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THE ROLE OF INTERNAL MARKETING IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY AT AL-AHLI INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL IN BAGHDAD

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to estimate the effect of prioritizing and enhancing the internal marketing practices on raising the quality of the healthcare services in the field of research (Al-Ahli International Hospital). The study adopted descriptive analytical method employing a questionnaire to gather information from the respondents which constituted a sample of 209 health workers and administrative staffs in the hospital. Results showed positive association between internal marketing and its four dimensions (selection and recruitment, training, empowerment, internal communication) and quality of health care services. Furthermore, internal marketing and its dimensions were found to play a significant role in exerting a clear impact on improving the quality of healthcare services. One of the main recommendations is that the management of the hospital should create a system and strategy that considers their internal customers (employees) and their aspirations to be met, as this will improve their satisfaction, which will in turn have a positive impact on their performance in providing healthcare services and caring for their patients.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Healthcare Services, Al-Ahli International Hospital.

Introduction

The attention to the quality of healthcare services was a definite success and became a priority in both sectors public and private healthcare services, especially in private hospitals that are rapidly growing over Iraq. Competing to provide the highest-quality and highest-value healthcare services to patients has become the primary differentiator among hospitals, as well as a key driver in enhancing their public image and reputation within the community.

But it always remains a challenge for management to maintain quality health services. The challenge is for administrations to hire and retain the best employees with the knowledge and skills to provide the highest quality, patient-focused care. As a result, hospital management has turned to different managerial and organizational strategies to secure skilled human resources, ensure engagement and create motivation among human resources to provide optimal services.

Internal marketing is one of these methods, based on the selection and recruitment of the best candidates, continuous training of different staff, and empowering them to make the right decisions in their work. Moreover, it involves ongoing initiatives by administrations to build efficient internal communication paths at every level and among every staff group in the hospital, all aimed at providing excellent healthcare services

First: Research Problem

The endeavor of hospital administrations to deliver high-quality healthcare services represents the primary objective in ensuring their survival and differentiation within an environment witnessing a wide proliferation of private sector hospitals. This requires providing services with credible results and immediate responsiveness to patients' needs, thereby ensuring their safety during treatment and recovery.

Achieving this objective requires administrations to focus on the internal environment, as it represents the first line of contribution in service delivery. This environment consists of the working staff referred to as "internal customers" whose needs and aspirations must be addressed and fulfilled. This, in turn, reflects positively on the healthcare services they provide by motivating employees and driving them to exert maximum effort in performance and responsiveness to the needs of the hospitals' external customers (patients). Consequently, the research problem is framed around the following question: *"What role does internal marketing play in improving the quality of healthcare services at the hospital under study?"*

Second: Research Importance

The importance of this research is reflected in two aspects:

1. **Theoretical Importance:** This is demonstrated in the attempt to highlight the role played by human resource management practices integrated within the internal marketing framework in aligning with the hospitals' orientations and goals to possess outstanding medical and administrative staff. This staff forms the basis for achieving organizational goals and maintaining a competitive image compared to others, through the selection, recruitment, training, and motivation of working staff to deliver the best healthcare services to patients.
2. **Practical Importance:** This is reflected in demonstrating the extent of attention given to and adoption of internal marketing practices and the dimensions of healthcare service quality provided by the hospital under study, as well as the role internal marketing plays in improving the quality of the services provided.

Third: Research Objectives

The research objectives are categorized into several points:

1. To assess the actual attention given by the hospital under study to internal marketing in its operations, and the extent of its focus on maintaining the quality of the healthcare services it provides.
2. To identify the nature of the relationship connecting internal marketing and its practices with the quality of the healthcare services provided.

3. To measure the potential impact that can be achieved through prioritizing and enhancing internal marketing and its practices in improving the quality of healthcare services.

Fourth: Research Framework (Model): Within the context of the research problem and its objectives, the flow of the relationship and impact between the research variables can be conceptualized as shown in Figure (1):

Figure (1): Model for Measuring the Role of Internal Marketing in Improving Healthcare Service Quality.

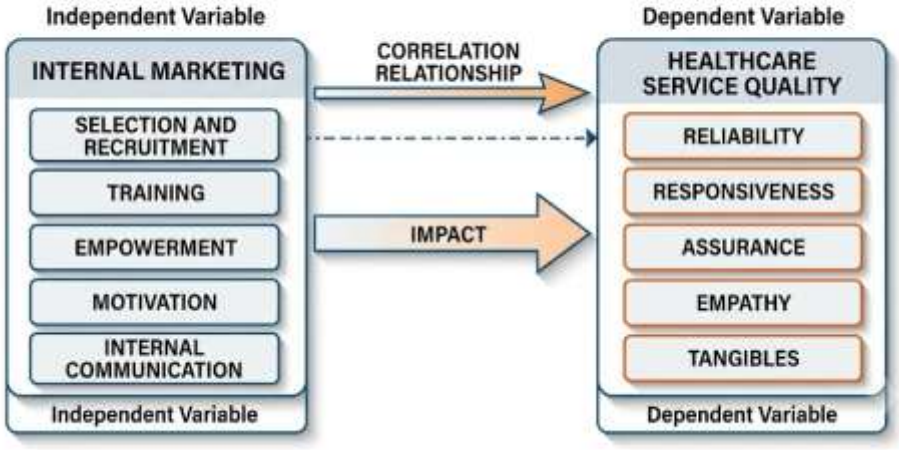

Figure 1. Research Framework

Fifth: Research Hypotheses: Based on the research framework and objectives, the research hypotheses are divided as follows:

1. The First Main Hypothesis (H1): "There is a statistically significant correlation between internal marketing and the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H1a): "There is a statistically significant correlation between (selection and recruitment) and the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H1b): "There is a statistically significant correlation between training and the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H1c): "There is a statistically significant correlation between empowerment and the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H1d): "There is a statistically significant correlation between motivation and the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H1e): "There is a statistically significant correlation between internal communication and the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital."
2. The Second Main Hypothesis (H2): "There is a statistically significant effect of internal marketing on improving the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." This hypothesis is sub-divided into the following hypotheses: • (H2a): "There is a statistically significant effect of selection and recruitment on improving the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H2b): "There is a statistically significant effect of training on improving the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H2c): "There is a statistically significant effect of empowerment on improving the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H2d): "There is a statistically significant effect of motivation on improving the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital." • (H2e): "There is a statistically significant effect of internal communication on improving the quality of healthcare services in the surveyed hospital."

Sixth: Research Methodology: To align with the nature, field, and objectives of the study by demonstrating how the research variables are adopted in the field, and preceded by a theoretical framework explaining the concept, importance, and underlying dimensions of each variable, followed by testing the research hypotheses the researcher adopted the descriptive-analytical approach in constructing the study.

Seventh: Research Population and Sample: The research field is represented by the private healthcare sector, while the research population consists of the medical and administrative staff working at the International Private Hospital in Baghdad, totaling (560) individuals, including physicians, nurses, and administrative and support staff. To verify the research variables and the hypothesized relationships among them, the research sample comprised (228) individuals from the healthcare, nursing, and administrative staff, selected according to the equation of Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The questionnaire was distributed to them electronically to survey their views on the research variables and their dimensions. The number of respondents who completed the questionnaire reached (209) individuals, as shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the Research Sample

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency
Gender	Male	117
	Female	92
Age	20–30 years	43
	31–40 years	69
	40–50 years	78
	51 years and over	19
Specialization	Administrative	49
	Nurse	64
	Physician	96

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the collected data.

Eighth: Research Limits: The research limits are divided into two parts:

1. Spatial Limits: The spatial limits are represented by the International Private Hospital located in the city of Baghdad, Iraq.
2. Temporal Limits: This refers to the time period during which the research was conducted in both its theoretical and practical aspects, spanning from 25/2/2026 to 6/7/2026.

Ninth: Data Sources: The research data sources are divided into two types:

1. Primary Sources: These are represented by the data collected through the questionnaire by surveying the opinions of the research sample. The scale for internal marketing and its dimensions was adapted from the study of, while the scale for healthcare service quality was adopted from the study of [1], [2].
2. Secondary Sources: These are represented by the sources relied upon to construct the theoretical framework of the research, providing an overview of the research variables and their dimensions based on what has been addressed by researchers and authors in studies, research papers, books, and scientific conferences.

Tenth: Statistical Tools: These are divided into several tools:

1. Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and Agreement Level: To determine the nature of the adoption of the research variables.
2. Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Significance Level: To determine the nature, direction, and strength of the correlation between the variables and dimensions.
3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis.

Methods

Section Two: Theoretical Framework of the Research

First: The Concept of Internal Marketing

Internal marketing emerged as a crucial type of marketing in the mid-1970s, resulting from organizations shifting toward viewing employees as the core of their operations and their external face when dealing with external customers [3]. An organization's objective to satisfy its external customers stems from its focus on satisfying its internal customers, as this represents the foundation for the quality of its provided services [4]. In the early 1980s,

organizations increased their focus on caring for employees as the primary market of the firm, whose satisfaction directly reflects on external customer satisfaction [5]. Internal marketing focuses on integrating Human Resource Management (HRM) practices into marketing processes and activities [6]. It seeks to attract, care for, and retain employees to achieve organizational goals by understanding their needs and ideas, providing solutions to their problems, and establishing long-term relationships with them [7].

Comprehensively, internal marketing is defined as a planned effort using a marketing approach to motivate employees, focusing on achieving their satisfaction and fulfilling organizational goals through functional coordination [8]. Internal marketing can be presented from two perspectives; the first focuses on internal exchange and strong relationships between the organization and its employees as a foundation for establishing robust relationships with external customers, emphasizing employee needs, well-being, and performance [9]. The second perspective views internal marketing as a motivational tool for employees, considering employee satisfaction as the minimum requirement for organizational success [10].

Romana et al. (2025:76) view internal marketing as a process of evaluating internal customers within the organization and providing jobs that offer fair and motivating practices, which constitute a vital factor in retaining them by meeting individual and collective employee needs [11]. Internal marketing reflects the activities that an organization adopts when dealing with employees, mirroring external marketing activities such as training, empowerment, motivation, and enhancing communication between the organization and its staff, with the aim of driving them to focus on the successful execution of its marketing strategies [1]. Al-Haj and Al-Hariri (2025:503) define internal marketing as the practices adopted by hospital management to organize and arrange its relationship with employees as internal customers. Based on the foregoing, the researcher defines internal marketing as a set of practices adopted by hospital management to regulate its relationships with employees through the effective selection and retention of competencies, developing their expertise through training, empowering them to perform their work freely according to the situation, and activating communication channels across different organizational levels [12], [13].

Second: The Importance of Internal Marketing

The value of internal marketing is reflected in achieving higher levels of job satisfaction among employees by endowing them with confidence and motivation to serve their organizations and customers, and through the capacity for professional development and direct responsiveness to changes in work procedures, which enhances productivity [14]. Internal marketing represents a powerful tool that helps organizations attract and retain top talent [15]. Furthermore, internal marketing enhances interaction among employees by adopting an organizational culture that promotes alignment between employees and organizational values, thereby increasing communication and commitment to the organization's work [16].

The importance of internal marketing also manifests in enabling employees to become aware of their overlapping roles in delivering services to external customers, by focusing on internal cooperation among employees to create value in the provided services [11]. Internal marketing is considered a fundamental prerequisite for the sustainability of organizations in providing their services amid intense competition, due to its value in boosting employee loyalty and facilitating their acceptance of organizational change [17], as well as its role in fostering agility, creativity, and cooperation among employees [16]. Tata et al. pointed out that employee performance is the foundation of competitive excellence for organizations; here, the role of internal marketing highlights preparing and empowering employees to deliver outstanding services. Thus, internal marketing serves as the strategic driver for expected employee productivity and contributes to ensuring organizational sustainability [9], [18].

Third: Dimensions of Internal Marketing

Given the diverse perspectives of researchers in defining the dimensions of internal marketing to suit their respective studies and fields of application, the researcher relied on the model of (Ali, 2025) and the study of [12] to determine the dimensions, as follows:

1. **Selection and Recruitment:** Internal marketing originates from the organization's search for individuals possessing skills and knowledge that align with its orientation and

activities, and choosing the best among them. The selection and recruitment steps comprise several guidelines and practices that guarantee the quality of the attracted human resource [3]. Effective recruitment of employees plays a vital role in maintaining the organization's competitive advantage, as they represent the fundamental component in its activities and processes for delivering services to external customers and maintaining relationships with them [19]. The selection and recruitment process can be achieved with high efficiency in internal marketing by the organization's endeavor to provide high value to the employee during these stages [20]. The selection and recruitment process refers to the procedures followed by the hospital administration in selecting and appointing competent individuals in accordance with the hospital's needs, its objectives, and the skills required for the work [13].

2. **Training:** Internal marketing emphasizes attention to employee training processes, particularly for those in direct contact with external customers, with the aim of increasing and developing their knowledge capabilities and skills in providing high-quality services in accordance with the organization's strategy [3]. Training within internal marketing falls under the tactical level of the organization's internal services, through which it aims to enable employees to meet the expectations and needs of external customers [21]. Training is considered the means upon which the organization relies in its internal marketing activities by equipping employees with knowledge, skills, and guidelines that ensure raising the efficiency of human resources and closing the gap between current and required competencies [17], as well as instilling positive behaviors and attitudes in employees toward the organization and its services [22]. Training represents the set of events and activities organized by the hospital to enhance and develop employee skills to deliver high-quality healthcare services, thereby reflecting on the satisfaction of customers and patients [13].
3. **Empowerment:** Empowerment reflects granting employees the authority to make decisions according to the work situation and to participate in building and developing the organization's strategy. This is activated through various activities, including training, motivation, leadership style, and the prevailing culture in the organization [3]. Empowerment is considered one of the rewards provided by the organization's management to employees to enhance their job engagement and trust in it [23]. Indeed, empowering employees as actual decision-makers is regarded as one of the fundamentals for the success of internal marketing efforts [24]. Well-implemented internal marketing processes help employees feel appreciated and recognized, which is an aspect of job empowerment [22], by granting space for thinking and acting to make decisions quasi-independently during work, which reflects on their convictions [25]. Granting employees decision-making authority positively reflects on their job happiness [26]. Employee empowerment determines the degree of freedom granted to employees when delivering services to external customers, reflecting a type of linkage between the human resources and marketing perspectives [10]. Thus, empowerment reflects the employees' active participation in decision-making and shaping the work environment according to their perception of the situation [13].
4. **Motivation:** This dimension represents the organization's work to link employee performance, job commitment, and constructive interaction with external customers to its adopted incentive system, which drives employees to exert more effort to provide the best services to the organization's customers [3]. Motivation represents the feedback provided constructively and positively by the organization and its management [23]. Motivation requires the organization to understand employee psychology to create an environment that stimulates their motives, leading to harmony between employee skills and their desire to work, driven by incentives directed within the framework of the organization's goals (Brital, 2026:61-62). A fair and effective motivation system is considered the cornerstone of internal marketing activities and employee engagement with their work [25]. Qiu et al. (2022:48) pointed out that employee rewards—which include financial incentives and internal relations—work harmoniously to enhance job satisfaction by reinforcing the

behaviors adopted by the organization. Non-material motivation includes enjoyable work and social recognition from others, as employees bond with the organization not only through material aspects but also through their sense of motivation and moral support [27].

5. **Internal Communication:** Internal communication reflects the interaction among employees across different organizational levels during service delivery, aiming to achieve smoothness in operations [3]. Internal communication is divided into two types: the first is information-based, one-way communication aimed at disseminating information through training; the second is relationship- and dialogue-based communication aimed at discovering and utilizing knowledge [21]. Internal communication represents the tangible and perceptible dimension among internal marketing dimensions, focusing on the interactive and mutual exchange of information between employees and management through various forms, such as reports, meetings, and direct communication, which contributes to reducing differences in perspectives [17]. This ensures the rapid transmission of information, enhances organizational relationships, and develops employees [28].

Fourth: The Concept of Healthcare Service Quality

The healthcare services provided by hospitals constitute the foundation of their operations and existence. They receive immense attention from hospital management, which continually works to improve and develop them due to their value in determining the competitiveness of these hospitals, particularly within the private sector. This is driven by the role of these services and their quality in enhancing the image of hospitals among customers specifically, and society in general, through elevating the quality of the therapeutic and nursing services provided [29]. The concept of service quality varies among researchers depending on the sector in which the study is conducted and its objectives [30]. Ajam et al. (2014:273) define healthcare service quality from a quality gap perspective, which refers to the difference between what patients expect to receive in terms of healthcare services and the actual reality of the delivered services. The more the actually provided services exceed patient expectations, the more it indicates a positive service gap [31].

Healthcare service quality is formed through patients' evaluation of the treatment process rather than just the technical aspects provided [32]. Mkperedem et al. (2023:3-4) view healthcare service quality as being measured by three components: infrastructure consisting of devices and equipment; processes which include referrals, checkups, and responsiveness; and the outcome achieved for the patient, such as improvement after receiving the service and their feeling of satisfaction [33]. On the other hand, Opio et al. (2022:223) argue that healthcare service quality is a result of the performance of healthcare staff, who are influenced by commitment and motivation, thereby affecting their performance and the speed of service delivery. This indicates that healthcare service quality is primarily shaped by the work and motives of the employees, rather than the mere availability of devices and buildings [34].

Mahmoud and Fasal (2025:105) point out that healthcare service quality refers to the organization's ability to provide and deliver healthcare services at a high level of quality to ensure patient safety and benefit from the service, by adhering to ethical and health standards at both the local and international levels, with the aim of gaining patient satisfaction and loyalty [35]. Al-Faridan (2026:4) views healthcare service quality as the healthcare institution's capability to deliver therapeutic and preventive services at a high quality level, through using available resources accurately and rapidly to ensure the continuity of care provided to patients and to maintain their safety. Abu Rawi (2026:126) defines healthcare services as the organization's ability to provide integrated healthcare requirements by supplying devices, equipment, and medical treatments that aid in delivering the best services to patients, in addition to providing medical guidance and counseling that help community members prevent diseases and injuries [36].

Based on the foregoing, the researcher defines healthcare service quality as the healthcare institution's ability to provide safe, effective, reliable, and timely care to patients and beneficiaries of its services in a manner that exceeds their expectations, by taking into account

humane, technical, and administrative aspects. This ensures a quality of service delivery that guarantees empathy with patients, rapid responsiveness to cases, ease of access to the service, and the competence of its staff, in a way that reflects in minimizing the gap between patient expectations and the service provided.

Fifth: The Importance of Healthcare Service Quality

The quality of healthcare services has gained growing significance among healthcare institutions, including hospitals, in recent times. It represents a critical factor in the competitiveness of these institutions at both the public and private sector levels, and plays a vital role in ensuring their organizational survival (Mahmoud & Fasal, 2025:105). Abu Abdullah and Muhammad (2025:2660-2661) point out that the importance of healthcare service quality for healthcare organizations lies in ensuring their ability to achieve success and sustain operations among competitors, which is reflected in several aspects [37]:

1. **Dynamism, Continuity, and Continuous Improvement:** Healthcare service quality expresses a non-static state of continuous improvement in service delivery according to patient needs and the competitive environment. This encompasses service comprehensiveness—which includes providing therapeutic and clinical services—as well as integration among various employees across different positions within the institution to ensure the elevation of healthcare service quality.
2. **Internal Quality:** This involves the provision of training and development activities, and offering support to nursing and administrative staff to elevate their performance and knowledge base, which ultimately helps enhance the level of healthcare services provided by the institution.
3. **Sustaining Economic Resources:** Maintaining the growth of the institution's economic resources by ensuring long-term relationships and interactions between the institution and its beneficiaries, focusing on retaining existing bonds rather than merely acquiring new beneficiaries.
4. **Focus on Measuring Beneficiary Satisfaction:** Measuring the satisfaction of healthcare service beneficiaries serves as an indicator of the institution's capacity to achieve customer satisfaction and its ability to deliver superior service levels compared to its competitors.

Ajam et al. (2014:273) noted that the ability of a healthcare institution to measure the quality of services provided to beneficiaries and patients helps it identify performance gaps in its operations, and consequently determine the methods and paths to improve its services [31]. Nahabwe et al. (2024:15-16) stated that obtaining feedback from healthcare beneficiaries is crucial in facilitating participatory planning with them. It grants management the visibility to see the outcomes of its work and the extent to which it achieves its goals, thereby providing the capacity to address defects in the provided services [38].

Sixth: Dimensions of Healthcare Service Quality

Given the multitude of studies addressing service quality or healthcare quality, and in light of the tendencies of researchers to adopt similar dimensions as seen in the studies of [29], [39], [40], [41] the researcher relied on the same dimensions, as follows:

1. **Reliability:** This refers to the staff's ability and readiness to perform their assigned services correctly and consistently across all cases, within the required time frame [29]. Reliability also indicates the capacity of healthcare institutions to fulfill their obligations and promises by delivering healthcare that yields valuable and effective outcomes for beneficiaries, through honoring service schedules, handling problems, and accurately diagnosing the needs and requirements of beneficiaries [39].
2. **Responsiveness:** Responsiveness refers to the speed with which the healthcare institution and its employees provide services to patients [42]. This reflects a persistence and willingness to provide genuine and effective help and support to patients, capturing the humanitarian aspect of healthcare organizational operations [41]. Responsiveness reflects the capacity of employees across various job titles to respond to patients accurately and continuously during their visits [40].

3. **Assurance (Safety):** Assurance represents the ability of the institution and its employees to deliver services accurately, making patients feel safe while receiving treatment and confident in obtaining positive outcomes [40]. It refers to the sense of comfort during patient interactions and peace of mind when receiving the service through the availability of skilled and experienced healthcare and therapeutic staff, in addition to utilizing highly efficient equipment [39].
4. **Empathy:** Empathy represents the care and attention shown by the institution's employees to patients and visitors during service delivery, which instills peace of mind and confidence in the results, making them feel genuinely valued by the institution [43]. Suki (2013:103) points out that empathy represents how the institution and its employees care for beneficiaries, identify their needs, and enhance their sense of respect during their presence in the institution [44]. Achieving healthcare service quality fundamentally requires dealing with patients with respect and personalized attention [40].
5. **Tangibles:** Tangibles refer to the infrastructure of the healthcare institution that is observed and utilized by both employees and patients [45]. This expresses the institution's attention to the physical details of its buildings and equipment through which services are rendered [46]. The physical environment also includes the appearance of the employees and standardizing the work uniform [47]. According to the perspective of Shams El-Din and Abdullah (2024:143), tangibles express the effective utilization of devices and equipment by employees to provide services to visitors accurately [40].

Results and Discussion

Section Three: The Practical Aspect

First: Descriptive Analysis of Internal Marketing

Table (2) shows that Internal Marketing achieved an arithmetic mean of (3.47), which indicates a moderate level of agreement among the respondents' views regarding the surveyed hospital's application of human resource management-derived internal marketing practices and methods. This reflects the hospital's focus on its internal customers (employees and staff) and the role this plays in reinforcing their commitment to the hospital's vision, orientation, and organizational objectives.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Internal Marketing Dimensions and Items

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
Recruitment and Selection	X1	The hospital management ensures the selection of employees with the required competencies and experience.	3.51	1.314	70.2	Good
	X2	The hospital management uses a testing system to evaluate applicants.	3.56	1.310	71.2	Good
	X3	The testing system used fits the	3.62	1.238	72.4	Good

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
		nature of the vacant positions.				
	X4	The hospital management ensures providing guidance and orientation during the probationary period for new employees.	3.64	1.267	72.8	Good
	X5	The hospital management takes educational qualification into consideration when filling positions.	3.54	1.233	70.8	Good
Recruitment and Selection		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.57**	**0.966**	**71.4**	**Good**
Training	X6	The hospital management ensures providing training courses for new employees.	3.54	1.215	70.8	Good
	X7	The hospital management applies a periodic training system for employees.	3.50	1.327	70.0	Good
	X8	The hospital management views skill and knowledge development as a continuous process.	3.49	1.324	69.8	Moderate
	X9	The hospital management uses technological and digital systems in training operations.	3.55	1.236	71.0	Good
	X10	The hospital management provides financial support to conduct training courses.	3.60	0.977	72.0	Good

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Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
Training		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.54**	**1.361**	**70.8**	**Good**
Empowerment	X11	The hospital management gives employees the freedom to handle work problems based on their experience.	3.26	1.361	65.2	Moderate
	X12	Employees possess appropriate authority to respond to the needs of visitors/patients.	3.47	1.330	69.4	Moderate
	X13	The hospital management allows employees the freedom to express their views on how to resolve work problems.	3.30	1.332	66.0	Moderate
	X14	Employees have the authority to take actions that ensure improving the quality of services provided.	3.50	1.337	70.0	Moderate
Empowerment		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.38**	**1.011**	**67.6**	**Moderate**
Motivation	X15	Employees perceive fairness in the hospital's motivation/incentive system.	3.47	1.346	69.4	Moderate
	X16	The motivation system focuses on encouraging teamwork.	3.63	1.194	72.6	Good
	X17	The hospital management has a financial and moral motivation system that covers all employees.	3.45	1.330	69.0	Moderate
	X18	The motivation system in the	3.45	1.349	69.0	Moderate

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
		hospital is linked to its goals and strategies.				
	X19	The hospital management grants incentives to employees who exert outstanding effort at work.	3.55	1.343	71.0	Good
Motivation		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.51**	**0.913**	**70.2**	**Good**
Internal Communication	X20	The hospital management utilizes meetings to enhance communication among employees across different organizational levels.	3.39	1.386	67.8	Moderate
	X21	The hospital management allows employees the freedom to communicate directly with administration and various officials.	3.47	1.158	69.4	Moderate
	X22	The hospital management adopts an open-door policy with all employees.	3.37	1.241	67.4	Moderate
	X23	The hospital possesses a communication system that provides information to various employees.	3.21	1.208	64.2	Moderate
	X24	The hospital management ensures emphasizing communication among different employees.	3.38	1.110	67.6	Moderate

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Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
Internal Communication		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.36**	**0.842**	**67.2**	**Moderate**
Internal Marketing		**Overall General Average**	**3.47**	**0.757**	**69.4**	**Moderate**

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v.26 outputs.

Section Three: The Practical Aspect (Continued)

When considering dimension, the first dimension that stands out in terms of importance is Recruitment and Selection with the arithmetic mean (3.57). This means the hospital prioritises the recruitment of cadres with experience and skills that are able to work towards the hospital's goals.

Training was ranked second in importance with a mean value of (3.54), as the hospital management has a continuous training policy to contribute to the development of the skills and knowledge of employees according to the best practices in their profession.

The third highest score was the Motivation dimension with an arithmetic mean of (3.51). This reflects that the management of the hospital takes a clear policy approach to motivating staff to work to the best of their ability towards visitors/patients.

The Empowerment dimension was ranked as fourth with arithmetic mean of (3.38) which shows a moderate level of hospital management activation of employees' empowerment in dealing with cases and situations that require specific and distinct skills and knowledge.

Last, Internal Communication is the lowest with arithmetic mean (3.36), indicating consensus of the study sample on the type of organizational structure of this hospital and the communication parameters imposed on employees and how they interact with the rest of the staff in a flexible framework.

As for the standard deviation, Table (2) shows that all dimensions and all items had acceptable standard deviation values, which meant that there was relative consistency among the responses of the study sample and harmony among the dimensions.

Second: Descriptive Analysis of Healthcare Service Quality

Results in Table (3) show that for the Healthcare Service Quality variable at the macro level, there is a moderate level of agreement obtained with an arithmetic mean of (3.40). This is an acceptable level of agreement among the respondents on the surveyed hospital's commitment to providing quality services to various visitors and cases. This commitment sets it apart from other competitive hospitals, provides greater value to patients and will help it meet its organizational objectives.

Regarding the standard deviation values, they were quite similar across all items, suggesting a low amount of variation and high degree of similarity in the responses.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Healthcare Service Quality Dimensions and Items

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
Reliability	Y1	The hospital possesses specialized staff with knowledge and experience to handle various medical cases.	3.48	1.187	69.6	Moderate

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
	Y2	The hospital has an accurate system for scheduling appointments and examinations for patients.	3.45	1.168	69.0	Moderate
	Y3	The hospital offers high-value services among visitors, prompting them to recommend it to their friends.	3.38	1.203	67.6	Moderate
	Y4	The hospital management ensures providing services fairly and without discrimination.	3.40	1.201	68.0	Moderate
	Y5	The hospital has an accurate financial system for calculating the costs of utilizing consultation and treatment services.	3.43	1.189	68.6	Moderate
Reliability		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.43**	**0.948**	**68.6**	**Moderate**
Responsiveness	Y6	The hospital features immediate responsiveness to various medical cases.	3.41	1.166	68.2	Moderate
	Y7	The hospital has wards dedicated to responding to various emergency cases.	3.35	1.178	67.0	Moderate
	Y8	The hospital management ensures providing updated information regarding medical conditions to visitors.	3.46	1.172	69.2	Moderate

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
	Y9	The employees possess the quick responsiveness to handle complaints and requests from outpatients and inpatients.	3.29	1.177	65.8	Moderate
	Y10	The hospital has a round-the-clock periodic monitoring system to follow up on patients according to their condition.	3.44	1.142	68.8	Moderate
Responsiveness		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.39**	**0.899**	**67.8**	**Moderate**
Assurance (Safety)	Y11	The hospital management ensures providing appropriate meals to patients based on their medical conditions.	3.51	1.109	67.8	Moderate
	Y12	The staff are highly competent in performing their job duties to monitor patients.	3.42	1.206	70.2	Moderate
	Y13	The hospital management prohibits informal financial payments to employees by visitors.	3.47	1.081	68.4	Moderate
	Y14	The hospital possesses the devices and equipment required to diagnose various medical cases.	3.51	1.247	69.4	Moderate
	Y15	The hospital management ensures the availability of various medicines	3.38	1.174	70.2	Good

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
		and medical drugs.				
Assurance (Safety)		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.46**	**0.898**	**67.6**	**Moderate**
Empathy	Y16	The hospital management motivates employees to meet the needs of inpatients and outpatients in a friendly and gentle manner.	3.28	1.200	67.6	Moderate
	Y17	The hospital management ensures the commitment of physicians to follow up on patient cases.	3.29	1.230	69.2	Moderate
	Y18	The hospital management ensures the continuous communication and presence of the nursing staff.	3.40	1.165	65.6	Moderate
	Y19	The hospital management provides personalized attention to every patient and visitor.	3.33	1.243	65.8	Moderate
	Y20	The hospital management ensures respecting social customs and traditions in the services it provides.	3.21	1.203	68.0	Moderate
Empathy		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.30**	**0.895**	**66.6**	**Moderate**
Tangibles	Y21	The hospital is distinguished by the modernity of its medical	3.30	1.115	64.2	Moderate

Dimensions	Items	Questions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Percentage (%)	Agreement Level
		devices and equipment used.				
	Y22	The hospital management uses directional signage that guides individuals to service areas.	3.44	1.153	66.0	Moderate
	Y23	The hospital management strictly ensures the cleanliness of various facilities.	3.39	1.157	66.0	Moderate
	Y24	The hospital has waiting lounges for patients' companions and visitors.	3.39	1.095	68.8	Moderate
	Y25	The hospital has air conditioning systems suitable for weather conditions to provide comfort to visitors.	3.47	1.143	67.8	Moderate
Tangibles		**Overall Dimension Average**	**3.40**	**0.866**	**69.4**	**Moderate**
Healthcare Service Quality		**Overall General Average**	**3.40**	**0.719**	**69.4**	**Moderate**

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v.26 outputs.

Table (3) shows that at a dimensional level, the most important dimension was Reliability with an arithmetic mean (3.43). This indicates a moderate agreement by the sample of the health services' overall distinguishability, thereby easing the outpatients' interaction mechanism and the appointment booking process.

The second most important item was tangibles in which the arithmetic mean was (3.40). This shows that the hospital has modern buildings that have been built according to standards optimized for the delivery of healthcare services, as well as state-of-the-art medical technologies and equipment for handling a wide variety of cases and outpatients, to deliver excellence in service delivery.

Responsiveness was in third position with the moderate importance rating (3.39) [agreement percentage 67.8%] demonstrating the hospital's ability to respond to medical conditions at the right time and place, and to react quickly and promptly to the requests of the service.

Assurance (Safety) was ranked fourth, with an arithmetic mean of (3.46), showing the hospital management's efforts to ensure the implementation of health and safety measures in patient care, particularly in ensuring that medical equipment and devices are cleaned properly, suitable meals and food are provided to patients on the wards, and high-quality, high-value pharmaceutical drugs and medical supplies are purchased.

Empathy was ranked 5th with an arithmetic mean of (3.30), indicating that the average response to integrating emotional factors when working with outpatients and beneficiaries, based on the type of case and its privacy, was moderate.

Third: Testing Correlation Hypotheses

Table (4) reveals that the correlation between internal marketing and healthcare service quality is characterized by a high, direct, and statistically significant value of (0.564) at the (0.05) significance level. This underscores the critical role of internal marketing practices in nurturing and developing healthcare services by providing support factors for the employees and staff within the surveyed hospital. Consequently, the first main hypothesis (**H1**) is accepted, which states:

"There is a statistically significant correlation between internal marketing and healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."

Within the framework of testing the sub-hypotheses:

Testing Hypothesis (H1a): *"There is a statistically significant correlation between (Recruitment and Selection) and healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."*

Based on the correlation values presented in Table (4), a positive relationship is evident between the recruitment and selection practices adopted by the hospital management and the reinforcement of its orientation toward improving service quality. The correlation coefficient between recruitment and selection and healthcare service quality reached (0.401), representing a strong correlation. Based on the foregoing, hypothesis (**H1a**) is accepted.

Table 4. Correlation Coefficients Values

Variables	Healthcare Service Quality (Correlation Coefficient R)	Significance Level (Sig.)
Recruitment and Selection	0.461	0.000
Training	0.401	0.000
Empowerment	0.429	0.000
Motivation	0.490	0.000
Internal Communication	0.494	0.000
Internal Marketing	0.564	0.000

Source: SPSS v.26 outputs.

Testing Hypothesis (H1b): *"There is a statistically significant correlation between training and healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."*

Table (4) shows that the correlation coefficient value between training and healthcare service quality is (0.401), representing a strong direct correlation. This indicates that the hospital management's implementation of a training and development policy for cadres and employees—aimed at upgrading their skills and knowledge serves to enhance its objectives in improving healthcare service quality. Consequently, hypothesis (**H1b**) is accepted.

Testing Hypothesis (H1c): *"There is a statistically significant correlation between empowerment and healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."*

The data in Table (4) indicate that the relationship between the empowerment dimension and healthcare service quality is direct and positive, reaching (0.429). This demonstrates the value of empowering employees to handle various work situations and make subsequent decisions to elevate the level of healthcare services provided. Consequently, hypothesis (**H1c**) is accepted.

Testing Hypothesis (H1d): *"There is a statistically significant correlation between motivation and healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."*

It can be concluded from Table (4) that the relationship between motivation and healthcare service quality is a positive, direct correlation reaching (0.490), which explains the acceptance of hypothesis (**H1d**). This indicates that the implemented motivation programs utilized in

managing cadres and employees provide clear value in elevating the quality of healthcare services offered by the surveyed hospital.

Testing Hypothesis (H1e): *"There is a statistically significant correlation between internal communication and healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."*

The data in Table (4) demonstrate a positive and direct relationship with a value of (0.494), clearly indicating the acceptance of hypothesis (**H1e**). This indicates that the internal communication system in the surveyed hospital significantly contributes to enhancing communication among various employees across different job levels, reflecting a smooth and clear transmission of instructions and information in line with the hospital management's orientation to improve service delivery.

Testing Effect Hypotheses:

Testing the Second Main Hypothesis (H2):

Within the framework of simple linear regression analysis, as its results are detailed in Table ( ), it is evident that internal marketing contributes to explaining (31.8%) of the variance (R^2) in healthcare service quality. The regression model is statistically significant based on the F-value of (108.209) at a significance level of (0.05). Furthermore, internal marketing helps improve healthcare service quality by a slope coefficient (beta) value of (0.536); meaning that an increase in adopting internal marketing activities by one unit translates into a (53.6%) improvement in healthcare service quality, which represents a high improvement value. This improvement in healthcare service quality is statistically significant according to the t-value of (10.402), which is greater than its tabulated value of (1.96) at a significance level of (0.05). This can be interpreted by the fact that the surveyed hospital's pursuit of internal marketing efforts and practices has reflected positively on improving the healthcare services provided to its visitors, increasing their satisfaction with its services compared to other hospitals. Based on this, the second main hypothesis (**H2**) is accepted, which states:

"There is a statistically significant effect of internal marketing on improving healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."

Table 5. Testing Effect Relations

Independent Variables	Healthcare Service Quality Coefficient of Determination (R2)	F-Value	Slope Coefficient (β)	t-Test	Significance Level (Sig.)
Recruitment and Selection	0.212	62.569	0.343	7.910	0.000
Training	0.161	44.521	0.296	6.672	0.000
Empowerment	0.184	52.303	0.305	7.232	0.000
Motivation	0.240	73.182	0.386	8.555	0.000
Internal Communication	0.244	75.070	0.422	8.664	0.000
Internal Marketing	0.318	108.209	0.536	10.402	0.000

Source: SPSS v.26 outputs.

Testing Sub-Effect Hypotheses:

Testing Hypothesis (H2a):

The data in Table (5) indicate that the Recruitment and Selection dimension contributes to explaining (21.2%) of the variance in healthcare service quality, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2). This regression model is statistically significant based on the F-value of (62.569). Recruitment and Selection contributes to improving healthcare service quality through its impact value, as indicated by the slope coefficient (beta) of (0.343). This effect is statistically significant according to the t-value of (7.910), which is significant at the (0.05) level. Consequently, hypothesis (**H2a**) is accepted, which states:

"There is a statistically significant effect of recruitment and selection on improving healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."

Testing Hypothesis (H2b):
The data in Table (5) show that the Training dimension explains (16.1%) of the variance in healthcare service quality within the regression equation, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2). This model is statistically significant based on the F-value of (44.521). The slope coefficient (beta) indicates that training contributes to improving healthcare service quality by (0.296) for each unit increase. This effect is statistically significant according to the t-value of (6.672) at a significance level (Sig.) of (0.000). Consequently, hypothesis (**H2b**) is accepted, which states:
"There is a statistically significant effect of training on improving healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."

Testing Hypothesis (H2c):
This hypothesis states: *"There is a statistically significant effect of empowerment on improving healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."* Table (5) reveals that the Empowerment dimension explains (18.4%) of the variance in healthcare service quality. The regression model is statistically significant based on the F-value of (52.303). Regarding the impact, the slope coefficient (beta) demonstrates that empowering the working staff in the surveyed hospital helps improve healthcare service quality by (0.305). This effect is statistically significant according to the t-value of (7.232) at a significance level (Sig.) of (0.000). Consequently, hypothesis (**H2c**) is accepted.

Testing Hypothesis (H2d):
This hypothesis states: *"There is a statistically significant effect of motivation on improving healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."* Table (5) shows that the Motivation dimension explains (24.0%) of the variance in healthcare service quality, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2). The regression model is statistically significant based on the F-value of (73.182). In terms of impact, the slope coefficient (beta) demonstrates that motivation affects the improvement of healthcare service quality by (0.386) for each unit increase. This effect is statistically significant according to the t-value of (8.555) at a significance level (Sig.) of (0.000). Consequently, hypothesis (**H2d**) is accepted.

Testing Hypothesis (H2e):
This hypothesis states: *"There is a statistically significant effect of internal communication on improving healthcare service quality in the surveyed hospital."* Table (5) shows that the Internal Communication dimension explains (24.4%) of the variance in healthcare service quality, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2). The regression model is statistically significant based on the F-value of (75.070). Regarding the impact, the slope coefficient (beta) demonstrates that internal communication affects the improvement of healthcare service quality by (0.422) for each unit increase. This effect is statistically significant according to the t-value of (8.664) at a significance level (Sig.) of (0.000). Consequently, hypothesis (**H2e**) is accepted.

Conclusion

From the descriptive analysis of the sentences and testing of the hypotheses, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Hospital and staff surveyed has a clear vision about the internal marketing and its dimensions. They show knowledge of its role in recruiting and selecting skills, in continuously building knowledge and skills, motivating them and linking them together via ongoing communication networks.
2. The descriptive analysis data show that the management of the surveyed hospital has a clear orientation towards providing medical services to beneficiaries, which are oriented towards acceptance and a good reputation in the community in which it operates.
3. Internal marketing and its dimensions (Recruitment and Selection, Training, Empowerment, Motivation, and Internal Communication) are positively correlated with the service quality in the healthcare sector. This is one of the reasons why the hospital

was able to have internal marketing orientations, focusing on human resources, and subsequently, enhance and develop the services of healthcare.

4. The regression equation results showed that the positive and direct effect can be generated by the internal marketing and internal marketing dimensions (Recruitment and Selection, Training, Empowerment, Motivation, and Internal Communication) in internal marketing. This helps the surveyed hospital to improve the quality of out-patient and beneficiary services.

Recommendations

In light of the research conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The hospital management should reinforce its orientation toward prioritizing internal customers through internal marketing practices and activities. The process starts with careful selection of candidates for the job, and continues through the training of candidates' specific skills and knowledge in relation to the hospital's vision and orientation.
2. Practices that help develop the staff's ability to make constructive decisions in response to situation variables should be given due importance. In addition, consideration should be given to the internal communication factor between the various employee and organization levels as it is crucial in ensuring optimal service delivery, with a particular emphasis on motivation of employees towards effective performance to be achieved through both financial and moral enablers appropriate for competent employees.
3. The provision and delivery of healthcare services to meet the expectations of beneficiaries and outpatients should be given utmost priority. This can be achieved by focusing on the dimensions of reliability in service provision and immediate responsiveness to patient cases based on the nature of each condition.
4. The hospital management should establish reliability in its offered services, which reflects in patients' sense of security and trust in the hospital's capacity to safeguard their health. Furthermore, the hospital should demonstrate social empathy according to each patient's case, emphasize the procurement of medical equipment that ensures accurate diagnosis, and maintain the buildings and lounges where services are delivered.
5. The hospital management should construct an integrated system and strategy dedicated to prioritizing internal customers, achieving their satisfaction, and meeting their expectations. This will ultimately reflect positively on their performance in delivering healthcare services and caring for patients.

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