

The Impact of Internal Marketing on Improving the Quality of Healthcare Services: A Field Study of Yemeni Private Hospitals in Ibb City

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Improving the quality of healthcare services has become a strategic necessity in the contemporary business environment, even in the face of the challenging and unstable conditions. This improvement has emerged as one of the essential goals healthcare institutions seek to achieve to enhance their competitiveness and ensure their sustainability.

Objectives: This study aimed to investigate the impact of internal marketing, with its dimensions of employees' selection, training, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication, on improving the quality of healthcare services in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

Methods: To achieve the study objectives, the descriptive analytical approach was used relying on a questionnaire using Likert's seven-point scale. The study included a stratified random sample of 414 individuals from a population of 1,638 employees in 12 hospitals.

Results: The study concluded that the level of internal marketing availability was moderate, with a mean score of 4.70 and a standard deviation of 1.031, representing 67.1% of the total average whereas the quality of health services was high, with a mean score of 5.59 and a standard deviation of 0.904, representing 80% of the total average. The results also showed a statistically significant impact of internal marketing with dimensions of employees' selection, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication of combined on improving the quality of health services while training dimension did not demonstrate a significant impact on the quality of health services.

Conclusions: Internal marketing is an influential factor in improving the quality of health services in the Yemeni private hospitals. Although its level is still moderate, its overall impact is positive and statistically significant. Furthermore, four of its dimensions (employees' selection, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication) play a direct role in improving service quality. However, it appears that training is not implemented effectively enough to have a significant impact, which calls for a reconsideration of mechanisms for designing and implementing training

programs.

Keywords: Internal marketing, healthcare service quality, private hospitals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitals in the modern era face increasing challenges as a result of the rapid changes in the economic, social, and technological environment. This has led to heightened competition in the healthcare sector, particularly among private hospitals in many countries including the Republic of Yemen. These hospitals have realized the importance of excellence in performance and service quality as essential tools for market survival and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. This has prompted them to adopt modern administrative and marketing strategies and practices. Providing high-quality healthcare services is one of the healthcare sector's top priorities given its direct connection to human health, which is the focus and primary goal of development. Global reports indicate that healthcare services are among the most expensive services in the world, with annual global spending estimated at more than two trillion dollars (Sufyan, 2008). This growing interest has contributed to pushing researchers and practitioners to study and analyze the dimensions of healthcare service quality and develop standard models for its evaluation.

Service quality is a fundamental measure of the extent to which actual service performance meets customer expectations. This has been confirmed by numerous models, most notably the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman and Berry Zeithaml in 1988, which identifies five key dimensions of quality: reliability, safety, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility. This model is particularly important in the healthcare setting, given the link between service quality and direct patient interaction with caregivers, making the human element a crucial factor in improving performance.

In this context, the concept of internal marketing emerges as a modern management tool aimed at improving service quality by focusing on the employee as the organization's internal customer. This concept has evolved since its emergence in the late 1970s to become a management philosophy focused on meeting employees' needs, empowering and motivating them, and providing them with training and effective communication, which positively impacts employees' satisfaction and performance.

In light of the challenges facing the health sector in the Republic of Yemen including the decline in the quality of health services in many facilities, there is a need to conduct field studies that shed light on management practices that can contribute to improving the current situation. So, this study responds to this need, aiming to investigate the impact of internal marketing on improving healthcare service quality in private hospitals in Ibb City.

1.1 Study Problem

In the light of the organizational and functional challenges facing private hospitals in the Republic of Yemen. Specifically, with regard to the weak efficiency of human resources and the absence of modern applications of administrative and marketing concepts as indicated by Iskandar (2021, p. 6), there is an urgent need to adopt modern approaches such as internal marketing, given its effective role in enhancing employees' performance and improving the quality of services provided. This is what Sharif et al. (2021, p. 10) recommended. The absence of a supportive organizational environment, weak empowerment and motivation, poor staffs' selection, and weak internal communication channels all negatively impact hospitals ability to meet patients' expectations and provide high-quality healthcare services. Accordingly, the importance of this study stems from its endeavor to investigate

the impact of internal marketing with its various dimensions on improving the quality of healthcare services due to the shortage of staff and the lack of administrative awareness.

Several studies (e.g., Miftah & Al-Nasr, 2021; Shaib, 2015) have also shown that internal marketing effectively contributes to improving the quality of services provided, especially in service organizations that rely primarily on human interaction such as hospitals. The literature indicates a positive relationship between internal marketing practices and service quality where Khairaddin (2021) demonstrated that effective marketing within an organization is a necessary condition for achieving external customer's satisfaction. Therefore, this study contributes to providing practical solutions that can enhance the efficiency of institutional performance in the Yemeni private hospitals. Based on the above, the main question of the study is: ***What is the impact of internal marketing on improving the quality of healthcare services in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City?***

The following sub-questions branch from the main question:

- 1- What is the level of internal marketing in the Yemeni Private hospitals in Ibb City?
- 2- What is the level of quality of health services in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City?
- 3- What is the impact of internal marketing (with its dimensions of employees' selection, training, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication) on improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City?

1.2 Study Objectives

This study aims to investigate the impact of internal marketing on improving the quality of health services in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

In addition to the main objective, the study aims to achieve the following sub-objectives:

- 1- To determine the level of internal marketing in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.
- 2- To determine the level of quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.
- 3- To determine the impact of internal marketing with its dimensions of employees' selection, training, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication) on improving the quality of health services in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Quality of Health Services

The World Health Organization defines service quality as: "conformity to standards and the right direction in a safe and socially acceptable manner at an acceptable cost, resulting in significant impacts on morbidity, mortality, disability, and malnutrition" (Sultan 2012, p. 84).

To build quality standard, "SERVQUAL" model was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithami, and Berry in 1988. This model is one of the most well-known and widely used models for measuring service quality. It was developed based on a series of studies that addressed the gap between customers' expectations and actual perceptions of the service provided, a gap that has been identified as a major cause of low levels of satisfaction. This model serves as a reference framework that helps service organizations, particularly in vital sectors such as the healthcare sector, identify shortcomings and improve the quality of service performance.

The SERVQUAL model consists of five main dimensions that represent the core axes of service quality assessment: dependability, empathy, responsiveness, safety, and tangibility. These dimensions were selected in the current study as they represent a comprehensive and integrated representation of the dependent variable "health service quality," which concerns the efficiency of health services, their

conformity to customers' expectations, and their association with their satisfaction and trust in the healthcare institution.

These dimensions have received widespread support in previous literature, as many researchers have adopted them in their applied studies in environments (Belhaj & Al-Jabri, 2020; Najm, 2021). This enhances the reliability of these dimensions in measuring the quality of healthcare services. Furthermore, the dimensions in the current study are based on its consistency with the nature of the Yemeni environment and the characteristics of private hospitals where these dimensions enable a comprehensive view of service performance from the beneficiary's perspective helping to evaluate the healthcare experience in a more realistic and comprehensive manner. The following is a brief overview of the dimensions of healthcare service quality as adopted in this study.

2.1.1 Dependability

Dependability is defined as an institution's ability to deliver promised services accurately, consistently and on time, reflecting its commitment to customers. Slack et al. (2004) argued that reliability is represented by adherence to patient appointments, timely delivery of test results, and minimizing appointment cancellations. The importance of this dimension is highlighted by its direct connection to patient's confidence and safety, making it a key focus in assessing service quality. Health, and a cornerstone for building a sustainable relationship between the beneficiary and the healthcare institution. Hence, an approval study is essential to determine the efficiency of private hospitals in Ibb in meeting patient's expectations and achieving their satisfaction.

2.1.2 Safety

A number of researchers have highlighted the importance of this dimension. Mahmoud and Bashir (2001) considered it a "covenant," as it requires a high level of knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust from clients. Shaikh and Rabbani (2005) also showed that ensuring healthcare services depends on the extent of patients' confidence in the qualifications and experience of medical staff. Al-Bakri (2005) confirmed that this dimension, which he called "assurance," represents 19% of the relative importance of other quality dimensions and is measured through indicators such as hospital reputation, employees' competence, and their personality traits. So, it is a pivotal dimension in this study as it has a fundamental impact on shaping patients' perceptions of healthcare services and their confidence in the hospital. This is directly reflected in the quality of services provided and the effectiveness of internal marketing.

2.1.3 Responsiveness

Chia-Ming et al. (2002) indicates that responsiveness represents a genuine desire to serve the customers and provide support in a timely manner. Diop and Attia (2005) also emphasized that responsiveness in the healthcare context indicates the service providers continuous readiness to meet patients' needs, which contributes to enhancing their trust and satisfaction. Therefore, this dimension is one of the fundamental pillars for ensuring effective performance and service quality in hospitals, especially in environments that require rapid response and good behavior, such as the case of the Yemeni healthcare institutions under study.

2.1.4 Empathy

Al-Khalidi (2012, p. 28) defined empathy as a healthcare, the extent of concern, and the best treatment of the customers without discrimination, along with providers' awareness of customers' needs, empathy, understanding their feelings, and building good relationships with them." Kotler and Keller (2009, p. 442) also emphasized that empathy represents self-care and humane concern for the

patient by the healthcare provider. In the same context, Abu Al-Nasr (2008, p. 30) indicates that empathy includes tactfulness, affection, and courtesy in dealing, which facilitates the building of respectful relationships and effective communication between the two parties.

From this standpoint, the importance of this dimension is highlighted in the health context as the gentle human interaction with patients which contributes to enhancing their confidence in the service provided and improves their assessment of their quality, especially since the hospital environment requires psychological and emotional communication that exceeds providing technical service. Therefore, empathy is a crucial component in improving the quality of health services and improving the customers' experience.

2.1.5 Tangibility

A group of researchers showed the importance of this dimension in the health sector, where Chia Ming et al. (2002) referred to tangibility as the appearance of material and human facilities and equipment, and the means of communication. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) revealed that the tangibility of the service includes building design, infrastructure quality, medical and communication technologies, and the general appearance of workers. In the same context, Shaikh and Rabbani (2005) showed that the tangibility of the health service includes cleanliness of the bargains using standardized devices, providing clear and easy-to-understand medical prescriptions. Diop and Attia (2005) also confirmed that the beneficiary often builds his evaluation on tangible elements such as equipment and the interior condition of the hospital, which are direct sensory indicators that affect the perception and quality.

2.2. Internal Marketing

Researchers have not settled to provide a unified definition of internal marketing, but there are many attempts and ideas to provide a definition to it. Gronroos (1981) defined it as selling the company to employees and who must be motivated in a way that enables them to deal with consumers according to the concept of (approach the consumer) (Al-Aloul, 2016, p.11). Therefore, internal marketing helps in improving performance and achieving the goals and quality of services provided, and many researchers have indicated that the implementation of internal marketing will be reflected in a positive way and on the quality of the services provided and on the performance of the institution, if it is implemented through the strategies directed towards the customer and the external environment (Nawal, 2023, p. 15). This is why many previous studies dealt with the relationship between internal marketing and the quality of services, where some studies were conducted in different organizations and work environments, and resulted in important results highlighting the nature and impact of this relationship. Nafeh and Mulla (2024) revealed the existence of an impact of internal marketing on improving the quality of educational services in private universities in Kuwait and Jaafar (2023) showed that internal marketing contributes to improving the quality of information services in the libraries of technical colleges in Baghdad, and Ibrahim and Saadia (2018) showed that there is an impact of internal marketing on the quality of banking services in the Iraqi Islamic National Bank and its branches. Al-Harthi (2023) also showed that there is a positive relationship with statistical significance between internal marketing practices and the quality of health services provided in Omani health institutions. The study of Amar (2021) also concluded that there is a close link between internal marketing and the quality of tourism services in tourist institutions in the state. According to the above mentioned, the main hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H1: There is a statistically significant impact of internal marketing on improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb city.

By looking at a set of models and dimensions adopted by previous studies as dimensions for internal marketing in different environments, work and organizations, it can be seen that these studies are similar in many dimensions, while they differ in some other dimensions, and for the measurement of the independent variable internal marketing in this study, the following dimensions were adopted: the selection of employees, training, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication. Iliopoulos & Priporas (2011, p. 261) showed that internal marketing includes several functions performed by the organization, namely employees' selection, training and development, motivation, and enhancing internal communications. As these dimensions represent the basic pillars of internal marketing, they are also comprehensive and closely related to the variable under study, which allows measuring it in an integrated manner without contradicting other variables of the current study. These dimensions are proportional to the study environment and its variables, and it is the most frequent dimension in many models adopted by previous studies. The study has identified five: dimensions of internal marketing, which are

2.2.1. Employees' Selection

The selection of workers represents the starting point for building a qualified human cadre and able to provide high-quality health services and the importance lies in its ability to enhance the compatibility of the characteristics and qualifications of individuals with the requirements of the health job, which is reflected directly on the level of their performance and the quality of service provided to the customers (Abdel Baqi et al., 2007, p. 267). The previous studies have showed a positive relationship between the process of selecting employees and the quality of service, such as Jaafar (2023) which showed that the selection of employees according to accurate criteria contributed to improving the quality of information services in the libraries of technical colleges. This assertion is consistent with Berry & Parasuraman (1994) showing that choosing individuals contribute to raising the level of satisfaction of customers of the service. Accordingly, this study highlights the importance of selecting workers as one of the basic dimensions of internal marketing because of its effective role in improving the quality of health services provided. So, based on the foregoing, the first sub-hypothesis could be formed as follows:

H1A: There is a statistically significant effect of choosing workers in improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

2.2.2. Training

The importance of training is evident in being a vital tributary to unleashing the creative energies of workers and motivating them towards outstanding performance, especially in which the health work environment requires continuous updating of medical and administrative knowledge. It has been proven that training is directly related to improving the quality of services indicating that the effectiveness of training is related to the quality of programs and the duration of their implementation and the selection of trainers and trainees (Widad & Hussein, 2000, p. 120). Nafeh and Mulla (2024) showed the impact of positive training on the quality of educational services in Kuwaiti private universities, while Al-Harthi (2023) demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing the quality and health services in the Sultanate of Oman. Based on the foregoing, the second sub-hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H1B There is a statistically significant effect of training in improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

2.2.3 Motivation

Motivation is the pillar that enhances workers energy towards effective performance and pushes them to achieve organizational goals efficiently (Al-Douri et al., 2009). According to Al-Dawi, (2008), motivation is embodied in a set of material and moral means provided by the organization to meet the needs of workers, to arouse their enthusiasm, and raise the level of their commitment to the medic work and from an administrative perspective. Motivation constitutes a strategy used to improve the level of productivity and quality of performance, as it contributes to developing a sense of satisfaction and belonging, and reduces rates and rates job rotation and absence. Multiple studies have showed the direct positive impact of motivation in improving service quality. Salama (2022) showed that motivating workers is closely related to improving their productivity and the quality of their outputs. Al-Siyani and Al-Sabri (2021) also demonstrated the effectiveness of motivation in raising the efficiency of performance within the food sector in Yemen. Based on the foregoing, motivation is a fundamental dimension in which to measure the quality of health service, as strengthening the motivation of health cadres contributes to providing more efficient and humane services and therefore, the third sub-hypothesis could be formed as follows:

H1C: There is statistical significance effect of motivation in improving of the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

2.2.4 Empowerment

Ahmed and Hussein (2013, p. 113) showed that empowerment enhances the feeling of belonging and job satisfaction, and increases the confidence of individuals themselves, which reflects positively on the level of performance and institutional creativity. The practical indicators show that empowerment contributes to reducing the percentage of operational errors to 40%, and accelerates the response to the needs of customers to 50%, and reduces operational costs from 10-15% which makes empowerment as a critical factor in improving the outputs of health institutions that are highly dependent on the direct interaction of workers with patients and the public (Sihaam & Wafiya, 2023).

Numerous studies have shown the importance of this dimension, (e.g., Ibrahim & Saeed, 2023), which confirmed the positive course of empowerment in the quality of banking services. Tatto and Buraq, (2021) demonstrated the existence of a statistically significant relationship between empowering workers and the quality of public health services. From the foregoing, this study highlights empowerment as an essential element in measuring and improving the quality of the health service. So, the fourth sub-hypothesis is built as follows:

H1D: There is a statistically significant effect of empowerment in improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

2.2.5 Internal Communication

Many studies indicate that effective internal communication is closely related to the quality of services. Bouhajar and Bin Nassef (2022, p. 144) showed that the instructions and directions that are clearly communicated contribute to the smooth flow of operations and improve performance, while Amar (2021) revealed a positive impact of internal communication on the quality of health services confirming the practice of this dimension in the service sectors. In light of the foregoing, the importance of internal communication emerges as a critical element in supporting the health services quality, so the formulation of the fifth sub-hypothesis could be formed as follows:

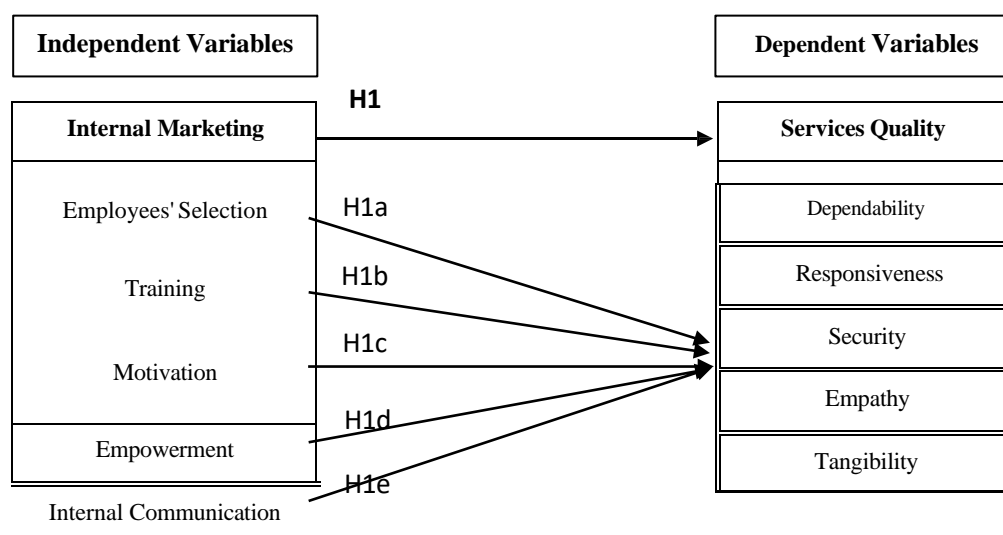
H1E: There is a statistically significant effect of internal communication in improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

2.3 The Study Cognitive Model

The model of this study is based on the theory that considered employee as an internal agent as formulated by Berry and Parasuraman (1994), and from the perspective of Grinroos (1981) who states that meeting the needs of workers first is a prerequisite for building sustainable ongoing competition before focusing on external clients. This model also employs the dimensions of service quality according to the model of Parasuraman et al (1995) SERVQUAL model (dependability, safety, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility) to show the impact of practicing the five internal marketing dimensions (the selection of employees, training, empowerment, motivation and internal communication) on improving the experience of customers in private hospitals. Many researches in various fields (e.g., Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Yoon & Suh, 2003) have supported the positive relationship between these practices and the quality of service, while some studies in the health Sector (e.g., Al-Omari, 2020; Al-Shuaibi, 2018) showed that the interest in selecting and empowering cadres and improving the internal communication channels is reflected in the high quality indicators and reducing operational errors.

In light of the organizational and cultural specificity of Ibb hospitals, this model provides a scientific and practical framework for measuring and improving the quality of health services according to SERVQUAL standards providing that it is in line with the conditions and the local and sustainable development requirements. Figure (1-1) displays the cognitive model of the study.

Figure (1-1) Cognitive Model of the Study



Source: Prepared by the Researcher

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

This study relied on the descriptive-analytical approach. It is descriptive as it deals with the nature of the content and level of both internal marketing and the quality of health services. It is analytical as it

investigates the impact of internal marketing practices on improving the quality of health services in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City.

3.2. Population and Sample of the Study

The study population is represented by all employees working in the private hospitals in Ibb city until the end of the academic year 2023. After conducting a field survey of human resources departments in these hospitals in the same year, the final study sample was determined including (14) private hospitals, but due to some field restrictions, Al-Kindi Hospital, which did not agree to participate, and Al-Jabalin Specialist Hospital due to the presence of a judicial guard, were excluded, and therefore the final study population was determined to include all workers in (12) hospitals only. The population of the study consists of workers (administrative staff, medical staff in hospitals, and reached (1638) while the study sample was (414) participant, which is the percentage that can be consequently accepted. The sample of the study was chosen using the stratified random sample until the study achieves the specified sample. The number of questionnaires distributed was 450 besides the questionnaires obtained electronically. The total number of returned questionnaires was (419), from which five questionnaires were not suitable for analysis. So, (414) questionnaire were analyzed which is the required percentage for the study sample.

3.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the hospital, in accordance with the requirements of the study variables, namely internal marketing and the quality of health services. These variables cannot be measured and analyzed at the individual level, but rather at the hospital level.

3.4 Apparent Validity of Study Instrument

To ensure the apparent validity of the study instrument, it was given in its initial form to a number of specialized and academic referees to obtain their opinions on all aspects related to the study variables and dimensions, the accuracy and clarity of the questionnaire items from a scientific perspective, and their suitability for the study objectives and their suitability for measuring the purpose for which they were designed. The referees offered their suggestions on what is necessary to modify regarding wording of some items, deletion of others, or addition of new items to develop the questionnaire structure. Based on the comments and guidance provided by the referees, the proposed modifications to the study instrument were made to its final form.

3.5. Data Analysis

The study relied on the questionnaire as the main tool for collecting field data and measuring the study variables due to its suitability and efficiency in achieving the goals of the study. Firstly, to measure the level of internal marketing as an independent variable, a measure of (25) items was built based on a number of previous studies, including the study of (Al-Sayani & Al-Sabry, 2021; Saad, 2022). These items were distributed into five sub-dimensions with five items for each dimension, namely employees' selection, training, motivation, empowerment, and internal communication. The participants used a Likert's seven-point scale to answer the questionnaire, ranging from (1 *strongly disagree*) to (7 *strongly agree*). Secondly, to measure the quality of health services as the dependent variable, a scale consisting of 25 items was used, drawn from studies by Al-Maghribi et al. (2021) and Al-Ajmi (2021). The items of this scale were divided into five sub-dimensions, with five items for each dimension: dependability, safety, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility. The study data were analyzed using SPSS.V.27 to answer the study questions and to test its hypotheses. This was done by using descriptive statistical methods such as percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, in addition to correlation and regression tests.. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study

instrument, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used, also. Constructive Validity and Cronbach's Alpha Tests were also used for measuring reliability.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Respondents' Data

This study examines the characteristics of the sample responding to the questionnaire items, as shown in Table 4.1 below. Table 4.1 below showed several demographic variables, including gender, age, educational qualifications, job title, and years of service. These characteristics are summarized as follows:

Table (4.1) Respondents' Demographic Data

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	268	64.7
Female	146	35.3
Total	414	100
Age	Number	Percentage
Less Than 20 Years	17	4.1
20-39 Years	346	83.6
40-49 Years	45	10.9
50- More Years	6	1.4
Total	414	1000.
Qualification	Number	Percentage
Secondary School or Less	21	5.1
Diploma	138	33.3
Bachelor	214	51.7
Higher Studies	41	9.9
Total	414	100
Job Title	Number	Percentage
General Manager Deputy	20	4.8
Department Manager	36	8.7
Head of Depart.	64	15.5
Administrative Employee	67	16.2

Doctor	64	15.5
Nurse	84	20.3
Technician	69	16.7
Other	10	2.4
Total	414	100
Years of service	Number	Percentage
Less Than Five Years	204	49.3
5-9 Years	135	32.6
10-14 Years	44	10.6
15- More	31	7.5
Total	414	100

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that males constituted the majority of the sample with a percentage of 64.7% compared to 35.3% for females. This is attributed to the random nature of the sample and the high level of response among males. The age group (20-39 years) also represented the largest percentage of the sample at 83.6%, followed by the age group (49-40 years) at 10.9% reflecting the youthful nature of the working healthcare workforce. Regarding educational qualifications, bachelor's degrees predominated at 51.7%, followed by diplomas at 33.3%, higher studies at 9.1%, and finally, secondary school at 5.1%.

In terms of job titles, nurses represented the highest percentage (20.3%), followed by technicians (16.7%), then administrators (16.2%). The remaining percentages were distributed equally among department heads and doctors (15.5%), with a declining representation of higher-level occupational categories, reflecting the nature of the hospital's service structure. Regarding experience, the results indicated that nearly half of the employees had less than five years of service (49.3%), followed by those with five years of experience (32.6%). This may be attributed to the recent establishment of some hospitals and the high rate of employees' turnover.

4.2 Evaluation of the Measurement Model

To measure the internal consistency to test the content of the questionnaire, the internal consistency coefficients were extracted for the items of each dimension of the study variables using a correlation coefficients. These correlation coefficients indicate that these domains or items measure something in common, which implies internal construct validity (Murad and Salim, 2005, p. 357). This inevitably leads to a strong tendency toward statistically significant correlations at a significance level of (0.01) reflecting the internal consistency element between these variables where the correlation coefficient between the item and the variable or dimension to which it belongs should not be less than (50%). What we observe from the extracted data is that all the correlations between the dimensions and their variables, and between the items and their dimensions, are highly correlated. This confirms the validity and consistency of the items, scales, and study variables. To determine the internal

consistency of the questionnaire items, the correlation coefficients between each item and its dimension were calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient as follows:

4.2.1. Internal Consistency Results for Marketing Internal

Table (4.2) below shows the correlation coefficient between each item and the total score of each domain of internal marketing. We noted that the correlation coefficients between the various items were high, exceeding 85%, indicating that the correlation coefficients are significant at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, and thus valid for what they were designed to measure.

Table (4.2) Measuring Internal Consistency Validity for Internal Marketing

Employees' Selection		Training		Empowerment		Motivation		Internal Communication	
P	Correlation	P	Correlation	P	Correlation	P	Correlation	P	Correlation
1	0.717	6	0.856	11	0.885	16	0.851	21	0.894
2	0.829	7	0.862	12	0.904	17	0.880	22	0.927
3	0.759	8	0.828	13	0.884	18	0.835	23	0.907
4	0.802	9	0.795	14	0.860	19	0.849	24	0.903
5	0.796	10	0.862	15	0.891	20	0.754	25	0.918
	0.781		0.840		0.891		0.834		0.909
Total score		0.850							

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire.

4.2.2. Internal Consistency Results for the Quality of Health Services

Table (4.3) shows below the correlation coefficient between each item regarding the quality of health services and the total score for the same dimension. We observed that the correlation coefficients between the various items and dimensions were high, reaching approximately 82%, which indicates that the correlation coefficients shown are significant at the significance level. (0.05), thus validating what it was designed to measure.

Table (4.3) Internal Consistency Validity Measurement for Healthcare Service Quality

Dependability		Responsiveness		Safety		Empathy		Tangibility	
P	Correlation	P	Correlation	P	Correlation	P	Correlation	P	Correlation
1	0.715	6	0.716	11	0.788	16	0.839	21	0.859

2	0.706	7	0.852	12	0.808	17	0.803	22	0.880
3	0.718	8	0.864	13	0.682	18	0.823	23	0.820
4	0.715	9	0.867	14	0.812	19	0.856	24	0.856
5	0.734	10	0.720	15	0.824	20	0.864	25	0.883
	0.718		0.804		0.782		0.837		0.860
Total score					0.800				

4.3. Instrument Reliability

Questionnaire reliability means that the questionnaire will yield the same results if it is re-administered more than once under the same conditions. In other words, questionnaire reliability means that the results of the study are stable and will not change significantly if re-administered. It was distributed to the sample several times over specific time periods (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The researcher verified the reliability of the study questionnaire using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method, as shown in Table 4.4 below:

Table (4.4) Cronbach Alpha's Coefficient

Main Variables	Dimensions	Alpha Coefficient
Internal Marketing	Employees' Selection	0.832
	Training	0.896
	Empowerment	0.930
	Motivation	0.888
	Internal Communication	0.948
Quality Services	Dependability	0.860
	Responsiveness	0.860
	Safety	0.849
	Empathy	0.890
	Tangibility	0.911

The results are shown in Table (4.4) above using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient revealed that all study dimensions are characterized by stability. The internal consistency of all dimensions reached (0.886), which is an acceptable value for internal consistency stability and is acceptable for the purposes of study and analysis. The closer the Cronbach's Alpha value is to one, the greater the internal consistency stability (Sekaran, & Bougie, 2010).

4.4. Discussion of Study Results

4.4.1. Results of the First Question of the Study

To answer the first question of the study that deals with the level of internal marketing in the Yemeni private hospitals, the researcher summarized the results of this question in the Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Ranking of Internal Marketing Dimensions

No.	Dimensions of Internal Marketing	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Significance level	Rank	Degree of Verification
1	Employees' Selection	5.14	1.008	73.5%	1	Moderate
2	Training	4.62	1.046	66%	5	Moderate
3	Empowerment	4.70	1.050	67%	3	Moderate
4	Motivation	4.69	1.021	67.1%	4	Moderate
5	Internal Communication	4.95	1.033	70.7%	2	Moderate
Total		4.70	1.031	67.1%	Moderate	

The results in Table 4.5 show that the level of internal marketing in the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City was moderate, with an overall mean score of 4.70, a standard deviation of 1.031, based on Likert's five point scale and a relative weight (67.1%) indicating a moderate practice of internal marketing practices within the administrative policies of these hospitals. The degree of availability of the dimensions varied, where the employees' selection dimension came in first rank with an mean score of (5.14) and a relative weight of (73.5%) reflecting the management's interest in the selection process as a tool for improving the quality of health services and reducing medical errors. Conversely, the training dimension came in last rank with an mean score of (4.62) and a relative weight of (66%), which may be attributed to the lack of administrative expertise in the human resources and the absence of clear and ongoing training programs in the hospitals. Thus, these results answered the first study question related to the level of internal marketing availability and achieved the first objective of this study.

4.4.2. Results of the Second Question of the Study

To answer the second question of the study that deals with the level of quality of health services in the Yemeni private hospitals, the researcher summarized the results of this question in Table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6: Ranking of Dimensions of Health Service Quality

No.	Dimensions of Health Service Quality	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Significance level	Rank	Score of Verification
1	Dependability	5.72	0.775	81.8%	1	High

2	Responsiveness	5.53	0.892	79.1%	4	High
3	Safety	5.66	0.891	80.9%	2	High
4	Empathy	5.55	0.971	79.2%	3	High
5	Tangibility	5.50	0.993	78.6%	5	High
Total		5.59	0.904	80%	High	

The analysis of the results of the second question showed a high level of the quality of healthcare services at the Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb city from the perspective of the participants with a mean score of (5.59), a standard deviation of (0.904), and a relative weight of (80) indicating a relative variance among participants towards the achievement of high quality of health services at private hospitals in Ibb city, indicating that the hospitals under study strive to provide exemplary healthcare services.

The level of availability of healthcare service quality dimensions in private hospitals in Ibb City from the perspective of participants was ranked according to the highest mean score. Dependability ranked first in terms of relative importance, with a mean weight of 81.8. Safety ranked second with a mean score of 80.9. Empathy ranked third with a mean weight of 79.2. Responsiveness ranked fourth, with a mean weight of 79.1%. Tangibility ranked fifth with a mean weight of 78.6.

4.4.3. Results of the Third Question of the Study

To answer the third question of the study that deals with the impact of internal marketing on improving the quality of healthcare services in Yemeni private hospitals in Ibb City, it was answered by testing the following hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect at a significance level of 0.05 for internal marketing, with its combined dimensions (selection, training, empowerment, motivation, internal communications) on improving the quality of health services in private hospitals in Ibb city.

Table (4.7) : Main Hypothesis Test

Path	R1	R2	Standard Deviation	T	significance level
Internal Marketing --- Health Service Quality	0.724	0.524	0.052	15.510	0.000

The results of the Table (4.7) above showed that the value of the statistical significance of internal marketing is (0.000), which is less than (0.05) indicating a significant statistical significance. The path analysis also showed a strong positive causal relationship between internal marketing and the quality of services and health, as the path factor reached (0.724) which confirms the existence of a positive impact of internal marketing on the quality of health services from the point of view of workers in private hospitals in the city of Ibb. Accordingly, the first main hypothesis is accepted, and could be concluded that the dimensions of internal marketing combined (employees' selection,

training empowerment, motivation, and internal communication contribute effectively to improving the quality and health services, and thus the goal of the study has been achieved.

Table (4.8): Summary of Sub-Hypotheses

Path	Beta	Standard Error	T	Statistical Significance
Employee selection --- Quality of health service	0.236	0.041	3.103	0.002
Training --- Quality Health Service	-0.025	0.074	-0.416	0.677
Empowerment--- Quality of health service	0.174	0.058	2.239	0.019
Motivation ---Health Service Quality	0.124	0.062	1.787	0.044
Internal Communication --- Quality of Service	0.282	0.054	3.173	0.002

H1A: The results of the first sub-hypothesis test indicated that there is a statistically significant effect of the selection of employees in improving the quality of health services in private hospitals, where the value of beta is (0.236) and the value of t is (3.103) which is higher than the acceptable limit (2), and p . value was less than (0.05) confirming the significance of the results and accordingly the acceptance of the first sub-hypothesis

H1B: The results of the second sub-hypothesis test showed that the value of the statistical significance for the dimension of training was (0.677), and it is higher than the level of statistical significance (0.05), which indicates that there is no statistically significant effect of this dimension in improving the quality of health services from the point of view of employees. Accordingly, the second sub-hypothesis is rejected.

H1C: The results of the third sub-hypothesis test showed that the dimension of empowerment had statistically significant effect on improving the quality of health services, as the statistical significance value was (0.019) and the value of t was (2.239) which indicate a significant significance at the level of (0.05). Accordingly, the third sub-hypothesis is accepted.

H1D: The results of the fourth sub-hypothesis test showed that the value of the statistical significance for the dimension of motivation was (0.044), and it is less than the level of statistical significance (0.05), and the value of t was 2.239 which indicates that there is a statistically significant effect of this dimension in improving the quality of health services from the point of view of employees, and therefore the fourth sub-hypothesis is accepted.

H1E: The results of the fifth sub-hypothesis test showed that the statistical significance value for the "internal communication" dimension was (0.002), which is less than the significance level of (0.05), indicating a statistically significant impact of this dimension on improving the quality of health services from the perspective of employees. The t value was (3.173), which exceeds the acceptable limit (2) supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis. Accordingly, the fifth sub-hypothesis is accepted.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The results of the statistical analysis confirmed the main hypothesis reflected the existence of a direct causal relationship between internal marketing practices and the quality of health services. This result is consistent with the findings of (Amar (2021; Al-Omari et al, 2018; Miftah & Al-Nasr, 2020) that confirmed the impact of internal marketing on improving the quality of health services.

Regarding the sub-hypotheses, the results revealed variations in the impact between the different dimensions. All the hypotheses of the dimensions were accepted, while one hypothesis was rejected. The results showed no statistically significant effect of the training dimension on improving the quality of health services. This result is consistent with the findings of Jedwani and Kawashi (2019, p. 82), which concluded that there is no relationship between training and the quality of service in the Tijani Public Hospital in Algeria. Najimi and Kuwahil, (2020, p. 26) also confirmed the lack of an impact of training on human resources performance.

These results indicate that training practices in Yemeni private hospitals have not been sufficiently implemented to achieve the desired impact. This result is likely due to the poor quality of the training programs provided, their inadequacy to staff needs, or the lack of effective evaluation for selecting appropriate trainers and trainees.

In contrast, dimensions related to staff selection, empowerment, motivation, and internal communication showed a significant positive impact on improving the quality of health services. This result can be explained by the fact that carefully selecting competent employees, empowering them to make decisions, and providing an effective internal communication environment directly contributes to enhancing their ability to provide high-quality health services. These results are consistent with Jawah and Taboub (2020) which demonstrated that the process of selecting and hiring staff had a significant impact on improving the quality of services provided at the Tlshin Hospital in Blida, Algeria. Saad (2022, p. 278) also supported this trend and demonstrated that employees' empowerment contributes to achieving organizational excellence in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Shaqra Governorate. Ali (2022, p. 127) demonstrated that internal communication contributes to enhancing customer loyalty in Sudanese service institutions. Amar (2021, p. 227) confirmed a significant moral impact of internal communication on improving the quality of healthcare services in tourism establishments.

Based on the above, it can be said that the results of the current study are consistent in general with what was stated in the literature and previous studies with some differences in some dimensions. This reflects the importance of the organizational and cultural context in showing the relationships between the study variables.

Furthermore, this study represents an important scientific contribution to enriching the literature related to internal marketing and health service quality. It presented an integrated model linking the dimensions of internal marketing (employees' selection, training, empowerment, motivation, and internal communication) with improving the quality of health services in Yemeni private hospitals. The study results contributed to confirming some theoretical hypotheses that view internal marketing as an effective tool for improving institutional performance through its direct and indirect impact on the quality of services provided.

Conversely, the lack of evidence of an impact on the training dimension provides theoretical evidence for the need to reconsider general hypotheses that assume the automatic positive impact of this dimension, opening the way for future studies focusing on contextual and institutional dimensions.

To conclude, the study confirms that the effectiveness of internal marketing is not achieved merely by the availability of its theoretical components. Rather, it depends primarily on implementation mechanisms and their suitability to the needs of employees and the circumstances of institutions. These results serve as practical guidance for decision-makers in the private healthcare sector to direct their efforts toward implementing practices that have a real impact on service quality.

5.2. Recommendations

In light of the study findings, the importance of internal marketing as a supporting element for the quality of healthcare services in Yemeni private hospitals is highlighted. This study demonstrated that internal marketing practices are not merely organizational procedures, but rather represent a strategic direction reflected in the overall level of performance and quality of service provided. The results indicate that the effectiveness of internal marketing depends on the extent to which its dimensions are integrated and compatible with the nature of the organizational environment. Furthermore, the disparity in the impact of some dimensions calls for a comprehensive review of internal policies, particularly those related to training. Based on the above, the study recommends the following: integrating internal marketing into human resources management strategic plans; enhancing job empowerment; developing more appropriate selection and recruitment systems; activating internal communication as a tool for guidance, motivation, and ensuring transparency; and restructuring training programs to align with employees' needs and the organization's orientations. The study also suggests conducting future research that examines the impact of internal marketing in various service sectors and within diverse cultural and organizational contexts, which will contribute to expanding the theoretical and applied understanding of this vital concept.

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