Study on the effect of internal marketing on service quality: Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to synthesize the fragmented literature on effect of internal marketing on service quality, thereby broadening the literature breath and making gap identification comprehensive. Additionally, the paper also provides more insight of the concept of internal marketing, identifying aspects of it which has the most significant impact on service quality. The methodology of the research is based on systematic literature review which enabled to collect the relevant data pool to the research through PRISMA approach using existing literature. Main findings of the data revealed that internal marketing possesses a positive impact by 76% on service quality, where most significant factor contributing a positive impact being motivation and reward system. Furthermore, the marketing mix elements of internal marketing is also shown to enhance the quality of service. The research results also identified limitations revealing the gaps in the existing literature in terms of the topic. These gaps are recommended areas which can be further explored to enrich the academia. Moreover, the practical implications of the paper can benefit the world of business to embrace the concept of internal marketing to enhance the competitive edge through employees, a major asset of organizations.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Service Quality, Internal Customers, Internal Marketing Mix

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world of business, ideas and knowledge are prioritized in terms of level of value it holds, compared to the material and capital resources. Competitive edge is built up with the creation of committed employees, which is resulted due to the great deal of effort spent on, engaging, motivating and retaining talent (Tolessa, 2017). In other words, companies are investing on marketing internally for an effective external marketing.

Result of external marketing is most fruitful when the service delivered is of high quality. Service Quality is best determined through the customer's judgement which is highly impacted by the discrepancy between customer's expectations and perceptions (Abumouab, et al., 2011). Lewis and Entwistle (1990) emphasizes that front-line employees are the major influencers to reduce such discrepancies, as the perceived quality is based on how the service is delivered. In this regard, IM helps to bridge the gap between expectation and perceived quality of service through satisfied employees.

Internal Marketing is an equal handling of both employees and customers with the aid of proactive polices to reach organizational objectives (Sadeghloo and Tirgar, 2013). The term Internal Marketing (IM) was pioneered by Berry (1981) defining that IM is, changing the organizational perspective to think of its employees as Internal customers as well, where
their jobs should be viewed as internal products catered by infusing objectives of the organization, in a way it satisfies the internal customer. (Kotler, cited in Sadeghloo and Tirgar, 2013) points out that, external marketing can be more effective by proper IM.

The importance of committed workforce is proving to bring in competitive edge in the volatile business environment. Employees who do not understand the roles they play in company success fails to be engaged in the work at an effective level, thus the quality of service is impacted negatively (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017). The concept of IM is proposed by multiple scholars, as a tool to which enables a competitive edge for organizations through best utilization of employees. (Wanbugu, 2015; Sadeghloo and Tirgar, 2013; Lings, 2000; Ballantyne et al., 2000 and Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993). Furthermore, it is observed that there is scariness of systematic literature review on the subject, while some level of inconclusiveness also exists among researchers on this particular topic (Alomeri, Al-Zoubi and Darabseh, 2018; Lombard and Koppler, 2016; ElSamen and Alshurideh, 2012). Hence it is vital that the existing researches on the concept of IM be reviewed and presented in a collective manner for organizations to understand the implications of IM and ways to perceive the subject matter. Therefore, the need of a systematic research to identify the effect of IM on Service Quality arises.

- What is the effect of IM on Service Quality through marketing mix elements?
- What is the impact of factors of IM on Service Quality?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of a review of the existing literature in the academia related to the topic of the research. The literature review is compiled based upon several themes in relation to the research questions.

2.1. DEFINITIONS OF INTERNAL MARKETING?

IM, is a concept which originated back in 1970’s (Panigyrakis 2009, cited in ElSamen & Alshurideh, 2012). Pioneer of the concept of IM as we now know was introduced by Berry (1981), defining that IM is, changing the organizational perspective of its employees to think of them as internal customers as well, where their jobs should be viewed as internal products catered by infusing objectives of the organization, in a way it satisfies the internal customer. Emphasizing to this definition, Ballantyne et al. (2000) and Rafiq and Ahmed (1993) states that, IM is a process of creating a market internally to ensure requirements of delivering a better service quality is enabled. Cahill, (1996, cited in Aburoub, et al., 2011) further simplifies IM as a tool which shapes internal products (employees) to fit customer’s perceived level of quality. In addition to above, some of the authors have highlighted that IM is just another approach to Human Resource Management (Gronroos, 1990, Vary, 2001 and Tsai, 2008, cited in Byju, 2013). Drake (2005, cited in ElSamen & Alshurideh, 2012) strains the importance of IM due to the fact that for organisations to establish its brand to the external customer, selling it successfully to internal customer (employee) is the best approach.
2.2. **INTERNAL MARKETING MIX**

As Piercy and Morgan (1991), states that internal customer is an influencing dependent of external customer satisfaction. Hence, marketing tactics must be applied in both the markets; internal and external. In this regard, each of the marketing mix element is reviewed based on published literature.

### 2.2.1. Internal Products

Internal products refer to the creation of jobs that attract the right type of employees (Kale, 2007). How an organization can make themselves a choice of such employees is through employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is achieved through the right products (jobs) that satisfy the needs of employees (Kale, 2007). In return, employee satisfaction is rooted to “meeting customer needs” conscious employees, which is one of the main purposes of IM (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2003).

### 2.2.2. Internal Price

Strydom (2004, cited in Burin et al. (2015), defines internal price as what the employee has to bear to work for the organization. Unlike price in external marketing being tied to monetary perspective, this is entirely intrinsic in nature. Hence the cost concepts of internal pricing are identified to be; an opportunity and/or a psychological or emotional sacrifice (Strydom, 2004 cited in Burin et al. (2015).

Strydom (2004, cited in Burin et al. (2015) and Zeithaml et al. (2006), described that opportunity cost consist of two types; one is, career development opportunities lost due to remining in the organization rather than hunting opportunities elsewhere and second being the time and energy it takes to get used to the organization when an employee starts afresh. Exhaustions and stress experienced from the job is the psychological cost, which is described by Larkin et al. (2012) as the stress caused by too much demands on employees due to external influences. Emotional cost is borne by employee when they have to apply emotional labor in situations when dealing with clients in a socially appropriate manner regardless of the true emotional state of the employee (Goodwin et al., 2011).

### 2.2.3. Internal Promotion

The internal promotions are the element of marketing mix which would enable the enforcing of organizational goals and objectives to employees (Piercy and Morgan, 1991). The authors further describe the fundamental reason of internal promotion is to educate employees to enable fulfillment of the jobs in line with organizational objectives.

### 2.2.4. Internal Distribution (Place)

With similar concept of the distribution defined in external marketing, (Mishra, 2018), outlines internal distribution as internal suppliers providing internal customers with required internal services (appropriate working environment, facilities and conditions) which must be enabled by the organization.
2.2.5. People

People element of IM mix involves two types; enterprise/organization and the people working in it - internal supplier and employees (Mishra, 2018). People element is vital as IM is the shared process between employees and organizations for mutual benefits (Mishra, 2018).

2.2.6. Internal Process

According to Zeithaml et al. (2006), processes are the procedures, practices and systems in place to deliver a service. There is no other place where employee is more important than implementation stages of the processes. Hence, process of IM deals with ensuring correct mechanisms are in place for employees to deliver the service at the level organization requires (Mishra, 2018).

2.2.7. Physical Evidence

Zeithaml et al. (2006) describes physical evidence as tangible aspects of the working environment which enables the delivery of a service. According to Mishra (2018), physical evidence has two types; (1) environment in which product is delivered which is called essential physical evidence and (2) the peripheral physical evidence, which is the required evidence for ensuring service delivery – manuals, memos, SOPs.

2.3. Definitions of Service Quality

Existing plethora of researches in relations to service quality indicates that Quality has been identified as a tool for conquering efficiency and improved performance in the volatile business environment (Jain and Gupta, 2004). Parasuraman et al. (1988) defines service quality as the gradient which exist due to the variances in expectations of customer in regards to the service provided. Supporting this, Lovelock and Wirtz (2004) describe service quality as differences in the perceived meaning of quality by customers. Further simplifying, Lovelock and Wirtz (2004), states that service quality ensures alignment with required specifications of a service or a product. In accordance to above definitions, Gilmore (2003) in a broader perspective describes services quality as the tendency of an organization to level up to or even exceed the expectations of customers.

2.3.1. Service Quality Dimensions

Quality is an essential part of the service industry while its measurability is highly abstract. Lewis and Booms (1983, cited in Colette et al., 2019) describes in a comparative viewpoint that service quality can be measured during its delivery, as quality is ensured when service level meets the customers’ expectations. Thus, a service will always have a certain level of quality, but whether it is at the expected level of the customer is how a service can be categorized in terms of its quality. In this regard, the dimensions to measure the service quality was developed.

Parasuraman et al., (1985) came up with ten dimensions to measure the service quality; Credibility, Responsiveness, Reliability, Security, Understanding, Tangibles, Accessibility, Courtesy, Competence, Communication. These were later summarized and reduced to 5
dimensions; reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, naming the model SERVQUAL. Mauri et al. (2013) and Siddiqi (2011), agrees that SERVQUAL model is a reliable model inclusive of all essential perceptions to measure service quality.

Reliability: Ability to perform and delivered the service at the promised level of accuracy (Parasuraman et al., 2008).

Empathy: Addresses the sincere concern and ability to cater service with required level of individual attention (Parasuraman et al., 2008).

Responsiveness: The readiness of the staff to deliver the service with the willingness to accommodate the needs of the customer (Parasuraman et al., 2008).

Assurance: knowledge and professionalism of staff and their ability to obtain the confidence of the customer in regards to the service being provided (Parasuraman et al., 2008).

Tangibility: Expresses the physical aspects of the facilities and staff involved in the delivery of the service with the suitable form of presentability required to deliver a particular service (Parasuraman et al., 2008).

2.4. Internal Marketing and Service Quality

Sadeghloo and Tirgar (2013) concluded in the study on sports and youth shows that both in the point of view of customers and employees, IM has a positive relationship with the service quality. Lings (2000) explains that workers satisfaction is a core step for satisfying customers as this can be won only by reaching a certain level of quality in the delivered service. Therefore, reaching quality of services required and achieving customers satisfaction depends on how much an organization can satisfy its employees and conforms to goals of them, which can be achieved through IM (Wanbugu, 2015).

2.4.1. Elements of Internal marketing mix and service quality

The following are observed linkage between IM and service quality dimensions through marketing mix elements based on existing literature.

2.4.1.1. Internal price and dimensions of service quality

As highlighted by Lovelock and Wright (2002) price element of IM mix is determined to effect service quality both positively and negatively. Positive impact is through the knowledge and skills gained by internal price which eventually leads to higher assurance, responsiveness and empathy (Burin et al. 2015). On the other hand, the negative impact as explained by Lovelock and Wright (2002), occurs due to any long learning processes, which requires extra energy and time. This can make employees less satisfied. In such a case, the responsiveness, assurance and empathy can be diminished. Lovelock and Wright (2002) recommends that integrating knowledge gaining programs in daily work processes (through IM) can reduce the negative impacts by eliminating overwhelming of employees with large contented trainings.
2.4.1.2. Internal promotion and dimensions of service quality

De Chernatony and Segal-Horn, (2003) explains that internal promotion helps to create the service consistency as this is the element of marketing mix which keeps the employees informed of the organizational goals and objectives. According to De Chernatony and Segal-Horn, (2003) if the services are consistent, quality aspects of service such as reliability, responsiveness and assurance are positively improved. Burin et al. (2015) further elaborates that internal promotion keeps employees informed of not just the organizational goals, but also about the new services or changes in the business. This keeps employees updated at a constant level which also makes them feel involved and important, ultimately improving the reliability, responsiveness and assurance dimensions of service quality through satisfies employees (Lovelock and Wright, 2002).

2.4.2. Internal process and dimensions of service quality

For an optimal delivery of services, enforcing and as well as practicing the processes that are in place is vital. Service quality dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness are enhanced with effective and efficient internal processes in practice. According to Gupta et al. (2005), when employees are familiar with the service delivery processes, they perform their jobs more effectively, which speeds up the service delivery (responsiveness dimension), while improving confidence levels of the employees. Gupta et al. (2005) further explains that when employees delivers the services with confidence, this permits employees to deliver services with empathy and assurance to the external customer.

2.4.2.1. Internal distribution and dimensions of service quality

Explaining the importance of inter-departmental synergy, Ahmed and Rafiq (2000), describes distribution as the element of IM mix, which highly influences the responsiveness and reliability dimensions of service quality. The comfort of a suitable working environment and facilities will enable for a more efficient service delivery, as this can make employees feel secure and taken care of (Bouranta et al, 2009).

2.4.2.2. People and dimensions of service quality

People aspect of IM mix deals with empowering the people; enterprise and employees. When employees are empowered, the feel of having more control makes them strive for higher levels of service quality (Lovelock and Wright, 2002). Not having to consult repetitively to their managers for everyday decisions makes the employees more responsive to the customer’s needs. Infusing rewarding mechanism further calibrates this, as employees will continue to strive for excellence. The service quality dimensions such as empathy, responsiveness, reliability is highly improved as a result (Burin et al. 2015).

2.4.2.3. Physical evidence and dimensions of service quality

Tangibility dimension of service quality is affected by the physical evidence element of marketing mix. The impression of service being received professional is ensured to the customers through internal physical evidence aspect of IM mix (Little and Marandi, 2003).
2.4.3. Internal Marketing factors and service quality

Data from several studies suggest that IM has been considered a concept consisting of multiple factors. The most commonly agreed factor among most scholars is Training and Development (George, 1990; Liou and Chen, 2001; Hu, 2003). Following this, Motivation and Reward system is identified as a major factor of IM (Gronroos, 1990; Mohammed and Ahmed, 1993; Lin, 2006; Ayse and Isil, 2008). In contrary to this, Conduit and Mavondo (2001) and Ching and Hsin-Hsin (2007) do not agree that motivation and reward system is a factor of IM, instead, identifies Internal Communication and Managerial Support as significant factors of IM in addition to training and development. Gronroos (1990) also included Internal Communication as one of the factors of IM. George (1990), Akroush et al. (2013) and Shakouri et al. (2015) approves this while counting Employee Empowerment and Recruitment & Selection also as vital factors of IM. Moreover, Mohammed and Ahmed (1993) and Liou and Chen (2001) augments Work Environment as an extended factor of IM.

Based all the factors identified by the scholars, the most commonly identified five factors which imposes the most significant impact on service quality are further reviewed in details in terms of the effect they have on service quality;

2.4.3.1. Training & development

Employees being one of the key resources for organizations, ensuring that employees are molded to become that key resource is highly important. Training is a systematic development of employees through knowledge, skills and attitudes (Saleem et al, 2011). IM requires employees to undergo trainings for excellent quality of services (DuBurin, 2014). Wanbugu (2015) further identified that knowledge and skill provided through one of the key dimensions of IM, training gives the competitive edge companies are seeking in today’s business environment. In line with this reasoning, Larsson et al. (2007) identifies that employees thrive in the organizations striving for the pinnacle of hierarchy, reasoning for the importance of employee development. Giving employees the resources (training) to use their own discretion confidently is effective IM which in return improves quality of service (Proctor and Doukakis, 2003).

2.4.3.2. Motivation & reward systems

When a company is seeking to gain advantage through employees, the management must be able to manage the behavior of employees. Noe et al. (2006) states that making the employees to feel accountable for the products and services through certain management styles and tools. This is defined as motivation and reward system, which enable control over employee behavior (Noe et al., 2006). Tansey and McGrath (2004) addresses that IM as a mechanism for ensuring motivation. Supporting to this statement, Papasolomou and Vrontis (2006) have indicated that motivation is an important dimension of IM which improves the performance of the employees, through systematic reward system. Often motivating factors are deteriorated by the type of management style (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). Wanbugu (2015) concludes that IM contributes to promote management styles which can enhance employee motivation and drive high level of activity for quality outcome.
2.4.3.3. Communication

Heskett, (1981) explains that organizations seek IM mainly because, it establishes an open information climate with the communication aspect of the concept. He stresses that, interpersonal and interactive communications with employees is important for service firms to convey high quality service. Roberts-Lombard (2010) emphasizes that communication aspect of IM enables organizations to induce its values to the employees. Furthermore, Lovelock (1999) apprises that high satisfactory levels can be observed with effective communication associated with the IM.

2.4.3.4. Employee Empowerment

Shakouri et al. (2015) define empowerment as delegating authority to employees along with the resources and freedom to make the decisions which align with the organizational goals. Further elaborating Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) confirms employee empowerment as a controlled independency given to employees to enable them to self-regulate to contribute their ideas, recommendations and even making decisions. This helps the organization to improve and achieve the goals through the knowledge and experience passed on by the employees. In return, employees get the sense of belonging and appreciation which drives the quality in the services being delivered through the employees (Shakouri et al., 2015).

2.4.3.5. Managerial Support

Hogg et al. (1998) highlights that creation of valuable relations who portray the sense of commitment to the organization is a significant result of successful IM. The effective management of relationship between all the levels of the hierarchy can enable organizations to promote employee value creation which is a major component of IM (Hogg et al.1998). The sense of belongings and appreciation from the management endorses employees to be more committed towards the organization willingly (Gounaris, 2006). Similarly, (Schilchte et al., 2015) concludes that managerial support which will drive the employees to put more effort into showing the commitment they have towards the organization. Pomirleanu and Mariadoss (2015) confirm that managerial support aspires the employees to improve the level of interaction inter-departmentally. Pomirleanu and Mariadoss (2015) further adds that managerial support acts as a stimulation for employees which enhances their performance and in return quality of the services.

3. Method of Analysis

3.1. Research Approach and Design

The methodology of this research is based on systematic literature review (SLR). This is a method primarily used in medical studies (Cabassa et al. 2017). With the purpose of enhancing theoretical and methodological rigidities while enforcing more practical application, Tranfield et al. (2003) was the initiator of this method in the managerial studies. SLR aids to compile a very inclusive empirical research which is based on multiple published literature (Tranfield et al., 2003, Massaro et al. 2016, Kraus et al. 2020).
Furthermore, the method fulfils the purpose of providing a deeper understanding of the research questions through an extensive collection of databases of peer reviewed articles.

The main reason for selecting the SLR method is to adopt a flawless literature review in managerial studies, where flaws such as subjectivity and low replicability can be eliminated (Fink 2014). In order to maintain the accuracy derived from the SLR method, the same review algorithm will be approached for the managerial studies as well. In this regard, the PRISMA principle has been used (Moher et al. 2015).

3.2. INCLUSION CRITERIA AND DATA COLLECTION

Online search engines including EBSCO HOST, Emerald, Google Scholar, Wiley Online and Core.ac.uk journals were used for collection of research data for a period between 01st February 2020 to 27th March 2020. Stated search engines were used as these are the academically approved platforms for publishing and retrieving valid academic literature. In order to track the articles which, meet the reference criteria, only the applicable articles have been listed and reviewed. The criteria satisfy the articles which have examined the relationship between targeted concept under the research scope and must be written in English language. Search terms such as; “internal marketing”, “Service quality”, “customer perceived value”, “internal marketing mix” and “internal customers” have been used along with the Boolean logic (i.e. AND or OR) to filter the most relevant articles in relations to the research topic.

In order to ensure articles included in the analysis of data fulfils a certain criterion, the articles published from the year 2010 onwards has been included. This is for two reason; (1) in order to base the research on the most recent academia and (2) trying to identify the extent of focus on the topic “Internal Marketing” in the academia in the past century. To further validate the data, articles have been shortlisted by selecting only the ones published in peer-reviewed journals, which are also written in English and is a paper based on the concept of the targeted topic of research. Peer reviewed journals are used in order ensure the validity of the data is assured by through academic standards.

Booth et al. (2012), suggests to use the order; search scoping, search conduction, bibliography search, verification and documentation. This order of data collection and validation has been adopted as a guide to extract the required gist of the data. As an initial step, redundant data was removed through a search done with keywords only. Second level of filtration included separation of the articles against inclusion criteria based on title/topic. Following this, relevant articles were identified based on abstract. To further validate the data, full article review was done as a last level of filtration.

Following PRISMA diagram Fig. 1 indicates a summarization of the data collection procedure. Step 1 amount to a total of 1052 articles (Core: 165, Emerald: 201, EBSCO HOST: 84, Wiley: 50 and Google Scholar: 550) through a search done with keywords only. This was further reduced to 280 by eliminating redundant data resulted for using multiple databases. Step 2 filtered the data to a total of 80 after relevancy check done based on title/topic. Step 3 accounted for a total of 31 articles after reviewing the abstracts. Finally, a full-text review of eligibility was checked through quality assessment (appendix 1).
The purpose of a quality assessment is to review and screen the validated articles in terms of academic rigor. Quality assessment was based on four criteria; descriptive validity, statistical conclusion validity, construct validity and external validity/transferability. Descriptive validity criteria identify the factual accuracy of the account as reported, of those based on qualitative method. Out of the reviewed 31 articles, 48% of the articles fulfilled this criterion. The second criteria, Statistical Conclusion Validity checks if the presumes causes and effects identified in the paper are related of those papers based on quantitative methodology. 77% of the articles satisfied this criterion. Following criteria of quality assessment, Construct Validity examines objectivity of the researcher for qualitative studies and adequacy of the operational definitions and measurements of theoretical constructs in quantitative studies. 86% of the papers passed this criterion. The final criteria of the quality assessment are External Validity or Transferability. This criterion reviews the generalization of the results of papers beyond the backgrounds of the study for those based on qualitative method. In the context of qualitative studies, the criteria review the extent to which results from the selected sample can be generalized to the sample population. 86% of the articles reviewed met this criterion. Final dataset concludes to a total 26 articles that has been finalized as eligible for this paper.

Fig. 1. PRISMA flow diagram

4. FINDINGS

The database of the research is based on 26 peer reviewed articles which full-fills the inclusion criteria specified in methodology. The main findings of the study are presented below;
4.1. Frequency of Publications per Year

It is observed that majority of the papers published are from the year 2012 with a 30%. Following that is Year 2016 with 15%. Least number of publications are from the year 2010, 2011 and 2019. Through the concept of IM was introduced back in 1981, most of the researches on the concept emerged recently with the need to gain competitiveness in the ever-changing business world. Hence, the greatest number of publications are observed to be published in the mid years of the last decade.

![Fig. 2. Year and frequency of publication](image)

4.2. Targeted Geographical Areas of Publications

Database of publications covers a broad range of geographical regions with targeted regions of research of publications are identified to be from Africa, Middle East, Europe, North America, Oceania and Asia. Majority of the publications are from Africa with 54% out of which Jordan is frequently used country of target for research in the region. Following this is Asia region with 19%. Only 4% of the publication was from regions including Europe, North America and Oceania was usable in the collected set of data. The majority of the researches being conducted in the regions of Africa limits any other dimensions such as cultural, which may have impacted the final results of the studies.

![Fig. 3. Percentage of publications per region](image)
4.3. Methodology used in the Publications

Observations on the methodology of the publications used in the data collection identifies that, majority of the researches were conducted using the quantitative method rather than qualitative or mixed methodology, which adds up to a percentage of 77%. Lowest number of publications of 8% were based on qualitative while mixed methodology was used in 15% of the publications. The length of the times it takes to collect the data for qualitative research is longer than that of qualitative researches. This is implicit to be the reason for majority of the articles being based on quantitative method.

![Diagram showing percentage of publications per sample methodology used]

**Fig. 4.** Percentage of publications per sample methodology used

4.4. Research Based Area

Out of the 26 articles in the dataset, total 31% articles were based in the area of banking making this the majority. Following that, 20% of the articles were based on tourism industry and healthcare industry. Other based areas of the research of the publications in the dataset includes; insurance, social, oil industry, education and postal service industry. Tourism and financial sector - Banking is highlighted to be an service industries where service quality is vital to enhance the businesses, hence it is observed that majority of the studies are based on these two areas (Ilemma and Nigussie, 2018; Wambugu, 2015; Kameswari and Rajyalashmi, 2012).

![Diagram showing percentage of publications per based area of research]

**Fig. 5.** Percentage of publications per based area of research
4.5. INTERNAL MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS AND ITS EFFECT ON SERVICE QUALITY

Out of 26 articles in the dataset, 19% of the articles directly examined the effect of IM on service quality through marketing mix elements. 80% out of which indicates there is an overall positive effect on service quality. With a percentage of 60%, Product and Price element of the marketing mix is identified to be the element which contributes the most significant positive impact on the service quality. Only 40% of the articles have identified Place, People, Process and Physical Evidence have a positive impact on service quality. In contrast to the 80% of the articles, a 20% confirms that, none of the marketing mix elements has any significant effect on service quality.

Table 1. Percentage of articles identifying the IM Mix elements and its effect on Service Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; year</th>
<th>Effect on service quality (positive/no effect)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Farias (2010)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td>Reynolds, Lombard and Meyer (2015)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td>Wambugu (2015)</td>
<td>No effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alomari, Al-Zoubi and Darabseh (2018)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of articles indicating positive effect on service quality</td>
<td>60%</td>
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4.6. FACTORS OF INTERNAL MARKETING ON SERVICE QUALITY

The dataset identified 7 common factors as key factors of IM; communication, training & development, recruitment & selection, reward & motivation, empowerment, work environment and managerial support. Majority of the articles have confirmed that reward & motivation as the most significant factor of IM impacting positively towards service quality with a 53%. Following reward & motivation factor, 50% of the articles have confirmed training & development as another factor of IM which results a positive impact on service quality. 40% of the articles specifies communication as a factor of IM which implies to positively impact quality of service. A total of 19% of the articles identified Managerial Support as a factor of IM which impacts service quality positively. Employee Empowerment was also determined as a factor of IM which impacts positively towards service quality, however, only 7% of the articles verified this factor indicating Employee Empowerment is not a significant factor for effective service quality. In addition to this, Recruitment and Selection is revealed as a factor of IM which positively impacts service quality by 15% of the articles.
Table 2. Articles identifying the Factors of IM positively impacting Service Quality

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<tr>
<th>IM factors</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
<th>Authors &amp; years</th>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation and</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Aburoub, Hersh and Aladwan (2011)</td>
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<td>Rewards</td>
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<td>Hamzeh, Mehrdad and Aghamiri (2012)</td>
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<td>ElSamen and Alshurideh (2012)</td>
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<td>Ogunnaiker, Oyeniyi and Adeniji (2012)</td>
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<td>Kameswari and Rajyalashmi (2012)</td>
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<td>Kaminakis, Siampas and Kostopoulos (2015)</td>
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<td>Lemma and Nigussie (2018)</td>
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<td>Training and</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Colette, Christian and Laure (2019)</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>Kameswari and Rajyalashimi (2012)</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Colette, Christian and Laure (2019)</td>
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<td>Recruitment and</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>De Farias (2010)</td>
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<td>Selection</td>
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<td>Aburoub, Hersh and Aladwan (2011)</td>
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<td>Employee Empowerment</td>
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<td>ElSamen and Alshurideh, (2012)</td>
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<td>Managerial Support</td>
<td>19%</td>
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5. DISCUSSIONS

The main results identified through the database collected has been discussed in relation to each research questions.
5.1. Effect of Internal Marketing on Service Quality through Marketing Mix Elements

Out of 26 articles in the dataset, 19% of the articles directly examined the effect of IM on service quality through marketing mix elements. 80% out of which indicates there is an overall positive effect on service quality (Farias, 2010; Reynold, Roberts-Lombard and De Meyer, 2015). With a percentage of 60%, Product and Price element of the marketing mix is identified to be the element which contributes the most significant positive impact on the service quality. This result corroborates the findings of the great deal of the previous work by Burin et al. (2015). Only 40% of the articles have identified Place, People, Process and Physical Evidence have a positive impact on service quality (Reynolds, Lombard and Meyer, 2015). In contrast to the 80% of the articles, 20% confirms that, any of the marketing mix elements has no significant effect on service quality (Alomari, Al-Zoubi and Darabseh, 2018). This result contradicts with the findings in the works of Lovelock and Wright (2002), Gupta et al. (2005), (Burin et al. 2015) and Ahmed and Rafiq (2000).

5.2. Impact of Factors of Internal Marketing on Service Quality

The dataset identified 7 common factors as key factors of IM; communication, training & development, recruitment & selection, reward & motivation, empowerment, work environment and managerial support. Majority of the articles have confirmed that reward & motivation as the most significant factor of IM impacting positively towards service quality with a 53% (ElSamen and Alshurideh, 2012; Kameswari and Rajyalashmi, 2012; Jumadi, 2014) validating the observations by Mohammed and Ahmed (1993), Hu (2003) and Lin (2006) who have also confirmed the significantly positive impact reward & motivation factor of IM has on service quality.

Following reward & motivation factor, 50% of the articles have confirmed training & development as another factor of IM which results a positive impact on service quality (Colette, Christian and Laure, 2019; Shazia, 2017; Wambugu, 2015). This conclusion is in agreement with the confirmation of Proctor and Doukas (2003) stating that giving employees the resources (training) to use their own discretion confidently is effective IM which in return improves quality of service.

40% of the articles specifies communication as a factor of IM which implies to positively impact quality of service (De Farias, 2010; Aburoub, Hersh and Aladwan, 2011; Huang and Rundle-Thiele, 2014). The works of Conduit and Mavondo (2001) and Ching and Hsin-Hsin (2007) validates this conclusion.

A total of 19% of the articles identified Managerial Support as a factor of IM which impacts service quality positively (Jumadi, 2014; Nsou, 2013). This result indorses the conclusion of Schilchte et al. (2015) that managerial support which will drive the employees to put more effort into showing the commitment they have towards the organization which leads to enhanced service quality.

Moreover, Employee Empowerment was also determined as a factor of IM which impacts positively towards service quality, however, only 7% of the articles verified this factor.
indicating Employee Empowerment is not a significant factor for effective service quality. Hence this contradicts with findings of Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) confirming employee empowerment as significant factor of IM in enriching the service quality through the authoritative power enabled by this factor.

In addition to this, Recruitment and Selection is revealed as a factor of IM which positively impacts service quality by 15% of the articles (Wambugu, 2015; Jumadi, 2014). This result specifies that Recruitment and Selection is a far more effective factor or IM compared to Employee Empowerment for improving service quality. Other additional factors evident from the dataset includes Work Environment, vision and Culture (Abrous, Hersh and Aladwan, 2011, Jumadi, 2014; Colette, Christian and Laure, 2019).

6. CONCLUSION

This study based on SLR provides a cohesive overview of the effect IM has on service quality. The SLR collected together the empirical literature on the IM concept, the factors of it and the IM mix. The marketing mix elements in general imposes a positive impact on service quality while, price element of the mix is identified to affect most significantly. SLR reveals multiple factors of IM which at different levels impacts the service quality. Motivation and reward factor indicate to be the most impactful factor of IM for higher service quality. Results of the study indicates that IM has a significant correlation with service quality and can be a concept organization can utilize in making the best use of its employees to stand out with a competitive edge in the volatile business world of today.

6.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

However, there are shortfalls of the study which imposed as a challenge to compile the SLR. The dataset has been compiled from articles in the period between 2010-2020. This restricts the inclusivity of the literature on the topic in the previous years which can transpire to be significant for the final result of the paper. Additionally, the keywords used for search terms may have caused a limitation in the data pool. Furthermore, the restricted criteria to use only peer reviewed articles excludes any books which may have contributed to be useful for the topic of research.

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Nevertheless, this research can be a valuable addition for enhancing researches in the area of IM and service quality by further exploiting the gaps in the existing academia.

6.2.1. Internal Marketing Mix Elements

The research results reveal that there is a lack of adequate amount of literature done in terms of marketing mix elements of IM. Similar to the traditional marketing to the external customer, IM is a process of creating a market internally to ensure requirements of delivering a better service quality (Ballantyne et al., 2000; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993). Focusing more in how each marketing mix element in the concept of IM can be best utilized for
effective marketing activities is important to incorporate a familiar traditional approach into this concept of marketing to employees.

6.2.2. Methodological and Theoretical Diversity

Furthermore, the data pool consists mainly of articles based on qualitative method. If more literature can be added based on qualitative method, this can give variety of perspectives to the existing numeric based results. Additionally, as main areas of the researches in the data pool were conducted in the banking sector, exploring other flourishing sectors such as innovative tech business areas are recommended. Due to the abundancy of existing researches only in African countries, it is suggested more researches in the topic can be focused additional regions of the world such as Asia.

Reference:


