

UNLEASHING INNOVATION: THE ROLE OF INTERNAL MARKETING IN EDUCATION SECTOR

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Abstract

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The education sector is undergoing huge transformations in response to changing situations and circumstances. In order to effectively adapt to the evolving demands of the new situation, innovative work behaviours among educators have become increasingly crucial. This study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of innovative work behaviours in Jordan, evaluate the implementation of internal marketing within the Jordanian education sector, and examine the influence of internal marketing on enhancing innovative work behaviours. Drawing on a qualitative research methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers of the first three grades in Jordanian public schools. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview data. The main themes that emerged from the analysis were motivation and collaboration. Findings show that motivated teachers are more likely to invest their time and effort in experimenting with innovative teaching methods and finding solutions to educational challenges. Collaboration fosters an environment of shared knowledge, support, and creativity among teachers. These findings imply the influence of internal marketing in guiding the motivation and collaboration among teachers. By understanding the impact of internal marketing on innovative work behaviours, policymakers and educational institutions can develop effective strategies to enhance the quality of education in the country.

Keywords: Adaptation, Sustainability, Innovation, Education Sector, Transformation

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1. INTRODUCTION

The education sector is experiencing a wave of transformation globally. This is driven by the rapid advancements in technology, changing paradigms of teaching and learning and recently the evolving societal need due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes have profound implications

not only for the policymakers, and stakeholders but especially for the educators who are largely involved in shaping the education framework. The swift changes in the education system in the 21st century require innovative measures from all teachers to accommodate diverse student populations, expand knowledge areas, gain new responsibilities and face higher school social expectations (Zainal &

Matore, 2019). In this dynamic context, fostering innovative behaviour among teachers has become imperative to ensure high-quality education and prepare students for the challenges of the future. To this end, the role of internal marketing in promoting and enhancing innovative work behaviour has garnered significant attention.

An organisation can improve innovative work behaviours through internal marketing (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017). Internal marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and strategies within an organization to cultivate a positive work environment, facilitate communication and collaboration, and motivate employees towards achieving organizational goals (Imani et al., 2020). In the realm of education, internal marketing can be viewed as a means to inspire and empower teachers, encouraging them to embrace innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and professional development (Yildiz, 2016). Previous studies have shown that internal marketing will encourage employees to provide high-quality services (Imani et al., 2020; Vel et al., 2019), develop an organisation's competitiveness and improve its competencies through employee motivation (Huang et al., 2019), enhance the organisational performance (Nik Mat et al., 2022), and achieve the organisational goals (Lemma & Nigussie, 2018). However, the education sector faces difficulties assisting teachers with teaching innovations, particularly in the Middle East (Mikdadi, 2017). Further, although internal marketing has been widely studied in investigating innovative work behaviours, the topic is still under-researched in the context of Jordanian as one of the leading countries in the Middle East.

Education development has become a top priority for the Jordanian authority as Jordan is now among the leading Arab countries in terms of education expenditure. In 2018, Jordan allocated 28.5% of its total government spending to education (The World Bank, n.d.). Furthermore, the first National Conference for Education Development in 1987 marked a significant milestone in guiding the Jordanian education system towards the vision of "education for all", which emphasized the importance of adapting the system to better balance individual and social needs (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The Jordanian education sector is witnessing a rapid transformation driven by the need to adapt to changing educational landscapes and meet the evolving demands of students and society. According to the Global Innovation Index (GII), Jordan was ranked 75th out of 141 countries in the world (Cornell University et al., 2015). However, in 2019, Jordan's rank in innovation dropped to 86th out of 129 countries (Cornell University et al., 2019). According to the Economic and Social Council (2016), the most notable reason for the weak competitiveness in Jordan is the weak infrastructure in educational institutions, particularly the decreased spending rates on scientific research and development. Moreover, the lack of teaching innovation is due to the fact that teachers are often overworked and underpaid, making them feel dispassionate, drained (Alzyoud et al., 2016), and lose motivation (Harmandaoğlu et al., 2018).

Clearly, changes are needed to transform the frustrating work environment into a more encouraging one by treating teachers fairly (Kreishan

& Al-Dhaimat, 2015). It has been reported that teachers tend to develop innovative and helpful ideas when working in a happy and healthy emotional situation (Töre & Yolal, 2017). Improving teachers' levels of motivation, creativity, and innovation requires the actions and support of the top management, as well as proper management style (Sethibe & Steyn, 2015). Incentives should be given to teachers who can adopt advanced information technology and new teaching methods. Schools are also recommended to update the course of study at all levels and publish a set of measures to improve and measure primary education outcomes for each age group (Economic and Social Council, 2016).

In this regard, there is a pressing need to study and understand the dynamics and shifts occurring in the education sector globally. The present work aims to gather teachers' perceptions of innovative work behaviours in Jordan, assess the implementation of internal marketing in the Jordanian education sector, and study the impact of internal marketing on enhancing innovative work behaviours.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 discusses the literature review related to the topic. Section 3 describes the methodology elements involved in this study. Section 4 presents the results and a discussion of the findings. Lastly, Section 5 provides the conclusion of the research

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Innovation and creativity in the education sector

Organisation innovations are the outcomes of the strategic decisions of management that arise from implementing operational methods not previously used in the firm (Molina et al., 2019), as well as having greater access to external information sources (Xie et al., 2018). Through continuous innovation activities, these efforts can positively influence the attitude of a company's stakeholders (Flammer & Kacperczyk, 2016). Furthermore, it has long been recognised as an essential key to the growth and performance of organisations (Mickahail & Aquino, 2019).

In the workplace, innovative work behaviour refers to when employees create, apply, realise, and promote new ideas to perform their work (Baskaran & Rajarathinam, 2018). According to Clarke (2019), it can be operationalised as one-dimensional, two-dimensional (idea and idea development), or four-dimensional (idea exploration, idea generation, championing of ideas, and implementation of ideas). This behaviour is strongly related to creativity, especially at the beginning of the innovation cycle when challenges are identified and ideas are introduced in response to the growing need for innovation (Lu et al., 2019) in the form of a product or service in an organisational environment (Gruenhagen & Parker, 2020). Employee innovation has been recognised as the primary determining factor of organisation performance, growth opportunities, long-term preservation (Chowhan, 2016), and overall organisational success (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Large or small organisations worldwide gain a competitive advantage based on their employee's innovative information, work skills,

and integrated knowledge, which are useful in their daily business practices (Hu et al., 2009). These allow organisations to achieve operating efficiency, quality control, and product and process innovation (Robbins & O’Gorman, 2015). Given the importance of employee innovation in predicting positive work results, many studies have been conducted on promoting employees’ participation in innovation (Zhang & Zhou, 2014), training and development, and motivation (Haase et al., 2018).

Nowadays, learning is not simply about imparting information but rather about how well teachers can nurture creative and critical thinking skills among future generations. By encouraging the students to apply the knowledge that they gain in the classroom in real life, these well-rounded students will be able to navigate the challenging world more effectively (Ayob et al., 2013). Thus, to make learning more engaging in the digital age, teachers have to give up the conventional method of teaching and adopt new teaching processes to attract students’ interest in learning (Mutiarin et al., 2019). To achieve this, it is imperative for teachers to be creative and engage in innovative work behaviour. In exhibiting this behaviour, teachers should be eager to identify issues and opportunities, create innovative solutions, recommend innovations to colleagues and staff, and ultimately contribute towards workplace innovations (De Spiegelaere et al., 2018). Besides enhancing their education careers and improving their organisations, innovative work behaviour is necessary to fulfil teachers’ roles in research activities to advance their thoughts in seeking a new way to improve their teaching ability.

2.2. Internal marketing and its relationship to innovative work behaviour

Creativity and innovation have been the focus of learning organizations in order to establish organizational development, particularly in adapting to many changes in the education sector. Most studies in creativity and innovation focused on the impact of the managers on the innovative results of the employees rather than on participation in the creative process, leaving the role of the employees in the creative process largely unexplored (Henker et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2018). Motivation-enhancing activities provide the required incentives to guide employees’ efforts toward desirable goals, while opportunities to enhance practices allow employees to apply their creative abilities at work (Subramony, 2009). In this regard, the internal organisation environment represents an important part of employees’ innovative work behaviours motivating productivity in the creative engagement of employees (Subramony, 2009). This is particularly true as motivation has been significantly related to innovative work behaviour (Bammens, 2016). Hence, employee motivation is positively linked to innovative work behaviours, and increased employee motivation can result from innovative work behaviour (Chang et al., 2017).

Internal marketing has been viewed as an important element to nurture innovation in the organization (Mieres et al., 2012). The influence of internal marketing can be seen in various ways as a structured approach for implementing strategy

spreading innovations creating a culture of service or increasing the performance of internal services (Kajalo & Lindblom, 2015). When employees feel intelligent, educated, and cared for by the organisation’s internal marketing strategies, their commitment and satisfaction with the organisation are clear and obvious (Nart et al., 2019). Furthermore, if the organisation decides to adopt internal marketing for its employees, they will be influenced most effectively, and thus they become more motivated (Kukreja, 2017). Although the concept of internal marketing and its practice is applied in small measures, there is still a field for employee motivation through internal marketing activities (Kukreja, 2017). Therefore, internal marketing practices enhance employees’ motivation and satisfaction (Huang et al., 2019). Thus, the value of internal marketing has the potential to encourage employees toward innovative work behaviour (Kukreja, 2017).

The organisation’s internal marketing creates certain conditions that encourage employees to work (Berry & Parasuraman, 2004). Likewise, developing the implementation of internal marketing programmes requires certain necessary and appropriate conditions, such as creating a supportive climate in the organisation so that employees would provide customers with higher quality services and encouraging employees to develop customer-oriented behaviours and act accordingly (Haghighikhah et al., 2016). Besides, internal marketing is described as training, encouraging, and paying employees so the organisation can deliver good customer service successfully (Boudlaie et al., 2020).

Internal marketing is an essential organisational performance factor, which has become an interesting subject for researchers and practitioners (Yildiz, 2016). The elements of internal marketing include education, information generation, employee motivation, and training (Bermúdez-González et al., 2016). Internal marketing places great emphasis on educating and empowering all employees, regardless of the level of education, job title, or pay grade. These are achieved through training and development programmes which can be designed to enhance the skills required to facilitate innovative work behaviour (Mishra et al., 2019). At the end of these programmes, employees will gain knowledge and experience regarding different processes in a given environment at all levels of the organisations, businesses, and activities (Boudlaie et al., 2020). Moreover, the exposure provided through training sessions enables employees to be prepared and motivated to work in a service-oriented way (del Carmen Martínez Serna et al., 2018). Consequently, this will raise the quality of the services provided by skilful, knowledgeable, and innovative employees (Mainardes & dos Santos Cerqueira, 2015).

In general, internal marketing is focusing on improving employees’ job satisfaction (Al-Weshah, 2019; Frye et al., 2020) and motivation (Kukreja, 2017). To increase employees’ level of job satisfaction, the top management should encourage employees to express their true beliefs and opinions through team meetings and personal development workshops with the employees (Fletcher, 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Li and Yang (2013), where fulfilling their needs, encouraging employee

reactions, and honouring their beliefs will contribute to the organisation's long-term success. When employees feel empowered through these encouragements, they will gain job satisfaction and become motivated to innovate (Huang et al., 2019). Additionally, it has been found that employees who feel fit in the organization will establish innovative work behaviour (Afsar et al., 2015). Therefore, management plays an essential role in shaping employees' innovative work behaviour by supporting them to generate new ideas (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Overall, previous studies have determined internal marketing as one of the ways to promote innovative work behaviours (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; Haider, 2018). Developing employees' technical skills and increasing their motivation for work, will encourage employees to exhibit attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with the organisational goals (Guan & Frenkel, 2019). Since available literature on the impact of internal marketing on innovative work behaviours in the education sector is scarce, the present work is attempting to close the gap.

2.3. Underlying theory

The current study employed the social exchange theory to frame the research findings. The social exchange theory is a theory that describes society as a series of reciprocal interactions between individuals based on the value of rewards and penalties (Blau, 1986). Based on this assumption, the employees' relationships are influenced by the rewards and penalties. Employees expect these from the employer, normally using a cost-benefit analysis model. Furthermore, in social relationships, employees aim to avoid expenses that do not benefit them, and exchange is based on a cost-benefit analysis according to social exchange theory (Blau, 1986). The idea of social exchange is founded on the assumption that interaction is formed through the exchange of financial or moral benefits. Thus, employees are performers who seek to enhance their benefits by utilising the resources at their disposal. This theory assumes reciprocity that individuals are interested in completing their obligations to benefit those who give the rewards (Blau, 1986).

The nature of social exchange theory is dependent on workplace support, perceived value, and strong social interrelationships. When top management and employees work to build relationships and mutual understanding, it benefits both parties and fosters the adoption of creative methods for the same goal (Choi et al., 2016). In this regard, teachers are encouraged to be innovative to achieve the educational institution's organisational goals. Therefore, teachers must constantly develop their skills in organisations that rely on innovation, eventually enhancing their creative and innovative behaviour. Teacher innovation becomes the way for educational institutions to improve organisational success (Nazir et al., 2018). In ideal working circumstances, employees are more likely to contribute to the support and development of their organisations by implementing new ideas if they perceive that they receive support and encouragement from their organisations.

In this study, internal marketing and teachers' innovative behaviour were described from the viewpoint of social exchange theory. Based on the social exchange theory, employees make rational decisions to optimise positive experiences by considering expected benefits (Arsawan et al., 2020). According to this theory, organisational life is a series of interconnected exchanges involving two or more parties. Teachers anticipate being motivated by internal marketing, so they plan and behave in ways that support beneficial outcomes (Laužikas & Miliūtė, 2020), by having innovative work behaviour (Romani-Dias & Carneiro, 2019). This process is anticipated from the exchange relationship between teachers and school because the benefits are anticipated (Wang et al., 2019), to the teachers who are collaborating in the innovation of teaching methods.

3. METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study explores the role of internal marketing in enhancing innovative behaviour among teachers in the Jordanian education sector through a qualitative approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews involving lower primary teachers in Jordanian public schools. A case study design is used to allow for an investigation of a particular case and develop an explanation to describe the event (Stake, 1994). Further, the case study is suitable for the research when the purpose of the research is to explore a particular topic in a certain research context (Yin, 2014). Therefore, this design was deemed suitable for this study as it enabled the researcher to understand the phenomenon with in-depth attention. It is confirmed that using the qualitative approach in the research helps to understand how certain events occur the way it is (Stair et al., 2016).

Lower primary education refers to the first three grades of students' school careers. With extensive teaching experience, the participants were able to share their valuable insights on the main topics covered in the interviews, namely the perceptions of innovative work behaviours in Jordan, the implementation of internal marketing in the Jordanian education sector, and the impact of internal marketing on enhancing innovative work behaviours among Jordanian teachers. The interview questions are included in the Appendix. Overall, 15 participants met the criteria for this study. The characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1. The sample size was determined using the rule of thumb of data saturation, where the data collection was ended once data saturation was reached (Marshall et al., 2013). For this study, a saturation point is reached after 15 interviews, thus the validity and reliability of the data is confirmed. At this stage, the researcher became aware of the patterns of repetition, no new topics or ideas were introduced during the interviews, and the interviews were unlikely to disclose further new or distinctive data. Despite the relatively small sample size, it is justified by the relative similarity of the participants' responses concerning the subject of the research (Saunders et al., 2016).

Table 1. Background of the interviewees

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	8	53.33
	Female	7	46.67
Age	22-30 years old	6	40
	> 30 years old	9	60
Marital status	Single	4	26.67
	Married	11	73.33
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	10	66.67
	Postgraduate	5	33.33
Teaching tenure	1-10 years	7	46.67
	> 10 years	8	53.33
Education courses	New teachers course	15	100.00
	Electronic programmes international licence course and Intel education course	15	100.00

The interviews were conducted in person from early November until the end of December, 2022. It was assured that their identities would not be revealed. After the interview sessions had ended, the recorded audio was transcribed and translated into English since the interviews were conducted in Arabic. Through thematic analysis, comparable phrases and words were grouped into separate categories. The extensive written notes and transcribed data were carefully studied to identify patterns of similar responses, which were then combined by introducing appropriate direct quotes as needed.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Teachers' perceptions of innovative work behaviours in Jordan

To answer the research questions, participants were asked about perceptions of innovative work behaviours in Jordan. The theme that emerges from the interview data is related to teaching strategies as the most critical innovative work behaviour. In this regard, respondents talked about teaching strategies as the methods and techniques that a teacher uses to support their students through the learning process. In doing this, respondents explained how the teacher selects the teaching strategy that is most appropriate for the topic being taught, the learners' level of experience, and the stage in their learning journey. Other respondents also spoke about the selection of teaching strategies that were based on the student's needs, the subject, and the educational goals. For the respondents, it is important to plan and choose the right teaching strategies to ensure that the teaching and learning process can be carried out efficiently. When students fully engage in the lesson, they will learn in a deeper and more meaningful way, allowing them to apply that knowledge and those skills to other aspects of their lives. A teacher stated: *"There are numerous teaching strategies, but the most important thing is that I look for an innovative teaching strategy that matches the lesson objectives and is suitable for my students"*.

Feedback from the respondents corroborates previous studies on the education sector in regard to teaching strategy. The teaching strategy is defined as the methods teachers employ in the classroom to assist students in understanding or providing knowledge or skills to others, and the teacher's act, task, or profession, and it includes both instructions in procedures, the process of guiding students to the information they will need and challenging them

to engage in thinking about the concepts they create in their minds. All of this is necessary to teach students to be fully functional individuals with good thinking abilities.

Adopting a teaching strategy includes developing practice guidelines, linking them to a specific method of organisational learning and learning circumstances, and employing specific ways and methods. The effective use of teaching strategies assists the teacher in achieving the learning outcomes, encourages productive engagement of students, and supports the development of their learning. To ensure that the information can be delivered interactively, the teacher can present the content using traditional and modern technological approaches, and when necessary, modify classroom prerequisites to accommodate students' varying learning levels and styles. A teacher mentioned: *"As a teacher, the most important thing for me is to deliver information to my students. Thus, I must innovate a teaching strategy that is suitable for my students"*.

Since most students in Jordan are now incorporated into general education classes, this puts each teacher in the position of fulfilling the requirements of students learning differently. To cover a wide range of learning needs in the classroom, versatile teaching strategies are fitting for this goal. One of the teachers said: *"My innovative behaviour will be in my teaching strategies. I am not limited to using only direct teaching strategies; instead, I have diversified my use of appropriate strategies for the lesson's subject, level, and the number of students"*. Another teacher stated: *"I always try to concentrate on creating a fresh teaching strategy that works for my students and, after thorough research, I work to put it into practice"*.

Teaching relies on assisting students in understanding their learning materials and monitoring their skill acquisition. Most participants believed these strategies could help primary school teachers understand their students' different learning profiles and build classroom environments that enable all students to succeed. Classes that encourage effort, perseverance, strategy, and goal orientation might help students break the negative cycle of failure and thus reduce their feelings of boredom. A teacher stated: *"In my job, which entails teaching all subjects except English in a classroom setting, I am continuously looking for modern teaching methods to improve my innovative behaviour to keep up with innovations and developments in this field that will operate to attract my students' attention and keep them from becoming bored"*.

In this study, the perceptions of respondents about innovative work behaviour are related to teaching strategy. Many reasons were given by respondents which is consistent with what was reported by a previous study (Phuong et al., 2021). First, society is fast changing as the number of students increases, knowledge disciplines expand, and new duties and societal expectations place higher demands. Second, when technology for teaching gets more developed, the teaching technique may become obsolete and unsuitable for current educational needs (Yunus, 2018). Third, according to Zainal and Matore (2019), teachers are often in direct contact with students, and their personal behaviours are shared and demonstrated to students, acting as brilliant role models for students by displaying innovative work behaviours in teaching methods to achieve educational purposes. Thus, the perceptions of respondents about innovative work behaviour are in line with the changing paradigm of the education sector in general.

4.2. Internal marketing implementation in the education sector

For the second purpose, respondents were asked about the implementation of internal marketing in the Jordanian education sector. Two themes emerged as strategies for implementing internal marketing: motivation and collaboration.

Developing intrinsic motivation allows teachers to inspire enthusiasm, allowing them to perform their tasks in an organised manner, and reach desired goals. Teachers in schools significantly contribute to achieving educational goals and objectives by informing them of the most recent educational developments in their specialities, which is positively reflected in promoting students' effective growth and development and assisting them in marketing themselves. A teacher said: *"The teacher must be careful and have an internal motivation to learn to market oneself as an experienced and knowledgeable teacher"*.

Further, teachers know their significance to the education process and school improvement. Moreover, teachers must improve their professional skills, abilities, and motivation using the many approaches that school administrators employ. A teacher stated: *"We are inspired by the principal through certificates of recognition, thank you books, and occasionally by the director of education, and this helps motivate us for further innovation in the educational process"*.

Infrastructure facilities, tools, and resources are required to motivate teachers within schools further. Teachers will be more motivated to work and inspire innovation if they have access to all the necessary resources and equipment, particularly those required to accomplish their job duties correctly. One of the teachers stated: *"An essential aspect of the school administration's interactions with us is it should enable us to use school facilities flexibly and make them available to all teachers, which motivates us to innovate"*. Another teacher added: *"The internal motive for work is the most significant factor in the educational process. Thus, if the teacher has internal motives, I am confident his teaching innovations will distinguish him"*.

The theme of collaboration appeared as the second most significant technique for teachers in the first three grades to implement internal marketing in the Jordanian education sector. The bond formed through this collaboration with experienced people can create a healthy school culture, a positive environment, and an understanding of teachers' learning. Collaboration among teachers also provides support and may raise the possibility of increasing work-related communication, collective responsibility, interdependence, and coordination of work with others. In achieving a common goal within a group, collaboration depends on team members' abilities, adopted techniques in completing a task, and available resources. One of the teachers said: *"Other teachers are priceless sources of support, and when teachers rely on one another for support, they develop trust-based relationships and interactions. These regular interactions are important in forming long-term professional and mentoring relationships. When teachers feel supported, they can better provide the same support to their students, and thus contribute to supporting their innovations"*.

Teachers at the school have various interests, experiences, and capabilities. This circumstance allows them to improve the implementation of new ideas or educational and teaching approaches and market themselves internally. One teacher stated: *"When teachers collaborate, the interests, backgrounds, and talents of each teacher may contribute to the innovation process and a rise in internal marketing"*.

For teachers to exhibit innovativeness, this behaviour stems from their desire or motivation to innovate (Bawuro et al., 2020). Motivation can be defined as a force that pushes an individual to accomplish something (Iqbal et al., 2020). There are two main types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Defined as the internal desire that forces individuals to complete a task that they find both challenging and rewarding, intrinsic motivation has been recognised as the primary factor that drives teacher innovation (Ranjan, 2017). Conversely, extrinsic motivations are tangible benefits that include monetary compensation (for example, salary raises, bonuses, cash prizes, and external training with certifications) or moral rewards (Fischer et al., 2019). Thus, when using internal marketing that motivates workers to innovate, tactics like praise, acknowledgement and positive feedback on performance are used. In the present study, it is apparent that the teachers' innovative behaviour is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Therefore, non-financial and financial motivation must be established toward employees based on their level of income or position (Mwabu & Were, 2019).

During the interviews, all research participants stated that collaboration is essential for implementing internal marketing in the Jordanian education sector. Collaboration is defined as the mutual interaction of the group in all the activities required to complete a task. Ingram (2020) described collaboration as how teachers and staff work together as a structure to help students grow as professionals. According to this perspective, schools are group activities where all members strive to achieve similar goals. Teacher cooperation is impacted by school policies, colleagues in

neighbouring schools, and teachers' willingness or interest in meeting students' needs. Professional community building can be seen as inclusive teams or other forms of teacher groups in schools, bringing all or a significant part of school teachers into a collaborative culture, characterised by some having shared values and vision and being learning-oriented (Vangrieken et al., 2015). The benefits include a positive impact on the sense of a supportive school environment, improved adaptation, and more innovation and internal marketing. A positive work environment has been reported to be an essential aspect for predicting innovative work behaviour in teachers (Phuong et al., 2021).

4.3. The impact of internal marketing on enhancing innovative work behaviours

The third purpose of this study is to explore the impact of internal marketing on innovative work behaviour. Respondents were asked about their experience in regard to the implementation of the school management to promote innovative work behaviour through internal marketing.

Most respondents spoke about professional development conducted by the school through formal activities such as teachers' conferences, seminars, or workshops; team member collaboration; or an academic course. For some respondents, professional development can be achieved through informal settings, such as conversations among colleagues, individual reading and study, remarks on colleagues' work, or other group work. The participants were all in agreement that professional development contributes towards innovative work behaviours it enhances teachers' abilities to innovate and achieve outstanding educational results for students. A teacher pointed out: *"Professional development, as represented by the Ministry of Education's course, is understanding professional standards and the evaluation system, which motivates teachers toward innovative work behaviours"*.

Respondents relate their understanding of internal marketing through professional development to the necessity for assisting teachers who face difficulties in innovating their teaching and learning processes. Through this program, teachers can adopt new teaching techniques, keep up with technological advances, and adjust their teaching style to accommodate a student with varying learning needs. A teacher said: *"Professional development occurs when the teacher experience grows. The more the teacher works in this profession and becomes familiar with the most recent results in learning theories, the more innovative they become in the educational process"*.

Considering the fact that the number of lower primary students is expected to grow, teachers need to prepare themselves for the future and work towards improving the quality of human resources. Plus, due to the significance of lower primary education in shaping the development of students, teachers should demonstrate awareness and willingness to improve their professionalism by setting a professional plan to develop themselves. Besides self-improvement, setting a professional plan will allow them to improve their innovation in the school environment. One of the teachers

described this as follows: *"Every teacher develops a plan for professional growth and the activities they desire to implement at the beginning of the school year, and they also develop a form for self-review, which the school administration monitors, and that their mark is included in their annual report on what has been accomplished. This, in my opinion, encourages teachers to be innovative"*. Another teacher stated: *"When I go through training, I use all I've learned in the classroom, which helps me generate new ideas for dealing with difficulties in the educational process, and so helps me innovate"*.

Professional development is most efficient when it occurs in the context of teachers' regular work. When learning is integrated into the school day, all teachers engage in growth rather than learning confined to those who volunteer to participate independently. School-based professional development also assists teachers in analysing student achievement data throughout the school year to identify learning problems, devise solutions, and discover teaching strategies that allow them to communicate information efficiently to their students and apply these immediate solutions to meet their needs. A teacher shared: *"The more the teacher [gets involved in] professional development, the more innovative they will become. When the teachers grow, they learn teaching methods and strategies that allow them to deliver information to their students efficiently"*. One teacher mentioned: *"The process is contingent on the teacher's professional development; the more innovation there may be at the individual and school levels, the better"*.

In answering this research question, consensus arrived among respondents that professional development appeared as an essential issue through which internal marketing may affect the promotion of innovative work behaviours. Teachers' lifelong professional development and learning are central to their teaching practice. When teachers develop their ideas and change their teaching methods, it is a process that involves the teachers' social, professional, and personal spheres. It shows how far they have come towards making decisions and acting autonomously, critically, and responsibly. Within professional development, teachers change and complete their educational competencies and behaviours as well as their professional and personal selves. Teachers participate in professional development to learn new information and skills they may use to perform better at work. Hence, teachers are calling for continuous professional development and working with others. The teachers' duty outside the classroom should be to develop relationships with others in the neighbourhood and society. They should be aware of the connection between their development and the students.

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of a previous study, which showed that professional development is closely related to innovative work behaviour (Aslam et al., 2017). It has been established that more professionally engaged individuals are more receptive to new ideas and are more active and responsible (Gawke et al., 2017). Professional development is seen as a vital programme that school systems must adopt to improve teachers' performance levels (Birdi et al., 2012). Besides gaining new useful skills, teachers can raise the standard of student

achievement by adopting fresh concepts that support innovation through formal or informal professional development initiatives. The innovation training device also promotes short-term creative problem-solving and motivation while contributing to long-term innovation. By increasing teachers' motivation, they will experience job satisfaction and feel a sense of reward in their teaching position which inspires them to keep innovating (Hosseini & Haghighi Shirazi, 2021). Therefore, this data supports previous research findings that professional development programmes can be designed to improve the skills needed to facilitate innovative work behaviour (Mishra et al., 2019).

5. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted education systems worldwide, highlighting the importance of studying the resilience and adaptability of educational institutions in unexpected circumstances. The widespread adoption of remote and blended learning models, the challenges of the diversity of students' backgrounds, and the social-emotional well-being of teachers are critical areas that require investigation to inform future educational policies and practices. Additionally, the 21st-century skills and competencies required for effective adaptation in the modern workforce cater to changing societal needs and expectations. These changes have profound implications for educational systems worldwide, making it crucial to study and understand the transformations occurring at a global level, especially for Jordan, a country that evidenced the drop in the innovativeness ranking.

This study aims to investigate the role of internal marketing in enhancing teachers' innovative behaviour in the Jordanian education sector. Overall, developing teaching strategies has been identified as the most significant innovative work behaviour in Jordan. In order to encourage teachers' innovative behaviour through internal marketing, motivation and collaboration have been identified as the prominent elements. The mutual understanding formed via a good working relationship may benefit teachers, school management, students, the community, and the educational process. This research mainly associated internal marketing with professional development which contributes towards innovative work behaviours by enhancing teachers' abilities to innovate and achieve

outstanding educational results for students. The findings of this study also show that teachers' innovative behaviour is a continuous process that requires encouragement from the school, education directorates, and the Ministry of Education to be practical. As it proceeds, teachers want to be internally marketed via motivation, training, and collaboration, creating the path for innovative work behaviours in a positive working environment.

The present study poses a theoretical implication that internal marketing is capable of enhancing innovative behaviour in Jordanian education. While this study only involves primary school teachers of the first three grades in public schools, in theory, it is envisaged that the findings are applicable to other levels of education. Concerning the current work's practical implications, the researchers recommend that school leadership practices should foster psychological safety, innovation, and chances for knowledge-sharing; if effective, this involvement might establish design thinking as a leader in innovation, collaboration, and positive risk-taking in schools. Moreover, it is possible to benefit from the collective expertise and collaboration of teachers to address challenges encountered by their innovations at the school level and to establish practices that improve the abilities of their students. Finally, the researchers recommend that undergraduate education programmes and district-level professional development teams emphasise teacher innovation since innovative teacher behaviour prepares students for a quickly changing workforce. The innovative change will only take hold if school leaders provide teachers with the time, resources, and direct support they need to reform teaching methods in Jordan fundamentally.

This study used a qualitative method, employing semi-structured interviews with fifteen Jordanian primary school teachers. For further research, more qualitative research with a bigger sample size should be conducted to compare teachers' perceptions across Jordan. A larger sample size may offer better result generalisation and allow an easier assessment of the sample representative. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, the mother tongue of teachers in Jordan, and then translated into English. Thus, some words in colloquial Arabic do not have precise meanings in English, which may be a limitation of this research. Plus, further study is required to compare Jordanian findings with developing-country contexts.

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APPENDIX. THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What exactly does the term "innovation" imply to you?
2. Is the school administration encouraging you to innovate?
3. What effect has your professional development had on you as a teacher and on your students?
4. What are the challenges you encounter during the innovation process?
5. What factors influence your innovation in school?
6. How does the school implement internal marketing?
7. What impact does internal marketing have on innovation in the school?