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# The Effect of Internal Marketing on Employees' Service Immersion to Customers\*

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study seeks to identify whether internal marketing factors have a statistically significant positive effect on the flow of services to customers of bank service employees. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to confirm the importance of internal marketing in the employees' services immersion to customers. In addition, the study seeks to identify whether employees' perceived organizational support recognition mediates between internal marketing factors and the employee's immersion in services to customers. **Research design, data and methodology:** This study distributed 100 questionnaires to employees working at banks to obtain data. Finally, the study conducted a statistical analysis on a questionnaire of 94 employees. For regression, factor analysis, and reliability analysis, the 24 version of the SPSS was used. For the mediation analysis, the SPSS macro developed by Hayes was used. **Results:** This study seeks to statistically verify which factors of internal marketing have a greater impact on employee immersion in services. **Conclusions:** Research verification has shown that all elements of internal marketing affect the employee's immersion in services to customers. It was also shown that the employee's recognition of organizational support mediated the relationship between factors of internal marketing and the employee's immersion in services to customers..

**Keywords :** Internal Marketing, Service Immersion to Customers, Perceived Organizational Support.

**JEL Classification Code :** M20, M31, M10, M16, M00.

## 1. Introduction

The internal marketing concept has undergone a number of changes from the initial conceptualization of employee satisfaction by considering employees as customers and their occupations as products with the ultimate goal of improving service quality (Berry, 1981; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976). The purpose of internal marketing is to ensure that

employees are recognized for their importance by treating them as internal customers (Grönroos, 1981). Internal marketing plays an important role in encouraging employees to provide optimal service to their customers. This is because the company will eventually achieve customer satisfaction with the services it provides (Lings & Greenley, 2005).

Rapid and Ahmed (2000) emphasized that internal marketing can transform employees into customer-oriented and motivate them to efficiently carry out their corporate strategies through training.

At this point, the majority of service organizations are attempting to meet and exceed customer expectations to increase shareholder satisfaction and loyalty (Ballantye, 2000). Furthermore, the role of employees in service organizations to achieve success encourages organizations to adopt internal marketing and to regard employees as internal customers (Mishra & Sinha, 2014).

Meanwhile, the existing paper showed that internal marketing has a positive effect on the job satisfaction of employees. Employee satisfaction stems from mental and physical satisfaction experienced by employees at work

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and in themselves (Takeda, Ibaraki, Yokoyama, Miyake, & Ohida, 2005). Employees' attitudes and behaviors show the quality of service provided to the customer (Takeda et al., 2005). In other words, job satisfaction refers to the status of workers who are aware of their welfare in the organization.

In this study, this study will investigate the effects of internal marketing consisting of authority, education, training, management support, compensation system, and internal communication on employees' job satisfaction and service immersion through empirical analysis. Furthermore, it is required to verify that the employees' perceived organizational support recognition mediated the relationship between internal marketing and internal marketing performance (service immersion).

## 2. Literature Reviews

### 2.1. Internal Marketing

Chang and Chang (2007) defined internal marketing as the activities of employees regarded as members of the organization and as supporting the establishment of products and services for external customers.

In modern society, the company strives to improve the quality of service of its employees, which has a great impact on improving the quality of service (Yi et al., 2012). In fact, consumers also aim to meet social and psychological needs, such as forming relationships through consultation with employees, and so on, within the shopping mall (Lee, 2018).

Grönroos (1994) warned that outside marketing could go wrong if companies overlook internal marketing. The role of internal marketing should be best performed by encouraging employees to behave in a service-oriented and customer-oriented manner by taking a functional and marketing attitude (Grönroos, 1994). In addition, through internal marketing, employees are trained. Therefore, employees feel more confident and more adept at themselves. These feelings will inspire them with more enthusiasm and enthusiasm to work with more dedication (Balta, 2018).

Berry and Parasuraman (1992) and Hales and Mccrate-Butcher (1994) emphasized that the main purpose of internal marketing is to make employees feel valued, recognized, and trusted so that all employees of the organization can have skilled staff. Pappasolomou (2006) emphasized that the purpose of internal marketing is to

create a motivated and customer-conscious workforce to achieve service excellence. The use of marketing in the context of internal marketing suggests emphasizing the application of marketing techniques, approaches, concepts and theories to achieve customer satisfaction. In order to be successful in the external market, Piercy and Morgan (1991) argued that, in order to achieve success in the external market, an enterprise should develop a set of marketing programs for the internal market to ensure that employees develop service awareness and customer-oriented behavior. As a result, internal marketing works to lower employee turnover and boost morale and commitment to outstanding service performance. Employees' satisfaction and staff-centeredness play a pivotal role in both the commodity production industry and the service industry. However, in the latter case, the ability of employees is even more important because there are employees in the contacts with the consumer when the consumer purchases the service. In other words, no matter how well the service was designed, it all depends on the performance of front-line employees (Balta, 2018).

Grönroos (2000) also agreed that the practice of in-house marketing contributes positively to the dedication and loyalty of the company's employees. In particular, for the service sector, implementation of internal marketing is required for everyone from lower-level workers to top managers of the organization. In other words, not only service personnel but also staff at all levels should always be ready to dedicate and serve customers.

Internal marketing is utilized by the majority of enterprises and enterprises providing services, and can provide a vision for the future through education, training and development to suit the characteristics of the enterprise (Foreman & Money, 1995). Weber (2015) argued in the study that appropriate training, compensation, and employment policies for the factors of internal marketing are having a significant impact on customer satisfaction.

In internal marketing, it is important to diagnose employees' needs, needs and interests. Kale (2007) argued that if service companies want to hire and maintain the best qualified staff, they should design jobs in a way that is appropriate to recruit and lead the right people. To do so, he stressed that the goals, desires, views, and interests of internal customers should be identified first. This implies that internal communication with employees is a priority.

## 2.2. Service Immersion

Service immersion refers to the service employee's dedication and effort to the customer. The definition of Commission to Service Quality (CSQ) is "compliant with standards" (Martin, 1986). Clark, Hartline, and Jones (2009) defined CSQ as "more staff to provide quality of service and a willingness to go beyond the level they expect." Peccei and Rosenthal (1997) defined service immersion as the attitude of service employees to engage in service for the customer and to continue to strive for the benefit of the customer and to be dedicated to the service. Therefore, service immersion is important on a practical level.

Pahi & Hamid (2015) emphasized the importance of service immersion, saying that employee commitment enhances loyalty and high quality of service delivery. Customers and employees located in contact with customers who work in an environment where management is not committed to service excellence cannot successfully handle customer requests and complaints.

Unless management is fully committed to service excellence, it is clear that such employee efforts will fail in the first place (Zemke, 1991). Because employees in contact with customers play an important role in the service delivery process, the management of the service company should consider them as strategic partners in the delivery of service quality and the retention of satisfied and loyal customers. But mistakes and failures in providing services are inevitable. Therefore, in the event of a mistake, the service providers must do the right thing immediately after (De Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000).

Service personnel are directly in contact with customers on behalf of the company. The entity creates an image of the entity through the service provider, and the customer's expectations of the service level also vary depending on the service employee (Chun & Park, 2018).

Education, empowerment and compensation are three important indicators of management's commitment to quality of service, enhancing the robustness of staff's duties. Training employees is important because they will let employees know their job-related work and organizational values and beliefs. (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010).

Employees in contact with customers should be granted authority because they cannot specify the exact tasks required to improve customer satisfaction because they must deal with customer requests and complaints (Banker, Lee, Potter, & Srinivasan, 1996). Otherwise, frontline employees who lack the authority and responsibility to act and respond will not be able to handle complaints (Lewis & Gabrielsen, 1998).

On the other hand, establishing appropriate compensation policies is important for frontline service

jobs where wages are generally low (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2003). The availability of appropriate levels of salary and other types of compensation for the organization's exemplary service efforts demonstrates the commitment of top management to quality of service (Ashill et al., 2005).

As a result, employees will become engrossed in their work when they are rewarded for their efforts from an empirical point of view, rewards have been reported to represent a positive association with job embeddedness (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009). As a result, authorization programs can fail if appropriate training and compensation are not followed. Similarly, unless front-line employees are empowered and compensated, the training program is likely to fail (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012).

## 2.3. Perceived Organizational Support

The concept of perceived organizational support recognition stems from the social exchange theory that views employment relationships as an exchange between employers and employees. To meet the need for approval, affiliation and respect, and to determine whether the organization is prepared to reward their efforts, employees form a general perception of how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sawa, 1986).

Organizational support recognition means that the members feel and believe that the organization recognizes the value of its members' contributions and is interested in the welfare of its members, and organizational support is the degree to which the members are immersed. It is a concept that contradicts the organizational immersion in which an individual tries to work hard with an attachment to the organization to which he belongs. Organizational members who receive recognition and praise from the organization will have an increased awareness of organizational support, resulting in a study showing that the members are immersed in the organization and have a positive effect on their job participation and job performance (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sawa, 1986).

Perceived Organization Support means when employees are aware of the organization's support (Self, Armenakis, & Schraeder, 2007). Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009) showed the importance of organizational support recognition to aging workers for their career satisfaction and their intention to be loyal to the organization.

Aggarwal-Gupta et al. (2010) and others found that organizational support awareness is an important factor in building trust between organizations and members, and has

a positive impact on job attitude and organizational performance.

Furthermore, Cheung and Wu (2014) confirmed that organizational support awareness is an important factor in five successful dimensions: adaptability and health, positive relationships, professional growth, personal safety, and continuous focus on goals. Thus, the field of organizational support recognition emphasizes the importance of considering employees' aspirations and evaluating their efforts.

### 3. Research Method

#### 3.1. A Study Model and Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were established. A research model is shown in <Figure 1>.

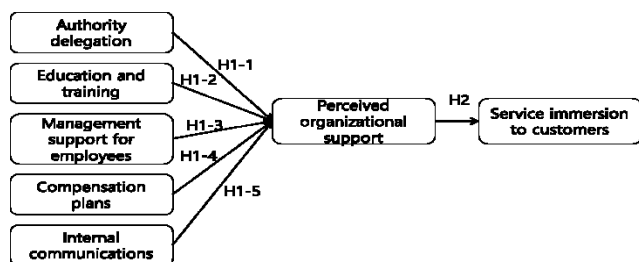


Figure 1: Research Model

**H1:** Factors of internal marketing will have a significant positive impact on service immersion to customers.

**H1-1:** Authority delegation will have a significant positive impact on service immersion to customers.

**H1-2:** Education and training will have a significant positive impact on service immersion to customers.

**H1-3:** Management support for employees will have a significant positive impact on service immersion to customers.

**H1-4:** Compensation plans will have a significant positive impact on service immersion to customers.

**H1-5:** Internal communication will have a significant positive impact on service immersion to customers.

**H2:** Perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between factors of internal marketing and service immersion to customers.

**H2-1:** Perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between authority and service immersion to customers.

**H2-2:** Perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between education and training and service immersion to customers.

**H2-3:** Perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between management support for employees and service immersion to customers.

**H2-4:** Perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between compensation plans and service immersion to customers.

**H2-5:** Perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between internal communication and service immersion to customer.

#### 3.2. Configure Questionnaire

Table 1: Questionnaire Configuration

Variables	Measurement Indicators	Related Study
Authority	The agency allows employees autonomy in making decisions for their jobs.	Hartline, Maxham & Mckee. (2000)
	The agency allows its employees to make their own judgments when solving problems.	
	The agency allows employees to be creative in promoting their duties	
	The agency allows employees to take the initiative in relation to their duties.	
	The agency trusts employees' judgment regarding job promotion.	
Education and training	Institutions tend to have a lot of education and training involved.	Harrell & Fors (1995)
	The agency provides an opportunity to complete education training.	
	There are various training programs related to job agencies operating.	
	I think it is helpful to understand customer requirements after completing education training.	
management support for employees	The agency has an atmosphere of easy access to management.	Harrell & Fors (1995)
	The agency involves the management team in planning and decision-making processes.	
	Agencies tend to have a smooth two-way flow of information throughout their management.	Harrell & Fors (1995)
	The management layer of the agency provides guidelines for solving work-related problems.	
	The agency boosts employee morale by rewarding good management performance.	
Compensation plans	The agency implements an evaluation system based on personal business performance.	Jaworski & Kohli (1993)
	The agency rewards employees for providing ideas in relation to work improvements.	
	The agency has a performance compensation system for employees.	

	The agency is giving fair opportunities for promotion.	
	The agency compensation plans y implements various welfare systems to promote employees' desire to work.	
Internal communication	Agencies can express their own opinions in a free atmosphere.	Clampit & Down (1993)
	Agencies have good communication within or between branches.	
	Agencies can communicate comfortably with their superiors in relation to their duties.	
	Agencies can communicate with each other smoothly.	
	The agency shares information on its management goals and work plans.	
Employees' Perceived organizational support	The agency values my contribution.	Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli & Lynch (1997)
	The agency appreciates my efforts toward private tutoring.	
	The agency allows me to be generally satisfied with my job performance.	
	The agency shows interest in my welfare.	
	I feel a sense of achievement by performing my current duties.	
	My duties allow me to exercise my knowledge and ability.	
service immersion to customers	I am satisfied with my current working environment and working conditions.	Tansujah et al. (1988)
	I think the service I provide to customers is important.	
	I feel proud to provide service to my customers.	
	I am very interested in things related to the provision of services to customers	
	I want to provide the customer with perfect service.	
	I make the most of my ability in providing services to customers.	

The composition of the questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

### 3.3. Analysis and Method

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of internal marketing (authority, education and training, management support for employees, compensation system, internal communication) on job satisfaction and service immersion for employees working in banks. The data collection was conducted on employees working at banks based in South Jeolla Province, and the distribution of the questionnaire was conducted on 94 people, with 100 copies distributed. The SPSS 24 version was used to analyse and verify the hypothesis.

## 4. Empirical Analysis Results

### 4.1. Validity Analysis Results

The results of the factor analysis for internal marketing factors are shown in <Table 2>. A total of 24 questions were used for verification analysis.

The Kasiser-Meyer-Oklin scale value for sample adequacy was .890, while Bartlett's chi-square value for the spherical test was 2085.991, indicating significant at .000 level. The total variance values of the factors corresponding to the independent variable were greater than 79.282%, and only those questions were screened for which the factor loading consisted of a value greater than

0.3 of the reference value. All measurement questions have been identified as valid.

**Table 2:** Validity Analysis for Internal Marketing

Concept	factor	variable name	Factor loadings	communality	Eigenvalu	R2
independent variable	Authority	1	.743	.681	3.973	16.556
		2	.850	.807		
		3	.867	.826		
		4	.890	.860		
		5	.682	.693		
	Education and training	1	.844	.796	3.247	13.528
		2	.889	.876		
		3	.781	.862		
		4	.703	.808		
	management support for employees	1	.780	.778	3.935	16.396
		2	.856	.854		
		3	.836	.875		
		4	.656	.670		
		5	.607	.716		
	Compensation plans	1	.782	.759	3.756	15.649
		2	.791	.747		
		3	.832	.791		
		4	.553	.700		
		5	.700	.787		
	Internal communication	1	.676	.776	4.117	17.153
		2	.819	.853		
		3	.829	.856		
		4	.832	.843		
		5	.792	.814		

## 4.2. Reliability Analysis Results

Reliability means the probability that the same measurement can be obtained when measured through a repetition of the concept to be measured, indicating the degree of consistency in the results. All variables have high reference values.

**Table 3:** Reliability Analysis Results

Concept	Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
independent variable	Authority	5	.920
	Education and training	4	.919
	management support for employees	5	.911
	Compensation plans	5	.899
	Internal communication	5	.941
Mediating variable	Perceived organizational support	4	.932
	service immersion to customers	4	.944

## 4.3. Hypothesis Verification Results

**H1:** Internal marketing will have a significant impact on service immersion to customers.

**H1-1:** Authority delegation will have a significant impact on service immersion to customers.

A simple regression analysis has shown that delegated authority has a significant positive effect on service immersion to customers ( $\beta=.287, \alpha<.001$ ).

**H1-2:** Education and training will have a significant impact on service immersion to customers.

A simple regression analysis has shown that education and training has a significant positive effect on service immersion to customers ( $\beta=.411, \alpha<.001$ ).

**H1-3:** Management support for employees will have a significant impact on service immersion to customers.

A simple regression analysis has shown that management support for employees has a significant positive effect on service immersion to customers ( $\beta=.294, \alpha<.001$ ).

**H1-4:** Compensation plans will have a significant impact on service immersion to customers.

A simple regression analysis has shown that compensation plans has a significant positive effect on service immersion to customers ( $\beta=.464, \alpha<.001$ ).

**H1-5:** Internal communication will have a significant impact on service immersion to customers.

A simple regression analysis has shown that internal communication has a significant positive effect on service immersion to customers ( $\beta=.465, \alpha<.001$ ). Therefore, the effect of organizational support recognition on the relationship between authority delegation and service immersion was found to be completely mediated.

**H2:** Employees' perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between internal marketing and service immersion to customers.

**H2-1:** Employees' perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between authority and service immersion to customers.

The hypothesis was verified on whether the organization support recognition mediated the effect of authority delegation on job satisfaction. The analysis used the SPSS Process macro technique created by Hayes (2013).

The PROCESS technique of Hayes (2013) based on the OLS regression method verifies the direct and indirect effects of independent variables at the same time, thus validating all effects such as the medial, modulated, and regulated ones. In this study, Model Number 4 was chosen to verify the mechanism based on bootstrapping method.

The mediated effect value of the organizational support recognition was 2.792 and the lower and upper values were shown at (1677, .4305), and the 'organization support recognition will mediate the relationship between authority delegation and service immersion' since it does not contain zero values between the lower and upper values. On the other hand, the value of the direct effect of authority affecting service immersion was .0075 and the lower and upper values (-.1684, 1.1834) was not statistically significant, including the value of zero between the lower and upper values. Therefore, the agency effect of organizational support recognition on the relationship between authority delegation and service immersion was found to be completely mediated.

**H2-2:** Employees' perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between education and training and service immersion to customers.

Since the mediated effect value of the organizational support recognition was .1963, the lower and upper values were shown as (.1116, .3010), and did not contain a value

of zero between the lower and upper values, the hypothesis of 'organization support recognition will mediate the relationship between training and service immersion' was statistically significant. Meanwhile, the direct effect value of education and training affecting service immersion was 2.2142 and the lower and upper values were (.0417, 0.3867), so it was statistically significant because they did not include a value of zero between the lower and upper values. Therefore, the medial effect of organizational support recognition on the relationship between education training and service immersion was found to be partially covered.

**H2-3:** Employees' perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between management support for employees and service immersion to customers.

Since the mediated effect value of the organizational support recognition was .3421 and the lower and upper values were shown to be (.2054, .4891), and it did not contain zero values between the lower and upper values, the hypothesis of 'Organizational support recognition will mediate the relationship between management support and service immersion' was statistically significant. On the other hand, the value of direct effects of management support on service immersion is -.0483 and the lower and upper values were shown as (-.2407, 1.1442), they were not statistically significant, including zero between the lower and upper values. Therefore, the mediated effect of organizational support recognition on the relationship between management support and service immersion was significant.

**H2-4:** Employees' perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between compensation plans and service immersion to customers.

The mediated effect value of the tissue support recognition was 2.2376 and the lower and upper values were shown as (.1232, .3631) and did not contain a value of zero between the lower and upper values. Therefore, the hypothesis that 'organization support recognition will mediate the relationship between the reimbursement system and the immersion of services' was statistically significant. Meanwhile, the value of direct effects of the compensation scheme on service immersion was .2259 and the lower and upper values were (.0360, .4158). Therefore, it was not statistically significant, including a value of zero between the lower and upper values. Therefore, it was found that the mediating effect of organizational support recognition on the relationship between the compensation system and the immersion of the service was partially disclosed.

**H2-5:** Employees' perceived organizational support will significantly mediate the relationship between internal communication and service immersion to customers.

The mediated effect value of organizational support recognition was 2.2195, the lower and upper values were shown at (.1073, 0.3368), and the lower and lower values did not contain a value of 0 between the lower and upper values, so the hypothesis 'organization support recognition will mediate the relationship between internal communication and service immersion' was statistically significant. Meanwhile, the direct effect value of internal communication affecting service immersion was shown to be .2451 and the lower and upper values (.2044, 0.6007), so the value was not statistically significant, including zero between the lower and upper values. Therefore, employees' perceived organizational support recognition partially mediated the relationship between internal communication and service immersion to customers.

## 5. Conclusions

This study wanted to recognize the importance of employees who are human resources in the bank's service businesses and to reaffirm the importance of internal marketing, a measure that can enhance employees' capabilities.

In order to achieve the research objective, the internal marketing factors of the service company were verified to influence the employee's job satisfaction and service immersion, and to the role of the employees' perceived organization's support recognition in the relationship between internal marketing factors and internal marketing performance (service immersion). Through the results of the empirical analysis, the management strategic implications were presented to the management of the service.

A summary of the results of the empirical study is as follows.

First, internal marketing factors (authority, training, management support, compensation system and internal communication) have been shown to have a positive influence on the employee's level of service immersion into customers. Ultimately, it suggests that internal marketing is an essential element to enhance service quality, which strengthens job satiety.

Second, the hypothesis that 'organization support recognition will mediate the relationship between internal marketing and service immersion' was found to be statistically significant. Organizational support recognition has been shown to fully mediate the impact of authority

and management support on service immersion. This means that the employees' awareness of organizational support must be accompanied by authority and management support in order to affect service immersion.

This study is meaningful in confirming that the banking sector, a leading service company, can promote the growth of service businesses when managers recognize interest and importance in internal marketing.

Ultimately, the better authority and internal communication are, the more systematic the education and training are, the better the management support is, the better the compensation system is, the higher the job satisfaction of the employees. The management team needs to create an organizational culture to facilitate internal communication in order to maximize the immersion of service employees, and to support communication among employees. This process should involve the recognition that the management layer or the company is supporting internal marketing. In addition, employees should be required to recognize that the compensation system for performance and service missions is fairly implemented and that training and training is supported to enhance their adaptability and ability to do their jobs. This will ultimately have the effect of cultivating employee immersion in services. In the end, internal marketing will be an indispensable source of job performance and employee service immersion.

The purpose of this study was to explore strategic use measures for employees engaged in banking services through the study on the impact of internal marketing on employees' job satisfaction and service immersion and the role of the intermediaries in organizational support recognition. However, there are limitations in generalizing research results because they are targeted only at bank service employees. In future studies, it is necessary to expand the scope to various service areas to increase the generalization of research.

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