

## **The relationship between internal marketing and organizational commitment in Golestan's sports and youth offices**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between internal marketing and organizational commitment. The research method in this study was descriptive and correlation method. Sports and Youth offices staff of Golestan province have established statistical population of research that they all participated in the study (N=180). For this purpose, Tabatabai (2010) Internal Marketing questionnaire and Organizational Commitment questionnaire developed by Gilaninia et al (2013) was used. Reliability of questionnaires after a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha test, respectively ( $\alpha=0.81$ ) and ( $\alpha=0.83$ ) were obtained. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods for data analysis were used. The findings showed that between internal marketing and organizational commitment in sports and youth offices staff, there is significant positive correlation ( $r=0.612$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). It is recommended that sport managers by using proper internal marketing operations promote employee skills and commitment.*

**Keywords:** Internal Marketing, Organizational Commitment, Sports and Youth Offices.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, organizations seek to improve their performance through increasing the quality of their services. As many researchers contend, organizations need to deal with both internal and external customers [1]. Successful organizations need to emphasize the quality of services offered to both internal and external customers. Such organizations are astute enough to predict the changing needs of their customers, to concentrate on their organizational capability to offer high-quality services, and to see the quality of internal service as a tool to gain competitive advantage [2].

With the emergence of industrial age, corporations changed their opinion about employees. Gone are the days when employees were treated as servants whose primary concern was to provide goods and services. But now this concept is totally changed as organizations realized that human capital is critical for the success of any organization. Especially in service sector the quality of service mainly depends on employees because service providing companies do not have physical goods. Internal marketing is an equal handling of both employees and customers with the aid of proactive policies to reach organizational objectives [3]. A new challenge for marketing leaders is therefore to manage the human resources. However, it is not only in practice that this challenge is accepted. Within the last few years, we have seen attempts to combine marketing theories with contributions from the human resource management area [4].

Berry (1981) pioneered the term internal marketing and originally defined it as "viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization [5]. According to Kotler (2000), internal marketing should be as a priority before external marketing. IM starts with the organization recruiting the right people in the position to reach the point where these employees are satisfied and willing to do their job and accomplish customer satisfaction [6]. Hult, Hurley, Giunipero, and Nichols (2000) pointed out that internal marketing means considering the internal

employee as the internal customer and to contemplate on making the internal customer's (employee) satisfaction [7]. Cooper and Cronin (2000) pointed out that internal marketing was consistent with the organization's effort; the organization trained and aggravated its employees to present better service [8]. Internal marketing in the service industry helps all employees' comprehend the company's mission and aims, and refers to schooling, motivation, and appropriate appraisal to accomplish the organization's anticipated aims and keep excellent employees [9]. Internal marketing must be started, practiced, and supported by top management. It continues through middle management to front-line employees, and ultimately results in strong service quality [10]. Top management must treat middle management as a customer of the product and determine what middle management perceives as the technical qualities, functional qualities, and image of the organization. They must create programs to segment them into various consumer groups in order to determine their wants and needs, and a similar process must occur throughout the flow chart [5].

Many of researchers believed that internal marketing can be effect on organizational processes. One of the main factors that led to the commitment of staff is looking and behavior with employees as inner customers of organizations. In order to enhance and improve the commitment and involvement of employees, organizations with employees shall behave as the people responsible, autonomous and active and they see it as a capital asset and not as a cost that must be controlled [11].

To achieve short-term and long-term objectives of any organization is not possible without strong determination and internal acceptance and self-effort of elements and employees. The realization of these goals when concludes that internal each employee has been inner commitment and relatively stable to targets, strategies, and methods of collecting and achieving organizational goals and be interested in their work [12]. In this regard, the research results of Davis (2005) demonstrated that the dimensions of internal marketing greatly impacted service quality [5]. Tabatabai (2010) research results showed that internal marketing activities can improve the service quality of within the organization [13]. Al Hawari, et al (2013) research results with title "The impact of internal marketing on employee's job satisfaction of commercial banks in Jordan" showed that internal marketing practices affect on employees job satisfaction [6]. Gilaninia et al (2013) research result internal marketing has a positive effect on organizational commitment and development and rewards has effect on organizational commitment [14].

As with other organizations, sports organizations follow unified principles in all divisions and aim to offer quality services to their customers [15]. In this regard, such factors as Internal Marketing may influence the commitment of employee and consequently affect external and external service quality. Iranian sport organizations have paid insufficient attention to the science of management and its scientific achievements. Hence attention to result of these researches can help to sport and sport organization. The present study may offer the opportunity to both HR management and employees to build an understanding of Internal Marketing. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between Internal Marketing and organizational commitment as perceived by the staff working with Golestan's Offices of Sports and Youth.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Method:** In view of the goal, the research is applied (functional), and in view of methodology, this research has descriptive, correlation method which was performed by field approach.

**Statistical Population and Sampling:** The population of the study consisted of all staff with the Golestan's offices of Sports and youth. The sample size was considered equal to the population (N=180).

**Instrument (s):** For collecting data, two standard questionnaires were used, Internal Marketing developed by Tabatabai (2010) and Organizational Commitment developed by Gilaninia et al (2013). The content validity of the questionnaires was approved by five professors of sports management. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted. The results showed a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha=0.81$  for Internal Marketing Questionnaire and  $\alpha=0.83$  for Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, which indicated the consistency of measurement. A demographic data sheet was used to collect the data on personal information including age, level of education and work experience.

**Data Analyses:** SPSS software was used to analyze the data. As to the statistical measures, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and tabulations were used to describe the data. Inferential statistics including Pearson correlation formula was used to test the hypotheses.

## RESULTS

The results showed that the participants were 41 years old on average. 53.9 per cent of the participants had B.S or higher degrees and 84.4 per cent had more than 5 years of work experience.

**Table1. Description of Internal Marketing based on Employee' opinions**

Statistic variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Perspective	3.882	0.526	1	5
Development	3.704	0.531	1	5
Reward	4.226	0.563	1	5
Total Internal Marketing	4.108	0.456	1	5

As shown in Table 2, the mean score of organizational commitment was 4.365 out of 5.

**Table2. Description of Organizational Commitment based on Employee' opinions**

Statistic variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Organizational Commitment	4.365	0.546	1	5

Since the data show a normal distribution, Pearson correlation test was run to analyze the data. As illustrated in Table 3, the results of correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between internal marketing and organizational commitment from the viewpoint of employees ( $r=0.571$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). The results, however, revealed there was a significant correlation between perspective and organizational commitment ( $r=0.612$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). There was also a significant relationship between development and organizational commitment ( $r=0.572$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). A significant positive correlation was also found between reward and organizational commitment ( $r=0.461$ ,  $P<0.001$ ).

**Table3. Relationship between dimensions of Internal Marketing and Organizational Commitment**

Variables	Organizational Commitment		
	N	r	P
Perspective	180	0.612	0.001
Development	180	0.572	0.001
Reward	180	0.461	0.001
Total Internal Marketing	180	0.571	0.001

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Service industry organizations now recognize the importance of quality and attempt to exceed the expectations of customers. While the level of perception varies from customer to customer, if service quality provided increases the value for the customer experience, then one method to obtain this level is through the implementation of an internal marketing program. It is believed organizational problems are internal, not external therefore, implementation of an internal marketing program will eliminate departmental walls, integrate organization members wide and this creates the opportunity to improve quality throughout the organization. For offer proper services to external customers, organization need to committed employees. Committed employees accept goals of organization and try to achieve them. Internal marketing program view employees as internal customers and try to get their commitment. So in this regard, the following suggestions are offered:

- To increase employees' commitment, employees should be aware of organization goals.
- Managers should strive for growth and development of staff.
- Internal marketing plan should be tailored to the needs of employees and departments.

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