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Based On Social Capital to Discuss the Correlation between Internal Marketing Strategy and Employees' Job Satisfaction in Medical Equipment Industry

Jui-Hsi CHENG¹, Di-Yu LEI², Kai-Ping HUANG³, Yu-Lei FENG⁴

Abstract

The approach to aging society in past years shows increasing medical equipment market with needs for health care that current health care industry is encountering the unprecedented dilemma. The fiercer competition has hospitals start to seek for the promotion of operating performance in order to create more profits. The partnership between hospitals and medical equipment stores provides more items for patients and the family members. Accordingly, the image and service quality of medical equipment industry are emphasized. Aiming at employees of medical equipment industry in Taichung City, total 360 copies are distributed for this study, and 251 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 70%. According to the research results, suggestions are proposed, expecting to provide suggestions and reference for introducing human resource organizations into medical equipment industry so that human resource departments could offer more customized service closer to organizational strategies.

Keywords: medical equipment industry, social capital, internal marketing strategy, job satisfaction.

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Introduction

The nation is currently approaching developed country and aging society that the medical equipment market is expected to increase with needs for health care to result in health care industry encountering unprecedented dilemmas. The competition becomes fiercer for hospitals which therefore have to seek for the promotion of operating performance to create more profits. Medical equipment is generally used by patients and caregivers; meanwhile, medical equipment and the use also involve in professional knowledge. In consideration of different characteristics from general products, special considerations for customers selecting medical equipment products, particularly “information channel”, “purchase decision”, “purchase behavior”, and “satisfaction with store”, different from the consumption behavior and consumption decision of other products should be taken into account. The partnership between hospitals and medical equipment stores could provide more items for patients and the family members that the image and service quality of medical equipment industry are emphasized. Labor awareness rise in past years results in several strikes. Business-labor tension would consume many precious resources of enterprises, and human resource centered medical equipment service industry is significantly struck. As a result, emphasis on labor relationship and the strategy to regard employees as customers and satisfy employees’ needs are the concerns of managers in medical equipment industry. Furthermore, difference in service provided by human resources would indirectly affect the design of human resource organizations, e.g. human resource functional organization, human resource sharing service, expert center, and embedded human resource organization. Human resource departments in many enterprises, which stress on internal marketing strategy and service quality, would re-adjust staff deployment and task arrangement along with the expansion of company size, cross the limit of traditional departments, and directly arrange cross-border personnel to continue the employee service quality. Human resource cross-functional service is therefore emerged. From the aspect of system theory, human resource department is regarded as the sub-system of an organization, and human resource cross-functional service could be considered as the cross-border personnel of human resource department. Cross-border personnel are defined as organizational members representing an organization to interact with the external, e.g. sales, purchase, public relations, and counter service personnel. “Human resource customer service representatives” of human resource department cross-border personnel are those stationing in the company, departments, or branch offices as the bridge between human resource department and other departments.

To provide more customized human resource service for the served units, enterprises start to design specific service for human resource customer service representatives of specific served units to reinforce the service quality and effectiveness. Accordingly, human resource departments are the executors of internal marketing for colleagues in other departments and assist organizations

in promoting policy announcement, culture shaping, and change project, with the application of internal marketing tactics and concept to benefit the execution of organizational strategies. In this case, human resource departments in enterprises, when stressing on the internal marketing function and service orientation, would introduce human resource organizations, expecting to implement internal customer service through such type of human resource management. Based on the viewpoint of social capital, the correlation between internal marketing strategy and employees' job satisfaction in medical equipment industry is discussed in this study, expecting to provide suggestions and reference for introducing human resource organizations into medical equipment industry so that human resource departments could offer more customized service closer to organizational strategies.

Literature review

Du & Nguyen (2018) proposed that internal marketing strategy was the application of marketing and human resources, combining theories, techniques, and rules for encouragement, and well applied employees in the management organization to continuously improve the external customers and the mutual service. Based on the viewpoint of internal customers, Dennis & Sandino (2019) considered that a company should adopt "approximate marketing" to treat the employees so that the employees could acquire the satisfactory "product", i.e. work. Singh & Sarkar (2019) concluded various definitions of social capital and pointed out the elements to cohere groups, e.g. specifications, common belief, cooperative behavior, goodwill, and mutual comprehension. When regarding social capital as an entity, it could be described as a sole network system, a structure, or a closely related system. Ouellette *et al.* (2018) indicated that, under the idea of social capital, interpersonal interaction created several network benefits, including that individuals could acquire relevant information, relevant resources, and career support in the network. There were many discussion and information exchange opportunities among members in an organization or a group. An organization with higher communication interaction could smoothen the interaction among members and help members form the interactive link, i.e. the establishment of social capital. Akbari *et al.* (2017) considered that human resource departments in lots of enterprises, which stressed on internal marketing strategy and service quality, would re-adjust staff deployment and task arrangement and directly arrange cross-border personnel to continuously maintain the employee service quality; human resource organizations for cross-functional human resource service then emerged. Sy, Horton, & Riggio (2018) proposed that social capital referred to the sum of actual and potential resources in individual or social relationship network, containing the network and the assets generated by the mobilization through the network. Social capital existed in relationship, while relationship was originated from exchange that social capital was created and maintained through

exchange. Yan & Werblow (2019) explained human resource cross-functional service as exchange activity allowing human resource departments acquiring various types of social capital, e.g. trust, reliability, and relationship network, in the exchange with various departments. Human resource customer service representatives, with rich social capital and being in the center of the company network, could more easily access to resources and control resources to present more influence. Yousef (2017) mentioned that human resource organizations emphasized the promotion and implementation of internal marketing strategy and human resource customer service representatives were the executors of internal marketing for other departments; human resource cross-functional service assisting in the promotion of policy announcement, culture shaping, and change project and applying internal marketing tactics and concepts could benefit the execution of organizational strategies; moreover, the service role of human resource customer service representatives and the social capital derived from the network position in the stationed business units would affect organizational employees. Marques *et al.* (2018) indicated that social capital extremely emphasized the interaction among members; enterprises introducing human resource organizations with better implementation of internal marketing strategy revealed more fluent communication channels in the organization, where organizational members could interact and exchange information with effective communication; the promotion of internal marketing strategy therefore might affect the composition of social capital. According to above literature review, the following research hypothesis is deduced in this study.

H1: Internal marketing strategy presents significant correlations with social capital.

Huang (2018) proposed various types of capitals from the viewpoint of economics, including material capital, human capital, cultural capital, and social capital, to upsurge the discussion of social capital. From the aspect of class and network relationship, he defined social capital as the sum of potential or physical resources in the mutual agreement between individuals and groups through persistent network or certain systematic process. Groysberg, Price, & Cheng (2018) regarded social capital as assets which could be possessed by individuals, existing in the social relationship structure of interpersonal interaction. It was indicated that specific benefits were covered in such relationship, actors with different intention could mutually precede resource exchange, and the continuously existed social relationship was formed in the continuous interaction process. Khalik (2018) pointed out the core of social capital as others regarding people's goodwill as a valuable element. Social capital was originated from actors' positions in the social structure. In the social relationship of individual position, social capital was the resource available for individuals and contain the relationship link internal and external the organization. Rahmawati, Ahmad, &

Suriansyah (2019) discovered that individual social capital acquired (acquired information, resource, and others' assistance) would significantly and positively affect individual career success (salary, promotion, career satisfaction). Bowers, Hall, & Srinivasan (2017) found out positive effects of individual social capital of employees on the career satisfaction, promotion, and salary. Sarker & Ashrafi (2018) also pointed out the positive effect of individual social capital on individual job satisfaction. Park & Tran (2018) mentioned that social capital did not simply affect individual acquisition (promotion and salary), but would influence the inner attitude (organizational commitment and job satisfaction); and, individual attitude would affect individual behavior. Accordingly, the following research hypothesis is deduced in this study.

H2: Social capital shows remarkable correlations with job satisfaction.

Kim & Koo (2017) regarded job satisfaction as individual general attitude towards the job. Employees with high job satisfaction presented positive attitudes towards the job; on the contrary, employees showed negative attitudes towards the job when being dissatisfied. Santos & Goncalves (2018) referred job satisfaction to the degree of individuals or most employees being satisfied with the job, which was related to salary, salary increase, working hour, working environment, promotion opportunity, interpersonal relationship, and management style. Salah, Abou-Shouk, & Fawzy (2019) considered that job satisfaction was based on desire, need, motivation, and the perception of working environment, i.e. workers' stable satisfaction or inner dissatisfaction with the job. In the organization of research on internal marketing, Player *et al.* (2017) proposed the related theoretical model and indicated that an enterprise would remarkably and positively affect employees' job satisfaction through internal marketing. In the empirical research on internal marketing, job satisfaction, and customer oriented behavior, Daniels, Hondeghem, & Dochy (2019) pointed out the positive effect of internal marketing on job satisfaction and proved that an enterprise could enhance employees' job satisfaction through internal marketing to have employees present customer oriented behavior. Wang *et al.* (2018) studied 359 hospital employees in Taiwan to discuss the correlations among internal marketing, job satisfaction, and organizational performance and discovered that enterprises engaging in internal marketing would positively promote employees' job satisfaction. Internal marketing stressed on satisfying internal customers' needs with internal product (i.e. job). According to above literature review, the following research hypothesis is deduced in this study.

H3: Internal marketing strategy reveals notable correlations with job satisfaction.

Methodology

Operational definition

Internal marketing strategy

Referring to Liu *et al.* (2019), internal marketing strategy is divided into four dimensions of managerial support, motivation and growth, communication relationship, and education and training: (1) *Managerial support*: A manager should establish market-oriented environment beneficial to the development, encourage employees participating in market-oriented behaviors, allow employees participating in plans, and concern about employees' suggestions and responses; (2) *Motivation and growth*: The design and execution of human resource management policy could enhance the market orientation of an organization as well as attract, retain, and reward excellent employees; (3) *Communication relationship*: Two-way communication between managers and employees could enhance management support and timely provide employees with feedback to promote the job performance; (4) *Education and training*: Training projects could deliver the importance of market orientation and provide employees with professional skills for satisfying customer needs.

Social capital

Referring to the research of Huang, Rundle-Thiele, & Chen (2019) on organization, three dimensions of structural dimension, relational dimension, and cognitive dimension are used in this study: (1) *Structural dimension*: referring to structural social capital, standing for the embedment of proper relationship and the entire relationship network as well as the connection type among groups, e.g. entire network between organizations or communities; (2) *Relational dimension*: referring to the relationship developed through interaction for a period of time, focusing on inner and subjective cognition relationship. A lot of assets constructed or extended by social capital are the long-term partnership built through relational dimension; (3) *Cognitive dimension*: Social capital in cognitive dimensions could externally present the consistent characteristics in the social network. Internally, resources to facilitate organizational members' agreement are covered. Social capital in cognitive dimension contains common language and codes, common experience, and shared vision.

Job satisfaction

Referring to Sun & Xia (2018), the following dimensions are used for measuring job satisfaction: (1) *Intrinsic satisfaction*: ability, achievement, authority, independency, morale, responsibility, guarantee, creativity social service, social status, and diversity; (2) *Extrinsic satisfaction*: promotion, company policy, salary,

identity, supervision of interpersonal relationship and technology; (3) *General satisfaction*: working environment, colleagues.

Method and model

Goodness-of-fit test in LISREL is generally measured by overall model fit (i.e. external quality of model) and internal quality of model. In terms of overall model fit test, the commonly used indices contain (1)“ χ^2 ratio” (Chi-Square ratio), standing for the difference between actual theoretical model and expected value, which is better smaller than 3, (2)goodness of fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), which show better fit when close to 1, (3)root mean square residual (RMR), reflecting the square root of“residual variance/covariance mean”, which is better smaller than 0.05, and (4)incremental fit index (IFI) revealing excellent model fit when higher than 0.9.

Common indices in LISREL to evaluate internal quality include (1)SMC (square multiple correlation) of individual manifest variable, as R^2 of manifest variables and latent variables, which should be higher than 0.5, (2)component reliability (ρ) of latent variable, as Cronbach’s α of observation indices of the latent variable, which should be higher than 0.6, and (3)average variance extracted of latent variable, which is calculated by dividing the R^2 sum of manifest variables in a latent variable by the number of manifest variables to show the percentage of the latent variable being measured through manifest variables, which is better higher than 0.5.

Research sample and object

To implement the policy goal of minimally invasive medical devices and intelligent assistive devices, the promotion strategy could be divided into minimally invasive surgery instruments, long-term care, wearable device, remote system, food safety and food inspection, and medical waste treatment, to integrate industrial advantage with future trend as well as cover the front, middle, and back ends of health care industry chain and the merchandise. Regarding the needs, it presents great development potential and could include the idea of circular economy to change the market conditions from material production. Aiming at employees of medical equipment industry in Taichung City, total 360 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 251 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 70%.

Reliability and validity test

The questionnaire content is based on past theories and refers to the actual situations of research objects to design the tool being able to authentically express the essence and integrity in order to ensure the content validity. Final communality estimate of the factor analysis results is applied to test the construct validity of

various questionnaire items, and the acquired validity appears in 0.743~0.936, revealing good validity test of the questionnaire. In basic research, reliability coefficient above 0.8 reveals high reliability of the scale, while reliability=0.7 is acceptable in exploratory research. The Cronbach’s α measured in this study appears in 0.85~0.96, apparently conforming to the statement of Cronbach’s α being in 0.70-0.98 as high reliability.

Results and discussion

Model fit test

“Maximum likelihood” (ML) is utilized in this study, and the LISREL analysis result achieves the convergence. The indices standing for the overall model fit of the external quality of the model show (1) χ^2 ratio= $\chi^2=1.564$, smaller than 3, (2)GFI=0.97, higher than 0.9, and AGFI=0.89, higher than 0.8, (3)RMR=0.026, smaller than 0.05, and (4)incremental fit index=0.94, higher than 0.9. Overall speaking, the research samples, 251, are higher than the requirement for at least 135.73 samples, and the overall model fit indices pass the test, fully reflecting good external quality of the LISREL model.

In regard to internal model quality test, SMC of manifest variables is higher than 0.5 (Tables 1 & 2), revealing good indices of latent variables. Furthermore, latent variables of internal marketing strategy, social capital, and job satisfaction show the component reliability higher than 0.6, and the average variance extracted of dimensions is higher than 0.5 (Table 3), apparently conforming to the test requirement for internal quality of model.

Table 1. SMC of variable to dimension

| Internal marketing strategy | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Managerial support | Motivation and growth | Communication relationship | Education and training |
| 0.74 | 0.78 | 0.83 | 0.86 |

Table 2. SMC of variable to dimension

| Social capital | | | Job satisfaction | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Structural dimension | Relational dimension | Cognitive dimension | Intrinsic satisfaction | Extrinsic satisfaction | General satisfaction |
| 0.78 | 0.81 | 0.88 | 0.75 | 0.84 | 0.87 |

Table 3. Component reliability and average variance extracted of variable

| Item | Internal marketing strategy | Social capital | Job satisfaction |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Component reliability | 0.853 | 0.921 | 0.963 |
| Average variance extracted | 0.83 | 0.90 | 0.92 |

Path relationship test

When dimensions of managerial support, acceptance, intrinsic satisfaction, and task performance in latent variables are selected as the reference indicators with constant 1, the causal path, Table 4, shows the significant estimate of the relationship between other dimensions and variables. In detail, motivation and growth=1.16 presents more explanatory power than managerial support, relational dimension=1.08 appears more explanatory power than structural dimension, and extrinsic satisfaction=1.05 reveals more explanatory power than intrinsic satisfaction. The research hypothesis test results are shown in Table 5.

Table 4. Overall linear structural model analysis result

| Factor dimension/evaluation standard | Estimate | |
|--|----------------------------|-------|
| Internal marketing strategy | Managerial support | 1.00 |
| | Motivation and growth | 1.16 |
| | Communication relationship | 1.08 |
| | Education and training | 1.05 |
| Social capital | Structural dimension | 1.00 |
| | Relational dimension | 1.07 |
| | Cognitive dimension | 0.98 |
| Job satisfaction | Intrinsic satisfaction | 1.00 |
| | Extrinsic satisfaction | 1.05 |
| | General satisfaction | 1.01 |
| Internal marketing strategy→social capital | | 0.867 |
| Social capital→job satisfaction | | 0.845 |
| Internal marketing strategy→job satisfaction | | 0.816 |

Note: * stands for $p < 0.05$, ** for $p < 0.01$, and *** for $p < 0.001$.

Conclusion

The research results prove that the implementation of internal marketing strategy in medical equipment industry could benefit the transparency and fluency of communication channels, effectively assist employees in acquiring required information and resources, and help employees. In other words, the implementation of internal marketing strategy in medical equipment industry could help employees establish personal social capital. Employees of medical equipment industry could acquire useful information and resources and receive help through the assistance of supervisors to smoothly complete the work and effectively promote job satisfaction. That is, individual social capital could promote employees' job satisfaction. Medical equipment industry positively planning and practicing internal marketing strategy as well as implementing such strategy could indirectly enhance employees' job satisfaction. In sum, medical equipment industry combining marketing and human resource management for the application to implement effective internal marketing management strategy would be the precursor factor in successful external marketing.

Recommendations

By organizing the research results and findings, following practical suggestions are proposed in this study.

- Medical equipment industry could not ignore the importance of internal marketing strategy. Especially, the fierce competition in medical equipment environment in past years results in the promotion of new medical equipment that, relatively, results in employees' worries and pressure. In this case, medical equipment industry should reinforce service training to have employees present customer service oriented spirit to promote employees' professional capability and improve service quality. Supervisors should actively concern about employees and understand employees to cohere employees with good communication to move toward the common goal. Proper use of employees' opinion data and enhancing the top-down communication channels could effectively develop corporate strategies. Making suitable performance evaluation and assisting employees in developing career planning could keep talents, induce employees' work morale and create quality service.
- Promoting supervisors' effects on employees' social capital in medical equipment industry could provide employees with effective information and resources and assist employees in smoothly completing work goals. Employees should be treated with empathy so as to understand employees' problems and needs and provide experiment sharing assistance, inquiry, and reference. Moreover, medical equipment industry could assist executives and human resource departments, through the communication of supervisors, in understanding the

- promotion of internal strategies to positively assist in the achievement of organizational goals as well as indirectly enhance employees' job satisfaction.
- Medical equipment industry should allow employees presenting job performance and receiving executives' agreement so that employees could acquire sense of achievement from the job and guarantee the right to work. Besides, medical equipment industry could provide employees with opportunities for job rotation to enhance employees' career development planning. Allowing employees developing in the stable working environment and perceiving the emphasis and affirmation from the organization and supervisors could enhance the overall job satisfaction, reinforce the agreement with and belongingness to the organization and further present better job performance and service quality. Consequently, medical equipment industry should make efforts to the management strategy to enhance employee loyalty, benefit talent recruitment and retention, and allow the enterprise acquiring larger competitive advantages.

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