

# Strengthening bank employee job satisfaction through an “internal people” approach – an emerging market perspective

**Ms P Ladzani**

*Department of Marketing Management  
University of Johannesburg*

pladzani@tsb.toyota.co.za



<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4583-2594>

**Prof M Roberts-Lombard**

*Department of Marketing Management  
University of Johannesburg*

mornayrl@uj.ac.za



<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5522-8737>

## ABSTRACT

The study investigates the extent to which the satisfaction of employees of a selected banking group is influenced by identified “internal people” constructs, namely perceptions of trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership. Data was collected from the employees of a selected banking group through the use of self-administered questionnaires. In total, 248 responses could be used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis and independent sample t-tests were conducted to test the formulated hypotheses. Employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership were found to significantly and positively influence employee satisfaction, while trust and employee empowerment (autonomy in job) did not have a positive and significant influence on employee satisfaction. The model tested endorses the hypothesised relationships between trust, employee empowerment, work conditions, leadership and the job satisfaction of employees of the selected banking group. The results suggest that banks need to have faith in the ability of their employees to perform the job for which they were recruited. The findings should assist the banking industry of an emerging African economy in understanding how employee empowerment (through confidence in the ability of employees), work conditions and leadership can enhance employee job satisfaction. The study focused only on banking employees and determined the extent to which the specified constructs relate to employee satisfaction. Limited research studies have explored how employee satisfaction relates to its antecedents in an emerging African market perspective.

**Keywords:** Internal marketing, Trust, Employee empowerment, Work conditions, Leadership style, Employee satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

The level of service quality experienced by customers can be a tool for differentiation in the competitive banking environment of the new millennium. The actions and behaviours of employees directly influence customers' perceptions of the service rendered by the organisation (Díaz, 2017). In the financial services sector, due to the intangibility and complexity of their product offerings, the role of the workforce has become an integral part of the delivered service. Through an internal marketing approach, positive employee attitudes can be generated that can ultimately lead to employee satisfaction (Huang & Rundle-Thiele, 2015). This is especially important in South Africa considering that the retail banking sector in the country should develop an improved understanding of the importance of employees in the service delivery process through an internal marketing perspective. Internal marketing is a critical strategy to

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ensure that the retail banking sector in South Africa focuses on its employees as internal customers, which could ultimately lead to employee satisfaction and the development of more customer-orientated employees (Reynolds-De Bruin, 2014). Numerous research studies (Ozuem, Limb & Lancaster, 2016; Boukis, Kaminakis, Siampos & Kostopoulos, 2015; Rahmati, Falahati & Jamshedynavid, 2013; Marshall, Baker & Finn, 1998) have investigated the interrelationships of selected elements of the internal marketing mix and their effects on internal service quality and customer loyalty. However, few research studies have investigated how the different constructs of the internal people element (namely trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership) influence employee job satisfaction in the banking environment of an emerging African market. The internal people element of internal marketing has not secured much focus as a relational determinant, especially within a financial services environment (Reynolds-De Bruin, 2014; Omid, Ebrahim & Bagher, 2014).

The foundation of internal marketing is the principle that internal relationships, functions and interactions are required to instil in employees positive views of the organisation's values, thereby inspiring them to deliver external service quality in a professional manner (Biedenbach & Manzhynski, 2016). Internal marketing is regarded as a critical strategy for perceiving employees as internal customers and securing the satisfaction of employee needs so as to enhance external customer satisfaction. For example, efficient internal processes contribute successfully to enhanced levels of employee confidence. The reason is that employees are in a position to perform their jobs more efficiently as they become familiar with the tasks required to deliver an excellent service to the customer. In addition, employees also gain much more empathy and understanding when engaging with external customers (Steyn, Steyn & Van Rooyen, 2011). In this study the concept "internal people", due to its linkage with employee satisfaction, is investigated from the perspective of four variables, namely trust (Semerciöz, Hassan & Aldemir, 2011; Hamed, 2010), employee empowerment (Kahreh, Ahmadi & Hashemi, 2011; Spreitzer, 2007), work conditions (Elanga, 2015; Ali, 2012) and leadership (Sepahvand, Pirzad & Rastipour, 2015; Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa & Nwankwere, 2011). The primary aim of the study was to establish the extent to which the job satisfaction experience of employees is influenced by their perceptions of trust, empowerment, work conditions and leadership.

The contribution of the study to academic theory is that it illustrates that the previously identified relationships between employee job satisfaction and its precursors from an internal people perspective, and not from a general internal marketing mix perspective, in the context of an emerging market. A model was suggested and confirmed that illustrates the relationships between employee job satisfaction and its antecedents within a South African setting. In terms of the managerial contribution, the study could contribute to banking service providers' understanding of how trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership can foster employee job satisfaction, eventually leading to enhanced contentment among employees.

What follows in this article is an explanation of the theories that are the foundation of the study and a discussion of its key constructs. The different hypotheses that are proposed for the study are provided and the proposition of a theoretical model is secured. This is followed by a discussion of the research methodology, the results, a discussion on the theoretical and practical contribution of the study and recommendations made.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Relationship Marketing theory and Social Exchange theory as foundation for the study***

Relationship marketing theory and social exchange theory were used as founding theories for the study in terms of the different researched constructs and the proposed relationships between them. Miquel-Romero, Caplliure-Giner and Adame-Sánchez, (2014) propose that the building of sound, positive relationships between the organisation and its employees is a critical element in the relationship marketing literature, where it is referred to as "internal marketing". Employees trust the organisation more if they perceive it to be committed and supportive of them in their need for development and empowerment (Giannakis, Harker & Baum, 2015). Kiarie, Maru and Cheruiyot (2017) state that an inspiring leader will provide organisational direction by securing employee trust, training and empowerment, ultimately leading to employee satisfaction. Therefore, a relationship marketing approach towards employees, founded on internal marketing principles, has to be built on trust, respect and mutual inclusion (Choi & Joung, 2017).

In terms of social exchange theory, the founding principle is the occurrence of exchange between two parties, the quality of which depends on the relationship between the actor (e.g. a leader of a team) and the target (e.g. employees) (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2017). Considering the importance of a relational focus in social exchange theory, Alegre, Mas-Machuca and Berbegal-Mirabent (2016) state that the leadership approach of a supervisor directly influences the level of work satisfaction that the employee experiences. The greater the level of support the supervisor provides for the employee in terms of encouragement, development and empowerment, the more positive the employee feels towards the organisation. According to social exchange theory, parties to a relationship always weigh the benefits and risks associated with the relationship. A positive approach results in a win-win situation for both parties or actors in the relationship. This theory suggests beneficial gain by both parties, as the leader secures the commitment of the employee towards the organisation, and the employee experiences increased levels of job satisfaction, resulting in a willingness to improve service delivery to external customers (Surma, 2016).

The principles of the theories discussed above underlie the arguments of the present authors in hypothesising the relationships between the constructs of the study with regard to the banking industry in South Africa. The hypotheses are directed at determining the extent to which employee satisfaction is influenced by trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership style. From a South African banking industry perspective, no previous study could be found that has used relationship marketing theory and social exchange theory to understand the factors that influence employee satisfaction.

## **THEORETICAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT**

### ***The interrelationship of trust and employee job satisfaction***

In the past three decades, organisational research has been characterised by the emergence of trust as an important topic of inquiry (Elangovan, Auer-Rizzi & Szabo, 2015). Trust refers to “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998: 395). When trust is a directorial norm in organisational culture, it creates a platform for the organisation to secure job satisfaction and devoted employees (Mohamed, Kader & Anisa, 2012). Trust between parties is therefore founded on the principle that interaction partners will engage in a cooperative manner that is based on shared norms and values (Chesney, Chuah, Dobebe & Hoffmann, 2017). Considering this, trust can foster a creative environment and innovative behaviours due to the safe atmosphere within the organisation (El-Ghorab, 2013). A high level of organisational trust contributes to high employee motivation, which results in a positive effect on performance (Chow, Cheung & Wa, 2015). Therefore, while other factors in the work environment may contribute to employee satisfaction, employees rely mainly on trust to secure their happiness with their work environment (Mey, Werner & Theron, 2014). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between trust and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

### ***The interrelationship of employee empowerment and employee job satisfaction***

Organisations are starting to recognise the critical function that employee empowerment plays in the modern world. Employee empowerment is viewed by Hanaysha and Tahir (2016), Appelbaum, Louis, Makarenko, Saluja, Meleshko and Kulbashian (2013) and He, Murrmann and Perdue (2010) as an approach for increasing employees’ feelings of added value and contribution in an organisation by enhancing their intellectual independence when making decisions in a working environment. By empowering employees through an internal marketing approach, service of higher quality can be secured for external customers (Kaurav, Paul & Chowdhary, 2015). The empowerment of employees results not only in improved service delivery for customers but also in increased innovativeness and productivity among employees (Burin, Roberts-Lombard & Klopper, 2015; Dalvi & Vahidi, 2013).

When empowerment is encouraged, the employees of the organisation become proactive, which results in greater job satisfaction, whereas if they feel that they have no control, they may withdraw goodwill, which can lower their level

of work productivity (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015). What is often found in many banking organisations is the expectation that employees must strictly follow the official rules and policies that manage the relationships between employees and their customers. Employees are regularly not enabled to use their own initiative or decision making to manage risks through a different approach due to a lack of empowerment (Isimoya & Bakarey, 2013). Therefore, empowerment is an important tool for strengthening the confidence of employees in their own task performance and for securing autonomy in job functioning, resulting in a more efficient and professional service delivery offering to customers (Hume & Hume, 2015; Erkmen & Hancer, 2015). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between empowerment and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

It should be noted here that hypothesis 2 contains two smaller hypotheses based on an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) dividing employee empowerment into two sub-constructs, namely “employee empowerment (confidence in ability)” and “employee empowerment (autonomy in job)”. The new hypothesis 2 reads as follows:

H<sub>2a</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between empowerment (confidence in ability) and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

H<sub>2b</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between empowerment (autonomy in job) and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

### ***The interrelationship of leadership and employee job satisfaction***

The style of leadership style that management use towards employees should be positively inclined to secure employee satisfaction and job performance (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). Conradie (2012) argues that employees are the backbone of the organisation, and consideration of their needs is critical in securing their satisfaction. Therefore, an engaging and supportive leadership approach towards employee management can secure increased employee commitment, job involvement and satisfaction (Fiaz, Su, Ikram & Saqib, 2017; Joung, Goh, Huffman, Yuan & Surles, 2015). Therefore, leadership requires an understanding of employee needs and wants in order to develop a positive employee attitude, stimulate employee motivation and develop employee engagement through teamwork.

Leaders can motivate employees to do more and even go beyond what is expected, especially when they have a participative approach towards employee management (Ozuem et al., 2016). Khuong and Nhu (2015) state that leadership has a direct influence on the productivity of employees and therefore also on their level of satisfaction. Buble, Juras and Matić (2014) concur, stating that employee satisfaction is directly related to the profitability of the organisation and that leadership is of critical importance in the process. Heyns and Rothmann (2015) and De Jager and Swanepoel (2008) argue that engaging leaders who acknowledge the role of their employees motivate such employees to perform better, with employees also trusting their leadership more. The formation of employee attitudes and behaviours are therefore directly influenced by leadership (Kaurav et al., 2015). Roberts-Lombard and Reynolds-De Bruin (2017) concur, stating that the type of relationship that employees have with their line managers (e.g. supervisors/departmental heads) has a direct influence on their attitude, work ethic and satisfaction.

Therefore, leaders who have an open communication channel to employees are empathetic and attentive to their complaints; and leaders who have an engaging management style are more successful in securing motivated and productive employees who feel satisfied (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). As a result, leadership is a critical element in securing employee satisfaction (Alegre et al., 2016). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between leadership and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

### ***The interrelationship of work conditions and employee job satisfaction***

Individuals devote most of their time at work and perceive incentives as important to securing their job satisfaction (Vorina, Simonič & Vlasova, 2017). Yildiz and Kara (2017) and Liu, Kob and Chapleo (2017) postulate that when an organisation provides a rewarding working environment for employees, they are more willing to align their interests with those of the employer, resulting in the creation of an environment that is more beneficial to both parties. Burin et al. (2015) argue that job satisfaction is determined by all of the positive and negative perceptions of employees with regard to their work environment. Quality work environments have been linked to employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment and the subsequent intention to remain employed. According to Ruizalba, Bermúdez-González, Rodríguez-Molina and Blanca (2014), employees tend to become more satisfied and committed to the organisation when they are of the opinion that management is sincerely interested in their personal well-being. Employees are eventually responsible for the creation of organisational wealth. As a result, by motivating them to enhance their overall productivity and delivery, the organisation can secure that its goals are attained (Sharma, Kong & Kingshott, 2016). Considering this, employers provide employees with benefits as motivation to increase job performance and job satisfaction, thereby enhancing employee productivity levels and their commitment to the organisation (Odunlade, 2012). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

- H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between work conditions and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

**FIGURE 1:  
PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL**

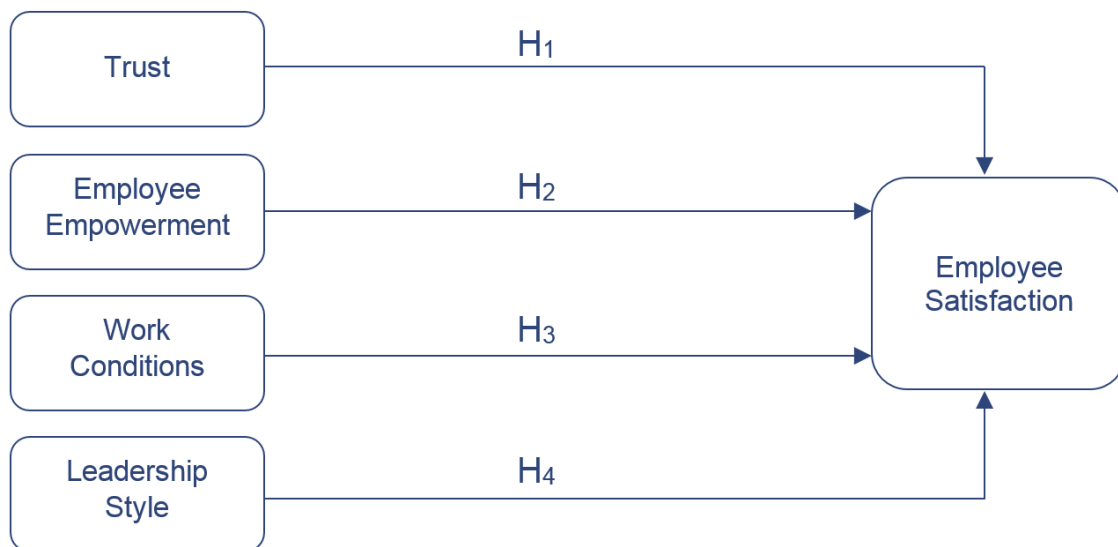


Figure 1 depicts the elements of developing and maintaining a satisfied workforce as well as the hypothesised relationships proposed for the study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study applied a descriptive research design (Burns & Bush, 2014), and data was collected from the banking employees of a major retail bank in South Africa. The study flowed from the master’s degree dissertation of Pathu Ladzani, published at the University of Johannesburg under the title “The perceived influence of the internal marketing element ‘people’ on internal customer satisfaction”, and the co-author of this article was the supervisor of the dissertation. Considering that the private wealth employee population at the selected bank was small and each of these employees could be contacted with ease at low cost, the study applied a census approach. A census refers to the obtaining of data from the whole population (Wiid & Diggins, 2009). A total of 250 useable questionnaires were collected for analysis. The sample size of 250 respondents was deemed sufficient when considering the minimum sample size of  $50 + 4$  (number of independent variables) as suggested by Tabachnik and Fidell (2007).

Data collection was secured through the use of self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire began with an introduction and one screening question to secure that prospective respondents had been with the bank for a period longer than six months. The questionnaire also included sections probing the demographic profile of the respondents and their understanding of internal marketing concepts. Five-point unlabelled Likert-type scales were used to measure the respondents' level of agreement with respect to the constructs of the study. Accordingly items assessing trust, employee empowerment, leadership, work conditions and employee satisfaction were included, where 1 indicated "strongly disagree" and 5 indicated "strongly agree". Scales for measuring the different constructs were adapted from the following authors: Semerciöz et al. (2011) for trust; Westgeest (2011) for employee empowerment; Papathanasiou and Siati (2014) for work conditions; Fowler (2009) for leadership; and Fowler (2009) and Lubbe (2013) for employee satisfaction.

The validity of the study was secured by ensuring that the items in the measurement instrument supported the stated research objectives. A pilot study was conducted that involved 10 respondents who corresponded with the sampling frame, verifying that the questionnaire did indeed measure what it was intended to measure. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated to measure the reliability of the items used in the research instrument. After the data was edited and cleaned it was entered into SPSS 23.0. Using SPSS 23.0, descriptive statistics were calculated to gain insight into the demographic profile of respondents and the 26 items measuring the five constructs of the study. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to uncover the interrelationships of the items measuring the study's constructs (Gaskin, 2013). The EFA resulted in the four constructs being expanded to five constructs, with employee empowerment being divided into two new constructs, namely employee empowerment (confidence in ability) and employee empowerment (autonomy in job). This resulted in hypothesis 2 being divided into two sub-hypotheses. Statistical techniques applied to test the hypotheses formulated for the study included multiple regression analysis and independent sample t-tests.

## EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

### *Profile of respondents*

The majority of the respondents were in the age category of 41 to 50 years (43.9%), followed by those of 31 to 40 years (30.9%), 51 to 60 years (19.2%), and 60 years or older (6%). Females comprised 64.9% of the respondents and males 35.1%. The largest race group was white (33.3%), followed by coloured (23.2%), black (23.1%) and Indian/Asian (17.0%), while some respondents (3.4%) were not willing to disclose their race. In addition, 29% of the respondents had worked for the bank for 3 to 9 years, 24% for more than 18 years, 21% for 10 to 17 years, and 26% for less than 2 years.

### *Reliability*

The coefficient alpha, or Cronbach's alpha, is the average of all people split-half coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items. Cronbach's alpha values vary in value from 0, meaning no consistency, to 1, meaning complete consistency. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.80 or higher are regarded as having high reliability and those from 0.70 to 0.79 as having good reliability; values from 0.60 to 0.69 are considered fair; and coefficients lower than 0.60 are questionable (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau & Bush, 2010). The reliability of the research instrument for this study was determined utilising Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Lubbe, 2013). Cronbach's alpha is calculated as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

**TABLE 1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS**

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha
Trust	0.904
Employee empowerment (confidence in ability)	0.806
Employee empowerment (autonomy in job)	0.702
Work conditions	0.806
Leadership	0.818
Employee satisfaction	0.750

Table 1 illustrates that the Cronbach’s alpha scores for the different internal people constructs and employee job satisfaction varied between 0.702 and 0.904, indicating good reliability.

### ***The influence of trust, employee empowerment (confidence in ability), employee empowerment (autonomy in job), work conditions and leadership on employee satisfaction***

Multiple regression analysis was applied to discuss the relationship between the independent variables of trust, employee empowerment (confidence in ability), employee empowerment (autonomy in job), work conditions and leadership and the dependent variable of employee satisfaction. The results are reflected in Table 2.

**TABLE 2:  
REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF INTERNAL PEOPLE ELEMENTS ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Sig. value (p-value)	Beta value	T value	Adjusted R-square value
Employee satisfaction	Trust	0.319	0.069	0.999	0.584
	Employee empowerment (confidence in ability)	0.029	0.162	2.207	
	Employee empowerment (autonomy in job)	0.679	0.024	0.415	
	Work conditions	0.000	0.449	7.627	
	Leadership	0.025	0.125	2.261	

Table 2 indicates that employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership style had a statistically significant positive influence on employee job satisfaction, while trust and employee empowerment (autonomy in job) did not have a statistically significant positive influence on employee job satisfaction. The researcher relied on a 95% level of confidence, so a p-value of less than or equal to 0.05 implied that it is highly unlikely that the results are due to chance alone according to the independent sample t-test. This implies that the null hypotheses are rejected and the alternative hypotheses are accepted. The relationship between employee empowerment (confidence in ability) and employee job satisfaction is significant at  $p = 0.029$ ; the relationship between work conditions and employee job satisfaction is significant at  $p = 0.000$ ; and the relationship between leadership and employee job satisfaction is significant at  $p = 0.025$ ; but neither the relationship between trust and employee job satisfaction ( $p = 0.319$ ) nor the relationship between employee empowerment (autonomy in job) and employee job satisfaction ( $p = 0.679$ ) is statistically significant. In addition, Table 2 indicates that the multiple regression analysis explained 58.4% of the variance (R<sup>2</sup>) in employee job satisfaction. In other words, it can be said that 58.4% of a possible variation in the level of employee job satisfaction in a selected bank is caused by employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership.

**TABLE 3: HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

Hypothesis	Independent variable	Dependent variable	$\beta$	Sig.	Finding
H <sub>1</sub>	Trust	Employee job satisfaction	0.069	0.319	Rejected
H <sub>2a</sub>	Employee empowerment (confidence in ability)		0.162	0.029	Accepted
H <sub>2b</sub>	Employee empowerment (autonomy in job)		0.024	0.679	Rejected
H <sub>3</sub>	Work conditions		0.449	0.000	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	Leadership		0.125	0.025	Accepted

Table 3 reflects the outcome (acceptance or rejection) of the different hypotheses formulated for the study. Hypotheses  $H_{2a}$ ,  $H_3$  and  $H_4$  are accepted, whilst hypotheses  $H_1$  and  $H_{2b}$  are rejected.

## DISCUSSION

From an industry perspective, the study contributes in potentially assisting the banking industry to recognise how trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership can nurture employee satisfaction. This outcome will be governed, however, by the extent to which employees of the bank perceive trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership as positive. As noted by Burin (2011), South African service businesses increasingly realise the importance of having an internal marketing programme to retain and motivate the best employees to deliver the best level of service. Therefore, the main objective of internal marketing is to motivate employees so that they can achieve service excellence (Mishra, 2010). The study suggests that a focused internal marketing approach will strengthen employee satisfaction through an understanding of the factors (such as trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership) required to strengthen employee happiness.

Theoretically, the study makes two contributions. Firstly, it establishes that employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership, as elements of the “internal people” component of internal marketing, do lead to positive employee satisfaction. The argument can therefore be proposed that only selected constructs, proposed by theory to influence employee satisfaction, do have a positive influence on the satisfaction of employees in the banking industry of an emerging market (as the study hypothesises). The findings from this study are significant as they demonstrate what constitutes a sound internal people strategy and how this influences employee satisfaction. Future researchers could use the different elements of “internal people” to study their influence on various domains, such as affective commitment or employee loyalty. Therefore, the study contributes to internal marketing literature through the proposition of useful measurement dimensions.

Secondly, the study provides an enhanced understanding of the influence on employee satisfaction of “internal people” constructs such as employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership from the perspective of an emerging African economy and a competitive industry such as the banking industry. The research study proposes a model that clarifies how employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership have a direct positive influence on employee satisfaction. Therefore, the positive influence of internal people elements (employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership) on employee satisfaction can provide a bank with a competitive advantage in retaining its employees and securing professional and sustained service delivery.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

When considering the results of the study, it can be said that the trust of employees in their organisation (e.g. a bank) plays a crucial role in their interaction with customers and their level of satisfaction while working for the organisation. Therefore, to secure employee satisfaction it is important for a bank to ensure that employees are of the opinion that the organisation has their best interests at heart. In addition, the primary focus of a bank should be not solely on generating profits but also on ensuring that employees who deliver the required service are well taken care of and are trusted to continue delivering the service in a professional manner, supportive of high service quality levels. When an organisational brand is trusted by its employees, such employees are empowered more successfully to convince the customer of what they are selling.

Secondly, only when employees can effectively take ownership of decision making can they provide a service that will keep the end user happy. It is therefore important for an organisation (such as a bank) to provide training for their employees and then to trust that this training has equipped them with all the necessary tools to provide exceptional service that enhances customer satisfaction. It is only when employees are respected for the job that they do and are acknowledged in their work environment that they feel confident and enabled to excel in what they have been tasked with. Through such an approach, the delivery time to end-user customers can also be improved.

Thirdly, it is no secret that additional benefits contribute to employee satisfaction. These include favourable remuneration, working hours (flexitime) and fringe benefits, the ambience of the work environment, and the comfort of employees' chairs and desks. When an organisation ensures that the employees are comfortable with their surroundings during their working hours, this can have a positive influence on their level of satisfaction. Acknowledgement of employee family achievements, the establishment of a baby centre for employees who are parents (e.g. a crèche on



the working premises), and the creation of more flexible working hours for mothers to be able to collect their children from school can also create a more favourable work environment.

Fourthly, the leadership style displayed by the leader is what motivates or demotivates employees. If employees feel that their leaders do not trust them, do not care about their work conditions, and do not have their best interests at heart, they will not enjoy working for that organisation and will become dissatisfied. However, when employees are of the opinion that their leaders view them as part of the team and trust them enough to handle their job on their own, their satisfaction increases.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study intended to determine the influence of the internal marketing element “people” on employee satisfaction from a banking perspective in order to enhance their satisfaction at a selected bank. The study established that the “internal people” constructs of employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership do have a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction levels of employees. It should be noted, however, that a bank can improve and maintain employee satisfaction if it creates work conditions that successfully empower employees to develop greater belief in their own abilities, and if management displays a participative leadership style that supports employee empowerment and continuous employee development.

In terms of limitations, only four elements of “internal people”, namely trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership, were researched in a single service setting. However, focused insights into these four elements of the “internal people” construct were delivered and its influence on employee job satisfaction within a banking services environment in South Africa discussed. An understanding of this can assist banks in emerging economies in enhancing employee job satisfaction, thereby reducing staff turnover and strengthening employee retention in the long term.

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