has become an indispensable asset in modern companies in the age of globalization where competition is fierce and the environment changes constantly.

Academics agree that corporate branding refers to the creation of organisation's unique characteristics. Corporate branding is not just a marketing matter (design, logo, brand name), instead it requires the participation of all actors in the company from bottom to top because the trend now is branding the whole company rather than branding each product separately (HATCH, SCHULTZ, 2009). Many researchers have tackled corporate branding from different approaches, the most known is the VCI model developed by Hatch and Schultz's (2001) .

Business Excellence on the other hand is an integrated collection of proven practices for how a business should operate to become the best it can possibly be'', it is applicable to all businesses whether private or public, for-profit or not-for-profit and small or large. It results in substantial productivity improvements.

This article, tries to explore and analyse the relationship between corporate branding using VCI model (strategic Vision, organisational Culture and perceived Image among stakeholders) and Business excellence. In this context, the study consists of literature review about corporate branding and Business excellence, the development of hypotheses, research methodology, findings and discussion of the results.

1. Literature Review and Hypotheses

This part will be dedicated to define and analyse the two main variables of the research i.e. corporate branding and Business Excellence. We'll start with corporate branding giving some definitions, main theories and its usefulness in modern companies, then we move to Business excellence (the dependent variable).

1. Corporate branding

1.1 Definition

Before dealing with corporate branding we proceed by defining brand, brand image and brand value.

- Brand: is a name, a term, a sign, a symbol, a design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Tasci, A. Kozak, M. , 2006), This definition leads people to focus exclusively on the tangible aspects of branding — the sound of the name, the colour and shape of the logo, or the look and feel of products and of retail outlets and other company facilities
- Brand image is a subjective mental picture of a brand shared by a group of consumers” (Riezeboz, 2003).
- Brand value: is the financial value of having customers who will pay more for a particular brand, it depends on company’s reputation (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>).
- Corporate branding:
Corporate branding can be defined as a systematic process of creating and maintaining positive images and a positive reputation of the company as a whole, by sending signals to all stakeholders, by managing behaviour and all internal and external communication (Einwiller, 2002).

Another definition views corporate branding as the sum of organisational expressions, that are communicated to its various audiences, through core values, the behaviour of employees and via all corporate communication to all internal and external stakeholders (Lorenz).

In the next table, we illustrate the world’s top Ten valuable brands according to Forbes report 2017, which is dominated by the technology companies led by Apple with a brand value of 170 billion dollars:

Table 1: The World's Most Valuable Brands

Rank	Brand	Brand Value	1-Yr Value Change	Brand Revenue	Company Advertising	Industry
1	Apple	\$170 B	10%	\$214.2 B	\$1.8 B	Technology
2	Google	\$101.8 B	23%	\$80.5 B	\$3.9 B	Technology
3	Microsoft	\$87 B	16%	\$85.3 B	\$1.6 B	Technology
4	Facebook	\$73.5 B	40%	\$25.6 B	\$310 M	Technology
5	Coca-Cola	\$56.4 B	-4%	\$23 B	\$4 B	Beverages
6	Amazon	\$54.1 B	54%	\$133 B	\$5 B	Technology

7	Disney	\$43.9 B	11%	\$30.7 B	\$2.9 B	Leisure
8	Toyota	\$41.1 B	-2%	\$168.8 B	\$4.3 B	Automotive
9	McDonald's	\$40.3 B	3%	\$85 B	\$646 M	Restaurants
10	Samsung	\$38.2 B	6%	\$166.7 B	\$3.7 B	Technology

Source: www.forbes.com/powerful-brands/list

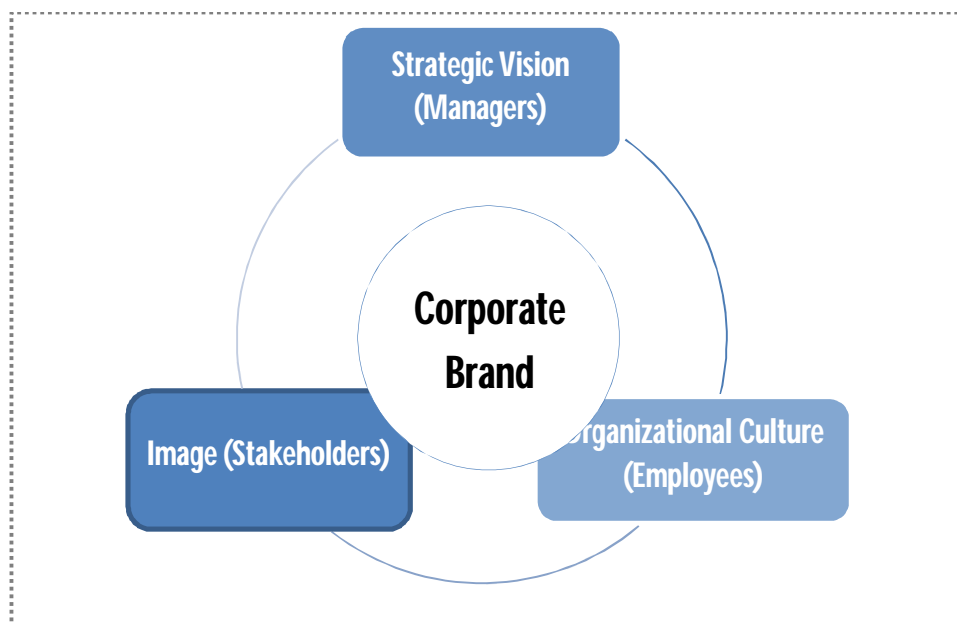
1.2. Assessment of corporate branding

To assess corporate branding, academics use the model of Hatch and Schultz called the vision, culture and image alignment model .

The vision, culture and image alignment model

Hatch and Schultz believe that building a successful corporate brand, requires the coherence between what the company's top managers want to accomplish in the future (their strategic *vision*), what has always been known or believed by company employees (lodged in its organizational *culture*), and what its external stakeholders expect or desire from the company (their *images* of it). The basic principle of the Vision - Culture - Image (VCI) Alignment Model — that the greater the coherence of vision, culture, and images, the stronger the brand and vice versa if there is no fit between vision, culture and image, the corporate brand will be underperforming. as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: The VCI Alignment Model



The coherence between these aspects is vital when bridging the gaps that precisely explain the medium and long-term failure of many companies throughout history, and which, in the worst cases, led to their disappearance. The greater this coherence, the stronger the brand will be. By contrast, the poorer this alignment, the weaker it will be.

In the following section, we'll try to define and explore each of the three constituents of VCI model and find the link between them.

• Strategic vision

Vision describes a view of the perfect situation that might eventually be achieved “in an ideal world”. It is the art of seeing what the others don't.

A vision is simply a shared mental framework that gives form to the future of an organization. It must be challenging and create a sense purpose of a more tangible perception of a promise to brighter future (O., Ilesanmi A., 2011).

Vision includes the company's objectives and goals, it explains the missions and long-term purposes the company is trying to achieve through its existence.

Strategic vision is a description of what the company can become. It is often communicated in the company's mission and vision statements. A mission statement describes what the organization would like to become.

People in an organization want to have a sense of mission, but only top management is in the position to specify and communicate this strategic vision to the general workforce. Successful CEOs are noted for having a clear strategic vision, a strong passion for their company and an ability to communicate with others. They are often perceived to be dynamic and charismatic leaders which is essentially important for the high firm performance and investor confidence in uncertain environment (Waldman D.et al., 2004).

All organizations need to have clear visions, because vision is primordial for direction setting and strategic coordination, it unifies and inspires stakeholders and supports the building of a strong organisational image and identity (Thomas C. Lawton,).

Each organization has its own vision statement, A Vision statement for an organization may include:

- The organization mission;
- Its basic philosophy, core values and cultural features;
- Its Goals and purposes;
- Its basic strategies;
- Its performance criteria;
- and its ethical standards of all employees.

We can state for instance the vision statements of Amazon, Pfizer and Apple.

For Amazon "Our vision is to be earth's most customer centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online."

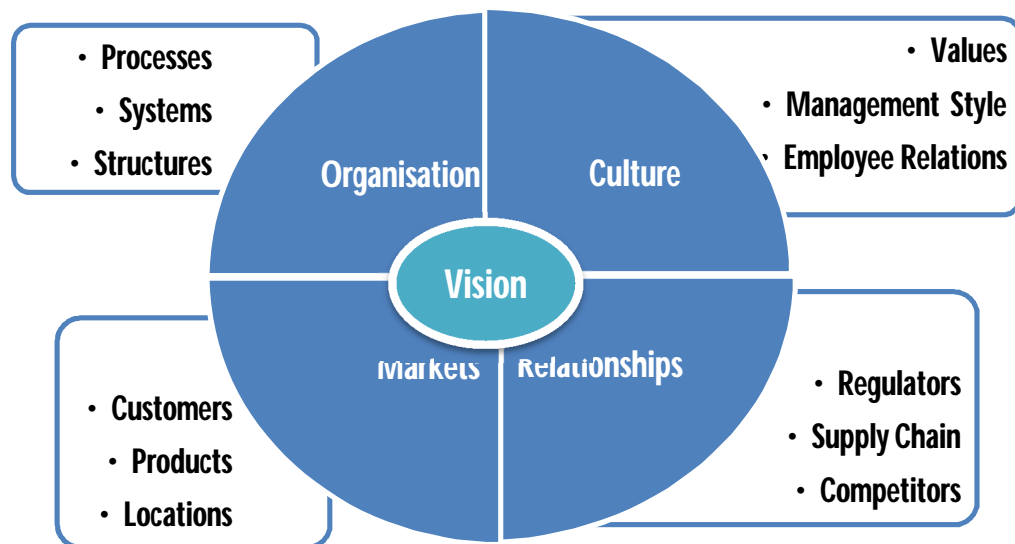
For Pfizer "We will become the world's most valued company to patients, customers, colleagues, investors, business partners, and the communities where we work and live".

And for Apple "To make a contribution to the world by making tools for the mind that advance humankind."

The main axes of strategic vision:

Strategic vision deals with four main issues, two of them are internal (Organisation and Culture) and the rest are external (Markets and Relationships), as shown in the following figure:

Figure 2: The strategic vision main axes



Source: Thomas LAWTON, Op.cit., p.10

According to figure 2 each of the four axes of strategic vision is represented by three constituents or dimensions. Vision is used to determine the present and future state of each constituent.

If processes for instance are now duplicated and redundant, the ideal future state that managers work to achieve is consistent, transparent and empowering processes. The same thing for the other dimensions like employee relations, if they are strained and lack trust, the future desired state is to be open, honest and trusting. If the products are standard and ordinary, it is imperative to customize them and render them premium, high quality and customer centered.

• Organisational Culture

Organizational culture is is mainly the sum of the attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions of an organization. It includes the collective goals of a company and the standards of expected behavior in achieving those goals. And it describes the environment and manner in which employees interact with each other and the market.

Barney has defined Organisational Culture as a set of shared assumptions and beliefs about an organization and its function in the marketplace (Barney, J.B., 1986).

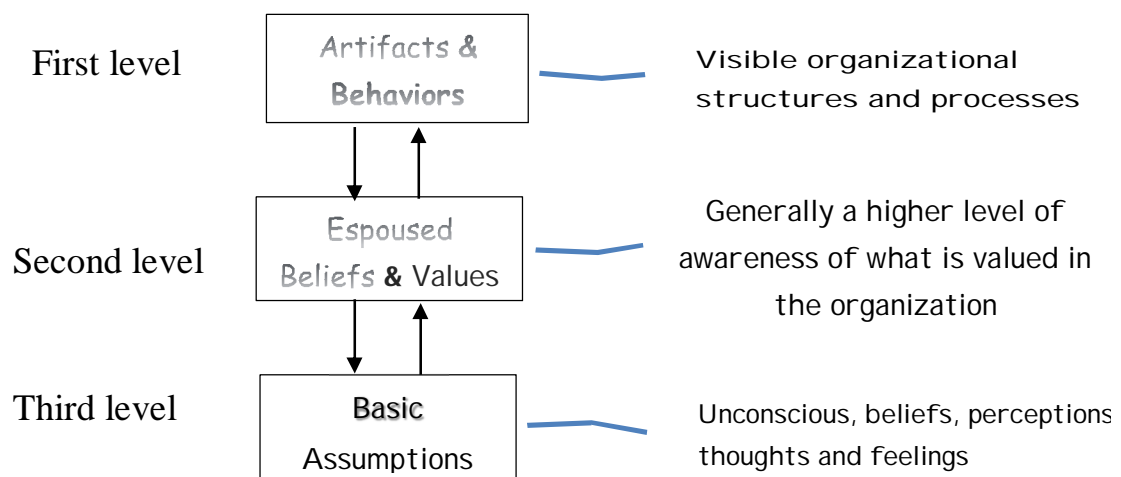
For *Cooke & Rousseau*, Organisationsal culture represents the ways of thinking, behaving, and believing that members of a social unit have in common (Cooke, R.A. and Rousseau, D.M, 1988).

So, according to the above definitions, Organisational culture is something specific and unique to the company, it deals with the shared assumptions and attitudes that employees have learnt, mastered and developed to solve work problems and cope with internal deficiencies, it is something proven and valid, it could be taught to new staff.

• Levels of Organisational culture:

Schein has identified three levels of culture that vary from obvious tangible features called Artifacts to intangible, unconscious Assumptions, passing accross Espoused Beliefs and values. As shown in the following figure:

Figure 3: Levels of organisational culture according to Schein



Source: Lisbet F. Møller, *Internal corporate branding across cultures*, - a comparative analysis of the company's identity internally in the organisation in Denmark and the UK, Aarhus University, 2009, p.32.

Artifacts and behaviors are any visible, tangible aspects that encompass behaviour patterns, physical and social environment and the written and spoken language used by employees. They also include Architecture, furniture, dress code, office jokes etc.

Espoused Beliefs and Values are the adopted strategies, goals and philosophies of the organisation. The term 'values' can also be described as attitudes: E.g. visible attitudes concerning how much influence employees have on making decisions in a given organisation (Lisbet Friis Møller, 2009).

Basic assumptions are the core of organisational culture, they are hidden, and taken for granted such as the ability of taking responsibility, Initiatives among employees and managers, they mean also how to act and react in specific situations, doing the right thing.

- **Stakeholders Image**

By stakeholders we mean customers, shareholders and the public, how do they look to the company

Kotler (2001) has defined image as "the set of beliefs, ideas, and impression that a person holds regarding an object (M. E. Malik et al., 2012). So when talking about brand image, it is about the mental representation of the brand based on individual consumer's beliefs, ideas and impressions.

Today, brand image has become an essential tool to seduce new customers by influencing their behaviour with various strategies that would make them loyal to one brand. It embodies Consumers' perception and recognition of the product's and brand's symbolic attributes (Zhang, Y., 2015) and it reflects the consumer's personality and characteristics.

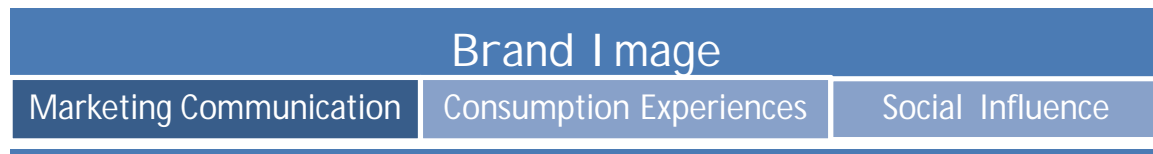
corporate image is the sum total of impressions left on the company's many publics. Image is perceived through customer interactions with:

- Corporate identity;
- Brand identity;
- Product and Service identity;
- Marketing campaigns and Advertising.

The creation of brand image

To create a good brand image in the minds of customers, three main processes are mobilized: Marketing Communication, Consumption Experiences, and Social Influence, as shown in figure 4 below:

Figure 4: processes of creating a brand image



- **Marketing Communication:** It includes advertising, personal relationships, personnel communications, brochures, etc. Advertising campaigns gives the company the possibility to adjust consumers' brand image and align it with the brand identity.
- **Consumption experiences:** Nothing comes equal to the act of consuming products and services, living and sharing this experience with friends and relatives in affecting how people feel and think about the organisation. So it is vital to provide superior product quality and premium services to the costumers.
- **Social influence:** Internet (web 2.0) and social media has revolutionised the relationships between people and customers; a word, a comment or a tweet may have a huge impact on the consumers' feelings and impressions. A bad experience of one customer with the company's products and services may lead to the deterioration of the brand image.

2. Business Excellence

All organisations aim to excel, but not all of them reach it, a lot of them fail. Even some organisations succeed to be excellent, they are obliged to innovate and create to stay in that state of excellence.

The Business Excellence Institute defines Business Excellence 'As being able to consistently out-perform your peer group (competitors) in delivering results for all your stakeholders' (Institute of Business Excellence, 2015).

Business Excellence is often described as outstanding practices in managing the organisation and achieving results, all based on a set of fundamental concepts or values.

To achieve Business excellence corporations need to attain some specific attributes i.e. key characteristics of high performing organisations.

The Assessment of Business Excellence:

Several business excellence models are in use today. The models are designed to guide and help organisations to improve their performance and

achieve world-class performance levels. While variations exist, these models are all remarkably similar. The most common include:

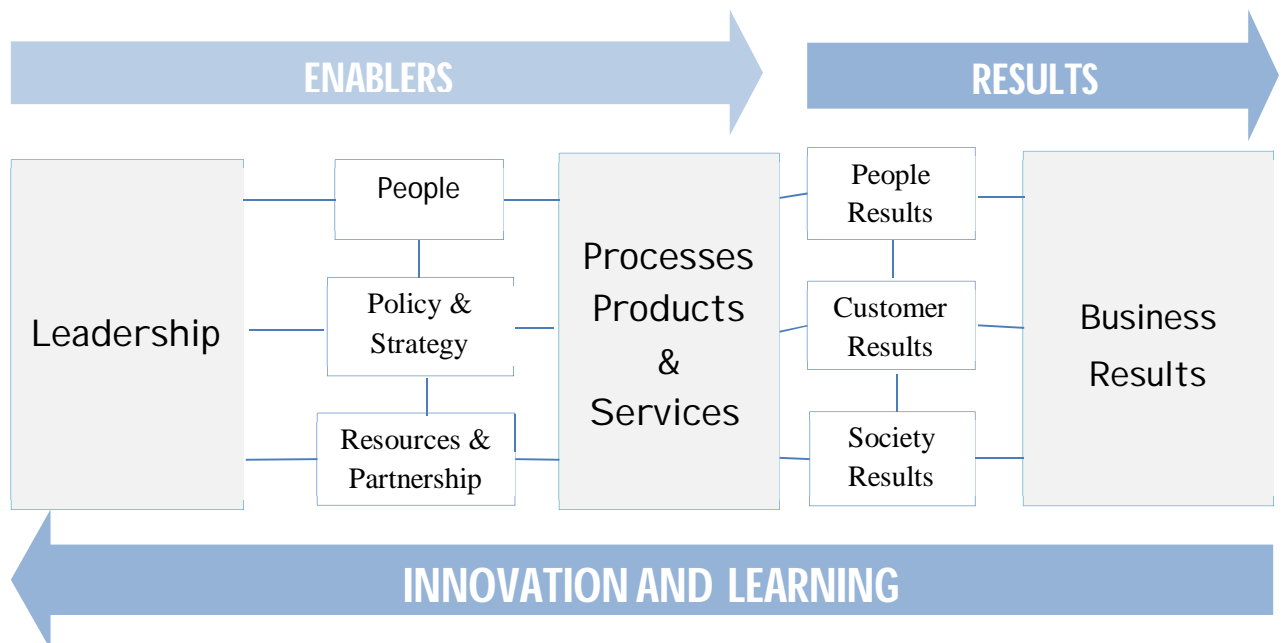
- Baldrige (MBNQA) – Used in over 25 countries including USA.
- European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) – Used throughout Europe.
- Singapore Quality Award Model.
- Japan Quality Award Model.
- Canadian Business Excellence Model.
- Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF).

In this study we'll use the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) which is based on the following nine criteria:

- 1. Leadership** The managers promote quality conscious action through their exemplary attitudes.
- 2. Strategy** The corporate strategy, policy and plans are clearly defined.
- 3. People** The staff is informed and empowered to work in an innovative atmosphere and be able to achieve their goals independently.
- 4. Partnerships and Resources** The resources – e.g., money, information, knowledge, material and means of production are deployed efficiently; the company makes use of the competences of its partners.
- 5. Processes, Products and Services:** The company knows the processes and constantly improve them to enhance customer benefits.
- 6. Customer Satisfaction:** The company measures the level of customer satisfaction and learns from the results.
- 7. People Satisfaction:** The company measures the extent of people satisfaction and uses the results to achieve even better satisfaction.
- 8. Social Responsibility:** The company determines how society perceives and uses the findings to fulfil expectations (e.g. environmental protection) even further.
- 9. Business Results:** The company measures how well its services achieve goals in the fields of finance, processes and business results and learn from the findings. It improves itself constantly through innovative ideas.

The next figure illustrates the model briefly:

Figure 5: EFQM Business Excellence Model



II. Case study of PROLIPOS food company :

PROLIPOS is a private company located in Ain mlila, district of Oum el Bouaghi, it has been founded by the brothers BARECH in the sixth of May 2000, with a capital of 492.643.320 DZD.

PROLIPOS is a medium enterprise with 400 worker in 2015, it is specialized in producing the following food products (www.prolipos-dz.com):

- ✓ White Sugar;
- ✓ Edible oil (*ZINOR*, *SAFINOR*);
- ✓ Edible Fat (vegetal margarine *Lyna*);
- ✓ Bottling of edible Oil;
- ✓ Plastic Packaging;
- ✓ Plastic containers;
- ✓ Bottles, flasks and tubes in plastic;
- ✓ Plastic articles for the chemical, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries;
- ✓ Detergents: Soap and Bleach.

Our study sample includes 100 member in the managing stuff, we have brought back 35 usable questionnaire.

Table 2 : The Demographic parameters of the respondents:

Variable	Characteristics	Number	Ratio %
Gender	Male	27	77.1
	Female	8	22.9

	Sum	35	100
AGE Group	Less than 30 years	15	42.9
	From 30 to 40	14	40.0
	More than 40	6	17.1
Educational Level	Secondary	6	17.1
	University	19	54.3
	Postgraduate	7	20
	Professional	3	8.6
Experience	Less than 5 years	26	74.3
	From 5 to 10	6	17.1
	More than 10	3	8.6
Function	Executive	15	42.9
	Control agent	13	37.1
	Execution agent	7	20
	Sum	35	100

Source: Firm's documents

According to the previous table, more than 77 percent of the sample gender is male, where more than 80 percent are less than 40 years. 54.3 percent of the respondents graduated from university.

Respondents were asked about corporate Branding in their company, using the VCI model (Vision, Culture and Image), their answers were noted using five points Likert scale, and here are the the descriptive statistics (Medium and standard deviation) results of vision, culture and image.

Table 3 : Descriptive statistics results of Corporate Branding axes (Vision, Culture and Image)

The statement	Medium	St. Dev.	Tendency
- Your company has an accurate meaningful vision and long term objectives.	4.83	0.382	Strongly Agree
- In your company, initiatives are encouraged to serve the achievements of strategic goals.	4.54	0.505	Strongly Agree
- Your company is customer-centric.	3.66	0.968	Agree
- Your company is Focusing at continual development.	4.09	1.011	Agree

- Your company allocates resources in a proper way that serves its objectives	4.28	0.406	Strongly Agree
Strategic Vision	4.27	0.50	Strongly Agree
- you are Maintaining the values and standards which the brand represents.	4.77	0.49	Strongly Agree
- Being aware that you are a representative of the brand and feeling responsible for it.	4.40	0.914	Strongly Agree
- Being friendly all the time.	4.63	0.490	Strongly Agree
- Creating new ideas, easily adapting to innovations.	4.46	0.563	Strongly Agree
- Seeing every customer as your own guest.	3.09	1.222	Neutral
- Respecting every individual without discrimination.	4.01	0.425	Agree
- Believing in common mind, open to communication and collaboration.	3.22	0.84	Neutral
Organisational Culture	4.08	0.80	Agree
- The customers are satisfied with the company's products and services	4.20	0.83	Agree
- The company is focusing on TV advertising to attract more customers.	3.83	1.07	Agree
- Your company has developed its own website to display its products and services.	3.71	0.86	Agree
- The company develops the skills and abilities of customer-contact employees.	3.57	1.036	Agree
- Your company has created communication channels with its customers.	4.01	0.479	Agree
Stakeholders Image	3.87	0.78	Agree

The respondents strongly agreed about the appliance of strategic vision in their company with a medium of 4.27 and standard deviation of 0.50, they similarly agreed about the appliance of organisational culture with a medium of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.80, which reflects the the non variance of answers. The respondents agreed about stakeholders image with a medium of 3.84 and standard deviation of 0.78.

The assessment of Business Excellence:

The respondents have been asked nine questions related to Business

Excellence, and were given five choices; Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree. The following table summarises the answers of the respondents, the medium and the standard deviation.

Table 4 : Descriptive statistics results of Business Excellence

	The statement	Medium	St.Dev	Tendency
management Excellence	1. The managers promote quality conscious action through their exemplary attitudes.	3.97	0.857	Agree
	2. The corporate strategy, policy and plans are clearly defined	4.31	0.583	Strongly Agree
	3. The staff is informed and empowered to work in an innovative atmosphere and be able to achieve their goals independently.	4.43	0.608	Strongly Agree
customer service Excellence	4. The resources are deployed efficiently and the company makes use of the competences of its partners.	3.77	0.770	Agree
	5. The company knows the processes and constantly improve them to enhance customer benefits.	3.97	0.891	Agree
	6. The company measures the level of customer satisfaction and learns from the results.	4.03	0.891	Agree
Socio environmental Excellence	7. The company measures the extent of people satisfaction and uses the results to achieve even better satisfaction.	4.06	1.083	Agree
	8. The company determines how society perceives and uses the findings to fulfil expectations (e.g. environmental protection) even further.	3.89	1.105	Agree
	9. The company measures how well its services achieve goals in the fields of finance, processes and business results and learn from the findings. It improves itself constantly through innovative ideas.	3.74	1.039	Agree
	Business Excellence	4.01	0.479	Agree

All the nine statements were approved with a medium between 3.77 and 4.43 , the three first statements constitute the management Excellence, the statements 4,5 and 6 represent the customer service Excellence and the last three statements represent the Socio environmental Excellence

Validity and Reliability

Validity and Reliability of the explanatory and the explained construct were successfully tested by Confirmatory factor Analysis. the construct has significant loading factors as appears in the next figure.

Figure 6: the CFA of the explanatory construct:

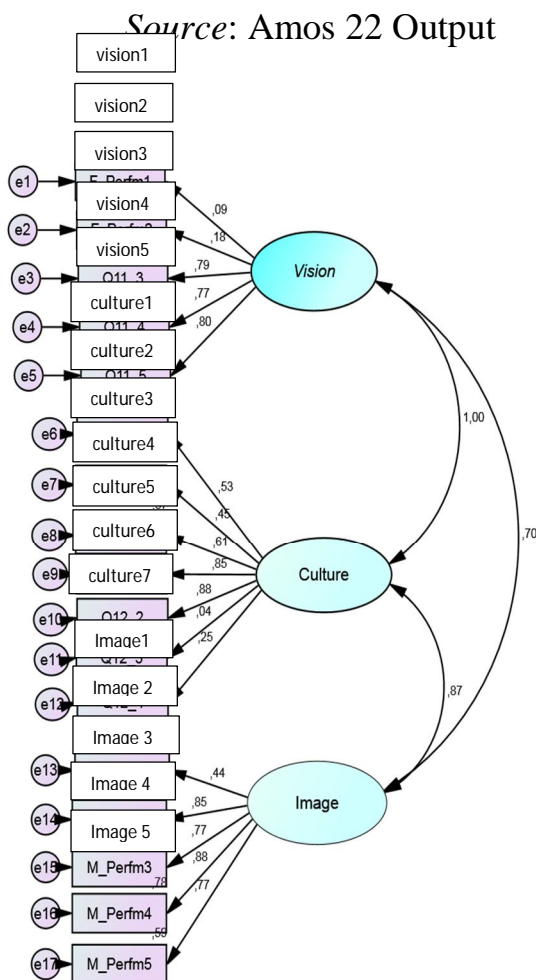
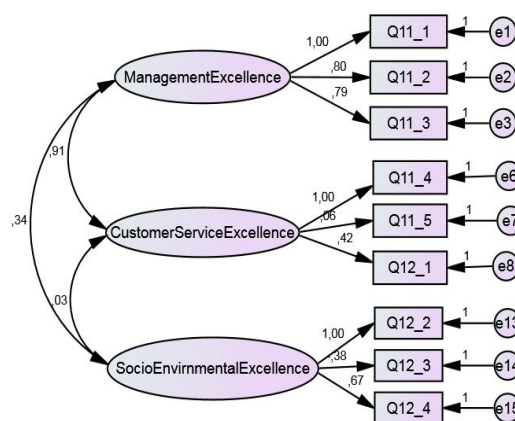


Figure 7: The CFA of the explained construct



For figure 6: The fit of the model to the data is satisfactory according to the main fit measures chi-square test result is 97.1672. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) has a value of 0.884 which is acceptable. The Root Mean square Residual (RMR) is 0.066, within the acceptable range of 0-0.08. Another measure of the fit of the model is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), where values between 0 and 0.08 are acceptable, in this model RMSEA is 0.046. The correlations between the three constituents of the construct (Vision, Culture and Image) are positive and significant.

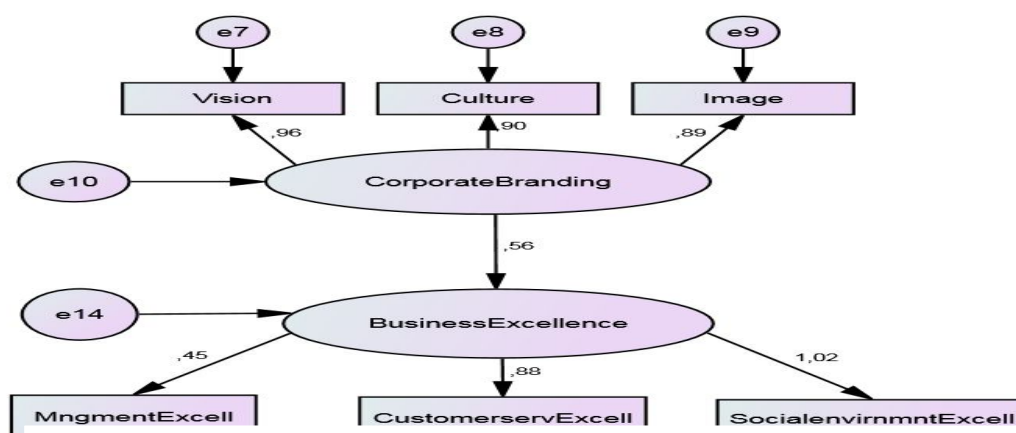
For figure 7: The validity and reliability of the explained construct were successfully tested by Confirmatory factor Analysis. the construct has significant loading factors as shown.

The fit of the model to the data is satisfactory according to the main fit measures chi-square test result is 31.4, The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) has a value of 0.901 which is acceptable. The Root Mean square Residual (RMR) is 0.058, within the acceptable range of 0-0.08. the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.055.

Research model Test: We try to test the relationship between the explanatory construct (The corporate branding) and the explained construct (Business Excellence) as follows in figure 8.

Figure 8: Model test

According to the figure 8, the correlation coefficient is (0.56; $p < 0.05$), which indicates the existence of a significant relationship (an impact) between the indepedent construct i.e. Corporate Branding and the dependent construct i.e



Chi square = 53.32, GFI = 0.845, RMR = 0.071, RMSEA = 0.076.

Source: Amos 22 Output

Business Excellence.

III. Conclusion:

This article has addressed the relationship between Corporate Branding with its three pillars : Strategic vision ,organizational culture, and stakeholders Image and Business Excellence .

We have found that VCI model is the most used in literature to assess Corporate Branding.

The research hypothesis has been validated i.e. “ *there is a positive direct influence of corporate branding on business Excellence in Algerian food firms.*

The case study firm (Prolipos) has shown a strong commitment toward strategic vision, Organisational culture, brand image and Business Excellence.

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