



Internal Marketing and its Impact on the Organizational Commitment of Employees in Airlines

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Internal Marketing,
Organizational
Commitment,
Employee Retention,
Human Resources
Marketing.

(JAAUTH)
Vol. 21, No. 3,
(December 2021),
PP.50-79.

Internal Marketing (IM) is considered a sustainable management philosophy using a marketing-like approach to motivate employees and achieve long-term objectives such as increasing employee retention. This paper aims to investigate the effect of internal marketing mix elements (internal product, internal price, internal promotion, internal distribution, internal people, internal processes and internal physical evidence) on employee organizational commitment of the airlines in Egypt. Using a sample of 405 employees at different administrative levels in airlines. The questionnaire forms were used and distributed on paper and electronically in 18 airlines in Egypt. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used to find the results. The paper found that the internal marketing elements (internal product, internal price, internal promotion, internal people, internal processes) have a statistically significant effect on the employee organizational commitment in airlines. Based on the study results, the researchers recommend the managers and decision makers of the airlines in Egypt to enhance the internal market research and segmentation, training programs, role fit and clarity, career advancement for all employees, financial rewards, internal communication, automating tasks, applying the delegating and supporting style of management, and improving their work environment. HR and Marketing should work together in the airlines to help the employees enjoying their job experiences, improving their quality of life and then increasing their organizational commitment.

1. INTRODUCTION

The complexities of today's world are the source of different problems and challenges that affect the growth of airlines. One of the most important challenges facing airlines is retaining qualified and talented employees and increasing their organizational commitment (Akbari et al., 2017; Ministry of Civil Aviation, 2018). Given the fact that employees become an essential part in the value chain and service delivery

process (Bruin, 2013; Bairstow and Skinner, 2006), no airline can have superior performance unless every employee is committed to the goals of the airline (Radosavljevic, Cilerdzic and Dragic, 2017). So that, service marketing must start with motivating its internal customers through various strategies such as "Internal Marketing" strategy which enhance employee retention and production (Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi, 2019).

1.1.PROBLEM STATEMENT

Airline performance and profitability depend on employees (Popp, 2016). So, by developing an effective internal marketing strategy, airlines could better treat and satisfy their competent employees benefiting from their creativity as well as their contribution to increase profitability. (Bruin, 2013). Taking the pilot study and the previous studies into consideration, the problem statement can be represented in:

'The low level of organizational commitment of airlines' employees in Egypt, as well as the absence of a specific strategy of internal marketing to retain the competent individuals and increase their level of commitment. This leads to the question as: Whether internal marketing mix elements have a positive impact on the organizational commitment level of airlines' employees in Egypt?'

1.2.RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aims to:

- Evaluate the current statue of internal marketing and organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Evaluate the relationship between internal product and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Evaluate the relationship between internal price and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Explore the relationship between internal promotion and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Explore the relationship between internal distribution and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Explore the relationship between internal people and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Evaluate the relationship between internal process and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Evaluate the relationship between internal physical evidence and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.
- Evaluate the relationship between internal marketing and employee organizational commitment in the airlines.

1.3.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research gains its importance from the importance of the topic, which is related to the impact of internal marketing practices on retaining the competent employees and raising their level of organizational commitment which is reflected on the performance of the airline as a whole.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTERNAL MARKETING

2.1.1. Internal Marketing Definition

In the mid-seventies, the concept of IM was first introduced as a solution for service companies facing the challenge of continuously delivering high quality of service (Lubbe, 2013). IM is not a new concept, but it has not always received the attention that it deserves, especially within airlines where happy employees are the key to happy customers (Vu, 2020). Table (1) illustrates the chronological definitions of internal marketing.

Table 1

Chronological Definitions of Internal Marketing.

Author/s	Internal Marketing Definition
Brown (2020)	The term "IM" considers as the act of a company marketing itself to its staff.
Bohnenberger and et al. (2019)	IM can be defined as an implementing strategy, diffusing innovations, recruiting and retaining service-minded staff.
Al-Hawary et al. (2013)	IM can be defined as a marketing-like approach to overcome organizational resistance, and to integrate employees towards the effective implementation of organizational goals.
Gounaris (2010)	IM is the integration between marketing and human resources to deliver external customer value and to protect employees in long term.
Bennett and Barkensjo (2005)	The concept of internal marketing emerged from the total quality management literatures to treat employees as "internal market" that needs to be informed, educated, developed, and motivated.
Rafiq and Ahmed (2000)	IM is a tool for achieving employee motivation, satisfaction, customer orientation, and a strategy change management.

Source: Authors.

Internal Marketing definition can be summarized as a philosophy of sustainable management to sell and promote company's values, visions, mission and goals to its internal customers through using the application of marketing techniques and human resource management (HRM) principles in order to improve the internal marketplace in which employees enjoy their job experiences (Vu, 2020; Omogbehin, 2014; Bohnenberger et al., 2019; Abd Munir et al., 2015; Akbari et al., 2017; Yuem and Wee, 2020). Internal marketing should start at the top of a company and be communicated downwards into the entire company (Yuem and wee, 2020).

IM could have a major impact on achieving the airline's holistic marketing strategy (Chang and Chang, 2007). Figure (1) illustrates IM as a tool of the holistic marketing.

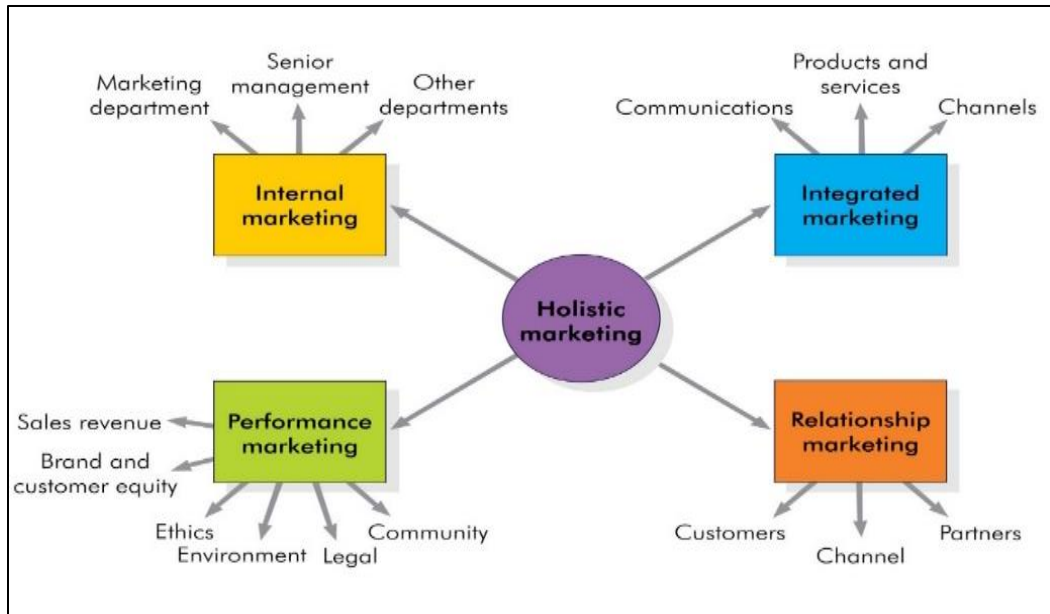


Fig. 1: Holistic Marketing Tools.
Source: Miletic and Stojiljkovic, 2018.

IM includes all internal practices required to motivate employees "internal market" to adapt to the external customers (Bruin, 2013; Parry, 2012; Saad et al., 2015). Figure (2) illustrates the relationship between internal, external and interactive of service marketing.

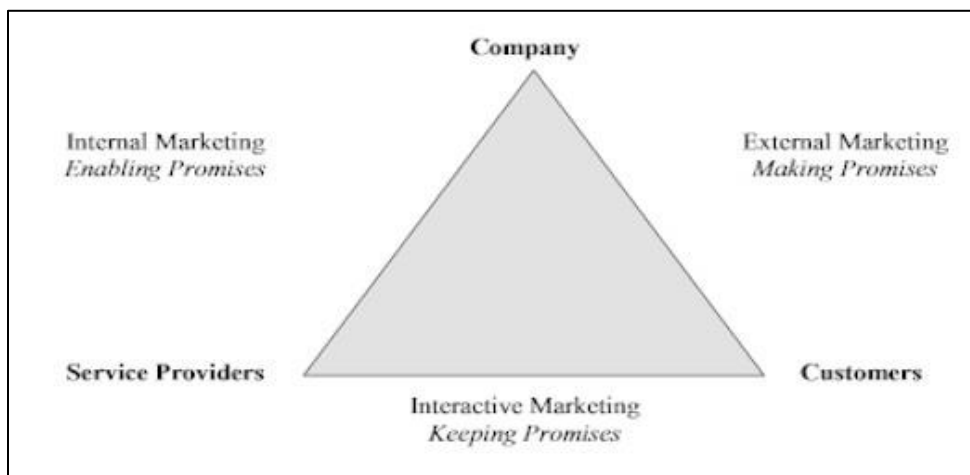
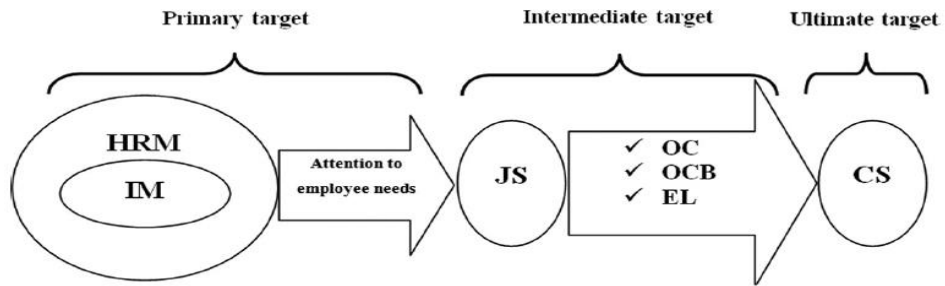


Fig. 2: Service Marketing Triangle.
Source: Flannagan, 2010.

2.1.2. Internal Marketing and Human Resource Management (HRM)

IM and its elements is the core of HRM and its practices. Figure (3) represents the relationship between HRM and IM.



Notes: HRM = Human resource management; IM = Internal marketing; JS = Job satisfaction; OC = Organizational commitment; OCB = Organizational citizenship behavior; EL = Employee loyalty; CS = Customer satisfaction

Fig. 3: The relationship between HRM and IM.

Source: Akbari et al., 2017.

IM and HRM has a common part, which is termed as human resources marketing (Queiroz and Matos, 2009 ; Zeuch, 2016). Its importance can be seen in the ‘hire to retire’ process (Doxey, 2019). Marketing department can learn business behavior, clarifying roles and responsibilities from HR department (Devi and Srinivasan, 2017). The marketing departments can play a central role in strengthen employees' personal brand (Devi and Srinivasan, 2017; Zeuch, 2016). So that, Bohnenberger et al. (2019) proposed the following IM model as shown in figure (4).

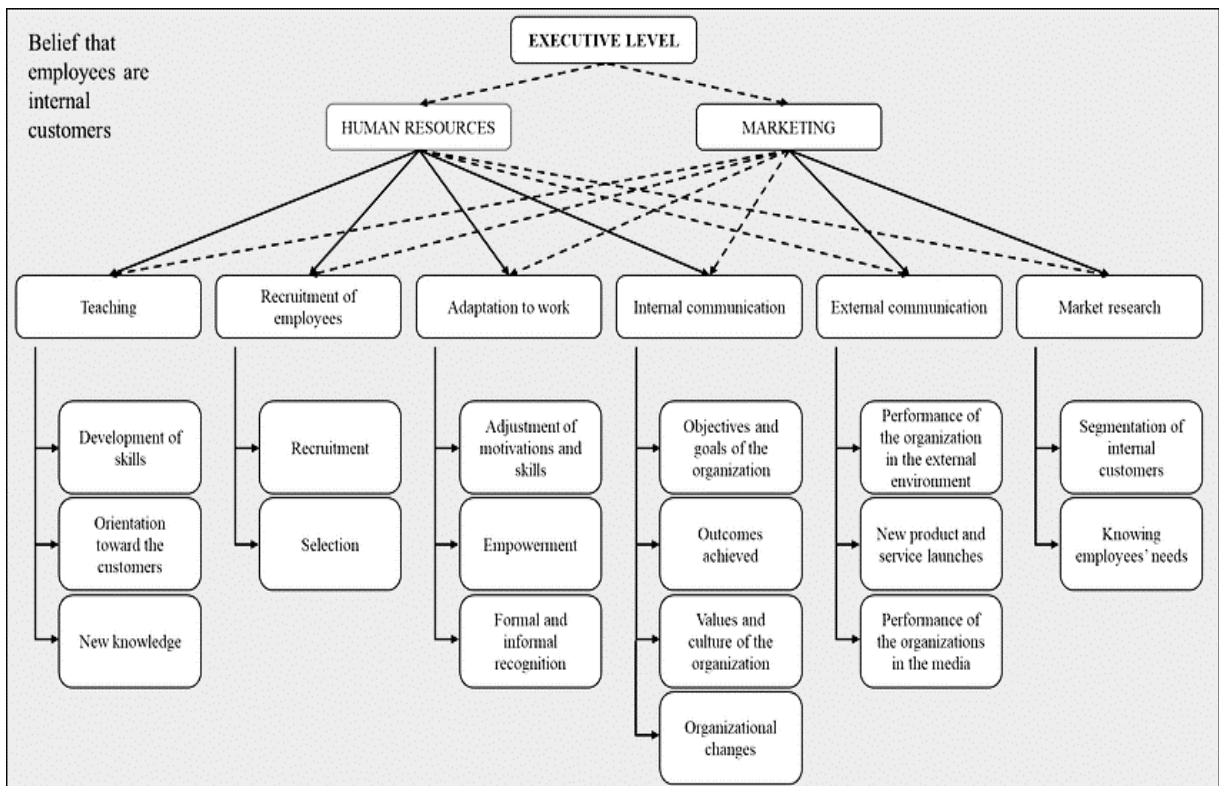


Fig. 4: Model of IM management.

Source: Bohnenberger et al., 2019.

2.1.3. Internal Marketing Mix in Airlines

Internal marketing mix helps employees enjoy their job experiences (Akbari, 2017; Vu, 2020; Omogbehin, 2014; Bohnenberger *et al.*, 2019). Internal marketing mix strategy depended on internal market segmentation and internal market research (González *et al.*, 2020). IM mix is involved internal (product, price, promotion, distribution, people, processes and physical evidence) (Shahzad *et al.*, 2018). Figure (5) represented IM mix elements.

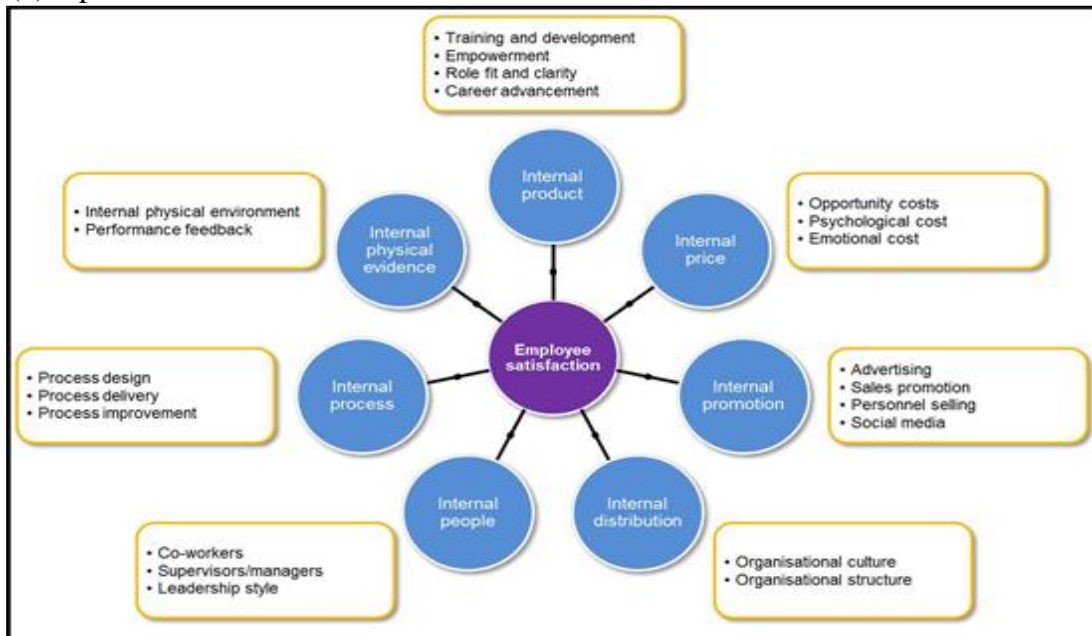


Fig. 5: IM mix elements.

Source: Bruin, 2013.

- Internal Product

Product policies include programs and services through which management can work on employees to satisfy their needs or wants such as training, empowerment, role fit and clarity as well as career advancement (Halepota and Shah, 2011; Mishra, 2018).

- Internal Price

Internal price is the cost to employees for gaining new knowledge and adopting new attitude. It is important to decrease the fears of employees of such new behaviors by offsetting them against short-term and long-term benefits for the employees and their company (Iubbe, 2013). Internal price includes opportunity costs, psychological and emotional costs (Bruin, 2013).

- Internal Promotion/Communication

Internal promotion /communication (IC) is very essential in the airlines to ensure that all employees are known the company's goals and the role they play in achieving them (Bruin, 2013). Internal communication tools includes: In-person communication, printed communication, and electronic internal communication, such as: Surveys, mobile apps, digital signage, recognition and reward platforms, and graphics creation software (Tiwari *et al.*, 2018; Toteva and Gourova, 2010; Rop and Bett, 2012; Stieglitz *et al.*, 2015; Chatterjee *et al.*, 2019; Lopes *et al.*, 2015; Want and Schilit, 2012).

- **Internal Distribution**

Internal distribution contains both the physical and non-physical elements of the companies (Bruin, 2013). The non-physical elements relate to the organizational culture and structure (Sanchez-Hernandez and Grayson, 2012), as follows:

- **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture is the effect of the common beliefs, behaviors, values, leadership styles and procedures that give directions to the employees within the airline (Ahmed and Shafiq, 2014). There are four types of culture, namely adhocracy, clan, hierarchy and market culture (Alharbi and Abdelrahim, 2018; Jaradat, 2018).

- **Organizational Structure**

Organizational structure is the hierarchical arrangement of lines of (authority, communications, rights and duties) in companies (Nyathi and bhebhe, 2019).

Successful companies aim to allow their employees to make more of their own decisions. Organizational structure should be based on what people actually do, rather than their outcomes (Cook and Billig, 2017; Machado et al., 2015; Bruin, 2013). Most airlines use a pyramid-shaped, geography or functional organizational structure with a rigid hierarchy (Machado et al., 2015).

- **Internal People**

Interrelationships between managers, supervisors and co-workers influence the employee behaviors (Bruin, 2013), as follows:

- Different situations require different styles of management such as: Directing style, coaching style, participating style and delegating style (Udovita, 2020).
- Supervision is the act of overseeing the responsibilities of employees to meet the organizational and personal objectives such as administrative supervision, educative supervision, and supportive supervision (Bruin, 2013).
- Co-worker support refers to individuals supporting one another by sharing information and expertise as well as providing help to solve problems (Bateman, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2013). Matching co-workers into groups based on the personality traits leads to establish strong and supportive environment (Saidi, et al. 2019).

- **Internal Process**

Internal process involves the methods of how employees receive the internal product (Bruin, 2013). Internal processes relate to many tasks in the company such as automate tasks, re-sequence task, and decrease customer contact (Ponsignon et al., 2012). Internal business process measures productivity, accuracy, cycle time, core competencies and effective use of people and information (Isaac, 2020).

- **Internal Physical Evidence (Essential and Peripheral)**

Essential evidence includes exterior design (e.g. parking area and surroundings), interior design (e.g. equipment, signage, layout, air quality and room temperature, sound, lighting), product brochures and the organization's website (Dharmaputra and Aruan, 2017; Bruin, 2013). Peripheral Evidence includes the things which individuals

can keep (e.g. training manuals, feedback reports, and documentation of policies) (Dharmaputra and Aruan, 2017; Lubbe, 2013; Bruin, 2013).

2.1.4. Internal marketing Implementation Model

The following model (Figure 6) illustrates the seven stages of internal marketing implementation (Cătălin *et al.*, 2014; Paliaga & Strunje, 2011).



Fig. 6: Internal marketing implementation model.

Source: (Cătălin *et al.*, 2014).

Internal marketing includes a lot of measures and target audience, so it is necessary to establish a special department for IM (Paliaga & Strunje, 2011). Strategic IM outcomes should be evaluated quarterly or even monthly by these measures of control: Accounting measures (e.g. profitability, and efficiency measures), operational measures (e.g. “balanced scorecard”), market-based measures (e.g. market value added, holding period returns), and survival measures (measure of long-term performance) (Carton, 2004; Cătălin *et al.*, 2014; Chang and Chang, 2008).

2.1.5. Internal Marketing Strategies

There are four strategies for applying the internal marketing, as follows:

IM as an internal branding strategy, IM as a company branding strategy, IM as a change management strategy, and the extended marketing mix strategy (Bruin, 2013; Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Axelsson and Åkesson, 2014; Finney, 2010).

2.1.6. Internal Marketing Criticism and Disadvantages

Kozaric (2015) believed that IM is obsolete in organizations that have a good HR practices. The major disadvantages of IM include: Shortage of financial measures of IM success, shortage of senior management support, high initial implementation costs, IM could result in interdepartmental conflict between marketing and HR department. (Anosike and Ahmed, 2006; Lubbe, 2013; Fuciu and Dumitrescu, 2018).

2.2. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment is a vital element in achieving organizational goals and enhancing stability between the managers and employees. It also contributes to developing the company's capabilities for survival and continuous growth (Abd El-Wahab, Marzouk and Talha, 2019 in Arabic; Radosavljevic, Cilerdzic and Dragic, 2017).

2.2.1. Organizational Commitment Definition

Organizational Commitment (OC) includes the attitudes and behaviors of employees in the company. It can be said that commitment is an intangible behavior resulting from the individual's self, touched in his actions and reflected on his performance

(Asman, 2019 in Arabic; Emam, Fahmy and Gaafer, 2019 in Arabic). Organizational commitment may be affected by demographic variables of employees such as organizational size, employee gender, tenure, experience and age (Ipek, 2016).

2.2.2. Importance of Organizational Commitment

The importance of organizational commitment can be demonstrated for both individuals, companies and society, as follows:

- **The importance of organizational commitment for individuals includes:**
Developing a sense of self-worth, enhancing career advancement, increasing employee motivation, and providing talents and skills (Naif, 2016 in Arabic).
- **The importance of organizational commitment for companies includes:**
Increasing loyalty for the company, adjusting performance in a way that is consistent with the policy of the company and better dealing with situations, reducing problems that occur between employees and management, and thus achieving organizational stability (Naif, 2016 in Arabic).
- **The importance of organizational commitment for the community includes:**
Creating social relations between company's individuals and customers, and enhancing the quality of service, which lead to an increase in the national income (Naif, 2016 in Arabic).

2.2.3. Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Affective, Normative, and Continuance commitment describes the relation between the company and the employee (Vera and Andersen, 2018). Much more attention has been paid to "Affective Commitment" because of its essential role in enhancing beneficial behaviors (Guan and Hsu, 2020).

- Continuous Commitment "desire" is the tendency to carry out activities due to the savings and funds (Ebraze et al., 2019).
- Normative Commitment "need" reflects the employees' sense of moral commitment to stay in the company Employees have a responsibility towards the company.
- Affective Commitment "obligation" includes an emotional attachment to involve in the company within positive work experiences (Kelarijani et al., 2019).

There are another dimensions for organizational commitment, as follows:

- Loyalty, responsibility, willingness to continue in the work and faith toward the organization (Elzohairy, Elsayed and Ibrahim, 2019).
- Values commitment, commitment to stay, moral commitment, calculative commitment and alimentative commitment (Al Saady, Hamady and Mahdy 2009 in Arabic).
- External commitment and internal commitment (Al Saady, Hamady and Mahdy 2009 in Arabic).

2.2.4. Components of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment includes a lot of elements such as: Safety, participation, contact, satisfaction, taking responsibility, appreciation and comparing with others (Boqandra and Ebrean, 2019).

2.2.5. Stages of Organizational Commitment

Feeling of commitment to companies goes through compliance stage, identification stage, and internalization stage, as follows:

- **Compliance Stage:** At this stage, attitudes and behaviors are adopted to gain specific remuneration or promotion. The nature of organizational commitment in the compliance stage is associated with the continuance dimension commitment (Al- Oufi, 2005 in Arabic).
- **Identification Stage:** Organizational commitment at this stage is based on the normative dimension. The individual stays because he or she is guided by a sense of duty towards the company (Al-Serfy, 2005; Al- Oufi, 2005 in Arabic).
- **Internalization Stage:** The employee at this stage develops not only the sense of belonging but passion to belong to the organization (Al-Serfy, 2005).

2.2.6. Levels of Organizational Commitment

There are different levels of organizational commitment, as follows: High level, moderate level and lower level of organizational commitment (Kassahun, 2005).

2.2.7. Characteristics of Organizational Commitment

Characteristics of organizational commitment includes: Stability during a certain period of time, behavior compatibility, strong belief in the company and its goals, willingness to make the best effort, OC takes a long time to achieve, as well as OC is influenced by a set of personal characteristics and organizational factors. (Saeed, 2016; Naif, 2016 in Arabic).

2.2.8. Determinants of Organizational Commitment

There are a lot of factors that affect the employees' organizational commitment such as: Organizational climate, organizational trust, leadership styles, organizational justice, organizational support, motivational factors, human resource management, organizational culture and organizational power (Gulluce, et al 2016; Terzi et al., 2017; Sun, 2019; Torlak, Kuzey and Ragom, 2018; Aranki, Suifan and Sweis, 2019).

2.2.9. Outcomes of Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment in companies has positive effects, the most important of them are: Increasing growth rates and profitability, enhancing functionality, boosting employee participation, achieving quality requirements for human resources, increasing quality of service, enhancing customer satisfaction, and reducing work turnover (Al zyady 2011 In Arabic; Kaooda and Salamy 2020; Naeem 2013; Naeem and Saif 2010).

2.3. INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IM MIX ELEMENTS AND EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

1.3.1 Interrelationship between Internal Product and Employee Commitment

Individuals are loyal and feel higher commitment to the airlines that empower them and allow them to learn new things, grow professionally and reward them for their efforts (Weng et al., 2010). When airline's goals, job expectations, feedback provisions and accuracy of performance rating are clear and fit with employee's self-concept, individuals perform significantly better (Bruin, 2013; Bako, 2014).

1.3.2 Interrelationship between Internal Price and Employee Commitment

Decreasing the costs and fears of employees by providing them with sufficient motivation, salaries and rewards, sharing information of short-term and long-term benefits of changes, and work- family balance are essential contributors to increasing employees' positive inner emotions and commitment to the airline (Aeeni et al., 2013; Bruin, 2013).

1.3.3 Interrelationship between Internal Promotion and Employee Commitment

Messages, quality, climate and system of formal and informal communication promote sense of belonging among employees and reduce employees' work stress (Zainun et al., 2018, Marchalina and Ahmad, 2017).

1.3.4 Interrelationship between Internal Distribution and Employee Commitment

When employees' behaviors at work fit with the airline's culture, they feel more committed and motivated (Mitić et al., 2016). Structural adjustments allow employees to make more of their own decisions and seek to boost employee empowerment, satisfaction and commitment of employees resulting in improvement of service delivery and enhanced the company brand image (Bruin, 2013; Li, 2019).

1.3.5 Interrelationship between Internal People and Employee Commitment

Good relationships with leaders, supervisors and co-workers provide support to employees to do their jobs better and feel more engaged, loyal and committed (Jacobs et al., 2013).

1.3.6 Interrelationship between Internal Process and Employee Commitment

Effective internal processes are the key to long-term performance, increase internal collaboration and commitment (Isaac, 2020).

1.3.7 Interrelationship between Physical Evidence and Employee Commitment

Well-designed physical evidence (external and interior facilities) leads to create a sense of comfort, increase internal customer satisfaction and reduce employee turnover (Lubbe, 2013, Dharmaputra and Aruan, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research was based on the descriptive analytical approach.

3.1.HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been put to test the relationships between the variables of the research:

- There is no significant correlation between the elements of internal marketing mix (internal product- internal price- internal promotion- internal distribution- internal people- internal process- internal physical evidence) and organizational commitment of employees in airlines.
- There is no significant effect of internal marketing mix elements (internal product- internal price- internal promotion- internal distribution- internal people- internal process- internal physical evidence) on organizational commitment of employees in airlines.

According to the previous hypotheses, the model that shows the relationship between the variables of the research can be formulated through figure (7).

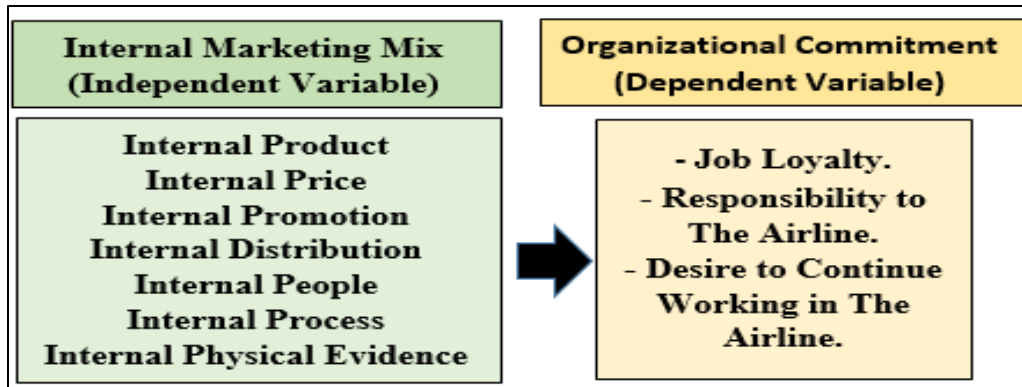


Fig. 7: Variables of the research.

Source: Researchers own construct.

3.2. RESEARCH GAP

- Many previous researchers were not interested in evaluating the current status of internal marketing and organizational commitment according to the opinion of managers and employees in different types of airlines offices (Town offices – Airport offices) in Egypt.
- The previous studies did not study the relationship between the seven elements of internal marketing mix (internal product- internal price- internal promotion- internal distribution- internal people- internal process- internal physical evidence) and organizational commitment of employees in airlines.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.3.1. Qualitative Description Method

The qualitative descriptive method is used in this study to collect secondary data about the study variables through using the available references, studies and scientific researches.

3.3.2. Statistical/Quantitative Methods

The statistical analytical method is used to describe the study variables in a numerical or quantitative manner using the survey form as a tool for collecting primary data from the research sample. The questionnaire was designed and divided into two main sections:

- The first section: "Assessment of internal marketing mix elements in airlines (internal product - internal price - internal promotion - internal distribution - internal people - internal process - internal physical evidence)" This section consists of 39 phrases.
- The second section: "Assessment of the organizational commitment of employees in airlines (Job loyalty- Responsibility to the airline – Desire to continue working in the airline)". This section consists of 21 phrases.

3.4. Study Population and Sample

The research Population consists of all employees of airlines operating in the Arab Republic of Egypt. According to the report of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for the year 2018, the total number of employees working in airlines, airports, aircraft maintenance and air navigation, is 79 thousand workers

(IATA, 2018). Because of the absence of a specific statistic to determine the number of employees in airlines in Egypt, researchers depended on the previous studies in this field to determine the sample size. So that, 500 forms of questionnaire have been distributed and only 405 forms have been retrieved from employees of different airlines operating in Egypt. This field study depends on a random sample from the study population.

3.5.LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

3.5.1. Place Limitations

This research is applied by distributing survey forms to all employees of the different departments of airlines operating in Egypt. It also includes town offices and airport offices of the airlines. This is done by distributing these forms either on paper or electronically via e-mail or via social networking groups of airlines' employees such as Facebook groups. This field study included 18 airlines.

3.5.2. Time Limitations

Data for the theoretical study was collected from 2017 to 2021, and for the field study, data was collected from June 2020 to December 2020.

3.6.STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

3.6.1. Reliability Factor for the Questionnaire

The reliability coefficient (Alpha Cronbach) was calculated for the survey contents. All the values of the reliability coefficients are greater than the acceptable range of the survey reliability value (0.6).

3.6.2. Demographic Information of the Research Sample

The demographic composition of the participants is summarized in table (2).

Table 2

Demographic information for participants.

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	285	70.4
	Female	120	29.6
Age	25-39 years old	225	55.6
	40-60 years old	180	44.4
Type of airline	Airport office	135	33.3
	Town office	270	66.7
Occupation	General manager	30	7.4
	Department manager	120	29.6
	Employee	255	63
Work Duration for the airline	Less than two years	60	14.8
	From 2-5 years	135	33.3
	More than 5 years	210	51.9

Continued

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Department			
Public Departments	Check-In Department	15	3.7
	Reservation And Ticketing Department	135	33.3
	Sales Department	45	11.1
	Freight Department	15	3.7
	Loss Luggage Department	-	-
	Total No. of Employees in Public Departments	210	51.9
Non-Public Departments	Management Department	45	11.1
	Human Resources Department	49	12.09
	Accounting Department	20	4.9
	Wireless Air Operations	13	3.2
	Maintenance Department	46	11.3
	Pilot/Copilot	22	5.4
	Total No. of Employees in Non-Public Departments	195	48.1
Total:		405	100%

Source: Researchers' preparation from the results of the statistical analysis.

It is evident from the previous table that the majority of participants were male within the age group 40-60 were working in town offices of airlines as employees in public departments specially reservation and ticketing department.

3.6.3.Descriptive Statistics of Internal Marketing Mix Elements and Organizational Commitment

Table 3

The Evaluation of the Internal Marketing Mix Elements in Airlines.

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
D1: Internal Product	405	3.11	1.0628
D2: Internal Price	405	3.244	0.970
D3: Internal Promotion	405	3.159	1.087
D4: Internal Distribution	405	3.191	0.838
D5: Internal People	405	3.407	1.079
D6: Internal Process	405	2.958	0.845
D7: Internal Physical Evidence	405	2.778	0.823
Overall score of Internal Marketing Mix Elements in airlines	405	3.121	1.101
		To some extent	

Source: Researchers' preparation from the results of the statistical analysis.

The overall average of **internal marketing mix** elements is to some extent as shown in table (3), which is consistent with the study of Bruin (2013).

Table 4

The Evaluation of the Organizational Commitment of Employees in Airlines.

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
D1: Job loyalty	405	3.3752	1.0070
D2: Responsibility towards the airline	405	3.6872	0.93387
D3: The desire to continue working in airline	405	3.2000	1.072014
Overall score of organizational commitment of airlines employees	405	3.420	1.004
Agree			

Source: Researchers' preparation from the results of the statistical analysis.

The overall mean score of the employee organizational commitment was 3.420 reflecting that airlines employees agreed with the statements measuring employee commitment as shown in table (4), which is consistent with the study of Akpinar and Yücel (2018). But this score is not suitable for employees in vital companies such as airlines.

3.6.4. Hypothesis Tests and Analysis of Results

- The First Hypothesis Test

The first hypothesis states that "There is no significant correlation between the variables of internal marketing and organizational commitment of employees in airlines."

To test this hypothesis, the researcher calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the type and strength of the relationship between internal marketing variables and affective organizational commitment, and table (4) shows the statistical analysis of the results of that relationship:

Table 5

Pearson correlation coefficients between IM dimensions and the organizational commitment.

Dimensions of internal marketing	Internal price	Internal promotion	Internal distribution	Internal people	Internal process	Internal physical evidence	Organizational Commitment
Internal product	0.777**	0.869**	0.683**	0.793**	0.488**	0.561**	0.758**
Internal price	-	0.730**	0.339**	0.728**	0.219**	0.246**	0.789**
Internal promotion		-	0.813**	0.867**	0.565**	0.418**	0.653**
Internal distribution			-	0.722**	0.856**	0.653**	0.459**
Internal people				-	0.507**	0.379**	0.771**
Internal process					-	0.661**	0.337**
Internal physical evidence						-	0.358**

**Pearson correlation coefficients at a significant level (0.05)

** Pearson correlation coefficients at a significant level (0.01)

Based on the previous statistical results, it is evident that there is a positive significant correlation between the variables of internal marketing and affective organizational commitment, which means rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis, which means that:

'There is a significant correlation relationship between the variables of internal marketing and organizational commitment at a significance level (0.05) from the point of view of airline employees.', which is consistent with the studies of Abbas *et al.*, (2018), Chiu *et al.* (2014), Abbas and Riaz (2018), Ramos (2018).

- The Second Hypothesis Test

The second hypothesis states that 'There is no significant effect of internal marketing dimensions on organizational commitment from the point of view of airlines' employees.'

To test the validity of this hypothesis, the researcher used a simple linear regression (enter) analysis, the following table (6) shows the result of this statistical analysis as follows:

Table 6

Regression coefficients for the relationship between internal marketing dimensions and affective organizational commitment.

Model	Dependent Variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant Variable	Organizational Commitment	8.074	3.031		2.664	0.008
Internal product x1		1.182	0.186	0.427	6.371	0.001
Internal price x2		2.101	0,244	0.416	8.598	0.001
Internal promotion x3		1.323	0.238	0.502	5.70	0.001
Internal distribution x4		-0.524	0.346	-0.136	-1.515	0.130
Internal people x5		2.530	0.226	0.593	11.196	0.001
Internal process x6		0.534	0.205	0.139	2.601	0.010
Internal physical evidence x7		-0.014	0.298	-0.002	-0.046	0.963
Calculated F value = 183.687 ** sig. = 0.001 ** Significance at 0.01						
Determination coefficient (R ²) = 0.764						

Source: Researcher's preparation from the results of the statistical analysis.

It is evident from the previous table that there is one regression model as follows:

- Through the value of t and sig (P-value), the significance of the regression coefficient is clear, and its positive sign means the positive effect, except for the internal distribution and the physical evidence, and the significance of the constant term is evidenced

- The value of the determination coefficient R² (0.764), which indicates that (internal marketing) contributes to explaining 76.4% of the changes that occur in the dependent variable (organizational commitment). The rest of the percentage change, which amounts to 23.6%, is due to other factors not mentioned in this model.
- From the previous results, it becomes clear that the second hypothesis has been proven wrong, and accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which means:
- "The internal marketing dimensions have a statistically significant impact on the organizational commitment for the research sample of airline employees, with the exception of the two dimensions (internal distribution and internal physical evidence).
- This significant impact of internal marketing dimensions (internal product- internal price- internal promotion- internal people- internal process) on affective organizational commitment is consistent with the studies of: BinAbdullah, et al (2015), Bako (2014), Dahie, et al (2017), Fernet, et al. (2010), Jacobs, et al. (2013), Kidd and Smewing (2010), Mokone (2012), Bruin (2013), Weng, et al. (2010) and Zaraket, et al. (2018).
- Whilst, the non-significant impact of internal marketing dimensions (internal distribution and internal physical evidence) on affective organizational commitment is not consistent with the studies of Mero (2020), Mitić, et al. (2016), and Shahzad (2018).

4. DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULT

4.1. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the statistical results, it is clear that:

- There is a positive significant correlation between the elements of internal marketing (internal product, internal price, internal promotion, internal people, internal processes and internal physical evidence) and organizational commitment.
- The internal marketing elements (internal product, internal price, internal promotion, internal people, and internal processes) have a statistically significant effect on the organizational commitment of the research sample of airline employees.
- On contrary, there is no significant effect of the two dimensions (internal distribution and internal physical evidence) of the internal marketing mix on the organizational commitment of the airlines' employees in Egypt.
- The overall average of internal product dimension in airlines is to some extent (3.11) because of the following factors:
 - There is a clarity in roles which employees must play in their work to achieve the airline goals (4.07).
 - Employees work in the right place for their potential (3.40).
 - Airlines allow employees to apply what they have been trained on (3.40).
 - There is a lack of continuous training program for all employees based on their actual needs in airline. But, there is training programs for new employees and

- for employees in some departments who need training such as maintenance department (2.92).
- There is a lack of the employee's opportunities to take some decisions and initiatives while working in airlines (2.92).
 - There is a shortage in the evaluation of employee's performance after training compared to before training (2.88).
 - There is a lack of opportunities for advancement in working in airlines (2.44).
- The overall average of internal price dimension in airlines is to some extent (3.24) because of the following factors:
- Airline's employees don't feel stressed to have always a cheerful face with customers (3.85).
 - Most employees take enough time to complete their tasks (3.66).
 - Most employees have a desire to develop their skills and to learn new processes in their work (3.37).
 - Most airline's managers don't clearly explain the benefits of implementing new policies to employees for removing any fears they have (2.59).
 - Most airlines don't seek to make salaries, incentives and bonuses distinguished or equal with that of other airlines (2.74).
- The overall average of internal promotion dimension in airlines (3.15) is to some extent because of the following factors:
- Most airline's supervisors listen to employees at any time and knows the problems they face and what their suggestions for solving them (3.70).
 - Most managers listen to the employees if they have a personal problem and tries to solve it (3.40).
 - There is a lack of the communication between senior leaders and employees (2.88).
 - There is a lack of appreciating employee's views of the airline's plans and strategies (2.96).
 - Most employees get appreciated in front of my co-workers (3.88).
 - There is a shortage in monthly / yearly bonus when employees do well, achieve their job goals or do overtime (2.51).
 - Most employees do not know anything about the airline's plans and strategies (2.74).
- The overall average of internal distribution dimension in airlines is to some extent (3.19) because of the following factors:
- Everyone in the airline works together as a team to provide customers with quality service (3.85).
 - Employee's values and principles are aligned with the airline's vision and goals (3.62).
 - There is a shortage in the organizational structure of the airline to carry out the tasks better (2.40).
 - There is a shortage of engaging employees in a decision making (2.62).

- There is a shortage of considering the airline's personnel the main source of the organizational success (3.03).
- There is a system for easily exchanging information between airline's departments (3.59).
- The overall average of internal people dimension in airlines is to some extent (3.40) because of the following factors:
 - Supervisors supports and respect employees and evaluate the performance fairly (3.88).
 - Co-workers treat each other with honesty, clarity and respect (3.88).
 - There is a lack of the authority delegation in airlines (2.77).
 - There is a lack of the communication with senior leaders of airlines at any time by various means of communication (3.07).
- The overall average of internal process dimension in airlines is to some extent (2.95) because of the following factors:
 - Mixed task forces are formed to coordinate between departments (3.40).
 - There is a lack of improving of internal processes to motivate employees for innovation (2.37).
 - There is a lack of developing internal process of airlines electronically (2.48).
 - There is a lack of announced, fair and transparent standards of performance evaluation (2.85).
 - The airline's internal operations are organized and coordinated (3.03).
 - Each department provides reliable support for the others (3.66).
- The overall average of internal physical evidence dimension in airlines is to some extent (2.77) because of the following factors:
 - There is an attractive, comfortable and stimulating work environment in most airlines (3.07).
 - There is a lack of researches to identify the needs and desires of employees and to monitor the impact of airlines' policies on them (2.14).
 - There is a lack of providing the quality health, recreational and social services to employees and their families (2.85).
 - There is a lack of the quality and accuracy of performance reports, brochures, website and emails which sent to the airlines' employees (3.03).
- Airlines' employees agreed with the statements measuring employee organizational commitment, but this score of commitment is not suitable for employees in vital companies such as airlines.
- Airlines' employees agreed with the statements measuring employee job loyalty (3.42) because of the following factors:
 - Employees feel their job gives them a good social status (3.96), they recommend working in this company to others (3.44) but they don't feel a strong sense of belonging to this airline (3.25). They feel that the company's problems are their personal problems (3.25)

- Most employees would not be happy to spend the rest of their career with this airline (2.81). But, they feel proud while talking about the company (3.70).
- Most employees do not feel very satisfied with their airlines (3.18).
- Airlines' employees agreed with the statements measuring employee's responsibility towards the airline (3.68) because of the following factors:
 - They want to achieve and sustain the goals of their airline (3.81), they feel responsible for implementing the company's regulations and laws (3.66). They perform the bulk of their job duties without the need for oversight from their bosses (3.88), they seek to maintain their work time (3.88), and they want to support and help their co-workers (4.22). They feel responsible for maintaining company's property (4.00)
 - They feel that they are ambassadors for the airlines and its brand (3.33), they contribute new ideas for work (3.18), and they want to search for all new information in their field (3.18).
- The overall average of employee's desire to continue working in the airline is to some extent (3.20) because of the following factors:
 - Some employees would like to work in their airline no matter what alternative opportunities are available (2.70), they accept any job assigned to them for continuing to work in my airline (3.25), they are looking for a distinguished job position in their airline (3.66).
 - Moving to work in another company will not cost them many costs and lose them many benefits that they get from this airline (2.88). They want to stay working in the airline, especially in the times of crisis (3.48).

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study results discussion, the researchers recommended the managers and decision makers of the airlines in Egypt the following:

- IM should be a major part of the holistic marketing strategy in airlines.
- IM should be used to overcome organizational resistance and to motivate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies.
- Airlines should concentrate on IM practices that lead to increase the affective commitment of employees in airlines.
- Internal marketing should start at the top of airlines and be communicated downwards into the entire airline.
- HR and marketing should work together for the employer branding strategy.
- HR Marketing should be a core of the 'hire to retire' process.
- Internal marketing mix strategy should be started with internal market segmentation and internal market research.
- Process of grouping employees should be according to motivational lines rather than departmental or other lines.
- It is necessary to coordinate between benefits and roles of employees.
- Internal marketing should be an integral part of strategic management and strategic change.

- It is necessary to establish a special department for internal marketing or expansion of marketing department with helping of HRM department.
- Strategic IM outcomes should be evaluated by the measures of control.
- Implementing internal branding strategy included; treating employees as internal customers, compatibility between personal and organizational values, setting quality standards, enhancing internal communications, reward systems, keeping promises and high engagement.
- There is a need for managers to understand the concept of commitment, what it is, and how it works.
- Airlines should concentrate on training programs, empowerment, role fit and clarity, and career advancement for all employees to enhance their affective commitment.
- Airlines should evaluate the impact of employee training program on business results such as; productivity, quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction ratings.
- Airlines should be mindful of the labor market conditions such as financial reserves, time pressure, shift work, work overload and personal conflicts.
- It is essential to motivate employees through financial bonuses and benefits such as medical aid.
- It is necessary to share information with employees through traditional tools such as (telephone, fax, notice boards, e-mail, internal newsletters and meetings) and through electronic tools such as (company newsletters-employee feedback apps and surveys- video conferencing, intranet, mobile apps, forums and chat, podcasts, digital signage, social media, recognition and reward platforms, planning tools, graphics creation software)
- Airline should share its management styles, common beliefs, behaviors, procedures, values, and goals with the employees.
- Managers should use participating, supporting and delegating style of management.
- It is necessary to automate task and decrease customer contact in airlines.
- The human-centered work system is very essential in the airlines which is based on what people actually do, rather than their outcomes.
- It is necessary to understand the effects of human behaviors in a product-oriented task analysis.
- Exterior/interior design and equipment, training manuals, performance feedback reports, and documentation of policies are very essential in airlines.

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التسويق الداخلي وأثره على الالتزام التنظيمي للعاملين بشركات الطيران

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معلومات المقالة	المُلخَص
الكلمات المفتاحية التسويق الداخلي؛ الالتزام التنظيمي؛ الاحتفاظ بالعاملين؛ تسويق الموارد البشرية.	<p>يُعرّف التسويق الداخلي بأنه أسلوب من أساليب الإدارة المستدامة من خلال استخدام منهج شبيه بالتسويق وموجه إلى تحفيز العاملين من أجل تطبيق الاستراتيجيات المؤسسية طويلة المدى وتوجيهها نحو الاهتمام بالعملاء. يهدف هذا البحث لتقييم مدى تأثير أبعاد التسويق الداخلي (المنتج الداخلي، السعر الداخلي، الترويج الداخلي، التوزيع الداخلي، الأفراد الداخليين، العمليات الداخلية، الدليل المادي) على الالتزام التنظيمي للعاملين بشركات الطيران بمصر. وقد تم تصميم استمارة الاستقصاء وتوزيعها على عدد (405) من العاملين في (18) شركة طيران بجمهورية مصر العربية. كما تم الاستعانة بأساليب الإحصاء الوصفي وتحليل الارتباط والانحدار بين متغيرات الدراسة لاستخراج النتائج بصورة علمية. وتضمنت النتائج التي قد توصلت إليها هذه الدراسة وجود تأثير ذات دلالة إحصائية بين عناصر التسويق الداخلي (المنتج الداخلي-السعر الداخلي-الاتصالات الداخلية-الأفراد الداخليين-العمليات الداخلية) والالتزام التنظيمي للعاملين بشركات الطيران. لذا يوصي الباحثون بمديري ومتخذي القرار بشركات الطيران بمصر بتعزيز الاهتمام بكل من: بحوث السوق الداخلية وتقسيمها، برامج التدريب والتمكين والتقدم الوظيفي لجميع العاملين، الحوافز المالية، الاتصالات الداخلية، تطبيق الأنظمة الإلكترونية داخلياً، وكذلك الاهتمام بتقويض الصلاحيات وإشراك العاملين في اتخاذ القرارات بالإضافة إلى تحسين بيئة العمل مع الاهتمام بالمجهود الذي يبذله العاملون فعلياً بدلاً من التركيز على النتائج فقط. كما يجب أن يعمل قسمي الموارد البشرية والتسويق معاً لتطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق الداخلي بشركات الطيران لمساعدة العاملين على الاستمتاع بتجربتهم الوظيفية ومن ثم زيادة مستوى الالتزام التنظيمي لديهم.</p>

(JAAUTH)
المجلد 21، العدد 3،
(ديسمبر 2021)،
ص 50-79.