

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## Marketing Innovation as a Strategic Bridge: Examining the Influence of Strategic Thinking on Internal Marketing in Sub-Saharan Africa's Broadcasting Industry

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study investigates the relationship between strategic thinking, market innovation capabilities, and internal marketing performance within the radio broadcasting industry in Sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on Uganda.

**Design:** Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV), a cross-sectional quantitative design was adopted. Data were collected from 127 managers of broadcasting stations across Uganda. Four hypotheses were tested.

**Findings:** All hypotheses were supported, revealing significant positive relationships among the variables. Strategic thinking, expressed through reflective decision-making, trend analysis, organizational awareness, and pattern recognition, positively influenced both market innovation capabilities and internal marketing performance. Mediation analysis confirmed that market innovation capabilities significantly mediate the relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing.

**Policy Recommendations:** Radio broadcasting firms should invest in developing strategic thinking skills among leaders and enhance innovation systems to improve internal marketing effectiveness.

**Originality:** The study extends the RBV by identifying strategic thinking as a vital cognitive resource that drives competitive advantage through market innovation capabilities and internal alignment.

**Keywords:** Strategic Thinking, Market Innovation, Internal Marketing, Capabilities, Broadcasting.

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### Background to the Study

Internal marketing has increasingly become a critical strategic tool within organizations, particularly in service-oriented industries, where employee motivation and internal service quality are key determinants of external customer satisfaction (Mazzarolo, Mainardes, & Montemor, 2021). Internal marketing emphasizes the alignment of internal processes and human capital management with broader organizational goals, fostering a culture that supports high-quality service delivery (Qiu, Boukis, & Storey, 2022). In the media sector, internal marketing is not only a means of enhancing service delivery but also serves as a mechanism for implementing organizational change and strategic management (Alencar de Farias, 2010). Despite its importance, sustaining dynamic internal marketing remains a persistent challenge for many broadcasting

institutions globally. Even prominent organizations like the British Broadcasting Corporation face issues related to maintaining internal marketing standards (Bell, 2022). In Africa, institutions such as the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation have struggled with creative employee development and internal branding deficiencies (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2018), while the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation has taken deliberate steps to strengthen internal marketing through proactive communication initiatives (Nyongesa, 2021).

Uganda's broadcasting sector reflects similar challenges. Reports indicate high levels of employee dissatisfaction, inadequate remuneration, and frequent staff turnover. At Kazo FM in western Uganda, for example, journalists have reported irregular and delayed salaries, with those who voice concerns facing threats of dismissal (Nuwahereza, 2022). A 2018

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survey by a Ugandan News paper, the New Vision revealed that journalists often receive low wages and lack professional development opportunities, making them vulnerable to self-censorship and bribery (Jabulani Sikhakhane, 2021). Moreover, seasoned journalists describe the current working conditions as the harshest in decades in the Sub-Saharan region (Namajja, 2019), and regional media managers have acknowledged systemic low pay as the cause of internal challenges (Lematia, Kiberu, & Kinene, 2022). Findings from the African Centre for Media Excellence highlight that the average African Broadcast journalist is young, underpaid, and lacks beat specialization factors that compromise service quality (Muhindo, 2021).

The Uganda Communications Commission, that supervises Broadcasting Services in Uganda, has attempted to address internal marketing challenges across all across all the registered stations. However, persistent issues such as poor employee management, inadequate human resource policies, and widespread dissatisfaction continue to undermine its performance (Kituyi, Abaho, Aguma, Nkambwe, & Beronda, 2024). High attrition rates among skilled staff have been attributed to low pay, limited growth opportunities, job insecurity, and insufficient work-life balance (Ayodele, 2023) which has greatly affected internal cohesion among broadcasters.

Recent literature highlights the importance of strategic thinking and marketing innovation capabilities in enhancing internal marketing outcomes (Qaisar & Muhamad, 2021 and Raeisi et al., 2020). Strategic thinking enables organizations to transcend operational challenges and proactively adapt to changing internal and external dynamics (Kale, Sharma, Kumar, & Ranjan, 2024). Concurrently, marketing innovation capabilities such as innovativeness, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace change help organizations achieve competitive advantage and sustainable performance (Morgan et al., 2018).

This study adopts the Resource-Based View (RBV) based on (Barney, 2001) as its theoretical framework. RBV posits that sustained competitive advantage arises from the strategic use of internal resources such as human capital and innovative capabilities which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 2001). Strategic thinking is central to RBV as it guides organizations in aligning internal competencies with market opportunities (Kettunen et al., 2020), while market innovation capabilities serve as key differentiators in competitive environments (Nkemkifu, Asah, & Felix, 2019). Although extensive research exists on internal marketing and its drivers in Western contexts (Qaisar & Muhamad, 2021; Raeisi et al.,

2020), there is a noticeable gap in literature focusing on broadcasting institutions in the Sub-Saharan Region. Previous Studies on Internal Marketing have focused on reviews, measurements and application (Foreman, & Money, 1995; Qiu, Boukis, & Storey, 2022; Huang, 2020), internal marketing and external marketing outcomes (Bansal, Mendelson, & Sharma, 2001), internal marketing and employee-based brand equity, (Baca, & Reshidi, 2023), internal marketing and job satisfaction (Nemteanu, & Dabija, 2021). Basing on these studies, they seem not to be a study that examines the influence of Strategic Thinking on Internal Marketing and the mediating role marketing innovation capabilities in this relationship. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by examining how strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities influence internal marketing within the Broadcasting sector in the Sub-Saharan Region.

## Review of Literature

The Resource-Based View (RBV), proposed by Barney (2001), posits that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage stems from internal resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Strategic thinking, internal marketing, and market innovation capabilities exemplify such resources, contributing significantly to superior performance. Strategic thinking enhances decision-making and adaptability, while market innovation capabilities drive product, pricing, and promotional advancements (Purchase & Volery, 2020). Internal marketing fosters employee alignment and organizational commitment, reinforcing service quality and innovation (Lizote, Alves, & Cavaleiro, 2019). These resources, when effectively organized and continuously adapted to environmental shifts, support long-term success (Teece, 2014). As firms evolve, so must their resource base to remain competitive. Thus, RBV highlights the strategic value of cultivating and renewing internal competencies such as strategic insight, innovation, and employee engagement (Morgan et al., 2018).

## Literature Review and Hypothesis Development Strategic Thinking and Internal Marketing

Strategic thinking plays a crucial role in organizational success, especially through its focus on employees who, equipped with intellectual capabilities and motivation, directly influence the achievement of institutional goals (AlQershi, 2024). Internal marketing, conceptualised as a deliberate effort to motivate employees using marketing strategies to implement customer-oriented business strategies, aligns well with the tenets of strategic thinking (Cerqueira, Mainardes, and de Oliveira, 2018). Treating employees as internal customers

and ensuring their needs are met fosters a conducive work environment that enhances service quality and external customer satisfaction (Lizote et al., 2019). Additionally, motivated and loyal employees tend to exhibit stronger alignment with organizational goals, contributing positively to business outcomes (Oliveira & Pataco, 2017). However, although prior research acknowledges the interdependence between Strategic Thinking and Internal Marketing, the mechanisms through which Strategic Thinking promotes Internal Marketing are underexplored, particularly in low-income or developing contexts like in the Sub-Saharan Africa (Ledi, Dumeda, Bandoma, & Ameza-Xemalordzo, 2024). Moreover, limited empirical tools exist to measure Strategic Thinking contribution to Internal Marketing effectiveness (Park & Tran, 2018). Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap and hypothesizes that: There is a relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing.

### Strategic Thinking and Market Innovation Capabilities

Strategic thinking fosters innovation by equipping organizations to deal with market complexities, adapt to change, and plan for various future scenarios (Kula & Naktiyok, 2021). Firms that integrate Strategic thinking into their operations are better positioned to recognize future opportunities and threats, thus proactively adjusting their innovation strategies (AlQershi, 2024). Research suggests a strong link between strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities including the development of new products and exploration of alternative business models (Vishnevskiy et al., 2015). However, while existing literature acknowledges this relationship, there remains a significant gap in understanding how firms leverage Strategic thinking to optimize innovation information flows and strategic decision-making (Goria, 2018). Furthermore, empirical studies such as Isiagi (2019) confirm a positive relationship between strategic choice and innovation outcomes but fall short of quantifying how strategic processes that shape innovation readiness. Therefore, this study builds on these insights to hypothesise that: Strategic thinking is positively and significantly related to market innovation capabilities.

### Market Innovation Capabilities and Internal Marketing

As organizations enhance their market innovation capabilities, internal marketing becomes increasingly vital to align employee motivation and capabilities with changing market dynamics (Zhang et al., 2020). Internal marketing not only empowers employees but also facilitates the flow of innovation throughout the firm (De Bruin et al., 2021). It plays

a central role in knowledge dissemination, job satisfaction, and strategic change, all of which are essential from the innovation capabilities point of view (Yadav & Bansal, 2020). Nonetheless, existing studies often address Internal Marketing and Marketing innovation Capabilities in isolation or focus on specific sectors, without establishing a generalized, causal relationship applicable across varied organizational settings (Jin & Cho, 2018). Relatedly, Kisubi et al. (2022) highlight the mediating role of firm capabilities in business performance, yet a detailed exploration of how Internal Marketing directly derives from Marketing Innovation Capabilities is lacking. Accordingly, this study proposes that: There is a relationship between market innovation capabilities and internal marketing.

### Mediating Role of Market Innovation Capabilities

Understanding the mediating role of Market Innovation Capabilities in the relationship between Strategic Thinking and Internal Marketing can deepen insight into how organizations convert strategic foresight into employee-centered initiatives. Market Innovation Capabilities facilitate the translation of strategic intent into actionable internal marketing practices through resource sharing, innovation systems, and customer-centric product development (Medase & Barasa, 2019). Firms that excel in marketing capabilities often achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by strengthening their internal processes and responsiveness (Morgan et al., 2018). Despite recognition of this potential, current literature inadequately explains how Market Innovation Capabilities serves as a conduit through which Strategic Thinking enhances Internal Marketing, especially in contexts of fast-paced market evolution (Ejrami et al., 2016). There remains a need to empirically validate this mediating effect and understand its implications for innovation-driven employee engagement and customer satisfaction. This leads to the final hypothesis that: Market innovation capabilities mediate the relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing.

### Methodology

A cross-sectional research design was used to conduct the study because the researcher collected data from one specific point in time. This study also employed a quantitative research approach which was correlational in nature, measuring the relationship between strategic thinking, market innovation capabilities and internal marketing as the study variables. The quantitative approach helped the researcher to make statistical explanations and inferences about the study variables (Saunders et al., 2012). The study targeted a population of 309 Radio

Stations licenced by the Uganda Communications Commission. A sample of 169 respondents was considered out of a population of 309 as determined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To select the sample, A simple Random sampling methods was used. Data was collected using closed ended self-administered questionnaires. This method was used because of the need to generate reliable data from many respondents who needed to be covered in a short period of time (Mwesigwa, 2019). The questions in the questionnaire were close ended because they are exhaustive and mutually exclusive. The questionnaires were self-administered with the help of research assistants. Questions were rated using a 5-point Likert Scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), uncertain (3), disagree (2) strongly disagree (1). This is because it could be easily understood by the respondents, increases the response rate and with a less model misfit (Adelson & McCoach, 2010). The questionnaire was divided into sections to address specifically all the variables in the model.

#### Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data were systematically edited, coded, and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 for initial analysis.

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and percentages were generated to provide a general overview of the dataset. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationships among the key study variables: strategic thinking, market innovation capabilities, and internal marketing. Multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the predictive power of the independent variables (strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities) on the dependent variable (internal marketing). Furthermore, mediation analysis was carried out to explore the mediating effect of market innovation capabilities in the relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing. In addition to SPSS, Smart-PLS software was utilized to perform advanced structural equation modeling, which included evaluating the measurement model's validity and reliability, testing hypothesized relationships among variables, and assessing mediation effects. Results from Smart-PLS provided robust support for both measurement and structural models, thus enriching the inferential analysis and overall rigor of the study.

The results in the table demonstrate strong

**Table 1: Validity and Reliability**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Internal Marketing	0.933	0.940	0.946	0.717
Market Innovation Capabilities	0.892	0.897	0.918	0.650
Strategic Thinking	0.947	0.965	0.958	0.790

Source: Primary Data

reliability and validity for the constructs measured. Cronbach's alpha values for all three constructs Internal Marketing (0.933), Market Innovation Capabilities (0.892), and Strategic Thinking (0.947) are well above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency. Similarly, composite reliability values (both rho\_a and rho\_c) exceed the recommended 0.70 level, confirming the reliability of the latent constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs

are above 0.50 Internal Marketing (0.717), Market Innovation Capabilities (0.650), and Strategic Thinking (0.790) indicating good convergent validity, as each construct explains a sufficient proportion of variance in its indicators. These results confirm that the measurement model is both reliable and valid, providing confidence in the consistency and accuracy of the data collected for further structural analysis.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio results

**Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio**

	Internal Marketing	Market Innovation Capabilities	Strategic Thinking
Internal Marketing			
Market Innovation Capabilities	0.847		
Strategic Thinking	0.360	0.426	

Source: Primary Data

generated using Smart-PLS indicate satisfactory discriminant validity among the constructs. HTMT values below 0.90 suggest that the constructs are empirically distinct (Ghanbar, 2024). The HTMT value between Internal Marketing and Market Innovation Capabilities is 0.847, which is acceptable and confirms that these two constructs, while related, are not measuring the same concept. The HTMT values between Internal Marketing and Strategic Thinking

(0.360), and between Market Innovation Capabilities and Strategic Thinking (0.426), are both significantly below the 0.85 threshold, further confirming discriminant validity. These results demonstrate that each construct in the model represents a unique dimension, supporting the structural integrity of the measurement model.

The Fornell and Larcker criterion is used to

**Table 3: Fornell and Larcker criterion**

	Internal Marketing	Market Innovation Capabilities	Strategic Thinking
Internal Marketing	0.847		
Market Innovation Capabilities	0.780	0.806	
Strategic Thinking	0.343	0.405	0.889

Source: Primary Data

assess discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with its correlations with other constructs. According to this criterion, a construct should share more variance with its indicators than with other constructs in the model. In the table, the diagonal elements represent the square roots of the AVE for Internal Marketing (0.847), Market Innovation Capabilities (0.806), and Strategic Thinking (0.889), while the off-diagonal elements represent inter-construct correlations. Each construct's square root of AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs like Internal Marketing has a higher diagonal value (0.847) than its correlations with Market Innovation Capabilities (0.780) and Strategic Thinking (0.343). Similarly, Strategic Thinking has a square root AVE (0.889) that is higher than its correlations with Market Innovation Capabilities (0.405) and Internal Marketing (0.343). These results

confirm that each construct is distinct and possesses adequate discriminant validity. The findings suggest that the measurement model is well-structured and each latent variable uniquely explains its observed variables.

### Findings

Out of the 169 respondents targeted, only 127 provided information, giving a response rate of 75%. Details of the responses are presented in the subsequent tables. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good and above 70% rated very well. This also concurs with Kothari (2004) assertion that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on these assertions; the response rate in this case of 75% was very good.

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 4: Respondents Characteristics**

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	80	63.0	63.0	63.0
	Female	47	37.0	37.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Age	18-25yrs	7	5.5	5.5	5.5
	26-35yrs	64	50.4	50.4	55.9
	36-45yrs	36	28.3	28.3	84.3
	46yrs & above	20	15.7	15.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

<b>Education Level</b>	Diploma	14	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Bachelors	79	62.2	62.2	73.2
	Masters	26	20.5	20.5	93.7
	PhD	3	2.4	2.4	96.1
	others	5	3.9	3.9	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Years of Service</b>	0-5 yrs	51	40.2	40.2	40.2
	6-10yrs	42	33.1	33.1	73.2
	11-15yrs	22	17.3	17.3	90.6
	16yrs&above	12	9.4	9.4	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>No of Employees</b>	less than 10	12	9.4	9.4	9.4
	10-20	16	12.6	12.6	22.0
	21-30	79	62.2	62.2	84.2
	over 30	20	15.7	15.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Primary Data

Results in Table 4 indicate that the majority of respondents were male (80%), while females constituted 47%, reflecting participation of both genders in the operations of broadcasting services in the region. The largest age group was 26–35 years (50.4%), followed by 36–45 years (28.3%), 46 years and above (15.7%), and 18–25 years (5.5%). This shows that most staff are middle-aged (26–45 years), suggesting a significant involvement of younger professionals in the day-to-day operations of broadcast services.

Regarding education, 62.2% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, 20.5% had a master's degree, 11% possessed diplomas, 2.4% held PhDs, and 3.9% had other qualifications, such as secondary education. These findings indicate that the respondents were generally well-educated, supporting the credibility of their responses on strategic thinking, market innovation capabilities, and internal marketing.

Work experience data show that 40.2% of the respondents had worked for 0–5 years, 33.1% for 6–10 years, 17.3% for 11–15 years, and 9.4% for over 16 years. This suggests that a majority had substantial experience in the broadcasting industry, making them well-positioned to provide informed insights. Additionally, 62.2% of the radio stations had between 21–30 employees, 15.7% had over 30, 12.6% had between 10–20, and only 9.4% had fewer than 10

employees, indicating that most of the stations were relatively large and capable of supporting internal marketing initiatives.

### Correlation Analysis

A bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was conducted in order to establish the relationship between the variables under study as summarized in Table 4.10 below. Correlation analysis is important to establish the strength of the relationship between the variables under study. This analysis was particularly important in addressing the study objectives. Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to establish the relationships between predictor variables of strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities and the outcome variable of internal marketing. The intention was to evaluate whether linear relationships existed between predictor variables and the outcome variable. Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used because it is a parametric statistic and requires interval data for both variables (Garson, 2013). As a result, bivariate-correlation analyses were performed and Pearson Correlation coefficients were generated to measure the direction and size of relationship between the study variables (Field, 2009)

The correlation results in table 5 indicated

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Reflection (1)	1													
Organization awareness (2)	.635**	1												
Trend analysis (3)	.558**	.677**	1											
Pattern recognition (4)	.401**	.482**	.397**	1										
Strategic Thinking (5)	.813**	.875**	.817**	.705**	1									
Innovativeness (6)	.328**	.387**	.325**	.279**	.411**	1								
Capacity to innovate (7)	.370**	.431**	.343**	.240**	.433**	.793**	1							
Willing to change (8)	.362**	.474**	.413**	.366**	.503**	.821**	.825**	1						
Market Innovation Capabilities (9)	.372**	.449**	.376**	.308**	.470**	.956**	.918**	.925**	1					
Internal Communication (10)	.430**	.528**	.404**	.340**	.532**	.810**	.786**	.804**	.855**	1				
Training & Development (11)	.168	.331**	.176*	.082	.238**	.694**	.761**	.703**	.764**	.742**	1			
Motivation & Rewards (12)	.285**	.428**	.350**	.248**	.409**	.654**	.579**	.705**	.688**	.702**	.695**	1		
Recruitment & Selection (13)	.237**	.254**	.204*	.130	.258**	.475**	.454**	.510**	.509**	.537**	.526**	.616**	1	
Internal Marketing (14)	.342**	.465**	.348**	.251**	.440**	.778**	.755**	.805**	.830**	.886**	.854**	.895**	.772**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

#### Source: Primary Data

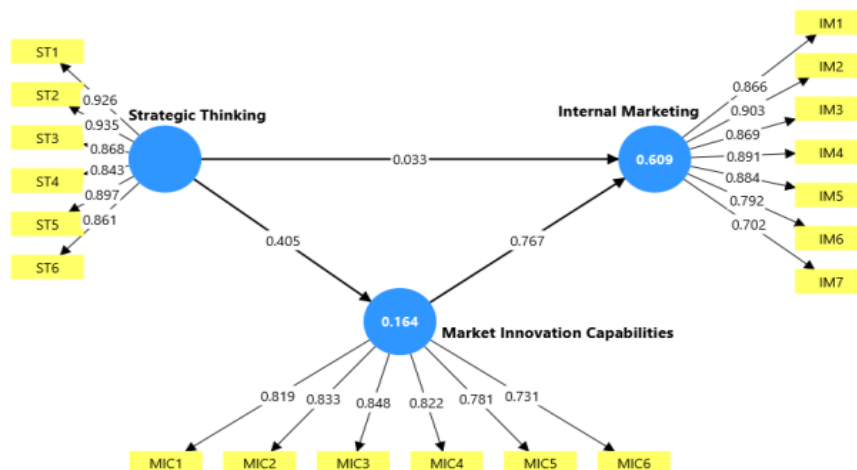
that there is significant positive relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing ( $r = .440^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results imply that a unit change in strategic thinking results into a 0.440 change in internal marketing. Therefore, this confirms the first study's hypothesis that "There is a relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing". Furthermore, indicate that there is significant positive relationship between strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities ( $r = .470^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This implies that a unit change in strategic thinking will result to 0.470 change in market innovation

capabilities. Therefore, this confirms the second study's hypothesis that "Strategic thinking is related to market innovation capabilities". Lastly, Results shows that there is significant positive relationship between market innovation capabilities and internal marketing ( $r = .830^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This implies that a unit change in market innovation capabilities will result to 0.830 change in internal marketing. Therefore, this confirms the third study's hypothesis that "There is a relationship between market innovation capabilities and internal marketing".

#### Measurement Model Results

#### Structural Model

As earlier indicated, the study also used SMART PLS software to generate the study results through the structural model as indicated in figure 1.



**Figure 1: Path Coefficients**

The measurement model results show that all outer loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating strong convergent validity and confirming that the indicators reliably represent their respective latent constructs. Specifically, the items measuring Strategic Thinking show loadings ranging from 0.843 to 0.935, while those for Market Innovation Capabilities range from 0.731 to 0.848. Similarly, the indicators for Internal Marketing (IM) have loadings between 0.702 and 0.903. These high factor loadings demonstrate that each observed variable contributes meaningfully to the construct it measures, supporting the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Basing on figure 1, The structural model results reveal the strength and direction of relationships between the

study constructs through path coefficients. There is a moderate positive relationship between Strategic Thinking and Market Innovation Capabilities ( $\beta = 0.405$ ), indicating that improved strategic thinking is associated with enhanced innovation capabilities. A strong positive relationship is observed between Market Innovation Capabilities and Internal Marketing ( $\beta = 0.767$ ), suggesting that firms with higher innovation capabilities tend to have stronger internal marketing practices. In contrast, the direct path from Strategic Thinking to Internal Marketing is very weak ( $\beta = 0.033$ ), This suggests that the influence of strategic thinking on internal marketing is likely mediated by market innovation capabilities.

The table presents model fit indices for both

**Table 6: Model Fit Indices**

	<b>Saturated model</b>	<b>Estimated model</b>
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.059	0.059
Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy (d_ULS)	0.663	0.663
Geodesic Discrepancy (d_G)	0.396	0.396
Chi-square	473.458	473.458
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.870	0.870

**Source: Primary Data**

the saturated and estimated models generated using Smart PLS, which assess how well the hypothesized model structure fits the observed data. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.059 for both models is below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.08, indicating a good fit between the theoretical model and the data. The d\_ULS (Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy) and d\_G (Geodesic Discrepancy) values are 0.663 and 0.396 respectively; although these indices lack universal cut-off values, lower values generally indicate better model fit, suggesting acceptable discrepancies in model estimation. The Chi-square statistic of 473.458 is reported equally for both models, and while chi-square is sensitive to sample size, its inclusion provides a traditional measure of model fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.870 is close to the desirable threshold of 0.90, indicating an acceptable, though not perfect, model fit. Overall, the model fit indices collectively support that the model has a reasonably good fit to the observed data.

### Mediation Results

The mediation analysis reveals that Market Innovation Capabilities fully mediate the relationship between Strategic Thinking and

Internal Marketing. While the direct effect of strategic thinking on internal marketing is negligible ( $\beta = 0.033$ ), the indirect effect through market innovation capabilities is significant ( $0.405 \times 0.767 \approx 0.311$ ), indicating that strategic thinking enhances internal marketing only by improving innovation capabilities. Regarding explanatory power, the  $R^2$  value for market innovation capabilities is 0.164, meaning strategic thinking accounts for 16.4% of its variance. For internal marketing, the  $R^2$  is 0.609, showing that the model explains 60.9% of its variance demonstrating strong predictive relevance. These findings suggest that to strengthen internal marketing, organizations should not rely solely on strategic thinking but focus on fostering innovation capabilities as a key intermediary.

### Discussion of Results

The main purpose of this paper was to establish the relationship between strategic thinking, market innovation capabilities and internal marketing in the Broadcasting Industry in Uganda. The discussion of results is therefore based on the hypothesis and findings of the study.

### Strategic thinking and Internal marketing

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing, suggesting that a unit increase in strategic thinking results in an increase in internal marketing within the radio broadcasting industry. This strengthens the predictive power of strategic thinking in shaping effective internal marketing practices. In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, where many broadcasting institutions operate in resource-constrained and rapidly changing environments, strategic thinking becomes even more critical. Managers must engage in reflective decision-making, trend analysis, organizational awareness, and pattern recognition to navigate institutional challenges such as limited funding, political influence, and technological shifts. Organizations in the region that demonstrate strategic foresight by formulating long-term goals and understanding both current and future operational realities are better positioned to align internal processes and enhance employee engagement. This resonates with [Abzari et al. \(2011\)](#), who noted that strategic thinking is central to organizational success and must be employee-centered, leveraging staff competencies to achieve goals. Furthermore, internal marketing, when embedded in strategic thinking, contributes to improved work environments, which ultimately enhance service delivery to external clients ([Lizote et al., 2019](#)). [Albassami et al., \(2015\)](#) further emphasize that strategic thinking should also uphold worker rights and foster equality, inclusion, and work-life balance principles that are particularly crucial in the often under-regulated labor contexts of Sub-Saharan Africa. These dynamics highlight the need for robust strategic thinking frameworks in the radio broadcasting sector to ensure not only operational efficiency but also employee well-being and sustainable performance.

### **Strategic thinking and Market innovation capabilities**

The results show a significant positive relationship between strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities, indicating that a unit increase in strategic thinking results in an increase in market innovation capabilities within the radio broadcasting industry. This relationship is particularly critical in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, where many broadcasting organizations face unique challenges such as unstable economic environments, limited access to modern technology, political interference, and rapidly changing consumer demands. In such settings, strategic thinking characterized by organizational awareness, trend analysis, scenario planning, and pattern recognition becomes an

essential tool for anticipating shifts in audience behavior and for crafting innovative responses to market demands. Radio stations that think strategically are better positioned to introduce new programming, adopt emerging digital platforms, and redesign service delivery models to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven media environment. This aligns with findings from [Kula and Naktiyok \(2021\)](#) and [Capatina et al. \(2016\)](#), who highlight that strategic thinking fuels innovation by encouraging creative problem-solving and the exploration of new business models. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where infrastructural limitations and regulatory instability can stifle creativity, the ability to reframe challenges and identify blind spots in the innovation process is a vital competitive advantage. Moreover, by systematically applying strategic thinking, broadcasters can access new knowledge, monitor trends, and reposition their market offerings in ways that meet both urban and rural audience needs ultimately driving sustainability and growth in a rapidly evolving media environment.

### **Market innovation capabilities and Internal marketing**

The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between market innovation capabilities and internal marketing, indicating that a unit increase in innovation capabilities leads to an increase in internal marketing within the radio broadcasting industry. This strengthens the critical role innovation plays in enhancing internal organizational processes, especially in the unique context of Sub-Saharan Africa. In this region, the radio broadcasting sector often operates under constraints such as limited access to advanced technologies, constrained budgets, and a rapidly evolving media environment driven by digital transformation and shifting audience expectations. Encouraging innovation among employees through capacity building, promoting openness to change, and creating a culture that rewards creativity is essential for improving internal marketing functions such as communication, employee engagement, and service delivery. Radio stations that foster innovation are more likely to empower their staff, enhance job satisfaction, and improve internal service quality, which in turn boosts overall organizational performance. These findings align with [Zhang et al. \(2020\)](#) and [De Bruin et al. \(2021\)](#), who emphasized that internal marketing thrives when employees are recognized as internal customers and are supported to innovate and adapt. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where many media organizations face frequent policy shifts, economic volatility, and limited training

opportunities, building innovation capabilities can help overcome structural challenges, ensure staff are better aligned with organizational goals, and improve adaptability. The study by [Kisubi et al. \(2022\)](#) further supports this by showing that firms' internal capabilities, including marketing and management competencies, significantly impact performance. Thus, in the radio broadcasting sector of Sub-Saharan Africa, market innovation capabilities serve not only as a catalyst for internal marketing but also as a strategic necessity for sustainability and growth.

### Mediating role of Market Innovation Capabilities

The findings of this study emphasise the significant mediating role of market innovation capabilities in the relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing within the radio broadcasting industry in Sub-Saharan Africa. This means that strategic thinking alone characterized by reflection, organizational awareness, trend analysis, and pattern recognition may not directly enhance internal marketing unless it is channelled through a strong innovation framework. In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, where radio remains a dominant medium for communication despite limited infrastructure and financial constraints, innovation is not merely a competitive advantage, it is a survival mechanism. Radio broadcasting institutions must foster innovation capabilities among employees by investing in training, encouraging adaptability to new technologies, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. These capabilities support resource sharing, idea generation, and agile responses to changing audience preferences and market dynamics, ultimately reinforcing internal marketing practices like staff motivation, internal communication, and service quality. The results align with [Qureshi and Kratzer \(2012\)](#), who emphasized the mediating role of innovation in the strategic thinking-marketing linkage, and with [Na, Kang, and Jeong \(2019\)](#), who suggested that firms enhance their internal effectiveness by aligning innovation strategies with strategic insights. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where media houses often contend with unpredictable political climates, low funding, and digital disruption, market innovation becomes critical in shaping how strategic goals are implemented internally. This also reflects [Rajapathirana and Hui's \(2018\)](#) assertion that innovation capability empowers employees to act proactively in dynamic environments. Therefore, for the radio broadcasting industry in the region to thrive and improve internal cohesion and performance, strategic thinking must be translated

into action through robust innovation capabilities making innovation a pivotal bridge between vision and internal operational excellence.

### Conclusions of the Study

The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing within the radio broadcasting industry in Sub-Saharan Africa. This suggests that organizations that adopt strategic thinking practices such as reflective decision-making, organizational awareness, trend analysis, and pattern recognition are more likely to enhance their internal marketing practices. In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, where broadcasting institutions often operate in politically and economically volatile environments, internal marketing is critical to motivating staff, aligning internal communication, and ensuring service quality. Strategic thinking empowers managers to anticipate and respond to internal organizational needs, contributing to the development of a conducive work environment that promotes employee satisfaction and commitment. As such, investing in strategic thinking capabilities is crucial for radio broadcasters seeking to strengthen their internal operations and ultimately improve performance.

The study also confirmed a significant positive relationship between strategic thinking and market innovation capabilities. In the competitive and often under-resourced radio broadcasting landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa, the ability to anticipate market trends and respond proactively is essential for survival. Strategic thinking equips organizational leaders with the tools to interpret complex market signals and devise innovative responses. It enables broadcasters to leverage data, assess risks, and develop forward-looking strategies that foster a culture of innovation. This relationship suggests that when strategic thinking is well-integrated into an organization's management processes, it enhances the organization's ability to innovate leading to better programming, technological upgrades, diversified revenue streams, and improved audience engagement. Therefore, strategic thinking serves as a foundational driver for innovation in the radio broadcasting industry.

The results further demonstrated a strong positive relationship between market innovation capabilities and internal marketing. This indicates that organizations with robust innovation practices are better positioned to enhance internal communication, employee motivation,

and service delivery. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where technological transformation and market disruptions are increasingly common, radio stations that invest in innovation—through staff training, adoption of digital tools, and flexible work processes create internal environments that are dynamic and engaging. Employees working in innovative organizations tend to be more empowered, adaptable, and aligned with organizational goals, which directly strengthens internal marketing efforts. Thus, market innovation capabilities not only help organizations remain externally competitive but also improve internal functioning and employee satisfaction.

Lastly, the mediation analysis revealed that market innovation capabilities significantly mediate the relationship between strategic thinking and internal marketing. This means that while strategic thinking alone has a positive impact on internal marketing, its influence becomes much more substantial when it leads to enhanced innovation capabilities. In practical terms, strategic thinking must translate into innovative actions such as new broadcasting formats, digital transformation, or audience engagement strategies before it can fully benefit internal marketing efforts. For the radio broadcasting industry in Sub-Saharan Africa, this finding is particularly important. It emphasizes the need to build organizational structures that do not just formulate strategic plans, but also implement them through innovation. Encouraging a culture of creativity, supporting risk-taking, and fostering continuous learning among employees are necessary steps to ensure that strategic thinking positively impacts internal marketing. Thus, market innovation capabilities are not just enablers of external competitiveness they are essential conduits for turning strategic insights into internal organizational success.

### Policy Recommendation

To enhance internal marketing practices in the radio broadcasting industry across Sub-Saharan Africa, policymakers and organizational leaders should prioritize the integration of strategic thinking into institutional frameworks. This includes policies that support the development of reflective decision-making, organizational awareness, trend analysis, and pattern recognition among management and staff. Given the volatile socio-political and economic environment of the region, internal marketing becomes a critical strategy for fostering employee engagement, improving service delivery, and maintaining institutional stability. Governments and regulatory bodies can incentivize training programs

in strategic thinking for media professionals, while industry associations can promote leadership development initiatives that align with long-term strategic goals. Such efforts will help broadcasting institutions build more responsive and resilient organizational cultures that support internal cohesion and staff motivation.

Moreover, policies should be introduced to explicitly link strategic thinking with innovation capacity as a pathway to stronger internal marketing. Radio broadcasting institutions should be encouraged through regulatory frameworks, funding opportunities, and public-private partnerships to invest in employee-driven innovation, digital transformation, and adaptive broadcasting practices. National media councils and ministries of information can promote innovation hubs within state and private broadcasters, equipping them with tools and resources for creative problem-solving. Internal marketing strategies must be reinforced through a culture that supports experimentation, continuous learning, and technological upgrades. By embedding innovation into strategic planning and operational models, radio stations in Sub-Saharan Africa can unlock employee potential, improve internal communications, and better serve their audiences ensuring long-term sustainability in an increasingly digital and competitive media business environment.

### Theoretical Implication

The findings of this study have significant theoretical implications when viewed through the lens of the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm as proposed by Barney (2001). According to RBV, sustainable competitive advantage stems from the possession and strategic deployment of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. In this study, strategic thinking emerges as a critical intangible resource that fulfills these VRIN criteria especially within the radio broadcasting industry in Sub-Saharan Africa, where environmental instability and limited resources challenge traditional competitive tools. Strategic thinking, through reflective decision-making, organizational awareness, and trend analysis, enables firms to align internal marketing with organizational goals, boosting employee morale and performance. The theoretical contribution here is that internal marketing a concept typically operationalized as a human-resource strategy is now reframed as an outcome of strategic resource application, suggesting that firms must first develop rare cognitive competencies to effectively mobilize internal marketing processes.

Furthermore, the mediating role of market innovation capabilities strengthens the RBV proposition by illustrating how valuable resources like strategic thinking, are transformed into organizational advantage through dynamic capabilities. Innovation capabilities act as the mechanism that operationalizes strategic thinking into actionable practices such as developing new broadcasting formats, leveraging digital tools, or enhancing employee adaptability. This transformation process aligns with the extended RBV view that emphasizes the importance of capability development in converting resources into sustained performance. In the Sub-Saharan African broadcasting context, where agility and innovation are paramount for survival, the study supports the theoretical position that dynamic capabilities are not stand-alone assets, but rather, are contingent upon the firm's ability to strategically manage and deploy its cognitive resources. Thus, this research contributes to RBV theory by validating the sequential logic: strategic thinking (resource) leading to innovation capabilities (capability) and then internal marketing effectiveness (competitive advantage).

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