

## **Perception of Professional Health Care Workers Towards Internal Marketing at Port Said Selected Hospitals**

**Safaa Abd EL-Moniem Zahran<sup>1</sup>; Noura El Gharib Mohamed Eldiasty<sup>2</sup>; Rabab Mohamed EL Hasaneen<sup>3</sup>**

Assistant. Prof. of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Tanta University<sup>1</sup>

Lecturer of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Port-Said University<sup>2</sup>

B.Sc Nursing, Mansoura University<sup>3</sup>

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Internal marketing is promoted as a way for hospitals to consider both their professional health care workers and their patients. It means that satisfying professional health care workers demonstrated more loyalty and profits for hospitals. Internal marketing motivation comes from professional health care workers who are considered internal marketing as a strategy of job design and service branding for provide the market. **Aim:** of this study is to assess cognitive awareness of professional health care workers towards internal marketing in hospitals of Port-Said City. **Subjects and Method:** **Design:** a descriptive comparative research design was used to conduct this study. **Setting:** two hospitals, El-Zohour hospital and Al-Soliman hospital, Port-Said city. **Subjects:** The study comprised of 64 physicians, 28 pharmacist and 105 nursing staff. **Tools:** data was collected by using one tool: perception of professional health care workers towards internal marketing questionnaire. **Results:** The current study revealed that the professional health care worker in both hospitals showed a moderate level of perception towards internal marketing (62.4%). **Conclusion:** there was a positive relationship between the professional healthcare workers level of perception related to internal marketing in both hospitals. Moreover, professional health care worker in Al-Soliman hospital had a high level of internal marketing perception than those in El-Zohour hospital. **Recommendations:** For improving internal marketing through hospitals by managers, develop hospitals philosophy that enhance and support internal marketing behavior, and identify the level internal marketing and develop strategy to improve it.

**Key words:** Internal marketing, level of perception, professional health care workers.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Service hospitals can achieve sustainable competitive advantage to ensure their competitive capabilities, by creating such a culture. Because there are more patients professional health care workers interactions. They are aware of their self-importance and play an important role in creating, achieving and maintaining sustainable competitive advantage (Akbari, Hooshmand, & Aletaha, 2019). Internal communication is also critical for staff awareness of the hospital vision, mission, hospital culture and goals which will increase their involvement in management and build emotions of belonging (Abo Soliman, El-sayed, Ibrahim, Inany & Ibrahim, 2020).

In addition to the essential parts of leadership and marketing the importance of marketing orientation and brand image as well as the vital components of internal marketing, hospital culture and brand identity. Many marketing theories have been developed as well as key theories on culture and leadership. Marketing orientation refers to set of beliefs and values that place the patient at the center of hospital's decision making. (O'Keeffe, Ozuem & Lancaster, 2016).

Benchmarking's popularity and efficacy are also reflects in its inclusion in quality excellence which is reflected the expansion of its use in different hospitals, benchmarking as a fundamental tool for continuous improvement. It is a technique for finding and enhances performance by measuring and comparing a hospital performance with that of others (Alosani, Al-Dhaafri, & Yusoff, 2016).

Furthermore the promotion activities focuses on assigning duties and functions that are higher than those attached to professional health care workers. Professional health care workers hospital status responsibilities and duties as well as, their pay and other privileges are expanding within the administrative hierarchy (Andrews & Shimp, 2017). Also service culture establishment involves beliefs, assumptions, and symbols of hospital staff that characterize the hospital work process. Managers use an effective hospital culture to influence performance and hospital culture has the potential to influence the work habits, performance, hospital environment, productivity, and profitability (Tedla, 2016).

Marketing in addition to human resources has emerged as a new phenomenon in both marketing and human resources management. Human resources marketing are defined as a hospital personal policy orientation toward the demand of the current and future professional health care workers. Its goal is to find and recruit a high quality human capital and keep it stable, setting its target to keep and motivate the present professional health care workers while also attracting new ones. (Strenitzerová, 2016).

Additionally it was shown how internal marketing affected the performance of professional health care workers. The analysis of relationship and influence between internal marketing procedures such as internal training and marketing information dissemination especially after the emergence of the role and importance of internal marketing. To get personnel of high capabilities and skills who are able of assume responsibility and providing high quality services to patients (Magatef & Momani, 2016).

Many professional health care workers are resistant to accept recognition and encouragement programs. However a cost-effective method to raise professional health care workers morale and reducing stress, absenteeism, and turnover can ranging from verbal praise to small non-cash awards. Furthermore, while professional health care workers benefit from recognition programs, hospital's adopting them tend to see improved profitability, higher retention rates, decreased turnover costs and increased worker productivity and performance (Sabir, 2016).

### **Significance of the Study**

Internal marketing aims to increase patients' satisfaction and fidelity, as well as ensure the survival and success rate. In this dynamic environment, hospitals require service innovation as a managerial reaction to create a competitive advantage. Besides, there is continuing interest among academics, practitioners, and policy-makers in approaches for achieving accelerated innovation (Abbasi, Haghghi, Maskan, Ashkani, & Mohammadi, 2017).

In addition internal marketing is promoted as a way for hospitals to consider both their professional health care workers and their patients. It means that satisfying Professional health care workers demonstrated more loyalty and profits for hospitals. Internal marketing motivation comes from the professional health care workers who are

considered internal marketing as a strategy of job design and service branding for provide the market (Abbasi, et al., 2017).

Internal marketing has a tendency to increase work engagement by enhancing job satisfaction. In such dynamic and changeable service-oriented hospitals, professional health care workers, who engage more in their work and hospital activities, are highlighted. Internal marketing influences job satisfaction and commitment in an indirect way. Moreover, internal marketing is used by hospitals to motivate professional health care workers' capabilities and to respond to hospital goals. (Raesi, Suhaili Ramli,& Lingjie, 2020).

### **AIM OF STUDY:**

Assess cognitive awareness of professional health care workers towards internal marketing in hospitals of Port Said City.

### **Research question:**

- What is the professional health care worker's perception about internal marketing?
- Is there a comparison between internal marketing at Al Zohor General Hospital (which affiliated to Ministry of Health) and Al Soliman Hospital (Private Hospital)?

### **SUBJECT AND METHOD:**

#### **Research design:**

The descriptive comparative research design was used in this study.

#### **Study Setting:**

This study was conducted at two different sector of hospitals at Port- Said city namely:

- Al Zohor General Hospital which affiliated to Ministry of Health
- Al Soliman Hospital, it is a Private Hospital.

#### **Study Subjects:**

The study subjects were comprised all the professional health care workers at Al Zohor General Hospital and Al Soliman Hospital , and they were participated in the study during the period of data collection and they are;

- 64 Physicians (Number in AlZohor hospital is 41 and in Al Soliman hospital is 23)
- 28 Pharmacist (Number in AlZohor hospital is 22 and in Al Soliman hospital is 6)
- 105 Nursing staff (Number in Al Zohor hospital is 68 and in Al Soliman hospital is 37)

**Tool of data collection:**

The tool was developed by researcher based on Drake, Gulman, & Roberts, (2005) and Azêdo, Alves, & Wymer, (2012) to assess professional health care worker's perceptions toward internal marketing awareness in their organization which consisted of the following two parts:

**Part I: Personal Characteristics**

This part developed by researcher includes questions about personal characteristics of professional health care worker's, these cover personal items, hospital name, gender, job position, occupation specialty, education, years of work experience, marital status.

**Part II: Perception of professional health care workers towards internal marketing questionnaire**

This part was included fifty five questions categorized under eight dimensions which addressing different aspects of the perception, These dimensions were as the following:

- **Communication:** It was consisted of 9 questions.
- **Leadership:** It was consisted of 6 questions.
- **Benchmarking and job quality:** It was consisted of 6 questions.
- **Promotional activities:** It was consisted of 5 questions.
- **Service culture establishment:** It was consisted of 5 questions.
- **Developing a marketing approach to human resources:** It was consisted of 8 questions.
- **Dissemination of marketing information to employees:** It was consisted of 8 questions.
- **Implementation of reward and recognition system:** It was consisted of 8 questions.

**Scoring system**

Perception of professional health care workers towards internal marketing questionnaire items were scored from 5 to 1 as follows: strongly agree =5, agree=4, natural=3, disagree=2 and strongly disagree=1, in which strongly agree + agree = agree and strongly disagree + disagree = disagree. The scores of items were summed-up for each item and the total were divided by number of the items giving scores for the part.

These scores were converted into a percent score, when percent score was equal more than 75% indicates high perception, moderate perception if the percent score was 60% and less than 75% and low perception if the percent score was less than 60%.

**Operational design:**

The operational design includes preparatory phase, face & content validity, reliability, pilot study and field work.

**Preparatory phase:**

Included reviewing of related literature, different studies and theoretical knowledge of various aspects of clinical learning environment and clinical supervision using books, research articles, internet, periodicals and magazines

**Content validity of the tool:**

The tool was translated into Arabic language by the researcher. The content validity was asserted by a five experts to content validity. Total content validity= 0.89.

**Reliability**

To assess reliability, the study tool was tested by Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.76 for the questionnaire.

**Pilot study:**

A pilot study was carried out to clarify understandability of the tool on 22 of professional health care workers who represent 10% of the total sample. Completion of tool took 15-20 minutes from each one.

**Field work:**

The directors of the two hospitals (AlZohor general hospital and Al Soliman private hospital) were informed about the aim of the study and official letters were taken from them, then the researcher met all the professional health care workers (Physicians, Pharmacist, Nursing staff) in the study setting and consent was taken from them after explaining objectives of the study and how to complete the tool. Data were collected from professional health care workers using self-instructions questionnaires. This process of data collection was carried out in the period started of August 2020 till the end of November 2020.

**Ethical considerations:**

- Ethical approval was obtained from the scientific ethical research committee at Faculty of Nursing, Port Said University.
- An informed consent was obtained from professional health care worker's to participate in the study after explaining the purpose and the nature of the study.
- The studied professional health care worker's was informed that their participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdrawing from study at any time.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of the information collected and anonymity is guaranteed.

**Statistical design:**

The collected data were organized; tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 21, SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL, USA).

**RESULTS:**

The study results revealed that most of professional health care workers (46.2%) were in age group ranged between 31-40 years. Moreover, 66.1% of them have Bachelor Degree. 34.3% of them had more than 10 years of experience, but 43% of them had less than 5 years' experience in the current hospital. 61% of the professional health care workers were females, while about half of them were nurses (52.2%), also 82.9 % of the professional health care workers were subordinates.

**Figure (1)** : illustrates levels of professional health care worker perception toward internal marketing in both hospitals. It shows that only 20.7% of the professional health care worker in both hospitals had high degree of internal marketing perception. Moreover, the figure represent that professional health care worker in El-Zohour hospital has high perception (28.6%) toward internal marketing more than those who work in Al-Soliman hospital which achieve 24.5% of perception. Also this difference was evident in the low level of perception (El-Zohour hospital was 20.5 % and Al-Soliman hospital was 10.5%).

**Figure (2)** : shows professional health care worker perception about internal marketing. It shows that 30.5% of nurses had high level of perception toward internal marketing, while only 8.8% of pharmacists had high level of perception toward internal

marketing, moreover 10.5% of the physicians had high level of perception toward internal marketing.

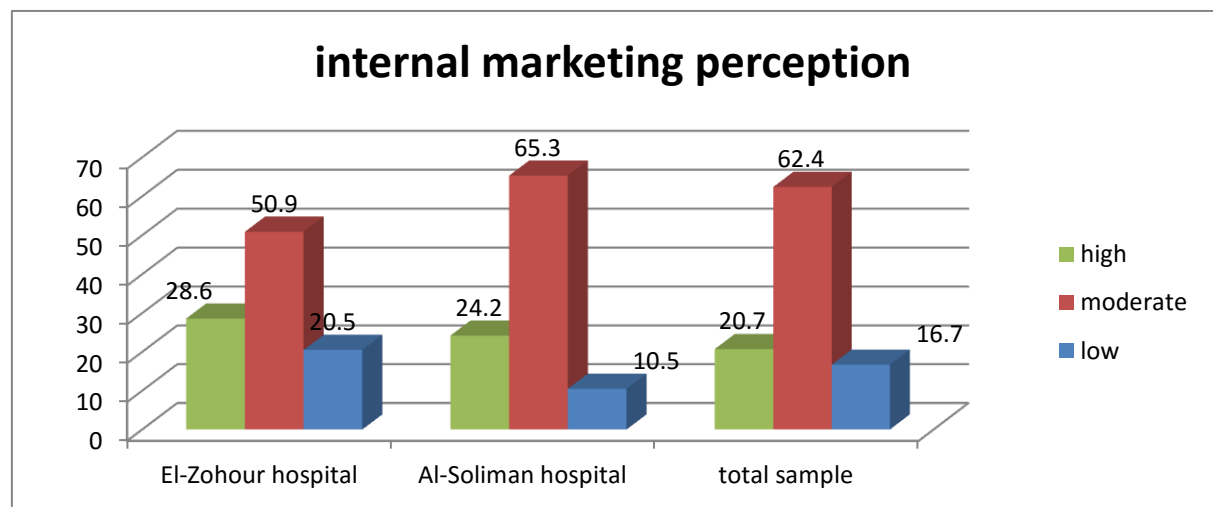
**Table (1)** : illustrates professional health care worker perceptions' levels toward internal marketing dimensions according to their hospitals. This table demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference between El-Zohour hospital and Al-Soliman hospital in the following dimensions; communication, developing a marketing approach to H.R, dissemination of marketing information to employees and implementation of reward and recognition system at ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, professional health care worker highest perception level was achieved in implementation of reward and recognition system dimension (62.8%) at El-Zohour hospital, while professional health care worker lowest perception level was achieved in promotional activities dimension (9.5%) at Al-Soliman hospital.

**Table (2)** : presents relation between professional health care workers characteristics and their perception levels of internal marketing. The table indicates that, there were a statistical significant positive relationship between level of perception of the professional health care workers related to internal marketing and their level of education ( $P = 0.032$ ) with highest score percent (40.6%) about Bachelor degree as a moderate level of internal marketing and their occupation specialty ( $P = 0.001$ ) with highest score percent (29.5) about nurses in the moderate level of internal marketing. While the other personal characteristics there is no statistical significant relationship with the professional health care workers characteristics and their perception about internal marketing.

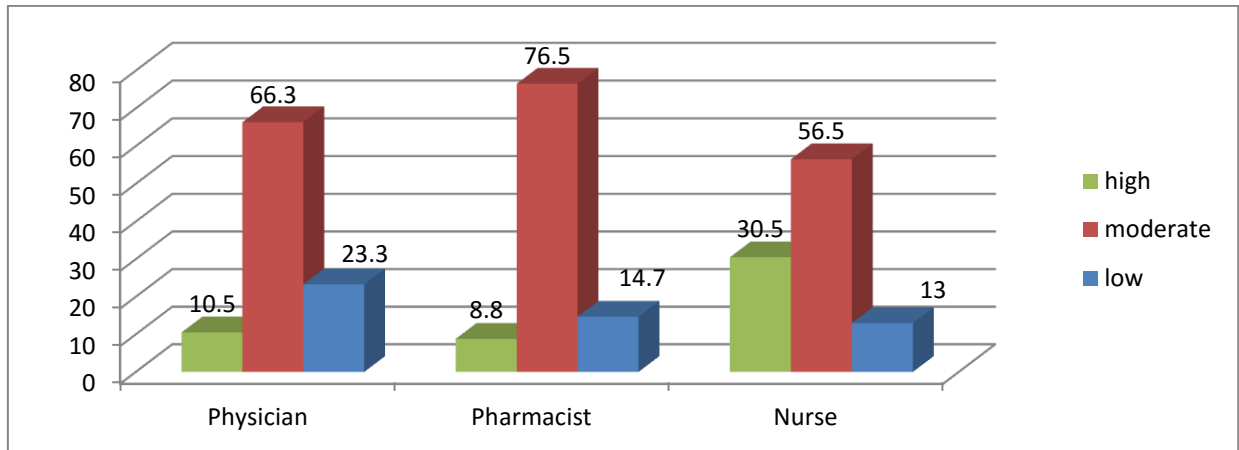
**Table (3)** : illustrates professional health care worker perceptions' levels toward internal marketing dimensions according to their hospitals. This table demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference between El-Zohour hospital and Al-Soliman hospital in the following dimensions; communication ( $p = 0.000$ ), developing a marketing approach to H.R ( $p = 0.049$ ), dissemination of marketing information to employees ( $p = 0.000$ ) and implementation of reward and recognition system ( $p = 0.000$ ). Also, professional health care worker highest perception level was achieved in implementation of reward and recognition system dimension (62.8%) at El-Zohour hospital, while professional health care worker lowest perception level was achieved in promotional activities dimension (9.5%) at Al-Soliman hospital.



**Table (4):** illustrates the relation between professional health care workers characteristics and their mean perception of internal marketing according to their occupation. The table shows that, there were no significant relation between total physicians mean of perceptions related to internal marketing and their characteristics. Moreover there were a significant positive relation between total mean pharmacist perception related to internal marketing and their marital status ( $p=0.012$ ) with highest mean ( $176.00\pm 0$ ) about widowed state and their years of experience ( $p=0.026$ ) with highest mean ( $160.88\pm 19.96$ ) about less than five years of experience. Also there were a significant positive relation between total mean of nurse's perception related to internal marketing and their level of education ( $P=0.007$ ) with highest mean ( $168.71\pm 24.17$ ) about Master Degree of education.



**Figure (1):** Levels of professional health care worker perception toward internal marketing in different hospitals (n=251)



**Figure (2): Professional health care worker perception about internal marketing (n=251)**

**Table (1): Professional health care worker perceptions' levels toward internal marketing dimensions according to their hospitals (n=251)**

Dimensions	El-Zohour hospital			Al-Soliman hospital			U	P value
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low		
Communication	35.3	51.9	12.8	18.9	38.9	42.2	28.69	0.000 **
Leadership	30.1	49.4	20.5	27.4	45.3	27.3	1.56	0.458
Benchmarking and job quality	21.8	35.3	42.9	23.1	33.7	43.2	0.092	0.955
Promotional activities	15.4	33.3	51.3	9.5	33.7	56.8	1.913	0.384
Service culture establishment	19.9	37.8	42.3	16.8	38.9	44.3	0.359	0.836
Developing a marketing approach to H.R	25.6	40.4	34.0	13.7	52.6	33.7	6.966	0.049 *
Dissemination of marketing information to employees	58.3	27.6	14.1	29.5	38.9	31.6	21.48	0.000 **
Implementation of reward and recognition system	62.8	26.9	10.3	27.4	54.7	17.9	30.83	0.000 **
<b>Total</b>	28.6	50.9	20.5	24.2	65.3	10.5	4.599	0.091

\*Significant (P<0.05).      \*\* High Significant (P≤0.001).      U = Mann-Whitney test

Numbers in the cells refers to percentage within the hospital category. We can't depend on the total percent of dimension due to the two group sample not equal in number.

**Table (2):** Relation between professional health care workers characteristics and their perception levels of internal marketing (n=251)

Personal characteristics	Professional health care workers perception						Significance test	P
	High		Moderate		Low			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
<b>Age in Years</b>								
≤30	21	8.4	48	19.1	15	6.0	H=4.161	0.655
31 :40	22	8.8	73	29.1	21	8.4		
41 :50	7	2.8	23	9.2	5	2.0		
51 : 60	2	0.8	13	5.2	1	0.4		
<b>Marital status</b>								
Single	17	23.9	61	24.3	17	23.9	H=8.67	0.193
Married	25	10.0	76	30.3	22	8.8		
Divorced	10	4.0	14	5.6	3	1.2		
Widowed	0	0	6	2.4	0	0		
<b>Hospital name</b>								
El-zohour hospital	29	11.6	95	37.8	32	12.7	U=4.599	0.100
Al-soliman hospital	23	9.2	62	24.7	10	4.0		
<b>Level of education</b>								
Diploma degree	5	2.0	11	4.4	0	0	H=16.77	0.032*
Health technical institute	10	4.0	23	9.2	1	0.4		
Bachelor degree	27	10.8	102	40.6	37	14.7		
Master degree	10	4.0	19	7.6	4	1.6		
PhD	0	0	2	0.8	0	0		
<b>Years of experience</b>								
Less than 5 years	19	7.6	48	19.1	13	5.2	H=4.649	0.326
5 :10	17	23.9	49	19.5	19	7.6		
More than 10 years	16	6.4	60	23.9	10	4.0		
<b>Experience years in the current hospital</b>								
Less than 5 years	31	12.4	74	29.5	26	10.4	H=2.931	0.569
5 :10	11	4.4	52	10.7	12	4.8		
More than 10 years	10	4.0	31	12.4	4	1.6		
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	18	7.2	59	23.5	21	8.4	U=2.688	0.261
Female	34	13.5	98	39.0	21	8.4		
<b>Occupation specialty</b>								
Physician	9	3.6	57	22.7	20	8.0	H=18.167	0.001*
Pharmacist	3	1.2	26	10.4	5	2.0		
Nurse	40	15.9	74	29.5	17	6.8		
<b>Job position in the hospital</b>								
Director	6	2.4	31	12.4	6	2.4	U=2.141	0.343
Subordinates	46	18.3	126	50.5	36	14.3		

\*Significant (P&lt;0.05).

H Kruskal-Wallis tests

U Mann-Whitney test.

**Table (3):** Relation between professional health care workers personal characteristics and their mean perception of internal marketing according to their hospitals (n=251)

Personal characteristics	Professional health care workers perception			
	El-Zohour hospital	Significance test (f)/ p value	Al-Soliman hospital	Significance test (f)/ p value
<b>Age in Years</b>				
≤30	167.98±21.48	2.947 P= (0.091)	156.26±19.76	1.371 0.241
31 :40	157.90±20.839		154.60±17.05	
41 :50	160.54±19.54		154.36±18.54	
51 : 60	159.14±19.93		153.89±18.36	
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	161.10±20.04	1.609 P= (0.207)	153.72±19.43	0.987 0.624
Married	163.06±21.51		153.20±16.69	
Divorced	160.54±20.98		152.36±17.98	
Widowed	159.36±19.74		152.77±16.97	
<b>Level of education</b>				
Diploma degree	159.36±18.35	4.432 P= (0.021*)	149.35±15.21	5.148 0.015*
Health technical institute	160.24±19.65		151.00±13.08	
Bachelor degree	165.68±20.54		153.65±16.54	
Master degree	167.26±21.05		157.54±17.65	
PhD	173.75±13.88		161.82±15.75	
<b>Years of experience</b>				
Less than 5 years	168.71±19.42	2.541 P=(0.179)	157.79±18.34	1.329 0.251
5 :10	159.41±22.09		150.83±19.35	
More than 10 years	161.41±21.13		151.39±20.35	
<b>Experience years in the current hospital</b>				
Less than 5 years	166.68±20.23	4.215 P= (0.029*)	154.91±18.54	1.021 0.459
5 :10	158.35±21.734		154.30±18.62	
More than 10 years	160.54±19.57		151.87±17.68	
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	161.81±22.37	(t) 0.913	155.53±17.16	(t) 0.777
Female	164.43±19.52	P=(0.417)	153.67±18.51	0.438
<b>Occupation specialty</b>				
Physician	153.66±17.54	0.549 P=(0.419)	163.11±15.77	1.495 0.384
Pharmacist	154.67±19.75		145.10±21.44	
Nurse	155.78±18.25		162.49±19.24	
<b>Job position in the hospital</b>				
Director	170.17±21.35	(t) 2.651	152.40±18.93	(t) 1.720
Subordinates	162.18±20.44	P=(0.067)	154.85±17.79	0.087

\*Significant (P<0.05). (t) Independent t-test (f) anova test

**Table (4):** Relation between professional health care workers characteristics and their mean perception of internal marketing according to their occupation (n=251)

Personal characteristics	Physician (n=86) mean perception	Significan ce test (F) (p) value	Pharmacist (n=34) mean perception	Significa nce test (F) (p) value	Staff nurses (n=131)mea n perception	Significa nce test (F) (p) value
<b>Age in Years</b>						
≤30	161.16±19.21	3.541	157.00±20.81	2.654	167.46±22.61	1.834
31 :40	153.44±17.06	0.082	147.28±19.99	0.123	162.29±19.70	0.177
41 :50	161.88±14.01		165.33±18.49		160.00±21.10	
51 : 60	157.62±7.12		144.50±9.19		158.67±23.18	
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single	155.71±18.34	2.915	154.23±14.29	4.369	161.36±22.33	1.239
Married	157.43±17.44	0.099	141.47±16.87	0.012*	164.47±20.41	0.293
Divorced	163.50±12.17		172.00±24.86		166.57±23.28	
Widowed	166.67±17.89		176.00±(0)		164.00±(0)	
<b>Level of education</b>						
Diploma degree	----		----		162.38±17.51	
Health technical institute	----	1.031	----	0.917	165.50±19.42	4.830
Bachelor degree	156.51±17.43	0.621	151.93±18.12	0.716	161.81±22.73	0.007*
Master degree	164.58±15.17		151.57±27.92		168.71±24.17	
PhD	155.50±28.99		----		----	
<b>Years of experience</b>						
Less than 5 years	163.35±15.95	2.919	160.88±19.96	3.996	167.16±21.25	1.398
5 :10	152.17±18.61	0.095	148.14±21.11	0.026*	161.17±22.02	0.286
More than 10 years	157.59±16.71		150.17±18.43		161.77±19.79	
<b>Experience years in the current hospital</b>						
Less than 5 years	159.58±18.40	1.083	155.42±20.58	2.642	166.38±20.93	2.521
5 :10	155.88±17.27	0.609	148.27±19.28	0.128	159.84±22.74	0.109
More than 10 years	158.00±15.58		153.43±22.29		162.92±18.63	
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	156.24±20.15	(t)1.609	153.78±23.79	1.012	163.20±20.58	0.719
Female	158.71±14.94	0.202	151.16±18.97	0.549	163.81±21.68	0.608
<b>Hospital name</b>						
El-zohour hospital	153.66±17.53	(t) 1.088	154.67±19.14	1.031	171.82±19.42	7.810
Al-soliman hospital	163.11±15.76	0.609	145.10±21.44	0.621	149.78±16.37	0.004*
<b>Job position in the hospital</b>						
Director	158.92±13.91	(t)0.810	143.29±26.85	2.028	169.26±21.09	0.991
Subordinates	157.38±17.98	0.644	154.07±17.81	0.157	162.36±21.11	0.438

\*Significant (P&lt;0.05). (F) anova test. (t) test

**DISSCUSION:**

According to the study results professional health care worker in both hospitals showed a high level of internal marketing perception. Moreover, professional health care worker in El-Zohour hospital have a high level of perception of internal marketing than those in Al-Soliman hospital. This difference could be due to the adoption of a job security policy for staff and timely payment of rewards.

The findings of a study conducted by De Farias (2016) who indicates that the concept of a worker as a patient leads to the premise that, desire to have their needs met. The present finding is disagreed with Weng, Chen, Lee, Lin, and Wu (2016) who claiming that there is a law relationship between internal marketing perceptions and worker awareness in hospitals, as it requires practices inquiring and clarification from the managers.

The result of the current study revealed that, there was a disparity in communication between El-Zohour and Al-Soliman hospitals. El-Zohour hospital had the highest level of professional health care worker perception, it was due to the hospital tries its best to provide a comfortable working environment for its workers. While Al-Soliman hospital had the lowest level of professional health care worker perception, this was due to the hospital lack of vertical communication channels.

Also, these results were in agreement with Panigyrakis and Kyriacou (2020) who's carried out a study in Greece and in Cyprus about the role of the internal marketing communication in the hospital and its effect on relationship quality and patient loyalty. Their results revealed that the internal marketing communication in the hospital supports the daily relations of personnel and shapes their behavior and attitudes. Moreover in disagreement of this study, Morsi (2016) found that the level of staff perception about internal marketing communication was decreased in the hospitals in Egypt and reported that not all the hospitals are successful in their efforts to staff communication.

Concerning to response of health care workers towards internal marking dimensions, the present study showed that the health care workers in El-Zohour hospital had a high perception than those in Al-Soliman hospital and there are significant difference between both hospitals in many dimensions, these findings might be because

the communications, information and reward systems in El-Zohour hospital assists in developing marketing approach.

This result was agreed with Sabir (2016) in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who found that, the employee recorded the highest level of perception in relation with implementation of reward and recognition programs. This is because it is a method of motivating employees to change work habits and key behaviors to benefit a work and to benefit employees and work in competitive job. This finding in line with Ekiyor and Altan (2020) in University of Ankara Haci Bayram Veli, Turkey they found that relation between staff perceptions and internal marketing promotional activities in Turkey, and the study results indicated that staffs are satisfied with internal marketing promotional activities provided by their hospitals because it is important to enhance quality of work life.

On the other hand, this results not consistent with Valmohammadi and Ghassemi (2016), in Iranian they discovered that, there is no link between implementation of reward and recognition programs and work success because of the most significant being resources and organizational culture .The finding of the current study differs from those of Waheed, Yang, Ahmed, Rafique, and Ashfaq (2017), in Lahore, Pakistan they found that, no relation between workers perception and internal marketing promotional activities this is due to must considering a variety of factors including internal marketing philosophy, providing resources.

Ongoing in the study results regarding the relationship between professional health care workers' perceptions of internal marketing and their personal characteristics, the current study found a statistically significant positive relationship; this may be due to their level of education with a high percentage of Bachelor's degree holders and their occupation specialty with a high percentage of nurses. While there was no statistically significant relationship with the other personal characteristics of the professional health care workers, it could be regarding to their occupation specialty and the difference of their years of experience.

This finding was in accordance with Sarker and Ashrafi (2018) in Bangladesh who revealed that there is a significant relationship between health employees' level of perception of internal marketing and their personal characteristics specialty in their level of education and occupation specialty. Also, in a study of Asiamah, Opuni, and Mensah

(2018) who conducted in the U.S.A, about the effect of personal characteristics and employees' level of perception related to internal marketing, they found that the major theme of improving the level of education and occupation specialty is increasing health employees' perception about internal marketing.

The study results disagreed with the finding of Taştan and Davoudi (2020) in Turkey who discovered a weak relationship between staff perception of internal marketing and their personal characteristics. On contrary, this results not consistent with Silvia and František (2017) in Slovakia who found that, there was no significant association between staff perception and their personal characteristics. Because of a highly competitive environment, and barriers of staff training and their socio-economic factors such as gender, age educational level are included in training.

The finding of this present study revealed that, there was statistically significant positive relationship between the professional health care workers level of perception at El-Zohour and Al-Soliman hospitals and their level of education. This could be due to the majority of them had PhDs and take in consideration increasing levels of staff education friendly. There was also significant relationship between the degree of professional health care workers perception at El-Zohour hospital and their years of experience with a high mean of less than five years, which could be attributable to holding more responsibilities.

This result goes in line with Chi, Yeh, and Liou (2016) in Taiwan, who found in his study that there was a significant relationship between the employee's level of perception and their level of education and their years of experience; this is because their factors increase the quality of the services provided. This result differed from Hashem (2018) in Jordan who discovered that, there is no significant relationship between an employee's level of perception and their level of education or years of experience; owing to the work progress is usually depends on available resources and the level of service provided.

The study results illustrated that, there were no statistically significant relationship between physician's level of perceptions and their characteristics. This can be exemplified by a physician's physical ability which enabled them to perform better. Moreover, pharmacists had a significant positive relationship with their marital status, with the high level of perception about being widowed and their years of experience with the highest level of perception about having less than five years of experience. This may



be related to their job had a meaning to them and they felt a part of their hospital. Also, there was a significant positive relationship between nurse's perception of internal marketing and their level of education with the highest level of perception about a Master Degree. This could be because nurses have more ambition in their careers and devote more time and effort to their jobs.

This result was supported by Ali (2016) in South and Southeast Asia who found that, there was a significant relation between staff impression of internal marketing and their personal traits. It was related to their years of experience, degree of education and sense of belonging to their jobs. This finding not consistent with the finding of Marques, Leal, Marques, and Cabral (2018) in Brazil, who found that, there is no significant relationship between staff level of internal marketing perceptions and personal attribute. It was related to their marital status, their degree of education and years of experience in the hospital. Effective implementation of internal marketing highlights the importance of assisting health care personnel in becoming more patient-focused and service oriented. (Haghighikhah, Khadang & Arabi, 2016).

## **CONCLUSION:**

Based on the findings of the present study, it was concluded that the professional health care worker in both hospitals showed a moderate level of internal marketing perception. Moreover, professional health care worker in Al-Soliman hospital had a high level of internal marketing perception than those in El-Zohour hospital. Also there were statistical significant positive relationships between professional health care workers level of perception at El-Zohour and Al-Soliman hospitals related to internal marketing and their personal characteristics, especially their level of education.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations were suggested: for improving hospital internal marketing

### **For hospital managers:**

- Develop hospitals philosophy that enhance and support internal marketing behavior.
- Achieving harmony between the hospitals vision, mission, values, goals, and strategies to increase internal marketing behavior.
- Identify the level of internal marketing and develop a strategy to improve it.

- Designing and applying training program on internal marketing as a managerial skills for professional health care workers progress.

**For professional health care workers:**

- A handing and training in the form of conferences, workshops, and seminars about internal marketing skills.
- Verify truth, integrity, humanity, and humility among each other.
- Play a role in improving hospital image and protecting their rights.

**For Further studies:**

- More study is necessary to investigate how internal marketing programs effect on the professional health care workers and hospitals.

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## الإدراك لدي مقدمي الرعاية الصحية المهنيين تجاه التسويق الداخلي في المستشفيات المختارة ببورسعيد

أ.م.د / صفاء عبد المنعم توفيق زهران، د/ نورا الغريب الدياسطي، رباب محمد الحسانين محمد

أستاذ مساعد ادارة التمريض كلية التمريض جامعة طنطا، مدرس إدارة التمريض كلية التمريض جامعة بورسعيد،  
كلية التمريض جامعة المنصورة

### الخلاصة

التسويق الداخلي بمجال الرعاية الصحية يعتبر أداة للاهتمام بمقدمي الرعاية الصحية وكذلك المرضى، وهذا يعني أن إرضاء مقدمي الرعاية الصحية قد يظهر ولاءً وأرباحاً للمستشفيات، ويأتي الدافع لهم من خلال اتخاذ التسويق الداخلي كإستراتيجية للعمل، والهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تقييم الوعي المعرفي للعاملين في مجال الرعاية الصحية المهنية تجاه التسويق الداخلي في مستشفيات مدينة بورسعيد والدراسة الحالية هي دراسة بحثية وصفية وقد تم إجراؤها في مستشفيين هما مستشفى الزهور ومستشفى آل سليمان بمدينة بورسعيد، وقد اشتملت موضوعات هذه الدراسة علي أربعة وستون طبيباً وثمانية وعشرون صيدلياً ومائة وخمسة ممرضاً وتم جمع البيانات باستخدام أداة واحدة وهي: تصور العاملين في مجال الرعاية الصحية المهنية تجاه التسويق الداخلي وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن العاملين في مجال الرعاية الصحية في كلا المستشفيين قد أظهروا مستوى متوسط من الإدراك تجاه التسويق الداخلي وقد كانت هناك علاقة إيجابية بين مستوى الإدراك لدى العاملين في مجال الرعاية الصحية فيما يتعلق بالتسويق الداخلي في كلا المستشفيين علاوةً لذلك، يتمتع العاملون في مجال الرعاية الصحية في مستشفى آل سليمان بمستوى عالٍ من الإدراك التسويقي الداخلي مقارنةً بمستشفى الزهور وقد أوصت الدراسة بضرورة تحديد معوقات التسويق الداخلي ووضع إستراتيجية للتغلب عليها.

الكلمات المرشدة: التسويق الداخلي، مستوى الإدراك، العاملين المهنيين بمجال الرعاية الصحية.