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Internal Marketing as a Driver of Corporate Image: Evidence from Tourist Agencies in Algeria

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Abstract :

This study investigates the impact of internal marketing on the corporate mental image of tourist agencies from the perspective of their employees. The research aims to determine how key dimensions of internal marketing—appointment and recruitment, training, motivation, administrative empowerment, internal communication, and administrative support—shape employees' perceptions of their organization's image. Data were collected during the 2024 analysis period through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees of selected tourist agencies in Algeria. The study employed a descriptive and analytical approach, supported by correlation and multiple regression analyses using SPSS (version 24). The empirical results reveal a statistically significant relationship between internal marketing and the organizational mental image ($R = 0.461$, $p < 0.05$). Appointment and recruitment and administrative empowerment emerged as the most influential predictors, while motivation, training, and managerial support also contributed positively. However, internal communication did not show a significant independent effect. These findings clarify the research problem by demonstrating that well-structured internal marketing practices enhance employees' perceptions of their organization's credibility and attractiveness. The study concludes that internal marketing constitutes a strategic managerial tool for strengthening internal cohesion and corporate image, offering both theoretical and practical implications for improving competitiveness in the tourism sector.

Keywords : Internal marketing; corporate image; empowerment; tourism sector; Algeria.

JEL Classification Codes: M31 –M12 – D23 –M54

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1. Introduction:

Internal marketing has emerged as a strategic approach to align employees with organizational values and improve service quality. It treats employees as internal customers whose satisfaction directly affects external customer experiences. A strong corporate image, in turn, represents the collective perception of an organization by its stakeholders. Recent studies emphasize that this image is shaped not only by external marketing but also by internal factors such as communication, motivation, and employee engagement. Accordingly, internal marketing practices play a vital role in creating a coherent and positive corporate image that reflects the organization's culture and values. Understanding this relationship is essential, as it provides insight into how internal strategies shape external perceptions and sustain competitive advantage in dynamic business environments.

The tourism sector in Algeria has witnessed significant transformation, with increasing recognition of the importance of internal marketing as a strategic tool for enhancing organizational performance and corporate image. Internal marketing, which focuses on treating employees as internal customers, is pivotal in service industries where employee satisfaction directly influences customer experiences and perceptions. In the context of Algerian tourist agencies, the interplay between internal marketing and corporate image is particularly salient, given the sector's role in national economic development and its exposure to global competition. Recent studies highlight that effective internal marketing practices not only improve employee satisfaction and loyalty but also contribute to a positive corporate image, which is essential for attracting and retaining customers in a dynamic tourism market (Gourine & Gourine, 2022; Regue & Regue, 2024; Sousa, 2024). Moreover, the Algerian tourism industry faces unique challenges, including the need for digital transformation, service quality enhancement, and adaptation to post-pandemic realities (Benchaib, 2022; Fadhela et al., 2025; Tadjine & Mebarki, 2024). This literature review synthesizes research on internal marketing, corporate image, the specific context of Algerian tourist agencies, and the relationship between internal marketing and corporate image, providing a comprehensive foundation for further empirical investigation.

2. Literature Review:

Internal marketing has been widely recognized as a strategic tool for enhancing organizational performance, particularly in service industries. Research demonstrates that internal marketing practices—such as effective communication, employee training, empowerment, and reward systems—are instrumental in achieving employee satisfaction and organizational commitment (Farndale & Murrer, 2015). These practices foster a customer-oriented culture, which is essential for delivering high-quality services and achieving competitive advantage. In a cross- national study, (Farndale & Murrer, 2015) found that job resources, including financial rewards and participation in decision-making, positively influence employee engagement across different countries, highlighting the universal relevance of internal marketing principles. Similarly, (Liu et al., 2021) conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that a knowledge-friendly organizational culture, which is closely linked to internal marketing, significantly enhances both financial and non-financial performance, especially in service industries. These findings underscore the foundational

Recruitment and training are central elements of internal marketing that shape employee attitudes and alignment with corporate goals. (Gilani & Jamshed, 2016) emphasized that recruitment process outsourcing enhances employer branding and corporate image when managed with transparency and

employee inclusion. (Roper & Gary Davies, 2010) found that effective training strengthens affective brand associations and employee satisfaction, both of which improve perceptions of the company's image. Similarly, (Ma et al., 2022) demonstrated that corporate green image positively influences employer attractiveness through perceived value, suggesting that training in sustainability enhances both employee engagement and the company's external reputation. Studies also highlight that the quality of onboarding and professional development programs can bridge the gap between internal identity and external image (Davies & Chun, 2002). Therefore, strategic recruitment and consistent training create a workforce that embodies corporate values, thereby strengthening corporate image coherence.

Motivation and empowerment are significant antecedents of employees' internalization of corporate identity. (Demir, 2022) found that motivational practices are primary drivers of internal marketing success, directly influencing service quality and perceived corporate image. In contrast, excessive empowerment without clear guidance may negatively affect perceptions, underscoring the importance of administrative support. (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2023) argued that internal communication fosters happiness at work and innovation, enhancing organizational reputation. Likewise, (Batt et al., 2021) demonstrated that internal sponsorship activities and communication enhance employees' brand commitment. (He, 2012) expanded this understanding by identifying "corporate identity anchors," including vision, mission, and values, as critical for administrative empowerment and internal coherence. The alignment of motivational systems, leadership support, and open communication thus forms the foundation for a positive corporate image perceived both internally and externally (Fall & Massey, 2006; Powell & Ennis, 2007).

Corporate image is not only the outcome of external advertising but also the result of consistent internal communication and brand alignment. (Gary Davies & Chun, 2002) identified discrepancies between employee identity and customer perceptions, showing that when internal identity exceeds external image, organizations are better positioned to sustain credibility and trust. (Kottász et al., 2008) demonstrated that internal initiatives such as corporate art collections foster shared meaning, enhance pride, and visually communicate company values to employees and visitors alike. Similarly, (Khanna et al., 2013) found that corporate real estate can serve as a tangible representation of corporate identity and brand values, strengthening internal cohesion while projecting a unified external image.

A strong corporate image contributes significantly to organizational success. (Foroudi et al., 2017) examined corporate logos as visual symbols influencing both internal stakeholders' professionalism and trust.

Corporate image is a multifaceted construct encompassing stakeholders' perceptions of an organization's identity, reputation, and value proposition. In the tourism and hospitality sector, corporate image is shaped by service quality, employee behavior, brand communication, and customer experiences (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). (Tasci & Gartner, 2007)reviewed a large body of literature and proposed a comprehensive conceptualization of destination image, emphasizing its impact on both supply- and demand-side aspects of marketing. The study concluded that while the importance of corporate image is well established, there remain many facets of this complex construct yet to be investigated empirically. (Vishwanathan et al., 2019) further highlighted that corporate reputation, as a component of corporate image, enhances firm performance through mechanisms such

as stakeholder reciprocation and risk mitigation. These insights illustrate that a strong corporate image is essential for competitive positioning and customer loyalty in tourism.

The relationship between internal marketing and corporate image can be unpacked through the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of employee perception. (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2004) found that perceived external prestige (a cognitive factor) enhances job satisfaction and affective commitment. (Roper & Gary Davies, 2010) linked affective brand associations to stronger employee satisfaction and customer perceptions. Behavioral outcomes—such as advocacy, cooperation, and alignment with brand promises—are fostered by strong internal identity and communication structures (Aurand et al., 2005; Kottász et al., 2008; Simões et al., 2005) proposed that corporate identity management diffuses values and goals that integrate cognitive understanding with affective and behavioral consistency. (Foroudi et al., 2017) added that corporate visual identity (logos, colors) influences emotional and behavioral responses, reinforcing internal brand consistency. Collectively, these findings suggest that a coherent internal marketing system cultivates employees' cognitive awareness, emotional attachment, and behavioral loyalty, all of which enhance the organization's corporate image.

Research on internal marketing highlights its influence on corporate image and reputation. Jung, (Jung et al., 2016)demonstrated that internal marketing positively impacts market orientation, which subsequently enhances corporate image and firm performance. Their findings suggest that employee satisfaction and internal communication serve as mediating factors in building a strong image of reliability and trust. Similarly, (Aurand et al., 2005)emphasized that human resources play a crucial role in internal branding. They found that when HR departments are actively involved in brand communication, employees exhibit stronger brand-aligned behaviors, reinforcing the corporate image. (Botha, 2016) also observed that internal marketing initiatives help maintain consistency between corporate culture and brand expression, ensuring that employees project the organization's desired identity in every interaction.

The internal marketing framework strongly connects with employee satisfaction and commitment. (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2004) showed that employees' perceived external prestige—the way they believe outsiders view their organization—significantly influences their job satisfaction and affective commitment. Likewise, (Abu-ElSamen & Akroush, 2018) identified that internal marketing enhances customer orientation among employees, which contributes to improved performance and loyalty. (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2023) added that effective internal communication promotes happiness at work and intrapreneurial behavior, both of which strengthen the organization's overall image. Collectively, these findings highlight that satisfied and engaged employees act as authentic ambassadors of the firm's image, linking internal satisfaction with external reputation.

In the financial sector, (Lymperopoulos et al., 2012) found that green marketing initiatives enhance a bank's image and strengthen brand equity. (Wu et al., 2016) similarly reported that corporate social responsibility (CSR) positively affects consumers' attitudes toward a brand, which in turn improves purchase intentions. These studies collectively demonstrate that firms cultivating a positive corporate image through responsible and internally aligned practices gain reputational advantages and competitive differentiation.

While numerous studies affirm the importance of internal marketing for developing a strong corporate image, several limitations persist. Most existing research focuses on external outcomes, such as customer satisfaction or brand equity, rather than employees' internal perceptions. Moreover, prior

studies tend to isolate specific internal marketing dimensions—communication, motivation, or training—without considering their combined effect on corporate image formation. Consequently, there is a lack of integrated models explaining how internal marketing activities collectively influence employees' perception of the enterprise's image. Addressing this gap is essential to understand how internal marketing practices foster coherence between internal identity and external reputation, thereby supporting sustainable brand success

Extensive empirical research supports the positive linkage between internal marketing and corporate image. (Simões et al., 2005) and (Aurand et al., 2005) emphasized that human resource involvement in internal branding directly influences brand image and employee commitment. (Zeng et al., 2005) demonstrated that internal environmental management and standardization efforts improve corporate image through better stakeholder relationships. Similarly, Nguyen and (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018) found that green marketing practices—particularly internal processes—strengthen corporate image and brand equity. (Demir, 2022) confirmed that internal marketing dimensions such as motivation and reward systems are the strongest predictors of positive corporate image among SMEs. The link is also evident in CSR-focused studies where internal marketing enhances employees' perception of organizational ethics and social engagement, leading to a more favorable corporate image (García-De-Los-Salmones-Sánchez et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2016)

2.1 Research Gap:

Despite extensive research on internal marketing and corporate image, several gaps remain that warrant further investigation. Most previous studies (Aurand et al., 2005; Demir, 2022) have primarily focused on service industries in international contexts, limiting the generalizability of their findings across sectors and regions. Specifically, there is a scarcity of empirical research addressing the dynamics of internal marketing and corporate image within Algerian tourist agencies (Kelfaoui et al., 2021). In addition, the majority of existing studies adopt cross-sectional designs, lacking longitudinal insight into how sustained internal marketing practices evolve to influence corporate image over time (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2023). While the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of corporate image have been theoretically distinguished, few empirical studies have integrated these dimensions within a unified internal marketing–corporate image framework. Furthermore, the employee perspective remains underexplored compared to external stakeholder views, despite its critical role in shaping corporate identity and reputation (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2004). Emerging factors such as organizational culture, digital transformation, and sustainability practices (Liu et al., 2021), along with contemporary challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting customer expectations, further highlight the need for contextualized research. Accordingly, this study addresses these gaps by examining how internal marketing dimensions—recruitment, motivation, empowerment, communication, and administrative support—jointly influence employees' perceptions of their company's image within the Algerian tourism sector, providing a comprehensive internal lens on corporate image formation.

2.2. The problematic of the study:

This study seeks to address the following central research problem:

To what extent does internal marketing contribute to shaping the corporate (mental) image of an organization from the perspective of its employees?

To operationalize this problem and translate it into specific, measurable dimensions, the following research questions were formulated:

Are there statistically significant differences in employees' perceptions of the impact of internal marketing on the corporate image of the organization according to personal variables (gender, age, marital status, educational level, job position, and years of experience) at a significance level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$?

2.3. Study hypotheses:

Based on the research problem and the questions posed, the following hypotheses were developed to guide the study:

H1: Internal marketing has a statistically significant impact on the corporate image of the organization from the perspective of its employees at a significance level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

H2: There are statistically significant differences in the perceived impact of internal marketing on the corporate image of the organization according to personal characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational level, job position, and years of experience) at a significance level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

These hypotheses serve as a framework for empirical analysis and guide the interpretation of findings regarding the relationship between internal marketing and employees' perception of the organization's image.

2.4. The importance of the study:

The importance of this study arises from the growing recognition of internal marketing as a strategic tool for improving employees' perceptions and behaviors within the organization. When internal marketing principles are effectively adopted across all organizational levels, they foster job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational loyalty. These outcomes, in turn, positively influence how employees perceive and communicate the organization's corporate image. A strong internal image among employees contributes to higher levels of commitment and alignment with organizational objectives, leading to improved performance and sustainable competitiveness. Thus, understanding the impact of internal marketing on employees' perceptions of corporate image is crucial for both managerial effectiveness and long-term reputation management.

2.5. Objectives of the study:

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To define the concept, characteristics, objectives, and dimensions of internal marketing.

- To clarify the concept, types, characteristics, and components of the corporate (mental) image, and to explain how it is formed among internal stakeholders.

- To examine the relationship between internal marketing and the corporate image of the organization from the perspective of its employees.

- To assess the impact of internal marketing on the corporate image of the organization as perceived by employees.

- To propose practical recommendations and policy suggestions to enhance the implementation of internal marketing and strengthen the organization's corporate image based on empirical findings.

3. Research method and data collection:

3.1. Study approach:

To address the research problem and the corresponding sub-questions, this study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach. This methodology is appropriate for examining the phenomenon under investigation—namely, internal marketing and its role in shaping the corporate image of the organization from employees' perspectives. The study focuses on a sample of tourism agencies in Algeria, where data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted to identify relationships, patterns, and causal effects between the main research variables. The descriptive component allows for an accurate portrayal of the existing situation, while the analytical component provides insights into the magnitude and direction of the relationships between internal marketing and corporate image.

3.2. Variables:

To provide conceptual clarity, the variables used in this study are defined and organized in Table 1. The independent variable, Internal Marketing, encompasses several dimensions that reflect the organization's internal practices aimed at engaging and motivating employees. The dependent variable, Corporate Image, represents employees' overall perceptions of their organization through cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The table below summarizes each variable, its type, key dimensions, and relevant scholarly references that support their theoretical and empirical foundations.

Table 1: Description of Variables

Variable	Description	Key References
Independent Variable Internal Marketing	Organizational efforts to attract, develop, motivate, and retain employees through practices that treat them as internal customers, aligning employee goals with organizational objectives.	Aurand et al. (2005); Demir (2022); Gilani & Jamshed (2016); Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2023)
Subdimension Appointment and Recruitment	Selecting and hiring individuals who fit the organizational culture and brand values, reinforcing the company's internal and external image.	Gilani & Jamshed (2016); Davies & Chun (2002)
Training	Continuous employee development to enhance skills, brand understanding, and service quality, strengthening organizational identity and image.	Roper & Davies (2010); Ma et al. (2022)
Motivation	Incentive systems and recognition practices that enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty.	Demir (2022); Zeng et al. (2005)

Administrative Empowerment	Entrusting employees with autonomy and responsibility, encouraging identification with corporate values.	He (2012); Powell & Ennis (2007)
Internal Communication	Sharing organizational information and values to build understanding, commitment, and alignment.	Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2023); Batt et al. (2021)
Administrative Support	Managerial backing, resources, and guidance provided to employees to improve performance and strengthen the internal brand.	Simões et al. (2005); Fall & Massey (2006)
Corporate Image	Employees' overall perception of the organization, reflecting beliefs, emotions, and behaviors toward the company.	Herrbach & Mignonac (2004); Foroudi et al. (2017); Roper & Davies (2010)
Cognitive Component	Employees' knowledge and beliefs about the organization's reputation, ethics, and performance.	Simões et al. (2005); Herrbach & Mignonac (2004)
Affective Component	Employees' emotional attachment, pride, and commitment to the organization.	Roper & Davies (2010); Aurand et al. (2005)
Behavioral Component	Employees' actions supporting the organization, such as advocacy, cooperation, and brand-consistent behavior.	Foroudi et al. (2017); Kottász et al. (2008)

3.3. The Population and the Sample of the Study:

The present field study took place in tourist agencies in Algeria. The study community has consisted of the employees who belong to tourist agencies in Algeria. To reach the objectives of the research study, the random sample method was adopted and (70) questionnaires paper were distributed, 47 have been retrieved and found usable data for analysis.

3.4. Research Instrument:

The main research instrument used for this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire used for the study broadly has three sections included 33 items. The first part dealt with the respondents' demographic information. Under the demographic section variables such as gender of the respondent, age, income level and educational level were asked. The second part of the questionnaire concerned with the questions used to assess internal marketing. This section was also divided into five subsection. The five subsections were also grouped into the various dimensions of internal marketing in the tourist agencies. These subsections are : appointment and recruitment -training –motivation administrative empowerment -internal communications - administrative support.

The third part of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree with various the mental image of the organsation using a five-point scale. The Five-Point Likert's scale was used to evaluate subjects' responses. Points were given based on the table below.

Table 2: Likert's scale

degree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	strongly agree
Point given	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Source: By authors

3.5. Statistical Methods:

In order to answer the questions of the study and to analyze the data, the researchers used the Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS.V.24) software to analyze data. The statistics techniques used in data analysis include:

Descriptive Statistic Measures: Using the arithmetical averages and standard deviations to precise the proportional significance of the sample individuals, response towards the axes and the dimensions of the study variables.

Simple Linear Regression: Using the simple regression coefficient to measure the impact of the independent variable on the dependent one.

Cronbach's Alpha: for testing the reliability of the study tool.

One sample T-test: Using the one sample T-test to test our hypotheses, so that the null hypothesis is rejected when sig is less than 0.05.

3.6. Reliability Analysis of items:

This scale refers to the extent to which the used tool is reliable in measuring the variables that the study covers. The scale results would be statistically accepted if the Cronbach's alpha value was more than (0.60).

Table 3. Reliability test

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	N° Of Items
Appointment And Recruitment	**0.830**	**4**
Training	**0.849**	**4**
Motivation	**0.811**	**4**
Administrative Empowerment	**0.819**	**4**

Internal Communications	**0.839**	**4**
Administrative Support	**0.819**	**4**
Cognitive Component	**0.847**	**3**
Affective Component:	**0.841**	**3**
Behavioral Component	**0.838**	**3**

Source: By authors from Spss.V.23 Output.

Table 03 shows that all constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.811 to 0.849 for internal marketing dimensions and from 0.838 to 0.847 for corporate image components. These values exceed the accepted reliability threshold of 0.70, confirming the robustness of the measurement scales. The highest reliability was observed for training ($\alpha = 0.849$) and internal communication ($\alpha = 0.839$), indicating that employees hold consistent perceptions regarding these practices. Similarly, the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of corporate image show balanced reliability, suggesting coherent employee perceptions across belief, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Overall, the high reliability across all variables confirms the internal validity of the instrument and reflects a stable organizational environment in which internal marketing practices are well understood and contribute to shaping a unified and positive corporate image.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

4.1. Descriptive statistics for the study variables:

This section illustrates the descriptive statistics for each variable and its item as mean and standard deviation, beside the rank and the level of importance. In order to analyze the questionnaire paragraphs and interpret the results accurately, the analysis scale categories were defined as follows:

Table 4 : The analysis scale categories

Range field	**1-1.8**	**1.8-2.6**	**2.6- 3.4**	**3.4- 4.2**	**4.2- 5**
importance	**Very low**	**low**	**medium**	**high**	**Very high**

Source: By authors

Table 5 illustrates the details about mean and standard deviation scores of the independent variable (internal marketing).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for the Independent variable (internal marketing).

Servqual Items	**Mean**	**Std.Dev**
Appointment And Recruitment	3.96	0.66
Training	4.03	0.66
Motivation	3.85	0.78

Administrative Empowerment	3.79	0.83
Internal Communications	4.07	0.68
Administrative Support	4.18	0.81
Internal Marketing	**3.98**	**0.56**

Source: By authors from Spss.V.24 Output.

Table 05 presents the descriptive statistics for the SERVQUAL dimensions measuring internal marketing as perceived by employees. The overall mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.56) indicates that respondents generally view internal marketing practices as moderately strong, reflecting a positive but improvable internal environment. Among the six dimensions, administrative support obtained the highest mean (M = 4.18, SD = 0.81), showing that management provides clear backing and guidance, which enhances trust and operational stability. Such support represents an efficient allocation of managerial resources, reducing coordination costs and improving human-capital productivity. Internal communication ranked second (M = 4.07, SD = 0.68), confirming that information flows are transparent and timely; this facilitates goal alignment and minimizes informational asymmetry within the firm. Training also recorded a high mean (M = 4.03, SD = 0.66), demonstrating that capacity-building and skill-development programs are consistently implemented across departments. From an economic standpoint, investment in training strengthens human capital and improves marginal productivity, yielding long-term efficiency gains. The appointment and recruitment dimension (M = 3.96, SD = 0.66) suggests that selection practices are fairly structured, ensuring reasonable alignment between employee capabilities and organizational needs. Meanwhile, motivation (M = 3.85, SD = 0.78) reflects a moderate perception of incentives and rewards, implying that the existing system may not fully satisfy employees' expectations or recognize individual contributions, potentially limiting discretionary effort. The lowest mean was observed for administrative empowerment (M = 3.79, SD = 0.83), indicating that decision-making autonomy remains somewhat constrained; the relatively higher standard deviation suggests heterogeneity in empowerment across hierarchical levels. Economically, restricted empowerment can hinder responsiveness and innovation, creating latent inefficiencies that dilute the benefits of other internal marketing practices. The pattern of means—high for support, communication, and training, but lower for motivation and empowerment—reveals an asymmetry between structural facilitation and psychological engagement. Standard deviations ranging from 0.66 to 0.83 show moderate dispersion, meaning employees share broadly similar views but differ in specific experiences, possibly due to positional or departmental effects. Collectively, these results portray an organization that performs well in managerial support and knowledge diffusion yet needs improvement in incentive alignment and participatory management. Strengthening empowerment and motivation mechanisms could amplify the positive spillovers of internal marketing, enhance employee identification with organizational values, and ultimately reinforce the corporate image perceived both internally and externally.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for the dependent variable **(the mental image of the organsation)**

Servqual Items	**Mean**	**Std.Dev**
Cognitive Component	3.67	0.90

Affective Component	4.31	0.54
Behavioral Component	4.19	0.69
Mental Image	**4.05**	**0.58**

Source: By authors from Spss.V.24 Output.

Table 06 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the dependent variable representing the mental image of the organization, which consists of three main components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The overall mean of the composite variable is 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.58, indicating that employees generally hold a positive perception of their organization's image. This value, lying above the scale midpoint, suggests that the institution enjoys a favorable internal reputation, reflecting credibility, emotional attachment, and supportive behavioral intentions among its workforce. From a statistical viewpoint, the moderate standard deviation denotes a reasonable level of consensus across respondents, although individual variations still exist due to differences in experience, position, or exposure to organizational culture.

Examining the subcomponents, the affective component recorded the highest mean (M = 4.31, SD = 0.54), revealing that employees express strong emotional identification and attachment to their organization. This result implies the presence of a healthy psychological climate in which employees feel valued, respected, and emotionally aligned with corporate values. From an economic perspective, such emotional commitment translates into lower turnover intentions, reduced monitoring costs, and higher discretionary effort, all of which contribute to improved organizational efficiency and long-term stability. The high affective score suggests that internal marketing practices—especially those related to communication, recognition, and support—are effectively fostering a sense of belonging and pride among employees.

The behavioral component also achieved a high mean (M = 4.19, SD = 0.69), indicating that employees demonstrate a strong willingness to act in ways that promote and defend the organization's reputation. This behavioral loyalty is a crucial asset, as it transforms positive perceptions into tangible actions such as advocacy, cooperation, and extra-role performance. Statistically, the moderate variability (SD = 0.69) suggests that most employees share this proactive orientation, though a minority may remain neutral or disengaged. Economically, such consistent positive behavior enhances internal cohesion and generates reputational spillovers that strengthen the organization's brand equity and market position.

In contrast, the cognitive component recorded a comparatively lower mean (M = 3.67, SD = 0.90), signifying that employees' rational evaluation of the organization—its competence, performance, and structural reputation—is somewhat less favorable than their emotional and behavioral assessments. The higher standard deviation indicates greater diversity in opinions, possibly reflecting differences in access to information or satisfaction with management decisions. This gap between the emotional and cognitive components is both statistically and managerially meaningful: while employees *feel* positively about the organization, they may hold mixed beliefs about its efficiency, competitiveness, or long-term prospects. From an economic standpoint, this discrepancy implies that emotional loyalty may currently compensate for weaker perceptions of organizational performance, a dynamic that could shift unfavorably if cognitive concerns remain unaddressed.

Overall, the descriptive evidence portrays a workforce that is emotionally attached and behaviorally supportive but somewhat divided in its rational assessment of organizational effectiveness. This pattern underscores the importance of reinforcing cognitive trust through transparent communication, performance feedback, and participatory management. By strengthening the cognitive dimension to match the affective and behavioral ones, the organization can achieve a more balanced and sustainable internal image. In sum, the results from Table 06 confirm that employees' overall mental image of the organization is positive and cohesive, providing a solid foundation for further inferential analysis linking internal marketing practices to the development of this favorable internal perception.

4.2 Testing Hypotheses:

To obtain results and recommendations that underscore the importance of this study, we conducted tests on the study hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 1: To test the first hypothesis, "Employees find internal marketing in tourist agencies to be good," we formulated it as follows**:**

- H01: Employees do not find internal marketing in tourist agencies to be good at a 5% significance level.
- H11: Employees find internal marketing in tourist agencies to be good at a 5% significance level.

The table below presents the results of the t-test for the first hypothesis of the study:

Table 7. Results of T-test for the first hypothesis of the study

Dependent Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	T Value	Sig
hypothesis 1	4.01	0.54	12.77	0.000

Source: By authors from Spss.V.24 Output.

To derive results and recommendations highlighting the significance of this study, statistical tests were performed on the proposed hypotheses. The first hypothesis sought to assess employees' perceptions of internal marketing practices in Algerian tourist agencies. Formally, the null and alternative hypotheses were stated as follows:

* H_{01}: Employees do not find internal marketing in tourist agencies to be good at a 5% significance level.

* H_{11}: Employees find internal marketing in tourist agencies to be good at a 5% significance level.

Table 07 reports the results of the one-sample t-test conducted to evaluate this hypothesis. The mean score for internal marketing was 4.01, with a standard deviation of 0.54, while the calculated t-value reached 12.77 and the corresponding p-value (Sig.) was 0.000, which is far below the 0.05 threshold. Statistically, this result indicates a highly significant deviation from the neutral point of the scale, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_{11}). In other words, employees in tourist agencies generally perceive internal marketing practices as good and positively implemented within their organizations.

From an economic and managerial perspective, this finding carries several implications. The mean value above 4.00 demonstrates that internal marketing strategies—such as transparent communication, employee motivation, managerial support, and empowerment—are not only present but are functioning effectively across the sampled agencies. High employee agreement on the quality of internal marketing indicates a healthy internal environment, where human capital is treated as a strategic resource rather than a passive operational input. Such internal alignment is known to generate positive externalities in service quality, customer satisfaction, and corporate reputation, ultimately translating into improved organizational performance and competitiveness within the tourism sector.

Furthermore, the very high t-value (12.77) suggests that the observed mean difference is not only statistically significant but also economically meaningful. The magnitude of deviation implies that employees' satisfaction with internal marketing is both strong and consistent across the sample, with relatively low dispersion (SD = 0.54). This consistency enhances confidence in the robustness of the result, indicating that internal marketing practices are perceived uniformly across various tourist agencies. From a behavioral economics standpoint, such uniformity in perception reflects a shared internal culture and mutual understanding of organizational values—key factors that reduce transaction and coordination costs within service-oriented enterprises.

In practical terms, these findings emphasize that internal marketing represents a critical strategic asset for Algerian tourist agencies seeking to strengthen their internal cohesion and external image. By maintaining high levels of communication, training, and managerial support, these organizations enhance employees' commitment and motivation, which in turn improves their willingness to represent the organization positively to clients and external stakeholders. Consequently, the acceptance of the first hypothesis confirms that internal marketing is both recognized and appreciated by employees, validating its importance as a determinant of internal satisfaction and external brand credibility in the tourism industry.

Hypothesis 2:

- **H02:** There is not a statistically significant impact between internal marketing dimensions and the mental image in tourist agencies at a 5% significance level.
- **H12:** There is a statistically significant impact between internal marketing dimensions and the mental image in tourist agencies at a 5% significance level.

Table 8 below shows the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to test the impact of the combined internal marketing dimensions (Appointment And Recruitment, Training, Motivation, Administrative Empowerment, Internal Communications, Administrative Support) as independent variables on mental image as the dependent variable:

Table 8. The results of the multiple regression of the impact of the internal marketing dimensions on mental image dimensions

Variables	R	R2	F	Sig (f)
internal marketing (independent variable) mental image (dependent variable).	0.461	0.213	12.171	0.01

Source: By authors from Spss.V.24 Output.

The second hypothesis aimed to determine whether the combined dimensions of internal marketing significantly influence the mental image of tourist agencies from the perspective of their employees. The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

* H_{02}: There is no statistically significant impact between internal marketing dimensions and the mental image in tourist agencies at a 5% significance level.

* H_{12}: There is a statistically significant impact between internal marketing dimensions and the mental image in tourist agencies at a 5% significance level.

Table 08 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis performed to examine this relationship. The analysis produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.461, indicating a moderate positive relationship between internal marketing and the mental image of the organization. This suggests that improvements in internal marketing practices are generally associated with more favorable employee perceptions of their organization's image. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.213) shows that approximately 21.3% of the variance in the mental image can be explained by the combined effects of the six internal marketing dimensions: appointment and recruitment, training, motivation, administrative empowerment, internal communication, and administrative support. While this proportion is moderate, it reflects a meaningful explanatory power, considering the complexity and multidimensional nature of human perceptions within service organizations.

The F-statistic value of 12.171 with a corresponding significance level (Sig.) of 0.01 confirms that the overall regression model is statistically significant at the 5% level. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{12}) is accepted. Statistically, this means that the set of internal marketing variables jointly exerts a significant effect on the mental image perceived by employees. In practical terms, the probability of obtaining such a result by random chance is extremely low, which validates the robustness of the relationship between the constructs.

From an economic and managerial perspective, this finding underscores the strategic role of internal marketing as an intangible asset that directly shapes how employees perceive, evaluate, and emotionally connect with their organization. The significant model indicates that internal marketing mechanisms—such as effective recruitment, consistent training, open communication, empowerment, and managerial support—collectively contribute to forming a positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral image among employees. When employees perceive internal marketing as effective, they are more likely to internalize the organization's values, communicate its vision convincingly, and exhibit behaviors that reinforce its external reputation.

Although the R^2 value indicates that internal marketing explains just over one-fifth of the variance in mental image, this level of explanatory power is substantial in behavioral and organizational research, where outcomes are inherently influenced by multiple internal and external factors. The remaining variance may be attributed to contextual variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, external market conditions, or personal attitudes—all of which can interact with internal marketing to shape employees' perceptions.

Economically, the presence of a moderate but significant relationship suggests that internal marketing investments yield measurable returns through enhanced employee satisfaction, reduced internal

friction, and stronger alignment with organizational identity. In service industries such as tourism—where employee behavior directly shapes customer experiences—these internal improvements translate into higher service quality and greater brand equity. Moreover, the finding validates internal marketing as a cost-effective strategic lever for improving organizational image and long-term competitiveness without necessarily requiring major structural changes or financial outlays.

In summary, the regression results provide robust empirical evidence supporting the existence of a statistically significant and economically meaningful impact of internal marketing on employees' perception of the organization's mental image. The positive association (R = 0.461) and the model's significance (F = 12.171, p = 0.01) confirm that well-designed internal marketing practices play a critical role in shaping favorable internal attitudes and sustaining the corporate image in the tourism sector. These findings reinforce the theoretical premise that internal marketing is not merely a human-resource function but a strategic instrument that strengthens organizational identity and enhances reputation from within.

Table 9. The results of the simple regression of the impact of the internal marketing dimensions in the mental image.

Variables	R	R^2	F	SIG
Appointment And Recruitment	0.507	0.241	15.57	0.000
Training	0.342	0.105	5.29	0.020
Motivation	0.357	0.140	7.34	0.009
Administrative Empowerment	0.459	0.211	12.01	0.001
Internal Communications	0.179	0.032	1.497	0.227
Administrative Support	0.357	0.127	6.553	0.014

Source: By authors from Spss.V.24 Output.

To deepen the understanding of how individual dimensions of internal marketing influence the mental image of tourist agencies, separate simple regression analyses were conducted for each component. Table 09 summarizes the results of these models, where the mental image represents the dependent variable and each internal marketing dimension is treated as an independent predictor.

The results reveal that appointment and recruitment exert the strongest individual effect on the mental image of the organization, with a correlation coefficient of R = 0.507 and a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.241$. This indicates that approximately 24.1% of the variation in employees' perceptions of the organization's mental image can be explained by appointment and recruitment practices alone. The F-value (15.57) and the highly significant p-value (0.000) confirm the robustness of this relationship. Statistically, this dimension stands out as the most influential predictor in the model, suggesting that fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment processes shape how employees cognitively and emotionally evaluate their organization. Economically, this result implies that effective recruitment reduces information asymmetry and mismatch costs, thereby strengthening internal trust and enhancing the organization's internal reputation.

The second most influential factor is administrative empowerment ($R = 0.459$, $R^2 = 0.211$, $F = 12.01$, $p = 0.001$), which explains 21.1% of the variation in the mental image. This finding demonstrates that granting employees autonomy and decision-making authority significantly enhances their perception of the organization's image. From an economic viewpoint, empowerment acts as a mechanism that reduces principal-agent frictions, encourages initiative, and fosters a sense of psychological ownership. When employees feel empowered, they internalize organizational goals, which translates into stronger affective and behavioral alignment with the firm's values—key determinants of corporate image consistency and credibility.

The dimension of motivation also shows a statistically significant influence ($R = 0.357$, $R^2 = 0.140$, $F = 7.34$, $p = 0.009$), explaining 14% of the variance in the mental image. This relationship indicates that incentive mechanisms—both material and moral—are effective tools for enhancing employees' perceptions of their organization. In economic terms, well-designed motivational policies optimize effort allocation, reduce shirking, and increase overall efficiency. Employees who perceive the incentive system as fair and performance-based are more likely to associate the organization with professionalism and reliability, thereby reinforcing its internal image.

Administrative support presents a similar pattern ($R = 0.357$, $R^2 = 0.127$, $F = 6.55$, $p = 0.014$), explaining 12.7% of the variance in the mental image. The significance of this variable confirms that management's availability, feedback, and assistance directly shape how employees perceive organizational reliability and care. Supportive supervision not only facilitates task performance but also signals institutional commitment to employee well-being—a key driver of trust and long-term loyalty.

In contrast, training exhibits a moderate but statistically significant relationship ($R = 0.342$, $R^2 = 0.105$, $F = 5.29$, $p = 0.020$). The fact that training explains 10.5% of the variance in the mental image implies that skill-development initiatives positively influence employee perceptions, though to a lesser extent than recruitment or empowerment. This may suggest that while training programs exist, their impact on perceived image depends on how effectively they translate into career progression or improved job performance. Economically, training enhances human capital accumulation, but its reputational benefits emerge only when employees perceive a tangible return on their learning investment.

Interestingly, internal communication was the only dimension found to be statistically insignificant ($R = 0.179$, $R^2 = 0.032$, $F = 1.497$, $p = 0.227$). Although the correlation is positive, it is weak and not significant at the 5% level, indicating that communication alone does not strongly predict the mental image when isolated from other dimensions. This result may reflect message saturation or asymmetry—employees might receive information, but not necessarily perceive it as transparent, relevant, or motivating. From a managerial perspective, this underscores the need for more participative and two-way communication strategies that foster authenticity and trust rather than mere information dissemination.

Overall, the simple regression results confirm that most internal marketing dimensions have significant and positive effects on the mental image of tourist agencies, albeit with varying magnitudes. Appointment and recruitment and administrative empowerment emerge as the most powerful predictors, followed by motivation, administrative support, and training, while internal communication shows no significant independent effect. Statistically, these results validate the

multidimensional nature of internal marketing, while economically they emphasize that employees' perceptions of fairness, autonomy, and managerial backing are critical to building a strong internal image. Strengthening these dimensions can therefore enhance both internal cohesion and external competitiveness within the tourism sector, demonstrating that internal marketing is not merely a human resource function but a key driver of organizational reputation and performance.

4.3 Discussion:

The findings of this study yield several important insights. First, the results confirm that internal marketing practices in tourist agencies are generally perceived as positive (mean ≈ 4.01, $t = 12.77$, $p < 0.001$). Second, the multiple regression analysis shows that the six internal marketing dimensions jointly explain about 21.3 % of the variance in the employees' mental image ($R = 0.461$, $F = 12.171$, $p = 0.01$). Third, the simple regressions highlight heterogeneity in influence: appointment & recruitment and administrative empowerment have the highest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.241$ and 0.211 respectively), followed by motivation, administrative support, and training, whereas internal communications—when isolated—failed to reach statistical significance ($R^2 = 0.032$, $p = 0.227$).

These findings imply that not all internal marketing dimensions exert equal leverage on employees' perceptions. In this context, structural and procedural practices (fair recruitment, empowerment) appear more potent in shaping the mental image than pure communicative efforts. Economically, this suggests that employees value tangible control, fairness and managerial backing more than information flow per se. When employees perceive recruitment and empowerment as well designed, they are more inclined to form favorable cognitive, emotional, and behavioral images of their organization, reducing misalignment and internal friction.

Comparing these results with previous literature, we note alignment and extension. The positive role of internal marketing on organizational image echoes the conclusions of (Jung et al., 2016) and (Aurand et al., 2005). The strong effect of empowerment aligns with organizational behavior studies showing that delegation and autonomy boost identification and loyalty (Gary Davies & Chun, 2002). However, the insignificance of internal communications (in simple regression) contrasts with many works that emphasize internal communication as a core lever (Pološki Vokić, 2023); (Santos, 2023). One plausible explanation is that communication in these agencies remains top-down and lacks participatory features, limiting its impact on perception. Moreover, the context of Algerian tourist agencies may influence which dimensions of internal marketing carry more weight, reflecting cultural or institutional idiosyncrasies.

Despite these contributions, the study has limitations. First, the cross-sectional design means causality cannot be conclusively inferred. Second, relying solely on self-reported survey measures may generate common-method bias. Third, the sample is limited to tourist agencies in one country, restricting external generalizability. Fourth, internal communication's weak effect may reflect measurement issues—if communication items lacked nuance or did not capture two-way dialogue, their effect could be underestimated.

Another unexpected result is the relatively weak role of communication vis-à-vis empowerment. It might be that employees already receive information in many forms, so additional communication does not meaningfully shift perceptions; or that communications are perceived as generic or symbolic rather than substantive. It also raises the possibility that communication must operate in interaction

with trust and credibility to matter—a nuance suggested by recent studies (Bano & Kazmi, 2025) which find that trust moderates the effect of leadership communication on employee buy-in.

Given these considerations, further research should adopt longitudinal or panel designs to capture the temporal dynamics of internal marketing's effects on mental image. Researchers might also examine*mediators (trust, employee engagement, organizational identification) and moderators (cultural values, leadership styles, organizational resilience). Comparative studies across sectors or countries would help test generalizability. Qualitative or mixed-methods work (interviews, focus groups) could uncover how employees interpret internal marketing signals. Finally, refining measurement of internal communication—especially interactive, trust-building communication—may help reveal more nuanced effects.

5. Conclusion:

This study set out to examine the extent to which internal marketing contributes to the mental image of the organization from the perspective of its employees, focusing on tourist agencies as the empirical context. Specifically, it tested whether internal marketing dimensions—appointment and recruitment, training, motivation, administrative empowerment, internal communication, and administrative support—significantly influence employees' perceptions of their organization's cognitive, affective, and behavioral image.

The results provided strong evidence in favor of the proposed hypotheses. Internal marketing was perceived as generally effective ($M = 4.01$), and regression analyses confirmed a significant positive impact on the mental image ($R = 0.461$, $R^2 = 0.213$, $p < 0.05$). Among the six dimensions, appointment and recruitment and administrative empowerment emerged as the strongest predictors, while motivation, training, and managerial support also played meaningful roles. However, internal communication did not exhibit a significant independent effect. These findings imply that structural and procedural fairness—particularly in recruitment and empowerment—plays a stronger role in shaping employees' perceptions than purely communicative factors.

This study contributes to the existing literature in three ways. First, it empirically validates the theoretical link between internal marketing and corporate image from an internal stakeholder perspective, extending evidence to a developing-country and service-sector context. Second, it demonstrates that the relative weight of internal marketing dimensions differs across cultural and institutional settings, offering nuanced insights into which managerial practices matter most for image formation. Third, it integrates an economic interpretation of internal marketing as a strategic investment in human capital and organizational reputation, bridging marketing and organizational economics perspectives.

Nevertheless, the study has several limitations. Its cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the use of self-reported data introduces potential response bias. Furthermore, the analysis focused solely on tourist agencies in Algeria, which may constrain the generalizability of findings to other sectors or countries. Finally, while the model explained a significant portion of the variance in mental image, other organizational or psychological factors—such as leadership style, trust, or job satisfaction—may also play mediating roles.

Future research should adopt longitudinal or multi-sectoral designs to verify the durability of these relationships across time and contexts. Researchers could also explore mediating and moderating variables, such as organizational culture, employee engagement, or leadership communication, to better understand the mechanisms linking internal marketing to corporate image. Qualitative approaches could further reveal how employees interpret internal marketing practices and how these perceptions evolve. Practically, managers are encouraged to prioritize fair recruitment, authentic empowerment, and supportive managerial behaviors, as these actions foster a strong internal image that ultimately enhances organizational competitiveness in service-driven markets.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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