

Internal Marketing Strategies and Consumer Satisfaction: Evidence from Selected Manufacturing Firms in South West Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper focused on the influence of internal marketing (IM) strategies on customer satisfaction (CS) in selected manufacturing firms in South-West, Nigeria. The general purpose of this study was to determine the effect of IM strategies on CS with evidence from selected manufacturing firms in south west Nigeria. The research questions and hypothesis were formulated to work with the research objective. The study used a survey research design with a sample size of 177 respondents selected from the 319 total populations. A structured questionnaire that was given to the respondents served as the main data collection tool. Simple percentage analysis and simple linear regression analysis were used to analyze the data that were gathered. Findings indicated that, at the 0.05 level of significance, the IM strategies component had a statistically significant impact on CS ($X1 = R2 = 666$ and $X2 = 763$). The study comes to the conclusion that the employer branding strategy and internal communication (IC) components of IM strategies are relational aspects that influence CS based on the analysis's findings. Managers should be trained in effective communication techniques to ensure they convey information clearly and listen to their team's needs and feedback. As a result, it is advised that manufacturing implement regular and transparent communication channels, such as internal newsletters, intranet platforms, and team meetings, to keep employees updated on important information and changes. By taking these steps, you'll lessen uncertainty, raise staff morale, and ultimately improve customer service.

Keywords: *IM Strategies, IC, Employer Branding, CS*

Introduction

In the competitive landscape of the manufacturing sector in Nigeria maintaining high levels of CS is crucial for long term success. IM strategies play a pivotal role in achieving this by fostering a productive and motivated work force. Two critical components of IM strategy will be discussed. IM extends beyond simple incentives and instead fosters the alignment of objectives within a department and between divisions. IM promotes the idea that every department will work together to accomplish a common objective - "CS" (Narver& Slater, 1990). The majority of existing research has examined IM practices as recent marketing phenomena that is incorporated into the activity of human resource management (Yusufi & Andeyang, 2015). Employee-centricity is the practice of viewing employees as internal customers, with the aim of achieving specific IM objectives such as employee motivation, job satisfaction (JS), retention, customer-centric behaviour, and job commitment or involvement. Zaman (2012) argued that while IM programmes can have a major impact on employees' commitment, market orientation, and overall profitability of an organisation, the relationship between organisation commitment, IM, and market orientation may not be supported as a mediating factor. The primary goal of IM is to assure employee satisfaction and facilitate the development of products and services to achieve external CS. This process involves catering to the needs of internal clients in order to meet the expectations of external clients (Iyadi, 2023). Currently, service organisations prioritise the acquisition and maintenance of their internal consumers (Ahmed, Rafiq&Saad, 2013). In a highly competitive business world, organisations consider high quality personnel as important assets that set them apart from their competitors and give them a competitive advantage. IM emphasises that in order to achieve work satisfaction and sustainability in the competitive service business, it is crucial to hire, train, and reward service employees who are capable and eager to provide high-quality service in a customer-oriented manner (Iyadi & Sado, 2023). IM is a concept that treats employees as internal customers and views them as internal products that fulfil the demands and wants of external customers (Nebo & Okechukwu, 2017). The primary implication of IM is that employee satisfaction with their organisation is strongly correlated with the delivery of high-quality service to external clients (Ogunnaike, Oyeniyi & Adeniji, 2012). The objective of IM is to elevate the significance of employees to the same level as external customers by regarding them as internal customers. IM is a crucial approach that improves organisational performance by aligning, engaging, and enabling employees at all levels to constantly provide a gratifying customer experience (Iyadi & Sado, 2023). Manufacturing companies in the southwestern region of Nigeria are becoming more aware of the significance of IM tactics. The study identifies two crucial techniques: internal communication (IC) strategies and employer branding. These strategies have a vital role in promoting CS (Iyadi & Oruakpor, 2023). The organisational environment is directly influenced by employees' perception of shared knowledge within the organisation, which ultimately has a significant impact on their productivity and performance. The ideal IC environment should be distinguished from the current communication environment. The task and its approach, known as IC, encompass more than what is publicly disclosed and are characterised by their complexity (Kapourchali& Banerjee, 2020). IC is closely connected to the task of efficiently conveying information regarding significant changes within an organisation, such as a merger, re-branding, or the launch of a new product (Yeomans & FitzPatrick, 2017). Effective communication enhances stakeholder understanding and satisfaction with leaders' actions and the extent to which their decisions would alleviate stress and enhance interpersonal relationships (Yue

& Men, 2019). The measurement of IC can be assessed using four dimensions: the communication environment, knowledge efficiency, chances for communication with higher management, and the accessibility of received information (Bhatia & Balani, 2015; Carvalho, 2013; Horak & Yang, 2019). Organisations that adopt a robust employer branding approach can attain superior business outcomes in terms of attracting more candidates, fostering higher employee loyalty, and enhancing productivity (Ambler & Barrow 1996, 187). Therefore, the employer has influence over the organization's employer branding plan. Nevertheless, employer branding can also manifest itself as Mayo (2001) asserts, "It is the conscious or unconscious communication to every employee or potential employee." (Kashive and Khanna, 2017). Employer branding is an unintended outcome that happens when employees talk about their organisation without any influence from management or the HR department. This study aims to examine the relationship between IM strategies and CS in selected manufacturing firms in south west Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Despite the recognition of the importance of CS for business success, many manufacturing firms struggle with low CS levels. This issue is linked to inadequate IM strategies. Specifically poor IC and weak employer branding can lead to low employee morale, decreased productivity, and ultimately unsatisfied customers. CS is crucial for business success, many manufacturing firms in the region consistently struggle to maintain high levels of CS. This issue often stems from internal organizational challenges related to inadequate IM strategies, specifically IC and employer branding. Many manufacturing firms suffer from inefficient or poorly managed communication channels. This results in the lack of clarity, where employees may not fully understand their roles, responsibilities or organization's strategic objectives. Such confusion can lead to inconsistent performance and poor service delivery. Additionally, inadequate communication can create a sense of isolation among employees, reducing their engagement and motivation. Disengaged employees are less likely to put forth their best efforts, negatively impacting customer service. Also, a weak employer brand makes it difficult to attract high-caliber candidates, as talented individuals are less likely to join or stay with a company that does not have a strong reputation as a good employer. In this absence employee might feel undervalued and unmotivated, leading to lower productivity and subpar customer service. Therefore, the combined impact of IC deficiencies and weak employer branding exacerbates the problem of low CS. This study aims to provide insights into how IM strategies can be optimized to foster a more motivated and engaged workforce, thereby enhancing CS and ensuring long-term business success using selected manufacturing firms in South west Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to determine the effect of IM strategies on CS: Evidence from selected manufacturing firms in south west Nigeria

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the effect of IC on CS of selected manufacturing firms in South West Nigeria.

2. Determine the extent to which Employer Branding drive CS in selected Manufacturing firms in south west Nigeria.

Research questions

The following questions were formulated;

- i. What is the effect of IC on consumer satisfaction in selected manufacturing firms in South West Nigeria?
- ii. What is the effect of Employer branding on CS of selected manufacturing firms in South West Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the objectives of the study and strengthen the analysis:

Ho₁: IC has no significant impact on CS of selected manufacturing firms in South West Nigeria.

Ho₂: Employer branding has no significant impact on CS of selected manufacturing firms in South West Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of IM Strategies

Through the work of Berry et al. (1976) and Berry and Parasuraman (1992), the concept of IM was first introduced into the literature on service marketing. According to Soheila et al. (2019), employee commitment was expected to meet internal customer value requirements, and employees were viewed as products in their work. Consequently, IM has been considered a tool for service marketing and a competitive strategy (Gounaris 2005), inspiring staff members to strive towards accomplishing company objectives (Mohamed et al., 2002). According to Jung G, Park E, Park M, and Chung J (2011), IM is a strategic endeavour that bridges the gap between marketing and human resource management with the goal of fostering a positive work environment among employees. This approach helps companies achieve a persistent competitive advantage. As such, this approach necessitates that companies view their staff as internal customers and consistently attend to their requirements. Schiele B, Lee H., Akata Z, Yan X, Reed S., Logeswaran L. Presently (2016) Acknowledging the importance of employees through IM helps to improve their human and social capital and raises employee enthusiasm. A more motivated workforce will lead to better development for the organisation. An abundance of research indicates that the most effective means of guaranteeing customer pleasure, staff retention, and profitability are IM initiatives [Siddiqi MA 2014]. Due to inadequate training and the minimum wage mentality, frontline staff

in the sports and fitness industries have been said to lack motivation and social skills while interacting with businesses and clients. (Sutton C., Donne K, Buswell J, and Williams C., 2016).

In order to consistently provide a positive customer experience, IM strategies are an ongoing process that only takes place inside a business, firm, or organisation. The functional process aligns, motivates, and empowers staff members at all management levels (Ogunnaike, Oyeniyi, & Adeniji 2012). In order to accomplish their goals, organisations, particularly bank management teams, can use IM as a mechanism in their core operations and values (Bellaouaied& Gam, 2004). As per Rainey (2014), the internal customers of a firm are its employees, who make up the first market according to the IM idea. The goal of IM is to establish a culture of accountability by allowing each member to function as both a client and a consumer (Wambugu, 2015). Huang (2003) determined that the goal of IM is to hire, train, and inspire internal staff members. It also hopes to help them understand the significance of CS and orientation, as well as to support and enable the marketing department in delivering first-rate customer service. Internal marketing, according to Johnson, Scheuing, and Gaida (2006), is assuring that the company has a customer-oriented internal environment and realises its services. Employees of the company who are required to be involved with and a part of the business are considered internal market. Since they have a great deal of knowledge and experience, they are crucial for marketing because they can increase CS and foster relationships and trust with consumers. Employees who are highly satisfied and those who have been with the company for a long time are also important (Sin, Tse, Yau, Chow, Lee & Lau, 2015).

Measures of IM Strategies

IC - a critical business function

The sharing and exchange of knowledge among employees is referred to as IC (Chen and Cheng, 2012). All forms of communication are covered, and it creates a competitive edge as well as facilitating organisational functioning and employee connections. Iyadi and Ojumude (2023) assert that IC is crucial for reasons other than only informing the internal public. This is due to its strong strategic orientation. When it comes to a hospitality company's revisit intentions, employees are regarded as a major source of consumer information (King, 2010). When workers bring their issues to work, it often leads to impromptu behaviour, which makes informal communication inside the organisation necessary. As they get to know one another and eventually become friends, coworkers discover they share similar beliefs, values, and points of view (Al EslamiKandlousi et al., 2010).

According to Lee J. (2013), internal CS and customer orientation cannot be developed in an organisation without effective communication within. Establishing the optimal working environment appears to be facilitated by excellent communication. According to Iyadi and Itimi (2023), effective communication may foster involvement, build management and colleague trust, and strengthen loyalty. Communicating back and forth between supervisors and staff members helps employees perform better at work and reinforces management support (Iyadi, 2023). Workers must comprehend their organization's needs as well as those of the customers and the significance of their contribution to both. Kifordu et al. (2022) state that the goal of IC is to increase business value through good employee communication, employee engagement, and the creation of a sense of belonging. A communicator's most crucial audience is their internal audience. Good

IC can help to spark change, lessen uncertainty and rumours, and more. According to Onuorah et al. (2022) it also helps to foster awareness of environmental change and improve internal relationships. Corporate information and communication systems (CICS) and management communication are the two main categories into which IC falls based on the application of communication technology. Communication between a manager and staff members, primarily on assigned tasks that impact morale and a sense of belonging, is referred to as management communication. According to Igwebuike and Iyadi (2021) primarily, it involves interpersonal communication. Whereas the latter focuses on giving general information, management communication is about relationship building. For communication both above and downward, they collaborate as a team. The CICS enables platforms to expand the reach and connection to top leadership, while upward communication encourages staff members to voice problems. The Cornelissen (2011). An effective ICs programme and CS are clearly related. According to Iyadi and Edeme (2022), an organization's mission and values must be a genuine driving force behind the implementation of an effective ICs plan.

IC is a process that involves sharing information, ideas, and knowledge among all members of an organisation in order to accomplish business objectives and to explain and characterise what is happening within the organisation (Iyadi, 2023). According to Papadonikolaki, Verbraeck, and Wadelink (2017), ICs refers to structured knowledge exchange between management and staff within a company, both formally and informally. The company's employee relations as well as the organisational atmosphere and behaviour can both be enhanced via IC. According to Kang and Sung (2017), IC is sometimes conflated with employee communication and is commonly used interchangeably with intra-organizational communication.

Employer Branding

Managing a company's brand is crucial for many businesses since brands are among their most valuable assets. Businesses can employ branding in the field of human resource management, even though they typically concentrate their efforts on creating corporate and product brands (Iyadi, 2022). "Employer branding" is the word used to describe the integration of branding concepts with HRM. Employer branding is becoming more and more popular as a tool for businesses to draw in new hires and ensure that current staff members are committed to the company's mission and values (Iyadi & Assay, 2019). Tim Ambler first coined the phrase "employer brand" in 1996, making it comparatively recent. Employers can use employer branding primarily to convey and make clear their organisational strengths, missions, visions, and values to potential and current employees. This helps the organisation stand out from the competition and attract top talent (Ibid, 2). In order to maintain a high standard among the workforce, an organization's relationship with its employees offers benefits both functional and symbolic (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The advantages of a product brand, which aim to be functional, economic, and psychological, can be likened to those of an employer brand, claim Ambler and Barrow. Economic benefits are more focused on finances and may include tangible rewards, whereas functional benefits include desired qualities like pay, benefits, and leave allowance. And last, feelings centred around a sense of direction, purpose, and belonging inside the organisation are strongly linked to psychological advantages (Ambler & Barrow 1996). Two components make up employer branding: Initially, the employee value proposition outlines the benefits that present employees enjoy from their

employment with the company. Moreover, firms use the employee value proposition as a weapon to target both present and prospective workers. According to Iyadi and Christopher (2022) and Tanwer and Prasad (2016), 188, the second factor is employee experience, which is the actual delivery of value.

According to Tanwer and Prasad (2016), there is also a blend of HRM and BM, with the ultimate goal being to draw in and keep both potential and present workers. According to Kashive and Khanna (2017), employer branding is defined as "an organization's endeavours to advance, internally and externally, a distinct perspective of its unique and appealing attributes as an employer." Furthermore, Kashive and Khanna contend that appealing to excellent talent is a key component of an organization's competitive advantage in the modern world, given the current understanding of employer branding. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) define employer branding as "a focused, long-term approach to control the knowledge and opinions that current and prospective employees, as well as related stakeholders, have about a specific company." Other researchers, like Kashive & Khanna, who contend that employer branding builds a favourable perception of the company as a distinctive and desirable employer and workplace, conveys the organization's unique employment position to potential hires, current employees, and society (Iyadi & Edeme, 2022), support this definition. Establishing a positive perception of itself helps the company stand out from the competition by outlining the distinctive work environment and taking into account all of the tangible and intangible benefits that the company provides to its workers (Kashive & Khanna, 2017; Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Draw in new hires and keep existing staff members engaged are the two key goals of employer branding. Accordingly, businesses have realised that developing a strong employer branding strategy can provide them a competitive edge, aid in the internalisation of company values by staff members, and increase staff retention (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). Accordingly, whereas internal employer branding concentrates on maintaining employee satisfaction to keep current employees, external employer branding concentrates on attracting and recruiting new employees (Iyadi & Egwuenu, 2017). Additionally, as stated by Minchington & Thorne (2007), "Every organisation has an employer brand," even if they decide not to develop an employer branding plan. This is because every organisation has an unconscious employer brand. The employer brand of your company is shaped year-round, whether you like it or not. (2016) Tanwar & Prasad, 188. Organisations can influence and shape their employer brand, according to this statement. But regardless of whether an organisation wants it or not, employer branding happens there (Iyadi & Obialor, 2019). Minchington and Thorne further contend that employer branding is a crucial component of a company's business strategy since it is self-generating and demands active involvement in its creation in order to effectively communicate organisational values and set itself apart from rivals.

Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Client happiness is critical to the success of any business, and both small and large enterprises should value the input provided by its patrons. A small firm can avoid spending a significant amount of money on marketing in order to recruit new customers by having a better understanding of CS, which can help better identify and satisfy consumer demands (Iyadi, et al, 2020). This is actually one of the main tenets of marketing—that all people have certain needs and desires. CS with purchases is expected after these needs are met. In Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler's (2016)

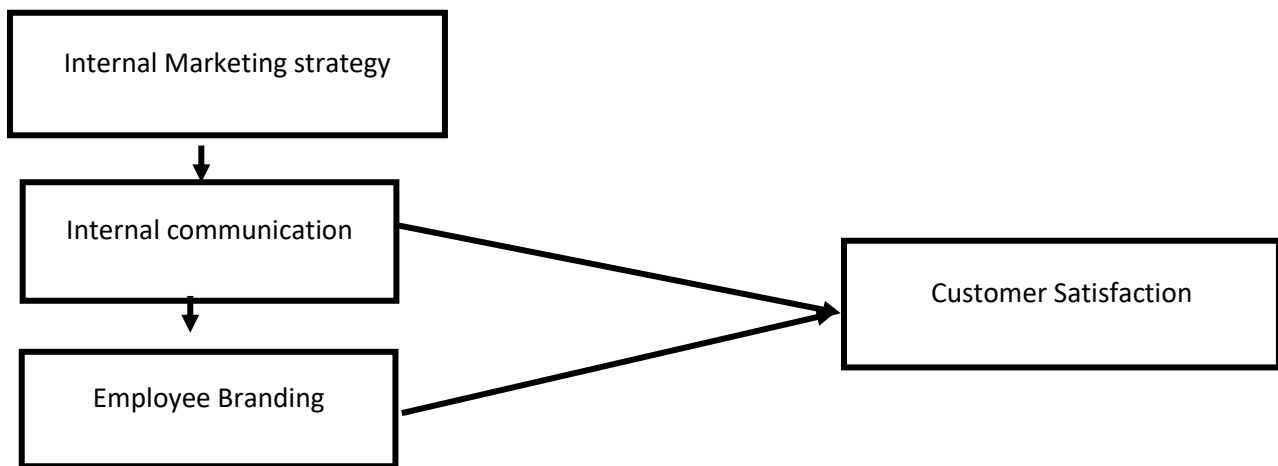
words, CS is the assessment of whether a good or service has fulfilled the needs and expectations of the user. The following are some ways in which a business can increase profits when its customers are happy with the product or service it offers and can be retained by it: acquisition costs decline; satisfied repeat customers will refer new customers; word-of-mouth marketing is free; new customers do not buy as much as existing customers; loyal customers are less price sensitive than new customers; serving existing customers is less expensive. These are some of the ways in which a business can increase profits when its customers are happy with its product or service offering and can be retained by the business. There is a common understanding that happy consumers will recommend the business to others. Any business might suffer significant harm from a delighted consumer since they are less likely to tell others about their positive experience than a disgruntled one.

IM strategies and CS

Conceptual framework

Independent Variable

Dependent variable



Source: Conceptual model of IM Strategies and CS by the researcher, 2024

IM Strategies and CS

Through an emphasis on employee development and engagement, IM techniques have a substantial impact on consumer satisfaction. Staff members acquire the skills and information needed to meet and surpass consumer expectations when organisations invest in comprehensive training programmes. Maintaining a coherent and uniform service approach is facilitated by open and transparent IC, which guarantees that staff members are aware of corporate objectives, guidelines, and client feedback. Employee consistency and predictability in providing a consistent and high-quality customer experience is greatly appreciated by clients.

It is argued by Lings and Greenley (2005) that the purpose of IM is to enhance CS by providing employees with the motivation and encouragement to provide superior services. Clients hold significant value as they represent the asset that the company's prosperity is contingent upon. That's

why it's critical for businesses to prioritise customer service. An organization's success is largely attributed to its customer focus, which guarantees that customer pleasure is prioritised in all departments. Employees that are driven and involved are more likely to provide great service, which raises customer happiness. This indicates a strong correlation between IM and CS. Customer relations are improved by high employee morale, which is cultivated via praise and happy work settings. An experienced team that better understands and serves customer wants is another benefit of effective internal marketing, since it lowers employee turnover and enhances customer experiences. According to Ahmed and Rafiq (2013), IM produced the capacity to boost performance, which involves employee job satisfaction.

Theoretical Review

Hamel & Prahalad's (1989) Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) serves as the foundation for this research project. A company's ability to deliberately modify its resource base is referred to as DCT in organisational theory. In order to deal with quickly changing environments, Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) defined the idea as the firm's capacity to integrate, develop, and reconfigure internal and external capabilities. DCT, a word that is frequently used in plural, refers to the capacity to respond appropriately and promptly to external changes. It does this by highlighting the need for a combination of many capabilities that are closely tied to IM, including outreach, empowerment, and organisational support. His paper "Core Competencies of the Corporation" (Prahalad, 1990) was the result of strategy research using the phrase "DCT" for the first time. The knowledge-creating company, written by Ikujiro, Nonaka, and Hirotaka Takeuchi in 1995, mentioned this study. The concept of operational capabilities, which was first introduced in a working paper in 1989, is somewhat unlike from the idea of dynamic capabilities in that the latter concerns an organization's ability to adopt changes effectively while the former relates to the way an organisation operates now. The organisation is a spin-off of Gary Hamel's multinational and adapts its operations and resource development accordingly (Helfat et al., 2007). The DCT pertains to the creation of tactics by top-level executives in prosperous organisations to adjust to sudden and drastic changes while upholding essential competencies to survive in the market. A new technology, for instance, may not always allow industries that have historically relied on a particular manufacturing process to quickly alter that process. In these situations, managers must adjust their own procedures to maximise the use of their current resources while also making plans for future process modifications as those resources deteriorate. The ability of the company to integrate, develop, and reconfigure internal and external capabilities to deal with quickly changing surroundings is known as dynamic capability (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997).

Empirical review

The study conducted by Leigh, Roberts-Lombard, & De Meyer-Heydenrych (2021) investigated the impact of IM on workers' perceived capacity to provide high-quality service in Oman's conventional banking sector. Additionally proven is the impact of employee perceptions of service quality on CS. Using electronic questionnaires, information was gathered from Oman's traditional banks' retail banking branch staff who serve as the customer's first point of contact. For data analysis, a total of 355 responses were collected. By using structural equation modelling, the

measurement and structural models were measured. The results show that internal factors influencing service quality include internal pricing, internal marketing, and internal performance management; the latter has a direct bearing on CS. Furthermore, client satisfaction at Oman's conventional banks is positively impacted by service quality. The results can direct Oman's traditional banking management in terms of IM strategies that enhance service quality and, in turn, result in satisfied customers. The Middle East is not where IM has been extensively studied as a technique; instead, it has primarily been studied in developed western markets. This research examines various components of the IM mix that have been evaluated for their ability to support customer happiness and service quality in Oman's traditional banking industry.

Egbosi, Chijionwu, Enidom, and Mojekeh (2019) investigated how employee job satisfaction was impacted by IM in a few South East Nigerian commercial banks. A review of pertinent theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature was conducted. The theoretical framework utilised in this study was equity theory. Survey research design was used in the study.

In 2011, Schlager, Tobias, Bodderas, Mareike, Maas, Peter, and Luc Cachelin conducted a study wherein they questioned a group of insurance industry employees to examine the connection between corporate branding and employee satisfaction. They proposed that job satisfaction is strongly impacted by a great employer brand, and that this is connected to a positive customer experience. Training and mentorship programmes are necessary to keep employees' job satisfaction at a high level.

Obikeze et al. (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between client job satisfaction and information management systems in the banking sector in South-East Nigeria. Factors such as employee and customer orientation, training and development, reward and recognition, internal communication, and empowerment were utilized for integration. A total of five regional deposit money banks and five insurance companies gathered primary data by utilizing a standardized questionnaire. The data was examined utilizing the Spearman's Rank Order correlation coefficient in SPSS version 22. Training and development, reward and recognition, internal communication, and empowerment have a strong and positive relationship with employee and customer orientation, which is used as a performance indicator in banks and insurance enterprises in South-East Nigeria. Information and communication technology (ICT) and empowerment have a greater positive impact on the performance of bank employees compared to insurance. The organizational structure has little impact on the internal market adoption or the firm's performance in a financial corporation. Implementing efficient IM solutions enhances the level of job satisfaction among employees, resulting in improved satisfaction for external clients. Therefore, it is imperative for insurance and deposit financial institutions management to create an engaging work environment that fosters employee satisfaction and encourages optimal performance.

Methodology

Research Design

Research design is defined as a framework for conducting information that is required to solve the research problem. A research design is the foundation for conducting a project that includes three different types of designs, depending on the purpose of the research: exploratory, descriptive and causal (Malhotra, 2010). This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional

design involves a one-time collection of information from a population (Malhotra, 2010). The rationale for the choice of the cross sectional studies allow you to collect data from a large pool of subjects and compare differences between groups. Cross-sectional studies capture a specific moment in time. Population of the Study The universe or population of a study signifies the numerical strength of all the subjects relating to the phenomenon of interest into which the research is conducted.

The total population for this study was three hundred and nineteen (319) senior, middle and intermediate management staff of selected quoted manufacturing firms in South-West Nigeria. These firms were selected based on proximity and are quoted by the Nigerian Stock Exchange as Breweries in Nigeria. The distribution of the population is shown below:

Population Distribution Table

Respondents	No of staff
PZ CussionPlc	88
Unilever Plc	64
Cadbury plc	74
Nestle Nigeria plc, Ogun State	93
Total	319

Determination of Sample Size

A Taro Yamani formula was used to determine a sample size of 177 respondent from the staff of selected Manufacturing firms in South West.

$$\text{Formula } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

N = population

n = sample size

e = error term

From the formula above,

The sample size is given as:

$$n = \frac{319}{1+319(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 319 / 1+319(0.0025)$$

$$n = 319 / 1+0.7975)$$

$$n = 319 / 1.7975 = 177$$

n = 177

A sample size of 177 respondents was used for this study.

Sources of Data

Data for this research were obtained from primary. The primary source comprises relevant information to this study were obtained through the use of structured questionnaires.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument used in collecting of the research data was a modified Likert questionnaire formulated around the research question. Hence, there arises a need to quantitate the qualitative Likert responses as strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, Undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5 to facilitate statistical analysis. The researchers administered the questionnaire to the respondent to complete by themselves using interval scale. This is to obtain the necessary information on the perception of the respondents towards the research topics

Validity

According to Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2018), a construct's validity refers to how well it assesses the goal it was intended to achieve. According to Johnston (2014), there are three techniques to assess validity: face or content validity, construct validity, and criteria validity. Construct and content validity were both used in this investigation. The legitimacy of the instrument's content was confirmed by consultation with expert initiative specialists. With the supervisor's help, construct validity was tested to make sure the instrument accurately captured all of the conceptual framework's components.

Reliability

Data reliability measures the internal consistency of the research instruments. According to Burns and Grove (2013), reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which the instrument measures an attribute. Reliability of the questionnaire were measured using Cronbach's alpha correlation which ranges from 0 to 1 (Kothari, 2004). A higher alpha coefficient values imply that the scales are more reliable and vice versa. Therefore, the rule of thumb is that acceptable alpha should be at least 0.70 or above (Hall, 2008).

Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Reliability
Core Competence	0.823	4	Reliable
Strategic Sensitivity	0.911	4	Reliable
Organizational Performance	0.901	4	Reliable
Total	0.941	12	Reliable

Source: Survey data, 2024

Method of Data Analysis

This paper utilized the statistical tool of Simple Linear Regression in which SPSS package of version 25 was used in analyzing the data in order to ascertain the effect of the identified variables. Simple Linear Regression was used to model the association between two continuous variables. Often, the objective is to predict the value of an output variable (or response) based on the value of an input (or predictor) variable.

To determine the significant relationship that exists between the independent variable (X1 =ICstrategy -F, X2 Employer Branding -SS, and the Dependent Variable (Y = CS), the Simple Linear Regression ‘R’ is used. This enable the researcher to predict if there exists any relationship between the dependent variable (Y) and the independent variables(X). All hypotheses are tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of IC on CS of selected manufacturing firms in South West Nigeria.

Regression analysis showing result IC on CS.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.882a	.669	.664	.43220

a. Predictors: (Constant), IC

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000b
1 Residual	50.576	149	.790		
Total	100.021	150			

a. Dependent Variable: CS

b. Predictors: (Constant), IC

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	570	.089		3.430	.000
1 IC	.766	.021	.972	17.127	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CS

The model summary in table above shows an R- value of 0.882. the result shows positive impact of IC on CS of selected manufacturing firms in South west Nigeria. The R square- value of 0.664 shows that 66.4% variation in IC was accounted for by variations in CS. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies a positive impact of IC on CS. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in IC given a unit increase in CS.

Ho2: There is no significant effect of Employer branding onCS in selected manufacturing firms in South west Nigeria.

Regression analysis Employer Branding on CS

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.761 ^a	.615	.611	.44520

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employer Branding

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000 ^b
Residual	50.576	149	.790		
Total	100.021	150			

a. Dependent Variable: CS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employer Branding

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	470	.089		6.430	.000
Employer Branding	.530	.021	.861	10.117	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CS

The model summary in table above shows an R- value of 0.761. The result shows a positive relationship between Employer branding and CS of selected manufacturing firms in South-West Nigeria. The R square- value of 0.611 shows that 61.1% variation in Employee branding was accounted for by variations in CS. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is a positive relationship between Employer branding and CS. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.666 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.530 units increase in Employer branding given a unit increase in CS.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the objectives of the study, the following findings were made;

To investigate how, in a sample of South-West Nigerian manufacturing enterprises, IC affects CS. An R-value of 0.882 may be seen in the model summary in the table above. The outcome demonstrates the beneficial effect of core competency on organisational performance in a subset of South West Nigerian industrial companies. 66.4% of the variation in IC was explained by changes in CS, according to the R square value of 0.664. In light of the dependent variable's F-value of 62.587 and matching P-value of 0.00, the ANOVA table shows that the regression model strongly predicts it. This suggests that CS is positively impacted by corporate communication. A unit increase in CS is predicted by the model to result in a 0.766 unit increase in ICs, assuming all other factors remain constant, according to the B-coefficient of 0.766. This indicates that in certain manufacturing companies in South West Nigeria, IC strategy has a major impact on CS. Almotawteh, (2021) provides support for this study as they investigated how IM influences the acquisition of new clients by utilising social media's moderating effect. Four hundred and forty-five employees of Kuwaiti telecommunications companies were given questionnaires as part of a quantitative approach. The hypothesis was supported by the study's findings, which also indicated that social media influences the relationship between IM and achieving prospective clients. Furthermore, the findings showed that, of the selected IM dimensions, communication had the greatest impact since it raised management, leadership, and employee understanding and support, which enabled them to draw in more clients by encouraging them to have positive opinions about the company's products. In order to maximise their influence on team management and effectively guide the IM mechanism, the study suggested stepping up the training programmes for leaders.

In a subset of manufacturing companies in South-West Nigeria, the second goal was to determine how employee branding techniques affected CS. An R-value of 0.761 can be seen in the model summary in the table above. In certain manufacturing enterprises in South-West Nigeria, the results indicate a positive correlation between CS and staff branding. 61.1% of the variation in employee branding was explained by changes in CS, according to the R square value of 0.611. In light of the dependent variable's F-value of 62.587 and matching P-value of 0.00, the ANOVA table shows that the regression model strongly predicts it. Customer happiness and employee branding appear to be positively correlated, based on this. Additionally, given a unit rise in CS, the model predicts 0.666 units of improvement in employee branding, assuming all other factors remain equal, according to the B-coefficient of 0.666. Mukesh, Biswas, Damodar, and Suar's

(2013) study, which found that social components are highly valued in building an employer brand, is related to this. One cannot compare the relationship between corporate branding and employee engagement with in-office engagement because this encompasses relationships with coworkers who are encouraging and communicative. Based on this argument and the observation that Covid 19 created a new "way of working," I am inclined to believe that an effective employer brand positively influences employee engagement when they work from home.

Conclusion

Therefore the study concludes that IMstrategies significantly impact CS in manufacturing firms in south west Nigeria. Effective IC ensures employees are well-informed and engaged. So, having a strong employer brand helps employees do their best, leading to a successful organization. Communicating effectively with employees can build organizational commitment, achieve superior business outcomes, influence corporate reputation, share knowledge, gain trust, instill a sense of belonging, create awareness and engage employees. While Employer branding has a big influence on how well employees perform and how successful the organization becomes. When a company has a positive employer brand, it makes employees feel proud and motivated to work hard. This leads to better job satisfaction, higher productivity, and increased loyalty among employees. As a result, the organization attracts talented individuals and keeps them, which contributes to its overall success and reputation in the market. Therefore, strong employer branding attracts and retains top talent, fostering a motivated workforce capable of delivering superior customer service.

Recommendation

To address the issues identified in the study, manufacturing firms should:

1. Implement regular and transparent communication channels such as internal newsletter, intranet platforms, and team meetings, to keep employees updated on important information and changes, managers should be trained in effective communication techniques to ensure they convey information clearly and listen to their team's needs and feedback. These measures will reduce confusion, improve employee engagement and ultimately enhance customer service.
2. Implementing recognition and reward programs can boost employee morale and loyalty, while clear career developments paths and training programs will help employees grow within the company. These initiatives will foster a sense of pride and belonging among employees, leading to improved performance and CS
3. Regular monitoring and evaluation of IMstrategies should be conducted to measure their impact on CS and make necessary adjustments for continuous improvement
4. Manufacturing firms should also invest in technology and systems that facilitate effective IC and collaboration, enabling employees to better serve customers.

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