
INTERNAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract: *This study focused on the influence of internal marketing strategies on commercial banks in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. To achieve this objective, data were obtained using a survey of 143 respondents drawn from the banks staff. 131 copies of the questionnaire were returned in useable form representing approximately 92% return rate and analyzed using the simple regression model (SRM) and hypotheses tested with linear regression at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that internal marketing strategies had significant influence on employee performance. This means that every unit that internal marketing strategies such as (motivation (rewards) and effective communication) increases employee performance will also increase. Thus, we recommend that marketing managers of commercial banks should develop and implement structured rewards systems that recognize and incentivize high performance among employees, this could include bonuses, recognition programs and performance based promotions. They should enhance effective use of motivations (rewards) to increase employee performance.*

Keywords: *Internal Marketing, Effective communication, Motivation and Employees Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Service marketing has evolved into a highly competitive discipline with many factors influencing service, quality and the ultimate source of deposit money banks. Due to the nature of services often the main determinant of customer's perception of service quality is their interaction with the bank staff and this helps banks to acknowledge the importance of employee in service delivery and quality (Udonde, Akpan and Awah, 2022).

Internal marketing is an internal process of initiating, maintaining and developing relationships between employees, their management and the organization for the purpose of creating superior value for customers (Gapp and Merrilees, 2016). This view is upheld in literature by Robert and Steyn (2017) and Ahmed and Rafiq (2011) who agreed that internal marketing (IM) is the process whereby internal

relationships are built with the aim of creating value. Gapp and Merilees (2016) view IM as being an appropriate method for communicating an organization's brand internally. They describe IM as a concept based on the believe that with a service value chain, a firm's internal customers (employees) can be motivated to strive towards customer consciousness, market orientation and sales mindedness through the application of accepted internal marketing approaches.

Hence, employee satisfaction and employee performance are related in that both require the provision of rewards to satisfy wants and needs in order to do so banks need to treat employees in much the same way as they would do to their customers. Accordingly, Udonde, Akpan and Awah (2022) see the concept of internal marketing as a marketing activity which deals and focuses on employee satisfaction as well as a business philosophy which promote the firm and it policies to its employees as if they were the firm's customers. According to them, excellent services to the firm's customers are as a result of satisfied and committed employees.

Internal marketing relates with employee performance. It increases employee's performance and retention, creates a customer oriented workforce, enhance relationship with the external businesses, facilitate a better flow of information, aid in empowering employees, increases compliance with protocols and standards as well as improving the reputation of the brand and profits (Udonde, Akpan and Awah, 2022).

Unfortunately there have been several studies (see for example, Amangala and Wali, 2013; Makaddem and Adnani, 2019; Udonde, Akpan and Awah, 2022; Imani et. al. 2020 and Anwan et, al. 2015) on internal marketing, but little or no effort have been done in the area of internal marketing and employee performance of deposit money banks in developing, economies like Nigeria. More so, many studies on internal marketing have been focusing on aviation industry with very little or no effort on deposit money banks particularly in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. It is against this background that we attempt to investigate the influence of internal marketing on employee performance of deposit money banks with particular reference to deposit money banks in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of internal marketing on employee performance in commercial banks in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives therefore include to:

1. Examine the effect of employee motivation (reward) on employee performance in commercial banks in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
2. Ascertain how effective communication influence employees performance in commercial banks in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

This study attempt to provide answers to the following research questions

1. What is the effect of employee motivation (reward) on employee performance in commercial banks in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?

2. To what extent does effective communication influence employee performance in commercial banks in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide the study

Ho₁: Employee motivation (reward) does not significantly affect employee performance in commercial banks.

Ho₂: Effective communication does not significantly influence employee performance in commercial banks

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

2.1.1 CONCEPT OF INTERNAL MARKETING

Internal marketing (IM) has in recent years embodied the philosophy and is defined by Papasolomou and Vrontis (2016) as any form of marketing within an organization which focuses on the staff and internal activities used in other to enhance external market place performance. Gounaris (2016) agrees with leading IM authors. Ahmed and Rafiq (2002), in that IM can be used to improve service quality and external marketing campaigns, but that its effects on both concepts is mediated by IM's influence on employee satisfaction. IM sees employees as internal customers, jobs as internal product which seek to offer internal products that will satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers at the same time addressing the organizations objectives, it is seen as the effort of service firms which provides all members of the organization with a clear insight and understanding of the corporate mission and objectives, training, motivation and evaluation to achieve the desired objectives (Mokaddem and Asnani, 2019).

Previous research into IM aimed at understanding the abstract concept of IM in terms of its definition, synthesis and extension (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2011), to relationship marketing and service quality (Barnes, Fox and Morris, 2004), the impact of IM on various service industries (Keller *et al.*, 2006; Hwang and Chi, 2005; Papasolomon and Vrontis, 2016), internal marketing orientation (Lings and Greenby, 2005), the link between internal marketing, organization culture and job satisfaction (Shiu and Yu, 2010) and how to use IM to improve service quality (Tsai and Tang, 2008). Although authors agree that there are links between job satisfaction and service quality (Shiu and Yu, 2010; Udonde, Akpan and Awah, 2022) and that IM has relationship with job satisfaction (Yang and Coarts, 2009; Gounaris, 2006; Chang, 2007) there are often overlapping IM constructs and authors cannot agree as to what constitutes IM. Elements such as jobs as products (Gounaris, 2006), place (Papasolomou and Vrontis 2016; Barnes, 2004) promotion or internal communication (Bumann and Zeplin, 2005; Ahmed and Rafiq, 2012; Udonde, Akpan and Awah, 2022) people (papa Solomon and vrontis, 2016;

Robert, Lombard and Steyn, 2007; Gounaris, 2006; Mokaddem and Adnani; 2019), Reward (Blames, Fox and Morris, 2004; Ahmed and Rafiq, 2012; Mokaddem and Adnani, 2019, Amangala and Wali, 2013) and leadership (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005; Ahmed, Rafiq and Saad, 2003; Gouuaris, 2006) have all been studied by various authors. These elements are seemingly indiscriminately change and adapted to suit individual studies and often broad IM element are broken into numerous more specific construct until one is faced with a veritable minefield of possible IM elements.

Elsamen and Alishurideh (2012), assert that training employees for specific purposes like how to communicate with others will help in improving the internal service quality among the co-workers. This assertion is in support of Kotler and Armstrong (2013) who postulates that the organization should carry out internal marketing before external marketing. Further as the task of successfully hiring, training and motivating able employees to serve the customers with the emphasis that it makes no sense for a business firm to promise excellent product or service before the firm's staff is ready to provide it. Udonde, Aniefiok and Awah (2022), advocate that the goal of internal marketing lies in motivating the employees and encourage them to offer superior service to customers which will improve the customer satisfaction of the company services. Elisamen and Alshrideh (2012) list the dimensions of internal marketing as employee motivation and reward, effective communication, employee development, employee selection, employee recruitment, support system and healthy work environment.

From the review of numerous literature many construct have been identified by researchers on the dimensions or constructs of internal marketing, the first two constructs (employee motivation, rewards and effective communication) advocated by Elsamen and Alshurideh (2012) seem consistent hence, they were adopted in this current study.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Internal communications systems include relationship between and within departments. Good internal communication acts as a binding ingredient in organization for the implementation of successful strategies (Ahmad, Igbal and Sheerah, 2012). In most companies, communication provides an information channel; it links managers and employees in different departments within the same organization (Ali, 2016).

Carrier and Bourque (2019) revealed that management spend 75% or more of their work time engaging in some form of communication. Lovelock and wright (2019) affirm that an effective internal communication is a very important instrument or tool for internal marketing. It helps the management to ensure effective service delivery at a high satisfactory level and helps build employee trust, respect and loyalty. Organizations must give a serious consideration to improve the level of communication with employees to communicate its vision and mission as well as provide effective strategies to transfer

knowledge and information, by using different methods such as team work, discussion session and internal newsletter (Elsamen and Alshurideh, 2012).

EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION (REWARD)

Motivation is defined as the process that propels an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal. According to Udonde, Akpan and Awah (2022), among the factors that affect employee performance, motivation that comes with reward is of utmost importance.

Theorist such as Maslow (1943), Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) and Alderfer(1972) have sought to explain employee motivation by holding onto the assumption that all individuals possess the same set of needs and therefore prescribe the characteristics that ought to be present in the jobs.

Maslow (1943) arranged human needs into a pyramid and combined them with motivation as a factor that encouraged people to satisfy their needs. Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) divided motivation into extrinsic and intrinsic factors, which influence employee's motives and job satisfaction. In the early development phase, the majority of the studies on internal marketing focused on the issue of employee motivation and satisfaction. The major reason behind these was the fact that the roots of the internal marketing concept lie on efforts to improve service quality in organizations (Pranowo, 2012)

Motivation therefore is about what a person wants and his emotional state which drives him in the direction of achieving what he wants (Mullin, 2019). Elsamem and Alshurideh (2012) posit that companies that seek competitive advantage through employees must be able to manage the behavior and result of all employees. Papasolomou and Vrontis (2016) have indicated that there is no doubt that motivation is an important factor that improves the performance of the employee. Udonde, Anefiok and Awah, 2022 sees it as an attribute that drives one to do or not to do something, strengthen employees to perform at their very best using diverse skills, tactics and processes. They see it as a powerful energy that drives, move and excite employees which usually end in their maximum productivity and contribution with a high level of employee's performance. They encourage managers to create an atmosphere where their employees will work and contribute to the realization of the organizations goal.

Thus, many organizations set a systematic reward to motivate its employees in order to improve their service quality and delivery (Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2016). Some of the ways that personnel could be motivated are through salary increment, fringe benefits, job security, physical surroundings and safety of the work.

Mokaddem and Adnani (2019) asserts that financial incentives will get people to do more of what they are doing. Thus, Pantea et, al. (2020) adds that there is no doubt that motivation is the key to increase employee performance, but there is no clear cut answer to the question of how to motivate.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Since employees are main source of competitive advantage in service-oriented organization. Performance is the extent to which firm employees contributes to the achievement of the organizational goals (Mokaddem and Adnani, 2019), employee performance is the output of an employee. It involves task successfully completed by selected individual or individuals. Many organizations in trying to decide on the abilities and output of their employees use the performance of their employees as a rating system. Thus, employee performance is linked with the quality and quantity of output, efficiency and effectiveness of accomplished task, timeliness of output and job presence/attendance. (Udonde, Akpan and Awah, 2022).

One of the techniques/strategies for developing and initiating innovations in organizations is to have skilled human resources that aid in contributing to the self - efficiency of employees. Hence, perceived self-efficiency and critical skills is a critical success factor for performance. Therefore, given the human resources potentials, employees can be an important element that aid organization's success in moving towards innovations to a large extent (Imani et, al., 2020). Thus, good employee performance leads to positive customer perception of the service quality while poor employee performance is the result of increase customer complaint and brand switching (Mokaddem and Adnani, 2019).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION (REWARD), EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Service organization focuses on consistently delivering high service quality but these services are offered by employees and employees are not always consistent. This brought to the fore the problem of how to ensure that service quality delivered by employees is of a consistently high quality. The solution to this was proposed as being employee motivation and satisfaction (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2002). Berry, Wall and Carbone (2006) support this assertion by putting forward the concept of employees as internal customers whose job products satisfy their needs. The premise of this in the development of internal marketing (IM) was that in the marketing of service, much of what the customer buys is human acts of performance. Therefore, in order for an organization to have satisfied client who receive consistently high service quality, an organization must have satisfied employees (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2002). This then leads to the people aspect of IM namely the recruiting, training, retention and motivation of the high-quality employees (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005; Papasolomou and vrontis, 2016).

The importance of motivation among the work force cannot be overstated. Happy workers lead to happy customers and happy customers lead to successful businesses. On the opposite side, unhappy workers are likely to leave the company and when this happens, the company usually loses out (Nickels, McHugh and McHugh, 2010). Motivating the right people to join and remain with the

organization is a key function of managers because people are willing to work and work hard if they feel that their work makes a difference and is appreciated, people are motivated by a variety of things such as recognition, accomplishment and status (Nickels, McHugh and McHugh, 2010). Employees are service organizations most important asset, as the interaction between employee and customers is the focal point of the customer's evaluation of the entire service process (Gracia, Cifre and Grou, 2010). Employees represent the organization to customers and are crucial to the success of their organization service offering as they interact directly with the organization's client (Mishara, 2010). Zeithaml and Bitner (2009) refer to the role of employees as being that of a boundary spanner, meaning that they provide a link between the consumer and the internal operations of the organization and are not only vital in terms of providing the service, but in understanding and filtering information between the two.

Berry, Wall and Carbone (2006) state that while the technical quality of the delivery process can meet customer expectations. It is usually the human interactions between employees and customers that exceed expectations and lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty, the author emphasizes the importance of the interaction between staff and customers by stating that although these interactions are the likely cause of delight, they also have the capability of undermining great service process. If interaction with the employee is unpleasant regardless of the actual service delivery, a consumer will be dissatisfied with the service performance irrespective of the technical quality of the delivery. To exceed customer expectations the element of pleasant surprise is required and that the best opportunity available to service organization to surprise customers is during the interaction between clients and employees, referred to as "moment of truth" or critical incidents (Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006).

Moments of truth are instances of contact between customers and the employees of a service organization that provide customers with the opportunity to form opinions about the service and service organization. Each interaction between staff and consumer presents the organization with an opportunity to prove its service quality and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2009), each encounter adds to the overall perception of service quality and if a mixture of positive and negative encounter is experienced by a consumer, they will be left uncertain of the service quality.

The interaction between employee and consumers during service delivery (moments of truth) are the single greatest opportunity service organizations have to customize their service offering in terms of customer requirements in order to delight (Gracia, Varela and DelRio, 2010). The customization of service by employees operates in two dimensions, interpersonal adaptive behaviour and service offering adaptation. Interpersonal adaptive behaviour refers to actions that go beyond the mental or physical skill of the employee needed in service delivery by encompassing the interpersonal communication elements required during a client interaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2009). This refers,

for example to the employee mirroring the client gestures and facial expressions as well as adapting tone, voice and language to the customer's needs. The dimension of service offer adaption refers to the employee's ability to tailor make or create a unique service offering per client (Gracia, Varela and DelRio, 2010). This can, for example be as simple as a hair dresser offering an assortment of refreshments to a client, or as complex as a bank staff tailor making a financial service to a client's specific needs all translates to effective employee performance.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

In this section, one major theory was considered relevant for this study and this is:

The internal marketing theory propounded by Leonard Berry (1981).

In his work "the employee as customers", he advocated treating employees as internal customers. Berry (1981) state that internal customers must be sold on the service and be happy in their jobs before they can effectively serve the final customer. His model explained that treating employee as internal customer and the job presented to the employees as the products in conjunction with the application of marketing techniques within the company to reach employees satisfaction. Berry's model is presented in Figure 2.1 thus:

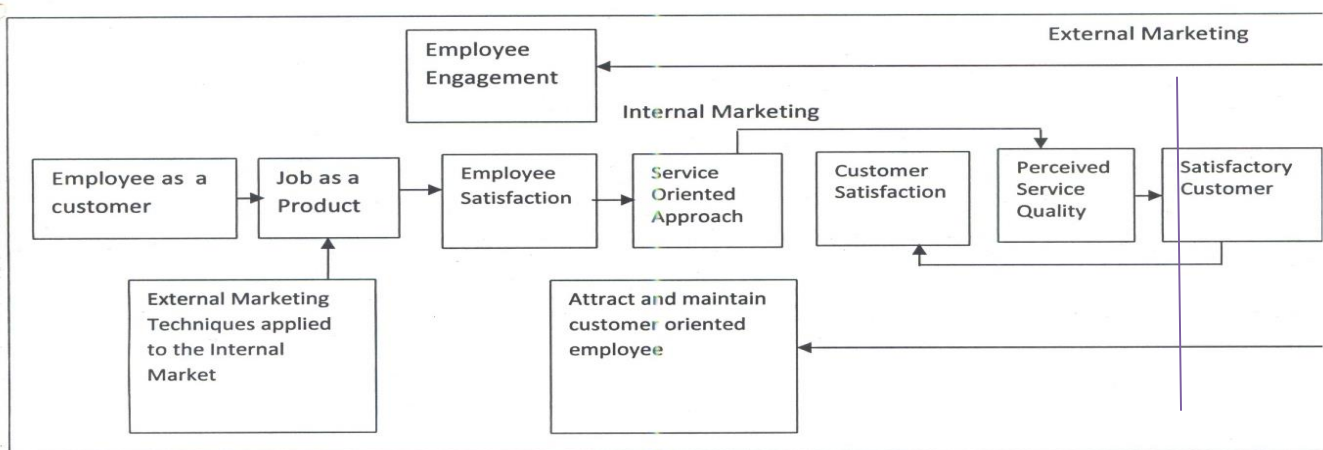


Fig 2.1 Berry's model of internal marketing

Source: Berry's model of internal marketing (Berry, 1981)

Berry's (1981) theory of internal marketing has been adopted in different studies over the years. Gronroos (1994) was the first in 2007, he highlighted that internal marketing focus is on good internal relationships between people at all levels in the organization. He emphasized on adequate leadership, from the relationship perspective, he stated that the main focus of marketing is the value creating process.

Another study who had adopted this theory is, Ahmed and Rafiq (2003), who developed what was regarded as a hybrid approach in internal marketing taking the best from Berry and Gronroos, Ahmed and Rafiq identified the main elements of internal marketing as:

- Employee motivation and satisfaction
- customer orientation and customer satisfaction
- Inter-functional coordination and integration
- Marketing like approach to the above
- Implementation of specific corporation or functional strategies

Other studies that have adopted this theory are Ballantyne (2003); Lambert (2002); Nanide, Pesai and Murphy (2003); Bansal (2001). The internal marketing theory applies to the present study on employee performance as it adopts indices from related studies. The indices (effective communication, employee motivation and reward) are used to enhance the performance of employees who are seen as the banks internal customer. Thus, the success of the service product when driven to the external customers depends largely on how well the internal customers are treated.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey design was adopted by the researcher to aid in obtaining information from respondents. The population for this study consists of the employee of the selected commercial banks used in the study totaling 224. To determine the sample size since the population for the study was known, the Tara Yamene's formula at 5% level of tolerable error was adopted. Based on this formula, 143 staff formed the sample size for the study. Primary data on the two independent variable and the dependent variable were collected from the 143 respondents who were banks employees within the Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State using the convenience sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structures questionnaire while the hypotheses were tested using the simple regression at 0.5 level of significance. Out of these 143 questionnaires distributed, 131 of them were returned representing approximately 92% return rate.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Variables	Number of questionnaire copies administered	Percentage (%)
Returned and useable	131	91.61
Not returned and un-useable	12	8.39
Total	143	100

As shown in the table above that out of the 143 copies of questionnaire that were administered to the respondents 131 representing 92% were returned in a useable form while the remaining 12 copies of 8% were either returned but not in useable form or not returned at all.

Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Employee motivation (reward) does not significantly affect employee performance of commercial banks.

Model Summary of Internal marketing and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.847 ^a	.718	.716	2.14541

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee motivation

Analysis of Variance of Internal marketing and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks ^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1689.225	1	1689.225	367.000	.000 ^b
	Residual	662.802	129	4.603		
	Total	2352.027	130			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee motivation

Coefficients^a of Internal marketing and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.897	.725		8.129	.000
	Employee motivation	.735	.038	.847	19.157	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

The table above with R value of 0.847 indicates that there is a significant influence between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.718 implies that about 71.8% of the variation in employee performance was explained by employee motivation. The F-calculated value of 367.000 and P-value of 0.000 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to explain the dependent variable very well. The constant value of 5.897 indicates that keeping independent variable (employee motivation) constant; employee performance will remain at 5.897. The coefficient of employee motivation was 0.735 which means that a unit change in employee motivation will lead to 0.735 unit change in employee performance. The P-value of 0.000 means that the effect of employee motivation on employee performance was statistically significant.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: effective communication does not significantly influence employee performance of commercial banks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
Model Summary of Internal marketing and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.900 ^a	.810	.808	1.76312

a. Predictors: (Constant), Effective communication

Analysis of Variance ^a of Internal marketing and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1904.392	1	1904.392	612.625	.000 ^b
	Residual	447.635	129	3.109		
	Total	2352.027	130			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Effective communication

Coefficients^a of Internal marketing and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.686	.690		3.894	.000
	Effective communication	.853	.034	.900	24.751	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

The table above with R value of 0.900 indicates that there is a significant effect between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.810 implies that about 81.0% of the variation in employee performance was explained by effective communication. The F-calculated value of 612.625 and P-value of 0.000 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to explain the dependent variable very well. The constant value of 2.686 indicates that keeping independent variable (effective communication) constant; employee performance will remain at 2.686. The coefficient of effective communication was 0.853 which means that a unit change in effective communication will lead to 0.853 unit change in employee performance. The P-value of 0.000 means that the influence of effective communication on employee performance was statistically significant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the influence of internal marketing strategies on employee performance of commercial banks in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The study result revealed that internal marketing strategies have significant effect on employee performances of commercial banks. This means that every unit that internal marketing strategies such as (motivation/reward and effective communication) increases, employee performance of the banks will also increase. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, we proposed the following recommendations:

1. Marketing managers of commercial banks should develop and implement structured rewards systems that recognize and incentivize high performance among employees. This could include bonuses, recognition programs and performance based promotions. They should enhance effective use of motivations (rewards) to increase employee performance
2. They should develop and implement training programs focused on enhancing communication skills for employees at all levels. These programs should cover verbal, non-verbal, written and digital communication techniques.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has provided practical recommendations for deposit money banks on how to design and implement effective internal marketing strategies to enhance employee performance. These include guidance on leadership practices, communication channels, performance management systems and employee recognition programs tailored to the banking industry context. The study findings has offered valuable insights into the role of internal marketing in driving employee performance within deposit money banks, contributing to both theoretical knowledge and practical implications for organizational management and strategy.

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