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The Effect of Internal Marketing on Job Performance of Academic Staff in The Faculty of Sport Sciences

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Abstract

In this study, the effect of internal marketing practices on the job performance of academic staff in the sample of faculties of sports sciences was examined. The data were obtained from the academic staff working in the faculties of sports sciences in Turkish Universities. Internal marketing and job performance scales, which have high reliability, were used in the study. The effect of internal marketing on job performance was examined by hierarchical regression analysis. As a result of the analysis, a significant and positive effect of internal marketing practices on job performance was found. Within the framework of this result, it can be suggested that higher education institutions that want to provide an effective service should strategically provide internal marketing practices in order to have academic staff with high job performance.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Job Performance, Academic Staff, Faculty of Sport Sciences

1. Introduction

In recent years, examining the internal and external factors that affect the performance of enterprises has become more of a topic in academic studies. While human resources, physical facilities, and production processes, etc. constitute internal factors, competing enterprises, customers, etc. constitute external factors. In this study, the internal marketing approach and job performance relationship are focused on in the context of the concept of human resources, which is one of the internal factors.

In today's constantly developing competitive environment, enterprises are trying to develop more strategies so that they can show more efficiency in the market (Greene, Walls, and Schrest, 1994). The most important of these is to increase the service quality and ensure the satisfaction of the customers who buy the product (Sureshchandar, Rajendran, and Anantharaman, 2002; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996). Recent studies have found a close relationship between customer satisfaction and employee performance (Otto, Szymanski, and Varadarajan, 2020; Williams and Naumann, 2011; Van der Wiele, Boselie, and Hesselink, 2002). Studies in the service marketing literature have shown that meeting the expectations and needs of enterprise employees will increase customer satisfaction (Chi and Gursoy, 2009). In the context of human resources management, an important tool in achieving employee satisfaction is emphasized, which is the concept of internal marketing (Ewing and Caruana, 1999).

Internal marketing is an approach that sees its employees as a customer and calls them internal customers. In this context, in order to reach the satisfaction of external customers, which are at the focal point of the enterprises, it primarily aims to reach the satisfaction of its employees. This framework, primarily emphasizes the effort to meet the expectations and needs of the employees and argues that the resulting satisfaction will provide external customer satisfaction. In short, internal marketing gives importance to its employees (internal customers) as much as it gives importance to its external customers, and underlines that the high performance of the enterprise depends on the happiness of its employees (Berry, 1981; Gounaris, 2006; Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Lings, 2004; Sasser and Arbeit, 1976).

The internal marketing approach strives to increase motivation by providing high-quality work opportunities to employees within the enterprise (Pitt and Foreman, 1999). The enterprise, which creates high motivation in its employees, integrates with its employees, so employees are more willing to satisfy the needs of external customers (Barnes, Fox, and Morris, 2004). Berry (1981) defines internal marketing as “meeting the expectations and needs of internal customers in achieving the goals of the business by seeing employees as internal customers and business as internal products.” In this framework, employees are considered as internal market elements (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993). Foreman and Money (1995) suggest that training and development of employees, rewarding and presenting a vision are internal marketing elements. Different from these studies, Yildiz and Kara (2017) discussed the internal marketing elements more inclusively. These include offering attractive physical opportunities to employees, meeting basic needs, empowering employees, providing and supporting reasonable workloads, vision, training and development opportunities, career opportunities, equal treatment of employees, open communication channels, seeking employee opinions, and rewarding (Yildiz, 2017).

There are many phenomena that internal marketing affects, one of them is the job performance of the employees. Schermerhorn et al., (2012) define job performance as “a concept that quantitatively and qualitatively indicates to what extent an individual or a group doing a job has achieved the purpose of that job.” Studies in the literature show that the high performance of employees is one of the main factors in increasing customer satisfaction of the enterprise (Netemeyer, Maxham, and Lichtenstein, 2010). In this case, the internal marketing approach becomes important in ensuring the job performance of the employees. In this study, it is aimed to examine the effect of internal marketing on the job performance of academic staff in the context of higher education. There are very few studies examining the relationship between both variables, especially on academic staff working in faculties of sports sciences. In this respect, the findings of this study will contribute to the literature.

2. Method

2.1. Sample Size and Procedure

The academic staff in the faculties of sports sciences in various universities in Turkey participated in the study. A simple random method was preferred in the study, and electronic communication tools were used in communication with the participants. First, an invitation letter was sent to the participants explaining the purpose of the research, and then those who volunteered were given one week to fill out the questionnaire. The number of questionnaires returned after one week was 143.

2.2. Measurement Instruments

Two scales were used as a measurement tool. One is the internal marketing scale developed by Yildiz and Kara (2017). This scale has 11 items and is one-dimensional. The measurement was made with a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The other scale is the job performance scale developed by Sigler and Pearson (2000). The scale has 5 items and is one-dimensional. The measurement was made with a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

2.3. Statistical Statistics

Frequency and percentage calculations were used in the analysis of demographic characteristics, correlation analysis in the relations between the variables, and hierarchical regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

3. Results

3.1. Sample Characteristics

Most of the participants are men (59.4%) and married (60.1%). Most of the age range is 46-55 years old (31.5%). The vast majority of respondents have a doctoral degree (83.9%). Assistant professors showed the highest participation (25.2%). Most respondents have 1-5 years of employment (28.7%), (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Variables		f	%
Age	Female	58	40.6
	Male	85	59.4
Marital status	Married	86	60.1
	Single	57	39.9
Age	25 and less	12	8.4
	26-35	36	25.2
	36-45	42	29.4
	46-55	45	31.5
	56 and more	8	5.6
Education	Undergraduate	7	4.9
	Graduate	16	11.2
	Doctorate	120	83.9
Title	Research Assistant	35	24.5
	Instructor	9	6.3
	Assistant Professor	36	25.2
	Associate Professor	35	24.5
	Professor	28	19.6
Tenure	1-5 years	41	28.7
	6-10 years	20	14
	11-15 years	21	14.7
	16-20 years	17	11.9
	21-25 years	29	20.3
	26 years and more	15	10.5

3.2. Reliability Values of the Scales

Since both scales were found to be valid in many studies, only the reliability values were examined in this study. As a result of the analysis, the reliability value of internal marketing was found to be 0.925, and the reliability value of job performance was found to be 0.853. These values showed that both scales were highly reliable.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

According to the results of the correlation analysis, job performance is positively and significantly related to the title ($r=0.181$; $p<0.05$). As the title increases, the job performance of the academic staff also increases. Job

performance is also associated with internal marketing ($r=0.224$; $p<0.01$). As internal marketing practices increase, the job performance of academic staff also increases (Table 2).

Table 2: Results of correlation analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	1				
2. Education	.413**	1			
3. Title	.734**	.507**	1		
4. Tenure	.828**	.382**	.778**	1	
5. Internal marketing	.197*	-.039	.235**	.281**	1
6. Job performance	.154	.158	.181*	.049	.224**

* $P<0.05$; ** $P<0.01$

3.4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

According to the hierarchical regression analysis results, internal marketing affects job performance significantly and positively ($B=0.255$; $p<0.01$). In other words, as the internal marketing practices of higher education institutions increase the job performance of academic staff increases (Table 3).

Table 3: The results of the hierarchical regression analysis

Independent variables	Job Performance					
	Step 1			Step 2		
	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p
1. Age	.267	1.763	.080	.293*	1.985	.049
2. Education	.067	.705	.482	.119	1.259	.210
3. Title	.268	1.883	.062	.225	1.615	.109
4. Tenure	-.407	-2.489	.014	-.486**	-3.016	.003
5. Internal marketing	-	-	-	.255**	3.025	.003
F	3.030			4.397		
R^2	.081			.138		
Adjusted R^2	.054			.107		

Note: Standardized beta values were used * $P<0.05$ ** $P<0.01$

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was carried out to examine the effect of internal marketing on the job performance of academic staff in faculties of sports sciences. The findings of our study showed that internal marketing has a significant and positive effect on higher educational institutions' performance ($\beta=0.255$; $P<0.01$). This study will contribute to the literature since studies on the academic staff of faculties of sports sciences to determine the relationship between both variables are limited.

There are many studies conducted in various sectors to determine the effect of internal marketing on many variables. These studies show that internal marketing has a significant and positive effect on service quality and customer satisfaction (De Burin, Roberts-Lombard and De Meyer-Heydenrych, 2021), while internal marketing has significant and positive effects on employees' organizational commitment (Ismail and Sheriff, 2017; Yildiz, 2011) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Grego-Plane, 2019). These effects increase the overall performance of the enterprises (Panigyrakis and Theodoridis, 2009).

Similar effects of internal marketing on some variables were also observed in the higher education sector (Altarifi, 2014). For example, internal marketing has a positive effect on employee satisfaction (Shabbir and Salaria, 2014),

organizational commitment (Ting, 2010), and organizational culture (Vieira-dos Santos and Gonçalves, 2018). Although limited, the literature has similar studies on the sample of academic staff working in faculties of sports sciences. One of them is Yildiz's (2016a) studies that examine the effect of internal marketing on academic staff's organizational citizenship behavior, and the other is Yildiz's (2016b) studies that examine the effect of internal marketing on academic staff's engagement. In both studies, positive and significant relationships were found between the variables. The results of these studies support the results of our study.

Researches in the literature reveal that the impact of internal marketing practices on employees and also on the overall performance of businesses is very important. Considering the researches in the literature and the results of our study, we argue that it is necessary to provide internal marketing practices for academic staff in faculties of sports sciences within higher education institutions. The motivation of the academic staff working in the faculties of sports sciences will increase through internal marketing practices. Increasing motivation will bring job satisfaction so that improvement effects can be seen in terms of student satisfaction, the satisfaction of other employees, and quality and quantity in academic publications.

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