

Impact of Flexibility on Patient Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention: A Critical Reassessment and Model Development

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Abstract : In the anticipation of demand fluctuations, services cannot be inventoried and hence it creates a difficult problem in marketing of services. The inability to meet customers (patients) requirements in healthcare context has more serious consequences than other service sectors. In order to meet patient requirements in the current uncertain environment, healthcare organizations are seeking ways for improved service delivery. Flexibility provides a mechanism for reducing variability in service encounters and improved performance. Flexibility is defined as the ability of the organization to cope with changing circumstances or instability caused by the environment. Patient satisfaction is an important performance outcome of healthcare organizations. However, the paucity of information exists in healthcare delivery context to examine the impact of flexibility on patient satisfaction and behavioral intention. The present study is an attempt to develop a conceptual foundation for investigating overall impact of flexibility on patient satisfaction and behavioral intention. Several dimensions of flexibility in healthcare context are examined and proposed to have a significant impact on patient satisfaction and intention. Furthermore, the study involves a critical examination of determinants of patient satisfaction and development of a comprehensive view the relationship between flexibility, patient satisfaction and behavioral intention. Finally, theoretical contributions and implications for healthcare professionals are suggested from flexibility perspective.

Keywords : healthcare, flexibility, patient satisfaction, behavioral intention

Conference Title : ICMP 2017 : International Conference on Marketing and Retailing

Conference Location : Mumbai, India

Conference Dates : February 07-08, 2017