

## Mitigating the Negative Effect of Intra-brand Clustering: The Role of Inter-brand Clustering and Firm Size

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**Abstract :** Clustering -geographic concentrations of entities- has recently received more attention in marketing research and has been shown to affect multiple outcomes. This study investigates the impact of intra-brand clustering (clustering of same-brand outlets) on an outlet's quality performance. Further, it assesses the moderating effects of inter-brand clustering (clustering of other-brand outlets) and firm size. An examination of approximately 21,000 food service establishments in New York State in 2019 finds that the impact of intra-brand clustering on an outlet's quality performance is context-dependent. Specifically, intra-brand clustering decreases, whereas inter-brand clustering and firm size help increase the outlet's performance. Additionally, this study finds that the role of firm size is more substantial than inter-brand clustering in mitigating the adverse effects of intra-brand clustering on outlet quality performance.

**Keywords :** intraband clustering, interbrand clustering, firm size, brand competition, outlet performance, quality violations

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