

Internal Marketing and Brand Commitment: An Empirical Review on Employee Perspective in Services Sector

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ABSTRACT

Internal marketing and brand-related behavior of employees are found as extendedly researched notions across the markets and product scopes. The concept of internal marketing has been referred in empirical studies connected to different variables and propositions. In addition, brand-related behavior of employees have been studied with specific variables as different facets of committed behavior. Brand commitment is one of the main variables found within the domain of brand-related behavior of employees. Studies have discussed employee brand commitment behavior in relation to internal branding and brand citizenship behaviors. Alongside, it is clear that the interrelated nature of internal marketing, internal branding, and brand citizenship behavior on employee brand commitment behavior has been a highlighted research avenue. Meanwhile, service sector brands and firms have been extendedly considered in recently held studies when examining the concepts of internal marketing and employee brand commitment behavior. The main argument found with the said is services are fully engaged with employees as a value delivering component, thus, their commitment is a critical factor for the external customer satisfaction. However, empirical studies still claim to investigate how internal marketing practices and brand-related behaviors of employees are interconnected within the services sector firms. Accordingly, this paper also attempted to examine the empirical insights revealing how internal marketing and employee brand commitment behaviors are interconnected. This Paper further highlights the empirical thoughts shared on service sector as a specific matter based on the literature review carried out. Paper concludes the future research priorities by summarizing the content presented in the paper whilst highlighting services sector as a specific research niche.

KEYWORDS: *Brand Citizenship Behavior, Employee Brand Commitment Behavior, Internal Marketing, Services Sector*

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I. INTRODUCTION

It has defined the brand commitment in various manner where a common agreement is found emphasizing the notion or relationship with a brand held by a customer resulted by interaction experience (Jones et al., 2010; Mathew et. al., 2012). In general, commitment is referred as a relational construct that motivates customers to be engaged with a brand or a firm that eventually mitigate the perceived risk (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002). As per some authors, brand commitment has been figured out as an attitudinal disposition whilst some argue that it relates to both attitudinal and behavioral perspectives (Ashley and Leonard, 2009). Usually, brand commitment results favorable outcomes for a brand including purchase intention, long term relationship with the brand and even tolerate the switching cost (Hur et al., 2011; Ilicic & Webster, 2014; Shuv-Ami, 2012). The notion of internal branding and internal marketing specifically highlighted the concern of people or employees as a greater part of the brand or the corporate. The degree of involvement of the employees in service is a significant managerial implication for different services sector companies including financial services (Jayampathi & Dissanayake, 2018). Thus, specific attention is found in the literature explaining the salient nature and the need of considering employee brand commitment as a critical concept within services sector organizations (Morrison, 2009). Empirical evidences are found linking employee brand commitment into internal marketing and branding scope emphasizing the strategic importance of internalizing the brand related values and behaviours (Mangold and Miles, 2007). Alongside, the way how employees engage with the brand related attitudes and behaviors has been able to find an extended attention for empirical studies and managerial implications (Nirmali, et.al.2018). Thus, it is clear that brand commitment is well connected to both internal customers and external customers whereas services sector could be considered as much connected with the employees when it refers to brand commitment aspects. The term employee brand commitment has earned a specific attention as a claimed research scope across the markets and different product categories (Alshuaibia & Shamsudinb, 2016; Ilicic & Webster, 2014; Morrison, 2009).