Information Needs and Information Resources Availability: A case Study of Mission-owned Schools of Nursing in Okigwe Senatorial Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract

Introduction: Information is the primary requirement for any advancement in knowledge and students opt for sources that are convenient and easy to use.
Methodology: The research design used is the descriptive survey research design. Data were gathered using two sets of instruments viz., a questionnaire for students to reveal their information needs, sources consulted to obtain such information and relevance of information resources to their information needs and a checklist with an open-ended questionnaire for the librarians to complete on information resources available and problems affecting resources availability.
Results: The results obtained from the study show that nursing students mainly need information for completing assignments, protecting themselves during ward experiences and for research and lifelong learning. Most students consult internet and databases, journals and magazines and the library. Information resources are available and relevant to the students' information needs. Problems faced in information resources availability are uncooperative institutional management, insufficient fund, and inadequate staffing.
Conclusion and Recommendation: The study concluded that information resources are available in the schools of nursing libraries and that the problem of management incompliance, insufficient fund, mutilation and poor staffing affect availability of information resources. Based on these findings, more use of the library, adequate funding for libraries and employment of more staff are recommended.

Keywords: Information needs, nursing students, Information resources availability, Okigwe senatorial zone

1. Introduction

Information is the sine qua non to knowledge acquisition and ensuing professional excellence. As it is indispensable for growth and development in other fields of knowledge, nursing professionals need a broad range of health information to meet their clinical and educational needs (Dee & Stanley, 2005). As part of their clinical concerns, nurses need information about their patients and how to care for them. This is to say, the field of nursing revolves around the promotion of health, prevention of illness and treatment to all affected

regardless of age. It also encompasses advocacy, research, advancement of a disease free environment, participation in shaping health policy and systems management and education (International Council of Nurses, 2006).

Adeoye and Popoola (2015) suggested that the aim of providing information to student nurses is to teach the students to reason and strengthen them for subsequent professional life as active practitioners and citizens. While studies have shown that nursing students utilise various sources and means to access needed information, the library remains a primary source of information which explains its presence in any reputable learning institution (Olajide & Otunla, 2015). Information source is used in this study to describe sites, channels or locations where information is located, sourced and probably obtained. It could be human source; material source that is, both print and electronic sources; a gathering or the media. Ogba (2013) explained it as materials, means, avenues or packs through which information can be received or sourced.

Information resources refer to those materials which enable libraries to carry out their functions effectively (Fayose, 2000). The bane of the library has been that of insufficient information resources, (Lucas, 2003). Therefore, for reasons of availability, accessibility, and convenience, nursing students utilise other sources including colleagues, physicians, the internet and electronic nursing databases for obtaining their information (Dee & Stanley, 2005; Dickey & Radford, 2011; Solomon & Spross, 2011).

In line with its mandate of promoting teaching, learning and research in any institution of higher education, schools of nursing libraries are expected to provide adequate and relevant information resources and more so dispose them to students' reach to meet their needs. Popoola (2008) stated that productivity in academia is linked to information richness. This implies that satisfaction of information needs and subsequent academic excellence can only be possible with abundance of quality information resources. Fatima and Ahmad (2008) buttressed that the use of library resources is necessary to help students fulfil their information requirements. These resources include books and other information bearing materials ranging from health/nursing textbooks, nursing journals, encyclopedia, dictionaries, directories medical records/case notes, drug reference manuals and articles on internet and hosts of electronic databases (Fayose, 2000).

1.1.   Research Problem

Information needs are varied, dynamic and peculiar to different user groups. Schools of nursing libraries by mandate of their establishment are directly responsible for meeting these needs. However, the scenario in the schools of nursing under study is an overdependence on cyber cafes for information. The question from this phenomenon therefore is: what information resources are available in the libraries for the nursing students to meet their information needs? More so, the need for information by any group of users is affected by factors such as information resources available, the relevance of these information resources and probable outcomes of use of such information. This work aims to identify what information needs students of mission-owned schools of nursing in Okigwe Senatorial Zone have, and the information resources that have been made available for their needs.

1.2. Objectives

The main objective of this research is to ascertain the information needs and information resources availability for students in mission-owned schools of nursing in Okigwe Senatorial Zone.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the information needs of nursing students in mission-owned schools of nursing in Okigwe Senatorial Zone.
2. Determine the source through which the nursing students obtained their information.
3. Ascertain the information resources available for nursing students in the libraries of the mission-owned schools of nursing in Okigwe Senatorial Zone.
4. Determine the relevance of information resources provided to students' information needs.
5. Identify problems facing availability of information resources in mission-owned schools of nursing libraries in Okigwe Senatorial Zone.

2. Literature Review

Information need begins when one notices a gap between what is known and what is unknown and should be known. Miranda and Tarapanoff (2008) suggested that it is a process initiated when one perceives a gap between the information and knowledge available to resolve a problem and the actual solution of the problem. Information need varies across fields and professions. According to Adelani (2002), information need is complex and therefore must be determined by the particular user group who need the information. Thus, information needs can differ even among people in the same profession. For instance, the study by Ricks and Ten Ham (2015) was on the information needs of professional nurses. While their study differed from the current study by the present user group being students who are still undergoing training, it can still give an insight into kinds of information needed by those in nursing professions. Thus, Ricks and Ten Ham (2015) discovered professional nurses' major information needs to include information for treatment of patients (79%) and information on prevention and control measures (79%). In the study conducted by Muhammad and Iyoro (2013), information needs of nursing students include information for lifelong learning (40.3%), information for patient care (27.9%), information for research purposes (17.4%) and information to satisfy curiosity, personal interest and inclination (14%).

Nursing students consult various sources for different reasons in trying to meet their information needs. Some of these reasons are encapsulated in Wilson's (1999)intervening variables and other scholarly works like Niedzwiedzka (2003), Adhami (2004), Al-Suqri and Al-Aufi (2015), Azadeh and Ghasemi (2016). Variables of psychological, demographic, source characteristics and environmental nature affect users' decision and choice of sources to use in meeting their information needs. Lathey and Hodge (2001) and Dee and Stanley (2005) discovered that healthcare professionals prefer information sources that are convenient, easy to use and dependable. Dickey and Radford (2011) and Solomon and Spross (2011) concurred that convenience regarding access to and ease of use of resources influence information users' decision on which source to use. A number of research works show that human sources are mostly utilized in seeking information (Fakhoury and Wright, 2000; Lathey and Hodge, 2001; Cogdill, 2003; Dee and Stanley, 2005; Pravikoff *et al.*, 2005;

Baro and Ebhomeya, 2013; Olajide and Otunla, 2015; Ricks and Ham, 2015). However, Nobert and Lwoga (2012) indicated that nursing textbooks were mainly consulted.

Muhammad and Iyoro (2013) studied information needs and resources provision for nursing students of North-Central States of Nigeria. This study showed that textbooks/monographs, learned journals, newsletters/bulletins, CD-ROM/databases, video films and the internet are the resources available in the schools of nursing libraries.

On relevance, the internet was indicated to be very relevant to 80.7%, followed by textbooks/monographs by 73%, learned journals 54.6%, CD-ROM and databases by 54.3%, newsletters and bulletins by 45.5%, and video films 31.6% (Muhammad & Iyoro, 2013).

Shortage of fund has usually constrained provision and availability of information resources in schools of nursing libraries (Lucas, 2003; Muhammad and Iyoro, 2013). As a result of insufficient fund, schools of nursing libraries get relegated as a reliable source of obtaining information to meet needs. Other problems affecting information resources availability in the school of nursing libraries, as pointed out in Muhammad and Iyoro (2013) include unfriendly environment, poor cataloguing system, poor user education program and inadequate ICT facilities.

3. Methods
The study used the descriptive survey research design. This design was deemed appropriate as it explored the areas of information needed by nursing students in mission-owned schools of nursing in Okigwe senatorial zone and revealed the information resources that has been made available for the students in the libraries.

3.1. Population
Two schools of nursing namely, Joint Hospital Mbano and Our Lady Mother of Mercy Hospital Obowo, in Okigwe Senatorial Zone were chosen for the study. First year and preliminary training school (PTS) students were considered premature in knowledge and usage of the library resources and thus excluded from the study. The sophomores and finalists were considered to be mature and knowledgeable enough about their information needs and the library resources and therefore, used for the study. This comprised of a total population of 187 made up of all the nursing students in the selected categories of the two schools. (See Table 1 for clarification). Alongside the nursing students, two professional librarians in charge of the two schools of nursing libraries were also used for the study.

3.2. Instruments for Data Collection
The mission schools, comprising of a relatively small and accessible population of 187 nursing students were given questionnaire with 179 returned, showing a response percentage of 95.7%. The questionnaire contained three sections covering Information needs, Sources of information consulted and Relevance of information resources in the nursing library to nursing students' information needs. Another open-ended questionnaire cum checklist was administered to the librarians to record available information resources in the libraries and reveal problems facing availability of information resources.

3.3. Results and Analysis
Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequencies and tables while that from the questionnaire cum checklist was stated per school of nursing.

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Table 1: Nursing Students' Population and Response rate

S/N	Institution	Nursing students	No. Returned	Percentage (%) Returned
1.	School of Nursing, Joint Hospital Mbano	101	98	97.0%
2.	School of Nursing, Our Lady, Mother of Mercy Hospital, Obowo	86	81	94.1%
	Total	187	179	95.7%

Table 1 shows the population of each school of nursing and number of respondents who returned their instruments. A total of 179 nursing students from the two schools of nursing returned their instruments showing 95.7% response rate.

Table 2: Information needs of nursing students

S/N	Information Needs	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Information to complete assignment	160	89.3
2	Information for patient care	31	17.3
3	Information for patient diagnosis	55	30.7
4	Information for personal/professional development	107	59.7
5	Information regarding disease outbreak	79	44.1
6	Information for self-protection at ward experiences	131	73.1
7	Information for research and lifelong learning	114	63.6
8	Information for patient education	55	30.7
9	Information on nursing job opportunities	76	42.5
10	Information on new treatment of diseases	40	22.3

Table 2 shows that majority of the nursing students need information to complete their assignments (89.3%) and for self-protection during ward experiences (73.1%). This is followed by 63.6% of the students who indicated that they need information for research and lifelong learning. 59.7% showed that they need information for personal and professional development while 44.1% and 42.5% revealed that they need information regarding disease outbreak and on nursing job opportunities.

Table 3: Sources of information consulted by nursing students

S/N	Sources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
11	Radio/TV	80	44.7
12	Notice board	42	23.5
13	Meetings and Gatherings	47	26.3
14	Personal textbooks	91	50.8
15	Human sources	97	54.2
16	The Library	103	57.5
17	Internet/ Databases	146	81.6
18	Social and Networking Media	64	35.8
19	Journals/ Magazines	120	67.0
20	Newspapers/Newsletters	58	32.4

Table 3 shows sources consulted by nursing students in meeting their information needs. From the table, 81.6% of the respondents indicated internet and nursing databases as the major source consulted in meeting their information needs. This is followed by journals and magazines with 67%. Over 50% of the students indicated the library, human sources and

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personal textbooks to be their source of obtaining information while 44% listen to radio and television to get information. Social and networking media, newspapers/newsletters, meetings and gatherings and notice boards also constitute sources consulted by students albeit with percentages of 35.8%, 32.4% and 26.3% respectively.

Table 4: Available information resources in the schools of nursing libraries
Note: S.O.N represents School of Nursing

S/N	Information resources	No. available in S.O.N Mbano	No. available in S.O.N Obowo
21	Nursing textbooks	1026	387
22	Other related textbooks	105	374
23	Journals	15	33
24	Magazines	119	171
25	Encyclopedia	3	1
26	Handbooks	20	10
27	Newspapers	510	120
28	Manuals	51	-
29	Dictionaries	7	5
30	Models	-	2
31	Medical records/case notes	95	48
32	Abstract	-	-
33	Index	-	-
34	Bibliographies	-	13
35	Conference proceeding	50	58
36	Students project	500	920
37	government documents	-	-
38	Biographies	-	-

Table 4 reveals information resources available in the two schools of nursing libraries and the numbers available for each type of material. It is evident from the table that highly available are nursing textbooks, textbooks in other related fields like general medicine, students' projects, newspapers and magazines. Also available are journals, medical records and case notes, conference proceedings, handbooks, dictionaries and encyclopedia. The table shows that bibliographies and models are available only in the school of nursing Obowo while manuals are available in school of nursing Mbano alone. Information resources like abstract, index, government documents and biographies are lacking in the two schools of nursing libraries.

Table 5: Relevance of Information resources to information needs

S/N	Information resources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
39	Nursing textbooks	107	59.8
40	Other related textbooks	50	27.9
41	Journals	98	54.7
42	Magazines	75	41.9
43	Encyclopedia	87	48.6
44	Handbooks	54	30.2
45	Newspapers	64	35.8
46	Manuals	32	17.9
47	Dictionaries	83	46.4
48	Models	45	25.1
49	Medical records/case notes	70	39.1
50	Abstract	-	-

51	Index	-	-
52	Bibliographies	25	14.0
53	Conference proceeding	15	8.3
54	Students projects	119	66.5
55	Government documents	12	6.7
56	Biographies	-	-

The table shows relevant information resources to include students' projects 66.5%, nursing textbooks 59.8% and journals 54.7%. As can be seen from the table, abstracts, index and biographies are not indicated to have any relevance to their information needs.

3.4. Problems facing information resources availability

Data for this objective was obtained using the open-ended questionnaire section of the checklist given to the two librarians. The problems affecting information resources available in the two schools of nursing libraries were listed to include uncooperative institutional management, an insufficient fund for the library, inadequate staffing, and mutilation by nursing students, erratic power supply and poor library patronage.

3.5. Discussion

Findings from the study showed that major information needs of nursing students are information to complete assignments, information for self-protection during ward experiences and information for research and lifelong learning. Many respondents also indicated their information needs to be for personal and professional development. First, these findings concur with Dee and Stanley's (2005) submission that nursing professionals need a wide variety of health information to meet their clinical and educational needs. The findings aligned itself with the findings of Muhammad and Iyoro (2013) who discovered nursing students' information needs to include information for lifelong learning, research purposes and personal interest and inclination. The findings show that nursing students' information needs can differ from professional nurses' information needs as confirmed in the study by Ricks and Ten Ham (2015) who found out professional nurses' information needs to be mainly information on prevention and control measures. This is because nursing students are still on the training path of becoming professionals and thus, concern themselves with assignments and other curricular exercises.

The study sought to find out sources which students consulted to obtain information to meet their needs. Findings showed that internet/nursing databases are the first port of call which students consult in meeting their information needs. This is followed by journals and magazines, then the library. Information users choose sources of information by convenience, ease of use and reliability (Solomons and Spross, 2011). Thus, the findings contradict studies by Fakhoury and Wright (2000); Baro and Ebhomeya (2013) and Olajide and Otunla (2015) which found out that human source are mainly consulted by nurses and nursing students in meeting information needs. In as much as human sources and personal textbooks appeared to be consulted (54.2% and 50.8% respectively), they do not constitute three significant sources which the students consult more in meeting their information needs.

The findings showed that information resources are available in the libraries of the schools of nursing. They include nursing textbooks, textbooks from other subjects, projects, newspapers, magazines, journals, medical records, case notes, conference proceedings,

handbooks, dictionaries and encyclopedia. This corroborates the findings by Muhammad and Iyoro (2013).

About the relevance of the resources, the findings showed that students' projects, nursing textbooks, journals, encyclopedia, dictionaries, magazines, medical records and case notes are relevant. The results also confirmed the findings by Muhammad and Iyoro (2013) that textbooks, learned journals, CD-Rom and databases are relevant.

The findings on problems facing resources availability include uncooperative institutional management, insufficient fund, inadequate staffing, mutilation, erratic power supply and poor library patronage. The librarians explained that institutional management usually does not comply in releasing fund for suggested titles of books and other materials to be bought for the students. The libraries are under-staffed as there is only one librarian in the school of nursing Obowo and two librarians in school of nursing Mbano who operate on morning and evening shift each. Thus, acquired materials spend a long time undergoing processing before they are exposed for students' access. Mutilation is also said to be a problem facing resources availability as affected books are no longer complete sources of information. Insufficient fund was among the problems identified by Muhammad and Iyoro (2013) as a barrier to efficient provision of library and information services to student nurses whereas this study concerned itself with problems facing resources availability in the libraries of mission-owned schools of nursing in Okigwe senatorial zone.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Nursing students in schools of nursing in Joint Hospital Mbano and Our Lady, Mother of Mercy Hospital, Obowo are mainly interested in information about their education and consult internet mostly for these bits of information. Therefore, the nursing school management should acquire more of information materials that are curriculum-based in other to meet students' information needs and by extension achieve individual, library and institutional goals. Based on the above finding, it is also recommended that internet facilities should be provided so as to enable students have access to quality online resources and nursing databases.

Information resources are available in the schools of nursing libraries, thus nursing students should develop search skills for information resources domiciled in the library and where difficult, should involve their librarians in their search for needed information.

Finally, in other to solve the problem of management incompliance, insufficient fund, mutilation and poor staffing, the management of schools of nursing should get involved in resource provision of their libraries, release adequate fund and employ more librarians for prompt service delivery to nursing students. Librarians are equally urged to be more vigilant so as to checkmate deviant behaviour such as mutilation of library materials.

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