

Correlates of Internal Marketing Practices and Employee Perceived Organizational Performance: An Empirical Assessment

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Abstract

The research sought to assess the impact of internal marketing on employee job attitude & organizational performance. The study also aims to find out the impact of independent variables namely, internal communication, training & development and interdepartmental integration of the organization, on the dependent variables, which are employee job attitude (job satisfaction & self-efficacy) & customer satisfaction (i.e., organizational performance). This study proposes three hypothesis: H1: Internal marketing positively influences employee job attitude., H2: Employee job attitude positively influence customer satisfaction and H3: Internal marketing positively influences customer satisfaction. Concept of internal marketing views employees as internal customers of the organization who work to attain external customer satisfaction. In modern marketing, consumer satisfaction (CS) is a central concept. The marketing concept emphasizes delivering satisfaction (not just products) to consumers and obtaining profits in return. Organizational performance is measured in terms of profitability. It is assumed that Greater the level of customer satisfaction, greater is the organizational performance. Internal marketing plays a significant role in building competitive edge and creating the positive job attitude among employees to attain the customer satisfaction for greater organizational performance. Since employees are the real marketers of the organization, improved employee efficiency leads to greater organizational performance. To achieve the study objectives, proportionate Stratified sampling procedure was employed. A total of 240 respondents (150 employees & 90 customers) participated in the study. Designed questionnaires were distributed over the targeted sample group. Two separate questionnaires were developed for Customers and Employees. The analytical results demonstrate positive influence of independent variables of internal marketing on dependent variables of job attitude and customer satisfaction. It demonstrates that there is approximately 29% contribution from internal marketing on job satisfaction and 25% on self-efficacy. It also demonstrates that there is approximately 19% contribution from internal marketing on customer satisfaction. After analyzing the results, the study unearthed that internal marketing positively influences customer satisfaction through the mediating role of employee job attitude. The study recommended that it is noteworthy to mention that

customer satisfaction is of utmost importance to stay profitable in the market. Organizations need to focus on developing competencies of employees to develop distinctive services and high standards of quality to reach a strategic level of differentiation in the market. Hence organizations must ensure that internal marketing initiatives are properly adopted and aligned to achieve organizational goals.

Introduction

Internal marketing has become vital for every business enterprise and occupies eminent position in every discourse. No business organization can survive in the competition without satisfying its customers; likewise, no organization can sustain without satisfying its employees. That is how organizations work: they serve the needs of employees and in turn employees serve the customer needs. The internal marketing concept emphasizes on improving internal working relationships. Internal marketing practices make customer-contact employees feel beholden to repay the organization through genuine emotions. In today's competitive scenario internal marketing comes up as a key differentiating factor for organizations to survive in the market. Due to the significance of employees as the most critical asset of distinction for any organization, the relevance between employee job satisfaction and organizational performance is self-evident. A number of empirical studies have been conducted on the subject of Internal marketing and employee perceived organizational performance. Research on this subject shows that most of the studies were conducted in developed countries. This implies that there is lack of pertinent literature on underdeveloped and developing countries, including J&K which has to be offset by research. This implies that the impact of internal marketing practices on employee perceived organizational performance has not received ample research attention in J&K. Thus, there is a major gap in the relevant literature on J&K, which has to be covered by research. This research endeavors to fill this gap by furnishing more empirical evidence on the effects of internal marketing practices on employee perceived organizational performance. In this backdrop three hypothesis are formulated.

Literature Review

Internal Marketing

Concept of internal marketing views employees as internal customers of the organization who work to attain external customer satisfaction. Dimensions of internal marketing that have a significant impact on the satisfaction level of employees are internal communication, training and development, work environment, superior and peer support, recognition, appraisal, feedback, and rewards. Internal marketing practices positively effects Employee job satisfaction which in turn impacts Employee job attitude and eventually attains Customer satisfaction (Berry 1981). The internal marketing concept, in a modern form, is the basis for improving internal working relationships between functional specialists by taking a social process perspective (Varey 1995). George (1990) noted that if management desires its employees

to do a splendid job with customers, then it should first do an exceptionally well with its employees. Sergeant and Frenkel (2000) opine that previous service workplace research has indicated the impact of supportive supervisors, teams, other departments, and technology on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. These variables in turn have been shown to influence customer contact employee behavior and customer satisfaction. The capacity of employees to satisfy customers is strongly dependent on a set of mutually supportive variables. Ferdous (2008) proposes that employee and the organization should be treated as an internal consumer and market, whereby the same concepts applicable to external markets should be applicable to internal markets too. If employees are committed, the customers will always experience a better service delivery. Internal marketing practices make customer-contact employees feel beholden to repay the organization through genuine emotions. The organizations where there are effective internal marketing practices, customer-contact employees are more disposed to express their naturally felt emotions in different service encounters. In a work environment that embrace a successful enactment of internal marketing practices, employees are prompted to exhibit genuine ardour in service encounters that in turn bring about customer-oriented behaviors at higher levels. (Sima Nart et al.,2018)

Organizational Performance

In today's business competitive world, the relevance between employee job satisfaction and organizational performance is self-evident due to the significance of employees as the most critical asset of distinction for any organization (Rouf & Riyaz, 2016). Human resources are the main basis, why organizations exist. Employees have the potentialities for reasoning and they play the major roles and also make considerable contributions to the organizations. However, the factors that satisfy and motivates employees to work and the fulfillment they get from it, marks the relationship between the organization and its employees. Onyebu et.al.,(2017) backed the opinion that existing literatures identified factors such as promotion, pay, supervisor support, working conditions, job content, job security, clarity of roles, participation in decision making, reward and recognition, career development, training and development, perceived organizational support, task variety, communication and style of management are determining aspects of employee job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction plays a pivot role in performance of an organization (Muhammad, Mushtaq, Muhammad, Momal, Amber and Hummayoun (2013). Job satisfaction focuses mostly on the feelings of individuals about their entire job, which accentuate on the level to which individuals like or hate their jobs. Ergo, job satisfaction serves as a benchmark of positive or negative feelings of individuals about their job (Mohammed Inuwa,2016).The authors drew attention that it is very important to recognize the ways of employee retention through satisfaction and motivation in order to achieve the set targets of organizational performance. Locke (1976) cited and owusu (2014) affirmed that employee job satisfaction is pleasant and emotional state. Evaluation of an employee's job experience creates job satisfaction. Satisfied employees have positive attitude towards their job which leads to increased performance, while dissatisfied employees may have negative attitude towards given tasks which, of course

would lead to decreased performance. Anuar (2011) inferred that in order to attain satisfied employees organizations should pay attention to them. He implied that highly satisfied employees ought to deliver high quality of job performance. Attitude towards work has a positive and significant effect on employee intention to quit. The negative attitude of employees towards the job will have a significant impact on employee turnover ratio. A positive attitude encourages employee performance and therefore, increases the organizational productivity.

Job Attitude

Employee Job attitude is a psychological or neurotic state. It is an Inclination to behave in a certain way at workplace as a result of an individual experience as well as personality. One's behavior in workplace determines the work attitude of an employee. Job attitude is defined as a set of behaviors that are expressed in terms of work involvement & organizational commitment (Mohammad Inuwa et al. 2017). Attitude of an employee expresses the individual's feelings about things, events or individuals. Attitude has a dynamic or oriented effect (Saeed shahriyari et al. 2019). The most widely accepted definition of an employee attitude, however, was provided by Eagly & Chaiken (1993, p. 1): "A psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor." Job attitudes are also closely related to more global measures of life satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe 1993). Job attitudes matter because jobs matter, to people's identities, to their health, and to their evaluations of their lives. Structurally, job attitudes are hierarchically organized, with perhaps an overall job attitude being the most general factor, followed by still relatively general job attitudes such as overall job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perhaps others, followed by more specific attitudes such as job satisfaction facets, specific dimensions of organizational commitment, job involvement, role clarity, self-efficacy and so on.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction, as noted by Tahir, Waggett and Hoffman (2013), is "a customer's perspective based on expectation and then subsequent post purchase experience". In other words, it is an evaluation of products or services' quality level that meets or exceeds the customer expectations. Many researchers and academicians emphasized that it is a key element for a company's success in the market as well as a crucial factor for company's survival as it has a positive effect on company's profitability (Novikova, 2009; Angelova and Zekiri, 2011). Customer satisfaction (CS) is a business philosophy forecasting and managing the customer needs, showing the responsibility to meet customer needs and highlighting the importance of creating value for them. It is an individual's perception either contented or discontented by comparing the expected performance and the perceived performance (Bodaghi & Rostamzadeh, 2018).

It cannot be denied that a satisfied consumer has a tendency to buy more than a less satisfied one. In a highly competitive market, customer satisfaction is, indeed, a crucial key that builds strong and long-term relationships between the customers and the firm (Mohammad, 2012). Customer satisfaction is thought to be a precursor to behavioral intentions. Scholars have produced impressive evidence of the favorable effects of customer satisfaction on various behavioral intention indicators, such as repeat purchase (Szymanski and Henard, 2001), retention (Bolton, 1998), willingness to recommend to others (Homburg et al., 2005), loyalty (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993), and profitability (Anderson et al., 1994). It is therefore an important business success strategy (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Organizations overall performance is improved by organizations efficiency of human resource practices (Berry 1980). Organizational activities involved in enhancing their employee performance actually has the motive of organizational performance enhancement. Since the employees in the organization are the real marketers and face of the organization, the enhancement of positive employee job attitude through internal marketing is the main focus of management so as to achieve higher performance and customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is assumed that positive attitude towards work and greater organizational commitment increases job satisfaction which in return enhances performance of the individual and creates customer satisfaction and loyalty leading to greater organizational performance.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study purposes the hypothesis that will be cleared on the investigation of Primary and Secondary data.

H1: Internal marketing (Communication, Training & Development and Interdepartmental Integration in this study) positively influences employee job attitude.

H2: Employee job attitude (Job Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy in this study) positively influence customer satisfaction.

H3: Internal marketing positively influences customer satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To assess the relationship between internal marketing, employee job attitude and customer satisfaction.
- To measure the efficiency level of internal marketing.
- To measure the level of employee satisfaction with internal marketing practices.
- To measure the level of customer satisfaction.
- To offer suggestions for further improvement of internal marketing practices, employee attitudes and ultimate firms' outcomes.

Research Methodology

To analytically study the correlates of Internal Marketing practices and Employee perceived organizational performance, a questionnaire survey was conducted. The basic issues concerning the study's research design and methodology are discussed below:

Sample

The selection of the sample was governed by the principles of proportionate stratified sampling, whereby, the two respondent categories customers and employees were taken one by one. The sample size will consist of 90 customers and 150 employees. The districts like Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramullah, Budgam, Ganderbal will be used as different strata of the sample.

Data Collection & Research Instrument

Survey method was adopted for collection of data and the survey instrument was hand distributed among the customers and employees. In addition, the secondary data has been obtained from the file records of the service provider, journals, books, past research done in this field and other relevant sources. Most of the instruments were either adopted from previous published works or developed specifically for the present study. The Lickert's five-point scale is adopted throughout the study.

Questionnaire Development

Two separate questionnaires were developed for Customers and Employees. Structured questionnaire has been employed to obtain information from respondents under study. The measuring items used for the study were sourced from existing validated scales and literature. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section 'A' included demographic information of respondents while Section 'B' included statements pertaining to internal marketing, employee job attitude and customer satisfaction.

Scale purification & refinement

In order to compact the instrument, only those items and factors were considered which had well discrimination and high consistency. This was checked by Exploratory factor Analysis (EFA). The EFA for this study was performed by SPSS using principle component method of extraction with varimax rotation, as it enhances the interpretability of factors by maximizing the number of items with high loading (Malhotra, 2003) as shown in table 1. The standard criterion used to determine the number of factors was based on Eigen value which should be equal to or more than one (>1).

Table 1: Configured EFA Matrix of Identified Factors and Item Description

Dimensions/ Factors	Rotated Factor loading	Communalities	Inter-total Correlation	Eigen Value	Variance extracted %
Communication	.894	.648	.805	4.812	6.127
Training & Development	.782	.773	.817	4.521	5.282
Interdepartmental Integration	.592	.551	.543	3.966	3.273
Job Satisfaction	.761	.883	.803	4.104	4.311
Self Efficacy	.616	.701	.751	3.574	2.187
Customer Satisfaction	.804	.731	.751	4.701	6.081
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (Cumulative % of Variance)					27.261

Source: Data compilation by the scholar for the present study

Analysis & Results

Table 1: Impact of Internal Marketing on Job Attitude

Independent Variables	Internal Marketing	Dependent Variables Job Attitude	
		Job Satisfaction	Self-Efficacy
1.	Communication	0.332*	0.211**
2.	Training & Development	0.214*	0.201**
3.	Interdepartmental Integration	0.013**	0.181*
	R^2	0.293*	0.251*

Note * <.001 ; **< .01; *** <.05; and ns not significant.

Source: Data collection by the scholar for the present study

The most influential internal marketing practice on employee job attitude is communication ($b=0.332, p<.001$ and $b=0.211, p<.01$) on job satisfaction and self efficacy respectively. Noticeably Interdepartmental Integration is the weakest driver of job satisfaction ($b=0.013, p<.01$ and $b=0.181, p<.001$). The estimated R^2 confirm the influence of about 29 percent in Job Satisfaction and 25 percent in Self Efficacy. Taking together the results, it is justified to accept the $H1$ that Internal Marketing positively influences Job Attitude.

Table 2: Impact of Internal Marketing on Customer Satisfaction

Independent	Internal Marketing	Dependent Variable
		Customer Satisfaction
	1. Communication	0.182*
	2. Training and Development	0.228***
	3. Interdepartmental Integration	0.016***
	R^2	0.193*

Note * $<.001$; ** $<.01$; *** $<.05$; and ns not significant.

Source: Data collection by the scholar for the present study

The most influential internal marketing practice on customer satisfaction is training and development ($b=0.228, p<.05$). Noticeably Interdepartmental Integration is the weakest driver of customer satisfaction ($b=0.016, p<.05$).

The estimated R^2 confirm the influence of about 19 percent in Customer Satisfaction. Taking together the results, it is justified to accept the $H3$ that Internal Marketing positively influences Customer Satisfaction.

Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to increase the understanding of internal marketing practices and employee perceived organizational performance by exploring organizations which can improve its customer satisfaction by improving employee job satisfaction and employee job attitude. Companies may adopt varied effective concepts and strategies to their businesses for employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction through technological advancements, modern facilities, strategic policies and other resources. The responses from customers and employees and the analysis thereof formed following findings: -

- ✓ Industries have adopted internal marketing practices to attain employee satisfaction and positive employee job attitude in order to withstand the competition in the market. The understudy internal marketing practices like communication, training and development, and inter-departmental integration are inadequately adopted by the industry.
- ✓ The organizations need to focus on enabling employees to perform better and for that they need to implement communication, training and development and interdepartmental integration well.

- ✓ The employees are well versed with the practices of internal marketing and also are better aware of the extent to which the practices are implemented in their organizations. They can recommend the internal marketing practices to the managerial levels to enhance the employee job satisfaction which in turn increases organizational performance.
- ✓ The behaviors exhibited by employees during service encounters show the positive or negative feelings of employees towards their job. Organizations must interpret these behaviors in order to know the satisfaction level of their employees and reduce employee turnover ratio.
- ✓ Employees are well aware of the lacking policies of the organizations which leads to the resentment in employees and eventually gets expressed during service encounters. They should express their demands of desired strategies and policies in front of management in order to facilitate hassle free organizational functioning.
- ✓ It is noteworthy to mention that customer satisfaction is of utmost importance to stay profitable in the market. Organizations need to take various initiatives to attain customer satisfaction to gain competitive edge in the market.
- ✓ Organizations needs to prioritize customer satisfaction in its policies in view of the fact that customer satisfaction acts as a driver for increase in market share and revenue.

Managerial Implications

- ✓ Organizations need to accentuate on its external marketing. It allows businesses to shape their customers perceptions and also to broadcast their brands, display information's about new products, service offerings and developments.
- ✓ Satisfied customers are attained through well performed internal marketing, but managers fail to realize that they do not achieve satisfied customers without achieving satisfied employees. Managers must recognize the motivational factors, for example incentives and rewards; in order to increase employee performance.
- ✓ Organizations need to focus on developing competencies of employees to develop distinctive services and high standards of quality to reach a strategic level of differentiation in the market.
- ✓ Organizations must focus on employee relationship management. Relationship building, for instances, remembering employees' birthdays and other important days creates warm feelings towards a company. This could lead to increased employee satisfaction and efficiency and also emphasizes employee retention. Employee retention leads to organizational efficiency and profitability.

Limitations

- ✓ First and most significantly, this current study is limited within the Kashmir division of the Union Territory of JK.

- ✓ The constructs of Internal Marketing and Employee Job Attitude were investigated and tested empirically in this study. There are a myriad of elements related to these two variables in literature, but the study focused on the few constructs from each variable only. This omitted any other possible elements of Internal Marketing and Employee Job Attitude as determinants of Customer Satisfaction from being tested empirically.
- ✓ The assessment of Employee Job Attitude in the organizations was made from the perspective of employee itself, but did not include any input from the seniors, peers, or sub-ordinates. Input from these categories also should be explicitly sought and included in future research in order to validate the findings reported.
- ✓ The co-operation and interest of respondents in general was one of the common problems faced during the survey.
- ✓ The employees had to respond to the statements related to their management policies, they were a bit hesitant in filing the questionnaire. This might have resulted in bias responses even though at most of the occasions, the management level was kept away from the lower levels at the time of filling the questionnaire.

Direction for future research

Like any other study, this study has also highlighted many opportunities for future research as follows:

- ✓ New studies can expand this research geographically.
- ✓ With regard to customer satisfaction, only the constructs of Internal Marketing and Employee Job Attitude was used as predictors in this study. More results can be obtained if other moderating variables can be involved in relation to desired consumer outcomes in future.
- ✓ The inclusion of only few constructs of each variable in this study provides another possibility for future studies to explore additional variables.
- ✓ Researchers can study the direct relationship between Employee satisfaction, Employees turnover intentions and Customer satisfaction.
- ✓ Future studies can measure influence of satisfied customers on other customers who have not attained the satisfaction yet. This effect would be a reason of positive word of mouth communication triggered by firm's customer satisfaction practices.
- ✓ Another interesting avenue for future research would be conducting this research by grouping customers based on their attitudes. For Example, grouping customers into positive and negative attitude exhibit ants and then comparing their satisfaction level, keeping the services similar. Similarly, it would be an important contribution to the literature to investigate customer intentions towards the service organizations by examining the impact of customer attitude on customer satisfaction.

- ✓ The customer's cultural background impacts the customer's behaviors. This study did not take in this issue; therefore this provides a possibility for future researches to examine differences in customer intentions towards service organizations amid the customers of diverse cultural background.

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