

The effectiveness of internal marketing strategies of private tertiary education institutions (PTEIs) in an emerging market

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to determine if internal marketing (IM) activities are fulfilling their intended purpose of creating customer centred employees. Such IM activities are designed to enhance employee productive behaviour (EPB). The target population of this study consisted of academic staff from the Private tertiary education institutions (PTEIs) in Gaborone, Botswana. The questionnaires were hand delivered to a sample size of 140 respondents. The descriptive research method as well as the quantitative research approach was used in this study. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, and analysed to compute factor analysis. The findings of this study show that the majority of the employees (96%) understood that the IM strategies motivate employees and was most importantly influenced the purposes of IM strategies. Two factors explained the ways management designed IM strategies: Management's focus on the organizational goals and disregard for employees. The results of this study show that most of the employees (88%) believed that management unilaterally design IM strategies. Leadership and management of tertiary education institutions could apply the recommendations proposed by this study to create customer centred employees. In addition, recognizing the need for marketing faculty to make marketing knowledge creation and dissemination more relevant to education institutions. To accomplish this goal, more academic research can be targeted toward internal marketing for tertiary education institutions.

Keywords: Internal marketing (IM); employee productive behaviour (EPB); private tertiary education institutions (PTEIs); service delivery.

1. Introduction

Emerging markets are increasingly becoming integrated into the global economy and it is important to remember the sheer size and diversity of developing economies. Botswana, a landlocked country with a population of just over 2 million and bordered by South Africa to the south and southeast, Namibia to the west and north and Zimbabwe to the northeast, is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

Botswana has 37 tertiary education institutions 24 of which are public and 13 are private. Many private tertiary education institutions (PTEIs) thrive through customer satisfaction and quality service delivery. Failure to deliver services to the expected customer satisfaction breeds a myriad of problems. PTEIs are facing serious competition from an increased number of competitors, reduced government spending on PTEIs, and the general decrease in the desire for tertiary education by potential students. As a result of these problems PTEIs are forced to apply appropriate internal marketing (IM) strategies.

IM studies indicate it is highly correlated with creating employee satisfaction, loyalty and job satisfaction (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). It seems PTEIs in Botswana are faced with a myriad of challenges including labour turnover, student strikes and transfers, constant intervention by regulatory authorities. Some of the challenges may be attributed to poor service delivery. IM is mandated to create customer centred employees who provide efficient and effective services to internal and external customers (Altarifi, 2014).

2. Literature review

Internal marketing is a business notion that has significantly evolved over years. It was first used by Berry and Parasuraman (1991), who ascribed the relevance of IM to service organisations, where employees were regarded as internal customers who are pivotal in delivering satisfaction to external customers. In its early stages IM was exclusively subscribed to service organisations, but nowadays it is embraced by all business sectors. IM is the activity of selling a business to its employees under the assertion and belief that extremely contented workers assist in creating a market-oriented and customer-centered corporation (Al-Hawary, Al-Qudah, Abutayeh, Abutayeh & Al-Zyadat, 2013). Internal marketing (IM) is a broad area of service marketing that advocates that employees are internal customers to the business. It strives to increase employee satisfaction.

According to Nath and Mahajan (2008), IM produces employee productive energy and enthusiasm that is needed for external marketing. According to Sanchez-Hernandez and Grayson (2012) the successful implementation of IM practices is the starting point for external marketing preparation. Therefore, IM is a prerequisite for successful external marketing. According to Kotler, Keller, Ang, Tan and Leong (2017), marketing to the external customer entails the implementation of the relevant products, prices, places and promotions. When reaching out to the external market, organisations

prepare a marketing mix respective of target markets. Therefore, external marketing is about organisational efforts to serve customers.

Kotler et al. (2017) argues that the quality of service and amount of sales and profits are increased by genuine customer-conscious employees, effective recruitment procedures, efficient reward systems and supportive management style in organisations. IM emphasises that staff training, motivation, empowerment and team work powerfully contribute to organizational performance and employee loyalty particularly in the achievement of customer satisfaction (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2012). Al-Hawary et al. (2013) indicate that IM promotes the involvement and empowerment of employees as well as client loyalty.

Kotler et al. (2017) defines IM as an element of holistic marketing tasked with recruitment, selection, training, development and motivating employees to provide a good service to customers. Therefore, in order to create an excellent service culture a company should view its employees as internal customers, meet service standard expectations, and provide them with training and development. This will create employee satisfaction, involvement and commitment, and prioritise service delivery. According to Siddiqi and Zahoor (2016), IM has direct influence on job satisfaction. As a result, organisations undertake IM with the purpose of positively influencing employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction in turn results in employee commitment (Siddiqi & Zahoor, 2016).

According to Al-Hawary et al. (2013), IM involves the following activities: motivation, communication, empowerment, training and development. In addition, Chang & Chang (2007) specified five main elements of IM as: training, administrative support, internal and external communication, administrative support and human resources management and development. Wilson et al., (2012) identified the following key activities of IM: employee motivation and satisfaction, customer orientation and customer satisfaction, inter-functional co-ordination and integration, and implementation of specific corporate or functional strategies. Shaw (2011) identified the following major components of IM: hiring, training and motivation of employees. Shaw further indicates that all marketing functions must be combined and be synchronized in relation to customer requirements.

This research seeks to determine if the IM strategies adopted by private tertiary institutions in an emerging market like Botswana, are serving their intended purpose of creating customer centred employees who serve external customers with pride and ownership.

In light of the mentioned guiding question, the following sub-research questions are asked by this study:

- Are there any IM strategies in private tertiary institutions in Gaborone?
- What are the specific purposes of IM strategies in PTEIs in Gaborone?
- How do management create these IM strategies in PTEIs in Gaborone?
- How do employees view the IM strategies in PTEIs in Gaborone?

3. Methodology

This study has adopted a philosophical post positivist approach because it aimed at identifying the effects of internal marketing strategies in creating customer conscious employees in private tertiary education institutions in Gaborone. In this research, explanatory research was used where the purpose is to identify any causal links between IM strategies effect on customer contact employees, to determine the IM strategies, to determine the specific purposes of the IM strategies, to determine how management design, the IM strategies and to determine how employees, view IM strategies in PTEIs in Gaborone. The population under study consisted of 430 academic staff from both new and old private colleges and universities in Gaborone. A single stage sampling procedure was used in this study to access names of the respondents of this study. The sample consisting of 140 respondents were conveniently selected using Fowler's (2009:75) approach at a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 0.05 and at 50/50 the sample contained required characteristics (see Figure 1). Furthermore, a non-probability sampling technique of purposive sampling was used on academic staff of PTEIs in Gaborone to select the participants.

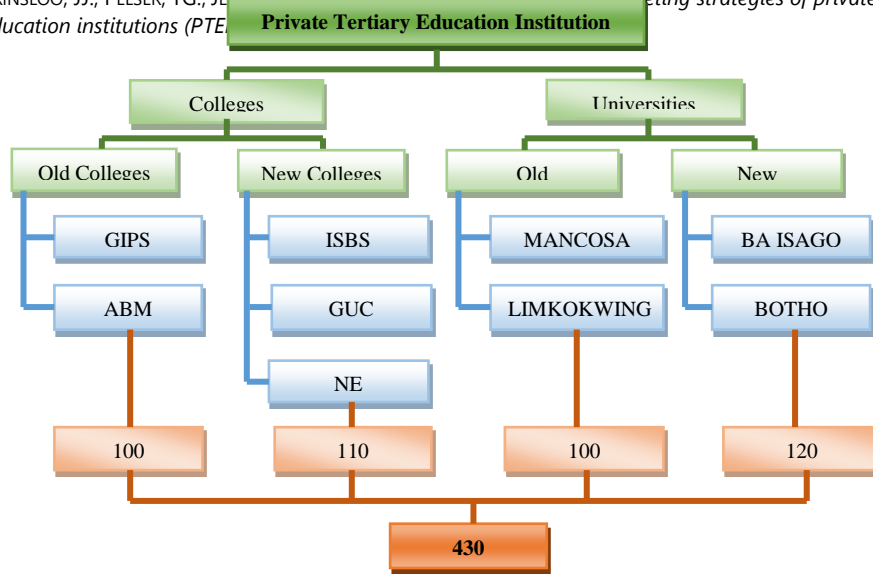


Figure 1. Sample and Population Size

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire to employees of private tertiary education institutions in Botswana. The questionnaire was hand delivered to academic employees of PTEI randomly. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; Section A, requires respondents demographic data such as age and occupation; Section B addresses variables such as remuneration, communication and training.

4. Results

A total of 140 questionnaires were distributed and 138 were returned giving a response rate of 98.6%. In this research the questionnaire had three multiple Likert question sections and the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.861 shows that the questionnaire was internally consistent and reliable.

Demographic Information

Most of the respondents (63%) were males whilst the remainder (37%) was females. The majority (55%) of the employees were from the faculty of Commerce and Business whilst the second largest group (31.8%) were from Education. Others (10.9%) were from Applied Science; very few (1.5%) from Arts and Humanities; and the least (0.7%) from the faculty of Health. Data shows that 45.7% of the respondents had been employed in their organizations for 0 – 5 years; 36.2% for 6 – 10 years; 16.7% for 11 – 15 years; and 1.5% for 16 – 20 years. The majority of the respondents (49.3%) originated from Africa as follows: Botswana (29.7%), Zimbabwe (27%), South Africa (10.1%), Nigeria (7%), Zambia (4%), Ghana (3%), Kenya (4%), Lesotho (1%), Congo

(1%), Tanzania (2%) and Swaziland (0.3%). Whereas 10.9% originated from India. 73.9% of the respondents had graduated with a masters' degree; 15.4% with a PhD; 7.7% a bachelor's degree; and 3.1% with a technical qualification. The majority of the respondents (89.3%) had a masters' degree qualification.

Factor Analysis

Employees' Perceptions of IM Strategies

Most of the employees (96%) claimed to have a clear understanding of their job requirements during hiring and training. Also, the employees (75%) agreed that they had a clearly defined career path, whilst some of the employees (25%) disagreed with that. The results therefore indicate that the majority of employees had a clearly defined career path. In addition, almost half of the employees (54%) indicated that they had enabling resources to meet job requirements whilst 45% did not agree with that. Furthermore, most of the employees (64%) indicated that they had sufficient knowledge of rewards system whilst others (36%) did not agree with that. The majority of the employees (98%) agreed that they knew how rewards motivated employees, whilst only (2%) did not agree. Almost half of the respondents (51%) indicated that employees understood measurement methods of performance whilst the remainder (49%) did not agree with that. In addition, most of employees (72%) indicated that the mission of their organisation was clearly articulated, whilst 28% disagreed.

However, most of the employees (81%) disagreed that the support they receive from management was adequate, whilst 20% agreed. This suggests that most of the employees did not understand the adequacy of the support they received from their management. Furthermore, a large majority of the employees (85%) confirmed that they understood that management had provided a safe working environment, whilst 15% did not agree. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents disagreed that the employees understood that there was trust between management and employees whilst only 12% agreed. These results show that to a greater extent most employees disagreed with the response that there was trust between management and employees.

The results show that 76% of the employees disagreed that employees received timely information from management whilst 23% agreed with that. This suggests that majority of the employees did not receive timely information from management. In addition, 86% of the employees indicated that they did not have easy access to information and 13% thought otherwise. Results show that 83% of the employees disagreed with the fact that they were treated equally, whilst 16% agreed with that. In

addition, 79% of the employees indicated that they worked as a team, whilst 20% disagreed. However, 81% disagreed that they resolved their differences quickly, and 18% agreed that all employees had their differences resolved quickly. Furthermore, 77% of the respondents indicated that they valued work done by other employees, whilst 22.5% disagreed.

Table 1. shows the descriptive statistics of the employees on the perceptions on IM strategies with respect to hiring and training. The highest mean of 3.36 suggests that “All employees have a clear understanding of the job requirements” is the most important than other variables that influences hiring and firing. This suggests that only one factor contributes towards the employees’ perceptions on IM strategies in terms of hiring and firing.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics: Hiring and training

Descriptive Statistics			
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
All employees have a clear understanding of the job requirements	3.3577	.57825	137
All employees have a clearly defined career path	3.0730	.82814	137
All employees have enabling resources to meet job requirements	2.4818	1.00075	137
All employees have sufficient knowledge of reward system	2.6642	.62164	137

Table 2. shows the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity on the perceptions on IM strategies with respect to hiring and training. The KMO measures the sampling sufficiency. For a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed, the KMO value of 0.5 is barely accepted Chetty & Goel (2015). In general, KMO value of 0.5 is hardly accepted, 0.7 to 0.8 is acceptable and above 0.9 is excellent (Chetty & Datt, 2015:15; Abdullah & Siddique, 2017:27). In Table 2, the KMO measure 0.732. The strength of variables’ relationship is indicated by the Bartlett’s test. A significance level less than 0.05 is good enough to reject the null hypothesis Chetty & Goel (2015). In Table 2, the significance level of Bartlett’s test indicates a value of (0.000) and is less than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test: Hiring and training

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.732
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	222.852
	Df	6
	Sig.	.000

Table 3. shows how much of the variance in the variables has been accounted for by the extracted factors. Over 78% of the variance in "All employees have a clearly defined career path" is accounted for, and 38% of the variance in "All employees have sufficient knowledge of reward system" is also accounted for.

Table 3. Communalities: Hiring and training

Communalities		
Variables	Initial	Extraction
All employees have a clear understanding of the job requirements	1.000	.700
All employees have a clearly defined career path	1.000	.785
All employees have enabling resources to meet job requirements	1.000	.725
All employees have sufficient knowledge of reward system	1.000	.380
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>		

Table 4. shows all the factors extractable from the analysis along with their eigen values. The eigenvalue table is subdivided into three sections, namely, initial eigen values, extracted sums of squared loadings and rotation of sums of squared loadings. Extracted sums of squared loadings are significant in performing analysis and interpretation. Thus, the first factor accounts for 64.744% of the variance and the remaining factors are not significant. This means that only one factor contributes towards the employees' perceptions on IM strategies in terms hiring and firing.

Table 4. Total variance explained: Hiring and training

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.590	64.744	64.744	2.590	64.744	64.744
2	.786	19.647	84.392			
3	.379	9.483	93.874			
4	.245	6.126	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5. shows the descriptive statistics of the employees on the perceptions on IM strategies with respect to motivation and rewards. The highest mean of 3.59 shown in Table 5 shows that “All employees know that rewards motivate” is the most important variable that influences motivation and rewards.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics: Motivation and rewards

Descriptive Statistics			
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
All employees know that rewards motivate	3.5870	.53666	138
All employees know that rewards are systematic with performance	3.3696	.67355	138
All employees understand measurement methods of performance	2.5652	.71436	138

Table 6. shows the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity on the perceptions on IM strategies with respect to motivation and rewards. Table 6 shows that the KMO measure of 0.53 is closer to 0.5 and is barely accepted. From Table 6, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (0.000) and below 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

Table 6. KMO and Bartlett's test: Motivation and rewards

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.534
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	104.476
	Df	3
	Sig.	.000

Table 7. shows the extracted communalities using the extraction method. Over 82% of the variance in "All employees know that rewards are systematic with performance" is accounted for, while 41% of the variance in "All employees understand measurement methods of performance" is also accounted for.

Table 7. Communalities: Motivation and rewards

Communalities		
Variables	Initial	Extraction
All employees know that rewards motivate	1.000	.658
All employees know that rewards are systematic with performance	1.000	.822
All employees understand measurement methods of performance	1.000	.414
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>		

Table 8. shows the total variance explained considering motivation and rewards. The first factor accounts for 63.107% of the variance and the remaining factors are not significant. This means that there is only one factor which contributes towards the employees' perceptions on IM strategies considering motivation and rewards.

Table 8. Total variance explained: Motivation and rewards

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.893	63.107	63.107	1.893	63.107	63.107
2	.803	26.774	89.880			
3	.304	10.120	100.000			
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>						

Due to space limitations, only the rotated component matrixes will be discussed for the other variables from here on:

Employees Perceptions on IM strategies: Management Support

Table 9. shows that the following are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 1: All employees understand that their work contributes to the achievement of the organisation’s aspirations; all employees understand that the vision is clearly articulated; all employees understand that the mission is clearly articulated; and all employees understand that management has provided a safe working environment. On the other hand, the following are substantially loaded on Factor 2: All employees understand that management support is adequate to carry out tasks; and all employees understand that there is trust between management and employees. These factors can be used as variables for further analysis.

Table 9. Rotated Component matrix: Management support

Rotated Component Matrix^a		
Variables	Component	
	1	2
All employees understand that their work contributes to the achievement of aspiration of the organisation	.640	-.268
All employees understand that the vision is clearly articulated	.874	.279
All employees understand that the mission is clearly articulated	.885	.176
All employees understand that management support is adequate to carry out tasks	.189	.852
All employees understand that management has provided a safe working environment	.586	-.018
All employees understand that there is trust between management and employees	-.100	.880
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a		
<i>a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.</i>		

Employees Perceptions on IM Strategies: Communication

Table 10. shows the rotated component matrix of the extracted components considering communication. The following are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 1: All employees receive timely information from management; all employees have easy access to information; and all employees receive feedback on time. On the other hand, the following are substantially loaded on Factor 2: All employees regularly carry out meetings with management; and all employees are aware of their responsibilities.

Table 10. Rotated component matrix: Communication

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
Variables	Component	
	1	2
All employees receive timely information from management	.800	.245
All employees have easy access to information	.744	-.007
All employees regularly carry out meetings with management	.361	.676
All employees receive feedback on time	.802	-.070
All employees are aware of their responsibilities	-.193	.832
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a		
<i>a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.</i>		

Employees Perceptions on IM strategies: Horizontal Integration

Table 11. shows the rotated component matrix of the extracted components considering horizontal integration. "All employees are treated equally"; and "All have their differences resolved quickly" are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 1. On the other hand, "All employees work as a team" and "All employees work done by other employees" are substantially loaded on Factor 2.

Table 11. Rotated component matrix: Horizontal integration

Rotated Component Matrix ^a	
Variables	Component

	1	2
All employees are treated equally	.831	.021
All employees work as a team	-.012	.850
All employees have their differences resolved quickly	.821	.155
All employees value work done by other employees	.198	.810
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a		
<i>a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.</i>		

Purposes of IM Strategies

Ninety-six percent of the employees agreed that they understood that IM strategies motivated employees, whilst 4% disagreed with that. This suggests that the majority of employees were motivated by IM activities. Ninety four percent (94%) of the employees indicated that they understood that IM strategies increased job satisfaction, whilst 6% did not agree with that. Ninety five percent (95%) indicated that they understood that IM strategies lead to organisational commitment, whilst 4% disagreed. Furthermore, 81% of the employees agreed that IM strategies improved employees’ relationships whilst 19% disagreed. Ninety one percent (91%) of the employees agreed that they understood that IM strategies increased productivity, whilst 9% disagreed with that. Furthermore, 81% of the employees indicated that they understood that IM strategies created loyal employees, whilst 17% disagreed. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the employees agreed that they understood that IM strategies created an employee based culture, whilst 23% disagreed. This suggests that IM strategies created an employee based culture.

Table 12. shows the component matrix of the extracted component considering internal marketing purposes and of the seven variables only one factor was extracted.

Table 12. Component matrix: IM purposes

Component Matrix^a	
Variables	Component
	1
All employees understand that IM strategies motivate employees	.598

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All employees understand that IM strategies increase job satisfaction	.841
All employees understand that IM strategies leads to organisational commitment	.795
All employees understand that IM strategies improve employee's relationships	.828
All employees understand that IM strategies increase productivity	.814
All employees understand that IM strategies create loyal employees	.811
All employees understand that IM strategies creates an employee based culture	.786
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>	
<i>a. 1 components extracted.</i>	

Management Ways of Designing IM Strategies

Seventy-three percent of the employees agreed that when designing IM strategies management considered the goals of the organization, whilst 26% disagreed. Eighty-eight percent (88%) disagreed to the fact that when designing IM strategies management consulted employees, whilst 12% agreed. This to a large extent suggests that management rarely consults employees when designing IM strategies. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the employees indicated that when designing IM strategies management decides on their own, whilst 11% disagreed. This show that majority of the employees believed that management decided on IM strategies on their own.

Table 13. demonstrate that the following are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 1: "All employees say management should consult employees when designing IM strategies"; and "All employees say management should decide on their own". Furthermore, the following are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 2: "All employees say management should consider the goals of the organization when designing IM strategies" and "All employees say management should the company's orientation towards employees".

Table 13. Rotated component matrix: Management ways of designing IM strategies

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
Variables	Component	
	1	2
When designing IM strategies, all employees say management consider the goals of the organization	.057	.796

When designing IM strategies, all employees say management consult employees	.898	.110
When designing IM strategies, all employees say management decide on their own	-.898	-.111
When designing IM strategies, all employees say management consider company's orientation towards employees	.135	.748
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a		
<i>a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.</i>		

Discussion

The findings show that successful hiring of employees is influenced by the standards of internal service. This confirms ELSamen and Alshurideh, (2012) observation that successful hiring of employees is highly dependent upon the internal standards of the organisation. The employees believed that understanding of job requirements was essential for one to be hired or fired from a given job. They also believed that IM strategies should obtain and retain the best workers who produced the best results for the organization (Eriksson, Hilmersson & Sjölander, 2009).

Motivation and rewards bring about competition as employees know that their work is supervised and paid for accordingly, and this brings about high standards of service (Eriksson et al., 2009). This aligns with the findings of this study where employees believed that they knew how rewards motivate. The findings also confirm ELSamen and Alshurideh's (2012) observation that there is a positive association between worker motivation and reward and beliefs on standards of service. Results also showed that the employees understood that their work contributed to the achievement of the institutions aspirations and that it influenced management support.

Effective internal communication has been found to be good for the success of an organization. ELSamen and Alshurideh (2012) indicate that good communication within an organization can be used by the management for smooth operations with better employee stability levels, and it helps to develop employee trust, respect and loyalty. However, employees in this study believed that communication is wanting because they received untimely information and did not have easy access to the information.

Asif (2015) indicates that senior administration determines the major course of action on given organizational matters. Similarly, the findings of this study show that employees believed that the management decides on their own when designing IM strategies. IM involves the use of internal marketing tasks meant to motivate and integrate employees towards the efficient application of organizational strategies (Anosike & Ahmed, 2009:163).

However, the findings of this study show that majority of the employees believed that IM strategies motivated employees and that horizontal integration could be explained in terms of their conduct. In addition, (Eriksson et al., 2009:126) indicate that the purpose of IM is to motivate the workers to attain high level standards of service taking the workers as internal customers.

Research shows that management's commitment to IM influences employee cooperation and builds the right employee productive behavior (Shaw, 2011:4). The findings of this study show that employees value each other in the organization and that management support is important. Eriksson et al. (2009:126) indicate that IM is used by the management as a tool to bring about change in an organization. This corresponds to the findings of this research, which show that the employees believed that they were employed to fulfill the purposes of the IM strategies according to the desires of the management to meet organisational goals.

Conclusion

The IM strategies adopted by private tertiary institutions in Gaborone as an emerging market, are not effectively fulfilling their intended purpose of creating customer satisfaction. The study found that some challenges between the employees and the management need to be addressed for efficient service delivery and working relationships.

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