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Públicas e Ciência de Dados
Livro de Resumos Alargados**

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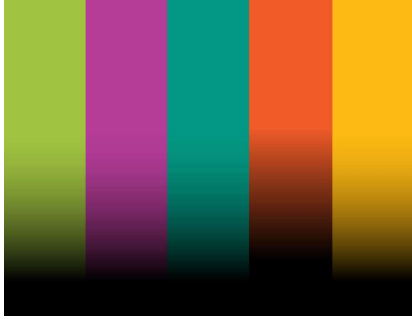
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Marketing interno, satisfação e motivação: uma aplicação ao contexto do ensino superior politécnico português

Internal marketing, satisfaction, and motivation: an application in a context of Portuguese polytechnic higher education

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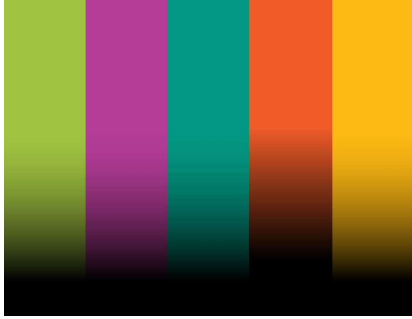
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Objectives

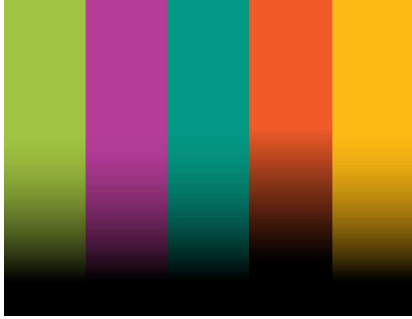
Higher education institutions (HEIs) increasingly operate in a competitive and performance-oriented environment, where students' satisfaction and engagement are central indicators of institutional quality. Student experience management has become a strategic priority in higher education governance, particularly in contexts shaped by digital transformation and increasing international competition. Therefore, marketing practices traditionally applied to employees, such as internal marketing (IM), are progressively being adapted to students, who are viewed as key internal stakeholders within the educational ecosystem. In that way, IM has become very important, particularly to HEIs. Applying marketing techniques and strategies to internal stakeholders in HEIs has become essential for developing students' skills and competencies and for enhancing their motivation and satisfaction. IM practices contribute to improving stakeholders' satisfaction and perceived institutional value. IM has emerged as a strategic managerial approach that enhances organizational performance by fostering employee alignment with organizational goals, strengthening internal relationships, and promoting higher levels of engagement, motivation, and service quality. This perspective is particularly applicable to the education sector, where the effective implementation of IM strategies can enhance academic engagement, institutional identification, and overall educational quality. Despite growing recognition of IM as a driver of positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes across different types of organizations, its application in higher education remains underexplored, particularly regarding its impact on students' motivation. While prior research focused on students' satisfaction as an outcome variable, fewer studies have combined satisfaction and motivation within a unified explanatory framework. This gap limits the



understanding of how institutional management and marketing practices shape students' responses in contemporary higher education systems. Drawing on IM and motivation frameworks, this study posits that organizational practices influence students' perceptions, which, in turn, affect their satisfaction and motivational levels. Accordingly, the main objective of this research is to examine the relationships among IM, students' satisfaction, and students' motivation, within a Portuguese higher education case, specifically at the High School of Communication, Administration, and Tourism of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (ESACT-IPB). In a more specific way, the study aims to: (1) analyse the effect of IM on students' satisfaction; (2) assess the impact of IM on students' motivation; (3) examine the relationship between satisfaction and motivation; and (4) test an integrated model in which IM and satisfaction jointly explain students' motivation.

Methodology

The present study adopts a quantitative approach to examine the perceptions of a sample of higher education students at EsACT-IPB regarding the IM policy of this institution and its impact on students' levels of motivation and personal satisfaction. After developing a questionnaire as the data collection instrument, we conducted a pre-test to assess the clarity and comprehensibility of the items. Participants were contacted via email and through notifications disseminated across the EsACT-IPB official communication platforms. The questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms, yielding 171 valid responses. Upon completion of data collection, the data were properly coded and exported to SPSS v26.0. To ensure data consistency and integrity, a logical validation of the dataset was conducted. All measurement scales used in this study were adapted from the existing literature. For IM and motivation, a five-point Likert scale was employed (1 = "Strongly disagree" and 5 = "Strongly agree"). For satisfaction, a five-point Likert scale was also used (1 = "Very dissatisfied" and 5 = "Very satisfied"). To measure IM, 16 items were adapted from the scale of Huang and Rundle- Thiele (2015). Motivation was assessed using 25 items adapted from the scales of Kuvaas and Dysvik (2009) and Dysvik et al. (2013). Regarding satisfaction, 20 items were adapted from Hildrew's (2008) scale. The internal consistency of the scales was assessed using an exploratory factor analysis, with Cronbach's alpha to assess the robustness of the results. The validity and reliability of all latent variable measurement scales were examined and confirmed. Based on the theoretical framework, we formulated the following research hypotheses: H1: IM has a positive and significant effect on students' satisfaction; H2: IM has a positive and significant direct effect on students' motivation; H3: Students' satisfaction is positively associated with students' motivation; and H4: IM and satisfaction jointly explain students' motivation, with motivation as the dependent variable and IM and satisfaction as independent variables. To test these hypotheses, we estimated four multiple linear regression models. This approach enabled the analysis of



IM effects on the dependent variables - motivation and satisfaction - and the assessment of the model's explanatory power and the statistical significance of the identified relationships.

Main results and contributions

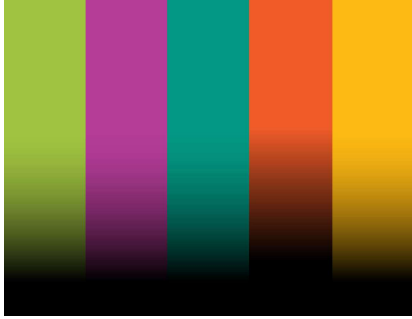
With Model 1, we tested the effect of IM on students' satisfaction, finding a positive and significant relationship. In Model 2, we assessed the impact of IM on students' motivation and found a significant positive effect. Through the Model 3, we examined the relationship between satisfaction and motivation and confirmed that satisfaction significantly predicts motivation. Finally, Model 4 integrated IM and satisfaction as independent variables predicting motivation. The results indicate that both IM and satisfaction contribute significantly to explaining students' motivation, highlighting the relevance of IM practices in enhancing positive student outcomes in higher education. In this case, it becomes possible to assess whether satisfaction mediates the relationship between IM and motivation. The direct effect of IM on motivation remains statistically significant but is reduced in magnitude after satisfaction is included, suggesting partial mediation.

Discussion

This study contributes to the IM literature by empirically testing the simultaneous effects of IM on satisfaction and motivation in the higher education context, an underexplored area. The findings support a conceptual model in which students' satisfaction operates as a key mechanism linking IM practices to students' motivation. The study provides empirical validation of adapted measurement scales in the Portuguese higher education context. Consistent with prior literature, IM significantly predicts students' satisfaction, which in turn enhances motivation. The full model suggests that satisfaction plays a central explanatory role, indicating that motivational outcomes are not solely driven by institutional practices but by how these practices are perceived and internalized by students. These findings extend the IM framework to the higher education context and highlight the importance of relational and communication-oriented management approaches.

Limitations

This study presents several limitations. The use of self-reported measures may introduce common-method bias. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to assess causal relationships over time. The sample is restricted to students from a single HEI, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The model does not account for potential moderating variables, such as demographic or academic characteristics. Future studies could formally test mediation and moderation effects using



structural equation modelling, and expand the model by incorporating additional constructs such as engagement, commitment, or academic performance outcomes.

Conclusions

This study provides empirical evidence that IM practices significantly influence students' satisfaction and motivation within HEIs. By integrating these constructs into a unified explanatory model, the research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how internal governance practices shape educational outcomes. From a public policy perspective, the findings highlight the relevance of managerial and relational practices as indirect instruments for improving student engagement and potentially academic success. The results suggest that higher education governance should not be limited to structural or financial considerations but should also incorporate internal climate and satisfaction indicators into quality assurance frameworks. The study demonstrates how validated psychometric instruments and regression modelling can support evidence-based decision-making in educational management. The proposed model may serve as a foundation for predictive analytics approaches to monitor students' motivation and prevent disengagement.

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