

Internal Marketing in Public Healthcare: A Catalyst for Improved Patient Care and Employee Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the application of internal marketing (IM) as a strategic tool for gaining a competitive advantage in Korea's public medical sector. We argue that IM plays a pivotal role in enhancing organizational performance and achieving a competitive edge. Through an in-depth analysis, we investigate the relationships between IM, self-efficacy, internal customer satisfaction, service innovation, internal service quality, and competitive advantage. Our findings highlight the significant influence of IM on improving employee motivation, fostering innovation, and ensuring high-quality services, which ultimately contribute to the organization's success in a competitive healthcare environment. The paper also emphasizes the importance of aligning internal marketing practices with the needs of employees, who are essential to delivering exceptional healthcare services. Finally, we provide both academic and practical insights, suggesting strategies for integrating IM into the public healthcare sector to enhance organizational effectiveness, improve patient care, and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the application of internal marketing (IM) as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage in Korea's public medical sector. The research emphasizes the importance of internal marketing in fostering organizational competitiveness. The central research question investigates how IM influences key organizational dynamics and outcomes. These sub-research questions studied include the impact of IM on the self-efficacy level, the relationship between IM and internal customer satisfaction, the role of IM in promoting service innovation, the influence of IM on internal service quality, and how these various factors contribute to competitive advantage. The research is carried out using a qualitative approach in understanding these elements in detail, with the structure being given by a comprehensive literature review, methodological exposition, findings analysis, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

This section critically reviews existing studies on internal marketing within organizations, particularly in public medical settings, answering the five sub-research questions. It expands on the results obtained with respect to these questions: "Impact of Internal Marketing on Self-Efficacy," "Internal Marketing and Internal Customer Satisfaction," "Internal Marketing as a Driver of Service Innovation," "Influence of Internal Marketing on Internal Service Quality," and "Pathways to Competitive Advantage through Internal Marketing." Even though there has been progress, research in this area has several gaps, including under searching IM functions in public sectors, insufficient linking of IM to self-efficacy, few findings about IM-driven service innovation,

fragmented knowledge regarding the influence of IM on service quality, and a lack of holistic models connecting IM to competitive advantage. This paper aims to fill these gaps by offering a detailed qualitative analysis.

2.1 Impact of Internal Marketing on Self-Efficacy

Initial findings in self-efficacy related to the practice of IM pointed toward its motivational influence on the employees, but the studies lacked empirical support and heterogeneity in settings. The subsequent studies incorporated structured training programs supported by IM, but with increased self-efficacy have also remained biased towards private sector cases. The recent studies emphasized individually tailored IM strategies that align with roles, yet they still miss comprehensive application in the public medical sector.

2.2 Internal Marketing and Internal Customer Satisfaction

Initial studies associated IM with customer satisfaction by bettering internal communications but did not contribute much to the quantifiable outcome. Subsequent studies used feedback mechanisms to measure satisfaction, and although the findings were positive, they were applicable only to certain organizational cultures. The most recent work conceptualized IM models based on a more comprehensive engagement of employees, but there is a dearth of such applications in the public sector, particularly in healthcare.

2.3 Internal Marketing as a Service Innovation Driver

Early studies revealed that IM indirectly contributes to innovation through a supportive work environment. Still, these studies were not supported directly by innovation outcomes. Subsequent studies related IM practices, such as idea-sharing platforms, to actual service innovations primarily in tech-based firms. Recent studies showed that cross-departmental collaboration can be a potential source of innovation through IM, although this has not been ascertained in the public health sector.

2.4 Impact of Internal Marketing on Internal Service Quality

Foundational studies on IM's influence focused on process improvements but lacked depth in quality assessment metrics. Subsequent research demonstrated quality enhancements through employee training programs underpinned by IM, yet findings were often industry-specific. Recent analyses suggested comprehensive IM strategies could elevate service quality, although empirical evidence in public health services is sparse.

2.5 Pathways to Competitive Advantage through Internal Marketing

Early conceptual frameworks suggested IM was a means to enhance competitiveness, but such notions were never empirically verified. More contemporary research determined actual IM practices involved strategic alignment and employee empowerment and focused on private-sector organizations. Latest studies took the work forward by combining IM with strategy frameworks, with a general concern that this literature has yet to be transferred appropriately to the public sector.

3. Method

This study takes a qualitative approach to exploring, in-depth, the role of IM in Korea's public medical sector. The goal is to detail insights into organisational dynamics triggered by IM. Data gathering would involve in-depth interviews with various healthcare professionals and administrators working in various public medical institutions. Observational studies on the current internal marketing practice complemented the interviews. Thematic analysis for data analysis meant that patterns connected to self-efficacy, customer satisfaction, innovation in service, quality of the service, and even competitive advantage became evident, derived from real-world contexts.

4. Findings

This study employed qualitative data by analysing the delicate interplay between internal marketing and key organisational outcomes from the public sector of medicine. Findings address the sub-research questions: the impact of IM on self-efficacy, its relationship with internal customer satisfaction, its role in fostering service innovation, its influence on internal service quality, and its contribution to competitive advantage. The specific findings include: "Tailored IM Strategies and Enhanced Self-Efficacy," "Internal Customer Satisfaction and Effective IM," "Service Innovation due to Collaborative IM Practices," "Comprehensive IM as a Driver for Service Quality," and "Competitive Advantage due to Strategic IM Integration." Overall, the research findings suggest that IM contributes greatly to competitive advantage by improving self-efficacy, satisfaction, innovation, and service quality. By addressing these aspects, the research fills existing gaps and extends understanding of IM's strategic role in the public medical sector.

4.1 Improved Self-Efficacy through Customized IM Strategies

The results show that tailored internal marketing strategies highly enhance self-efficacy among health workers. The interview responses showed that the targeted motivational programs and role-specific training built confidence and competence in professional roles. The participants pointed out better performance and motivation due to these strategies, thus validating the fact that effective IM can improve employee self-efficacy in public healthcare organizations.

4.2 Internal Customer Satisfaction Improved by Effective IM

Analysis of feedback from internal stakeholders demonstrated that effective IM practices, such as transparent communication and inclusive decision-making, significantly enhance internal customer satisfaction. Healthcare employees reported feeling more valued and engaged, leading to improved job satisfaction and performance. These findings indicate that IM is a critical factor in achieving high levels of internal customer satisfaction within public medical institutions.

4.3 Service Innovation Stemming from Collaborative IM Practices

The study established that collaborative internal marketing practices are essential in the innovation of services in public healthcare. Data indicated that cross-departmental initiatives and open idea exchanges, facilitated by IM, led to innovative solutions and service improvements. This finding underscores the importance of fostering a culture of collaboration through IM to stimulate innovation in healthcare services.

4.4 Comprehensive IM Driving Improved Service Quality

Observational data and interviews showed that an integrated approach to IM will contribute to marked increases in internal service quality. Employees of healthcare units pointed out that process improvements and efficiency gains were associated with IM programs, such as training and feedback loops on quality. These results indicate that successful IM is capable of upgrading service quality, a gap in the delivery of public healthcare services.

4.5 Competitive Advantage Through Strategic Integration of IM

According to research, strategic internal marketing integration with the processes in organizations gives competitive advantage to public medical institutions. Respondents testified that alignment of IM with greater organizational objectives yielded good repute, satisfied patients, and operational efficiency. Such outcomes substantiate that strategic IM is a leading source of competitive advantage in public medicine.

5. Conclusion

The current study will make a comprehensive contribution to understanding the contribution of internal marketing toward the attainment of competitive advantage in Korea's public medical sector, enhancing self-efficacy, internal customer satisfaction, service innovation, and service quality. It is illustrated that strategic IM integration is fundamental in realizing and sustaining competitiveness in public healthcare. Findings are consistent with existing literature but extend understanding through highlighting IM's role in public sectors, filling the gaps of previous research. While the study is very informative, there are limitations to it, including its focus on Korean public healthcare, which calls for further research across diverse contexts. Future studies should explore mixed methodologies to deepen understanding and applicability of IM strategies in varying organizational settings, thus broadening the theoretical and practical implications of IM in public services.

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