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Research Article

INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL MARKETING TO HOTELS: THE CASE OF HOTELS OF THE CHANIA PREFECTURE, GREECE

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ABSTRACT

The hotel industry is directly associated with marketing in general, both the external and the internal one. Hotels are companies that provide services which means that the workforce of the company gets in direct (personal) touch with its customers. However, the implementation of internal marketing is not only proven indispensable for companies that provide services, but it can also apply to other types of companies, such as the industrial sector. The aim of the paper is twofold: (a) Measurement of the implementation of internal marketing as well as measurement of job satisfaction at the hotels of a particular area, and (b) Investigation of the awareness of directors-remaining administrative personnel and subordinates-employees on issues of internal marketing and job satisfaction. Results demonstrate low percentages of the implementation of internal marketing in hotels in the majority of aspects of internal marketing.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Service Marketing, Hotels, Satisfaction, Awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Meaning of Internal Marketing

The notion of Marketing has always been associated with the prediction, distinction but also the satisfaction (with efficiency) of the needs and wants of customers, companies and organisations. Internal Marketing, on the other hand, identifies with the forenamed, but employees are now the ones that are on the opposite side of the customers. Generally, an ambiguity is perceived in the literature around Internal Marketing, in issues such as what internal marketing is, what it is supposed to do, how it is supposed to do so and who is supposed to do so (Alomari, Al-Zoubi, & Darabseh, 2018; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). The generally accepted definition of internal marketing is

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that internal marketing is a cultural framework and an instrument to achieve strategic alignment between front-line employees and marketing (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Huan., & Rundle-Thiele, 2014). Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) classified semantically the development of the theory of internal marketing in three (3) distinct categories-phases which are related to each other. These categories are the following: (a) 1st phase: Motivation and satisfaction of the employees: Literature focuses mostly on the fact that a company must first have satisfied employees, by using tools and methods of motivation, in order to have satisfied customers (Azzam, 2016). The motivation of the employees, the attraction and the retention of personnel gains utmost importance in companies that provide services, such as hotels. (b) 2nd phase: Customer orientation: The second important step (according to the literature) around the theory of internal marketing was carried out by Grönroos (1981), who supported the customer-driven approach through the front-line employees who are the ones that get in direct contact with the customers (Cano & Sams, 2009). The idea that the front-line employee should be able to satisfy the customers did its first appearance, implicating in this way the interactive marketing. Besides, Grönroos (1981) acknowledged that interactions between buyer and seller influence not only the purchasing behaviour but also post-purchasing behaviour. (c) 3rd phase: Expansion of the theory of internal marketing-strategy implementation and change in administration: During this phase, internal marketing was characterised as a means of the implementation of the strategy (Olson et al., 2018). Firstly, Winter (1985), supported that internal marketing is an administrative technique of the employees with the intention to achieve the aims of the company, by focusing on the orientation, training and motivation of the personnel. Subsequently, George (1990) supported that the administration of human resources is the department of the company or the organisation which will implement the principles of internal marketing, and Glassman and McAfee (1992) claimed that internal marketing is a part of integrated marketing. Overall, in all different phases and approaches, employees are considered to be a crucial prerequisite for the success of a company (Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006). This study adopts the stance of the majority of internal marketing literature that successful internal marketing can motivate and satisfy employees.

1.2. The Contribution of Internal Marketing to the Hotel Industry

The importance of internal marketing in the hotel industry is tremendous and interrelated (Marques et al., 2018). Internal marketing is concerned with all the operations that take place in the internal environment of a company or an organisation since it is concerned to a great extent with the management of human resources (Collins & Payne, 1991). Hotels are financial hospitality establishments which offer customers a series of goods and services. These goods, such as boarding and lodging, are offered simultaneously with the services, such as the provision of information, the reservations of rooms, the cleanliness, the maintenance, the insurance. For this reason, hotels are characterised more as establishments that offer experiences, rather than goods (Chitiris, 1996).

Internal Marketing is characterised as a strategic procedure during which the administration can manage the behaviour of employees and then the employees can manage the customers effectively (Ballantyne, 2000). Therefore, each (hotel or non-hotel) company should, on the one hand, have in mind the satisfaction of the employees and, on the other hand, the satisfaction of its customers to reach its goals and to lead to profitability. Internal Marketing constitutes an administrative tool, which promotes the company and its products to its personnel, with the aim to intensify the satisfaction of the ultimate customer (Broady-Preston & Steel, 2002). To accomplish this, the administration of the company should primarily discover which are the needs of the personnel and afterwards it should proceed to their direct satisfaction, which constitutes the most crucial goal of internal marketing (Varey, 1995).

1.3 Implementation of Internal Marketing to Hotels

In today's competitive world, there is an immense need for companies to focus on the people who manage issues that are related to the customers of the company in question. These are of course the employees of the company (referring mostly to the employees that get into contact with the customers of the companies). This procedure is included in the implementation of the methods of internal marketing, mostly in the personnel who get in touch with the customers (Kaurav, Prakas, Verma, & Chowhary, 2014). The six (6) essential elements of

internal marketing which show that a company is oriented towards it are: (a) the exchange of values, (b) the segmentation of the internal market, (c) the internal communication, (d) the management concern, (e) the implementation of management concern and (f) the training of the personnel (Robledo and Arán, 2014).

Based on the research conducted by Huang and Rundle-Thiele (2014), the view prevailed that generally, the tourist sector but also, in particular, the hotel sector can benefit if they understand the cultural differences of the personnel and if they implement techniques of internal marketing respectively. The aim is to improve the levels of employees' satisfaction which will lead to organisational efficiency. The employees' cultural background constitutes a factor which should be counted when implementing internal marketing (Huang and Rundle-Thiele, 2014). The results from a particular research conducted in hotels of Spain show that the hotels that belong to a particular chain show a higher level of implementation of internal marketing. However, other variables influence the implementation of internal marketing, such as the hotel size or category, according to Robledo and Arán (2014). According to a study carried out in hotels of Gwalior of India, regarding how internal marketing influences the organisational commitment, the result was that there is a direct, substantial and positive relationship between the two. Besides, internal marketing constitutes an essential factor in a company that wants to build good services in the hotel sector and to be significantly competitive regarding this feature (Kaurav, Prakas, Verma, & Chowhary, 2014). Based on a study that was conducted by Tag-Eldeen and El-Said in five (5*) star hotels in Egypt, it was found that the dimensions of internal marketing include: (a) the development of a service culture, (b) the development of a marketing approach in the human resource management, (c) the dissemination of information among the employees of the hotel and (d) the implementation of a system of reward and recognition (Tag-Eldeen & El-Said, 2011). Besides, the research shows the different beliefs among satisfied and dissatisfied employees, of different age groups and in various categories of working experience. Because the company relies on the employees who will offer a high-level quality of service to the customers, internal marketing constitutes the foundation for competitive advantages (Tag-Eldeen & El-Said, 2011). Through the contemporary studies mentioned above, it is evident how important the implementation of internal marketing can be proven for each hotel company and which are its many and various benefits.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Based on the Literature Review that proceeded and the objectives of the present study, which are the investigation of the level of the implementation of internal marketing in the private sector and in particular in hotel companies, the research objectives of current study are the following:

- (a) Investigation of the use of internal marketing in hotels of four and five stars in the prefecture of Chania.
- (b) Examination of the awareness that the administrative personnel (directors of departments, among others) have on issues of internal marketing and
- (c) Examination of the awareness that the administrative personnel (directors of departments etc.) have on issues of employees' satisfaction.

Consequently, the hypotheses that the present research explores are the following:

(Ho1) Four and five* star hotels implement internal marketing:* The investigation of this hypothesis was conducted again in the past as can be seen from the literature mentioned above and journalism. Regarding the prefectures, this investigation is conducted for the first time in the prefecture of Chania, a geographical area which shows high tourism flow. The results of the study may indicate what is happening in other similar prefectures of Greece. The hypothesis is based on the fact that four* and five* star hotels often consist of large hotels which are mostly companies that provide services. These kinds of companies have many departments which favour the implementation of internal marketing.

(Ho2) The implementation of internal marketing leads to job satisfaction: Based on the literature and journalism, similar studies have been conducted in the past which link the implementation of internal marketing to job satisfaction, both in hotel companies and in other kind of companies, either in the private or in the public sector.

The results have shown that there is a direct relationship. For the first time, this is investigated in the prefecture of Chania, and it is implemented exclusively in the hotel sector.

(Ho3) Directors know if the employees are satisfied from their job: This particular hypothesis is original since no similar study was conducted in the past which measures and compares the beliefs and views of these two samples regarding the same research tool (questionnaire suitably adapted for both groups). This fact is also of considerable interest because the administration's awareness of the present situation in the working environment is a prerequisite for the implementation of internal marketing. Subsequently, after accurate estimations are made, the working environment could be formed adequately and anew through the implementation of internal marketing.

3. METHODS

The primary aim of the present study is to research to what extent internal marketing is implemented in the private sector and more specifically in hotels. Therefore, the main topic of this research relates to the measurement of internal marketing in hotels, that is to say, to measure firstly whether and to what extent marketing is implemented in the internal environment of these companies. Besides, this particular study is also concerned with job satisfaction. More specifically, one objective of the research is to discover to what extent the implementation of internal marketing influences or not employees' satisfaction. Moreover, the study has been extended in order to measure the awareness that directors and subordinates have on the specific questions mentioned in the questionnaire.

The research plan used for this study belongs to the category of descriptive research. Descriptive research is often based on the collection of original data (Stathakopoulos, 2005).

Regarding data collection, the primary research was based on the quantitative method through structured questionnaires.

In order to conduct the research two different questionnaires were developed, one of which was concerned with the directors of departments (and the remaining administrative personnel) while the second questionnaire was concerned with the employees-subordinates. The questionnaires were the same concerning content. The difference between the two questionnaires is the formulation of the questions. In particular, the questionnaires consist of the same questions with the only difference that on the directors' questionnaires the formulation of every question begins with the following phrase: «The majority of employees consider that: ». This distinction is made in order to measure the awareness directors have for the answers that employees will give for the same questions, following Zouni and Kouremenos's methodology (2008).

The questionnaires include three common sections that are in brief the following: (a) First section: Research for the implementation of marketing within the company (with the use of the scale of Robledo & Aran, 2014), (b) Second section: Research for the job satisfaction in the internal environment of the company (based on the scale of Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002) and (c) Third section: Personal information of the respondents.

Questionnaires were distributed to local hotels of 4* and 5* star category in the prefecture of Chania (40 hotels, source Delimpasi, 2013). The quantitative research is based on sampling which makes easy the quantification of data and the provision of information which can be estimated not only numerically but also statistically (Veal, 2006). Sampling was typical for both studies conducted. Sampling was carried out through the use of probability samples, which assures that the choice of data is made in an objective way. In this way, the researcher can measure the scale of the sampling error (Stathakopoulos, 2005). The questionnaires which were intended for each hotel concerned both studies: (a) directors and remaining administrative personnel and (b) employees-subordinates. It was an indispensable condition that every hotel participating in the research would complete the questionnaires for both studies. The scale of the sample was determined at 180 individuals, 60 of which corresponded to the first sample (directors and remaining administrative personnel of hotels) and the other 120 individuals corresponded to the second sample (subordinates-employees of hotels). The research was carried out during March and April 2016 in the prefecture of Chania. The questionnaire that was used included mostly

questions of Yes/No (polar questions). The results of this research concern the prefecture of Chania, since the research took place there.

Regarding the sampling of the research, the questionnaires were collected from 4* (four) and 5* (five) star hotels. One hundred eighty questionnaires were given to these hotels and were completed by them, 60 of which (33,33%) were addressed to directors and the rest 120 questionnaires (66,66%) were addressed to subordinates. The statistical programme (SPSS v20) was used to analyse the data collected through the questionnaires. Problems related with the sampling frame -missing data, clusters of elements and blank foreign elements as mentioned by Kish (1965) - were identified and treated. Homogeneity of the samples investigated was both assumed and tested in the first steps of the research. In addition, Levine statistical tests of homogeneity of variance have been carried out in early stages of data analysis with excellent results.

4. RESULTS

The first sample of the current research amounts to 60 individuals who work at hotels of the prefecture of Chania either at a directing position of a department or at a position that belongs to the remaining administrative personnel (see APPENDIX A - The demographic profile of the directors).

The second sample of the current research amounts to 120 individuals in total who work at hotels of the prefecture of Chania. These individuals belong to the category employees-subordinates (see APPENDIX B - The demographic profile of the employees).

T-test analysis was conducted for independent samples with independent variables the job position (directors, employees) and the following results emerged. The level of statistical importance has been defined at 5% ($\alpha=0,05$).

The critical statistical differences were found in the following variables of the questionnaire for the implementation of internal marketing within the company and are as follows:

At the question «The company gives priority to the understanding of the employees' needs » ($t=3.09$, $p=0.02$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,90$) than employees ($MO=3,42$).

At the question « The company monitors if employees are satisfied from their job» ($t=2.42$, $p=0.02$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,63$) than employees ($MO=3,25$).

At the question « The company investigates how particular policies would influence different sectors» ($t=0.11$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a slightly higher average ($MO=3,46$) than employees ($MO=3,45$).

At the question «Directors listen to the employees» ($t=3.01$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=4,16$) than employees ($MO=3,72$).

At the question «Directors encourage the employees to discuss their problems» ($t=4.60$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=4,23$) than employees ($MO=3,52$).

At the question «Directors explain the aims of the company to the employees» ($t=1.61$, $p=0.01$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=4,16$) than employees ($MO=3,95$).

At the question «The administration shows a true interest for the employees» ($t=3.84$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=4,00$) than employees ($MO=3,37$).

At the question «The administration understands the family needs of the employees» ($t=3.60$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,83$) than employees ($MO=3,21$).

At the question « Employees can find a balance between work and their family life at the company » ($t=0.85$, $p=0.01$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,36$) than employees ($MO=3,22$).

A concise table follows (Table 1):

Table 1: Presentation of results regarding the implementation of marketing within the company

Variables for the implementation of marketing within the company <i>The majority of employees believe that:</i>	JOB POSITION	Average (± ds)	t	p
1. The company gives priority to the understanding of employees' needs.	Directors	3,76 (± 0,96)	3,526	0.342
	Employees	3,19 (± 1,06)		
2. The company is willing to understand employees' needs.	Directors	3,90 (± 0,91)	3.094	0.020
	Employees	3,42 (± 1,07)		
3. The company researches in order to identify employees' needs.	Directors	3,10 (± 1,23)	1,753	0.377
	Employees	2,75 (± 1,27)		
4. The company considers if the employees are satisfied with their job.	Directors	3,63 (± 0,88)	2,429	0.029
	Employees	3,25 (± 1,14)		
5. The company classifies the employees according to their needs.	Directors	3,23 (± 1,12)	1,002	0,994
	Employees	3,05 (± 1,17)		
6. The company investigates how particular policies would influence different sectors.	Directors	3,46 (± 0,76)	0,119	0,003
	Employees	3,45 (± 1,08)		
7. Directors listen to the employees.	Directors	4,16 (± 0,78)	3,015	0,001
	Employees	3,72 (± 1,15)		
8. Directors encourage the employees to discuss their problems.	Directors	4,23 (± 0,85)	4,602	0,000
	Employees	3,52 (± 1,18)		
	Directors	4,36 (± 0,66)	2,884	0,085

9. Directors are available to the employees.	Employees	3,95 (\pm 0,99)		
10. Directors explain the aims of the company to the employees.	Directors	4,16 (\pm 0,74)	1,612	0,017
	Employees	3,95 (\pm 1,03)		
11. The administration shows a genuine interest for the employees.	Directors	4,00 (\pm 0,93)	3,842	0,001
	Employees	3,37 (\pm 1,18)		
12. The administration is interested in learning how employees feel.	Directors	3,50 (\pm 0,92)	3,384	0,162
	Employees	2,90 (\pm 1,20)		
13. The administration invests in resources to cover the particular needs of the employees.	Directors	3,40 (\pm 0,84)	2,379	0,743
	Employees	3,05 (\pm 0,96)		
14. The administration takes employees' needs seriously.	Directors	3,53 (\pm 0,96)	2,460	0,271
	Employees	3,10 (\pm 1,15)		
15. The administration is oriented towards solving employees' problems.	Directors	3,60 (\pm 0,99)	3,443	0,987
	Employees	3,01 (\pm 1,10)		
16. The administration understands the family needs of the employees.	Directors	3,83 (\pm 0,97)	3,606	0,001
	Employees	3,21 (\pm 1,26)		
17. The administration supports the bonds between family and job responsibilities.	Directors	3,66 (\pm 0,87)	3,432	0,126
	Employees	3,07 (\pm 1,18)		
18. Employees can find a balance between their job and their family life at the company.	Directors	3,36 (\pm 0,95)	0,852	0,014
	Employees	3,22 (\pm 1,21)		

19. Employees are trained to overcome changes.	Directors	3,56 (± 1,03)	1,293	0,261
	Employees	3,34 (± 1,13)		
20. The company organises educational seminars.	Directors	3,33 (± 1,23)	1,233	0,143
	Employees	3,06 (± 1,43)		
21. Employees are trained to take on new responsibilities.	Directors	3,40 (± 1,06)	-0,283	0,284
	Employees	3,45 (± 1,14)		

The critical statistical differences were found in the following variables of the questionnaire that refers to the job satisfaction in the internal environment of the company and are as follows:

At the question «I have at my disposal all the necessary material and equipment in order to do my job correctly» ($t=2.77$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=4,23$) than employees ($MO=3,93$).

At the question, « His/her director, (or somebody else from his/her working environment) seems to care about him/her as a person » ($t=1.04$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,86$) than employees ($MO=3,68$).

At the question «There is somebody at work who encourages his/her progress» ($t=0.44$, $p=0.01$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,80$) than employees ($MO=3,73$).

At the question «His/her co-workers (his/her colleagues) are committed to working qualitatively» ($t=1.28$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,90$) than employees ($MO=3,74$).

At the question «S/he has a very good friend at his/her working environment» ($t=0.86$, $p=0$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,86$) than employees ($MO=3,71$).

At the question «In the last six months, somebody from his/her working environment spoke to him/her about his/her progress» ($t=1.33$, $p=0.03$), as it emerges from the results, directors have a higher average ($MO=3,60$) than employees ($MO=3,37$).

At the question « In the last year, s/he had chances at his work to learn and progress» ($t=-0.16$, $p=0.04$), as it emerges from the results, employees have a higher average ($MO=3,72$) than directors ($MO=3,70$).

A concise table follows (Table 2):

Table 2: Presentation of results regarding job satisfaction in the internal environment of the company

Variables for job satisfaction in the internal environment of the company	JOB POSITION	Average (± ds)	T	P
---------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------	----------------	---	---

<i>The majority of employees believe that)</i>				
22. They know what to expect from me at my workplace.	Directors	3,80 (\pm 0,98)	-1,210	0,118
	Employees	3,98 (\pm 0,94)		
23. I have at my disposal all the necessary material and equipment so that I can do my job correctly.	Directors	4,23 (\pm 0,56)	2,774	0,002
	Employees	3,93 (\pm 0,87)		
24. In my job, I have the chance to do what I do best every day.	Directors	3,93 (\pm 0,86)	0,000	0,386
	Employees	3,93 (\pm 0,90)		
25. In the last seven days, I have gained recognition or praise regarding my performance in my job.	Directors	3,30 (\pm 1,13)	1,803	0,594
	Employees	2,95 (\pm 1,26)		
26. The director (or somebody else from the workplace) seems to care for him/her as an individual.	Directors	3,86 (\pm 1,03)	1,042	0,004
	Employees	3,68 (\pm 1,25)		
27. There is somebody at the workplace who encourages his/her progress.	Directors	3,80 (\pm 0,87)	0,442	0,012
	Employees	3,73 (\pm 1,09)		
28. At work, his/her views seem to be taken into consideration.	Directors	3,73 (\pm 0,97)	1,357	0,255
	Employees	3,50 (\pm 1,08)		
29. The mission/ the aim of the company make him/her feel that his/her job is essential.	Directors	3,80 (\pm 0,87)	0,936	0,164
	Employees	3,65 (\pm 1,07)		
30. His/her co-workers (colleagues) are committed to working qualitatively.	Directors	3,90 (\pm 0,65)	1,283	0,000
	Employees	3,74 (\pm 0,98)		

31. S/he has a good friend at his/her workplace.	Directors	3,86 (\pm 0,96)	0,864	0,001
	Employees	3,71 (\pm 1,32)		
32. In the last six months, somebody from the workplace, spoke to him/her about his/her progress.	Directors	3,60 (\pm 0,96)	1,338	0,031
	Employees	3,37 (\pm 1,24)		
33.) In the last year, s/he had chances at his/her work to learn and progress.	Directors	3,70 (\pm 0,90)	-0,160	0,041
	Employees	3,72 (\pm 1,12)		

5. DISCUSSION

Regarding the first research hypothesis (Ho1- Four* and five* star hotels implement internal marketing) the results of the study, it arises that an attempt to implement internal marketing to the hotel industry takes place, which is not sufficient though. Therefore, the positive results from the implementation of internal marketing to companies that provide services cannot take place in hotel industries. In all the dimensions of internal marketing, a weak presence of internal marketing is apparent, apart from the 6th dimension which refers to «Education».

In particular, regarding the dimension of internal marketing «Value Exchange», it is apparent that directors overestimate the degree at which the hotel intends to understand employees' needs. As a result, these needs are not explored as they should be in hotel companies. Moreover, employees in the hotel industry feel that the hotel considers to a small extent if they are satisfied with their job, whereas directors overestimate this fact.

Regarding the dimension of internal marketing «Departmentalization», directors overestimate the degree at which the hotel company examines and takes into consideration how the particular policies implemented influence different sectors within the company. Hence, diversity is not recognised at the departmentalisation of the internal market.

Regarding the dimension of internal marketing «Internal communication», what is observed is that directors overestimate the level of internal communication at the hotel. As a result of that, employees feel that directors do not listen to them as well as that they do not encourage them to discuss their problems.

Concerning the dimension of internal marketing «Administration interest», employees feel that the administration of the hotel does not show genuine interest to them, which directors' overestimate.

Regarding the dimension of internal marketing «Implementation of the administration interest», there are differences between the views of directors and employees. Directors overestimate the degree at which the administration of the hotel understands the family needs of employees, as well as the fact that employees can find a balance between their work and their family life at the hotel. In contrast, employees feel that those mentioned above happen to a smaller extent.

Finally, regarding the dimension of internal marketing «Training», both directors and employees agree to the same extent that employees are trained to overcome changes, that the hotel organises educational seminars, and that they are trained to take on new responsibilities.

Regarding the second research hypothesis (Ho2 - The implementation of internal marketing leads to job satisfaction) results have shown, in accordance with previous researches, that there is a direct relationship. In detail, it is observed that the non-implementation of internal marketing has an impact on job satisfaction. Due to

the gap between the views of directors and the views of employees, it is difficult to identify the immense need for the implementation of internal marketing from the side of the administration.

Finally regarding the third research hypothesis (Ho3 - Directors know if the employees are satisfied from their job), the results from the research showed that also here directors overestimate employees' satisfaction from their job. In particular, directors overestimate the fact that employees have at their disposal the necessary material and equipment so that they can do their job correctly. Moreover, directors overestimate the degree at which they seem to care for the employees as individuals as well as the fact that there is somebody at their working environment who encourages the employees. The overestimation of directors is present because the co-workers-colleagues of the employees are committed to working qualitatively as well as because employees have a very good friend in their working environment. The same occurs with the fact that during the last six months somebody from their working environment talked to the employees for their progress. Last, directors overestimate the degree at which in the last year the employees had chances to learn and progress at their work.

Table 3 presents the results of the research hypotheses of this study:

Table 3: Presentation of results of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis	Accepted/ Rejected
Ho1- Four* and five* star hotels implement internal marketing	Accepted (a weak presence of internal marketing is apparent, apart from the 6th dimension which refers to «Education»)
Ho2 - The implementation of internal marketing leads to job satisfaction	Accepted (the non-implementation of internal marketing has an impact on job satisfaction)
Ho3 - Directors know if the employees are satisfied from their job	Rejected (directors overestimate employees' satisfaction from their job)

From the conclusions mentioned above, it arises that there are some propositions to be made for the hotel companies. The propositions refer to particular actions that each company must do:

- (a) Firstly, the administration should conduct research within the company in which it will measure the level of the personnel's satisfaction as well as examine their propositions. The measure of the «pulse» of the employees is not enough. Some plans should also be implemented which would show the interest of the administration towards the personnel and to promote internal marketing to the environment of the company.
- (b) The analysis of the internal market refers to the analysis of the human dynamic of a company. Therefore, such an analysis could be useful to the placement of the individuals (employees) to the equivalent job positions taking into consideration their needs, their characteristics, such as age, gender, procedures that are carried out for the external customers as well. As a result of the placement of employees, the tasks would match the people and ideally would give them pleasure.
- (c) In addition, actions should be taken to bridge the gap between directors and employees so that the internal communication could flourish. Erroneous internal communication could induce significant errors which may have an impact on the external customer and generally his/her dissatisfaction. The ways that internal communication is implemented should be examined, the possible gaps should be covered, and the errors should be corrected.
- (d) The training of the personnel is an essential procedure for the hotels, mostly for the personnel who get into contact with the customers, since it is a part of the offered service. Moreover, training is also vital for the

supporting personnel in order to work efficiently as a team. Through the training, the reinforcement of the personnel is achieved, as well.

(e) Finally, the regular update of the administration-direction for the development of the company, the aims but also its vision create an atmosphere of trust, togetherness and collective responsibility and effort for the achievement of the real aim in the working environment.

As a result of the propositions mentioned above, the implementation of internal marketing constitutes a basic requirement which is directly linked to job satisfaction. The satisfied employee is the best ambassador of a company not only during his/her work because s/he performs the best, but also for the image of the company that is created outside. This occurs to a greater extent since, in the modern age, which is characterised as a digital era, the dissemination of the information is quicker than ever.

6. Limitations and Future Research

In this research, as happens in every research, there is a set of limitations which need to be mentioned in order to avoid some erroneous generalisations regarding the results of the research. A fundamental research limitation is that it took place at the broader area of the Prefecture of Chania and that it is not concerned with all the hotels that exist in Greece. Also, the research did not take place in all hotels of the prefecture of Chania (regardless of the category) but it was limited to the hotels of five (5*) and four (4*) stars. Finally, another limitation was that the research was faced with suspicion by some hotel companies, because of its nature. As a result, there was much delay concerning the collection of the required number of questionnaires.

Regarding the propositions for future research, another research could be conducted which would include an additional questionnaire. This questionnaire would measure the satisfaction of customers. In this way, an association of the three samples could be done, that is to say, an association of the implementation of internal marketing, of the personnel's satisfaction and finally of the customers' satisfaction. Another proposition is to measure the awareness of all personnel (directors and employees) regarding customer satisfaction and to measure customer satisfaction. Finally, further research could be concerned with the relationship between the implementation of internal marketing, the implementation of external marketing as well as the customer satisfaction, not only for hotel companies but also for other companies which belong to the broader sector of providing services.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Demographic Profile of the Directors

Concise Presentation of the demographic profile of the first sample

(directors of departments)

Gender	Number Individuals	of	Percentage %
Men	30		50.0 %
Women	30		50.0 %
Total	60		100%

Level of Education		
Junior High School Graduates	0	0 %
High School Graduates	6	10.0 %
Students	0	0 %
Graduates of the School of Tourist Occupations (OTEK) or IEK	10	16.7 %
Graduates of Technical University (TEI)	18	30,0 %
Graduates of Higher University (AEI)	8	13.3 %
Postgraduate Studies	12	20.0 %
Other	6	10.0 %
Total	60	100%
Years of work at the particular company		
0 to 5 years	28	46.7 %
6 to 10 years	14	23.3 %
11 years and more	18	30.0 %
Total	60	100%
Overall years of work in the hotel industry		
0 to 5 years	8	13.3 %
6 to 10 years	8	13.3 %
11 years and more	44	73.3 %

Total	60	100%
Employment relation with the company		
Open-ended contract (permanent job)	44	73.3 %
Fixed term contract (temporary job)	12	20.0 %
Shift work contract	4	6.7 %
Internship	0	0 %
Total	60	100%
Work Department		
Administration-Direction	24	40.0 %
Marketing-Sales	8	13.3 %
Accounting Office	6	10.0 %
Reservations-Reception	14	23.3 %
Restaurant-Bar	4	6.7 %
Kitchen	2	3.3 %
Floors-Laundry	2	3.3 %
Maintenance-Security	0	0 %
Human Resources	0	0 %
Total	60	100%
Position at the company		
General Director	4	6.7 %

Director	6	10.0 %
Vice Director	6	10.0 %
Director of a Department	42	70.0 %
Remaining Personnel	0	0 %
Other	2	3.3 %
Total	60	100%

Appendix B – Demographic Profile of the Employees

Concise Presentation of the demographic profile of the second sample

(employees-subordinates)

Gender	Number Individuals	of	Percentage %
Men	51		42.5 %
Women	69		57.5 %
Total	180		100%
Level of Education			
Junior High School Graduates	2		1.7 %
High School Graduates	30		25.0 %

Students	9	7.5%
Graduates of the School of Tourism Occupations (OTEK) or IEK	28	23.3 %
Graduates of Technical University (TEI)	29	24.2 %
Graduates of Higher University (AEI)	12	10.0 %
Postgraduate Studies	8	6.7 %
Other	2	1.7 %
Total	180	100%
Years of work at the particular company		
0 to 5 years	84	70.0 %
6 to 10 years	16	13.3 %
11 years and more	20	16.7 %
Total	180	100%
Overall years of work at the particular hotel industry		
0 to 5 years	69	57.5 %
6 to 10 years	18	15.0 %
11 years and more	33	27.5 %
Total	180	100%
Employment relation with the company		

Open-ended contract (permanent job)	49	40.8 %
Fixed term contract (temporary job)	61	50.8 %
Shift work contract	5	4.2%
Internship	5	4.2 %
Total	180	100%
Work Department		
Administration-Direction	0	0 %
Marketing-Sales	12	10.0 %
Accounting Office	7	5.8 %
Reservations-Reception	49	40.8 %
Restaurant-Bar	37	30.8 %
Kitchen	5	4.2 %
Floors-Laundry	4	3.3 %
Maintenance-Security	3	2.5 %
Human Resources	3	2.5 %
Total	180	100%
Position at the company		
General Director	0	0 %
Director	0	0 %
Vice Director	0	0 %

Director of the Department	0	0 %
Remaining Personnel	104	86.7 %
Other	16	13.3 %
Total	180	100%