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Impact of Internal Marketing and Human Resource Management to Foster Customer Oriented Behavior among Employees: A Study on Mega Retail Stores in Karachi

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ABSTRACT

Primal intent to undertake this research work is to adjudicate the stature of mindfulness on Internal Marketing notion among commercial establishments and to comprehend the part of workers/employees (particularly forward-facing or end representatives) for providing exceptional client services. Likewise, the reason or motive for this study is to survey the effect of Internal Marketing Approach and HRM practices for accomplishing management magnificence in terms of service excellence. This examination included utilization of surveys duly completed through a total of 500 persons who had the diversified ethnic, demographic and social class backgrounds. To incorporate and examine the information, SPSS programming was utilized. Information, examination, and consequent near outcomes plainly recommended that if workers are kept well by their management, predominantly through their development, motivation and a long-term retention of such talents, thus making their organization to have the capacity to foster service-oriented culture throughout the organization.

Somehow, the idea of internal marketing is still not being executed in the organizations, resulting in poor customer services leading to dissatisfaction. The results of this study may help the retail business heads to comprehend which factors are viewed as critical to cultivate service oriented behavior for utmost service delivery toward the customer and which factor can be further subjugated for further enhancement of service oriented behavior.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Human Resource Management, Customer Services, Front Line Employees

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Companies' orientation towards the marketplace has evolved over the time. Moving from the Production Concept which said that consumers will only prefer

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products that are widely available and inexpensive, organizations are now operating consistently with the Holistic Marketing Concept which holds that “everything matters” in marketing; be it your product, customers, vendors, community, environment, or the organization itself. Therefore, an integrated approach is necessary to achieve the marketing objectives and also organization’s overall goals (Grönroos, 1981, 1990a; Gumesson, 1987a; George, 1990; Berry and Parasuraman, 1991; Ahmed and Rafiq, 1995; Joseph, 1996; Ewing and Caruana, 1999; Lings, 2000).

If Holistic Marketing Concept is studied in detail then we come to know that Internal Marketing is one of the components of the Holistic Marketing. As external marketing is for external customers, so internal marketing for internal customers (i.e. employees) is equally vital in order to have customer satisfaction and ultimately customer loyalty. Organizations should remember the fact that the fulfillment of the internal clients is of high significance as their fulfillment will at last prompt the fulfillment of the outside clients (Ballantyne, 1997, Heskett et al., 2008).

In the present world, service orientation is considered as a key source of gaining competitive advantage in the industry and only a ‘service attitude’ among employees can lead to the delivery of outstanding customer service and increased market share (Varey and Lewis 1999). Also, it is high time to realize that the role of front line employees in delivering consistently high-quality services is of utmost importance. This service oriented or customer oriented attitude can only be developed in all employees when the internal marketing approach and human resource management practices work in liaison.

Human Resource Management understands that employees are the backbone of any business success and therefore, they need to be developed, motivated and retained in the organization at any cost in order to support the organization as a whole to be globally competitive. Additionally, it has been seen that taking care of workforce in any association is the most basic HR challenge being looked by HR practitioners (Parasuraman et al, 1991.p.151) (Bell et al, 2004).

In association with the over, some exact help has just been discovered that shows the critical connection between internal marketing and service quality as well as and between internal marketing and business performance (Opoku, 2009; Yafang Tsai, 2008;

Panigyrakis, 2009). But, in order to achieve high service quality and positive business performance, the role played by Human Resource Management cannot be ignored.

1.2. Problem Statement

About every organization says that it will give outstanding client service; notwithstanding, prove demonstrates that the level of service quality of numerous organizations is underneath client desires (Czaplewski et al, 2001). The major reason behind this is that it is difficult to attract and then retain high quality employees (Heskett et al., 2008). Also, many managers and front office employees fail to understand their role in a marketing perspective. Many marketing papers (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000, 2003, George, 1990, Gronroos, 1989, Greene, 1994) highlight that development and motivation of the employees can have a significant impact on the service quality.

Although, a large literature can be found in internal marketing this discipline still needs to be implemented and systemized in our business sector. Limited research has been conducted in the field of internal marketing in Pakistan, especially Karachi i.e retail store sector. Organizations need to give careful consideration to the internal marketing activities. They should pull in, hold and keep workers persuaded and conferred constantly (Deery and Kinnie, 2004), which in turn will ensure high quality service delivery to customers (Schneider and Bowen, 1995). This is where the role of Human Resource Management comes into play because the HR Department is the one which can provide the necessary information needed for the implementation of Internal Marketing practices in any organization. It is undoubtedly evident that it is employees who create a competitive edge for any organization. Considering this fact in mind, organizations have to undertake such actions which are friendly and contribute positively toward employees' goodness (Lancy and Ho Kit Ieng 2015, p. 4; Kaur and Sharma 2015, p. 237)

Therefore, in today's competitive era, Human Resource Management and Internal Marketing can't work in isolation; both need to work together in order to have a competitive edge in the market. As employees are assets for any organization, so efforts put on their development and retention will result in customer retention.

1.3. The significance of the Study

By combining Internal Marketing with Human Resource Management,

development and motivation activities, especially for front line employees, can be focused. Also, at the end of this study, possible improvements in the job performance of the front line employees will be discussed. This improvement will have practical relevance to other organizations as well which was not part of the sample taken. By integrating these two disciplines, the service delivery quality can be enhanced in multiple ways which will ultimately result in satisfied and loyal customers.

1.4. Research Limitations

Although internationally a lot of work has been done previously on this and similar kind of topics, there is a lack of prior research on this topic in Pakistan. Therefore, the availability of relevant secondary data was lacking. Moreover, in this study, mega retail stores of Karachi are focused only, however in order to get more significant results, the sample could have been taken from other parts of Pakistan as well.

1.5. Prospects for Further Research

This research paper is trying to merge two detached areas that are Internal Marketing and Human Resource Management and then to find their combined effect on the performance of front line employees. Further, this study could be elaborated in two directions; (1) exploration of the existence of internal marketing approach in organizations whether it is really spread throughout the organization or not, and (2) identifying the level of existence of internal marketing approach and its relationship with overall organizations' performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Internal Marketing

Internal Marketing is a concept which revolves around satisfying employees. It is seen as a direct marketing tool for internal customers. It's emphasis on the organization's strategy and efforts put on for the development of its employees and overall value creation, which can uplift the external outputs of business (Boukis, 2015: 396). Internal marketing is a means to enhance overall marketing orientation among all employees of the organization. It involves employees from all levels of the organization in implementing effective marketing programs by enabling them to understand their role in

the marketing process. This can be achieved by giving them proper training and establishing an effective communication network. The concept of internal marketing views jobs as “internal products” offered to employees (Berry, 1981)

The Internal Marketing was first introduced by (Berry et al, 1976). Internal Marketing manages the organization’s human resources from a marketing perspective (George and Gronroos, 1991). The concept of Internal Marketing mainly emphasizes that employees should be treated as internal customers (Preston & Steel, 2002, Berry, 1981, Gummeson, 2000) as this will lead to the satisfaction of external customers (Gronroos 1981).

Moreover, Internal Marketing centers on individuals inside hierarchical limits and especially stress on the fulfillment of their needs (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2003). In a comparative setting, said that internal marketing is a relationship advancement procedure as the idea is as a rule broadly talked about in the writing as a vital device for meeting and surpassing clients' desires (Ballantyne 2003; Lings 2004; Papasolomou-Doukakis 2002; Mudie 2003). Moreover, all internal relationships within the organization should be taken care of by Internal Marketing approach. These relationships are between employees, departments, and management (Bell et al, 2004).

Internal Marketing mainly consists of three main parts which are; treating the employees as internal customers, teaching every employee in the organization to behave as a ‘part-time marketer’ and the use of information systems which will make available all the data and information throughout the entire organization. There is a logical link between business nonprofit partnerships and nonprofit organizations for an internal marketing play key role in converging possibilities that enhance engagement between two and results in enhances commercial tie-ups (Luis, I., 2017).

2.2. Internal Customers

Internal Marketing aims to deliver high quality customer service which is possible not only by satisfying the external customers but also by taking care of the internal customers (employees). The most significant way to satisfy the employees is by treating them as customers (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000) because organizations never want their customers to be dissatisfied. Various organizational behaviorists have suggested that

by treating front line employees as internal, or as ‘partial customers’, a service oriented culture can be established and flourished (George, 1990).

Through the perspective of the internal customer, employees perform better, if there is mutual investment relationship exist amongst employee and organization, and as they are more likely to demonstrate organizational citizenship behavior which enhances service delivery and ultimately customers’ satisfaction (Tsui et al, 1997). Internal marketing has the multifold impact it shows both direct and indirect impact on customer satisfaction. The data based on cross-functional sales persons indicate a significant impact of the practice of internal marketing on customer satisfaction (Selma, K., 2018). In addition practice of internal marketing, mechanism induces employee satisfaction that in turn enhances service quality, which translates to customer satisfaction (Justin, P., 2018).

2.3. Part-Time Marketers

The quality of the delivered service is not only dependent on the effort put forward by any single employee, but it is a joint effort made by all the members of the organization (Benoy, 1996). If each and every employee is made aware of their contribution with respect to the achievement of marketing goals, then an organization becomes more service oriented and also customer oriented behavior emerges among employees (George and Gronroos, 1989). It is stated in a book ‘Service America!’: “if you’re not serving the customer, you’d better be serving someone who is” (Albrecht and Zemke, 1985). This clearly depicts not only the importance of the front line employees but all employees involved in service creation and delivery.

2.4. Information System

Another vital element of Internal Marketing is communication or the flow of information. One of the most important objectives of internal marketing is to make sure that all employees are well informed about the firms’ initiatives, goals, services, products and target markets (De Brum, 1998). By effectively communicating marketing goals, the employees will form an understanding of their important roles in achieving these goals (Gronroos, 1981). When information from different departments is shared openly and at all levels then front line employees are able to provide better information and services to

other members of the organizations and most importantly to customers (Bansal et al., 2001).

Moreover, the ability of employees to perform is dependent on the internal procedures and processes of the company along with prevailing resources and personnel recognition (Newman et al, 2001). Possession of this ability in sound manner enables and influences towards individuals' job satisfaction and leading towards attachment of employee, thus the satisfaction of external customers.

2.5. Human Resource Management

In the purview of contemporary business world and considering the latest business phenomenon pertinent to the globalization, ever changing technological environments, cutthroat competitions and some other reasons impels organizations to make their resources competitive; precisely, their human resources, which helps in creating competitive advantage (Boxall et al., 2007, p. 88) and for having optimal organizational performance.

A lot of debate has been done related to the actual role HR should perform and how it should be done. Although, Human Resource Management plays a much bigger role which starts with the recruitment of an employee and continues until his/her separation from the organization but according to Armstrong (2010, p. 8), the practice of Human Resource Management (HRM) deals with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organizations. HR department is responsible for getting the right people at the right place which will enable them to achieve service excellence (Guest, 1997).

Furthermore, Human Resource Management is concerned with the development, motivation, and retention of employees which ultimately has a significant effect on the quality of service delivery (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000, 2003, George, 1990, Gronroos, 1989, Greene, 1994).

2.6. Employee Development

Service delivery problems often occur because front line employees are not well suited for their jobs. Proper training and development enhances the understanding level of the employees and enables them to find out what they can expect from the organization and from the customers (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1988). Training

also needs to be consistent with the jobs for which the employees were selected; the training must be in line with what the employee was hired for (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000). Training given to the front line employees are designed to enhance their interpersonal skills (Rosenthal, 2004).

Unfortunately, many organizations are not willing to invest in their employees for financial reasons as they consider it as a waste of money. As many firms hire workers with low levels of education to save costs as low salaries would be given to such employees (Batt, 2000). Moreover, investing in training should be viewed as creating value, since this leads to a lot of knowledge development in the employees, who are the firm's human capital (Hitt et al., 2001).

With reference to the contemporary business world, employees are ever demanding for continuous personal growths in terms of skills and monetary, thus they may seek such employers which are interested to put their money in their personal growth (Jense, 2002), where a rigorous finding throughout management literature suggests that when the expectations of employees are met or exceeded, they are more likely to be satisfied with their role/job and vice-versa (Wanous, Polad, Pre Mack, & Davis, 1992).

2.7. Employee Motivation

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from the inside when a person enjoys doing his/her tasks. In this case, employees are not performing forcefully but they are willing to do that job due to his/her interest in the same. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation comes from the outside when employees are performing forcefully just to get the outcomes (Dahlgaard and Dahlgaard, 2003). In this scenario, the tasks are performed just to achieve certain goals, e.g., salary, bonus, or promotion. Studies of "Cohort and Levine" suggested an affirmative relationship between job satisfaction and quality of products and services, as they determined internal Marketing's elements being cause agent, which resulted in external customer satisfaction leading to their loyalty (Davoudi & Allahyari, 2013).

There is a strong and positive relationship between job motivation and commitment to customer service (Bell et al., 2004). Both, support and supervision from the organization are necessary to have a direct effect on the commitment of the front line

employees towards customer service delivery and an indirect effect if the job motivation is developed and enhanced in any manner (Bell et al., 2004).

2.8. Employee Retention

An organization must pay attention to multiple ways of rewarding the employees, like compensation, recognition, trust, and acknowledgment in order to attract and retain the right employees that can meet the customers' expectations (Schneider, 1994). Building a reputation for the organization among customers cannot be done when the front line employees are not fully committed to delivering high quality service (Benoy Joseph, 1996). For financial reasons also, it is vital for an organization to reward employees and encourages them to stay with the organization for an as long a period as they can. It would be a waste of financial capital to invest in the development of employees in the form of training who after sometime find a better employer with the more attractive working environment.

There is little research on the relationship between internal and external service quality, which propagates the idea of service-profit chain system which results in profitability and business growth because of customer loyalty and satisfaction, which is, basically achieved through content and fruitful employees, and impression acquired by collected evidence from vast service providers (Heskett et al, 1994). Where, some more endeavors were undertaken to assess the complete value chain empirically (Burleson, 1997; Loveman, 1998; Silvestro and Cross, 2000).

2.9. Role Prescribed Customer Service

Role Prescribed Customer Service refers to the intra-functional behaviors and also the roles (in terms of customer service) that are defined for the employees to perform. These behaviors/roles are also defined in the organizational chart and employees are forced to do them as a part of their job requirement. An organization's Human Resource Management policy should be customer oriented and if it is not, then the firm might fail to provide the employees with the skills and knowledge needed to serve the customers in an efficient manner. Also, if the employees are not communicated well then motivations and rewards might be misinterpreted and executed in the wrong way which may result in employee leaving the organization (Schneider, 2004).

At the same time, retaining a loyal base of customers' increases revenues saves costs and enhances market share (Halil & Cem, 2010). Therefore, in order to retain satisfied customers, employee retention is necessary and the employees could only be retained when they are satisfied like external customers. The extant literature suggests numerous determinants of customer services starting from services quality to services convenience. Services fairness, service convenience, and service quality have a direct and positive impact on customer satisfaction (Sanjit Kumar, et al., 2018).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Type of Research

The type of current research is quantitative as questionnaire will be used as research instrument. The questionnaire included close ended questions and all questions were based on the 5-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data extracted from this questionnaire was in quantitative form. The data was then analyzed with the help of SPSS software, the results of which were interpreted in order to conclude this research.

2.10. Conceptual Framework

3.2. Research Hypothesis

During this research and from available literature review, I have identified the following major factors:

1. Internal Marketing.
  - i. Internal Customer.
  - ii. Part-time Marketer.
  - iii. Information System.
2. Human Resource Management
  - i. Employee Development.
  - ii. Employee Motivation.
  - iii. Employee Retention.

With the help of the aforementioned factors, 06 null (H_0) and 06 alternatives (H_1) hypotheses have been formulated:

H_{01} =Treatment of Employees as an Internal Customer doesn't foster customer oriented behavior.

H_{02} =Treatment of Employees as a Part-time Marketer doesn't foster customer oriented behavior.

H_{03} = Presence of effective Information System doesn't foster customer oriented behavior.

H_{04} = Efforts put on Employee Development doesn't foster customer oriented behavior.

H_{05} = Efforts put on Employee Motivation doesn't foster customer oriented behavior.

H_{06} = Efforts put on Employee Retention doesn't foster customer oriented behavior.

3.3. Target Population

The universe for this research would be employees of Retail Industry of Pakistan. Target population would include employees of Mega Retail Stores of Karachi. However, a sample of 3 Mega Retail Stores would be taken for the purpose of collecting data for this study. The target population of this research is those employees who are working with Mega Retail Stores of the Karachi and likely those individuals who are performing front line jobs or those who have often direct interaction with the customers.

3.4. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sample size taken was of 500, and a non-probability sampling (convenience) technique was used. Therefore, for this research, instead of all retail staff, only front line staff or those who have more often direct interaction with the customers were targeted as

respondents in order to get the accurate results.

3.5. Research Instrument

A well-structured questionnaire with the 5-point Likert scale was used as a research instrument for collecting primary quantitative data from a selected sample of respondents and this exercise was conducted by physically visiting the store and getting instrument filled. Few of the questionnaires were also filled through email receive & dispatch because of the non-availability of staff members.

3.6. Data Integration and Analysis

Table 1: Population Statistics			
Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	330	66%
	Female	170	34%
Years of service	01 to 03	112	22.4%
	03 to 05	120	24.0%
	05 to 08	135	27.0%
	8 year & Above	133	26.6%
Education	Non-Matric	94	19%
	Matric	180	36%
	Intermediate	150	30%
	Graduate	52	10%
	Masters	24	05%

Aforesaid data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of two parts, first part was about the demographical information of the respondents, where the second part contained 37 questions pertaining to Customer oriented behavior, Internal Marketing, and Human Resource Management practices.

3.7. Reliability & Validity

In order to assess the reliability of the instrument, we used Cronbach's alpha. The results of Cronbach's alpha reliability for all included variables were found more than 0.7 ($\alpha > 0.7$), thus declaring us that the rated scales established decent reliability. Moreover, in order to cater the aspect of instrument validity, we used content validity and well as construct Validity by vetting the questionnaire through research experts, who evaluated and after finding the validity positive, we conducted pilot testing of the instrument, by

distributing 50 questionnaires amongst the research target audience, which also showed positive results. Aforementioned statistics are shown in table 2.

Variables	Indices	Number of Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Customer Oriented Behaviour (Dependent Variable)	Customer Oriented Behaviour	07	0.880
Internal Marketing (independent Variable)	Internal Customer	05	0.730
	Part-time Marketer	05	0.776
	Information System	04	0.794
Human Resource Management (independent Variable)	Employee Development	05	0.878
	Employee Motivation	06	0.890
	Employee Retention	05	0.886

Regression Analysis and Results

In this study, we tried to explore the impact of Internal Marketing and HRM Practices for fostering the customer oriented behaviour amongst employee and to examine those factor(s) which are expected to increase service oriented behaviour. The assumption was tested using Regression Analysis to figure out if there is any possible connection between dependant and independent factors.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
1	.942 ^a	.887	.886	.23941

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Retention, Info-System, Employee Development, Part-time marketer, Internal Customer, Employee Motivation

Explanation of Model Summary

The estimation of R is 0.942 and this esteem shows solid relationship or expectation. The estimation of R Square is 0.887 and this esteem tells that this model clarifies 88.7% variation of every autonomous variable in the dependent variable. The estimation of adjusted R Square is 0.886 and the Std. the error of the estimate is 0.23941, where these results/values are likewise for research.

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	222.692	6	37.115	647.517	.000b
	Residual	28.258	493	.057		
	Total	250.950	499			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Oriented Behaviour
b. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Customer, Part-time marketer, Info-System, Employee Retention, Employee Development, Employee Motivation.

Explanation of ANOVA

ANOVA is utilized to analyze contrasts of means among in excess of two gatherings. The table demonstrates that the independent factors factually anticipated the reliant variable, $F = 647.517$ at the significance level of 0.000 , $p < 0.05$.

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.988	.060		16.385	.000
	Internal Customer	-.025	.021	-.027	-1.175	.241
	Part-time Marketer	.003	.019	.003	.142	.887
	Information System	-.028	.020	-.033	-1.399	.162
	Employee Development	.249	.017	.323	15.008	.000
	Employee Motivation	.078	.021	.100	3.800	.000
	Employee Retention	.512	.021	.657	24.919	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Oriented Behaviour						

Explanation of Co-efficient Test

The first, second, and third independent variables (“Internal Customer”, “Part-time Marketer”, and “Information System”) have p values 0.241, 0.887, and 0.162 respectively which are higher than 0.05, that means these variables are not useful predictors and have no impact. Whereas in case of fourth, fifth, and sixth variables (“Employee Development”, “Employee Motivation”, and “Employee Retention”), p values are less than 0.05, that means these variables are useful predictors and show the positive impact of HRM practices to foster Customer Oriented Behavior.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As mentioned before, the rationale of this research was to evaluate the effect of internal marketing and HRM practices to encourage customer service behavior among employees of Mega retail stores in Karachi. In any case, with reference to our finding through data analysis and representatives' view, it is observed that, if workers are kept well by their management, particularly as far as employees' development, employees'

motivation and their employee long-term retention, then their organization would have the capacity to make service oriented culture inside the organization, consequently this will at last prompt the ever needed fulfillment of outside customers (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000, 2003, George, 1990, Gronroos, 1989, Greene, 1994, Bell et al., 2004, Heskett et al. 1994, Burleson, 1997; Loveman, 1998; Silvestro and Cross, 2000).

Employees' views regarding utilization of internal marketing tool for increasing customer satisfaction are divergent to the literature review, and this needs to be educated by the organization to their employees by spreading awareness amongst them or making them feel that employees are their internal customers. This factor can be addressed by continuous and rigorous efforts of management by imparting this philosophy of everyone being an internal customer for every employee's role and job design because in today's "Relationship Era" superior customer satisfaction is not possible when internal marketing and HRM practices are considered independent to each other. To decide part of front-end representatives in conveying top-notch client service, it is broke down through information that a great looking number of workers consented to the way that it is the front end employees who are the prime service supplier and organizations should put more spotlight on these representatives through certain ways (Schneider, 2004).

To conclude this research and provide rationale, it is imperative for retail store businesses of Karachi to understand the importance of HRM and Internal marketing for better service delivery, where in order to attract and retain customers for a longer period, retail stores should focus on opting the holistic approach, where every stakeholder of the business is dealt with the view of being internal/external customer. Further, it is the organization' responsibility to emphasize that employees are being kept well through every aspect and their organization is willing to do more (Wanous, Polad, Pre Mack, & Davis, 1992).

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