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Boosting employee job satisfaction through internal marketing: A study of star category hotels in Jimma

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Abstract: This study investigates whether internal marketing strategies affect employees' job satisfaction in star-rated hotels in Jimma City. The important dimensions analysed are pay and reward, motivation, training and development, internal communication, and empowerment. The study targeted 353 employees across eight star-rated hotels as of November 30, 2024. Using stratified sampling, a representative sample of 188 employees was selected, with 180 completed questionnaires collected on a five-point Likert scale. A descriptive and explanatory research design with a quantitative approach was employed, and the data were analysed using SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised. The results indicate significant positive correlations between internal marketing dimensions and employee job satisfaction, with internal communication and motivation showing the strongest associations. Further, multiple linear regression analysis with hypothesis testing was conducted. This study highlights the importance of star-rated hotels adopting internal marketing strategies that focus on meeting employee needs and treating the organisation as their primary market.

Keywords: Internal Marketing; Job Satisfaction; Employees; Empowerment; and Pay and Reward

1 Introduction

For an organisation to thrive, it must prioritise the satisfaction of both its employees and customers. In the human resource management literature, job satisfaction is created by different practices. Internal marketing is one of the most effective human resource practices in service organisations for building employee job satisfaction (Maung, 2020). Internal marketing requires service firms to invest heavily in employee quality and performance. It must effectively train and motivate its customer-contact employees and all supporting service personnel to work as a team to ensure customer satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2014).

Internal marketing is part of the marketing strategy, with employees serving as internal customers. It is used as a philosophy for managing the firm's human resources by meeting their needs, thereby fostering their utmost dedication and paving the way for the company's success (Güven & Sadaklioğlu, 2017). The fifth "P" in the services marketing mix is People, who are vital constituents of any service provision. If an organisation seeks to achieve a competitive advantage, it must recruit the right staff and train them effectively in service delivery. Recently, greater emphasis has been placed on providing high-quality services to the organisation's employees than on its customers (Mekdes, 2021).

To achieve the mission and vision, effectiveness and efficiency, and to have good quality assets and financial stability in the organisation, employees are the most vital asset (Fulmer & Ployhart, 2014). The organisation's success largely depends on the performance of its employees (Zewdie, 2020). Internal marketing begins with the organisation recruiting the right people for the positions, ensuring these employees are satisfied and willing to perform their jobs and deliver customer satisfaction (Mahammed, 2016).

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As noted by Gounaris (2008), despite the critical role of internal marketing as a link between the organisation's external marketing objectives and its internal capabilities, very few organisations actually use internal marketing. However, if a business organisation aims to deliver sustainable, high-quality service, it should attend to its internal and external customers. This also results in the higher the degree of employee satisfaction, the higher the possibility of generating external satisfaction and loyalty.

Despite the recognition of internal marketing as essential for organisational success, many service organisations struggle to implement effective strategies due to limited knowledge and understanding of its components (Hung & Lin, 2008). Research indicates that job dissatisfaction in the hospitality sector is often linked to poor working conditions, inadequate pay, and a lack of advancement opportunities, which are considered hygiene factors in Herzberg's two-factor theory. These dissatisfactory conditions lead to reduced motivation and an increased likelihood that employees will seek alternative employment (Poulston, 2009). Employee envy and job dissatisfaction have been shown to lead to negative behaviours such as service sabotage, which can further deteriorate the work environment and employee morale (Shoukat et al., 2024).

An essential part of the service sector, the hotel business plays a major role in the expansion of the world's economy. Ethiopia's service sector is driven by trade, communication, hotels, and tourism, reflecting its significant contribution to the nation's economy. While studies by Selamawit (2019), Tadesse (2022), and Mahammed (2016) have explored the impact of internal marketing on employee satisfaction in the banking sector, there is a notable research gap regarding the hotel industry. This sector faces critical challenges, including high employee turnover rates fueled by dissatisfaction and workplace sexual harassment, particularly affecting women. The prevalence of harassment and limited coping mechanisms creates a hostile environment, exacerbating dissatisfaction and turnover rates (Worke et al., 2021a; 2021b).

Although efforts such as salary increments, bonuses, and training programs have been implemented to improve employee satisfaction in Ethiopian hotels, the impact of internal marketing practices remains underexplored, especially in star-rated hotels in Jimma City. This study aims to assess how internal marketing dimensions like communication, empowerment, training and development, motivation, and pay and reward influence job satisfaction in these hotels. By addressing this gap, the research aims to provide actionable insights to enhance employee satisfaction in Ethiopia's hospitality industry.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Internal marketing concept

The core concept of internal marketing is to treat employees as internal customers, making them as important as external customers (Ali, 2016; Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). According to Gwinji et al. (2020), internal marketing is one of the types of marketing that is applied within the organisation through marketing and promoting the product to employees to push them towards engagement and integration in work to achieve the organisational goals and reach the desired goals stipulated in the organisation's strategy.

Bowen and Sethi (2020) stated that internal marketing is one of the types of marketing that takes place within the institution or organisation, where the product or service is promoted and marketed to the employees, to involve them with the goals of the organisation and actual solidarity with it, as this internal marketing is an important part of the external marketing process for the brand, most of the time, the human resources department takes over the task, since it is responsible for distributing the company's tasks, goals, and strategies.

According to Kang and Park (2020), the concept of internal marketing is completely compatible with the idea of marketing as a whole, except that internal marketing is exclusively for individuals within the organisation by providing them with a suitable work environment and helping them to raise their performance level, in addition to integrating them into the goals and strategies of the organisation. To ensure the success of external marketing to consumers. Important parts of internal marketing include optimising human resources, enhancing employee relations, and implementing effective communication strategies within the organisation. It focuses on aligning employee goals with organisational objectives, fostering a positive work environment, and ensuring that employees feel valued and engaged (Neves et al., 2024).

2.2 Employees' job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an attitude that shows up at work as individual employee behaviour and has the potential to affect the organisation and organisational behaviour. Employee commitment to the organisation, improved performance, decreased absenteeism, and increased interest in careers are all encouraged by job satisfaction. In both

the public and private sectors, as well as in developed and developing nations, it is crucial (Khan *et al.*, 2014). Armstrong and Tyler (2014) defined Job satisfaction as the attitudes and feelings of the workers toward their tasks, and it is the result of a balancing and combination of various likes and dislikes. It's also defined as a collection of people's feelings and views about their jobs, with satisfaction ratings ranging from extremely happy to extremely unhappy (George & Jones, 2008).

2.3 The relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction

Many researchers have been concerned about the relationship between internal marketing and job satisfaction (Azzam, 2016; Braimah, 2016; Kukreja, 2017; Rajyalakshmi *et al.*, 2009). 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, decentralised decision making, sharing of knowledge and information and organisational culture are crucial to job satisfaction (Ali, 2016; Ahmad *et al.*, 2012; Braimah, 2016; Halepota & Shah, 2011). So, it can be deduced that internal marketing has a strong correlation with employee job satisfaction.

Furthermore, job satisfaction is influenced by factors such as salary, working environment, autonomy, communication, and organisational commitment, which are also crucial elements of internal marketing (Braimah, 2016; Chi *et al.*, 2016; Isik & Altunoglu, 2016; Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). An empirical study conducted on the impact of internal marketing factors on job motivation and job satisfaction in retail stores revealed that the working conditions and hours, hygiene and sanitation, restrooms, support from superiors, and attitude of colleagues have the strongest influence on job satisfaction and motivation (Rajyalakshmi *et al.*, 2009). The findings revealed a positive relationship between internal marketing practises and employee job satisfaction.

2.3.1 Training and development and job satisfaction

Employees must consistently provide high-quality, timely service to attract repeat business (Dwomoh & Moses, 2020). In a competitive and dynamic environment, Training and Development is an important element for a

company that wishes to survive, as it enables employees to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities, thereby meeting customers' demands and providing high-quality services (Tsai *et al.*, 2008). According to Chaudhary and Bhaskar (2016), firms must establish training and development programs to enhance employees' skills and efficiency, thereby motivating and satisfying them. The deliberation above led to the formation of the following hypothesis:

H1: Training and development have a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

2.3.2 Employee empowerment and employee job satisfaction

Employee empowerment refers to the autonomy employees have to make important decisions about their everyday activities (Haas, 2010). Empowered employees are expected to perform their work more effectively and efficiently than non-empowered employees. Employee Empowerment has received recognition in management circles because it is one of the fundamental elements of managerial and organisational effectiveness that increases when power and control are shared in the organisation (Ergeneli *et al.*, 2007). In the last decade, empowerment has become particularly important in services as a means of controlling or enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction at the point of service production (Klidas *et al.*, 2007).

Empirical research indicates that job satisfaction is significantly predicted by empowerment, and that empowered workers are happier in their positions (Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997). Job satisfaction may be somewhat impacted by empowerment (Bakker *et al.*, 2008). Ning *et al.* (2009) reported a significant positive relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction. Based on the above details, it was prudent to form the following hypothesis:

H2: Employee empowerment has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

2.3.3 Internal communication and employee job satisfaction

Internal Communication is a process whereby people within an organisation give and receive messages; it is a vital prerequisite for a well-functioning internal marketing culture. Without people being able or prepared to

communicate with one another, there is no interdepartmental or functional coordination (Naude et al., 2003). Downs and Hazen (1977), Madlock (2008), Orpen (1997), and Varona (1996) are among the researchers who studied the relationship between communication and employee job satisfaction. Research indicates that internal communication is one of the factors that influence employee job satisfaction. With active and accessible communication, employees are better able to understand their jobs and are more connected to them. This leads to better performance and higher job satisfaction. Considering other research the following hypotheses were developed:

H3: Internal communication has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

2.3.4 Motivation and employee job satisfaction

Scholars and organisational theorists have long recognised that the psychological forces driving an individual to action are closely linked to their level of satisfaction at work. Gagné and Deci (2005) argue that fulfilling fundamental psychological needs such as autonomy and competence enhances intrinsic motivation, which in turn contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction. Prior literature also indicates a positive association between employee motivation and job satisfaction (Ahuja, 2011). Furthermore, empirical research by Grant (2008) suggests that motivated employees tend to exhibit greater persistence and performance, outcomes that may reinforce their overall sense of fulfilment and satisfaction at work. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis was posited:

H4: Employee motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

2.3.5 Rewards system and employee's job satisfaction

Every individual is unique, different inputs can motivate them to act and perform well. According to Sohail and Jang (2017), an effective reward system includes both monetary and non-monetary elements, and the perception of fair compensation is key to employee satisfaction. Based on the above literature, the following hypothesis was formed:

H5: Pay and reward system has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research approach and design

The primary objective of the study was to determine the impact of internal marketing strategies on employee job satisfaction in the star-rated hotels in Jimma City. This objective was achieved, and the hypotheses were tested using a quantitative research approach. Additionally, both descriptive and explanatory research designs were used in the study. While the descriptive research approach was chosen to describe the characteristics of the problem of interest, the explanatory research method was utilised to explain, understand, predict, and control the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. The theoretical perspective of this research is grounded in internal marketing theories and the service-profit chain model, which highlight the importance of efficient internal practices in enhancing employee engagement and, consequently, customer satisfaction.

The research focused on five dimensions of internal marketing pay and reward, motivation, training and development, internal communication, and empowerment as this selection streamlined analysis to core factors directly impacting employee performance and organisational outcomes, avoiding redundancy (e.g., employment security overlapping with motivation) and less critical dimensions (e.g., work/family balance) in the study's specific industry context.

3.2 Target population, sample size, and sampling technique

All permanent staff members of Jimma City's star-rated hotels were included in the study's target group. According to Jimma's eight-star hotels' human resources report dated November 30, 2024, there are currently 353 employees. To build a representative sample for the population, Yamane's (1967) formula for selecting sample size was employed, which had a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This formula was used because it helps calculate an appropriate sample size when the exact population size is known. The calculation is as follows:

$$N = N/1 + N(e)^2$$

Thus, based on Yamane's formula, the sample size is determined as follows:

$$N = 353/1 + 353(0.05)^2 = 188$$

Table 1 presents the sample sizes for each hotel. The 188 closed-ended questionnaires based on a five-point Likert scale in English and Amharic were distributed on

30th November 2024 among the star-rated hotels in Jimma city. The questionnaires were collected after one week. The questionnaire was based on the five key dimensions of internal marketing: empowerment, training and development, motivation, internal communication, and pay and reward. There were four items for empowerment: “problem solving, initiative, good judgment and encouragement”. For training, there were six items: “individual needs, new employees, major change in service rules, change in department, resources for training and creating competencies”. In terms of motivation, there were five items: “reward, feedback, incentives, performance measurement reward system and performance evaluation”. Internal communication had five items: “timely information, managers’ listening skills, personal problems, in-person meetings by managers, time spent with subordinates”. For pay and reward there were nine items “competitive pay and benefit package, satisfaction with present salary, annual increment in relation to qualification or performance, annual increment in relation to peers, benefits offered as per expectations, non financial benefits, equal opportunity for advancement, positive recognition and job promotions”. Finally, there were nine items regarding job satisfaction “satisfaction with current career, job security, equal growth and development opportunities, satisfaction with salary, responsibility and role, medical benefits, status, policies and supervisors.”

To ensure the questionnaire’s accuracy, initial input was gathered from hotel managers and industry experts, and a trial survey was conducted on 10 employees before full-scale distribution of the questionnaires. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and a cover page explaining the purpose and significance of the research, along with a declaration that no employee identification would be used, was included with the questionnaire to promote truthful responses. Further responses were

securely stored and accessed only by the research team, reinforcing the confidentiality of the information provided. Eight-star-rated hotels and 353 sample employees were proportionally selected for inclusion in the study. The share of the target respondents from the total number of employees is calculated as follows: $n1 = n1/N*100$

A stratified sampling technique was selected for this study to provide equal representation across the target population and to avoid under- or overrepresentation of employees from a single hotel. Further Census sampling was applied to select all eight star-rated hotels, as their numbers were manageable to the researcher. Within these hotels, simple random sampling was used to select the 188 employees out of the total of 353 employees in the eight-star-rated hotels, ensuring that the sample is representative of the total workforce.

3.3 Sources and methods of data collection

For this research, both primary and secondary data were utilised. The primary data were collected through questionnaires filled out by the existing permanent employees of the eight-star-rated hotels in the study area. Secondary data were collected from documents obtained through reviews of related literature, published journals, internal records, relevant documents, websites, human resource books, brochures, annual reports and magazines, articles, and other available sources.

3.4 Method of data analysis

Editing, coding, and tabulation were done on the data gathered from primary and secondary sources. The data was analysed using version 21 of the Statistical Package

Table 1: Proportionate stratified sample size of respondents

No	Branch	Population size	Sample size
1	Central hotel	45	$45/353*100 = 12.7$, then $12.7\% \ 188 = 24$
2	Awetu grand hotel	40	$40/353*100 = 11.33$, then $11.33\% \ 188 = 21$
3	Honey land hotel	35	$35/353*100 = 9.92$, then $9.92\% \ 188 = 19$
4	SYF hotel	40	$40/353*100 = 11.33$, then $11.33\% \ 188 = 21$
5	Rebeca hotel	52	$52/353*100 = 14.73$, then $14.73\% \ 188 = 27$
6	Bony hotel	39	$39/353*100 = 11.05$, then $11.05\% \ 188 = 21$
7	Dololo hotel	67	$393/353*100 = 18.98$, then $18.98\% \ 188 = 36$
8	Lalo hotel	35	$11/353*100 = 9.92$, then $9.92\% \ 188 = 19$
Total		353	188

Source: Survey, 2024

for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The software was used to detect errors and omissions and to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. The study variables were summarised and described using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Additionally, inferential statistics like correlation and multiple linear regressions were used to examine how internal marketing techniques affected job satisfaction.

3.5 Reliability

Reliability analysis was used to measure the internal consistency of questionnaires. There are different methods of reliability tests. For this study, Cronbach's alpha was used. The reliability measures for each significant variable are presented in Table 2 to facilitate data analysis.

According to the table above, all internal marketing practice dimensions (empowerment, training, motivation, and internal communication) and employees' job satisfaction were classified as good, as the reliability scores for all dimensions exceeded 0.70. This indicates that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables falls within the acceptable range and indicates internal consistency.

4 Findings

Of the 188 questionnaires distributed to study participants, 180 were returned, yielding a 95.74% response rate. Only 4.26% of the questionnaires were discarded due to incorrect, incomplete, or faulty responses. Kindly see Table 3 below:

4.1 Descriptive statistics of internal marketing practices and employee job satisfaction

The analysis revealed that employee empowerment had the highest mean score ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.54$), indicating its prominence as a valued internal marketing practice in the surveyed hotels. Other dimensions, including internal communication, pay and reward, employee motivation, and training and development, followed closely, with mean scores ranging from 3.67 to 3.79 and standard deviations ranging from 1.42 to 1.58. Refer to Table 4.2 provided below:

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Empowerment	.740	4
Training	.774	6
Motivation	.878	5
Internal Communication	.882	5
Pay and reward	.843	9
Job satisfaction	.858	9

Source: Own survey, 2024

Table 3: Response Rate of Respondents

Description	Respondents
Questionnaire distributed	188
Questionnaire returned	180
Response rate (%)	95.74

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables (N=180)

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee Empowerment	3.79	1.54
Training and development	3.67	1.58
Motivation	3.72	1.42
Internal Communication	3.77	1.49
Pay and reward	3.76	1.47

Source: Field survey, 2024

4.2 Correlation analysis

All five internal marketing variables showed a moderately positive correlation with employee job satisfaction, according to the Pearson correlation analysis, with statistically significant results at $p < .01$. The strongest associations with job satisfaction were seen with internal communication ($r = .695$, $p < .01$), motivation ($r = .687$, $p < .01$), training and development ($r = .654$, $p < .01$), pay and reward ($r = .606$, $p < .01$), and empowerment ($r = .543$, $p < .01$).

The detailed results are presented in Table 5 below:

4.3 Regression analysis

The researcher further sought to establish the effect of each of the independent variables; (pay and reward, motivation, training and development, internal commu-

Table 5: Pearson Correlation coefficients (n=180)

	EM	T&D	MO	CO	PR	EJS
EM	1					
T&D	.428**	1				
MO	.365**	.449**	1			
CO	.335**	.384**	.489**	1		
PR	.601**	.475**	.423**	.435**	1	
EJS	.543**	.654**	.687**	.695**	.606**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.876 ^a	.768	.761	.50195

a. Predictors: (Constant), Pay, Motivation, Training, Communication, Empowerment

b. Dependent Variable: Employee job satisfaction

Source: Field survey, 2024

nication, and empowerment) to the dependent variable of employee job satisfaction in star-rated hotels in Jimma city. The degree to which the predictors influence the dependent variable was ascertained using the regression model.

4.3.1 Model summary

The impact of five independent variables—empowerment, internal communication, training and development, motivation, and pay and reward—on the dependent variable, employee job satisfaction, was assessed using a multiple linear regression analysis. With $R = .876$, the results showed a good correlation between the predictors and Employee Job Satisfaction, demonstrating

the model's ability to predict. $R^2 = .768$, indicating that 76.8% of the variance in employee job satisfaction can be explained by the variables taken together. The model's trustworthiness is confirmed by an adjusted R-squared of 0.761, which accounts for its complexity. With a standard error of the estimate of 0.50195, the predictions appear to be reasonably accurate. These results show that variations in employee job satisfaction are significantly influenced by the five variables taken together. Please see table 6 below:

4.3.2 The analysis of variance (model fitness)

To determine whether internal communication, empowerment, training and development, pay and reward, and motivation significantly predict employee job satisfaction, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. With $F(5, 174) = 115.22$, $p < .001$, the regression model was statistically significant, indicating that it fits the data well. The overall variance in employee job satisfaction was estimated by the regression sum of squares (145.15), the residual sum of squares (43.84), and the total sum of squares (188.99). These findings demonstrate that a substantial portion of the variation in employee job satisfaction may be explained by the predictors considered together. Refer to Table 7 below for further details:

Table 7: The Analysis of Variance

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	145.150	5	29.030	115.218	.000 ^b
	Residual	43.840	174	.252		
	Total	188.990	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee job satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Pay, Motivation, Training and development, Communication, and Empowerment

Source: Field survey, 2024

4.3.3 Multiple regression analysis

According to the analysis, employee job satisfaction was significantly impacted by internal communication, empowerment, training and development, motivation, and pay and reward taken together. The overall model fit was confirmed by the statistically significant regression model findings, which demonstrated $F(5, 174) = 115.22$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.768$ and Adjusted $R^2 = 0.761$, indicating that the predictors account for 76.8% of the variation in employee job satisfaction. If each dimension is examined separately Internal Communication had the strongest impact ($B = 0.292$, $SE B = 0.037$, $\beta = 0.349$, $t = 7.926$, $p < .001$), Motivation ($B = 0.260$, $SE B = 0.040$, $\beta = 0.295$, $t = 6.559$, $p < .001$) and Training and Development ($B = 0.260$, $SE B = 0.042$, $\beta = 0.275$, $t = 6.159$, $p < .001$) also showed notable contributions, Empowerment ($B = 0.113$, $SE B = 0.042$, $\beta = 0.127$, $t = 2.707$, $p = .007$) and Pay and Reward ($B = 0.128$, $SE B = 0.052$, $\beta = 0.122$, $t = 2.455$, $p = .015$) were significant predictors but had comparatively smaller effects. These results highlight the collective and individual importance of these internal marketing dimensions in influencing employee job satisfaction. Kindly see Table 8 provided below:

4.3.4 Regression equation

A multiple regression model was used to determine whether independent variables, as symbolised by EM= Empowerment, TD= Training and development, MO= Motivation, IC= internal communication, and PR=pay and reward, altogether affected the dependent variable EJS= Employee job satisfaction. The Multiple regression models were as follows:

$$EJS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \sum_0 + e$$

$$EJS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (EM) + \beta_2 (TD) + \beta_3 (MO) + \beta_4 (IC) + \beta_5 (PR) + e$$

$$EJS = -.219 + 0.127(EM) + 0.275(TD) + 0.295(MO) + 0.349(IC) + 0.122(PR) + e$$

Where;

EJS= the dependent variable (Employee job satisfaction)

EM= the first independent variable (Empowerment)

TD= the second independent variable (Training and development)

MO= the third independent variable (Motivation)

IC= the fourth independent variable (Internal communication)

PR= the fifth independent variable (Pay and reward)

β_0 = intercept of the equation

e = error term

4.4 Hypothesis summary

As shown in Table 9 below, the research hypotheses were tested based on the unstandardised coefficients, beta and p-values so as to determine whether they were accepted or rejected. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that all five internal marketing dimensions were practised and significantly contributed in a statistically meaningful way to Employee Job Satisfaction in Jimma City's star-rated hotels.

5 Discussion

The study clearly emphasises the importance of internal marketing strategies in promoting employee job satisfaction in Jimma City's star-rated hotels. The active participation in this study indicates that the topics discussed

Table 8: Regression Coefficients Analysis

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.219	.174		-1.257	.210
	Empowerment	.113	.042	.127	2.707	.007
	Training and development	.260	.042	.275	6.159	.000
	Motivation	.260	.040	.295	6.559	.000
	Internal Communication	.292	.037	.349	7.926	.000
	Pay and reward	.128	.052	.122	2.455	.015

a. Note: Dependent Variable: Employee Job Satisfaction. $p < .05$; $p < .01$; $p < .001$

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 9: Analysis of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	B	t	p-value	Results
H1	EM-EJS	.113	2.707	.007	Accepted
H2	TD-EJS	.260	6.159	.000	Accepted
H3	MO-EJS	.260	6.559	.000	Accepted
H4	IC-EJS	.292	7.926	.000	Accepted
H5	PR-EJS	.128	2.455	.015	Accepted

R .768

F (5, 174) 115.22

Note: *p<0.05 EJS: Employee Job Satisfaction, EM: Empowerment, TD: Training and Development, MO: Motivation IC: Internal communication PR: Pay and reward

Source: Field survey, 2024

are not only pertinent but also profoundly felt by those employed in the hospitality sector.

Additionally, the analysis showed that employee job satisfaction and these internal marketing aspects were moderately correlated, albeit statistically significant. Notably, motivation and internal communication were found to be especially important. This highlights that developing a strong sense of commitment and happiness among employees requires open, honest communication and effective motivational strategies. It may be useful for managers to schedule frequent team meetings, maintain contact through digital platforms, and maintain an open-door policy so that staff members can freely express their thoughts and concerns. Further motivation can be boosted by implementing incentive schemes that honour and reward outstanding work, such as bonuses, employee of the month honours, or other recognition, along with promoting a productive workplace that fosters both professional and personal development. Regression analysis supports these conclusions by demonstrating that nearly 77% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by internal communication, empowerment, training and development, motivation, and pay and rewards. Together with a low standard error, the high R^2 and adjusted R^2 values indicate that these predictors provide a robust and reliable framework.

It is pertinent to note that although regression analysis indicates that internal communication and motivation have a more direct impact on job satisfaction, employees rated empowerment highly, as reflected in mean scores indicating their appreciation for autonomy and a say in decision-making. This implies that empowerment is important, and it may prove beneficial if employee commitment and sense of ownership can be increased by involving them in decision-making processes. Moreover, assigning duties and, where necessary, granting employees autonomy to make significant contributions to hotel

operations may be worth exploring to increase employee empowerment. However, the daily benefits of effective motivational techniques and transparent communication contribute more immediately to higher employee satisfaction.

In practical terms, the findings suggest that companies should approach internal marketing holistically. Although each component alone affects job satisfaction, their combined effect is substantial. A more stimulating and encouraging work environment can be achieved by prioritising projects that enhance internal communication and motivation, as well as ongoing training, empowerment, and competitive pay. It may make sense to invest in staff expertise by collaborating with other training organisations to offer specialised courses and certifications. Pay scales and incentive schemes may also be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain competitive and accurately reflect employees' contributions. Such an integrated approach may not only enhance overall organisational performance but also increase employee job satisfaction.

6 Conclusion

The focus of this study was to examine how internal marketing influences employees' job satisfaction at star-rated hotels in Jimma City. The researchers utilised 180 valid responses and a quantitative approach to examine the five major dimensions of internal marketing, i.e. internal communication, empowerment, training and development, motivation, and pay and rewards. The findings showed strong and positive connections between each of these dimensions and job satisfaction.

The results highlight the significance of internal communication ($\beta = .349$), which is the most crucial element in fostering a healthy work environment. Employees feel more included and content when there is clear, regular

communication that includes timely updates and feedback. Another important component, motivation ($\beta = .295$), underscores the need for a positive work environment in which staff members feel valued and motivated to perform to the best of their abilities. Training and development ($\beta = .275$), equal pay and reward ($\beta = .122$), empowerment ($\beta = .127$), are also essential. These elements support workers' skill development, sense of independence, and confidence in receiving fair treatment inside the organisation. Regression analysis revealed that these five dimensions together accounted for 76.8% of the variance in job satisfaction, emphasising their significant influence.

Despite offering valuable insights, the study faced certain limitations. By focusing solely on star-rated hotels in Jimma City, its findings may not be broadly applicable to non-star hotels or other regions. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce response biases that could affect the results. Further, the study's quantitative approach, while rigorous, did not focus on the contextual and nuanced insights that qualitative data could offer. The study design was used to measure specific factors systematically; it limited the investigation of individual experiences that could have enhanced the understanding of employee job satisfaction.

Future research could address these limitations by examining employee satisfaction across non-star hotels and across diverse geographic areas. A greater understanding of the dynamics at play might be obtained through mixed-methods approaches. Examining other elements such as leadership style, organisational culture, and technological developments could help clarify how internal marketing contributes to higher job satisfaction. Future research that broadens its focus may produce better methods for enhancing employee retention and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Bionotes

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Declaration of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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