



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Internal Marketing on Job Satisfaction through Employee Engagement as Mediator

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine and analyze comprehensively and in-depth the role of internal marketing on employee engagement and job satisfaction. This study involved 42 employees of MSMEs food processing Mang Ding in Palembang. This research is an explanatory research category, using the PLS-SEM approach as a test and data analysis tool. These study findings that internal marketing has a significant impact on employee engagement and job satisfaction. In addition, employee engagement was found to have a significant impact on job satisfaction and acts as a mediator on the influence of internal marketing on job satisfaction.

Theoretically, this study has implications for the emergence of the role of internal marketing as a significant antecedent of employee engagement and job satisfaction in a unified research model. In addition, from a practical perspective, this study has implications in the field of human resource management, especially in designing alternative strategies to increase employee engagement and job satisfaction through the implementation of internal marketing models.

INTRODUCTION RESEARCH

The increasingly fierce business competition triggers organizations to build a sustainable competitive advantage. Competitive advantage can be achieved by optimizing the role of human resources (Malik, 2019; Shehadeh & Mansour, 2019), one of which is through increasing job satisfaction (Prasetio et al., 2019). Job satisfaction can encourage employees to continue to make positive contributions to the organization. Job satisfaction is an important aspect that must always be considered, especially by organizational executives, given the positive impact it has on organizational performance (Pang & Lu, 2018). Several studies have investigated the effect of job satisfaction, high levels of job satisfaction encourage employees to display a variety of constructive behaviors such as commitment (Mahmood et al., 2019) loyalty (Dhir et al., 2019), innovative work behaviors (Tang et al., 2019), morale (Kocman & Weber, 2018), and so on. Some of these behaviors certainly have the potential to bring the organization to a unique ability that not many other organizations have, thus bringing the organization to a sustainable competitive advantage.

Until now, job satisfaction is still the focus of attention for many practitioners and academics in the field of human resource management. Experts report that job satisfaction can be influenced by various factors such as internal marketing (Mainardes et al., 2019; Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021) and employee engagement (Chan, 2019; Yan et al., 2019). Moreover, there are several studies that report that internal marketing does not have any effect on job satisfaction (Sohail & Jang, 2017) and employee performance (Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021). There are other studies that find the internal marketing dimension has no effect on employee engagement (Khasawneh, 2019)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internal Marketing

The concept of internal marketing is essentially oriented to employee satisfaction (Sohail & Jang, 2017). Internal marketing is also said to be a managerial approach that views employees as internal customers of the organization (Foreman & Money, 1995); (Udayana, 2022); (Farida et al., 2023). It is important to know that services are not only aimed at external customers, but the best service must also be provided to members of the organization including employees, this is because without the role of employees the organization cannot maintain its existence in competition (Wang et al., 2011).

Several internal marketing approaches such as empowerment, reward systems, communication, training, and development have been found to have a significant impact on job satisfaction (Balta, 2018; Egbosi et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2019; Mainardes et al., 2019) and employee engagement (Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021; Shahzad & Naeem, 2013). Job satisfaction and employee engagement are believed to bring positive benefits to overall organizational performance (Črnjar et al., 2020; Johansen & Sowa, 2019; Pang & Lu, 2018). However, in some cases, there are still a number of human resource management practitioners who are not aware of the urgency of the concept of internal marketing for organizational sustainability.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement enables employees to achieve positive fulfillment, which can foster a sense of belonging and make it harder for them to leave work (Bakker et al., 2008). This statement is also evidenced by a report that states that employee engagement reduces employees' intention or desire to move or leave their jobs (McCarthy et al., 2020; Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). This condition can occur because of feelings of attachment and pride and are immersed in their work as a whole (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020). High employee engagement will ultimately lead employees to achieving more optimal performance (Sugianingrat et al., 2019). Experts say that employee engagement has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction (Chan, 2019; Cote et al., 2021; Han et al., 2020; Perera et al., 2018). However, there are studies that report that employee engagement has a negative effect on job satisfaction (Yalabik et al., 2017).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a condition that should arise for workers in an organization, this is because job satisfaction contributes greatly to better employee performance (Tang et al., 2019). In addition, employee job satisfaction appears as a manifestation of the positive attitudes and feelings of each employee towards his work (Prasetio et al., 2019). Employees have a high level of job satisfaction if they have positive attitudes and feelings towards their work, on the other hand, employees who are dissatisfied with their work have negative attitudes and feelings towards their work (Prasetio et al., 2019).

Referring to a number of relevant empirical findings, an opinion can be drawn that there are still inconsistent results in the study of the influence of internal marketing on employee engagement and job satisfaction. This condition is the rationale for research to re-examine the role of internal marketing on employee engagement and job satisfaction. This research is expected to make a significant contribution in the field of human resource management, especially regarding how organizations can achieve competitive advantage by focusing attention on aspects of internal marketing, employee engagement, and job satisfaction.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Influence of Internal Marketing on Employee Engagement

Employee engagement arises from good internal marketing in a company or organization (Bakker et al., 2008). Internal marketing is essentially able to increase employee engagement because employees feel valued, loved and belong to the organization as a result of employee satisfaction with

the satisfaction provided by the company or organization. Employee engagement enables employees to achieve positive fulfillment, which can foster a sense of belonging and make it harder for them to leave work (Bakker et al., 2008). In addition, internal marketing is able to increase employee engagement and reduce employees' intention or desire to move or leave their jobs (McCarthy et al., 2020; Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). This condition can occur because of feelings of attachment and pride and are immersed in their work as a whole (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020). High employee engagement will ultimately lead employees to achieve more optimal performance (Sugianingrat et al., 2019). The better the internal marketing in a company or organization, the higher the employee engagement.

H1: Internal marketing has a positive influence on employee engagement

The Influence of Internal Marketing on Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is inseparable from how Internal marketing plays a role in a company or organization. Good internal marketing within a company or organization will increase employee job satisfaction with the organization (Tang et al., 2019). In addition, employee job satisfaction appears as a manifestation of the positive attitudes and feelings of each employee towards his work (Prasetio et al., 2019). Employees have a high level of job satisfaction if they have positive attitudes and feelings towards their work, on the contrary, employees who are dissatisfied with their work have negative attitudes and feelings towards their work (Prasetio et al., 2019). Therefore, internal marketing plays an important role in a company or organization to provide satisfaction to the company's or organization's first customers, namely its employees (Prasetio et al., 2019). If internal marketing in a company or organization goes well, the higher the job satisfaction in the organization.

H2: Internal marketing has a positive influence on job satisfaction

The Influence of Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction begins with high employee engagement with a company or organization (Bakker et al., 2008). Employee engagement is able to increase job satisfaction because employees feel appreciated and valued by a company or organization (Prasetio et al., 2019). Job satisfaction arises from employee satisfaction in a company or organization, this contributes greatly to better employee performance (Tang et al., 2019). In addition, employee job satisfaction appears as a manifestation of the positive attitudes and feelings of each employee towards his work (Prasetio et al., 2019). Employees have a high level of job satisfaction if they have positive attitudes and feelings towards their work, on the contrary, employees who are dissatisfied with their work have negative attitudes and feelings towards their work (Prasetio et al., 2019). The higher the employee engagement in a company or organization, the higher the job satisfaction.

H3: Employee engagement has a positive influence on job satisfaction

The Influence of Internal Marketing on Job Satisfaction through Employee Engagement as mediator

Internal marketing is a managerial approach that views employees as internal customers for the company or organization (Foreman & Money, 1995). In addition, internal marketing is essentially oriented to employee satisfaction (Sohail & Jang, 2017). Employee engagement is able to increase job satisfaction because employees feel appreciated and valued by a company or organization (Prasetio et al., 2019). Job satisfaction arises from employee satisfaction in a company or organization, this contributes greatly to better employee performance (Tang et al., 2019). In internal marketing, companies or organizations must first satisfy their internal customers, namely their employees, this is because without the role of employees the organization cannot maintain its existence in competition (Wang et al., 2011). The results of this study further emphasize the important role of employees in a company or organization if they are given satisfaction first before satisfying external customers of the company or organization (Wang et al., 2011). Employees who are satisfied with the company or organization will have a high sense of belonging to the company or organization (Wang

et al., 2011). Internal marketing that works well in a company or organization will increase employee engagement and will ultimately increase job satisfaction.

H4: Internal marketing has a positive influence on job satisfaction through employee engagement as mediator

RESEARCH MODEL

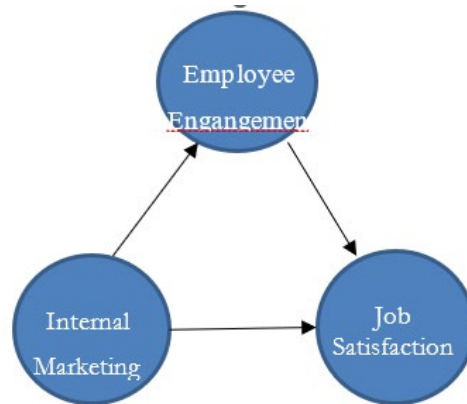


Figure 1. Research Model

METHOD

Data Collection and Analysis

This study is an explanatory research category with a survey approach. From the survey conducted, 42 data were obtained involving employees who worked at MSMEs for processing food Mang Ding in Palembang. This study uses a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach with partial least squares (PLS) software version 3.0., as a test and data analysis tool. This study will use the Sobel test in the analysis of the effect of mediation with reference to the significance value of $t_{table} > 1.96$. The minimum number of samples in this study was twenty (20) samples. Determination of the minimum number of samples refers to the paper of Hair et al., (2012) which suggests ten times the maximum number of paths that lead to each construct in the outer model (number of formative indicators per construct) and the inner model (number of path relationships directed at a particular construct). Because the model in this study as a whole consists of reflective indicators, in determining the minimum sample, the second alternative will be used, which is ten times the number of structural paths directed at certain (endogenous) constructs in the structural model (Hair et al., 2013).

Variable Measurement

Internal marketing was measured using twelve items developed by Foreman & Money (1995) and adopted by Nemteanu & Dabija (2021). Employee engagement is measured using nine items developed by Schaufeli et al., (2006). Job satisfaction is measured using six items developed (Mainardes et al., 2019). Furthermore, this study will adopt a five Likert scale model to measure each research item with alternative answers “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Outer Model

Table 1. Loading Factor (Outer Loading)

	Internal Marketing	Employee Engagement	Job Satisfaction
IM1	0,786		
IM2	0,794		
IM3	0,752		
IM4	0,797		

	Internal Marketing	Employee Engagement	Job Satisfaction
IM5	0,852		
IM6	0,793		
IM7	0,793		
IM8	0,833		
IM9	0,792		
IM10	0,820		
IM11	0,769		
IM12	0,836		
EE1		0,845	
EE2		0,797	
EE3		0,839	
EE4		0,837	
EE5		0,847	
EE6		0,812	
EE7		0,834	
EE8		0,825	
EE9		0,728	
JS1			0,864
JS2			0,806
JS3			0,786
JS4			0,852
JS5			0,728
JS6			0,809

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

From the outer loading output, it can be seen that all constructs with reflective items or indicators produce a loading factor value > 0.07 which means that all construct items or instruments are declared valid.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Engagement	0,938	0,671
Internal Marketing	0,949	0,643
Job Satisfaction	0,894	0,654

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

From the output construct reliability and validity, it shows the AVE value generated by all reflective constructs that are above > 0.50 so that it meets the requirements of convergent validity and reliability. The composite reliability value produced by all reflective constructs is very good, above > 0.70 so it can be concluded that all reflective construct indicators are reliable or meet the reliability test.

Inner Model

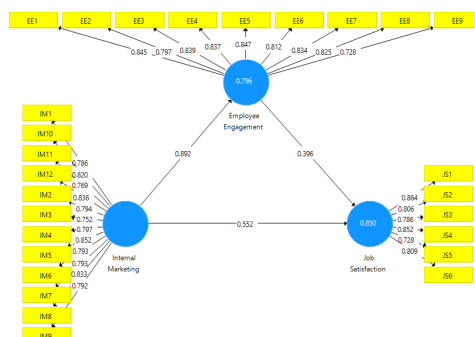


Figure 1. Full Model SEM

Table 3. Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

Influence	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values	Explanation
EE → JS	0,396	0,136	2,910	0,004	Significant
IM → JS	0,552	0,145	3,797	0,000	Significant
IM → EE	0,892	0,059	15,021	0,000	Significant
IM → EE → JS	0,353	0,125	2,816	0,005	Significant

Note: IM = Internal Marketing, EE = Employee Engagement, JS = Job Satisfaction. $T = \geq 1,96$ dan $p = < 0,05$.

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

DISCUSSION

From the results of testing the inner model on the output path coefficients, it can be seen that the internal marketing variable has a positive and significant influence on employee engagement, as evidenced by the positive original sample (R2) value of 0.892 with a strong category and T statistics > 1.96 or p value < 0.05 , thus the first hypothesis is accepted. This finding is in line with several reports in relevant previous studies which reveal that internal marketing has a significant effect on employee engagement (Frye et al., 2019; Mero et al., 2020; Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021; Shahzad & Naeem, 2013). In addition, this finding also expressly conveys results that are different from the findings presented by Khasawneh (2019) regarding internal marketing not having any effect on employee engagement. Keep in mind that employees also need to be treated better like customers of the organization. Employees have an important role as a resource which until now has been a positive contributor to the survival of the organization (Malik, 2019). Internal marketing approaches such as empowerment, communication, training and development, as well as reward systems are very much needed by employees (Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021), and if this approach can be accepted and felt directly, it is possible to increase employees' sense of attachment to work and the organization. them (Al-Weshah, 2018).

Furthermore, it was found that internal marketing had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, as evidenced by the positive value of the original sample (R2) of 0.552 in the moderate category and the resulting T statistics value > 1.96 , thus the second hypothesis was accepted. This finding is in line with the results that have been reported in a number of previous studies such as Nemteanu & Dabija (2021), Mainardes et al., (2019), Huang et al., (2019), and Balta (2018). This finding is of course contrary to the results of a study presented by Sohail & Jang (2017) that internal marketing does not have a significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Internal marketing can be manifested through various approaches. A number of experts state that internal marketing is relevant to communication, training, and development activities (Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021). Another study stated that internal marketing can include approaches related to empowerment and reward systems (Mainardes et al., 2019). In essence, the internal marketing approach is considered a possible solution for the delivery of high-quality services by meeting the needs of employees, so this approach is expected to provide satisfaction to employees, especially to their work and organization (Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021).

Finally, it was found that employee engagement had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, as evidenced by the positive value of the original sample (R2) of 0.396 in the moderate category and T statistics > 1.96 , thus the third hypothesis was accepted. This finding reaffirms a number of results in the relevant literature that employee engagement is a significant predictor of employee job satisfaction (Chan, 2019; Cote et al., 2021; Han et al., 2020; Perera et al., 2018). This finding is in contrast to studies that report that employee engagement is negatively related to job satisfaction (Yalabik et al., 2017). Furthermore, from the specific indirect effect output, it can be seen that the employee engagement (EE) variable mediates the influence of internal marketing (IM) on job

satisfaction (JS), this statement is evidenced by the positive original sample (R2) value of 0.353 with moderate category and T statistics value. The result is > 1.96 or P value < 0.05 , thus the fourth hypothesis (4) is accepted. This finding is in line with the results presented by Al-Weshah (2018) and Marjono et al., (2019) that employee engagement formed from an internal marketing approach can trigger higher employee job satisfaction.

Furthermore, it was reported that employee engagement enables employees to achieve positive fulfillment, which can foster a sense of belonging and make it harder for them to escape from work. High employee engagement encourages employees to increase their engagement and feel proud and immersed in their work as a whole. This can occur because of the similarity of values and characteristics between employees and their work or organization (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020), so this condition can potentially create satisfaction for employees with their work and organization. In addition, employee engagement can also be formed from internal marketing approaches such as empowerment, managerial communication, training and development, as well as an adequate reward system (Al-Weshah, 2018; Shahzad & Naeem, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical test results in the previous section, it can be concluded that internal marketing is a significant antecedent of employee engagement and job satisfaction. This condition has confirmed that internal marketing can be an alternative strategy in increasing employee engagement and job satisfaction. The higher the effectiveness of the implementation of internal marketing such as empowerment, communication, training and development, as well as the reward system, the higher the level of employee engagement and job satisfaction (Foreman & Money, 1995); (Sohail & Jang, 2017); (Prasetio et al., 2019); (Tang et al., 2019); (Wang et al., 2011).

This research is still focused on a relatively narrow scope of study, which is limited to one research object, this can be one of the causes of the coefficient of determination (R2) generated in a number of constructs, the majority are still in the moderate category. It is hoped that further research will develop a focus of study that is not limited to one research object. Furthermore, this study has not used the relevant basic theoretical perspective in the field of human resource management to explain the influence of internal marketing and employee engagement on job satisfaction (Tang et al., 2019); (Prasetio et al., 2019). It is hoped that future research can conduct a comprehensive and in-depth study of the influence of internal marketing and employee engagement on job satisfaction through a well-established basic theoretical perspective in the field of human resource management, this of course aims to strengthen the theoretical basis of the empirical model that will be tested for truth (Bakker et al., 2008); (Foreman & Money, 1995).

This study provides theoretical implications regarding the role of internal marketing as a significant antecedent of employee engagement and job satisfaction in a unified research model. In addition, this research also brings practical implications, especially in the field of human resource management (HRM) regarding how to design effective alternative strategies to increase employee engagement and job satisfaction through the implementation of internal marketing models (Prasetio et al., 2019); (Tang et al., 2019).

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