

Improving employee performance through internal marketing and organizational learning: The mediating role of organizational innovation

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Abstract

The present study investigated improving employee performance through internal marketing and organizational learning: the mediating role of organizational innovation. This research is applicable in terms of purpose, quantitative in terms of method, and of descriptive-survey type. The statistical population in this study is 116 food exporting companies in Mashhad, and using the Cochran formula, the sample size was estimated to be 86 companies; for this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed among and completed by the managers of these companies using simple random sampling method. In order to analyze the data, structural equation modeling test and other statistical tests based on SPSS and PIs software were used. The validity of the research variables was measured through confirmatory factor analysis. Also, the reliability of the research variables has shown that Cronbach's alpha for research variables including internal marketing, performance, organizational innovation, and organizational learning has been obtained as 0.909, 0.935, 0.940, and 0.901 respectively, which indicates the desired reliability of the research tool. The research findings have shown that organizational learning and internal marketing are effective on employee performance and organizational innovation mediates its effect.

Keywords:

Internal marketing,
Organizational
Performance,
organizational
Innovation,
Organizational
learning.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In today's world, human resources are recognized as the most important resource of organizations and attracting and retaining efficient forces is considered a vital competitive advantage (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2024). With rapid environmental changes, traditional management tools have become ineffective and the need for flexible and learning structures to respond to changes is felt more than ever. Optimal human resource performance is a necessary condition for the success of organizations, as it allows managers to focus on macro strategies (Organ, 2020). Two key factors in improving employee performance are organizational learning and internal marketing. Organizational learning helps organizations survive in a competitive environment by producing knowledge and continuously reviewing methods. On the other hand, internal marketing, by looking at employees as internal customers, creates effective relationships and improves organizational performance by increasing job satisfaction and motivation (Ocharo & Kinyua, 2021). Also, organizational innovation, especially in times of crisis and intense competition, plays a decisive role in the success of organizations and helps managers allocate resources optimally (Quispe et al., 2024). This issue is doubly important in food trading companies that face export challenges and strict standards. Therefore, in today's dynamic and uncertain environment, organizations need a flexible, learning, and innovative structure to meet stakeholder expectations. Based on the above, this study examines the question: do internal marketing and organizational learning through innovation have a significant impact on employee performance?

Theoretical foundations

Innovation and organizational innovation

Leticia Santos et al., (2022) considers innovation as the tendency of a company or organization to participate in and support new ideas, pioneer in technology, conduct research, development, and other creative activities aimed at developing new products, services, and processes. On the other hand, organizational innovation encompasses a wide range of actions and activities aimed at facilitating and achieving innovative results in the organization. This type of innovation can be related to a product, device, system, process, policy, program, or service (Chen & et al., 2019).

Internal Marketing

Internal marketing means that companies should seriously invest in the quality of performance and capabilities of their employees. This is especially important for people who are directly in contact with customers, and these people need to be trained effectively. Also, all support staff should work together and work as a team to satisfy customers (Corrin & et al., 2022).

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning is a dynamic process that enables an organization to adapt quickly to changes. This process involves the production of new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Organizational learning is the main way to create knowledge work and improve the efficiency of the organization; therefore, a successful organization must be dynamic in learning (Okolie, 2024).

Research Background

Bikzadeh Abbasi & Kaneshloo (2024) conducted a study titled: Investigating the Effect of Marketing Research on Improving Organizational Innovation. The results obtained indicate that marketing research has a positive and significant effect on improving organizational

innovation in the United Nations Credit Institution. Khajeh Saeed & Sattarii (2024) conducted a study titled: The Effect of Marketing Capabilities on the Financial Performance of Exporting Companies. The results of this study showed that financial resources, information resources, and relational resources have a significant effect on the financial performance of exporting companies. Patwary et al., (2022) conducted a study aimed at investigating the role of knowledge management (KM) practices on performance and innovation. The findings indicate that KM has a positive effect on innovation performance among Malaysian hospitality employees. This study also shows that organizational learning and organizational creativity significantly mediate the relationship between KM and innovation performance.

Research Methodology

The present study is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of method. The statistical population in this study is 116 food exporting companies in Mashhad, and the sample size was estimated to be 86 companies using the Cochran formula; for this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed among the managers of these companies and completed by them, through a simple random sampling method. In order to collect data, a questionnaire with 36 items related to the research variables was used. Also, in order to analyze the data in this study, the structural equation modeling technique and other statistical tests were used through SPSS and Smart PLS software. Face validity was used to confirm validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficient criterion was used to confirm reliability.

Findings

The findings of this study are presented in the form of 7 hypotheses, all of which were confirmed.

- Internal marketing has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
- Organizational learning has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
- Organizational innovation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
- Internal marketing has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation.
- Organizational learning has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation.
- Internal marketing has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with the mediating role of organizational innovation.
- Organizational learning has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with the mediating role of organizational innovation.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to improve employee performance through internal marketing and organizational learning: the mediating role of organizational innovation (case study: food exporting companies in Mashhad). The findings of this study are consistent with the research of Chaubey et al., (2024), Laksono (2023), Imani et al., (2015), Karimi et al., (2021), and Gholipour et al., (2021). In the following, and based on the research findings, the following suggestions are presented:

- Internal marketing
 - Designing motivational systems to increase job satisfaction
 - Improving organizational communications and clarifying processes
 - Paying attention to the needs of employees as internal customers
- Organizational learning
 - Holding continuous training courses

- Creating an organizational knowledge bank of successful and unsuccessful experiences
- Encouraging employees to share knowledge

- Developing innovation
 - Creating a safe space for presenting new ideas
 - Forming cross-departmental innovation teams
 - Investing in new technologies

- Coordinating strategies
 - Integrating internal marketing with innovation programs
 - Facilitating knowledge exchange between different units
 - Practical support for innovative ideas

- Human resource management
 - Mapping a career path for employees
 - Promoting a culture of continuous learning
 - Linking individual and organizational goals