



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study was to assess the behavior of patients as they engage in wayfinding in hospitals.

Wayfinding behaviors in a healthcare environment: A case study analysis of individual differences

Sevinç, Z., & Bozkurt, E. 2015 | *Gazi University Journal of Science*. Volume 3, Issue 3, Pages 37-45

Key Concepts/Context

Wayfinding in healthcare facilities is often a challenge. Given the complexity of the space, its multi-functionality and the assortment of activities that take place on its premises, the inability to smoothly find one's way in a hospital can add to a patient's stress. The authors refer to numerous studies on wayfinding in public spaces and those that focus on hospital buildings. For this research, a study was undertaken in a polyclinic building of a university in Turkey to examine patient behavior vis-à-vis wayfinding. The study found that maps were preferred over signage across ages and in most age groups.

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

The study suggests that patients generally preferred signage over maps to aid wayfinding in a polyclinic setting in Turkey.

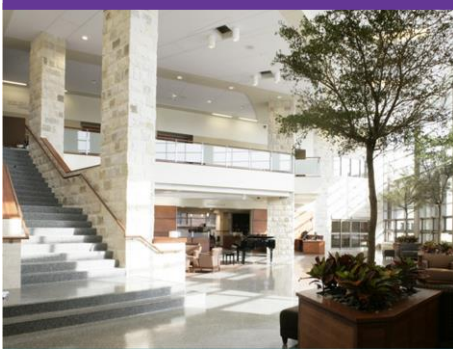
Methods

The methodology involved surveying patients in two waiting areas of the polyclinic. There were two stages to the administration of the survey. In the first stage, participants were asked if their visit was the first one, their demographics, and preferences regarding 'You are here' (YAH) maps and signage. In the second stage the participants were asked to make a sketch of the route they followed from the entrance to reach the waiting area. The sample size was 40 with equal numbers of male and female participants.

Findings

The study yielded the following findings:

- Over 62% of the participants were in the polyclinic for the first time.
- Signage was preferred over maps as an aid for wayfinding, irrespective of age and gender. However, participants in the 21-30 age group preferred the maps over signage.



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The route sketches indicated

- Female participants showed more zones on their routes, while male participants displayed fewer zones on their routes.
- Participants in all age groups showed the information desk on their sketches.
- On evaluating the accuracy of the sketched routes, it was seen that:
 - Male participants were more accurate than their female counterparts.
 - The inaccuracy of the sketches was more prominent in the 21-30 age group participants.

Limitations

The authors do not identify any limitations in the study. Some limitations of this study were:

- The authors did not indicate the acuity levels of the patients participating in the study. It cannot be ascertained from the article if their acuity levels impacted their responses to the survey or the wayfinding routes they were asked to draw.
- The study does not indicate when the patients were asked to participate in the study – before or after their visit with the doctor. It is possible that health-related stress and anxiety may have impacted participant responses.

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