

THE ROLE OF INTERNAL MARKETING ON THE PARLIAMENTARY DEALINGS IN GHANA: PERCEPTION FROM GHANAIS

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ABSTRACT

The importance of Internal Marketing as an effective tool to the dealings of Parliament of Ghana cannot be downplayed. The concept of internal market is a promising area of study in the marketing and organizational behaviour literature. However, research needs on internal marketing has mainly focused on both private and some public organizations with little or no research on Ghana's Parliament dealings. Using in-depth interviews, this paper explores how internal marketing through education and training ensure that Members of Parliament in Ghana know what to do, when to do, how to do and for whom to do; making it easy to achieve the laid down objectives of Parliament. Findings suggest that differences in political goals in an emerging economy such as Ghana interferes with the developmental growth of Ghana. Therefore, Members of Parliament must work towards achieving a unified goal. Having an understanding on the concept of internal marketing in Parliament means treating members as internal customers hence, sustaining the internal market during good times and bad times to perform effectively for the success of Parliament. It was ascertained that internal marketing communication within Parliament is very crucial. Through communication, relevant tasks and information are elaborated to ensure satisfaction of the general public. When members are well-informed, they tend to work effectively to achieve success in all projects and decisions.

Keywords: Internal Marketing; Ghana's Parliament; Marketing Communication; Members of Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing as a concept has been applicable traditionally to all sectors in profit-making and not-for-profit making entities in Ghana (Berthon et al., 2007; Blankson, Mbah, & Owusu-Frimpong, 2009; Owusu-Frimpong & Martins, 2010). A large body of scholarly literature has centered on the application of marketing concepts and principles to politics, with the primary goal of ensuring public satisfaction (Hinson & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010). Excellent customer support is a critical component of every company's competitive advantage, and it is one of the areas where internal marketing can have an effect. Internal marketing is based on the idea that employees are internal customers. Organizations may use an internal marketing strategy to inform, inspire, direct, and drive their employees to higher levels of success by incorporating an internal marketing strategy. This is due to the fact that employees often embody the organization, which is both dynamic and multi-dimensional.

The concept of internal marketing stems across all service organisations. Internal marketing increases workplace retention and achieves organizational loyalty at various levels, resulting in employees feeling a sense of belonging to the company and exhibiting belonging actions, which leads to creativity and a spirit of perseverance (Alshura et al., 2016). The concept of internal market is a promising area of study in the marketing and organizational behaviour literature. This study contributes to the understanding of what Internal Marketing is and focuses on importance of Internal Marketing as an effective tool to the Parliament of Ghana. The study focuses on rationale for adoption of this concept in the proceedings of the Parliament of Ghana. For a smooth and effective proceeding, the Parliament of Ghana can be viewed as an “*organisation*” with each Member of Parliament also as an “*employee*” and the general public as the “*external customers*”. A harmonized effort within an organisation (Parliament of Ghana) is an utmost necessity to provide customers (the general public of Ghana) with services at a desired level. For the development of Ghana, the Members of Parliament must be viewed as internal markets who must be convinced of the Parliaments’ vision for our motherland Ghana. The goal of internal marketing is to align every aspect of an organisation’s operations to ensure they are as capable as possible of providing value to its external customers. When an organization (Parliament of Ghana) operate in a coordinated and standardized way, it can provide a more consistent experience to their external customers (the general public). Without the implementation of internal marketing, chaos and misunderstanding and differences in goals mostly arises. This study is of additional importance as it highlights the impact of internal marketing practices on organizational commitment such as the Parliament of Ghana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parliament of Ghana

On March 6, 1957, the Gold Coast was renamed Ghana and granted independence, with the British monarchy remaining as head of state. Ghana became a republic on July 1, 1960, after a new Republican constitution was approved and Kwame Nkrumah was elected President. The country returned to civilian rule in 1969. During the Third Republic, which lasted from 1979 to 1981, the dominant party in the National Assembly was the People's National Party (PNP), which won the elections held on 18 June 1979. All elected institutions were abolished and political party membership was banned after the military intervened in 1981. A new constitution was adopted in a referendum in 1992, after 11 years of military rule. In November, presidential elections were held. In the 1996 parliamentary elections, both parties were represented. The NDC won 133 out of a total of 200 seats, while the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) won 60. Two other parties won the remaining seats. The simple majority is used in Ghana's parliamentary elections. The country has been divided into 275 single-member constituencies since 2012, with members serving four-year term (Parliament of Ghana History, 2021).

Internal Marketing

The term "*internal marketing*" first appeared in the mid-1970s, and it was closely associated with the concepts of "*service marketing*" and "*service marketing efficiency*." Internal marketing is a critical component of establishing a customer-centric organizational culture, with the goal of increasing customer knowledge both internally and externally by eliminating barriers to organizational effectiveness (Zaman et al., 2012). Marketing scholars establish that internal

marketing practice encompasses several activities that have been grouped in four major themes that appear to constitute internal marketing namely; education and training, motivation, communication and information and coordination. Furthermore, the basic purpose for applying internal marketing concept is to get motivated employees and to make them conscious at each and every level to serve customer in a better way (Ahmed and Rafiq 2003). Pappasolomou and Vrontis, (2006) argue that internal marketing through its emphasis on “internal customers” creates a market - oriented culture that sets the foundation for building a strong corporate service brand. Scholars have also identified some issues pertaining to internal marketing which includes: the link between employee satisfaction and organizational performance; the need for research on how inter-functional co-ordination can be achieved for the effective implementation of marketing strategies; the need for relationship marketing perspective in internal marketing; the need for research in internal communication strategies; and the role of internal marketing for developing organizational competences, (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Budhwar et al., (2009) suggested that a well-structured and rationalized internal marketing approach can significantly improve employee relations with any organizational competitiveness and performance. Research has stipulated that service organizations should not only focus on external marketing but should focus on internal marketing as much as external marketing since the employees play the main role in the service (Chung-Cheng & Hung, 2008). It has been identified that internal marketing is a strategy for front line personnel who interact with customers to provide them with the best service possible (Ting, 2011). Organizations have adapted internal marketing to better understand the importance of employees’ role in any organization (Esfahani et al., 2013).

Dimensions of Internal Marketing

Below are the dimensions of internal marketing:

Education and Training

Internal Marketing plays an important role in employee’s training because they have direct contact with the company's external customers and therefore need to have the requisite information and experience to ensure high quality (Bansal et al., 2001). Employees need expertise and information about customers' needs and how to meet them, therefore training programs are critical. (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001). Internal marketing includes training to provide employees with the expertise and information they need to do their jobs. Narteh (2012) stated, top managers can assess employee performance, and if there are any gaps in expertise or knowledge, they can be resolved by training programs. Employees consider training to be an essential component of the work environment, and the greater the opportunity for skill growth, the greater the employee engagement. Narteh (2012) stipulated that training is important not only for ensuring that employees perform their jobs satisfactorily, but it also helps to foster a sense of belonging among employees. Organizations may use education and training to teach new hires what seasoned employees know. This opens the door for interactive skills, resulting in courteous, compassionate, and empathic service from employees in a company (Wilson et al., 2008). Thus, for the purpose of this study, internal marketing through education and training, ensures that Members of Parliament in Ghana know what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and with whom to do it, making it easier to achieve Parliament's goals..

Motivation

Motivation is multifaceted and difficult to assess for each person. Clear expectations and input in the workplace will help employees feel more motivated (Cook, 2011). According to Grönroos (2007) when employees are given the right to think, evaluate, and make choices freely, they are more likely to perform better.

Workplace motivation can be divided into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation focuses on external incentives including bonuses and benefits. Gaining new skills and abilities, opportunities to learn new things, promotion, independence, success, appreciation, support from supervisors, and accomplishment are all examples of intrinsic motivation (Stringer et al., 2011). Internal marketing promotes the development of a friendly environment through inspiration, allowing each Member of Parliament to share their ideas with one another in a cohesive and seamless manner. Ideally, internal marketing through motivation places value on members' contribution towards the development of Ghana.

Communication and Information

Internal marketing communications provide employees with reliable information that matches what external consumers hear and see (Wilson et al., 2008). Internal marketing plan must come from the top of the company and be conveyed to all of the workers who work under them. To learn more about the changes happening in the company, workers must be informed about service-oriented initiatives as well as innovative ways of performing while communicating with customers (Grönroos, 2007). Employees need knowledge to fulfill their duties as service providers, so communication within a company is critical. Having a two-way contact system in place where employees can communicate to management about what they have discovered about consumer needs is an element of internal marketing. This will help managers provide more resources to employees in order to increase their efficiency. Employees use this knowledge to understand customer desires and how they can contribute to the company as individuals. (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001). Organizations must ensure that employees are trained and empowered to provide what external customers expect in order to provide high-quality service. (Wilson et al., 2012). Inadequate knowledge leads to confusion, misunderstanding, and other organizational issues, such as a drop in employee work satisfaction and productivity. In providing information through effective communication to Members of Parliament in Ghana, it conveys the message to every member, the purpose for which they were elected and the responsibility they have to deliver to the general public of Ghana. This is to ensure that the core values of the organisation (Parliament) in guaranteeing good governance is completely comprehended by each employee (Member of Parliament).

Coordination

Internal marketing is just as successful as the coordination of all members involved in an organization. The company must coordinate the activities of its employees in order to provide an efficient service. (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). Coordination is concerned with how people function together in a harmonious manner. Employees must, in the end, perform various tasks that are all geared toward the same target. Another important part of internal marketing is coordinating the tasks of all members. The implementation of internal marketing as a tool allows Members of Parliament from both the ruling and opposition parties to coordinate and cooperate effectively.

When an organisation (Parliament of Ghana) operate in a coordinated and standardized way, it can provide a more consistent experience to their external customers (the general public).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was primarily qualitative in nature since its main aim was to uncover Ghanaians' views and experiences on the Parliamentary dealings. Data was generated mainly via in-depth qualitative interviews with thirty (20) respondents. The interviews were semi-structured and guided by an interview guide that outlined the following goals for the investigation. However, the interview guide was not strictly followed, which allowed for the emergence of new ideas. The qualitative approach was adopted because of its ability to reveal rich and in-depth data, which was essential for understanding the concept of Internal Marketing and its application to the Parliament of Ghana). Convenience sampling techniques was utilized for the study. Convenience sampling is characterized by being less-time consuming (Saunders et al., 2009) and easy to access (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Convenience sampling is described as a sample that is selected because of its availability to the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Key terms that originated from transcripts were formed into codes for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the data captured. Shorthand connotations were applied to codes, which were then used to identify trends in transcripts. All of the interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim (Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) explained the benefits to transcribe the data as soon as possible, mainly due to the huge amount of time taken to transcribe audio records. Additionally, different concepts and ideas were illustrated using colored highlight pens. Cross-checking the themes with transcripts to ensure accuracy and consistency ensured the data's reliability (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). However, they have been criticized for being time-consuming and difficult to maintain, as well as providing little basis for scientific generalization. However, since qualitative cases are not statistically chosen to reflect a broader population, the quantitative notion of generalizing is inadequate for qualitative case study research (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). Since the data is collected only from interviews, the researchers used open-ended questions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Data analysis starts with regular readings of the collected data in order to gain immersion and a holistic sense of the situation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Following that, codes are created by reading the data word for word and highlighting the exact terms that appear to catch key concepts or thoughts. The codes are classified based on their relationship and linkage. The emerged categories are then used to group and organize codes into relevant clusters (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

STUDY FINDINGS

Respondents' characteristics

A total of 20 respondents were interviewed using a semi-structured mode of enquiry. The respondent represented the general public of Ghana. This research sought to explore the dealings of Parliament proceedings in Ghana, therefore all respondents were the citizenry of Ghana. Table

1 provides information on the major characteristics of the respondents. Figure 1 identifies the Chamber of Ghana’s Parliament House and Figure 2 exhibits the Ghana’s Parliament House. The presentations of the findings below are presented by the major themes that were identified from the data.

Table 1	
CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY SAMPLE	
Variables:	Total (n = 20)
Gender:	
Male	11
Female	09
Marital Status:	
Married	15
Single	5
Educational Level:	
Masters	6
Bachelor’s	2
MBCHB	2
Professional	1
HND/Diploma	2
SHS	1
Informal	1



Figure 1
CHAMBER OF GHANA’S PARLIAMENT HOUSE



Figure 2
GHANA’S PARLIAMENT HOUSE

RESULTS

Questions were asked to determine respondents' perception towards Parliamentary dealing in Ghana. This led to a detailed description of their perceptions towards the Parliament of Ghana and their dealings of the developmental projects. In total 20 interviews were conducted, while saturation of the data set was achieved at the 18th interview, two additional interviews were conducted to further establish the saturation and increase trustworthiness of the study.

Different Political Parties with Different Goals as a Reason for Delay in Developmental Performance

The issue of Members of Parliament from different political groups having different set of interest was one of the main themes that emerged. 15% of the respondents attributed the slowdown of many developmental projects in Ghana to the differences in political interests: One respondent has this to say: *"I find it quite annoying that whenever there is a different political party in power, previous developmental issues are not continued", On the same issue another respondent responded this way: "The challenge we are facing as Ghanaians is that, whenever there is a new party in power, old projects are being abandoned and new ones begin. This same cycles continue for a very long time. Leaving room to a whole lot of uncompleted projects"*. This was also stipulated by another respondent: *"Differences is all we are facing in Ghana as a country. Everybody is looking at what it is in for me and not for our beloved country. This is so difficult to move on as a country"*. It can be asserted that, differences in operational objectives of Parliament results in distortion of developmental projects and inability in achieving certain targets to the benefit of Ghana.

Understanding of Internal Marketing as a concept in Parliament

It is essential for Parliament to be oriented on the concept of internal marketing and its application in the dealings of Parliament. 25% of the respondents shared their views on the importance of internal marketing in Parliament. This is what ensued: *"I genuinely think that each Member of Parliament regardless of the political party must understand that once you are being elected by the good people of Ghana and therefore much is expected that all interest must be towards the common good of the country"*. Another respondent emphasized: *"Parliament must continuously ensure that each Member of Parliament must be trained, motivated and empowered to ensure that a unified goal is achieved"*. One respondent also reiterated that: *"When you talk of internal marketing, I'm not really sure of what you mean but I assume that it means that the mission and goals of an organisation is spelt out to every member, so with this little knowledge, I think Parliament must ensure that, yes, although there may be different role set, it is important for outline and elaborate on the main goals and vision of Parliament to ensure a smooth running"*. From the views of the respondents, having an understanding of internal marketing strategy within Parliament paves the way for a unified effort in providing value to the Ghanaians citizenry.

Inadequate Information and Communication in Parliament

Communication is the lifeblood of every organisation. Through the flow of information every member knows what is expected from them by keeping them aware of all goals and

activities through internal marketing. 10% of the respondents shared their view on the importance of keeping each Member of Parliament abreast of all proceedings: *“Oh for me! I just believe that when Parliament meet up to discuss certain pertinent issues, sometimes communication processes in ensuring its effectiveness may be lacking. I think this is mainly because when any information is relayed concerning certain issues concerning our country, it is sometimes inadequate”*

This was also stated by one respondent: *“You know that in Parliament, we have the majority and minority. With this in Parliament, sometimes certain information may not favour a particular party, taking it quite a longer period of time to reach a consensus”*. Another view was shared by one respondent concerning the same issue: *“Hmmm, I don’t really follow up on the proceedings of Parliament because I know that when such meetings are held even members’ attendance is not encouraging so how then do you get detailed information to take place”*. Human resource professionals spearhead all internal marketing campaigns. Since internal marketing focuses on leveraging the value of employees (Members of Parliament), having a strong communication of the goals of Parliament, expected tasks and all strategies are crucial in achieving organizational (Parliament) success.

Management Emotional Labour in Parliament

Creating a congenial atmosphere is one way of managing emotional misunderstanding in any organisation (Parliament) where every member can share their differences in views or opinions in a professional manner. 30% of the respondents recounted an experience which occurred in Parliament during the election of a new Speaker of Parliament as an example:

“This matter! We all witnessed this! Very much appalling. I pray that as time goes on, Parliament would have learnt from this particular experience and figured how to manage any conflicts or misunderstanding”

This was also cited by another respondent who considered the incident that occurred as embarrassing:

“I really cringe when I see any pictures or videos concerning what occurred when the Speaker of Parliament was elected. Up until now, I believe that much can be done to ensure that such an embarrassing event does not repeat itself again”. Another respondent stressed the following statement: *“I just always emphasize that there is the need for every member of the House to coordinate with every activity that may occur with due diligence. Coordination and having a proper understanding of the House and its dealings as well as what is expected of them must be taken into consideration always”*. With the implementation of internal marketing, members will understand the main reason they were elected into power and their responsibility in ensuring that all policies, projects and decisions are for the betterment of the country and not for individual interests.

Implementation of a Reward and Recognition System

Rewarding the best performance from members of Parliament is another implementation of internal marketing. 20% of the respondents were of the view that recognizing members of Parliament based on their developmental projects may bring about accountability:

“Oh okay, accountability of each member of Parliament will be brought to light to determine which MP is working or not”

A respondent suggested the following that:

“Assuming if the House implements a recognition and reward system of members that have put in their maximum effort, it will even serve as a guide for the general public on who to continuously vote for or not”

This was also supported by another respondent:

“This is one way that I believe that Parliament can ensure that all members are working towards a common goal. I think this will keep each member on track and will empower them to take all developmental projects seriously, I mean who doesn't want to be recognized as a really hardworking Member of Parliament, Hahaha”

It is believed that every employee of an organisation is intrinsically motivated through recognition, it paves way positive competition amongst others which in one way or the other, delivers value to the general public of Ghana.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The context of internal marketing in Parliament has not been entirely explored by marketing scholars. As a result, this study examined the effect internal marketing has on the proceedings of Parliament in Ghana. Various themes were derived during the respondents' interviews to delve into their opinions on the dealings of Parliament and its possible application of internal marketing. Themes derived from the interrogation were different political parties with different goals as a reason for delay in developmental performance, understanding of Internal Marketing as a concept in Parliament, inadequate information and communication in Parliament, management emotional labour in Parliament and implementation of a reward and recognition system. From the analysis, respondents reported that the implementation of internal marketing in Parliament will go a long way in ensuring the achievement in developing the economy of Ghana. Additionally, the study revealed that differences in political goals in an emerging economy such as Ghana interferes with the developmental growth of Ghana. Therefore, Members of Parliament must work towards achieving a unified goal. Having an understanding on the concept of internal marketing in Parliament means treating members as internal customers hence, sustaining the internal market during good times and bad times to perform effectively for the success of an organisation is eventually measured by the achievement of its organizational goals and objectives. It was ascertained that internal marketing communication within Parliament is very crucial. Through communication, relevant tasks and information are elaborated to ensure satisfaction of the general public. When members are well-informed, they tend to work effectively to achieve success in all projects and decisions.

Internal Marketing creates the avenue for a transparent and conducive environment leading to development and empowerment of members. With the implementation of internal marketing, it becomes easier to resolve any issue or challenge that may arise. Having a track record of completion of developmental project to recognize and reward members who meet target serves as an encouragement to all in Parliament as well as an accountability factor to the general public of Ghana. Upon the events that occurred during the transfer to and the inauguration of the 8th Parliament, Members have been encouraged to work closely together for the ultimate good of Ghana. This calls for all political actors to come together and work in an integrated way to ensure a hardworking, dedicated and unified Parliament. Ultimately, for the development of

Ghana and good governance, internal marketing must be utilized in all proceedings of the House to achieve the said objective.

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