

Impact of Internal Marketing on Business Performance

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ABSTRACT

Due to increasing competition and dynamic environment, it is not sufficient to measure only financial performance, but also non-financial or non-economic indicators are also important. Internal marketing is a practice, strategy and process that improves organizational performance and plays a vital role for overall development of the organization. It makes a significant impact on the financial as well as non-financial performance of the organization. It is not easy to measure the impact of internal marketing on the financial performance of the organization. Various studies revealed that internal marketing indirectly makes the significant impact on the financial performance of the organization. Internal marketing directly and indirectly makes a positive impact on the organizational performance of the organization. It makes a positive impact on employee retention, employee loyalty, employee satisfaction, market orientation, change management, branding, employee commitment and relationship management. It also makes a significant impact on service quality and increase market share. To compete in the external marketing it works as a powerful tool. This research paper explores about the various benefits of internal marketing on the business performance. It also gives insight about why this internal marketing practice is important for the overall organizational business performance.

Keywords: *Internal Marketing, Business Performance, Market Orientation, Competitive Advantage*

INTRODUCTION

Internal marketing is the strategy to improve in-house marketing. According to Lings internal marketing is to improve interaction between customers and internal suppliers to improve quality of products and services. In this respect, Alvar Zarinjoio Soheila et al. (2018), internal marketing is all about customer satisfaction. They also insisted that despite the various studies on the internal marketing, there is little practical emphasis made by the organization. Wachovia is the fifth largest bank in America. This bank formed in the year (2001) that merged two smaller banks. This bank used brand identity plan and successfully implemented it. This is one of the example of internal

marketing. The reason of successful South West Airline, is to implement internal marketing dimensions as reward system, empowerment, training, open communication, employment security and career development.

Internal marketing plays an eminent role in the business performance. It makes a positive impact on financial and operational performance of the organization. Various authors revealed that implementation of internal marketing results in financial and non-financial performance. The impact of internal marketing on the organizational performance studied in the hotel industry at Zimbabwe by Nyasha Mapira et. al. (2015), described internal marketing as, a client oriented strategy to improve organizational performance. Various authors (Zaman et al 2012; Magatef Ghaleb Sima et al 2016), confirmed that internal marketing increases organizational performance and improves efficiency of the organizational people and it leads to financial performance. However, no perfect measurement instruments available to measure its impact on financial performance. To improve organizational performance, internal marketing makes a significant impact on service quality, build market share, customer satisfaction and overall organizational functioning. It acts as a backbone of the organizational body that helps to improve the internal work environment and also compete in the external environment.

Due to increasing competition, mergers, amalgamation, joint ventures are very common strategies following by the organizations. This brings change in the organizational system. In such situation, it is difficult to deal with the human resource. They are resists to change. Sherry Finney (2010), suggested that internal marketing is the best concept to deal with organizational change. Whenever people think about changes then they see the reaction of outside forces. Underestimating internal organizational problem is the biggest mistake. If the change is for the sake of organization, then it is necessary to bring changes. But if the organizational people are not ready to accept the change or if they have a negative attitude towards organizational change, then it is prerequisite to implement internal marketing strategy for the successful organizational change.

Internal marketing is such a practice or strategy that prepares human resource to bring change in the organization. Various authors MacStravic (cited in Dunnie and Barnes, 2000); Ballantyne et al. (1995 cited in Ballantyne 2000) agreed that internal marketing and human resource management are the same concept. However both are different from each other. Attraction, recruitment, training, compensation, motivation are the functions of the human resource management and. Glassman and MC Afjee defines internal marketing is the in-house marketing of marketing personnel.

Various studies conducted on the internal marketing and revealed diverse benefits of it. However, the ultimate goal of the internal marketing is to give direction to the organization so that value addition is created in the organization for its growth and development by utilizing internal customers. To face

the competition, business organization needs to strengthen internal organizational system. so that it will be ready to compete in the external work environment. Various organizations are gaining competitive advantage in the market for example Tesla, Microsoft, south east Asian airlines, Apple, amazon, Walmart, Mcdonald etc.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

There is a conception behind internal marketing concept is that by satisfying internal customer, external customer can be satisfied. Shenge et al (2007) confirmed that internal customer satisfaction improves business performance. Various researchers agreed that internal marketing is to motivate and satisfy employees. It makes a significant impact on the external customer satisfaction which leads to organizational profitability. The main determinants of internal customer satisfaction are discount, reward and incentives and empowerment depicted by Prathibha A & Kristie. According to Bansal et. al. (2000) employees' attitude and behaviors leads to customer satisfaction. Organizations earn profit by increasing customers through employee's positive attitude and behaviors. Similarly, Mendelson B. Morris et. al. (2001) linked internal marketing with external marketing and used six key elements (employment security, extensive training, generous rewards, sharing information, employee empowerment and reduced status distinctions,) of internal marketing practices. Various authors studied diverse dimensions of internal marketing. Huang and Runadle (2014) used internal communication, relations, learning and internal market as key performer of internal marketing.

Unya Ong Otieno Gordan et. al. (2019) examined the influence of internal marketing and job satisfaction on quality service delivery in a government health sector and found significant result of both. Their result also accepted that internal marketing is the predictor of quality health service delivery and antecedent of job satisfaction in local government, Uganda. This means that first step is job satisfaction and second step is internal marketing to achieve quality health service delivery. Job satisfaction means the feeling of employees related to their job status and position depicted by Joung et. al. (2015). According to Suzuki et. al (2006) job satisfaction is a feeling of employees towards their job. Job satisfaction plays a significant role to implement internal marketing affirmed by various researchers. Schuller and Chalupsky (2011) investigated internal marketing is not only effective in private sector but also public sector organizations. In one of the study on private health institution, Ghasemi (2014) found a positive correlation between internal marketing and quality of services. Banking sector is also not alienated from internal marketing studies and various studies conducted on it. In one of the recent study of banking industry in Kahmir, Shazia Quereshi (2017) pointed out significant relationship between internal marketing and employee satisfaction and also consumer satisfaction.

Akbari Mohsen (2019) et al. examined the effect of internal marketing on the internal customer citizenship behavior (ICCB) by means of the perceived satisfaction and value in the higher education and found significant result. They gave importance of internal marketing study in the higher education and suggested to pay more attention for studies in the universities. There are various studies that revealed that there is positive impact of internal customer satisfaction on external customer satisfaction. Findings of Lavy and Littman (2017) depicted that various researchers agreed that suitable working condition and work atmosphere increases job satisfaction of employees. Commitment of managers plays a key role to implement internal marketing depicted by Paul and Sahadev (2016).

Internal marketing activities has been promoted by the researchers and organizations and is related to work methods, knowledge and need of external customers, policies and practices of the organizations, employees' quality of life (Conduit et al 2014), employee development activities (Rafiq and Ahmed 2002), employee training (Berry and Persuraman 1991) and customer orientation (Mavondo 2001). One of the most important dimensions of internal marketing studied by various researchers is training which leads to organizational profitability depicted by Mehra et al (2011). Training is the function of human resource management but the logic of including in the internal marketing concept is to understand the employee need in well manner and after their performance provide them training as reward. After the development of the concept, internal marketing is found very effective for the internal interaction between internal customers and internal suppliers. It also makes positive bonding between internal customers and organization. Human resource management is managing people in the organization while internal marketing gives direction to achieve individual and organizational goal successfully. After the various studies of internal marketing Amjad and Alshurideh (2012) reemphasized the internal marketing dimensions which are employee motivation, reward, effective communication, recruitment, employee selection, employment development, support system and a healthy work environment.

According to Ramanujam (1986) internal marketing makes a significant impact on the organizational financial and operational performance. Thus, the outcome of it can be divided into two parts, first are financial indicators of performance and other is non-financial indicators. Panighyarakis and Theodoridis (2009) specified financial indicators are return on assets and return on investment and Voldsund et al. (2009) indicated non-economic indicators which are market share, product development to evaluate performance. Avery et al insisted that organizations that are focusing on social, ethical and governance factors succeed in the long-term and gain competitive advantage. Customer loyalty, customer retention, increasing customers are the ways through which internal marketing increases organizations market share and makes impact on return on assets and return on

investment. According to Rafiq and Ahmed employee retention, minimizing conflict and improving inter-functional co-ordination saves cost of the organization. Momani Ahmed Raed (2016) studied internal marketing in Jordanian private hospital sector and affirmed that organizational culture has strong impact followed by the other variables incentives and rewards on the performance of Jordanian employees. Impact of internal marketing on employee's performance was also studied by the Labd and Ryan (2013) in the civil society institutions and examined the role of service culture to improve employee performance.

To improve the service delivery staff motivation and satisfaction plays an important role. However internal marketing is not limited to service delivery but it makes impact on overall quality of the organization. By reviewing literature, it is found that Internal marketing leads to customer loyalty (Martensen, A, Grønholdt, et al. 2006.), creates market orientation (Gronroos 1985; Ahmmed and Rafiq 2000), creates positive organizational culture (Hogg et al 1998), employee retention (Ahmed Naveed et. al. 2012) and brings a (Javadein, S.S., Rayej, H.,Estiri, M. and Ghorbani, H.) sustainable competitive advantage. It also helps in branding and plays a vital role in the overall organizational growth and development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the research is

- To assess the impact of internal marketing on business performance.

The main objectives are divided into the following sub-objectives:

- 1) To find out the impact of internal marketing on customer loyalty.
- 2) To find out the impact of internal marketing on market orientation.
- 3) To find out the impact of internal marketing on culture change.
- 4) To find out the impact of internal marketing on sustainable competitive advantage.
- 5) To find out the impact of internal marketing on branding.
- 6) To find out the impact of internal marketing on relationship building.
- 7) To find out the impact of internal marketing on employee retention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The aim of the research paper is to assess the impact of internal marketing on business performance. This is an exploratory research design based on the existing literature review. For the purpose of the study various secondary qualitative data has been used from articles, journals, books, and online sources. In the internal marketing literature it is difficult to find out the impact of internal marketing on the business performance. There are so many studies on the significance of the internal marketing thus it is necessary to give clarity on it. In this exploratory research paper attention is given to internal marketing and its outcome. To simplify the main research objective, the research has seven sub-objectives. To achieve all the objectives of the research, all the analysis has been completed on the basis of literature review evidences.

ANALYSIS

To achieve the objective of the research in-depth literature review analysis are divided into seven points.

1. Employee loyalty leads to Customer loyalty

Employee loyalty is linked with customer loyalty and profitability. To improve the customer loyalty it is necessary to improve the employee loyalty which leads to organizational profitability. Anne Martensen (2006), discovered a model of employee loyalty. According to Groomroos (2000), effective external relationship depends on the success of the internal relationship, thus, first organization needs to improve internal relationship. According to Bashaw and Grant (1994) et al companies that are involved in continuous effort having committed and loyal employees will get in success to increase earnings per employee. Various authors developed conceptual frameworks that show the relationship between internal market and external market to achieve profitability or success of the organization. They are:-Loyalty based cycle of growth (Reichheld 1996), service profit chain (Heskett et al 1997), improvement loop (Dahlgaard et al 1998), customer profit chain Brooks (2000), and linkage model (Christopher et al 2002). The main objective of all of the above marketing approaches is that before satisfying or providing service to customers, it is necessary to take care of employees first. This is the mantra of successful implementation of marketing.

2. Internal Marketing leads to Market Orientation

With the development of the internal marketing concept, it is also assured that it improves market orientation that attracts and retail customers and makes a significant impact on the business performance m. Employees increase their knowledge with market situations, customers and

competitors. Nowadays marketing is not only to focus on customers only. Marketing is shifted towards relationship marketing. Morlinear et al (2009), stated that employees are the most important stakeholder of the organization consequently by maintaining the relationship with them organization works well. Internal marketing is a very useful notion, but there is lack of applicability of internal marketing in the organizations depicted by Groomroos. Ghoeneim & Hassan also empirically examined the role of internal marketing in customer loyalty and business performance of Egypt banks. They also agreed that internal marketing is the best strategy for external marketing success. Similarly Zaman et al (2012) studied on commercial banks of Pakistan and found positive impact of internal marketing on banking performance. The impact of internal marketing dimensions on quality of private health care in Jordan studied by Haddad Shafiq et al and found a significant result. They used vision, Reward, communications, employee training and development, leadership and managerial support as factors of internal marketing. According to researchers internal marketing act as a motivator and be short of quality in healthcare leads to the reduction of 17-27% of income and return on assets. According to Martensen et al employee loyalty results in customer loyalty and it leads to the profitability of the organization. When the organization thinks about change management, it is prerequisite to keep a positive attitude of organizational people to accept changes. Senge underpinned the problem of change management and described that underestimating internal problems of the organization is the biggest mistake. In the internal marketing value is not delivered due to outside market requirements, but due to internal requirements. Avery et al (2009) stated that business that are using social, ethical and governance factors are successful in long-term.

3. Internal Marketing for Culture Change

There are two levels of organizational change depicted by Boddy and Buchana (2002) which are given below-

- 1) Macro level :-Macro level is a form of organizational transformation with the intention to reconstruct fundamental assumption.
- 2) Micro level- Micro level is about the belief of people, values and norms in the organizational system.

Four levels of cultural change identified in the Cultural change onion model.

Cultural Change onion model: The cultural change onion model includes various levels which are basic assumption, values, norms and artifacts.

Basic assumption: It is the deepest level regarding the solution of organizational problems.

Values: It is the second level that describes organizational member what is important for them. It also describes about on what the organization should have to pay attention.

Norms: It is the third level that shows how member of an organization should act in a given situation. It is directly related to ethical behavior.

Artifacts: It is the highest level. It comprises structures, system, procedure rules, physical aspect and observable behavior. It builds up, on the above three levels.

Cummings and Worley (2001) presented the six step guidelines to search out the linkage between internal marketing orientation and cultural change program.

Step 1: Clarity in the strategic Vision- First step is to formulate clarity in the strategic vision which consist of required shared values and expected behavior.

Step 2: Involvement of top management- Top management involvement is necessary for cultural change.

Step 3: At the highest level model cultural change should be adopted first in the organization- Top management needs to communicate the values and norms that are linked with the new culture. They are called initiator of the change.

Step 4: Modify the organization for corporate changes- For the purpose of cultural change supporting modifications are required in organizational structure, human resource system, information, management style, communication and operation.

Step 5: Select members who fit with new culture and give them induction program- Those who find problems to adapt changes should be terminated specifically at the senior level.

Step 6: Ethical and legal sensitivity should be developed: Promoting employee integration, equal opportunity and job security in the organization. Organizations should have to be clear about ethical and legal issues.

By creating employees' customer-consciousness internal marketing and financial performance can be improved. Internal marketing is the best practice to implement change and organizational development. Employees or internal customers face resistance to change. For cultural change, it is necessary to implement strategies, new values and objectives from top management.

4. Internal Marketing Leads to Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Customer satisfaction is an important tool for the organizational development. According to Christopher et al (1991), the objective of internal marketing is to increase knowledge of internal as well as external customers that improves organizational effectiveness. Lings (1999), described the importance of internal customers with the external customers. Internal and external customers are

equally important to gain success in the strategy implementation. In this regard Foreman and Money (1995), stated that by satisfying and improving internal chains of supply organization results into better customer orientation. According to Soltani et al service quality is the best way to gain customer loyalty. Skills, attitude and behavior of the employees' are important because they play the role of delivering customer service. Core competency is the most important component in strategic planning that leads to competitive advantage. In the present scenario human capital is the best means for gaining sustainable competitive advantage conveyed by Cahill (1995). Internal marketing plays an important role to gain competitive advantage for the survival and prosperity of the organization. Human resource plays an important role to get success. Internal marketing improves service quality and by focusing on external as well as internal customers, organization enhances the organizational culture for sustainable competitive advantage.

According to Hitt et (2007), It is not easy to copy the strategies of organizations that are gaining competitive advantage. There are two reasons of it:

- a) Firstly, it is difficult to copy strategies.
- b) It may have high-cost to imitate.

Skillful, motivated and flexible workforce is the means to gain sustainable competitive advantage.

5. Internal Marketing Leads to Branding

Employees get full knowledge about the products/services that creates or develops value for customers before deliver, it is known as internal branding. According to O'Reilly and Pfeffer attraction and retention is not the means to get success. The best method is to create the culture that utilizes and develops employees in a best possible manner. Employee oriented service culture makes a positive impact on customers. It is the internal marketing that cares or maintain relation with the employees', thus it creates employee orientation. It enforces internal customers towards internal brand management. Branding not only makes a significant impact on the customer's perception, but also employee's perception and attitude. Internal brand management is also a rising thought for organizational success. It is the internal marketing through which internal brand management can be enhanced. According to the literature review, economic wealth comes from the knowledge assets, intellectual capital, and its useful application.

6. Internal Marketing builds Relationship in the Market

Reynosa and Moores (1996), describes internal relation between internal customer and internal supplier in six steps of internal marketing campaign which are given below-

First step: Building internal awareness.-First step is to create or maintain internal awareness in the internal market.

Second step: Process of identifying internal customer and supplier. Who are internal customer and internal supplier are the second question in the second step of internal marketing campaign.

Third step: Identifying expectations of all internal customers.-It is necessary to identify the need of internal customers.

Fourth step: The fourth step of internal marketing campaign is communicating expectations of internal customers to the internal suppliers in order to discuss about how to meet the needs and wants. After all the above point's internal supplier find out the changes required in the organization to deliver services to the internal customers. In the organization internal supplier find out the ways to provide service to internal customers.

Measuring internal service quality and feedback

In the last internal service quality is measured and giving feedback on it. Internal marketing takes both internal and external relationships of the organization. This means it creates both market orientation and internal customer orientation. According to this concept, it viewed as relationship marketing. However, relationship marketing is not internal marketing. The internal relationship improves internal service quality and it also strengthens external marketing.

7. Internal Marketing Leads to Employee Retention

According to American Management Association (2001), employee retention is the major challenge in front of the organizations as employees do not want only salary but also work culture, work experience etc. Ahmed et al (2012) investigated the effect of internal marketing (motivation, future growth, training, internal communication) on employee retention and found positive impact of it. Due to increasing various options for the job it is difficult to retain the competent employee. As competent and efficient employees are more demanding, their expectations are also increasing high therefore, organizations loss their key employees. An organization saves their cost of recruiting new employees through internal marketing. In this sense Martensen et al stated that without satisfying employees 'organizations are unable to achieve their objective. Employee retention is the major issue in today's organizations. The main reasons to concentrate on the employee retention are the lack of skilled labor, economic growth and employee turnover.

FINDINGS

The findings of the seven sub-objectives are given below:

- **Impact of Internal Marketing on Customer Loyalty**

It is found that internal marketing plays a significant role on customer loyalty. Internal marketing results in employee loyalty which leads to customer loyalty and profitability. Therefore, employee loyalty is necessary for customer loyalty and organizational profitability.

- **Internal Marketing Leads to Market Orientation**

Employees understand the need of the market through internal marketing. They increase their knowledge with market situations, customers and competitors and thus lead to market orientation.

- **Internal Marketing is the Best Practice to Implement Change and Organizational Development**

Employees or internal customers faces resistance to change, therefore it is necessary to motivate and satisfaction internal customers. To implement change it is necessary to provide training and create a positive culture in the organization.

- **Internal Marketing Leads to Sustainable Competitive Advantage**

Organizations that are focusing on employees or internal customers need gain long-term benefits. To compete in the external market it is necessary to strengthen internal market.

- **Internal Marketing Leads to Branding**

Employees are the brands of the internal marketing. Their positive behavior, attitude and perception make positive impact on the branding of the products and services of the organization.

- **Internal Marketing Builds Relationship in the Market**

In the internal market internal customers and internal suppliers are working together to achieve organizational goal. Internal marketing improves relationship among internal customers, internal suppliers and organization or employer.

- **Internal Marketing Leads to Employee Retention**

Internal marketing is to motivate and satisfy employees and thus creates positive impact on employee retention.

Findings of the research conclude that internal marketing is significant to improve business performance.

SUGGESTIONS

- Business organization should have to focus on internal market first. Customer loyalty is dependent on the employee loyalty. To improve customer loyalty it is necessary to improve employee loyalty first.
- To implement market orientation it is prerequisite to understand internal market orientation of the organization. Employees need first is the solution of successfully implementing market orientation.
- To implement changes in the organization it is necessary to understand employees training needs and resource requirements. Employees are resistance to change because they do not understand the value of change. Organization should convey message with effective communication.
- Employee retention is the issue that is struggling by various organizations. Internal marketing helps to retain employees. Organization has to focus on the employee retention due to lack of skilled labor and increasing labor turnover.
- To improve business it is very important to build health relationship with all the stakeholders. Relationship building in the internal market makes positive impact on the external market. To maintain and build relationship internal marketing plays a vital role.

CONCLUSION

Internal marketing is a practice, strategy and process that makes a significant impact on customer loyalty, market orientation and service quality. It also satisfied external customers which increases market share of the organization. It improves the relationship among the internal customers, internal suppliers, external customers, external suppliers and organization. It makes a significant impact on the financial as well as non-financial performance of the organization. It saves costs of the organization by retaining customers. It leads to branding which is an important parameter for gaining competitive advantage of the organization. Sustainable development is necessary for facing competition in the external market. Internal marketing is a very effective way for gaining sustainable development of the organization. By concluding, internal marketing is the best practice to enhance service quality, customer loyalty, branding, relationship building, and market orientation. It builds market share and return on investment. It increases customers and retaining existing customers, thus it also makes a significant impact on the profitability of the organization. For improving and compete in the external market and to gain competitive advantage, performance of internal organizational system is very important which is enhanced by the implementation of the internal marketing practices.

Limitation of the study: This research study is an exploratory research study. Thus, impact of internal marketing on business performance was not tested empirically. In the future research this research study can be used for empirical evidences and practical implications.

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