The Effect of Internal Marketing on Organizational Citizenship Behavior of Academic Staff in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract   Due to their important roles in organizational performance, internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior have become more interesting subjects among researchers and practitioners. However, empirical research is limited in the literature, and the relationship between these two variables in higher educational institutions is not clear. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine the effect of internal marketing on organizational citizenship behavior of academic staff in higher educational institutions. The data for the study was collected from academic staff who worked in the faculty of sport sciences in Turkey. The findings showed a statistically significant positive effect of internal marketing on organizational citizenship behavior. As a result, this study revealed that internal marketing is an effective tool for organizational citizenship behavior of academic staff.

Keywords   Academic Staff, Higher Education, Internal Marketing, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

1. Introduction

Today, intense competition is forcing service-providing organizations to more internal customer orientations. Internal customer orientation phenomenon is a phenomenon contributing to an organization for achieving service quality and external customer satisfaction [11]. Service marketing literature addresses the customer concept in two ways as "internal customer" and "external customer" and it focuses to satisfy both.   Internal customer refers to an organization's employees while external customer refers to the other organizations and people getting services from that organization [16].

For an organization, gaining superiority to its competitors is closely related with administrative practices and the performances of the employees [22]. Effective management practices and high performance of the employees are quite strategic in terms of providing a sustainable competitive advantage [32]. Therefore, recently, researchers and practitioners have started to consider more the phenomena that are effective on both organizations and the employees' performances. Internal marketing (IM) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) are considered in the phenomena that are influential in higher educational institutions.

Academic staffs are the main factors contributing the performance of higher educational institutions in terms of both the collaboration with their colleagues (internal customers) and education and scientific research and publishing activities [18]. Therefore, increasing the performance of the higher educational institutions depend primarily on the academic staffs to display high performances. The higher performance of the academic staffs arises with the help of high motivation, high satisfaction and extra role behavior. In this context, examining relationship between IM and OCB becomes important for higher educational institutions. IM can be expressed as a powerful tool increasing the motivation and satisfaction of employees and OCB can be stated as the concept creating the contribution to the organization by the employees' extra-role behaviors.

Berry [4] suggests that primarily internal customer (employee) satisfaction must be provided in order to ensure external customer satisfaction. In this context, IM is seen to be an important factor for providing employees' motivation and satisfaction. There are evidences related with that the effective IM applications provide competitive advantages to the organizations [8]. Berry [4] defined IM as "viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization" (p.34). In short, IM refers to the application of marketing techniques developed for external marketing to the employees [21,25]. Some studies are carried out in literature about what are the needs and expectations providing motivation and satisfaction of the employees working in service sector [13,14,15,17]. On the other hand,

Yildiz and Kara [30] who address the issue more specifically summarized the basic needs and expectations of the employees working in higher education context in eleven items: physical conditions, fundamental needs, strengthens employees, appropriate workload and support, vision, training/development, career advancement opportunities, equal and fair, open and transparent communication, decision making process, and rewards. Authors suggest that employees' motivation and job satisfaction will increase when their needs and expectations are met. Furthermore, there are some evidences in the higher educational institutions that IM is an important determinant on other variables. For example, IM has a significant positive effect on work engagement. In other words, IM improves work engagement of academic staff [32].

Organizations expects from their employees to behave in favor of their organization beyond their work contract and voluntarily in order to reach strategic goals. In this context, OCB is seen to be an important concept contributing to the performance of an organization [29]. Organ [23] defined OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p.4). More employees displaying OCB will provide more contribution to the organizational performance [31]. Organ [24] examined OCB in five dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. *Altruism* refers to help another person (ie, colleagues, clients, or boss) having a work related problem voluntarily; *conscientiousness* is going beyond to the minimum requirements of the role behavior (working overtime to finish the job, using resources efficiently, etc.); *courtesy* represents the preventive behaviors providing employees to avoid problems that will affect their works; *sportsmanship* refers to be tolerant against difficulties face in work environment and continuing as willing to work without complaining; *civic virtue,* corresponds to support the organization's policies and participating in activities for the development of the organization [2].

Many researches have been conducted recently about what the variables affecting OCB are. Job satisfaction [28], organizational commitment [20], organizational justice [19] are examples of these variables. IM applications increasing the employees' motivation and job satisfaction are also located in the important parameters affecting OCB. However, while there are researches in different sectors investigating the effect of IM on OCB, researchers conducted in higher educational institutions are very limited. Hence, the purpose of the study is to examine and better understand the effect of IM on OCB in the higher education context.

Research Hypotheses

Due to the limited number of studies investigating the relationship between IM and OCB in higher education context requires that more researches should be performed for clarification of this issue. The following hypotheses have been developed in this study to contribute to literature:

H1. Internal marketing will have a positive effect on altruism.

H2. Internal marketing will have a positive effect on conscientiousness.

H3. Internal marketing will have a positive effect on courtesy.

H4. Internal marketing will have a positive effect on sportsmanship.

H5. Internal marketing will have a positive effect on civic virtue.

H6. Internal marketing will have a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Model

The conceptual model of this study conducted to investigate the effects of IM on OCB in the context of higher educational institutions is illustrated in Figure 1. This model shows IM as the independent variable while OCB and its sub-dimensions (altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue) as the dependent variables.
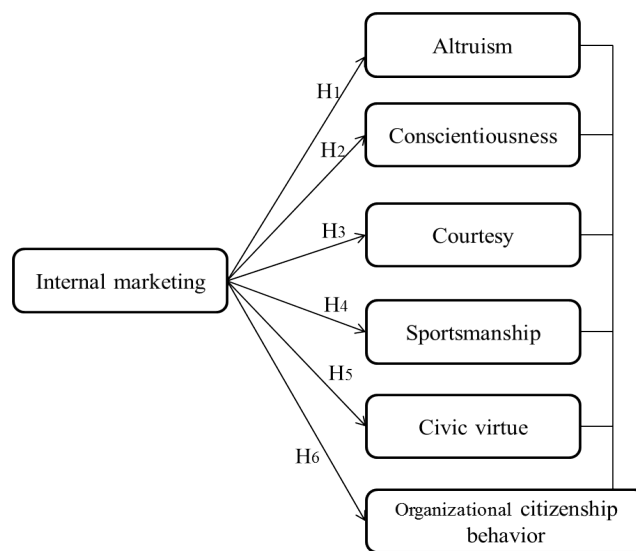

Figure 1. The effect of internal marketing on organizational citizenship behavior

2.2. Measurement Instruments

Internal marketing: In this study, we used a 11-item IM-11 scale developed by Yildiz and Kara [30] to determine the perceptions of IM of participants. The participants responded to each question using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree)". Some of the questions included on the scale asked participants to respond to questions such as "this organization provides an achievable vision to its employees" and "this organization treats its employees equally and

fairly." High-scale values indicated a high perception of IM.

Organizational citizenship behavior: A 20-item OCB scale with the sub-dimensions of "altruism," "conscientiousness," "courtesy," "sportsmanship," and "civic virtue" was used in this study in order to measure extra-role behaviors [5]. This scale included examples such as "I help my co-worker to solve his/her problems" and "I participate actively in my organization's meetings." The statements were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 5 ("always"). High-scale values indicated a high perception of OCB.

2.3. Sample Size and Procedure

The data used in this study were obtained from academic staffs working in faculties of sport sciences/school of physical education and sports in Turkey. Some of the communication was provided via electronic communication tools, the other part was obtained via pollsters. First, the participants were informed about the purpose and content of the study and were sent to 280 academic staff to voluntarily participate in the study. Then, 221 voluntary participants were identified (%79 return rates). As a result of investigation, 7 forms were lacking information and therefore 214 forms were found appropriate for the analysis to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs.

3. Analysis and Results

3.1. Sample Characteristics

Majority of the sample were males (68.7%) and married (63.6%). Most people had PhD degrees (60.7%), and were between 36 and 45 years old. Approximately 29% of the subjects had administrative duties and their academic rank was distributed as follows: lecturer (12.1%), research assistant (28.5%), instructor (19.2%), assistant professor (22.4%), associate professor (15.4%), and professor (2.3%). The level of income for most of the participants was between $1,333 and $1,666 per month. Half of the participants have been working for the same academic institution for less than 5 years (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Variables	Categories	frequency	%
Gender	Male	147	68.7
	Female	67	31.3
Marital status	Married	136	63.6
	Single	78	36.4
Age	Less than 25	5	2.3
	26-35	74	34.6
	36-45	87	40.7
	46-55	18	8.4
	More than 56	30	14.0
Degree	Undergraduate	16	7.5
	Master	68	31.8
	Doctoral	130	60.7
Title	Lecturer	26	12.1
	Research Assistant	61	28.5
	Instructor	41	19.2
	Assistant Professor	48	22.4
	Associate Professor	33	15.4
	Professor	5	2.3
Administrative duties	No	151	70.6
	Yes	63	29.4
Income	Less than 1500 USD	49	22.9
	1334-1500 USD	92	43.0
	1501-1666 USD	41	19.2
	More than 1667 USD	32	15.0
Length of employment in current institution	Less than 5 years	106	49.5
	6 to 10 years	31	14.5
	11 to 15 years	22	10.3
	16 to 20 years	26	12.1
	21 to 25 years	15	7.0
	More than 26 years	14	6.5
Total length of working life	Less than 5 years	54	25.2
	6 to 10 years	27	12.6
	11 to 15 years	35	16.4
	16 to 20 years	28	13.1
	21 to 25 years	34	15.9
	More than 26 years	36	16.8

3.2. Test for Validity and Reliability

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in order to confirm the one-dimensional structure of IM-11 scale and five-dimensional structure of the OCB scale. Strong model fit indexes were observed in the CFA applied to the IM-11scale (χ^2=82.9; df=44; χ^2/df=1.88; CFI=.968; GFI=.934; AGFI=.900; NFI= .934; RMESA=.064). Similarly, good levels of model fit indexes were observed as a result of the CFA applied to the OCB scale (χ^2=338.0; df=160; χ^2/df=2.11; CFI=.905; GFI=.866; AGFI=.824; NFI=.837; RMESA=.072). These model fit values meet the criteria suggested in the literature [6,7]. Reliability analysis using Cronbach alpha coefficient of the IM-11 scale indicated a high reliability score of .913, and .890 for the OCB scale. These values indicate that all scales are highly reliable.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analyses were carried out using average values of the scale items for each instrument. Since the scales had high reliabilities, averages may be used to in the analysis to represent each construct. Literature provides information regarding the low, moderate and high levels of correlation levels among constructs. Cohen [10] suggests that if the correlation is between 0.1 and 0.3, it is considered a low correlation, 0.3-0.5 moderate correlation and 0.5-0.7 high correlation. The result of the correlation analysis in this study showed that there was a significant, positive and moderate level correlation between IM and OCB (r=0.388; p<0.01). This result shows that the employees will show OCB in case of the increased IM applications. In addition, there was a significant and positive correlation between all sub-dimensions of OCB and IM (Table 2).

3.4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

The results of the two-stage hierarchical regression analysis are given in Table 3 where OCB and its sub-dimensions were used as dependent variables one at a time and IM was considered as independent variable. Regression results show that OCB was positively and significantly affected by IM (β=0.366; p<0.01). Similarly, all sub-dimensions of OCB (altruism (β=0.187; p<0.01), conscientiousness (β=0.237; p<0.01), courtesy (β=0.332; p<0.01), sportsmanship (β=0.194; p<0.01), civic virtue (β=0.481; p<0.01)) were also significantly and positively affected by IM. On the other hand, OCB was affected by the control variables of "gender," "age," and "income". Accordingly, males show more OCB than females. In addition, when age and income increases, OCB decreases. Consequently, hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are all confirmed according to the data.

Table 2. Results of correlation analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1							
2. Marital status	.012	1						
3. Age	-.108	-.399**	1					
4. Degree	-.075	-.101	-.105	1				
5. Title	-.082	-.273**	.295**	.513**	1			
6. Administrative duties	-.060	-.212**	.037	.153*	.284**	1		
7. Income	-.078	-.293**	.274**	.305**	.547**	.310**	1	
8. Length of employment in current institution	-.010	-.352**	.752**	-.258**	.112	-.077	.120	1
9. Total length of working life	-.081	-.492**	.873**	-.011	.421**	.133	.448**	.710**
10. IM	-.247**	.018	-.007	.006	.058	.201**	.130	-.076
11. Altruism	-.224**	-.010	-.121	-.094	-.023	.113	-.130	-.031
12. Conscientiousness	-.115	-.078	.039	-.090	-.051	-.025	-.162*	.034
13. Courtesy	-.221**	.162*	-.065	-.064	-.096	-.161*	-.192**	-.086
14. Sportsmanship	-.211**	-.049	-.048	.019	.164*	.102	.011	-.039
15. Civic virtue	-.241**	-.041	.022	.142*	.055	.008	-.069	.086
16. OCB	-.257**	-.005	-.044	-.025	.007	.009	-.142*	-.007

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 2. Continued

Variables	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Gender							
2. Marital status							
3. Age							
4. Degree							
5. Title							
6. Administrative duties							
7. Income							
8. Length of employment in current institution							
9. Total length of working life	1						
10. IM	.069	1					
11. Altruism	-.067	.242**	1				
12. Conscientiousness	.105	.247**	.459**	1			
13. Courtesy	-.097	.320**	.410**	.638**	1		
14. Sportsmanship	.055	.259**	.422**	.588**	.481**	1	
15. Civic virtue	.044	.453**	.492**	.591**	.640**	.495**	1
16. OCB	.009	.388**	.722**	.836**	.804**	.743**	.822**

Table 3. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis aiming to identify the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and independent variables

Independent Variables	Altruism		Conscientiousness		Courtesy		Sportsmanship		Civic virtue		OCB	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
1. Gender	-.262**	-.217**	-.135*	-.078	-.239**	-.160*	-.227**	-.181**	-.250**	-.135*	-.283**	-.196**
2. Marital status	-.053	-.070	-.073	-.093	.097	.067	-.025	-.042	-.007	-.050	-.018	-.050
3. Age	-.443**	-.403**	-.344*	-.294*	-.036	.036	-.466**	-.424**	-.240	-.136	-.388**	-.310*
4. Degree	-.155	-.140	-.073	-.054	-.055	-.028	-.141	-.125	.212*	.250**	-.052	-.023
5. Title	.127	.135	.000	.009	.045	.058	.262**	.270**	.006	.026	.106	.121
6. Administrative duties	.137	.106	-.016	-.055	-.129	-.183**	.046	.014	.026	-.052	.018	-.041
7. Income	-.222*	-.231**	-.329**	-.341**	-.185*	-.201*	-.187*	-.196	-.195*	-.218**	-.287**	-.305**
8. Length of employment in current institution	.104	.133	-.151	-.116	-.131	-.081	-.043	-.014	.237*	.310**	.009	.064
9. Total length of working life	.224	.156	.615**	.530**	.135	.015	.427**	.357*	.145	-.029	.391*	.260
10. IM	-	.187**	-	.237**	-	.332**	-	.194**	-	.481**	-	.366**
F	4.019	4.486	3.313	4.339	3.225	5.732	3.677	4.223	3.267	9.840	3.577	6.843
R^2	.151	.181	.128	.176	.125	.220	.140	.172	.126	.326	.136	.252
Adjusted R^2	.113	.141	.089	.136	.086	.182	.102	.131	.087	.293	.098	.215

Note: Standardized beta values were used, $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{*}p<0.05$

4. Conclusions

There are researches in different sectors about the relationship between IM and OCB in literature. However, the researches investigating the relationship between these two phenomena are quite limited in the higher education context. Therefore, this study will contribute to the literature by showing the effect of IM on OCB in the higher education context.

In empirical researches performed in different sectors, there are evidences showing positive and significant relationship between IM and OCB [3,12,26,27]. The results of our study we performed in the higher education context show that IM effects OCB significantly and positively. In other words, IM applications increase academic staff's OCBs. This result shows similarities with the other researches carried out in higher educational institutions. In their researches, Alshurideh, Alhadid, and Barween [1] and

Carlos and Rodrigues [9] found that IM applications have positive and significant effects on academic staff's OCBs.

This study has also looked at the sub-dimensions of OCB separately and examined the role of IM on each one of them. It was seen that all sub-dimensions (altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue) were significantly and positively affected by IM. The sub-dimension most affected by IM was "civic virtue". Academic staffs having civic virtue behavior support the policies of higher educational institutions more, join to the events made for organizational developments (scientific research-publications, conferences, etc.) more. On the other hand, it was seen that OCB was significantly and positively affected by some control variables including gender, age, and income. Accordingly, men show more OCB than females. Hence, it can be considered that females are more sensitive than male on work and human relations. Youngers and low-income earners show more OCB. The reasons may be that they want others to respect them and need prestige and a feeling of accomplishment in organization.

As a result, this study shows that IM applications will increase academic staff's OCBs. This situation can be assessed in the context of win-win paradigm. Due to IM applications of managements, academic staffs gain various achievements. As a result of displaying OCBs by academic staffs, higher educational institutions offer better quality internal and external services [27]. For example, academic staffs reveal more synergy with their colleagues, increase the students' satisfaction levels by providing a better education, and perform more scientific research and publication activities.

According to the results of this study, it is clear that the managers should focus on IM applications. University managers can adopt IM philosophy and strategies to improve the OCB levels of their academic staffs and hence contributing to the quality of the service delivered to their external customers. In order for organizations to have extra role behaviors of academic staff, it is necessary to present attractive physical opportunities (office, equipment, facility, etc.), give a reasonable work load, give appropriate authorization, have a vision, present career advancement opportunities, treat workers equally and fairly, as well as to form clear and pure communication channels. In addition to these, the main activities that should be done can be given as meeting the basic requirements of employees (salary, insurance, work safety, etc.), training employees for developing their information and talents, taking their ideas while deciding, and awarding their success. Thus, higher educational institutions will have academic staffs showing creative and productive behaviors beyond the formal tasks and having high level of organizational commitment. Therefore, these behaviors will contribute higher educational institutions to increase their service quality and also to gain an advantage in competition.

This study focused on academic staffs working in higher educational institutions in Turkey. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all higher educational institutions due to the limited amount of samples. Therefore, the other researchers should test if the results of this study is consistent or not by applying similar data gathering and analyzing methods to other research groups. In addition, in order to generalize various subjects investigated in a cultural environment to different cultural environments, it is required to investigate this subject in other countries and compare the results.

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