CHALLENGES OF MARKETING MEDICAL SERVICES OFFERED BY MAJOR PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

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ABSTRACT
The primary purpose of the study was to find out the challenges of marketing medical services offered by major private hospitals in Nairobi, Kenya. The study reviewed historical background of marketing strategies; marketing mix and the 4Ps; service marketing mix and the 7Ps; hospital marketing; and challenges experienced in service marketing.

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target populations of the study were all the 25 major private hospitals in Nairobi as picked from the directory of Hospitals by United Nations Joint Medical Service. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviation. In assessing competitive forces and the context within which a hospital operates, the study found out that the different challenges are forces pushing and pulling private hospitals to change. It was established that although the study was limited to the major private Hospitals in Nairobi, issue of high competition goes beyond Nairobi, where Hospitals in India, Thailand and Turkey are revered for their high quality, cost effective care.

The study also found other factors that are critical in private hospitals in Nairobi include differentiation, pricing and promotion strategies, mainly due to high cost of marketing. The breakdown between marketing communications and the actual service delivery featured prominently, with Marketers blaming operations for poor customer experiences, and loss of repeat business.