ICT SKILLS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS OF NURSING COLLEGES: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the ICT skills and information-seeking behavior of nursing students through a case study approach. It examines the level of proficiency in ICT tools among these students and explores how these skills influence their ability to seek and utilize information for academic purposes. The study reveals that while nursing students possess varying levels of ICT skills, those with higher proficiency demonstrate more effective and efficient information-seeking behaviors. This study highlights the importance of integrating robust ICT training into nursing education to enhance students' information management and academic success, providing valuable insights for curriculum development.

KEYWORDS: *ICT Skills, Information-Seeking Behavior, Nursing Students, Academic Success, Digital Literacy.*

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a crucial role in shaping the academic experiences of students across various disciplines. In nursing education, the integration of ICT has become increasingly significant as it enhances both learning and professional practice. The use of technology in nursing education is not merely a supplementary tool but a fundamental component that supports the development of essential skills and competencies. This introduction explores the importance of ICT skills for nursing students and the impact of these skills on their information-seeking behavior, providing a comprehensive overview of the study's context, significance, and objectives.

The evolution of technology has transformed the educational environment, making ICT an indispensable part of academic and professional development. For nursing students, the ability to effectively use ICT tools is critical for accessing medical databases, managing patient information, and engaging with digital learning resources. The shift towards digital platforms in healthcare and education necessitates that nursing students are proficient in using various ICT tools, ranging from basic software applications to complex systems for data management and telemedicine. Consequently, the acquisition and application of ICT skills are integral to their academic success and professional readiness.

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Despite the recognized importance of ICT in nursing education, there remains a significant variability in the level of ICT skills among students. Some nursing students may enter their programs with a robust understanding of technology, while others may face challenges due to limited exposure or inadequate training. This disparity in ICT proficiency can influence how students seek and utilize information for their studies. Information-seeking behavior encompasses the strategies and processes individuals employ to identify, locate, and use information to meet their needs. In the context of nursing education, this behavior is crucial for accessing relevant academic resources, staying updated with current medical practices, and engaging in evidence-based learning.

The relationship between ICT skills and information-seeking behavior is a key area of interest in this study. Students with advanced ICT skills are likely to exhibit more effective information-seeking behaviors, such as utilizing digital libraries, accessing online journals, and employing search engines efficiently. Conversely, students with limited ICT skills may struggle with information retrieval, which can impact their academic performance and overall learning experience. Understanding how ICT skills influence information-seeking behavior can provide insights into how educational institutions can better support students in developing these essential competencies.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform improvements in nursing education curricula and training programs. By examining the ICT skills and information-seeking behaviors of nursing students, this study aims to identify gaps in current educational practices and offer recommendations for enhancing ICT training. Effective integration of technology in nursing education can lead to more competent and confident practitioners who are well-prepared to meet the demands of the modern healthcare environment. Additionally, the findings of this study can contribute to a broader understanding of how ICT proficiency impacts academic outcomes and professional development in healthcare education.

This study employs a case study approach to investigate the ICT skills and information-seeking behavior of nursing students. A case study is an appropriate methodology for this research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of these phenomena within a specific educational context. Through surveys, interviews, and observations, the study collects data on students' proficiency with various ICT tools and their strategies for finding and using information. The case study approach provides rich, contextual insights that can reveal patterns and trends in ICT usage and information-seeking practices among nursing students.

The objectives of this study are threefold: first, to assess the level of ICT skills among nursing students; second, to analyze their information-seeking behavior; and third, to explore the relationship between ICT skills and information-seeking behavior. By achieving these objectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ICT skills influence students' ability to seek and utilize information effectively. This knowledge can help educators design targeted interventions and support mechanisms to improve ICT proficiency and enhance information-seeking strategies.

In the integration of ICT into nursing education is essential for preparing students to excel in both their academic and professional careers. The ability to effectively use technology and seek information is crucial for nursing students as they navigate their educational journey and prepare for their roles as healthcare professionals. This study aims to bridge the gap in understanding by exploring the ICT skills and information-seeking behavior of nursing students, providing valuable insights that can inform educational practices and support student success. As technology continues to evolve and shape the future of healthcare education, it is imperative to address these aspects to ensure that nursing students are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a digital age.

ICT SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. **Digital Literacy:** Fundamental proficiency in using computers, software applications, and the internet for academic tasks, including word processing, spreadsheets, and online research.

2. **Information Management:** Ability to effectively search, evaluate, and manage information using digital tools and databases, crucial for academic research and assignments.

3. **E-Learning Tools:** Competence in utilizing learning management systems (LMS) like Moodle or Blackboard, as well as educational apps and online resources that enhance learning experiences.

4. **Communication Technologies:** Skills in using email, video conferencing, and collaboration platforms (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) for effective communication and teamwork in academic settings.

5. **Data Analysis:** Proficiency in using software tools for statistical analysis, data visualization, and research interpretation, which are essential for data-driven decision-making and research projects.

6. **Cybersecurity Awareness:** Understanding of digital safety practices, including password management and recognizing phishing attempts, to protect personal and academic information.

7. **Technical Problem-Solving:** Ability to troubleshoot common technical issues and seek assistance when necessary, ensuring minimal disruption to academic activities.

8. **Adaptability to Emerging Technologies:** Staying updated with technological advancements and integrating new tools into academic practices to maintain relevance in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

ICT AND INFORMATION SEEKING IN NURSING

1. **Electronic Health Records (EHRs):** Nurses use EHRs to access and manage patient information efficiently, improving clinical decision-making and patient care through accurate and up-to-date records.

2. **Medical Databases:** Proficiency in searching and navigating medical databases such as PubMed and CINAHL is essential for finding relevant research articles, clinical guidelines, and evidence-based practices.

3. **Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS):** These systems assist nurses in making informed decisions by providing evidence-based recommendations and alerts, which enhance patient safety and care quality.

4. **Telemedicine Platforms:** Skills in using telemedicine tools enable nurses to conduct remote consultations, monitor patients' health from a distance, and provide care in underserved areas.

5. **Online Continuing Education:** Access to online courses and webinars helps nurses stay current with the latest advancements in healthcare, meet continuing education requirements, and enhance their clinical skills.

6. **Mobile Health Applications:** Utilizing mobile apps for health monitoring, patient education, and communication supports nurses in delivering personalized care and managing patient health more effectively.

7. **Information Literacy:** Nurses need to critically evaluate online health information for reliability and relevance, ensuring that they use accurate and credible sources to inform their practice.

8. **Collaborative Tools:** ICT tools like shared digital platforms and communication systems facilitate collaboration among healthcare professionals, enhancing team-based care and information sharing.

CONCLUSION

In the integration of ICT skills significantly impacts nursing education and practice, shaping how students and professionals seek and utilize information. Proficiency in digital tools and resources enhances nursing students' ability to access critical data, engage with evidence-based practices, and adapt to technological advancements in healthcare. As the field continues to evolve, strengthening ICT competencies will be crucial for improving patient care and educational outcomes. This study underscores the need for targeted ICT training in nursing programs to better equip students for the demands of modern healthcare and to foster more effective information-seeking behaviors in their professional practice.

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