

# The relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction: A study from retail shops in Bangladesh

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## Key Words

Internal Marketing, Job Satisfaction, Customer satisfaction, and Organizational performance.

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## Abstract

A Retail store is now a prevalent concept in Bangladesh offering a wide range of necessity goods for household and daily living. Within the last one decade, superstores have developed positive perceptions among customer and this is the attractive business to many investors. As retail shop business is based on service sector, customer satisfaction and service delivery are keys to the success where having satisfied employees are essential. Hence, to achieve sustainable organizational development and higher organizational performance in this competitive market, the need of having a special emphasis on effective internal marketing practice is worth mentioning. Viewing employees as an internal customer is essential and vital in internal marketing that contributes to job satisfaction.

This paper aims to analyze the relationship between internal marketing factors and employee job satisfaction in the retail sector of Bangladesh. The essential assumptions in the research are internal marketing components namely training and development, organizational support, pay and rewards, and retention policy influence job satisfaction. A multiple regression analysis was used as an efficacious method to test the effect of internal marketing practices on employee's job satisfaction. The adjusted  $R^2$  is .751 which suggests that the four internal marketing elements explain close to 75.1 percent of the variance for the dimension of employee's job satisfaction.

The results of the multiple regression analysis elucidate that there is variation in the effect of internal marketing factors on job satisfaction. So, it can be deduced that the stronger the internal marketing practice; the better will be the level of employee satisfaction. Organization should treat employees as an internal customer and give them opportunities for developing themselves. The company should ensure that they have the promotion opportunity and frequent feedback along with ensuring a healthy working environment. A company should induce financial rewards by providing bonus, commissions etc. to increase the satisfaction level. Since internal marketing practices act as a precursor to higher organizational performance and job satisfaction, special attention has been given in this paper to focus the importance of internal marketing practices.

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## 1. Introduction

Business organizations need to attract and retain customers as well as employees to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage (Schultz, 2002; Shabnam and Sarker, 2012). To achieve this objective, retail super shops must focus on their efforts for developing and sustaining an organizational culture that emphasize on employee satisfaction through effective internal marketing practices. Employee plays a central role in attracting, building and maintaining relationships with customers (Lings and Greenley, 2005; Schultz, 2002). The recognition of the central role of employees has given rise to "internal marketing"

programs strongly oriented to employee development. It was revealed that internal marketing orientation is a significant variable in employee job satisfaction, and therefore, the internal market can be effective by practicing it properly. According to Melten et.al. (2005), "the internal support concept is grounded in the view of the service-contact workers as consumers of internal resources generated and supplied by others within the firm". The implied assumption is that satisfied employees will perform their jobs better which has positive impact on customer satisfaction (Berry, 1981; Chi, et.al., 2016). Hence, satisfied internal customers will also be loyal and more unlikely to change their jobs which results in decreased turnover.

Job satisfaction is of great significance for employees to remain happy and also deliver their level best. Satisfied employees tend to be loyal towards their organization and stick to it even in the worst time. Ivancevich, et. al. (1997) mentioned that job satisfaction is the state a worker has of a feeling how well he or she is in an organization. Satisfied employees hardly think of leaving their current jobs and it is vital to ensure higher revenues for any particular organization. Farzad (2007) asserts that the fundamental tool for achieving employee satisfaction is considering employees as customers. In order to achieve organizational expectation, the employees will be searching for improvement and motivational methods such as motivation system, training and job design, etc to increase their organizational and individual performance (Ahmed,et.at.,2003; Tsai and Tang, 2008; Isik and Altunoglu, 2016).

One of the main goals of service sectors is to achieve higher level of customer satisfaction and often employees act as a precursor to customer satisfaction. The target of satisfied customer can be achieved if the employees are satisfied through internal marketing (Ismail and Sherif, 2017; Kotler, 2000; Pitt, et.al., 1999; Schultz, 2002). This paper aims to elucidate the relationship between internal marketing factors and job satisfaction in the retail sector. The specific objectives are as follows.

- To determine the factors that constitutes internal marketing.
- To determine the demographic and socio-economic profile of employees in urban retail sector.
- To examine if internal marketing orientation affects job satisfaction.
- To help formulating appropriate internal marketing strategies to enhance satisfaction of retail super shop employees.

## **2. Theoretical background of internal marketing and its importance:**

The term internal marketing appears to have been first used by Berry et al. (1976) and later by George (1977) and Thompson et al. (1978) and Murray (1979). Internal marketing orientation has begun as a method to motivate and satisfy employees, developed through a customer orientation phase (Ali, 2016; Ahmed and Rafiq, 2000). The concept of internal marketing has evolved from the original conceptualization of employee satisfaction and motivation by treating employees as customers and jobs as products for improving service quality (Azzam, 2016; Berry, 1981; Sasser and Arbeit, 1976). Stauss and Hoffman (2000) defined internal marketing as "The planned use of communication actions to systematically influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of current employees". Internal marketing is defined as treating both employees and customers with equal importance through proactive programs in order to achieve the objectives of the organization (Brammah, 2016; Woodruffe, 1995).

The main concept of internal marketing is to make the employees as important as the external customers by treating them as internal customers (Ali, 2016; Kanyurhi and Akonkwa, 2016; Grönroos,1981). Internal marketing orientation is an important concept where organizations apply marketing tools to attract and retain the best employees, which will affect business performance. There are many dimensions of internal marketing. According to Rajvalakshmi and Kameswari (2012), internal marketing dimensions like training and skill development activities, work environment, superior support, coworker support and recognition have a significant impact on the satisfaction level of employees. On the other hand, Hogg, Carter and Dunne (1998), mentioned that dimensions of internal marketing measurement are: communication, staff training; appraisal and feedback; and customer consciousness. Ahmed and Rafiq (2000) classified these dimensions into strategic rewards; internal communications; training and development; organizational structure; senior leadership; physical environment; staffing; selection and succession; inter-functional coordination; incentive systems; empowerment; and operational process changes. Tsai and Tang (2008) identify the key elements of internal marketing including service training programs, performance incentives, and vision for service excellence. The dimensions of internal

marketing measurement as discussed by Berry et al. (1976) involve actions such as employee attraction and selection, employee socialization, empowerment, participation in decision making and establishment of accurate and open information between employees and management.

Internal marketing acts as a precursor to service excellence as Greene et al. (1994) suggest that internal marketing orientation is the key to excellent service and success of external marketing. However, literatures have depicted that, internal market orientation has an impact on employee's roles and responsibilities. Satisfied customer can be achieved if the employees are satisfied (Ali, 2016; Kukreja, 2017; Kotler, 2000; Pitt, et.al., 1999; Schultz, 2002) and satisfying employees can be easily achieved through internal marketing. In addition to that, the importance of internal marketing lies in motivating the employees and encouraging them to offer super services to customers who will improve the customer satisfaction of the company's services (Kukreja, 2017; Lings and Greenly, 2005). According to Kotler (2000), internal marketing should be as a priority before external marketing. Internal marketing starts with the organization recruiting the right people in the position to reach the point where these employees are satisfied and willing to do their job and accomplish customer satisfaction. Internal marketing is also significant for business performance in retail sector since profit maximization mostly depends on customer satisfaction in this sector. Therefore, this study reveals the direct relationship of internal marketing and employee job satisfaction in retail sector of Bangladesh which has not be covered yet by another researchers.

### 3. Job satisfaction and its importance

Job satisfaction is pivotal to the growth of any organization. Lawler (1973) defined job satisfaction as a person's affective reaction to his total work role. Kallerberg (1977) stated that job satisfaction refers to an overall affective orientation on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying. According to Ali (2016), one of the most frequently studied concepts in organizational sciences is job satisfaction. According to Yildiz (2016) and Zeffane (1994), job satisfaction is one of the most widely debated topics in the areas of organizational behavior and human resource management. Ali (2016), for instance, defined job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job value. However, internal marketing practices can result in a positive as well as rewarding experience which affects employees job satisfaction as Suzuki et al. (2006) refers to job satisfaction as a joyful or positive emotional state regarding work or the work experience. According to Shimizu et al, (2005), job satisfaction is the level of satisfaction achieved through the job itself, through facets such as sense of achievement, growth, self-esteem, independence, and sense of control. According to Herzberg (1966), the leading dissatisfactions are Company policy, Supervision, Relationship with boss, Work conditions, Salary, Relationship with peers. The leading to satisfaction of a job are Achievement, Recognition, Work itself, Responsibility, Advancement, and Growth and so on. It is concluded that the predictors of employee satisfaction namely, reward and recognition (including salary and benefits), career advancement, promotional opportunities, work environment (including personal safety), leadership, relationship with supervisor or manager, relationship with co-worker, stress and pressure, role clarity and job fit, empowerment, training and development, feedback, decentralized decision making, sharing of knowledge and information and organizational culture (Ali, 2016, Azzam, 2016, Ahmad Wasay and Malik, 2012; Gu and Sio, 2009; Halepota and Shah, 2011; Kanyurhi and Akonkwa, 2016; Schon, 2007; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006; Roos, 2005).

Job satisfaction is complex phenomenon with multi facets. It is influenced by the factors like salary, working environment, autonomy, communication, and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfillment (Azzam, 2016; Kukreja, 2017; Kaliski, 2007; Yildiz, 2016). However, employee satisfaction leads to customer satisfaction. One of the main goals of service sectors is to achieve higher level of customer satisfaction and often employees act as a precursor to customer satisfaction. Satisfied customer can be achieved if the employees are satisfied (Kukreja, 2017; Kotler, 2000; Pitt, et.al., 1999; Schultz, 2002). Satisfying employees can be easily achieved through internal marketing. However, various literatures show that selection and appointment, training and development, communication, compensation, retention policy as well as organizational support affect job satisfaction of

employees. Specific focus is given on internal marketing and its impact on retail employee's job satisfaction in Bangladesh which is completely new in this study.

#### 4. Internal marketing and employee job satisfaction:

The relationship between internal marketing and job satisfaction had been the concern of many researchers (Azzam, 2016; Braimah, 2016; Kukreja, 2017; Rajyalakshmi and Kameswari, 2009). If an organization implements internal marketing then the organization is upgrading job satisfaction for employees which will lead definitely to enhancing the performance of the organization (Ali, 2016; Ahmed, et.al., 2003; Conduit and Mavondo, 2001; Tansuhaj et al. 1991). Rajyalakshmi and Kameswari (2012) found that training and skill development activities, work environment, superior support, coworker support and recognition had a significant impact on the satisfaction level of employees. On the other hand, Hogg, Carter and Dunne (1998), mentioned about communication, staff training; appraisal and feedback; and customer consciousness as dimensions of internal marketing measurement. Likewise, research has found that reward and recognition, career advancement, promotional opportunities, work environment, leadership, relationship with supervisor or manager, relationship with co-worker, stress and pressure, role clarity and person job fit, empowerment, training and development, feedback, decentralized decision making, sharing of knowledge and information and organizational culture are crucial to job satisfaction (Ali, 2016; Ahmad, et.al., 2012; Braimah, 2016; Halepota and Shah, 2011). So, it can be deduced that internal marketing has a strong correlation with employee job satisfaction.

Furthermore, job satisfaction is influenced by the factors like salary, working environment, autonomy, communication, and organizational commitment; which are also crucial elements of internal marketing (Braimah, 2016; Chi, et.al. 2016; Isik and Altunoglu, 2016; Kanyurhi and Akonkwa, 2016; Lane, et.al. 2010; Vidal, et.al. 2007). An empirical study conducted on the impact of internal marketing factors on job motivation and job satisfaction in the retail stores revealed that the working conditions and hours, hygiene and sanitation, rest rooms, support from superior, and attitude of colleagues have highest influence on job satisfaction and motivation (Rajyalakshmi and Kameswari, 2012). The findings revealed a positive relationship between the internal marketing practices and employee job satisfaction. Many of the studies highlighted the relation between internal marketing and job satisfaction. The factors of internal marketing like pay, coworker support, supervisors, working conditions, job security, promotional aspects, nature of work, employee selection, employee training and development, work design, employee rewards and compensation, fairness, recognition, flexibility, feedback, quality of service, employee development, vision of the organization, strategic reward, internal communication and senior leadership have been concentrated upon by different authors over the years. Based on the literature, the present study identified five dimensions of internal marketing factors: selection and appointment (staffing), training and development, organizational support, pay and rewards and retention policy. These dimensions are studied within the retail super shop employees, to identify their relation to job satisfaction. The established relationship from the literature between the various internal marketing dimensions and employee job satisfaction is shown in figure 1 below.



Figure-1: Model of internal marketing and employee job satisfaction.

## 5. Research Hypotheses:

Based on the research model in figure-1 and existing literature review, the following hypotheses are developed to test the relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction specifically in retail sector of Bangladesh. The test measures particular five components of internal marketing and their relationship with job satisfaction.

H1: Internal marketing has positive significant effect on job satisfaction.

H1.1: Selection and appointment have positive effect on job satisfaction.

H1.2: Training and development have positive effect on job satisfaction.

H1.3: Organizational support has positive effect on job satisfaction.

H1.4: Pay and rewards has positive effect on job satisfaction.

H1.5: Retention policy has positive effect on job satisfaction.

## 6. Retail Business in Bangladesh:

Retail business in Dhaka city of Bangladesh is playing a significant role in community life. It is offering a good number of employments at present, and this sector is booming due to huge business demand. According to Siddiqui, et.al. (2006), there are five categories of retail shops in Bangladesh; (1) Roadside Shops (*Traditional & Unstructured*), (2) Municipal Corporation Markets (*Traditional & Unstructured*), (3) Convenience Stores (*Traditional & Unstructured*), (4) Supermarkets (*Organized and Structured*), (5) Superstores (*Organized and Structured*). Almost 20,000 products are being offered by these superstores with prime focus on food items including a large variety of fish, meat, vegetables, fruits, bakery, dairy and grocery items (Munni, 2010). Furthermore, retail shops in Bangladesh also provide household, personal care and miscellaneous products (Siddiqui, et.al. 2006; Munni 2010). According to BSOA (Bangladesh Supermarket Owner Association), retail chain stores in Bangladesh get 15% to 20% annual growth in sales, and they claim that the annual turnover of the superstores now stands at the BDT 15 billion approximately (Munni M, 2010). The present retail organizations which are performing as organized retailing in Bangladesh are going through myriad challenges in procuring, maintaining and retaining good employees (Kashem, 2012; Sarker and Afroze, 2015; Shamsher and Hossain, 2012). Many of the employees often complain of not having financial rewards or incentives; they call themselves underpaid and one of the consequences of this can be called as lack of motivation (Sarker and Afroze, 2015; Shamsher and Hossain, 2012). Some employees behave like superior, and they often do not cooperate with customers (Sarker and Afroze, 2015). Working in a team is an important quality that every single employee should possess, but some of the organizations are doing an extra ordinary job while others are performing below average (Kashem, 2012). Pay for performance is not practiced well in most of the cases. Therefore, improving employee's job satisfaction is a serious concern in recent time. This paper has focused the role of internal marketing in satisfying internal customers (employees) that ultimately makes the external customer happy with higher profitability in retail sector of Bangladesh.

## 7. Methodology:

Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire survey where the questionnaire is developed based on published literature on internal marketing and job satisfaction by different authors. The target population of this study was employees of retail shops in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Respondents were selected randomly based on convenient sampling. Survey data had been collected between November, 2016 and April, 2017. 250 employees from the retail sector responded to the survey and all participants have been kept anonymous. In the first part of the survey questionnaire, there were questions about the demographic profile of employees with multiple choice questions about their gender, age, average monthly income and family size. In addition to that, factors influencing employee satisfaction were identified through secondary data analysis from relevant journals and books. For instance, independent variables were identified as training opportunities, verbal appreciation, promotion opportunity, feedback of supervisor, work relationship, compensation package, existing salary structure, financial and non-financial rewards, organizational policies etc. from the literature of different published research journals. The statistical software used for the analysis of questionnaires was SPSS. The data of all the independent variables were tested first using Cronbach's alpha reliability test to assess reliability. Multiple regression analysis has been done to find out if the independent variables have a significant

relationship with the dependent variable. The statistical significance difference targeted was .05 alpha levels which are prevalent in most research (Cooper and Schindler, 2006).

## 8. Findings

In the survey questionnaire, all constructs were evaluated using five-point Likert scale. Random office personnel from retail sector were surveyed who fell in appropriate criteria. Among the 250 respondents, 77% were male respondents and 23% were female from different age groups and job positions. Among them, 61% were from age less than 25 years, 34% were from age between 26 and 35 years, 5% were from age between 36 and 45 years. 32% of the respondent was from managerial position, 56 % were from sales unit and 12% belonged to cash in charge and accountant. There were also differences among the respondent's average monthly income. 59% respondents had monthly income below BDT 15000, 33% people had income between BDT 15000 and BDT 25000, 6% of them had income between BDT 25000 and BDT 35000 and only 2% had the income of more than BDT 45000 (USD 580). The number of family members also varied. For instance, 27% of the employees have a family of 1-3 members, 65% have 5-6 family members, and 8% of the employees have a family of more than 6 members.

Only 11% of the employees agreed and 2% strongly agreed that their salary encourages them to work with full dedication while 59% of the respondents were not happy with their salary structure. However, only 23% of the high achieving employees get financial and non-financial reward which is quite alarming. 53% of the respondents were not satisfied with the organization policy. At the same time, 58% employees believe that their organization will replace them if they find new employees for the same position to whom they will have to make lesser payments, which is undesirable. Contrarily, 59% of retail employees are satisfied with their supervisors and 72% of the employees get the opportunity to ameliorate their working skills through participating in myriad training and development programs.

### 8.1 Descriptive statistics analysis

Table (1) in the appendix elucidates that employees of retail sector perceived organizational support (with the highest mean scores, i.e.  $M = 3.54$ ) to be the most dominant of internal marketing practices followed by training and development ( $M = 3.38$ ), retention policy ( $M = 2.96$ ), and pay & rewards ( $M = 2.34$ ) respectively. However, employees of retail sector rated job satisfaction with a mean of 2.91.

### 8.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

The essential assumptions in the research are internal marketing components namely training and development, organizational support, pay and rewards, and retention policy influence job satisfaction. A multiple regression analysis was used as an efficacious method to test the effect of internal marketing practices on employee's job satisfaction. According to Table 2 shown below, the adjusted  $R^2$  is .751 which suggests that the four internal marketing elements explain close to 75.1 percent of the variance for the dimension of employee's job satisfaction.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870 <sup>a</sup>	.758	.751	.36382

**Table 2: Predictors: (Constant), Mean Retention policy, Mean Training & development, Mean Organizational support, Mean Pay & rewards**

Table 3 shows that pay and rewards (56.2%) and organizational support (23.7%) appears to show the greatest impact on job satisfaction. In addition, the impact of training and development, organizational support, pay and rewards, and retention policy on job satisfaction would vary according to the demographic profile. The results of the multiple regression analysis elucidate that there is variation in the effect of internal marketing factors on job satisfaction.



opportunities, coworkers, supervision, and the work itself. Organizations should give their employees more verbal recognition as it motivates them to work properly. Supervisors should also provide them frequent feedbacks to increase their performance. However, companies should ensure a healthy work relationship and environment as well. In addition to that, supervisors should communicate with them more openly and should respect their opinions too.

H1.3: Pay and rewards have positive effect on job satisfaction.

The results point out a significant relationship between pay and rewards and employee job satisfaction ( $p=.000$ ) which demonstrates job satisfaction is influenced by the factors like salary, working environment, communication, autonomy and organizational commitment; which are also crucial elements of internal marketing (Lane, et.al., 2010; Vidal, et.al., 2007). The results also indicate that rewards lead to higher recognition of achievement and increase employee satisfaction. So, if organizations increase the opportunities to get rewards, the employees will more likely to be satisfied. Organizations should introduce such compensation package so that it encourages the employees to work with full dedication. If they feel that payment they are receiving is higher than the others working in the same positions, they will more likely to be satisfied. Moreover, organizations should provide more financial rewards along with non-financial benefits to boost up employees motivation.

H1.4: Retention policy has positive effect on job satisfaction.

There is a significant relationship between retention policy and employee job satisfaction. From the analysis, it is found that there is a significant relationship between retention policy and employee job satisfaction ( $p=.027$ ). Prior research has empirically revealed a positive relationship between retention policy and job satisfaction (Suzuki et. al, 2006; Rajyalakshmi and Kameswari, 2009). These results indicate that the retention policy is a vital element to retain the employees. Thus, this will have a significant impact on the employee job satisfaction. If employees feel a sense of belongingness, they will more likely to be satisfied. Organizations should make better relationships with their employees and they are company's internal customer. Management should not neglect their point of views and should pay the salary that they deserve. Thus it ensures job satisfaction of the employees.

## 10. Conclusion

The prime purpose of the research was to analyze the relationship between internal marketing practices and employee job satisfaction. This research has fulfilled the objectives as a mentioned earlier above. The first objective was to analyze the relationship between internal marketing practices and job satisfaction which revealed a positive relationship. This proves that internal market orientation and employee job satisfaction was connected with each other. The second objective is to identify the relationship between training and development and employee's job satisfaction. Finding dictates that there was a significant relationship. The third objective was to find out the relationship between organizational support and employee's job satisfaction. The finding reveals that there is positive correlation between organizational support and employee job satisfaction. Another objective was to examine the relationship between pay and rewards and employee's job satisfaction. The findings depicted that there is a positive relationship between them. The regression result shows that the pay and rewards are the most important factor to evaluate the employee's job satisfaction in the retail sector in Bangladesh. In conclusion, this research has successfully attended the four research objectives and proved that internal marketing is positively related with employee job satisfaction.

## 11. Limitation and scope of the study

This research has revealed that internal marketing is connected with employee job satisfaction in retail sector of Bangladesh. However, this result is only valid for employees in the organizations under study. Extensive study of all organizations in retail sector of Bangladesh was not covered due to inconvenience of collecting data and conducting interview of the respondents. This study will assist future research to examine the relationship between the internal marketing practices and employee job satisfaction in other organizations and sectors. It will also bring attention of the policy makers and practitioners to motivate employees of retail sectors in particular.



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### Appendix

**Table 1: Mean, Standard deviation, and Reliability of study variables**

Construct & Item	Mean	Reliability	Standard Deviation
<b>Training &amp; Development</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>.73</b>	<b>.70</b>
My organization provides me enough training opportunities to develop myself			
In my organization, the knowledge and skill expansion of staff is taken/considered to be an investment			
This organization encourages high flexibility regarding the versatile/diverse training needs of employees			
<b>Organizational Support</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>.71</b>	<b>.57</b>
I receive verbal recognition/appreciation when I achieve higher performance.			
I have opportunities to get promoted in my organization			
My supervisor frequently provides me the feedback regarding my work performance.			
In my organization, co-workers treat me with proper respect/I am satisfied with work relationships with the people around me.			
Supervisors and managers communicate openly with me			
I am satisfied with the given right to put forward my opinions.			
<b>Pay &amp; Rewards</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>.86</b>	<b>.78</b>
The compensation package I receive encourages me to work with full dedication			
The pay I receive is higher compared to others doing similar job at their companies.			
I am satisfied with the existing salary structure of the company			
High achieving employees showing excellent performance get financial rewards (Bonus, Increases etc.)			
<b>Retention Policy</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>.76</b>	<b>.92</b>
Even if the organization find employees to whom they have to make lesser payment for my position, they will not replace me.			
If I decide to resign, the organization management will convince me to stay			