Internal Marketing for Customer Satisfaction in Retail Sector



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In addition to the external customers, the internal customers too are increasingly seen as the key to the organizational success. Unfortunately, many retail organizations do not think in these terms and, as a result, have not developed the orientation necessary to produce outstanding customer contact employees. This paper presents an empirical study on the relationship among internal marketing factors and job motivation and job satisfaction in the retail stores in Visakhapatnam city. Findings show significant correlations and suggest that the retail stores should concentrate on internal marketing to have the satisfied employees to deliver customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Retail Sector, Job Satisfaction, Job Motivation

1. Introduction

Organizations need to attract and retain customers to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage. To achieve this objective, service organizations must focus on their efforts to developing and sustaining an organizational culture that emphasizes internal customer well being as a means to attract and retain external customer patronage. This rationale is based on the notion that to the external customer, the internal customer represents the firm. In services marketing, the employee plays a central role in attracting, building and maintaining relationships with customers. The recognition of the central role of employees has given rise to "internal marketing" programs strongly oriented to employee development [28].

Customer satisfaction is one of the biggest priorities of business. In the service industry, customer satisfaction levels are revealed during what we like to call the "moments of truth", being the moment that the customer comes in contact with a front-line employee of the firm [45]. This made the interaction between people within the organization and the external customers more vital. In retail sector instead of selling services they will eventually start to sell experiences that augment the actual product. Grönroos [17] recognized that an improved service quality will lead to customer satisfaction. He also added that this in turn has a two fold effect. Internally this will lead to an improved working atmosphere since increased customer satisfaction is noticed by the employees. This in turn will create obvious positive effects which are supported by the service- oriented strategic direction that is chosen by management. Strategic decisions like this have a positive effect on the internal environment of the firm and on employee motivation [17].

2. Internal Marketing

The aim of internal marketing on a strategic level is the creation of an appropriate environment that will support employees' interest in external customer satisfaction. It is the application of marketing inside an organization to instill customer-focused values. As such, it joins marketing with human resources to attract, motivate and retain employees, with an emphasis on getting employee commitment to provide customer satisfaction and achieve organizational goals. Internal marketing is for the care of both customers and employees. It is based on the relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction (take care of the employees, and they'll take care of the customers) [40]. It has been proposed as a way of increasing lower level commitment to corporate strategies and improving organizational integration. Internal marketing can be used to increase employee involvement in reaching decision, making commitments and taking action.

Employees are a particularly important participant in the formulation of the image that customers get in relation to the offered service. External customer satisfaction can not be achieved without the fundamental contribution of the customer- contact employees who provide the service. The front-line employees of the retail store interact with the majority of customers and generally handle a wide range of customer transactions. Grönroos [17] mentioned that the emerging importance of services in almost every business has led to the recognition that well-trained and service- oriented employees are the most important resource of a company, rather than raw materials, production technology or the actual products. Since the employees meet the external customers and responsible for the offered service quality, they impact heavily on how the organization is viewed by the customers. In line with this Ahmed and Rafiq [3] state that the focus upon employee satisfaction in internal marketing is due to the fact that in the marketing of services a large part of what customers ask for is in fact labour, or human acts of performance.

Internal Marketing comes from the concept of services marketing. It is viewing employees as internal customers and jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the firm [8]. In a definition of internal marketing [9] this fact gets illustrated: *"Internal marketing is attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs. Internal Marketing is the philosophy of treating employees as customers…and it is the strategy of shaping job-products to fit human needs"*. Kotler [21] explains that internal marketing is more important than conventional external marketing. The key to have satisfied customers lies in having satisfied employees [9]. In line with this strategy Ahmed and Rafiq [3] state that *"to have satisfied customers, the firm must also have satisfied employees"*. The overall purpose of internal marketing is explained by Grönroos [15] in three steps:

1. To attract appropriate employees as contact persons and in management positions
2. To retain good and appropriate employees
3. And, to influence and motivate employees in order to make them customer oriented, marketing oriented and thereby make an effort as good as possible in the interactive marketing process.

Employee satisfaction has often been referred to as job satisfaction [24]. Unfortunately, the reality shows that a common phenomenon in many retail organizations is to fill up their customer contact positions with persons willing, at least temporarily, to work for minimum wages. In retail sector it is of prime importance to train and retain good people since good employees that offer high quality service is one way of distinguishing one retail store from competitors. In fact, a growing body of empirical evidence suggests that there is a direct relationship between a firm's financial success and its commitment to internal marketing practices that treat employees as assets.

Nearly 25 years after the development of internal marketing concept, it is not being recognized and implemented by managers to the extent it deserves. In order to achieve this goal early researchers in the field argued that the focus should be upon the issue of employee motivation and satisfaction [3].

3. Retail Sector In India

Indian Retail Sector has evolved from traditional formats like kirana stores, street vendors to shopping malls, super-marts, hyper-marts, departmental stores, apparel stores etc. In India the retail sector is the second largest employer after agriculture. It accounts to around 10 percent contribution to GDP and an 8 percent employment generation. The Indian retail industry is valued about U.S $ 350 billion and is expected to grow to $ 427 billion in 2010 and $637 billion in 2015 [13]. The sector is now at its inflexion point awaiting multifold growth. India's retail sector is evolving at a swift pace fuelled by the strong economy, favorable demographics, rising wealth levels and rapidly changing life styles and consumer aspirations of an ever-burgeoning middle class. This results in more attractive market to domestic and global retailers.

However, in India, attracting people to this industry and then retaining them is a challenge. The primary reason for such a situation is the poor image that the business carries. With the emergence of multiple formats, the demand for manpower is increasing and at the same time, has led to high attrition rates among most of the organized players in the market. The increased number of shopping malls has led to induction of labour that are mostly low-paid, untrained and with insecure jobs.

The quality of the employees affects the overall quality of customer service in the interactive marketing process and results in decreased functional quality. This, in turn, might lead to negative word of mouth and in the worst case scenario, dissatisfied customers. Efficient Internal marketing is the panacea for all customer relationship problems in retail sector as many customers experience the indifferent attitude of the employees. Hence, there is a need to study how the different ideas and activities building up internal marketing are implemented in retail sector.

4. Objectives of the Study

Besides motivating the existing personnel it is important for the retail store to retain the personnel and not lose them to other retail organizations with more attractive work environment, tasks and terms. Achieving all these goals is the aim of the *internal marketing* function [15]. This paper presents an empirical study on internal marketing and employee job satisfaction and motivation in the retail outlets in

Visakhapatnam city. It proposes the concept of Internal Marketing Mix or a set of controllable factors inside the organization that can be used effectively to influence employees' motivation and satisfaction to generate satisfied customer base.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To study the demographic and socio-economic profile of employees in urban retail sector.
- To identify the important internal marketing factors in the urban retail sector.
- To examine the influence of these factors on employee job satisfaction and job motivation.

5. Literature Review

Internal marketing orientation is an area within the broader market orientation that remains relatively under-researched. The literature on marketing, services marketing, corporate strategy, total quality management, operations management, human resource management, and organizational development reveals a body of work referring to or describing an "internal marketing" concept or internal customer concept. This seems to have grown out of an organizational internal communications perspective and the notion of an "inner market" in the organization comprising "internal customers" [4]. Research reveals that the concept and the action of an enterprise's internal marketing increases the employee job satisfaction [43] [34] [12], and which in turn improve the performance of the enterprise [30] [25] that is directly related to the customer satisfaction. Being a service industry, the employees in retail sector are exposed to a customer centric environment. Several research studies on internal marketing identified it as a part of marketing strategy with the employees as internal customers. Internal marketing can be divided into four categories [19]. The first category is where the employee is treated as an internal customer [37] [8] [14] [11] [18]. It is believed that the task of internal marketing is to view the jobs as products; and employees as customers. The second category is developing customer oriented behaviour among the employees. Several experts [31] [12] addressed the application of marketing skill in the internal marketing of a company, where company/outlets should adopt a framework which is similar to that of its internal marketing and develop a program aimed at the internal market. The third category is the human resource management (HRM) orientation. Joseph [20] believed that internal marketing should be incorporated with HRM theories, technologies and principles which encourage employees to provide better services. The fourth category is internal exchange between organization and its employees. It is proposed that [5] allowing efficient operation of and exchange relationship between the organization and its employees in achieving organization's objectives in the external market.

In the case of the more complex "person × situation" multi-item variables, the most important determinants were found to be the perceived market orientation of local managers and direct managers/supervisors, as well as aspects of communication, socialization, and workplace satisfaction. These more complex variables are important in managing internal marketing [29]. Instead, the importance lies in trying to keep those workers you can least afford to lose. In achieving this, companies should start with identifying past reasons for the loss of such employees and how they can be prevented in the future. Employee satisfaction is the ultimate motive of

internal marketing to offer high service quality and get satisfied customers. Miller et.al [24] further stated that creating employee satisfaction is an instrument to reduce employee turnover, hence increase the retention rate.

Review of literature shows that Job Satisfaction Index (JDI) is the most frequently quoted scale when measuring job satisfaction. The scale includes job type, monthly income, promotion, and job associates. But the correct scale for measuring job satisfaction of employees in the service sector is given by Spector [39]. He developed the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), which includes aspects of monthly income, promotion, relations, welfare, incentive, associate relationships, job description and communication.

Considering these two scales, the factors identified for the study include income, work hours, motivational factors, training, working conditions, infrastructure facilities, hygiene & sanitation, recreation, cafeteria, rest rooms (room to relax), employee welfare measures and safety and medical measures, encouragement, attitude of colleagues, support from superior, educational loans, festival advances, leisure time, leave facility, provident fund benefits, first aid and workmen compensation.

A plethora of studies have been conducted under the aegis of internal marketing that have identified many internal marketing factors that influence employee motivation and satisfaction in service sector. Most studies suggest that competitive advantage and customer satisfaction are derived by implementing internal marketing. This study is focused on identifying the important internal marketing factors that influence employee satisfaction and motivation in emerging retail sector. The study concentrates on the first and third categories i.e. where the employee is treated as an internal customer and the incorporation of HRM principles for making employees more competent. Effort was made to get a better understanding of the internal marketing variables that increase job satisfaction and motivation in retail sector.

6. Methodology

The data is collected from employees working in various shopping malls and departmental stores in Visakhapatnam city, India, by a structured questionnaire that comprises of demographic profile of the respondents and internal marketing factors in retail outlets. Items of internal marketing factors are measured on a five point Likert scale, with 1 for “Very Poor” and 5 for “Very Good”. Respondents were identified based on convenience sampling, as the retailers did not permit to contact their employees at work. A total of 500 questionnaires were circulated but 460 questionnaires were used based on the completeness of data. The SPSS has been used for statistical analysis of the collected data. The results were tested using statistical tools like reliability analysis, factor analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

7. Data Analysis and Discussion

The profile of the employees with respect to their age, education, marital status, occupation, monthly income and experience are presented in Table 1. Most of the male employees were in the age group of 31-35 years, accounting for 41 percent of the total and the 66 percent of female employees were in the age group of 18-24 years.

Table 1 *Sample Profile of the Respondents*

Characteristic	Male	Female	Total
Age			
18-24	63 (26)	145(66)	208 (45)
25-30	27 (11)	70(32)	97 21)
31-35	99 (41)	1(0.5)	100 (22)
36-40	39 (16)	1 0.5)	40 (9)
41-45	7 (3)	1(0.5)	8 (2)
46-50	4 (2)	-	4 (1)
51-55	2 (1)	-	2(0.4)
56-60	-	1 (0.5)	1(0.2)
Total	241 (100)	219 (100)	460(100)
Education			
Primary School	89 (37)	102 (47)	191(42)
High school	108 (45)	106 (48)	214(47)
Intermediate	4 2)	11 (5)	15 (3)
Graduate	40 17)	-	40 (9)
Total	241(100)	219(100)	460 (100)
Marital Status			
Married	183(76)	22 (10)	205(45)
Unmarried	58(25)	197(90)	255(55)
Total	241(100)	219(100)	460(100)
Occupation			
Sales	170(71)	219(100)	389(85)
Accountant	8 (3)	-	8(2)
Supervisor	63 (26)	-	63 (14)
Total	241(100)	219(100)	460(100)
Monthly Income			
1000-2000	20 (8)	59(27)	79(17)
2001-3000	113 (47)	136(62)	249(54)
3001-4000	38 (16)	24(11)	62(14)
4001-5000	61(25)	-	61(13)
>5000	9 (4)	-	9 (2)
Total	241 (100)	219(100)	460(100)
Experience			
<1 Year	89(37)	144(66)	233(51)
1-5 Years	89(37)	75(34)	164(36)
5-10 Years	60(25)	-	60 (13)
>10 Years	3 (1)	-	3 (1)
Total	241(100)	219(100)	460(100)
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.			

This signifies that the Indian retail sector employees are young. Only 48 percent of the sample respondents had high school education. It is interesting to know that 76 percent of the males and 10 percent of the female respondents were married. All the female respondents and 70 percent of the males were in the sales job. This reveals that females were employed only at lower level and married women do not prefer to work in the retail sector. Average monthly income of the respondents was Rs.3000/- (approx. US$ 60) and 50 percent of the employees had one year experience at present job.

Reliability Analysis

The final Cronbach's Alpha score for all the listed items is 0.8386, which shows that data has satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is used to know the contribution of each variable and to identify the key internal marketing factors. The method used to get the extractions is the principal component analysis using the Varimax with Kaiser Normalization for factor rotation. A total of 5 factors emerged from the factor analysis. According Tabachink & Fidell [41], the minimum value for a good factor loading is 0.5. Table 2 explains the total variance of the factors

Table 2 *Total Variance*

Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	43.1	43.1
2	16.8	59.9
3	16.3	76.2
4	6.6	82.9
5	6.0	88.8

Table 3 shows the rotated component matrix of internal marketing factors and all the variables have a good factor loading.

Table 3 *Rotated Component Matrix*

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Remuneration	0.362			0.683	
Employee Motivation					0.843
Job Satisfaction	-0.856	0.428			
Initial Training	-0.880	0.370			
Facilities in your organization	0.879	0.367			
Infrastructure	0.875	0.334			
Working conditions		0.961			
Working hours		0.960			
Hygiene & Sanitation		0.941			
Recreational activities	0.855	0.374			

Cafeteria/ canteen facility	0.866	0.367			
Rest rooms	0.971				
Support from your superior	0.984				
Attitude of your colleagues	0.984				
Encouragement	0.973				
Educational Loans	-0.422		0.862		
Festival Advances	-0.373		0.889		
Workmen compensation				0.893	
Leisure Time	0.437	-0.447	0.631		
Year End bonus	0.580	-0.341	0.713		
Leave	0.536		0.712		
Provident Fund Benefits	0.408		-0.712		
Gratuity Fund	0.832				
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

Table 4 *Factor Structure of Internal Marketing Variables (Factor Loading)*

Sl No	Variable Attributes	Extraction
1	Support from superior	0.984
2	Attitude of colleagues	0.984
3	Encouragement	0.973
4	Rest rooms	0.971
5	Working conditions	0.961
6	Working hours	0.960
7	Hygiene & Sanitation	0.941
8	Festival Advances	0.889
9	Workmen compensation	0.893
10	Cafeteria/ canteen facility	0.866
11	Facilities	0.879
12	Educational Loans	0.862
13	Infrastructure	0.875
14	Recreation	0.855
15	Employee Motivation	0.843
16	Gratuity fund	0.832
17	Year end bonus	0.713
18	Leave Facility	0.712
19	Remuneration	0.683
20	Leisure time	0.631
21	Job Satisfaction	0.428
22	Provident fund benefits	0.408
23	Initial training	0.370
	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

According to Table 4 the variables that have the highest factor loading are support from superior, attitude of colleagues, encouragement at work, rest rooms, working conditions, working hours, hygiene & sanitation. The variables that have factor loadings above 0.5 are festival advances, workmen compensation, cafeteria/ canteen facility, facilities, educational loans, infrastructure, recreation, employee motivation, gratuity fund, year end bonus, leave facility, remuneration and leisure time.

Multiple Regressions

Pallant [26] says that, a good relationship between independent and dependent variable is that when the R^2 value is more than 0.3. The method used to get the multiple regressions is the Enter method. According to Table 5 the obtained 'R' value is 0.997 and R^2 value is 0.994 at the 0.000 level of significance. This indicates that internal marketing variables contribute to 99.4 percent of the job satisfaction and there is a positive relationship between internal marketing and job satisfaction of employees in the retail sector.

Table 5 *Multiple Regressions for Job Satisfaction*

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.997	0.994	0.994	0.039

Table 6 *Internal Marketing and Job Satisfaction Coefficients*

	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		
(Constant)		7.31	.000
Facilities	1.261	22.97	.000
Attitude of colleagues	0.952	16.14	.000
Festival Advances	0.864	18.85	.000
Initial training	0.789	26.29	.000
Educational loans	0.658	10.11	.000
Hygiene & Sanitation	0.197	11.10	.000
Provident Fund	0.166	10.15	.000
Workmen compensation	0.096	4.02	.000
Working hours	0.085	3.91	.000
Remuneration	-0.009	-2.02	.044
Employee Motivation	-0.109	-14.73	.000
Infrastructure	-0.479	-12.58	.000
Working conditions	-0.292	-10.19	.000
Recreational activities	-0.036	-0.94	.348
Canteen facility	-0.819	-8.56	.000
Rest rooms	-0.465	-4.78	.000
Encouragement	-0.339	-5.54	.000
Leave facility	-0.098	-3.11	.001
Gratuity Fund	-0.226	-9.43	.000

Table 6 shows the predictor variables like facilities, attitude of colleagues, festival advances, initial training and educational loans have a comparatively higher value that indicates a greater impact of the predictor variables on the job satisfaction. Further, the variables hygiene & sanitation, provident fund, workmen compensation and working hours have a slightly lesser impact on job satisfaction and the variables remuneration, employee motivation, infrastructure, working conditions, recreational activities, canteen facility, rest rooms, leave facility, gratuity fund and encouragement the employees receive from their superior found to be negatively related to employee job satisfaction. The '*t*' values that are key for employee job satisfaction are initial training, facilities, hygiene & sanitation, attitude of colleagues, educational loans, festival advances and provident fund(p=0 .000).

An interesting assumption made by Maslow is that a human being is never satisfied, except for a short period of time. As one desire gets satisfied another desire will shortly arise in the mind of the individual.[23].This assumption is very important in an organizational context since it requires a regular monitoring of employees in order to find out how to motivate and what needs they want to be satisfied at that particular point of time. According to Table 7 the obtained 'R' value is 0.877 and R^2 value is 0.769 at 0.000 level of significance. In other words the internal marketing variables explain 76.9 percent of the variance in job motivation. On the whole, there is a positive relationship between internal marketing and job motivation of employees in the retail sector.

Table 7 *Multiple Regression for Job Motivation*

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.877	0.769	0.759	0.076

Table 8 shows the predictor variables like infrastructure, working hours, recreational activities, canteen facility, attitude of colleagues, leave facility and gratuity fund have a comparatively higher value, which indicates a greater impact of the predictor variables on the job motivation. But remuneration, working conditions, hygiene & sanitation, initial training, facilities, workmen compensation and provident fund, rest rooms and encouragement the employees receive from their superior are negatively related to employee job motivation. The '*t*' values that are key for employee job motivation are infrastructure, working hours, recreational activities, canteen facility, attitude of colleagues, leave facility and gratuity (p=0.000) indicate that careful attention should be given to each aspect to have motivated employees.

If minimum expectations are not met, an employee might be dissatisfied enough to leave, even if the job is quite rewarding [7]. The present study confirms this aspect. Remuneration (Salary) is generally considered as a prime factor for the job motivation and job satisfaction. But surprisingly it showed negative relationship. Because of high employee turnover, as 40 percent of the respondents had past experience, they know the pay structure in the retail sector. Hence they are looking at other factors for motivation and satisfaction. They do not consider it as a job motivation or satisfaction factor and that resulted in negative relationship.

Table 8 *Internal Marketing and Employee Motivation Coefficients*

	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		
(Constant)		15.21	.000
Infrastructure	1.56	6.79	.000
Recreational activities	1.98	8.58	.000
Leave Facility	1.08	5.66	.000
Canteen facility	3.26	5.46	.000
Working hours	1.03	7.81	.000
Attitude of colleagues	0.98	2.58	.010
Gratuity Fund	0.56	3.70	.000
Encouragement	-4.34	-12.88	.000
Educational Loans	-4.21	-11.42	.000
Rest rooms	-2.86	-4.68	.000
Festival Advances	-2.62	-9.79	.000
Facilities	-2.25	-6.68	.000
Hygiene & Sanitation	-1.09	-10.80	.000
Initial Training	-0.95	-5.02	.000
Working conditions	-0.81	-4.50	.000
rkmen compensation	-0.66	-4.33	.000
Provident Fund	-0.39	-3.71	.000
Remuneration	-0.007	-0.26	.793
Dependent Variable: Job Motivation			

8. Managerial Implications and Conclusions

The basic premise of this study has been that the job motivation and job satisfaction of employees in retail sector are strongly influenced by internal marketing. The results showed that the working conditions and hours, hygiene &sanitation, rest rooms, support from superior, and attitude of colleagues have highest influence on job satisfaction and motivation. Retail owners and managers should give careful attention to each aspect.

There are some factors that have significant negative relationship to job satisfaction and motivation. Retail stores, particularly those spending significant time and money in providing these aspects, should take care to highlight the benefits of these factors to the employees. The store managers should play a prominent role in educating the employees about the benefits and to encourage them. This is possible by maintaining regular interaction with the employees. Retail organizations need to integrate their activities aiming for effective high quality service delivery, recruiting the right employees, retaining them with proper incentives and motivation.

Attitude of colleagues is significantly related to both job satisfaction and motivation. Management must encourage healthy competition, where there is a win-win situation for all the employees. The team work should be encouraged, since it results in positive attitude among them.

Another interesting fact is that it might not include a great cost as the retail store has to integrate the existing activities rather than implementing new. As the employees are considered as internal customers, the factors that are not considered as benefits by the employees should be eliminated and jobs must be redesigned based on their needs and wants. Good control and monitoring system can help to understand the needs and problems of employees.

The retail sector is an emerging sector with potential opportunities and growth. Internal marketing is essential for the success of growing retail sector. The study reveals that there is a positive relationship between internal marketing and job satisfaction and motivation. The study identified several Internal marketing factors contributing to job satisfaction and motivation. The retail stores should concentrate on these to improve the employee motivation and satisfaction, consequently leading to external customer satisfaction. Internal marketing must be the priority in order to push the employees in the right direction to provide customer satisfaction.

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