Information Seeking Behaviour of the Paramedical Students in the Colleges of Health Science and Technology of the Northwestern States of Nigeria

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Abstract
The paper investigates the information seeking behaviour of the paramedical students of the colleges of health science and technology in the Northwestern states of Nigeria, using descriptive survey research design. A total number of five hundred and eighty eight (588) copies of the questionnaires were administered to the respondents, out of which five hundred and seventy three (573) were returned and found useful. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive analysis. The finding shows that majority of the respondents seek information for research and assignment. Textbooks and E-resources were the top information resources used by more than half of the respondents. Lack of skills to browse the information in the libraries, poor internet service and constant power failure are factors or barriers to their information use. The study recommended that, user education programmes should be intensify by the management of the colleges' libraries, and also alternative power sources and reliable internet services should be provided to enable the students satisfy their information need effectively.

Keywords: *Information, Information need. Information resources, Paramedical students, Kano State, Nigeria*

Introduction
Information is a crucial resource for the overall academic development of any academic institution because it is used to promote teaching, learning and research function of these institutions. Information refers to processed raw data which was collected about an event in a given society and processed into a message for the purpose of the societal development. It can also be viewed as any material in any form through which message or idea is supplied to the individual, group or society for communication. Therefore, the acquisition and utilization of information resources are critical and important activities engaged by individuals, more especially scholars, researchers and students in meeting their information need.

Paramedical students also known as "allied health students" refer to persons who are studying any of the following medical courses such as nursing, optometry, dental technology, nutrition and dietetics, pharmacy technicians, health information management and so on. The paramedical science courses serve as a lateral aid to the medical sciences, in terms of diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The National Board for Technical Education (2012) identifies the following paramedical courses offered by the colleges of health sciences and technology in Nigeria, which include community health, dental technology, environmental health technology, health information management, public health nursing and so on, that aim to provide health care services. The Canadian international Development Agency (2011) reports that the

schools later colleges of health technology were established in the late 1970s as part of Nigeria's Basic Healthcare Service Scheme (BHSS) to train new cadre of public healthcare workers to staff the basic healthcare units then constructed. Today there are many colleges of health science and technology situated across the thirty-six (36) states in federation owned by federal government, state government and private individuals. The objectives of such institutions are to: offer course of study or research in the primary healthcare services; provide enough personnel for successful implementation of primary healthcare policies in the federation; and promote the advancement of knowledge and its application to the health seeking through the methods accepted by the community that made up the state.

To attain these objectives, the provision of relevant information resources of right quality and quantity is necessary for effective teaching and training of paramedical students. To buttress this statement, Sa'idu (2012) explained that, for educational institutions to serve their role as centers of academic excellence, they must depend on the services provided by the libraries in providing relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning and research function of the institutions. Also for academic library to be an excellent center towards promoting teaching, learning and research activities its collection should be acquired and provided by considering the information need of its potential users.

It is against this background the researcher attempts to conduct this study by employing quantitative research methodology with a view to investigate the information seeking behaviour of the paramedical students in their related colleges' libraries. And also to find out the factors that affects their information seeking and use.

Statement of the Problem
It is clear that the role of paramedical personnel in the provision of healthcare services cannot be over emphasized, as they help in assisting the medical doctors and physicians in prevention of diseases and provision of healthcare services to the patients, among others. Thus, the effective teaching and quality of training for their profession may to the large extent depends upon the provision of relevant information resources available in their related colleges' libraries. Therefore, the knowledge about the types of information resources preferred by these students is an important factor in determining and satisfying their information need.

However, as observed by the researcher during the preliminary surveys, all the libraries of the colleges understudied have substantial amount of information resources which include: subject textbook, serial or periodicals (newspapers, journals, and magazines), reference books like encyclopedias, research projects, government publications etc. Apart from printed information resources, each library in the colleges surveyed study has information technology center or E – library unit to enable the users to have access to digital resources from the internet and databases. But despite these sizeable collections the growing number of researches conducted on user studies in Nigeria in general and in the northwest in particular do not include a study about the information need and use of information resources by the paramedical

students in colleges of health science and technology of the northwestern states of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study
The general objective of this study is to investigate the information seeking behaviour of the paramedical students and specific objectives are to:

1. find out the information need of the paramedical students in the colleges of health science and technology in the Northwestern States of Nigeria;
2. identify the types of information resources used by the students in the colleges surveyed; and,
3. identify the factors that affects the effective use of the information resources by the students in the colleges under study.

Research Questions

1. What are the information need of the paramedical students in the colleges libraries of health science and technology in the North Western States of Nigeria?
2. What types of information resources do paramedical students used in the college libraries of health science and technology in the North Western States of Nigeria?
3. What factors affects the effective use of information resources by the students in the college libraries of health science and technology in the North Western States of Nigeria?

Literature Review
The concepts of information, information need and information resources have become the important variables in literature of library and information sciences. Information is a crucial component of modern society and almost every is based on information and depends upon its resources. Hornby (2010) defined information as details about somebody or something. Jerome and Mary (2012) viewed that, information is an essential resource to which individuals in every society should have unimpeded access to, because people seeking information to play their roles in the society and to live meaningful life. Mustaffa, Ahmad and Abdul Baqi (2012) observed that, there is a universal assumption that man was born innocent or ignorant, thus should actively seek knowledge. Information need is what individual ought to have for work. Research, edification or recreation (Andualem, Kebede and Kumie, 2013). Therefore, information need said to be any data, idea or knowledge required by an individual that was triggered by personal, academic, professional and environmental factors, or emerged out of recognition of gap in the state of knowledge experienced by the information seeker. Akporido (2013) while exploring the information need and information seeking behavior of nursing students revealed that, the nursing students need information for class work and assignment. Opele, Iyanda and Asubiojo (2015) revealed that, the top crucial information required by health information management students was health information (60.2%) and academic information (59.8%). In relation to this Nyam, Akawe and Tynum (2015) reported that, the medical students across the various departments: nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, etc of Benue state

university, Makurdi have information need related to job opportunities for medical students, getting information for final year projects, entertainment and to update their knowledge. Wiche and Ray-Ogbonna (2021) investigate the information need and seeking behavior among medical students of Pomo University of medical sciences. The findings revealed that the top information need of the students is academic information, like courses they are to study, assignment, and examination timetable, what book to use for the course, departmental programs, personal health information, medical news and laboratory practical.

Information resources is any material through which information was published for communication. Ikhizama (2004) defined information resources as materials consulted for the aid of information on topic theme. Oyedekum (2007) classified these information resources into three (3) categories which include; primary, secondary and tertiary information resources. The primary information resources ate most current, uninterrupted, first-hand materials, such as scientific journal articles, dairies, memos, statistical data, theses, technical report and the like. The secondary and tertiary information resources said to be built from primary resources. They include textbooks, dictionaries, bibliographies, indexes, abstracts etc. Muhammed and Umar(2010) added that, the information sources or resources include people (specialist), documents, directories, serial publications, general print information, multimedia information technology and structured databases.

Mishra et at (2015) studied the information need and seeking behavior of health sciences students; these are nursing students, dental students and pharmacy students, the finding revealed that textbooks, reference books and E- journals are cited frequently used by students. Also, Olajide and Otunla (2015) reported that, the printed materials are the major information resources used by student nurses at Bowen University in Osun state, Nigeria. In their studies on information need and seeking behavior of health information management students Opele, Iyanda and Asubiojo (2015) revealed that, the information resources used by students include; textbook, newspapers, magazines, bulletin, electronic resources and CDs. Wiche and Ray-Ogbonna (2021) investigate the information needs and seeking behavior among medical students of Pomo University of medical sciences. The findings revealed that the top information resources used by the respondents are medical textbooks, lectures, school notice board, internet, E- book and databases.

In the process of searching and identifying the desired information resources in the libraries various authorities have reported the different factors that undermined the effective use of information resources by users. Nyam, akawe and Tynum (2015) studied the information need and seeking behavior of medical students of Benue state university, the findings shows that inadequate tables and chairs for readings, unavailability of current sources, not knowing how to use the library catalog, unwillingness of library staff to assist users, noise making in the library are factors that affect their information use in the library. Also Mishra et al (2015) conducted a survey study on the information need behavior of health sciences students, and it was found that, 59% of the students indicated that lack of time is great barrier to seek

information, 18% of the students indicated that they have no searching skills, 16.20% of the students indicated that they are not satisfied with the availability of the seeking materials and 10.48% of the students indicated that, they have no knowledge on how to seek information.

Research Methodology
A descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population of the study comprised ten thousand and twenty six (10,026) paramedical students from one college of health science and technology of owned by each of the seven states (7) of the North Western States of Nigeria northwest zone of Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five hundred and eighty eight (588) respondents, by using the Taro Yamani (1967) table of determining the sample size. The number was then proportionately allocated to the seven (7) colleges based on the number of their population. The questionnaire was the only instrument for data collection, which was distributed by the researcher to the respondents through the aid of library staff. The data collected was presented and analyzed by using frequency distribution tables follow by discussions.

Interpretation of Results and Discussion of Findings
Table 1: Response Rate

Name of College/ School	No. Questionnaires administered	No. Questionnaires returned	%
Shehu Idris College of Health Science and Technology, Makarfi, Kaduna State.(SICHSTM)	127	123	20.9%
Sultan Abdurrahman School of Health Technology, Gwadabawa, sokoto State.(SASHTG)	119	114	19.4%
Kebbi State School of Health Technology, Jega(KSSHTJ)	113	112	19.0%
School of Health Technology, Daura, Katsina State.(SHTD)	91	89	15.1%
Zamfara State College of Health Science and Technology, Tsafe.(ZSCHSTT)	64	63	10.7%
School of Health Technology, Kano. (SHTK)	44	42	7.1%
College of health Science and Technology, Jahun, Jigawa State.(CHST)	30	30	5.1%
Total	588	573	97.4%

Table 1 shows that a total number of five hundred and eighty-eight (588) copies of the questionnaires were administered to the students of the seven (7) colleges under studies. Five hundred and seventy-three (573) copies were returned and found usable, representing 97.41%.

Table 2: Information Need of the Paramedical Students

College/ School	Information need													
	Research		assignment		examination		Laboratory work		Problem solving		Reference		Current awareness	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SICHSTM	112	19.48	83	14.4	73	12.7	64	11.1	60	10.4	57	10.	53	9.2
SASHTG	96	16.7	71	12.6	59	10.26	53	9.2	51	8.9	46	8.0	44	7.7
KSSHTJ	85	14.79	59	10.3	41	7.1	42	7.3	42	7.3	38	6.7	36	6.2
SHTD	72	12.52	53	9.2	40	7.0	39	6.8	40	7	32	5.5	33	5.7
ZSCHSTT	57	9.91	38	6.61	21	3.7	21	3.7	21	3.7	23	4.0	23	4.0
SHTK	38	6.61	21	3.17	21	3.7	19	3.3	19	3.3	17	2.9	19	3.3
CHSTJ	23	4.0	9	1.6	14	2.4	18	3.1	18	3.1	13	2.2	12	2.0
Total	483	84.0	334	58.4	269	46.9	256	44.5	250	43.5	226	39.	220	38.1

Table 2 shows the information need of the paramedical students in the colleges of health science and technology surveyed under study. It reveals that more than half (483, 84.0%) of the respondents indicated that they seeking information for research work; followed by assignment (334, 58.4%); examination (269, 46.9%); laboratory work (256, 44.5%); problem solving (250, 43.5%); reference (226, 39.3%), while current awareness is the least information need of paramedical students in the colleges surveyed. under study. This analysis implies that the information need of the paramedical students in the colleges surveyed under study are for research; assignment; examination; laboratory work; problem solving; reference and current awareness. In view of the above situation the respondents were asked to identify the information resources they use to satisfy these information need.

Table 3: Use of Information Resources by the Respondents

College/ School	Information resources											
	Textbooks		E - resources		Govt. publications		Reference books		Research projects		Periodical/ serials	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SICHSTM	116	20.1	105	18.27	88	15.3	81	14.0	76	13.2	41	7.1
SASHTG	104	18.0	97	16.87	39	6.8	34	5.91	31	5.39	22	3.82
KSSHTJ	98	17.0	89	15.48	24	4.17	22	3.82	21	3.65	21	3.65
SHTD	86	15.0	57	9.91	18	3.13	20	3.48	20	3.48	18	3.13
ZSCHSTT	62	10.7	22	3.82	16	2.78	16	2.78	12	2.08	12	2.08
SHTK	40	6.96	17	2.95	9	1.56	8	1.39	9	1.56	7	1.21
CHSTJ	30	5.22	12	2.08	6	1.04	8	1.39	9	1.56	3	0.52
Total	536	93.0	399	69.3	200	34.7	189	33.0	178	31.0	124	21.5

Table 3 indicates the use of information resources by the respondents. It shows that, more than half (536, 93.0%) of the respondents indicated that they used textbooks;

followed by the use of E –%)ources (399, 69'3%); government publications (200, 34.7%); reference books (189, 33.0%); research projects (178, 31.0%) while periodicals and serials were the least information resources used with response rates of 124(21.5%) respondents. Textbooks and e-resources are used by the majority of the respondents. The implication to be drawn from the results is that analysis implies that, the most common types of information resources used by the paramedical students are textbooks and E- resources.; government publications; reference books; research projects and periodicals/ serials. In view of this, the respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the use of each information resources in colleges' libraries.

Table 4: Satisfaction of respondents with the Use of each Information Resources

S/N	Information resources	Highly not satisfied		Not satisfied		Not sure		Satisfied		Highly satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Textbooks	4	0.7	16	2.8	46	8.0	242	42.2	265	46.2
2	E- resources	9	1.6	40	7.0	191	33.3	242	42.2	86	15.0
3	Govt. publications	5	0.9	61	10.6	289	50.4	155	27.1	63	11.0
4	Reference books	5	0.9	106	18.5	288	50.3	133	23.2	41	7.2
5	Research projects	13	2.3	145	25.3	236	41.2	128	22.3	51	8.9
6	Periodicals/ serials	4	0.7	137	23.9	291	50.8	112	19.5	29	5.1

Table 4 indicates the levels of satisfaction with the use of using the information resources by the respondents. The result in no.1 shows that 4 (0.7%) respondents indicated that they are highly not satisfied with the use of textbooks, and Follows by 16 (2.8%) who indicated that they are not satisfied with the use of textbooks to meet their information needs. , and then followed by 46(8.0%) who are not sure. This is followed by 242 (42.2%) who indicated that, they are satisfied with the use of textbooks to meet their information needs. Lastly, 265(46.2%) respondents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the use of textbooks in the colleges' libraries. The result further showed in no.2 shows that 9 (1.6%) respondents indicated that they are highly not satisfied with the use of E- resources, This is followed by 40 (7.0%) who indicated that they are not satisfied with the use of E- resources to meet their information needs, and then followed by 191(33.3%) who are not sure. This is followed by 247 (43.1%) who indicated that, they are satisfied with the use of E-resources to meet their information needs. Lastly, 86(15.0%) respondents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the use of E- resources in the colleges' libraries.

The result in no.3 shows that 5 (0.9%) respondents indicated that they are highly not satisfied with the use of government publications, Also, 61(10.6%) indicated that they are not satisfied with the use of government publications to meet their information needs, and then followed by 289(50.4%) who are not sure. This is followed by 155 (21.7%) who indicated that, they are satisfied with the use of government publications

to meet their information needs. Lastly, 63(11.0%) respondents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the use of government publications in the colleges' libraries. The result in no.4 shows that 5 (0.9%) respondents indicated that they are highly not satisfied with the use of reference books, Followed by 106 (18.5%) who indicated that they are not satisfied with the use of reference books to meet their information needs, and then followed by 288(50.3%) who are not sure. This is followed by 133 (23.2%) who indicated that, they are satisfied with the use of reference books to meet their information needs. Lastly, 41(7.2%) respondents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the use of reference books in the colleges' libraries.

Also, table 4 revealed that, the result in no.5 shows that 13(2.3%) respondents indicated that they are highly not satisfied with the use of research projects, Follows by 145 (25.3%) who indicated that they are not satisfied with the use of research projects to meet their information needs, and then followed by 236(41.2%) who are not sure. This is followed by 128 (22.3%) who indicated that, they are satisfied with the use of research projects to meet their information needs. Lastly, 51 (8.9%) respondents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the use of research projects in the colleges' libraries. The result in no.6 shows that 4 (0.7%) respondents indicated that they are highly not satisfied with the use of periodicals/ serials, Follows by 137(23.9%) who indicated that they are not satisfied with the use of periodicals/serials to meet their information needs, and then followed by 291(50.8%) respondents who are not sure. This is followed by 112 (22.3%) who indicated that, they are satisfied with the use of periodicals/serials to meet their information needs. Lastly, 29(5.10%) respondents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the use of periodicals/serials in the colleges' libraries.

The analysis implies that textbooks followed by E- resources were the highly information resources that satisfy the information needs of the paramedical students. In view of this the respondents were asked to identify the factors or barriers that undermined the use of information resources in their colleges' libraries.

Table 5: Factors / barriers affecting the use of information resources

College/ School	Factors/ barriers													
	Lack of skills to browse information		Constant power failure		Poor internet services		Lack of awareness		Restricted access duration		Unwillingness of the library staff to assist		Poor lightening	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SICHSTM	91	15.8	91	15.8	89	15.4	61	10.6	59	10.2	16	2.7	9	1.5
SASHTJ	79	13.7	78	13.5	72	12.5	44	7.6	40	6.9	13	2.2	7	1.2
KSSHTJ	64	11.13	53	9.2	50	8.7	41	7.13	28	4.8	10	1.74	5	0.87
SHTD	44	7.65	48	8.35	49	8.52	30	5.2	20	3.4	9	1.56	4	0.69
ZSCHSTT	39	6.7	36	6.26	34	5.9	27	4.6	17	2.9	6	1.0	4	0.69
SHTK	15	2.61	14	2.43	18	3.13	17	2.9	13	2.26	3	0.52	3	0.52
CHSTJ	7	1.21	11	1.91	12	2.08	10	1.74	9	1.5	2	0.34	2	0.34
Total	339	58.8	331	57.4	324	56.0	231	39.77	186	31.9	59	10.1	34	5.8

Table 5 indicates the factors or barriers that affects the effective use of information resources by the respondents. It shows that, lack of skills to browse the information is the major barrier to their information use with highest frequency of 339 (58.8%)

respondents; followed by constant power failure(331: 57.4%); poor internet service (324:56.0%); lack of awareness(231:39.77%); restricted access duration (186:31.9%) respondents. Others shown on the table are unwillingness of college library staff to assist (59:10.1%) and poor lightening with 34 (6.3%) respondents.

Discussion of Findings
Based on the data collected from the respondents of this study, the discussion was presented in line with the research objectives to provide answer to the research questions. The study found that, the information needs of the paramedical students in the colleges of health science and technology in Northwestern States of Nigeria northwestern state of Nigeria are related to research; assignment; examination; laboratory work; problem solving; reference and current awareness. And the top information need is related to research by majority (84.0%) respondents, followed by information need related to assignment by more than half of the respondents (58.4%). The study therefore corroborates with the findings of Akporido (2013) which revealed that. The nursing students seeking information for class work and assignment. Also based on the analysis the types of information resources used by the paramedical students are: textbooks; E- resources; government publications; reference books; research projects and periodicals/ serials. And out of these information resources text books were used by almost all the respondent (93. %); followed by E- resources by more than half of the students (69.3%). Therefore the findings corresponds with the findings of Opele, Iyanda and Asubioju (2015) whose findings revealed that, the types of information resources used by the health information management students include; textbooks, newspapers, magazines, bulletins electronic resources and CDs.

Lastly, the study found that, the factors or barriers encountered by the respondents while using the information resources in the colleges' libraries are: lack of skills to browse information in the library; constant power failure; lack of awareness and poor internet services. Others are: unwillingness of the college library to assist and poor lightening. This finding corroborates with the finding of the study conducted by Momudu (2013) whose finding shows that the main factors for not using the information resources by the students effectively in their college library are: absence of internet services; lack of up-to-date research materials; difficulties in identifying relevant text and restricted access duration of the library services.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, the paramedical students of the colleges of health sciences and technology in northwestern states of Nigeria have information needs related to academic activities and clinical practices. For they are seeking information for research and assignment purposes. Medical textbooks and E-resources were the top information resources to meet their information needs. And majority of the students indicated that, they are satisfied with information resources they used. But despite the satisfaction they derived by using these resources in the colleges' libraries, many of the students do not have the adequate skills to effectively search and browse the information in the libraries to enable them satisfy their information needs effectively.

Recommendation
Based on the findings, the study recommends the followings:

4. The management of the colleges' libraries should design effective information literacy program to educate students to know how to locate the desired information resources in the college library.
5. The management of the colleges' libraries should extend the working hours of the libraries to enable students have enough time to effectively use the information resources in the libraries.
6. The administrators of the colleges should recruit more professional and qualified library staff to provide better information services to the students in the libraries.
7. The management of the colleges' libraries should provide reliable internet services to the E – library units to enable the students have access to the internet and online database resources at anytime they visit the libraries.
8. Also, in order to ensure proper utilization of E- information resources, the college administrators and library managements should endeavor to provide the library with alternative and regular power supply to address the constant power outage in the colleges' libraries.

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