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Article

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Rajagiri Management Journal (RAMJ)

Provided in Cooperation with:

Rajagiri Business School and Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kochi

Suggested Citation: Bennani, Chaymae Abbana; Hassi, Abderrahman (2024) : The role of internal marketing in employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention in Morocco, Rajagiri Management Journal (RAMJ), ISSN 2633-0091, Emerald, Leeds, Vol. 18, Iss. 4, pp. 287-304, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RAMJ-04-2023-0081>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/337048>

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The role of internal marketing in employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention in Morocco

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Received 3 April 2023
Revised 21 March 2024
Accepted 21 May 2024

Abstract

Purpose – The current study investigated the effect of internal marketing practices, specifically the training and rewards system, on job satisfaction, affective commitment and employee turnover intention.

Design/methodology/approach – Structural equation modeling analysis was conducted on a sample of 288 responses from employees working in different organizations and diverse industries in Morocco.

Findings – The findings revealed that internal marketing positively affected employee job satisfaction and affective commitment and negatively affected employee turnover intention.

Practical implications – The current investigation extends our understanding of the effects of internal marketing practices, especially training and rewards, on an emerging country context and contributes to the organizational behavior and management field. The results may be of interest to organizations and managers who should consider the importance of internal marketing in enhancing job satisfaction, affective commitment and decreasing employee turnover intention.

Originality/value – The current study is the first of its kind to investigate the impact of internal marketing practices on job satisfaction, affective commitment and employee turnover intention in Morocco.

Keywords Internal marketing, Job satisfaction, Affective commitment, Turnover intention, Morocco

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Berry, Hensel and Burke coined the internal marketing notion in the following equation: “*employee as internal customer and job as a product*” (1976, p. 11). Internal marketing considers employees as internal customers, regards jobs as internal products, and then attempts to offer internal products that would respond to the needs and wants of these internal customers while progressing toward meeting the organizational outcomes (Berry *et al.*, 1976). Many internal marketing researchers have confirmed numerous benefits when successfully implemented. Internal marketing generates a low turnover rate (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991), empowers workers (Gounaris, 2006b), increases their job satisfaction (Huang and Rundle-Thiele, 2014) and provides the organization with more highly committed employees (Yao *et al.*, 2019).



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Rajagiri Management Journal
Vol. 18 No. 4, 2024
pp. 287-304
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 2633-0091
p-ISSN: 0972-9968
DOI 10.1108/RAMJ-04-2023-0081

Commitment is the human mindset of hard-working or supporting something. It is an attitude of loyalty. In the working environment, an employee can be committed to their occupation, supervisor, team or organization (Allen, 2017; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Researchers have proven that internal marketing implementation leads to numerous advantages, such as reinforcing affective commitment (Turkyilmaz *et al.*, 2011).

Job satisfaction is an emotional reaction that employees may feel during their current job occupation (Akehurst *et al.*, 2013). It is associated with achievement and enjoyment sensation while operating daily duties (Akehurst *et al.*, 2013). It is important to highlight that job satisfaction is correlated with internal marketing practices such as training and reward systems (Huang and Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Park and Tran, 2018).

The turnover of employees consists of the staff's intentional desire to quit their current job (Sexton *et al.*, 2005). A high turnover rate inside the company destroys the psychology of the remaining employees and, as a result, demotivates them (Byrd *et al.*, 2000). Internal marketing has been linked to reducing employee turnover rates (Uludağ *et al.*, 2023; Ullah and Yasmin, 2013).

Despite the importance and relevance of internal marketing as per employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and employee turnover, no study has fully explored this topic in the Moroccan context. There is only partial research on this topic. In this regard, research conducted recently by El Yadari *et al.* (2020) studied training, rewards and internal communication as sources of motivation and perceived quality as effects of work satisfaction. The study focused only on the health sector in Morocco; more precisely, it studied doctors' job satisfaction. The study's results showed no positive and significant impact of compensation on job satisfaction, clarifying that doctors' job satisfaction can be reached through patients' recognition. However, training influences positively and directly affects doctors' job satisfaction. With a sample size of only 60 observations in two hospitals, the research is quite limited to the healthcare industry. In addition, the study cannot be generalized to other hospitals or other industries.

Based on the above, it is safe to assert that no study has addressed the impacts of internal marketing practices (training and rewards) on job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention in Morocco. In other words, there is limited, fragmented and partial research (e.g. El Yadari *et al.*, 2020) relating internal marketing practices to job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention.

Therefore, we intend to bridge the apparent gap by investigating the impact of internal marketing practices on job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention in the Moroccan context.

Literature review

Internal marketing

Internal marketing is the process of hiring, training, and motivating employees to provide excellent service to customers. It's crucial for building a customer-centric culture and driving business success (Kotler, 1991). Furthermore, it is a set of rewards oriented toward employees with the objective of inciting workers to develop and increase the quality of service provided to customers (McGrath, 2009). In order to inspire and encourage workers to deliver excellent customer service along with exceptional performance, internal marketing rests on satisfying employees' demands and placing them as a core concern of the organizational outcomes (Vella *et al.*, 2009).

The organizational consequences of internal marketing implementation are of an economic and non-economic nature. Financial benefits are mainly related to profits (Fang *et al.*, 2014), revenue growth (Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012), returns to shareholders (Lings and Greenley, 2009) and sales performance (Yu *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand, the

nonfinancial advantages can be assessed in the reinforcement of ties with the fulfilled clients (Tortosa *et al.*, 2009), employees' retention (Yu *et al.*, 2019), excellent employee contribution (Podnar and Golob, 2010), recognizable branding specification (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2018), loyal-shaped customers (Ozuem *et al.*, 2018), internal innovative and collaborative atmosphere (Gounaris *et al.*, 2020) and market positioning (Lings and Greenley, 2010).

Internal marketing is a multidimensional concept (Gounaris, 2008), has not yet been constructed, and has no consensus about the number of elements that would characterize it (Kanyurhi and Bugandwa Mungu Akonkwa, 2016; Lings and Greenley, 2005). Many researchers have developed internal marketing dimensions in different contexts. Gounaris (2008) and Huang and Rundle-Thiele (2014) have developed internal marketing with the following dimensions: internal communication, training and internal market research. Furthermore, other researchers have come up with different dimensions of internal marketing: vision, development and rewards (Foreman and Money, 1995; Joung *et al.*, 2015).

Employee job satisfaction

Since the 1930s, job satisfaction has been one of the most scratched and consistent subjects in management studies (Hofmans *et al.*, 2013). It is a pleasurable positive emotional state as a result of an appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, 1976). Simply, job satisfaction can be defined as the level to which employees derive pleasure from their work (Spector, 1997). Following the same line, Herzberg's two-factor theory emphasizes the importance of job satisfaction as employees' positive feelings about their job endeavors. Academic research in the field of organizational behavior has proven that satisfying a group of employees needs a deep picky analysis, as job satisfaction differs from one employee to another, meaning that what makes an employee satisfied can differ from one to the other (Choi *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, satisfying employees is a challenging achievement and demands meticulous investigations. Still, high job satisfaction reduces the staff turnover intention and leads to higher job effectiveness, culminating in the organization's overall progress (Afsar *et al.*, 2018; Gounaris, 2008; Pantouvakis, 2011).

Affective commitment

Allen and Grisaffe (2001) stated that organizational commitment is the employees' relationship with the company they work for. Organizational commitment is also the organization's intention to maintain employees' enthusiasm in the workplace and is related to employees' psychological connection to the organization (Allen, 2017). The construct of organizational commitment is conceptualized into three dimensions: continuance commitment, normative commitment and affective commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Continuance commitment or "perceived costs," is a dimension for employees who remain working in the organization for a must. For example, they consider that the opportunity cost matters; they are resilient to change and do not think about other opportunities (Allen and Meyer, 1990). While normative commitment or "obligation," is the employees' moral obligation to continue working in the organization. For instance, an organization invests in its employees using training, rewards and other incentives; in this case, employees continue working hard to recognize the company's efforts (Allen, 2017). Affective commitment also describes how involved the employees are in the organization and how emotionally attached they are to it (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). The results can be noticed, for example, in the workers' intention to remain employed with the organization underlying their agreement and strong dedication (Allen, 2017). Affectively committed employees behave positively and are distinguished by a high level of satisfaction with their job (Cohen, 2015).

Employee turnover intention

Four turnover categories can be seen among companies: voluntary separations, involuntary separations, layoffs and discharges (Sexton *et al.*, 2005). Voluntary departure is when the employee chooses to end-up the working relationship on their initiative. Besides, involuntary separation is a permanent suspension due to the employee's retirement, death or permanent disability. Furthermore, a layoff is when the employer suspends the payroll of the company's employees' due to an economic slowdown. Discharge takes place when the employer decides to stop the employment relationship for disciplinary causes (Sexton *et al.*, 2005). To emphasize, among the four categories of turnover, voluntary departure tends to be highly problematic for organizations; it is out of the companies' control (Sexton *et al.*, 2005). According to Tett and Meyer (1993), turnover intention is a deliberate psychological drive to depart from one's current job and disassociate from the organization. All organizations face considerable financial costs and negative impacts due to employee turnover. This has been evidenced by various studies (Cantrell and Sarabakhsh, 1991; DeMicco and Giridharan, 1987; Denvir and McMahon, 1992; Van Dyke and Strick, 1990). Staff turnover engenders additional direct and indirect costs for organizations. For instance, direct costs include hiring and training new employees' fees and the overtime costs generated to back up the unoccupied positions, whereas indirect costs are related to the loss of expertise when hiring inexperienced employees, which directly reduces performance (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000).

Hypothesis development*Internal marketing and job satisfaction*

Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 151) have defined internal marketing as "attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining qualified employees through job products that satisfy their needs." Besides, internal marketing has been considered a scheme to satisfy workers' requirements (Bowen and Schneider, 2014; Al-Fakeh *et al.*, 2020).

Gounaris (2006a) stated that the more the internal marketing practices are prevalent in a given company, the more the employees satisfied. In other words, corporations are more undoubtedly satisfying their employees when practicing internal marketing; on the other hand, employees tend to be more effective with their daily tasks and contribute to consumer satisfaction achievement (Asif and Sargeant, 2000; Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000).

Numerous studies have explored the effect of internal marketing on job satisfaction. Through a sample of 235 employees working in the Saudi Arabian banking industry, a study examined the effect of internal marketing on worker job satisfaction and found that internal marketing has a highly significant positive impact on employee job satisfaction (Bailey *et al.*, 2016). Based on 419 workers employed in different microfinance institutions in Congo, Kanyurhi and Bugandwa Mungu Akonkwa (2016) found a positive correlation between internal marketing and employees' job satisfaction. Further, Joung *et al.* (2015) investigated the associations between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction in the hospitality industry in the USA; the results show that internal marketing is a predictor of employee job satisfaction. Lastly, upon a survey of 246 frontline employees working in travel and tour agencies in Malaysia, Nointin (2018) found that internal marketing was a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction and indirectly impacted workers' turnover intention.

Concerning the influence of internal marketing dimensions on job satisfaction, further studies in the banking sector, hospitality and food industry have shown that implementing specific internal marketing dimensions (e.g. training, communication, vision, rewards and career development) has positive effects on employee job satisfaction (Gounaris, 2006a; Huang and Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Jou *et al.*, 2008; Ting, 2011; Ullah and Yasmin, 2013). On the other hand, rewards are crucial in attaining job satisfaction (Ali, 2016; Ahmad *et al.*, 2012; Braimah, 2016).

Regarding the Moroccan context, a study explored the impact of some internal marketing dimensions on job satisfaction (rewards and training) in the health sector and found a negative impact of rewards on job satisfaction. However, the findings showed that training positively influenced employee job satisfaction (El Yadari *et al.*, 2020).

Therefore, based on the above literature and the contradictory findings in the Moroccan context, the relationship between internal marketing and job satisfaction in Morocco needs to be further investigated. Hence, we can posit the following hypothesis:

H1. Internal marketing positively affects the job satisfaction of employees in Morocco.

Internal marketing and affective commitment

Affective commitment is part of the organizational commitment construct (Meyer and Allen, 1991). It is when the employees want to remain working in the same organization because of their own desire that those affectively committed employees believe in what the organization stands for and choose to support the organization's purpose, objectives and principles (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Kimpakorn and Tocquer, 2010).

Many studies have indicated that internal marketing is positively associated with organizational commitment, especially affective commitment within different industries. Research conducted on banks' employees in Jordan concluded that internal marketing positively and directly influenced organizational commitment, explaining that banks offering efficient training with a proper reward system would result in emotionally attached employees (Suleiman Awwad and Mohammad Agti, 2011). Similarly, other studies on financial institutions in Saudi Arabia (Bailey *et al.*, 2016) and Yemen (Ismail and Sheriff, 2017) showed a positive relationship between internal marketing and organizational commitment. Furthermore, research studying a sample of employees working in the health sector in Ghana concluded that internal marketing considerably shaped organizational commitment (Asiamah *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, a study investigating employees working in service facilities in Bahrain proved a significant positive impact of internal marketing on affective commitment (Al Samman and Mohammed, 2021).

Chang and Chang (2009) and Ting (2011) revealed the importance of using internal marketing strategies to efficiently reach and develop organizational commitment. Other studies in the food industry field found that some of the internal marketing dimensions' (e.g. training programs and rewards systems) significantly influence the employees' affective commitment (Joung *et al.*, 2015).

A study of 392 employees in the retail sector found that internal marketing and affective commitment generate emotional ties between employees and the organization. This creates a sense of pride and commitment to the organization's values and objectives, which leads to a greater willingness to stay with the organization despite potential risks and foregone benefits (Canales-Requena *et al.*, 2021).

Besides, a study in Finland investigated in elderly care homes the impact of some internal marketing dimensions (training and communication) on their employees' affective commitment. The findings showed that training is not a significant predictor of affective commitment. However, the impact of communication on commitment depends on whether it is vertical or horizontal communication. Horizontal communication negatively impacts employees' commitment, but vertical communication affects in a positive way employees' commitment (Bermúdez-González *et al.*, 2016).

Regarding the Moroccan context, an exploratory study about a dimension of internal marketing (i.e. communication) interviewed employees working in Moroccan public organizations from different sectors and found a strong relationship between communication and employees' affective commitment (Hamdi and El Abbadi, 2020).

Based on the above and regarding that there is still a need to study the relationship between internal marketing and affective commitment in the Moroccan context, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Internal marketing positively affects employees' affective commitment in Morocco.

Internal marketing and employee turnover

It has been proven that employee turnover negatively affects organizations (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000). Organizations try to decrease the turnover rate, and it is considered an important matter to deal with (Choi and Dickson, 2010). In this regard, internal marketing contributes to preventing and reducing employee turnover (Yee *et al.*, 2008; Ullah and Yasmin, 2013).

Cheng-Ping and Wei-Chen (2009) investigated employees working in the hotel industry in Taiwan to find a statistically significant relationship between internal marketing practices and employees' turnover intentions. The findings showed that the more internal marketing is practiced, the lower the turnover intention is. In other words, the turnover intention is negatively correlated with internal marketing practice, especially education, training and communication.

Another research study based on 255 respondents employed in call centers in India found that internal marketing strategies are crucial in decreasing employees' turnover rate, explaining that repetitious tasks, lack of career development and training and the stressful workplace cause an increase in employees' turnover rate (Budhwar *et al.*, 2009). In addition, Lee *et al.* (2010) investigated the associations between internal marketing and turnover intention by targeting 185 nurses working for 1–10 years in hospitals in South Korea and found that internal marketing had a significant impact on nurses' turnover intention. Further, another study explored the effect of internal marketing on turnover intention among employees working in telecommunication companies in Egypt and found a negative correlation between the two variables, which means that when a company adopts internal marketing practices such as rewards, communication and leadership, it lowers the employees' turnover intention (Ibrahim, 2011). Another study conducted in Turkey, targeting sports teachers' turnover intention, among 201 participants found that internal marketing practices decrease turnover intention, specifying that practices such as career development, training, rewards, employee involvement and communication directly reduce the thought of quitting the organization (Eren and Dokuzoğlu, 2020). According to a study conducted by Uludağ *et al.* (2023), it was found that companies that implemented internal marketing strategies, along with coaching and engagement practices, were successful in reducing their employee turnover rates.

No research has explored the relationship between employee turnover intention and internal marketing in the Moroccan context. Therefore, based on the literature and the limitations concerning the Moroccan context, we can state the following hypothesis:

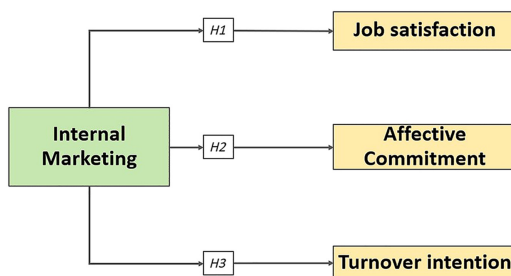
H3. Internal marketing has a significant negative effect on turnover intention in Morocco.

As Figure 1 shows, the hypothesized research model combines internal marketing as the independent variable with job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention as dependent variables.

Methodology

Sample and procedures

This research aimed to investigate the employees' attitudes toward implementing internal marketing practices in Morocco. The target respondents were members of various organizations in multiple sectors in Morocco. The survey was conducted online. The



Source(s): Figure by the authors

survey was shared with 1,800 employees via mailing lists, direct contact and professional social media platforms. In total, 288 usable surveys were obtained, representing a response rate of 16%. The respondents were informed that their participation in this study was voluntary, and the processing of the data was anonymous.

Measures

Except for the personal demographic data, the measure consisted of a five-point scale response ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree.”

The scales and items for the survey were presented in French since it is the most widespread language used in Moroccan companies (Hassi and Storti, 2023). The survey items were translated from English to French by adopting the back-translation technique (Brislin, 1986).

Internal marketing. This variable is comprised of two dimensions: training (six items) and rewards (five items). Scales regarding training were taken from the research conducted by Huang and Rundle-Thiele (2013). The elements of the rewards system are retrieved from the scales constructed by Foreman and Money (1995) and reused in research by Joung *et al.* (2015). A sample item is: “The training in my organization has enabled me to do my job well.”

Job satisfaction. This measure was retrieved from Hackman and Oldham (1975) and includes three items. A sample item reads as follows: “All in all, I am satisfied with my job.”

Affective commitment. We used an eight-item scale created by Meyer and Allen (1991). A sample item is: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.”

Turnover intention. We borrowed a four-item measure developed by Cammann *et al.* (1983), which includes this sample item: “I often think about quitting.”

Control variables. We controlled for demographic variables such as gender, age, education, job position and job tenure (years in service with the current organization), which are associated with employee job satisfaction (Warr, 2008), organizational commitment (Riordan *et al.*, 2003) and turnover intention (Kim and Jagaratnam, 2010).

Data analysis technique

We used the structural equation modeling technique (SEM) via AMOS 26 to verify our hypotheses. SEM was selected owing to its ability to estimate the measurement error for each item and because it is considered one of the most robust techniques to test cause-effect relationships models (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Results

Demographics

Among the 288 respondents, 55.9% were male. The majority of the respondents were aged between 25 and 34 years old (54.86%), 18.06% were between 35 and 44 years old, 15.6% were

between 18 and 24 years old, 7.64% were between 45 and 54 years old and 3.8% were more than 60 years old. Regarding their education, 1% had a high school diploma, 15.3% completed an undergraduate degree, 73.6% have a graduate degree and 10.1% have a postgraduate degree. As per the job position, 52.8% are employees with non-managerial positions, 28.8% are managers, 10.1% are team leaders and 8.3% are directors. Concerning the job tenure, 34% of the respondents have been in their position for two years or less, 25.7% for 2–5 years, 18.06% between 10 and 15 years, 3.47% between 15 and 20 years and 7.64% for more than 20 years. Regarding the organization’s sector, 54.9% of the respondents are working in the tertiary sector, 35.8% in the secondary sector and 9.4% in the primary sector.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 lists the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the current study, including means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. The absolute Kurtosis value is less than 8, and the Skewness ranges between –2 and 2, indicating that the study’s variables follow a normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

Reliability-validity analysis of the scales

Table 2 provides the correlations for the variables used in the current study, including their Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability (CR) and the average extracted variance (AVE). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranged from 0.875 to 0.925, indicating high internal consistency within the construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The fact that CR greatly exceeds the threshold value of 0.7 demonstrates the model’s reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The AVE of all the constructs is greater than 0.5, indicating the convergent validity of the measurement scales (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Lastly, the square root of the AVE for each of the latent variables is higher than the highest correlation with any other latent variable, which means that the discriminant validity is established (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Measurement model

Before evaluating the hypothesized structural model, the measurement model will be evaluated first to check if it fits the data. Several indices will be used to measure how well-specified models explain the observed data (Kline, 2011). Five widely model-fit measures were used to assess the goodness of fit of the overall model. These indices are as follows: the comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.949, the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.941, the root-mean-

Variables	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	N = 288		Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis	
				Std. deviation Statistic	Std. error		Std. error	
Training	1.00	5.00	3.3542	1.00461	–0.393	0.144	–0.503	0.286
Rewards system	1.00	5.00	3.1597	1.03569	–0.310	0.144	–0.687	0.286
Job satisfaction	1.00	5.00	3.6875	0.95482	–0.700	0.144	0.006	0.286
Affective commitment	1.00	5.00	3.2153	1.02767	–0.377	0.144	–0.492	0.286
Turnover intention	1.00	5.00	3.0599	1.19873	–0.106	0.144	–0.922	0.286

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics of
the focal variables

Source(s): Table by the authors

Table 2.
Correlations,
Cronbach's alpha, CR,
AVE and the square
root of AVE

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	CRs	AVE	The square root of AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1. Training	0.906	0.906	0.617	0.786	1				
2. Rewards system	0.905	0.907	0.662	0.814	0.785	1			
3. Job satisfaction	0.875	0.879	0.710	0.843	0.674	0.632	1		
4. Affective commitment	0.925	0.929	0.655	0.810	0.557	0.556	0.749	1	
5. Turnover intention	0.925	0.923	0.752	0.867	-0.402	-0.363	-0.528	-0.454	1

Note(s): $N = 288$. All the correlations are significant at the 0.01 level

Source(s): Table by the authors

square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.063, the chi-square (χ^2) = 555.65 and the minimum discrepancy divided by its degree of freedom (CMIN/DF) = 2.15. A successful model fit was demonstrated as the fit indices met the required thresholds. The results indicate that measurements show a good model fit and provide empirical evidence that further examination of the structural model is justified. As Figure 2 shows, all item loadings are close to or above the 0.70 cut-off point.

Hypothesized structural model

After validating the measurement model, SEM was conducted through AMOS 26 to assess the predicted structural relationships. Each of the overall goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the structural model fit the data well: CFI = 0.998; TLI = 0.991; RMSEA = 0.030, the chi-square (χ^2) = 6.323 and CMIN/DF = 1.265.

Hypothesis testing

The study assessed the effect of internal marketing on job satisfaction, affective commitment and employees' turnover intention. As Table 3 shows, the impact of internal marketing on job satisfaction was positive and statistically significant ($b = 0.639$, $t = 14.206$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis 1. The impact of internal marketing on affective commitment was positive and statistically significant ($b = 0.621$, $t = 13.232$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis 2. The impact of internal marketing on turnover intention commitment was negative and statistically significant ($b = -0.400$, $t = -7.351$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis 3. Only the control variable, job tenure, was found to be statistically significant to the dependent variable, affective commitment ($b = 0.182$, $t = 4.448$, $p < 0.001$).

Discussion

The present research investigated the impact of internal marketing, through training and rewards system practices, on job satisfaction, affective commitment and employee turnover intention in the Moroccan workplace.

The findings showed that internal marketing practices statistically affected job satisfaction. An organization providing adequate training and a performance-based rewards system would increase employee job satisfaction. These results align with internal marketing concepts defined by Berry and Parasuraman (1991) and previous studies (see Asif and Sargeant, 2000; Gounaris, 2006b; Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000). Specifically, many researchers found that training

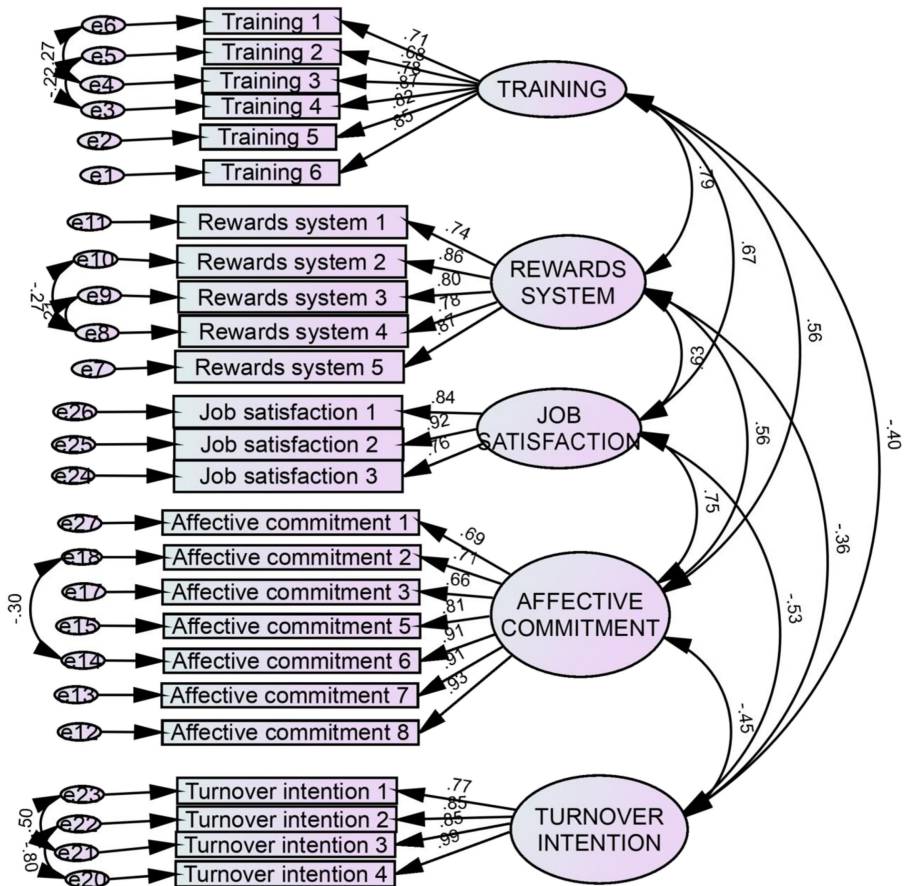


Figure 2. Results of the measurement model

Source(s): Figure by the authors

Table 3. Results of hypotheses testing and structural parameter estimates

Hypothesized path	Standardized path coefficients	t-value	p-value	Result
H1: IM → JS	0.639	14.206	<0.001	Supported
H2: IM → AC	0.621	13.232	<0.001	Supported
H3: IM → TI	-0.400	-7.351	<0.001	Supported

Note(s): IM (Internal marketing practices), JS (Job satisfaction), AC (Affective commitment) and TI (Turnover intention)
Source(s): Table by the authors

positively influences employee job satisfaction (El Yadari *et al.*, 2020; Huang and Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Zampetakis and Moustakis, 2007). Moreover, rewards are crucial in attaining job satisfaction (Ahmad *et al.*, 2012; Al-Fakeh *et al.*, 2020; Ali, 2016; Braimah, 2016; Jung *et al.*, 2015). The results also showed that age, gender, job position, job tenure and organization industry did not significantly impact job satisfaction. In other words, job satisfaction does not

have a relationship with some characteristics pertaining to employees' demographics, their job and industry. Bringing back the concept of internal marketing, to have satisfied customers, the firm must also have satisfied employees (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991). The present research results are aligned with the extant literature and show that internal marketing practices raise employee levels of job satisfaction. Paying more attention to internal marketing, such as training and reward systems, leads to better job satisfaction.

This study revealed that internal marketing practices positively influenced employee affective commitment. This finding is similar to various previous studies (e.g. Asiamah *et al.*, 2018; Al Samman and Mohammed, 2021; Canales-Requena *et al.*, 2021; Joung *et al.*, 2015; Suleiman Awwad and Mohammad Agti, 2011). When a firm offers excellent training and a fair rewards system to its employees, those latter are more emotionally attached to the organization. Therefore, affectively committed employees behave positively and stand out for high satisfaction with their job (Cohen, 2015). In order to improve employee job satisfaction and strengthen employee attitudes toward organizational commitment, various authors (e.g. Suleiman Awwad and Mohammad Agti, 2011) recommended implementing internal marketing practices.

The findings also showed that job tenure was statistically correlated with affective commitment, meaning that years of experience within a company are predictors of affective commitment. However, the relationship of age, gender, job position and organization industry with affective commitment was not statistically significant as per affective commitment.

The current study found that internal marketing had a statistically significant positive impact on reducing employee turnover intention. This result is consistent with previous studies (see Al Shehab, 2020; Chang and Chang, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2010; Limor and Weisberg, 2018; Nart *et al.*, 2019; Nemteanu and Dabija, 2021; Yee *et al.*, 2008; Yildiz, 2014; Yücel, 2021).

Employee turnover has been shown to have a negative impact on organizations; decreasing turnover has long been an objective for organizations and is considered a crucial issue to tackle (Choi and Dickson, 2010; Mitchell *et al.*, 2000). Numerous researchers investigated the relationship between internal marketing and turnover intention in various industries and showed that lack of training increases employees' turnover rate (Budhwar *et al.*, 2009). However, implementing employee training reduces the employees' thoughts of quitting the organization (Cheng-Ping and Wei-Chen, 2009; Eren and Dokuzoğlu, 2020). Furthermore, in the present research, fewer employees think about quitting their job when companies adopt internal marketing practices such as rewards. In other words, a proper rewards system can decrease employee turnover (Eren and Dokuzoğlu, 2020; Ibrahim, 2011). In this regard, an investment in internal marketing can prevent and reduce employee turnover.

The findings also showed that age, gender, job position, job tenure and organization industry were not statistically significantly correlated with employee turnover intention. This means that internal marketing practices can predict employee turnover more than the demographic characteristics of employees.

The results show that the more internal marketing is implemented, the fewer employees will think about quitting their job. Neglecting the benefits of internal marketing practices might result in employees' undesirable behaviors, a decline in their job satisfaction (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000) and a tendency to develop thoughts about quitting their job (Ullah and Yasmin, 2013).

Conclusion

The results show that internal marketing practices impact positively employee job satisfaction and affective commitment and negatively employee turnover intention. The current research contributes to a deep comprehension of internal marketing effects, especially training and rewards and contributes to the management literature. The results may be of interest for organizations and managers who should consider the importance of internal

Implications of the study

Theoretical implications

The present research is the first of its kind to examine the impact of internal marketing on job satisfaction, affective commitment and employee turnover intention in Morocco. In the existing literature worldwide, only a few studies have investigated internal marketing within different sectors. This study has made significant contributions to the advancement of internal marketing theory by providing empirical evidence to address high employee turnover rates across different industries. By applying the internal marketing concept, it has offered practical contributions to organizations. The study has also contributed to the methodology of analyzing internal marketing as a multidimensional construct, using the hierarchical model. Furthermore, the study has contributed to our understanding of the position of employees working in Morocco regarding internal marketing practices and their influence on their job satisfaction, affective commitment and intention to leave.

Practical implications

The current study's findings have numerous practical implications for different industry operators based in Morocco. The findings of this study provide new insights into the reasons for leaving a job and how to retain employees. These insights can be valuable to human resources professionals, managers and consultants. The study proposes a solution called internal marketing practices, which relies on training and rewards to help organizations manage and prevent employee turnover. In order to have satisfied employees who are affectively committed to the organization and reduce their intention to quit their job, organizations need to focus on internal marketing practices. Based on our findings, it appears that an organization can enhance the quality of its internal processes (such as internal services) by implementing an internal marketing policy (Prasad and Steffes, 2002). On another note, job satisfaction and affective commitment can greatly reduce employees' intention to leave the organization. Organizations can achieve employee job satisfaction and commitment by adopting internal marketing practices, which include a reward system and training activities. Training and rewards are among the components of internal marketing practices that are considered crucial in reinforcing employee job satisfaction and affective commitment and, as a result, lowering employee turnover. These practices should work together collectively to achieve the desired outcome. Consequently, it is suggested that ongoing training programs need to be provided to employees. In turn, employees will improve their skills and perform their work. Moreover, a performance-based rewards system is recommended for more committed and motivated employees.

Limitations and future research directions

As there is almost no research without limitations, the current study has its own share of limitations. The results of this study should be considered cautiously in light of the following limitations. The convenience-based sampling method adopted in this research would not allow generalizing the findings. Employee turnover intention was incorporated into the current study as a dependent variable, though measuring employee turnover does not necessarily indicate that employees would resign.

Based on the research findings and limitations, several recommendations are suggested that future research should address. The current study explored only two internal marketing practices, namely training and rewards systems; other internal marketing practices may be

added to the model, such as employee motivation, vision, internal communication, career development and internal market research. Adding more internal marketing practices to the model will allow which practice would have a more or less significant impact than other variables on job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intention. Future studies should attempt to use random sampling procedures in order to generalize findings.

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