



İçsel Pazarlama ve Örgütsel Vatandaşlık Davranışı Arasındaki İlişki: Spor Örgütlerinde Bir Uygulama

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Özet

Bu çalışma içsel pazarlama ile örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışı arasındaki ilişkiyi spor örgütleri bağlamında incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Veriler Türkiye'nin batı bölgesinde spor hizmeti veren kamu kurumları çalışanlarından elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak Yıldız ve Kara (2017) tarafından geliştirilen içsel pazarlama ölçeği ve Bolat ve diğerleri (2009) tarafından derlenen örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışı ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma hipotezlerini test etmek için hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçları içsel pazarlamanın örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışı üzerinde anlamlı ve olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir ($\beta=0,239$; $p<0,05$). Ayrıca içsel pazarlamanın örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışının yalnızca vicdanlılık, centilmenlik ve sivil erdem alt boyutlarını anlamlı ve pozitif yönde etkilediği görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: İçsel Pazarlama, Örgütsel Vatandaşlık Davranışı, Spor Örgütleri, Çalışanlar

The Relationship between Internal Marketing and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Study of Sports Organizations

Abstract

This study examined the relationships between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior in the context of sports organizations. The data were obtained from the employees of the organizations providing sports services in the western region of Turkey. The internal marketing scale developed by Yıldız and Kara (2017) and the organizational citizenship behavior scale compiled by Bolat et al. (2009) were used as data collection tools. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. The results of the analysis showed that internal marketing has a significant and positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior ($\beta=0.239$; $p<0.05$). In addition, internal marketing significantly and positively affected only conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Sports Organizations, Employee

INTRODUCTION

Today's competitive environment forces organizations to develop various strategies in order to be more effective in the market. The most important of these is the creation of customer satisfaction in the products offered (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994). Organizations can maintain their profitability and existence only to the extent that they provide customer satisfaction. The literature emphasizes that the most important element of gaining a competitive advantage by providing customer satisfaction in organizations is employees (Loveman, 1998). The fact that employees have a significant impact on customers' perception of quality (Son, Kim, & Kim, 2021) requires consideration of all the elements presented to employees in organizations that affect their behavior. One of the factors that cause employees to produce positive behavior is internal marketing, which has attracted more attention from researchers in recent years.

Internal marketing is an approach that supports employees to achieve high motivation by meeting their needs and expectations (Ewing & Caruana, 1999). An organization that provides high motivation to employees integrates with its employees, so employees are more willing to satisfy customers and increase the service quality of the organization (Barnes, Fox, & Morris, 2004). Studies in the literature have shown that employees whose expectations are met through internal marketing are more motivated to work in the workplace, and this provides the organization with outputs such as high productivity and performance (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). On the other hand, in the context of organizational behavior, internal marketing has an impressive feature on the attitudes and behaviors of employees (such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job engagement, and organizational citizenship behavior). There is a consensus in the literature regarding the contribution of organizational citizenship behavior to the production processes of organizations (Bachrach, Powell, Bendoly, & Richey, 2006; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991). Organizations that want to maintain their existence and develop in an intensely competitive environment need more employees who show extra-role behavior in favor of the organization beyond what is expected. It should be emphasized here that the extra role behaviors of the employees positively affect the performance of the organization, and the organization with increased profitability offers some gains to its employees (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). Thus, a win-win climate is formed in the context of economic and social exchange between the organization and the employee, and as a result, both parties win (Yildiz, 2017).

In recent years, a lot of research has been conducted in the literature about the variables that affect organizational citizenship behavior. Some of these are leadership (Yan & Yan, 2013), leader-member exchange quality (Yildiz, 2011), job satisfaction, and fairness perceptions (Schappe, 1998). Similarly, internal marketing can be an effective predictor of organizational citizenship behavior. In the literature, there are studies conducted in various sectors on internal marketing and organizational citizenship behaviors. However, studies in the sports sector are very limited (Duyan, 2021). Therefore, it is clear that more studies are needed to clarify the relationships between both variables in the context of the sports sector. Based on this, this study purposed to provide evidence for the relationships between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior variables by focusing on sports organizations. The results obtained from the study will contribute to the sports management literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internal Marketing

Modern management divides the concept of the customer into two, people who receive service from the organization are called external customers, and employees who provide service are called internal customers. The basis of this distinction is the concept of satisfaction (Conduit, Matanda, & Mavondo, 2014). When external customers are satisfied with the service they receive, when the need arises again, they buy the same product again and again from the same place, which leads to the existence and development of the organization. With a similar approach, organizations focus on their satisfaction both in order to avoid disruption in service delivery and quality and to retain their employees (Biason, 2020; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). The basis of this is the understanding that if the internal customer (employee) is satisfied, external customer satisfaction will occur (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001; Ehrhart, Witt, Schneider, & Perry, 2011). Satisfaction is an emotional state that occurs when needs and expectations are met. Internal marketing is an approach that aims to increase the motivation of employees by focusing on their expectations and needs (Berry, 1981). Berry and Parasuraman (1992) define internal marketing as “attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees by meeting their needs through business products”. In short, internal marketing is an approach that applies the satisfaction and quality techniques developed for external customers to its employees.

In the studies on internal marketing, there is no consensus on which factors are effective in meeting the needs and expectations of the employees (Ahmed, Rafiq, & Saad, 2003). It is seen that most of the researches emphasizes the factors that ensure the satisfaction of employees and their commitment to their organizations (Yildiz, 2017). Among these elements, there are mostly “providing and rewarding the training and development of the employees, presenting the organizational vision” (Ferdous & Polonsky, 2014; Foreman & Money, 1995; Galpin, 1997; Gounaris, 2006). Unlike these studies, Yildiz and Kara (2017) addressed the needs and expectations of employees in a more inclusive way in their studies. These consist of the following items: providing attractive physical opportunities to employees, providing and supporting reasonable workloads, meeting and empowering employees’ basic needs, providing vision, training, development, and career opportunities to employees, treating employees equally, establishing open communication channels, seeking employee opinions and rewarding employees. The authors argue that if the needs and expectations of the employees are met, their motivation and satisfaction will increase.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

In today’s competitive environment, organizations expect their employees to act in favor of their organizations voluntarily and beyond the employment contract in order to achieve their goals. In this context, organizational citizenship behavior is seen as an important phenomenon that contributes to the performance of an organization (Yildiz, 2016). Indeed, such behaviors facilitate the production process of other employees and the organization on the one hand (Moorman & Blakely, 1995), on the other hand, they contribute positively to the formation of service quality perceptions of customers (Morrison, 1996).

Organ (1988) defines organizational citizenship behavior as “the individual in the work environment voluntarily showing more effort and extra-role behavior beyond the task and responsibility determined for him/herself”. These behaviors are handled in five dimensions and named as follows (Organ, 1988): *Altruism*, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, civil virtue. *Altruism* refers to voluntarily helping another employee who has work-related problems. *Conscientiousness* refers to going beyond the minimum requirements of role behaviors (eg, coming to work despite being sick, working overtime to get work done, using resources efficiently, etc.). *Courtesy* refers to preventive behaviors that will enable other employees to avoid problems that will affect their work. *Sportsmanship* refers to being tolerant in the face of difficulties encountered in the working environment and continuing to work willingly without complaining (eg, willingness to continue working even when the workload is high, etc.). *Civil virtue* refers to the support of the policies carried out by the organization, participation in activities for the development of the organization (eg, participation in decisions, training, social, etc.).

In summary, employees who show extra-role behaviors beyond their job descriptions, on the one hand, make organizational functioning more effective, and on the other hand, the spread of these behaviors among employees paves the way for high organizational performance (Shahin, Shabani Naftchali, & Khazaei Pool, 2014).

Relationships between Internal Marketing and Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Hypotheses

The production process in service organizations is often based on interactions between individuals, groups, and institutional actors, which are seen as changes in social behavior (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013). In this context, the relations between the organization and the employees can be explained by the social exchange theory. According to social exchange theory, the resources exchanged can be not only tangible such as money but also intangible things such as friendship and social support. The basic assumption of social exchange theory is that parties enter and maintain relationships with the rewarding expectation of offering behavior (Blau, 1968). In social exchange, social relations are mutually based on informal norms. According to Gouldner (1960), when one party creates a benefit to the other party, an obligation occurs to the other party. According to this approach, which is expressed as the reciprocity norm, individuals show positive behavior towards those who benefit them, even if they do not create benefits, at least they do not harm them. According to Blau (1964), who used the name of social exchange for the first time, when individuals see positive behavior from others, they are under the obligation of the good they will return in the future. The individual who exhibits positive behavior also has an expectation that this behavior will return positively in the future (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

The relations between the organization and the employees are realized through a number of mutual exchanges. Employees contribute to production by using their mental and physical powers for their organizations, while organizations offer some rewards to the employees in return for the performance they produce. In this framework, internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior issues can be considered as a part of the exchange between the organization and the employee. Since internal marketing is an instrument that

provides various returns and rewards for employees (Yildiz, 2017), employees will be able to exhibit extra-role behavior beyond what is expected in return. From this point of view, the following hypotheses have been developed in order to determine the cause-effect relationships between the variables of internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior in the context of sports organizations:

H₁: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and altruism.

H₂: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and conscientiousness.

H₃: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and courtesy.

H₄: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and sportsmanship.

H₅: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and civic virtue.

H₆: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior.

METHOD

The Sample Size and Procedure

In this study, convenience sampling method was adopted to minimize time and labor cost. The data were obtained from the employees of four public institutions providing sports services in the western region of Turkey. First, an invitation letter explaining the study along with an informed consent form was sent to the participants using electronic communication tools, and then the scales were sent to those who agreed to participate voluntarily. In total, 135 of the 152 scale forms sent were returned. All of the scales without errors were found suitable for analysis (n=135).

Measurement Instruments

In this study, two scales on internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior were used as data collection tools. The internal marketing scale developed by Yildiz and Kara (2017) has 11 items and one dimension. This scale has a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Examples of scale items: “This organization provides career advancement opportunities to its employees” and “this organization provides rewards to high performing employees.” High-scale values indicated a high perceptions of internal marketing. The organizational citizenship behavior scale (Bolat, Bolat, & Seymen, 2009) has 20 items and five dimensions (altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue). This scale included such as “Even if the given tasks are difficult, I do not object” and “I make constructive suggestions for the development of my organization.” The statements were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“never”) to 5 (“always”). High-scale values indicated a high perceptions of organizational citizenship behavior.

Statistical Analysis

In this study, descriptive statistics were used to reveal the demographic characteristics of the participants, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability of the scales. In addition, correlation analysis was performed to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables, and hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Sample characteristics

Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants are men (73.3%), 31-35 years old (80.7%), permanent staff (65.9%), and those with an undergraduate degree (67.4%). Half of the respondents have 6-10 working time (49.6%).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Variables	Categories	F	%
Gender	Female	36	26.7
	Male	99	73.3
Age	Less than 30	14	10.4
	31-35	109	80.7
	36-40	6	4.4
	41-45	2	1.5
	More than 46	4	3.0
Employment status	Fixed-term contract	46	34.1
	Permanent staff	89	65.9
Educational degree	Lycée	16	11.9
	Undergraduate	91	67.4
	Master's	26	19.3
Tenure	Doctorate	2	1.5
	Less than 5 years	36	26.7
	6-10	67	49.6
	11-15	20	14.8
	16-20	4	3.0
	21-25	4	3.0
	More than 26 years	4	3.0

Correlation Analysis

According to the correlation analysis, there is a significant and positive relationship between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior ($r=0.311$; $p<0.01$). In addition, except for "courtesy", internal marketing is significantly and positively related to all other sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. All of the demographic variables, except for "educational degree", are significantly and positively related to organizational citizenship behavior (Table 2).

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

According to hierarchical regression analysis, internal marketing affects organizational citizenship behavior significantly and positively ($\beta=0.239$; $p<0.05$). In addition, only the sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior conscientiousness ($\beta=0.288$; $p<0.05$), sportsmanship ($\beta=0.312$; $p<0.01$) and civic virtue ($\beta=0.258$; $p<0.01$) are significantly and

positively affected by internal marketing (Table 3). On the other hand, gender, one of the demographic variables, continued its effect on organizational citizenship behavior in the second step of the regression analysis. In other words, regardless of other variables, it can be said that gender affects organizational citizenship behavior. Accordingly, men exhibit more organizational citizenship behavior than women. The source of this result may be that men have a sense of responsibility in the first degree for family subsistence. It can be said that men try to show more positive behaviors to their organization than women, depending on their desire to work for a long time and to continue the employment contract at the same workplace.

According to the results of this analysis, hypotheses 1 and 3 were rejected, while hypotheses 2, 4, 5 and 6 were accepted.

Table 2. Means, correlations, and reliabilities

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender ^a	-	-	-											
2. Age ^b	-	-	.199*	-										
3. Employment status ^c	-	-	.132	.153	-									
4. Educational degree ^d	-	-	-.063	.129	-.241**	-								
5. Tenure ^e	-	-	.289**	.471**	.375**	.043	-							
6. Internal marketing	3.26	1.00	.203*	.149	.209*	-.258**	.436**	(.948)						
7. Altruism	4.22	.62	.254**	.125	.149	-.073	.149	.210*	(.760)					
8. Conscientiousness	4.35	.45	.097	.231**	.224**	.000	.204*	.293**	.439**	(.659)				
9. Courtesy	4.62	.46	.357**	.291**	.122	-.085	.250**	.042	.515**	.429**	(.861)			
10. Sportsmanship	4.19	.48	.248**	.145	.171*	-.171*	.174*	.359**	.338**	.500**	.430**	(.636)		
11. Civic virtue	4.26	.79	.210*	.161	.149	.075	.227**	.273**	.493**	.557**	.444**	.601**	(.880)	
12. OCB	4.33	.43	.302**	.238**	.208*	-.050	.261**	.311**	.746**	.743**	.711**	.737**	.855**	(.892)

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Note. Diagonal values are Cronbach α .

Key. ^aGender: 1=female, 2=male. ^bAge was measured in 5-year intervals, coded as 1=less than 30 to more than 46. ^cEmployment status: 1=fixed-term contract, 2=permanent staff. ^dEducational degree: 1=lycée, 2=undergraduate, 3=master's, 4=doctorate. ^eTenure was measured in 6-year intervals, coded as 1=less than 5 years to 6=more than 26.

Table 3. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis aiming to identify the relationship between organization citizenship behavior and independent variables

Independent Variables	Altruism		Conscientiousness		Courtesy		Sportsmanship		Civic virtue		Organizational Citizenship Behavior	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
1. Gender	.219**	.209**	.027	.009	.288**	.297*	.194*	.174*	.160	.143	.232**	.217*
2. Age	.062	.069	.174	.186**	.213*	.208**	.089	.102	.047	.057	.137	.147
3. Employment status	.089	.095	.182	.191**	.002	-.003	.074	.084	.101	.109	.117	.125
4. Educational degree	-.047	-.003	.021	.101	-.097	-.137	-.155	-.069	.098	.169	-.028	.038
5. Tenure	.025	-.048	.045	-.088	.070	.136	.055	-.089	.116	-.003	.087	-.023
6. Internal marketing	-	.158	-	.288*	-	-.144	-	.312**	-	.258**	-	.239*
<i>F</i>	2.361	2.422	2.639	3.856	6.093	5.539	3.187	4.705	2.544	3.418	4.603	5.096
<i>R</i> ²	.084	.102	.093	.153	.191	.206	.110	.181	.090	.138	.151	.193
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.048	.060	.058	.113	.160	.169	.075	.142	.054	.098	.119	.155

Note. Standardized beta values were used, * $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to present evidence in the context of sports organizations by focusing on the relationships between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior. The results of the study showed that internal marketing affects organizational citizenship behavior significantly and positively, similarly, only conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue dimensions are significantly and positively affected by internal marketing.

There are studies in the literature examining the relationships between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior in various sectors. In some studies, significant and positive relationships were found between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior, while in others, no significant relationship was found. Therefore, as can be seen in the studies below, there is no clarity in the literature regarding the significance of the relationships between both variables, and it differs from sector to sector.

Chow, Lai, and Loi (2015) found no significant relationship between internal marketing and organizational citizenship behavior in their study on travel agency employees. In their study, the authors did not separately associate internal marketing with the sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Suleiman Awwad and Mohammad Agti's (2011) study in the banking sector showed that employees' internal marketing awareness did not have a significant positive effect on organizational citizenship behaviors. Mohamed, Diab, and El-Kholy (2021) found in their study on nurses in the health sector that internal marketing had a significant and positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior. The authors also separately examined the effects of internal marketing on the sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Accordingly, internal marketing only significantly and positively affected the altruism and sportsmanship dimensions. In his study on academic staff in the education sector, Yildiz (2016) found that internal marketing had a significant and positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior and all its sub-dimensions. Similarly, Ay (2018) in his study on health sector workers found that internal marketing affected organizational citizenship behavior and all its sub-dimensions significantly and positively.

In a study conducted in the sports sector, Duyan (2021) examined the effect of internal marketing on organizational citizenship behavior and found that internal marketing had a significant and positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior. The author also analyzed the organizational citizenship behavior sub-dimensions of internal marketing separately in his study. Accordingly, he found that internal marketing only affected the dimensions of courtesy and civic virtue significantly and positively. Unlike this study, in our study, in addition to the sub-dimensions of courtesy and civic virtue, the dimension of conscientiousness was also significant. The only difference between the two studies may be due to the regional variation in the sample profile. In fact, altruism and courtesy, which are sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior, express the relationship of an employee with other employees. Conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue dimensions express an employee's relationship with the organization. From this point of view, the fact that internal marketing did not affect the altruism and courtesy dimensions in our study can be explained by the fact that an employee feels an obligation only to his organization in return for internal marketing, not to other employees. According to this result,

it can be said that the employee, whose expectations are met with internal marketing, will exhibit behaviors in favor of the organization by responding with conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue characteristics after his/her increased motivation, as explained in the social exchange theory earlier. As a result, the employee exhibits extra-role behavior, becomes tolerant in the face of difficulties in the work environment, continues to work willingly without complaining, supports the policies of the organization, and participates in activities for the development of the organization. With the effect of these, the organization also has a chance to reach high performance.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that in the context of sports organizations, internal marketing significantly and positively affected organizational citizenship behavior. In addition, internal marketing significantly and positively affected the dimensions of conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue, which were sub-dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. These results indicate that internal marketing is an important instrument in extra-role behaviors that employees can show in favor of their organizations. Considering that internal marketing practices appeal to employees' emotions and these emotions affect social behavior changes, managers should give importance to internal marketing practices and meet the expectations of employees in this way in order for organizations to obtain more extra-role behavior from their employees.

This study was carried out in the context of the sports sector, with a limited sample amount of public employees. Due to the limited sample size, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all sectors in general and to all organizations in the sports sector in particular. Because the sports sector consists of public and private organizations and is quite diverse. Therefore, organizations may show different characteristics due to their unique working mechanism. More research is needed to learn these features. In the future, new studies can be carried out on different organization types and samples by using similar measurement tools.

Conflict of interest: There is no personal or financial conflict of interest within the scope of the study.

Ethics committee: Ethics Committee of Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey. (Date: 06.02.2024 Decision number/protocol number: 23/240008)

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