

A unidimensional instrument for measuring internal marketing concept in the higher education sector

Measuring
internal
marketing
concept

343

IM-11 scale

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Abstract

Purpose – Although the existing internal marketing (IM) scales include various scale items to measure employee motivation, they fall short of incorporating the needs and expectations of service sector employees. Hence, the purpose of this study is to present a practical instrument designed to measure the IM construct in the higher education sector.

Design/methodology/approach – Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this empirical study. A qualitative method was used to develop the scale items to measure the IM construct and a quantitative method was used to test the scale developed in the higher education sector. The study sample included $n = 240$ academic staff from a large university. Both exploratory (EFA) and the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were used to confirm the dimensionality of the IM scale developed.

Findings – The study results showed that all items in the measurement scale were loaded on a single dimension that represents the IM construct in the higher education sector. The psychometric properties of the developed scale (IM-11) met and exceeded the expected criteria cited in the literature.

Research limitations/implications – The IM-11 scale presented in this study offers a practical tool for higher education administrators in their efforts to measure the needs and expectations of their employees. Moreover, this knowledge should provide a framework for the administration to develop strategies for employee motivation, job satisfaction and performance and assume additional responsibilities in their efforts to serving their external customers better. Sample size, cultural factors and the complex nature of university academic staff limit one's ability to generalize these results to broader populations.

Originality/value – In line with the information provided in the literature on IM, this study developed a simple and practical instrument to measure the IM construct for an academic unit within a university.

Keywords Measurement, Internal marketing, Higher education, Scale development, Internal customers

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

While some companies learn to survive in today's ever-intensifying global competitive market environment, others are forced to stop their operations because of their inability to adapt to the new realities of global markets (Grönroos, 1990). Therefore, organizations need to develop customer focus and effective marketing strategies to differentiate themselves for

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sustainable long-term business operations. We argue that internal marketing (IM) is an important piece of the puzzle in their efforts to develop differentiation to achieve the competitive advantage needed in today's competitive market conditions. Although there are various conceptualizations of IM provided in the literature, the main arguments for IM may be summarized as to focus on coordination and motivation of the internal employees, who service the external customers, to accomplish higher levels of customer orientation (Yildiz, 2014).

The IM concept has attracted significant researcher and practitioner interests, especially by the services organizations during the past two decades. The IM concept has emerged in the marketing literature during the 1970s, and Berry's (1981) notion that *to have satisfied customers, organizations should have the satisfied employees first* has started to receive greater acceptance among the scholars. Researchers have suggested that competitive advantage may be achieved through paying close attention to satisfying employee needs, so that they could provide superior service to the external customers. Despite generating increased debate among scholars until the 1990s, IM research has not been as extensive as one would have expected. During the mid-1990s, renewed interest in the concept has been surfaced with the introduction of an IM measurement scale by Foreman and Money (1995). Additional scales focusing on employee motivation have also been offered to measure the IM construct during the early years of 2000s. However, there is no consensus among scholars in terms of the dimensionality of IM and how higher levels of employee focus would lead to better customer focus (Ahmed *et al.*, 2003). Some scholars viewed IM more broadly by assuming that it included all factors to motivate and establish better relationships with the employees (Ahmad *et al.*, 2012; Berry, 1995; Cahill, 1995; Gummesson, 1991; Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000), while others focused more the role of leaders in achieving IM (Wieseke *et al.*, 2009).

Although the existing IM scales include various items measuring employee retention through motivation, the existing scale items do not incorporate information about employee expectations, needs and motivations to fully measure IM construct. For instance, one of the most frequently used scales to measure IM is the one developed by Foreman and Money (1995). However, this scale mainly attempts to measure the motivation through *vision, training* and *rewards*. We agree that these are important factors in the scope of IM, but they do not incorporate individual employee expectations and needs. Motivation is a complex concept, and it is known to include various economic, psycho-social, organizational and managerial factors. For instance, Rynes *et al.* (2004) reported that money/pay raise is an important motivator for most people. Similarly, psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995) and equity (Adams, 1963) have been reported to be important workplace motivators.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to revisit the IM measurement and offer a revised instrument (IM-11 Scale) for the services sector (higher educational institutions) that captures the crucial elements of the IM construct. In general, organizations may be classified into three broad categories according to their activities – *manufacturing/production, re-sellers* and *service organizations* (Jansen *et al.*, 2007). Because of the nature of their activities, higher levels of customer contact is required in the service organizations, while moderate and lower levels of customer interactions may take place in the re-sellers and manufacturers, respectively (Chase and Tansik, 1983). As the fundamental philosophy of IM is to motivate all employees to be more customer-centric, one could argue that the IM concept is closely related to the service organizations where the highest levels of customer contact is expected. Acknowledging the shift in marketing thought more towards the service-centered dominant logic for all organizations (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), for the purposes of this study, we mainly limit our focus to the services sector where the IM has the highest level

importance. We first discuss the IM concept and then focus on the existing scales that are offered to measure the construct. We then present the conceptual support for the scale items that are included in the IM-11 scale and analyze the psychometric properties of the scale. The final section of the paper presents the study results, conclusion and future research directions.

Literature review

Sasser and Arbeit (1976) argued that the employee satisfaction and motivation were crucial factors for gaining competitive advantage in the services sector. This idea of focusing on employee satisfaction and motivation as a source of competitive advantage has later indirectly contributed to today's view of "employees as internal customers" and the "IM" concept. This view was later considered as a crucial organizational behavior topic, and the IM concept was first proposed by Berry in 1981. Berry (1981, p. 34) defined IM as "[...] viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization". To improve service quality, Berry argued that employee satisfaction has to be achieved beforehand. Various other definitions of IM have been offered by different scholars since it was first proposed by Berry (1981).

Employees have been considered the most important element in the services industry (Cooper and Cronin, 2000) because of their inseparable role in the process of delivering services to satisfy customers' needs (Berry, 1995). Accordingly, the modern view of marketing considers employees as "internal customers" whose needs ought to be satisfied in the internalized market (Berry, 1981; Gummesson, 1987; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993). According to this view, IM is simply the application of marketing concepts and techniques to satisfy the needs and expectations of organizations' employees (Lings, 2004) to achieve external customer satisfaction and retention (George, 1990). Varey (1995) provided a framework for IM and presented various challenges for future research on this topic.

Establishing healthy internal and external relationships among key organizational players is an essential element of the company success (Palmer, 1996). Therefore, organizations ought to concentrate on establishing relational exchanges with their employees (George, 1990). The underlying assumption for this argument is that if an organization does not have good relationships with its employees, then it cannot expect to achieve good relationships needed with its customers in the process of satisfying their needs (Grönroos, 2000). Supporting this argument, Gummesson (2000) and Lau and May (1998) characterize the internal relationship dynamics in a firm using a win-win paradigm to accomplish organizational goals. According to this paradigm, when organizations provide a satisfying work environment, employees tend to align their interests with the interests of the organization and, hence, create a mutually beneficial environment that benefits both parties. Improved relationships between an organization and its employees will contribute to the reduction in suspicion and hostility among parties, benefiting the employees in terms of improved quality of work life while simultaneously benefiting the company in terms of improved business performance (Brettel *et al.*, 2012). As a result, internal relational exchange will contribute positively to employee needs and expectations; in return, employees will more be likely to concentrate on better satisfying external customers' needs and wants (Greene *et al.*, 1994). Employees whose needs and expectations are satisfied are assumed to become more customer-oriented (Wagenheim and Anderson, 2008) which will pave the way to become more customer-centric. In contrast, the lack of a customer-orientated approach toward the employees will lead to unhappy employees, unsatisfied customers and reduced

marketing effectiveness through negative word-of-mouth communication (Cooper and Cronin, 2000).

However, there is no consensus in the literature with respect to the factors that lead employees to be more focused on customer orientation (Ahmed *et al.*, 2003; Tortosa-Edo *et al.*, 2010). Ahmad *et al.* (2012) and Berry (1995) suggested that it is crucial to first retain employees who are demonstrating higher job performance because high levels of job performance have been assumed to be related to service quality levels provided to the external customers. Next, training and motivating need to be provided to the employees to have them focus on customer orientation (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000) and deliver consistently high service quality. This is the phase where the organization should focus on strategies to motivate employees to be more customer-oriented.

Theoretical foundations of internal the marketing concept

The foundations of the IM concept may be grounded in various theories and approaches such as reciprocity, social exchange, economic exchange and fulfillment of the psychological contract. Using the reciprocity rule, Gouldner (1960) argued that the recipient of the benefit would be usually obliged to give back to the donor/giver by at minimum not doing anything that harms the giver. Thus, as the employees receive greater support from the organization, they are more likely to reciprocate with good will (i.e. better performance and higher motivation) which in turn benefits the organization's needs. Similarly, social exchange refers to relationships that entail unspecified future obligations; hence, it is assumed to generate an expectation of some future return for contributions (Blau, 1964). Using the commitment in social exchange theory, Blau (1964) argued that people act under the belief that one should help another who has helped (or will help) them. However, unlike economic exchange, the exact nature of that return in social exchanges has not been specified, and it does not occur on a deliberate basis. Economic exchange is based on transactions and economic benefits (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005), but social exchange relationships are based on individuals trusting that the other party will fairly discharge their obligations in the long run (Holmes, 1981). In social exchange relationship, the incentives employers may offer usually go beyond the monetary rewards and may include a consideration of employees' well-being as well as the employees' career within the firm.

On the other hand, the mutual expectations that manage the relations between the employee and organization that are not incorporated in the employment contracts are fulfilled by the psychological contract. According to Argyris (1960) and Levinson *et al.* (1962), a psychological contract includes expectations about the nature of the exchange by both employer and employee. Although, mostly implicit and unspoken, psychological contracts are based on mutual understanding and expectations. The obligatory nature of the psychological contract is more of a result of the reciprocal expectations in the contract. In other words, because of the reciprocal expectations or perceived obligations, the two parties are bound to one another. Some scholars conceptualized two different dimensions for psychological contracts: transactional and relational (Roehling, 1997; Rousseau, 1989). The transactional dimension was more related to higher pay, pay by performance and short-term opportunities, while the relational dimension was related to long-term opportunities, job security, career advancement, support for personal issues such as flexible hours and accommodation of school schedule. In summary, according to the psychological contract, the organization is expected to provide financial and social benefits to its employees, and in exchange, hard work and loyalty is expected from the employees. The organization-employee relationships are mutual obligations and depend on the actions of the parties

involved. It is contingent on the rewarding reactions of others, which, over time, provide for mutual and rewarding transactions and relationships (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Measurement of the internal marketing construct

Based on the literature reviewed, the IM concept may be viewed as a combination of two critical elements: organization and employees. According to Foreman and Money (1995), the organization may either be the entire organization or a specific department within the organization and the employees are the target of IM actions – either all employees or specific group of employees within a department. To this end, the IM concept integrates two critical elements that have mutual interests with a common purpose.

Accordingly, researchers have focused on proposing various instruments to measure the IM construct. Among these scales, a notable one was offered by Foreman and Money (1995). This scale conceptualized IM consisting of three dimensions – vision, rewards and development. The *vision* dimension was related to sharing organization's preferred future image with the employees; the *rewards* dimension was related to rewards provided to employees based on performance evaluation; and the *development* dimension was related to educational and training opportunities offered to employees to meet their needs of adaptation and betterment. These dimensions are argued to have an important role in motivating employees to be more customer-focused. Therefore, managers need to understand how to motivate employees through IM activities to improve and maintain organizational performance.

In addition to the vision, rewards and development dimensions of IM offered by Foreman and Money (1995), the literature provides support for the existence of other aspects of IM such as physical conditions (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), fundamental needs (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1974), open and transparent communication (Gounaris, 2006) that would contribute to motivating employees to be more customer-centric. One could argue that the concepts captured by the Foreman and Money (1995) instrument may not fully reflect the IM construct. Hence, in this study, we attempt to offer a scale that incorporates additional items that are crucial to fully reflect the IM measurement.

Development of IM-11 scale

Individuals have needs to satisfy, expectations and future goals to accomplish. To satisfy their needs, individuals participate in the workforce and perform tasks to meet these needs and achieve their goals. To this end, the tools and strategies developed for the external marketing activities should be also directed to the internal customers to improve their motivation and satisfaction (Boshoff and Tait, 1996; Gounaris, 2008; Lings, 2004). Table I shows the factors that motivate employees when their specific needs and expectations are met.

Tangibles are known to influence service quality perceptions of external customers (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), and hence, they are applicable to the internal customers (Galpin, 1997; Lings, 2004). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, pay satisfies employees' physiological needs, while insurance may satisfy safety needs. These basic needs are known to contribute to employee job dissatisfaction according to Herzberg. As the management provides more support and empowerment (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014), employees would assume higher levels of responsibility and authority leading to high levels of motivation and satisfaction; thus, they would be more likely to serve the external customers better (Galpin, 1997; Spreitzer, 1995; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997). Furthermore, the motivations of employees will be positively influenced when they are assigned appropriate levels of work load (Karasek, 1979); and provided social support (Van Der Doef and Maes, 1999); education and training regarding how to serve the customers better; meet their career

Scale items	Relationship between scale items and the other existing scales	Relationship between scale items and existing theories and approaches
1. This organization provides attractive physical conditions (office, tools and equipment) to its employees	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> (1988)	Galpin (1997)
2. This organization fulfills the fundamental needs (pay, insurance, job security) of its employees	Gounaris (2006)	Maslow (1943), Herzberg (1974)
3. This organization strengthens its employees through appropriate direction, empowerment and participation	Ferdous and Polonsky (2014)	Spreitzer (1995), Galpin (1997)
4. This organization provides appropriate workload and support to its employees		Karasek (1979), Van der Doef and Maes (1999)
5. This organization provides an achievable vision to its employees	Foreman and Money (1995)	
6. This organization provides training/development programs to improve knowledge and skills of its employees	Foreman and Money (1995), Gounaris (2006)	Maslow (1943), Herzberg (1974), Galpin (1997)
7. This organization provides career advancement opportunities to its employees		Maslow (1943), Herzberg (1974)
8. This organization treats its employees equally and fairly		Adams (1963)
9. This organization provides open and transparent communication channels to its employees	Ferdous and Polonsky (2014), Gounaris (2006)	Galpin (1997)
10. This organization involves their employees in the decision-making process	Ferdous and Polonsky (2014)	Likert (1961)
11. This organization provides rewards to high-performing employees	Foreman and Money (1995)	Galpin (1997)

Table I.
Scale items used to measure internal marketing

advancement needs (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1974); and shared personal and organizational visions (Foreman and Money, 1995; Gounaris, 2006). In addition, employee motivations are known to increase when organizational communication is open and transparent (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Gounaris, 2006); participation in the organizational decision-making is encouraged (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Likert, 1961); fair and equal treatment procedures are adopted (Adams, 1963); and reward for high achievement is offered (Foreman and Money, 1995; Galpin, 1997). Accordingly, employees whose critical expectations and needs are met would be more motivated and satisfied and, therefore, achieve higher levels of job commitment and loyalty to the organization. When employees are motivated and satisfied, they are more likely to provide higher service quality to satisfy customers' needs.

The literature provided strong arguments for developing different scales or modifying existing scales for various contexts, especially in the services sector that covers a wide array of organizations. Lings and Brooks (1998) modified the popular SERVQUAL scale by adding an IM dimension to measure service quality. Moreover, Lee (2006) reported employee dissatisfaction when their expectations with regard to workplace environment were not met. Therefore, the IM scale proposed in this study conceptualizes that IM concept should include aspects other than the vision, rewards and development dimensions included in the Foreman and Money (1995) scale. Inclusion of aspects related to the employee needs and expectations that would contribute to their motivation and performance were supported by the various researchers in the literature. For instance, some factors that were suggest to improve employee motivation were expectations related to physical conditions (Galpin, 1997; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988); fundamental needs (Gounaris, 2006; Herzberg, 1974; Maslow, 1943); appropriate workload and support (Karasek, 1979; Van der Doef and Maes, 1999); career advancement opportunities (Herzberg, 1974; Maslow, 1943); equal and fair (Adams, 1963); open and transparent communication (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Galpin, 1997; Gounaris, 2006); and participation in the decision-making process (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Likert, 1961).

According to these discussions, we argue that employees in different sectors will have different expectations and are motivated by different factors. Hence, developing specific scales to measure the same construct in different sectors are warranted. All items used in the proposed IM-11 scale to measure the IM construct in the higher educational sector have been extracted from different IM scales available in the literature. Table I shows the scale items and their relationships with existing IM scales and theories.

For instance, Foreman and Money (1995) have used vision, rewards and development dimensions, and Ferdous and Polonsky (2014) used empowerment, participative decision-making and communication formalization dimensions. Employees of the higher educational institutions are expected to have different expectations and motivations because of the nature of these institutions and the different market environments faced by them. Therefore, to measure the IM construct in the higher educational sector, our study used different scale items that have been included among the dimensions of existing IM scales used in other sectors.

Methodology

Research design

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to conduct the study. In the first stage of the study, we developed scale items to measure IM, and then, in the second stage, we empirically tested the developed scale using data collected from the full-time employees of a higher educational institution in Turkey.

Generation of scale items

As suggested by Carson *et al.* (2001), we have used a convergent interviewing technique to elicit the information needed. Carson *et al.* (2001) argued that such a method is useful in the early stages of a research where the objective was to learn and identify the issues that have high importance for the targeted sample. They describe this process as a “cyclic series of in-depth interviews”, where the researchers use an unstructured approach and begin the interview by asking broad and open questions. After several iterations, the interviewers refine their questions to reach the specific questions needed to investigate the research phenomenon. This process, used in this study, may be illustrated using the flow chart in Figure 1.

More specifically, to develop the IM-11 scale, we first conducted a comprehensive literature review on existing scales of IM and selected scale items that were consistently used in various scales. Next, we conducted in-depth interviews with the critical organizational experts [four academicians (two males and two females) from each of the following colleges: Liberal Arts, Social Sciences, Science and Health Policy] in the higher educational institutions to discuss the relevance of the existing IM scale items and used brain storming about the necessity to include other scale items that needed to be included in IM measurement instrument for the higher education sector. More specifically, during these in-depth interviews, participants were mainly directed to share their thoughts about various components of IM. Two broad questions were asked of the participants:

- Q1. What do you need and expect from your organization to be more customer-focused and to improve service quality?
- Q2. What are the important elements for improving your motivation levels?

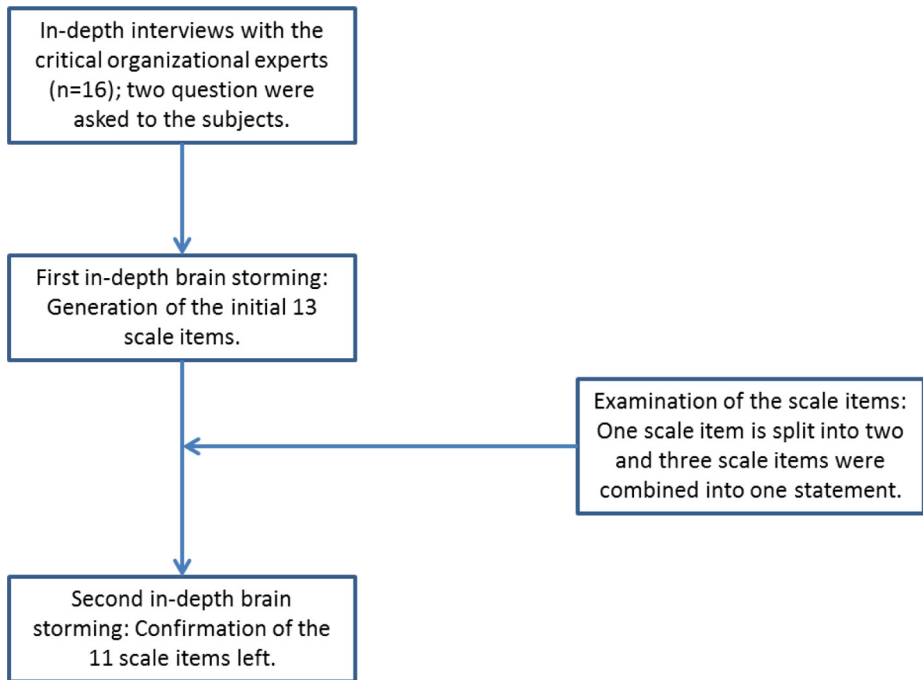


Figure 1.
Convergent interview
flow chart

The answers to these questions were recorded and later incorporated in the development and refinement of the final scale items. As a result, 13 items were generated that received the strongest support from all participants, as well as having the support from the literature. During these in-depth interviews, for instance, lower level college administrators indicated that if some authority and responsibility were to be delegated to them, then it would strengthen their hands in offering faster solutions and would make them more responsive to customer needs. They further indicated that such an ability would lead to higher levels of motivation and engagement. Using a similar brain storming process, other items used in the IM scale were reviewed and further additions made. These discussions and brain storming converged and stabilized and, after a while, resulted in the final items to measure IM. During this process, one of scale items that represented both “physical conditions” and “fundamental needs” was split into two items because they were considered to represent two different concepts. On the other hand, some items were merged (“work load” and “support”, “training” and “development”, “equal” and “fair”) into single statements because they were considered to measure the concept. Accordingly, from the original 13 items, one item was split into two, while three items were merged into one item, resulting in a total of 11 scale items that were considered to represent the fundamental concepts in the IM construct in the higher education sector. Finally, using a small pilot sample, the scale items were pre-tested to assure their validity.

Sample

We selected the academic personnel of a large university in the Western part of Turkey as the sampling frame. Established relationships and personal connections with key opinion leaders at the university contributed significantly to the subjects’ willingness to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary and the subjects were assured about the confidentiality of the information provided. In all, 249 subjects agreed to participate in the study and completed the survey instrument. Questionnaires were then personally distributed to the subjects, and they were instructed to return the completed questionnaire within a week. In total, 243 completed questionnaires were returned, but three of them were discarded because of significant missing data. Therefore, 240 questionnaires were used in the final analysis of the data.

Analysis and results

Sample characteristics

Descriptive analysis showed that majority of the study participants were male (69.2 per cent), married (65.8 per cent), between the ages of 26-45 (76.3 per cent) and held a doctorate degree (63.8 per cent). With respect to the academic rank, the majority of the subjects were assistant professors (25.4 per cent), followed by associate professors (23.8 per cent). In all, 29 per cent indicated that they had various administrative duties. Most of the subjects were in the college of social sciences followed by science (38.8 per cent) and liberal arts (23.3 per cent) (Table II).

Test for validity and reliability

Both EFA and CFA were used to assess the construct reliability of the developed scale. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used in the factor analysis of the data. Extraction was initially set to define factors with eigenvalues above 1.0. Absolute values were suppressed to 0.40. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO-MSA) (Kaiser, 1970) and Bartlett’s test for sphericity for the data were used to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO measure was 0.964 which was considered “excellent”. Bartlett’s Sphericity test resulted in ($\chi^2 = 1932.846$; $p < 0.001$) significant results indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 1995;

QAE 25,3	Characteristics	Frequency	(%)
352	<i>Gender</i>		
	Male	166	69.2
	Female	74	30.8
	<i>Marital status</i>		
	Married	158	65.8
	Single	82	34.2
	<i>Age</i>		
	Less than 25	7	2.9
	26-35	90	37.5
	36-45	93	38.8
	46-55	34	14.2
	More than 56	16	6.7
	<i>Education</i>		
	Bachelor's degree	17	7.1
	Master's degree	70	29.2
	Doctorate	153	63.8
	<i>Academic rank</i>		
	Professor	21	8.8
	Associate professor	57	23.8
	Assistant professor	61	25.4
Research Assistant	49	20.4	
Instructor	36	15.0	
Lecturer	16	6.7	
<i>Administrative responsibilities</i>			
No	170	70.8	
Yes	70	29.2	
<i>College</i>			
Liberal Arts	56	23.3	
Social Sciences	93	38.8	
Science	46	19.2	
Health Policy	45	18.8	
<i>Number of years employed in the current university</i>			
Less than 5	112	46.7	
6-10	38	15.8	
11-15	40	16.7	
16-20	30	12.5	
21-25	9	3.8	
More than 26	11	4.6	
<i>Total number of years employed</i>			
Less than 5	55	22.9	
6-10	32	13.3	
11-15	51	21.3	
16-20	34	14.2	
21-25	40	16.7	
More than 26	28	11.7	

Table II.
Sample demographic
characteristics

Grandzol and Gershon, 1998). Reliability analysis results yielded an excellent coefficient alpha score $\alpha = 0.943$. IM-11 represented as a latent construct had an AVE value of 0.644, which is higher than the minimum cut off point of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Results showed that all 11 items were loaded to a single dimension, and the factor loadings ranged between 0.613 and 0.881 with a cumulative explained variance of 64 per cent (Table III). The results are illustrated in Table III and provide strong evidence for adequate levels of construct validity (0.30).

We then used confirmatory factor analysis to further assess scale validity. CFA results yielded excellent model fit indices ($\chi^2 = 52.7$, $df = 44$, $p > 0.10$; RMSEA = 0.029; NFI = 0.973; TLI = 0.994; AGFI = 0.942; GFI = 0.961; CFI = 0.995). Results of CFA are illustrated in Figure 2.

The unidimensional nature of IM-11 scale should not be evaluated as a weakness. Our review shows that a number of multi-dimensional scales available in the literature suffer test-retest reliabilities. The literature provides a number of examples where the various researchers could not confirm the original dimensions of popular instruments and reported results that were different from the original scales in terms of number of dimensions and meaning. When explaining the discrepancies they reported, most researchers argued that there was a significant need and justification to alter the dimensionality of popular scales in the different environments they have studied. Although the IM-11 scale is unidimensional, it contains 11 scale items that are more inclusive and comprehensive from the Foreman and Money (1995) measurement scale. Moreover, shorter and simple scales present significant advantages in terms of administration and respondent fatigue during the data collection process and improve data quality. Finally, the literature presented various unidimensional scales with strong psychometric properties (i.e. the LMX-7 scale developed by Scandura and Graen, 1984 and the stress and burnout scale developed by Malach-Pines, 2005). These unidimensional scales have been used and praised frequently by other researchers in the literature. Our results indicated the existence of a single dimensional construct (Hattie, 1985) to measure IM in the higher educational environment. CFA results presented provide strong data support for the unidimensional nature of the IM-11 scale.

Scale items	M	SD	IM
1. Physical conditions	3.66	1.19	0.696
2. Fundamental needs	3.86	0.98	0.613
3. Strengthens employees	3.21	1.09	0.877
4. Appropriate workload and support	3.33	1.06	0.675
5. Vision	3.23	1.07	0.849
6. Training/development	3.07	1.16	0.859
7. Career advancement opportunities	3.50	1.12	0.831
8. Equal and fair	3.05	1.14	0.881
9. Open and transparent communication	2.97	1.12	0.829
10. Decision-making process	2.95	1.17	0.858
11. Rewards	3.05	1.17	0.807
Mean	3.26		
SD		0.89	
% of variance explained			64.412
AVE			0.644
Cronbach's alpha			0.943

Table III.
Results of factor
analysis and reliability
coefficients of the
IM-11 scale

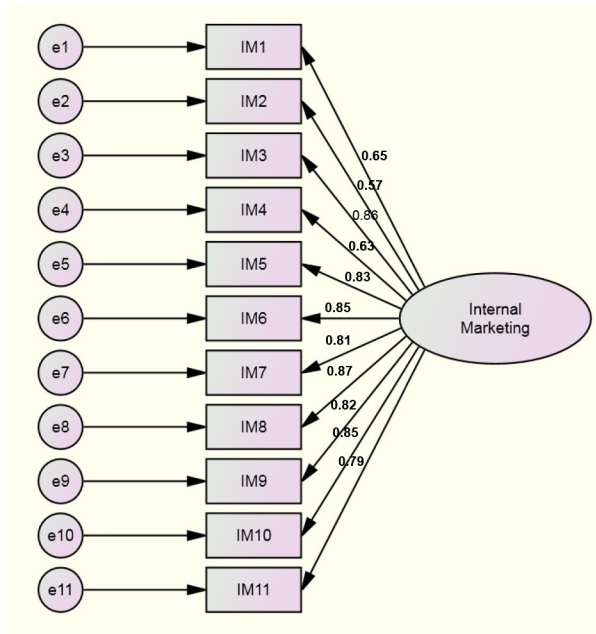


Figure 2.
Confirmatory factor
analysis of the IM-11
scale

	Chi Square	df	Chi Square/df	RMSEA	NFI	TLI	AGFI	GFI	CFI
Model	52.7	44	1.19	0.029	0.973	0.994	0.942	0.961	0.995

Correlation analysis

The next set of analyses involved further assessment of dimensionality of the scale proposed. The sample correlation matrix of IM-11 items was first examined using *Bagozzi's (1981)* rules for “convergence” in measurement. The rules indicated that items representing a distinct dimension should correlate highly with each other. Sample correlations are presented in *Table IV*.

Table IV shows that the correlations among all scale items are meaningful and positive ($r > 0$), indicating that they all have converged into a single dimension. The strongest correlation was found between “decision making process” and “strengthens its employees”, indicating that when employees are included in the decision-making process that contributes to the perceived strengthening in psychological conditions.

Background variation check

To validate the applicability of the IM-11 scale to groups with different background characteristics and see if there were any between group variations, we used various statistical tests to examine the IM-11 scale values. Therefore, using either *t*-tests or *F*-tests, we performed a series of between groups analyses based on various demographic variables that were collected in the study. Analysis results show that none of the demographic characteristics showed any meaningful statistical significance with an exception of gender ($p < 0.05$). Results showed that females had different mean scores for the “physical conditions”, “fundamental needs”,

Scale items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Physical conditions	1									
2. Fundamental needs	0.425**	1								
3. Strengthens employees	0.580**	0.549**	1							
4. Appropriate workload and support	0.478**	0.377**	0.568**	1						
5. Vision	0.552**	0.446**	0.717**	0.562**	1					
6. Training/development	0.553**	0.484**	0.723**	0.502**	0.718**	1				
7. Career advancement opportunities	0.515**	0.468**	0.707**	0.509**	0.681**	0.707**	1			
8. Equal and fair	0.570**	0.510**	0.728**	0.551**	0.730**	0.723**	0.727**	1		
9. Open and transparent communication	0.463**	0.417**	0.694**	0.509**	0.682**	0.690**	0.647**	0.739**	1	
10. Decision-making process	0.568**	0.448**	0.744**	0.510**	0.687**	0.700**	0.664**	0.737**	0.737**	1
11. Rewards	0.494**	0.416**	0.668**	0.450**	0.649**	0.701**	0.639**	0.681**	0.649**	0.694**

Note: **Correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$

Table IV.
Inter-item correlations
of the IM-11 scale

“appropriate workload and support”, “vision”, “training/development”, “career advancement opportunities”, “equal/fair” and “open and transparent communication” scale items (Table V). We could potentially explain such variation in mean scale values by mainly focusing on the potential preferences between males and females with respect to work environment values (Yildiz, 2013). These differences may even be more emphasized in the Turkish cultural environment where the study was conducted. In other words, we argue that females would have stronger preferences in the issues described by those scale items than the males. However, we do not see these differences reducing the validity of the scale in different demographic populations.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to present an alternative scale to measure the IM construct more comprehensively and effectively in the higher education environment. Accordingly, this study developed and tested a unidimensional scale, named IM-11 to measure the IM construct and tested scale validity using an empirical study. With strong literature support, IM-11 scale measures the IM construct by incorporating more comprehensive aspects of the construct using 11 scale items.

With literature support, we argued in this study that the any measurement scale of the IM construct should incorporate a more comprehensive framework than the ones incorporated in existing measurement scales. More specifically, in addition to the vision, rewards and development dimensions included in the Foreman and Money (1995) scale, IM should also include needs- and expectation-related aspects that contribute to their motivations and performance such as physical conditions (Galpin, 1997; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), fundamental needs (Gounaris, 2006; Herzberg, 1974; Maslow, 1943), appropriate workload and support (Karasek, 1979; Van der Doef and Maes, 1999), career advancement opportunities (Herzberg, 1974; Maslow, 1943), equal and fair (Adams, 1963), open and transparent communication (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Galpin, 1997; Gounaris, 2006) and decision-making process (Ferdous and Polonsky, 2014; Likert, 1961).

According to the above discussions, we argued that employees in different sectors will have different expectations and are motivated by different factors. All items used in the IM-11 scale were extracted from different IM scales available in the literature. For instance, Foreman and Money (1995) have used vision, rewards and development dimensions, and Ferdous and Polonsky (2014) used empowerment, participative decision-making and communication formalization dimensions. Employees of the higher educational institutions were expected to have different expectations and motivations because of the nature of these

Scale items	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. Physical conditions	2.784	0.006*
2. Fundamental needs	2.289	0.023**
3. Strengthens employees	1.471	0.144
4. Appropriate workload and support	3.241	0.002*
5. Vision	2.097	0.038**
6. Training/development	2.241	0.027**
7. Career advancement opportunities	3.041	0.003*
8. Equal and fair	3.499	0.001*
9. Open and transparent communication	2.340	0.021**
10. Decision-making process	1.661	0.099
11. Rewards	1.271	0.205

Table V.
Mean scale items by
gender

Notes: * $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$

institutions and the different market environments faced by them. Therefore, to measure the IM construct in the higher educational sector, our study used several items that are presented as part of the dimensions of existing IM scales used in other sectors. The literature provides strong arguments for developing different scales or modifying existing scales for various contexts, especially in the services sector, as that covers a wide array of organizations. [Lings and Brooks \(1998\)](#) modified the popular SERVQUAL scale by adding IM dimension to measure service quality. Moreover, [Lee \(2006\)](#) reported employee dissatisfaction when their expectations with regard to workplace environment were not met.

The IM-11 scale presented in this study incorporates many of the crucial aspects mentioned in the literature, and it is single dimensional structure and that makes it easier to understand and more meaningful to the practitioners in their pursuit of uncovering employee needs and expectations. Moreover, improvements achieved in the motivations would lay the foundation for better job satisfaction, performance and role behavior. Additionally, it would be expected to reduce employee absenteeism, intentions to leave or dismissal ([Madanta and Ndubisi, 2013](#)). This would lead to a more conducive environment for employees to focus on meeting and/or exceeding the needs and expectations of the external customers in a highly competitive environment. Furthermore, the organization will be able to attract better qualified employees and improve their loyalty/commitment to the organization through IM ([Narteh, 2012](#)). Service quality and competitiveness would be improved because qualified and motivated employees would be serving the customers ([Berry, 2002](#)). In contrast, employees working for companies that do not have an effective IM philosophy would provide the minimum effort expected from them and will continuously look for opportunities to leave the organization, leading to unfavorable outcomes for external customers.

Limitations and future research

A few limitations of this study are noted, but we argue that these should be seen as opportunities to design and develop future studies. First, the sample size used in this study was relatively small and limited our ability to generalize these results to broader populations. Second, the sample was collected from the academic staff of a single university based on a convenience sampling. Future studies should use sampling to limit the sampling errors. Third, our sample did not include non-academic personnel working for the university. Future studies should include both academic and non-academic staff for a better representation of the employees in academic institutions. Perhaps another important limitation of the study was the fact that the scale was tested in a state university where marketing orientation and the marketing concept may not be emphasized or considered important because of the nature of the business. Accordingly, one could argue that higher educational institutions do not operate in competitive market conditions similar to commercial businesses; however, the changing trends and competition faced from both traditional and non-traditional (online) and domestic and international institutions forces them to be more customer-centric. Being in a service industry, higher educational institutions need to adopt or develop means to measure their effectiveness in serving target market needs and satisfy their customers in a similar way to commercial firms ([Sahney et al., 2003](#)). Therefore, we do not think that the organizational environment where IM-11 was tested and validated was a concern, but the validity of IM-11 scale needs to be tested in different services organizations including profit and non-profit organizations. Finally, to assess the influence of cultural factors in internal market orientation, similar studies need to be conducted in culturally different environments.

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Further reading

Ferdous, A.S., Herington, C. and Merrilees, B. (2013), "Developing an integrative model of internal and external marketing", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 21 No. 7, pp. 637-649.

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