

Persons with HIV in Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Self-concept and Information Needs

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship among self-concept, information needs, and information utilisation by PLHIV (persons living with human immunodeficiency virus) in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. Ex-post-facto design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to target about 400 PLHIV administered with anti-retroviral drugs under the supervision of the State Hospital, Ijebu-Ode. Using a questionnaire with reliability value ($\alpha = 0.70$) for self-concept, ($\alpha = 0.72$) for information needs, and ($\alpha = 0.73$) for information utilisation, 400 questionnaire were sent out, of which 160 (40%) were returned. The study found that PLHIV had high self-concept ($\bar{X} = 41.78$; $SD = 4.54$), very high percentage scores in information needs, and high degrees of information utilisation via radio/television, newspapers/magazines, colleagues, and religious establishments but low via libraries, information centres, and internet. Self-concept and information needs of PLHIV had no significant relationship with information utilisation ($r = 0.22$, $p > 0.05$) and ($r = 0.052$; $p > 0.005$) respectively. There is significance difference in self-concept of respondents based on gender ($t = -2.406$; $df = 159$; $p < 0.05$) and no significant difference in information utilisation based on gender ($t = -1.349$; $df = 158$; $p > 0.05$). The study recommends more HIV/AIDS prevention advocacy, counseling and rehabilitation, and improvement in information utilisation via libraries, information centres, and internet as well as societal stimulating factors.

I. Introduction

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), has for many years ravaged developing countries. HIV infection has assumed a frightening dimension in Africa. In Nigeria, the number of

the infected people in the country makes her one of the high risk areas in the world. Recent estimates by the National Action Commission for AIDS (NACA) put the population of Nigerians infected with HIV at about 3 million.

Persons living with HIV (PLHIV) came to the realisation of their HIV status through medical test. The stigmatization and alienation of HIV positive persons in Africa has actually done greater harm than the virus itself. Positive test results are usually accompanied with rigorous counseling and re-orientation. This is because an HIV positive result is psychologically damaging, with accompanying social tagging and misconceptions. Oftentimes, the self-perception among HIV positive persons in Africa results from societal negative attitudes.

"The self-concept construct has been used to explain behaviors across a diverse array of situations, and the attainment of a positive self-concept has been posited as a desirable goal in developmental psychology" (Marsh, 1988). Self-concept refers to the global understanding that a sentient being has about himself or herself (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). It is "composed of relatively permanent self assessments such as personality attributes, knowledge of one's skills and abilities, one's occupation, hobbies and awareness of one's physical attributes" (Wikipedia, 2008).

Useful, relevant, and timely information is crucial to the survival of PLHIV. They need information for their day-to-day existence and obtained such information from various sources. "Information behaviour research is concerned with a deeper understanding of information needs and use, through sense making or features" (Urquhart, 2001).

The literature of library and information sciences is replete with studies on the information needs and use of specific social groups, selected people, race, and interest groups, such as studies by Adetoro (2004), Fiankor & Adams (2004), Wathen & Harris (2006), and Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique (2008).

The nature of HIV infection requires carriers to learn about the virus, make difficult decisions regarding its management, and cope with the consequences of their status. Information utilisation in relevant areas will not help PLHIV to understand their status. Rather, it would essentially facilitate decision making and coping. PLHIV have a variety of information sources to obtain needed information to learn, decide, adjust, and cope with their situation. Medical personnel are primary and important sources of information to HIV positive persons.

Few studies have investigated information needs and use of PLHIV in Nigeria. Hence, there is a need for this study to examine these variables within a framework of their self-concept.

II. Statement of the Problem

As in many other African countries, PLHIV have been negatively perceived and treated in Nigeria. Unfavourable societal attitudes such as stigmatization towards PLHIV result in negative self-concept. Thus, the information behaviour of PLHIV is called to question. This situation may precipitate inappropriate information needs and use of inaccurate or irrelevant information derived from unreliable sources.

The following questions are raised to guide this study:

1. What is the level of self-concept among PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode?
2. What are the information needs of PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode?
3. What is the level of information sources utilization by PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode?

III. Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated for the study are as itemised hereunder. They were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and information utilization among PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between information needs and information utilization among PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the self-concept of PLHIV based on gender.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the information utilisation of PLHIV based on gender.

IV. Literature Review

Sub-Saharan African remains the region where the effect of HIV and PLHIV are most visible. In Nigeria, the HIV/AIDS pandemic cannot be discountenanced anymore. At the end of the year 2002, an estimated 4.5 million adult Nigerians were living with HIV/AIDS (Centre for the Right of Health. CRH, 2001). In recent times, the rapid spread of HIV, notably in Nigerian urban centres is well noted, and it is now spreading from urban centres to rural areas (Lawal, 2002). There is evidence suggesting that PLHIV in Nigeria are increasing among the youth (CRH, 2001; Nwana, 2002).

The social interaction arising from HIV infection borders a great deal on the self-concept of the infected. Most self-concept studies examine correlations between a measure of self-concept and measures of other constructs. Most definition of self-concept links this construct to achievement (Shavelson, Hubner & Staton, 1976).

The increase in the number of studies on self-concept is a reflection of a re-emphasis on non-cognitive outcomes of life endeavours (Yamamoto, 1972).

The self-concept is not restricted to the present. It includes past selves and future selves. Future selves or possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become. Possible selves may function as incentives for future behavior. And they also provide an evaluative and interpretive context for current view of self (Markns & Nurius, 1986). Self-concept is crucial in explaining and predicting how a person acts. A person's perception of himself is thought to influence the way he acts. And his acts in turn influence the way he perceives himself (Shavelson, Hubner & Staton, 1976).

Purkey (1970) found a positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, though he warned that an inevitable relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement has not been established by researchers. In a study of age and sex effects of self-concept, March (1988) reported that self-concept declines from early adolescence to middle adolescence, and then increases from middle adolescence through early adulthood.

Studies on information needs, seeking and use are central to information research. The first studies in this area focused on information systems or what has been called System oriented paradigm (Eskola, 1998). In the early 1980s, questions were raised regarding the system approach; thus, the user of information and his information needs come into focus in what is called the Cognitive view (Dervin & Nilan, 1986). The fallout of the foregoing is an avalanche of studies which examined the information behaviour of groups in a variety of context. Studies by Hopkins (1989), Blazek and Aversa, (1994), Watson Boone (1994), Challener (1999), Shelizad (2007), and Tahir, Mahmood, and Shafrique (2008) investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of scientists, social scientists, and humanists while Eskola (1998), Thorsteinsdottir (2001), Finakor and Adams (2004), Kuiper, Volman, and Terwel (2008) studied the information needs and seeking behaviour of undergraduates.

Scheiber, Schneemann, and Wischer (1998) found that there is a demand for information filtering and information supply in the public health sector in Germany while Young (2002) found that information needs often reflect the age and changing socio-economic, health, family and personal circumstances of people. A study on information seeking and use behaviour of economists and business analyst (Thivant, 2005) revealed similarities in information seeking and use strategies used by these two groups, though there are some differences by their activity frameworks and goals.

Ankem (2006) investigated the use of information sources by cancer patients and found that health care professionals, medical pamphlets, and family and friends were the most used sources of information. Internet and support groups were least used. He also found that younger patients use health care professionals and certain forms of written information sources more than older patients.

In Nigeria, studies have focused on specific interest or user groups. Adimorah (1983) studied information needs of hairdressers, rural farmer, caterers, and custom officers in Imo State, Nigeria. Camble (1994) investigated the rural people of Borno State. Mabawonku (2004) studied information needs and use of artisans while Adetoro (2004) examined the pattern of information provision and needs among commercial motorcycle operators in Ogun State, Nigeria. These studies clearly highlighted the specific nature of the information needs of groups studied, their information seeking behavior, and how they utilise information sources.

Edem (1993) and Popoola (1996) investigated the information needs, seeking behaviour and use among journalists and civil servants respectively. While Popoola (1996) found that workers in the civil service use information obtained to solve problems which may be related to job performance or personal matters, Edem (1993) revealed that the greatest information need areas of journalists in Nigeria is in political activities and government affairs.

V. Research Methodology

1. Research Design

An ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study due to the fact that the manifestations of the independent variables had occurred.

2. Sample Population

The study population is PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode town, administered with anti-retroviral medications under the supervision of the government-owned State Hospital. The town Ijebu-Ode is the second most populous town in Ogun State, Nigeria. It lies on latitude 6° 47' N and longitude 3° 58' E. It is also the second largest urban centre in Ogun State (Ogunnowo, 2004). The Ijebu-Ode State Hospital coordinates the administration of anti-retroviral drugs to PLHIV through outlets manned by experienced nurses.

Hospital records show no definite number of registered PLHIV. However, the nurses in charge of this exercise in the various outlets estimated the population of PLHIV in the care at over four hundred (400).

3. Sample Procedure and Instrument

The negative circumstances associated with HIV infection in African settings made it difficult to collect information from PLHIV. The researchers therefore purposively targeted those PLHIV who came for anti-retroviral drugs, using the nurses themselves as research assistants.

The instrument used for the study is a questionnaire, which consists of two sections. Section A has six (6) items, which focused on the Bio-data of respondents. Section B

has three different Likert-type rating scales, which elicited information on self-concept, information needs, and information utilisation.

Four hundred (400) questionnaires were provided to the nurses. The duration of the questionnaire administration was six weeks.

4. Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument was subjected to validation by experts in Psychology and Information studies, who examined the instrument and made useful suggestions which improved the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was established through pre-testing. Using Cronbach Alpha test, a reliability value ($\alpha = 0.70$) was obtained for the scale on self-concept; ($\alpha = 0.72$) for information needs and ($\alpha = 0.73$) for the scale on information utilisation.

5. Data Analysis

Research questions 1 and 3 were analysed, using means and standard deviation while research question 2 was analysed with frequency count and percentage. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were handled with Pearson Product Moment correlation test while hypotheses 3 and 4 were analysed using t-test statistic.

VI. Results

Of the four hundred (400) questionnaires provided, the nurses successfully administered one hundred and sixty (160) questionnaires, that is, 40% of the total.

The results show that 113 (71%) of the respondents are female while 47(29%) are male. 30% of the respondents are age 30 years or younger. Those who were age 35 years or younger constitute 59.4%. Surprisingly, 31% of the respondents are 41 years and older, though 60% are 31 years and older. 54% are married, 46% are single, and 93% have post-secondary education.

Research Question 1: What is the level of self-concept among PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode?

The items measuring self-concept of PLHIV show high mean scores, indicating that the self-concept of the respondents is high. The highest mean score is ($\bar{X} = 4.41$; $SD = 0.61$) and the least is ($\bar{X} = 3.04$; $SD = 0.97$); and the cumulative mean score is ($\bar{X} = 41.78$; $SD = 4.54$).

Table 1: Rank order of self-concept measures for PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode

Rank	Items	\bar{X}	SD
1	I am confident that I will do well in examinations.	4.41	0.61
2	I can face difficulties in life.	4.17	0.83
3	I am proud of my life achievements.	4.13	1.03
4	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on equal footing with others.	4.04	0.82
5	I am reliable and dependable.	4.03	0.88
6	I have positive social attraction for others.	4.01	0.96
7	I am a submissive person.	3.97	1.01
8	Sometimes I allow people to do what I cannot really do.	3.73	1.19
9	It is not worth living in a world full of unfaithful people.	3.14	1.13
10	I am self-centred.	3.12	0.97
11	I always agree with mates on all issues.	3.04	0.97

n = 160 (\bar{X} = 41.78; SD = 4.54)

Research Question 2: What are the information needs of PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode?

The results of the respondents show very high percentage scores in all the information need areas. This indicates that the respondents have information needs in the areas that are crucial to their well-being and survival as humans. The highest score of 97.5% is on HIV/AIDS educational information. The percentage on the current affairs is 96.2%, politics and governmental information, 92.5%, and health information, 90%. The least percentage score of 71.2% is recorded for Government Policy information for PLHIV as well as Professional or Job related information.

Table II: Rank order of information needs of PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode

Rank	Information Needs Areas	Freq	%
1	HIV/AIDS Educational Information	156	97.5
2	Current Affairs	154	96.2
3	Political /Governmental Information	148	92.5
4	General Health Information	144	90
5	Social Services Information	142	89
6	Reproductive Health Information for PLHIV	134	84
7	Finance / Business Information	129	81
8	Information about Managing Stigmatization	128	80
9	HIV / AIDS Awareness and Eradication information	124	77.5
10	Networking Information for PLHIV	115	72
11	Professional / Job related information	114	71.2
12	Information on Government Policy for PLHIV	114	71.2
n = 160			

Research Question 3: What is the level of information sources utilisation by PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode?

There are high levels of information utilisation through Radio/Television (\bar{X} = 4.08; SD = 1.49); Newspaper/Magazines (\bar{X} =3.64; SD=1.38); Colleagues/Friends (\bar{X} =3.56;SD=1.25); Mosque/Churches (\bar{X} =3.29;SD=1.42); Billboard (\bar{X} =3.16;SD=1.71); and Bulletins/Handbills (\bar{X} =3.03;SD=1.57). Low levels of information utilisation is recorded unexpectedly for Libraries (\bar{X} =2.21;SD=1.44); Information centres (\bar{X} =2.37;SD=1.53); and the Internet (\bar{X} =2.44;SD=1.20).

Table III: Rank order of level of information sources utilisation by PLHIV

Rank	Information Source	\bar{X}	SD
1	Radio / Television	4.08	1.49
2	Newspapers / Magazines	3.64	1.38
3	Colleagues / Friends	3.56	1.25
4	Mosque / Churches	3.29	1.42
5	Billboards	3.16	1.71
6	Bulletins / Handbills	3.03	1.51
7	Posters	2.98	1.77
8	Lectures & Speeches	2.62	1.50
9	Online / CD-ROM Databases	2.52	1.51
10	Internet	2.44	1.20
11	Information Centres	2.37	1.53
12	Libraries	2.21	1.44
n = 160			

VII. Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and information utilisation among PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode.

The results of the study shows a correlation co-efficient value $r=-0.022$; $p>0.05$. This has validated the hypothesis.

Table IV: Relationship between self-concept and information utilization among PLHIV

Variables	N	\bar{X}	S.D	R	Sig.	Remark
Self-concept	160	41.78	4.54	-0.022	0.785	N.S
Information Utilisation	160	38.22	7.40			

Significant at 0.05 level

Decision: Not significant

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between information needs and information utilisation among PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode.

The results of the study reveal the correlation co-efficient value $r=0.052$ and a significant value 0.514 at 0.05 level of significance, which has validated the hypothesis.

Table V: Relationship between information needs and information utilisation among PLHIV

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	R	Sig.	Remark
Information Needs	160	39.71	5.47	0.052	0.514	N.S.
Information Utilization	160	38.22	7.40			

Significant at 0.05 level

Decision: Not significant

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the self-concept of PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode based on gender.

The results of the study show that T-value is -2.406, df is 158, and significant value of 0.017 at 0.05 level (i.e., $T=-2.406$). Therefore, $df=158$; $p<0.05$. The hypothesis is therefore invalidated. The female respondents have higher self-concept ($\bar{X} =42.33$; $SD=4.60$) than the male respondents ($\bar{X} =40.46$; $SD=4.13$).

Table VI: t-test comparison of the self-concept of PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	T	Sig.	Remark
Male	47	40.46	4.13	158	-2.406	0.017	S
Female	113	42.33	4.60				

Significant at 0.05 level

Decision: Significant

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the level of information utilisation of PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode based on gender.

The results of the study showed that T-value is 1.349 and significant value is 0.179. Therefore, $t=1.349$; $df=158$; $p>0.05$, which has validated the hypothesis.

Table VII: t-test comparison of information utilization among PLHIV based on gender

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	T	Sig.	Remark
Male	47	39.44	8.70	158	1.349	0.179	N.S.
Female	113	37.71	6.77				

Significant at 0.05 level

Decision: Not significant

VIII. Findings and Discussions

71% of the respondents are females. This is consistent with gender distribution of HIV positive persons in Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, women constitute the fastest growing segment of the HIV/AIDS population all over the world (UN, 2002; Bammeke, 2002). The reasons for this especially in Africa could be social and cultural factors as well as gender inequality. The respondents are educated, which indicates a growing HIV prevalence rate among the educated people. The majority of the respondents are well above age of thirty (30).

The study found that PLHIV in Ijebu-Ode have high level of self-concept. This suggests that counseling and rehabilitation initiatives seemed to have worked in terms of their perception and assessment of the self. It also indicates that they are positive about their "past selves" and "future selves", and indeed their "possible selves".

PLHIV in this study show excellent information needs in the relevant areas. The study presents very high and positive percentage scores in all the information need areas. This indicates that the population of HIV infected persons in Ijebu-Ode is informed. This finding is consistent with their level of education. It corroborates Scheiber, Schneemann Wischer (1998) and Ankem (2006), who investigated information needs and use of cancer patients.

The study also revealed that PLHIV have a high level of information utilisation via sources such as Radio/Television, Newspaper/Magazines, Colleagues/Friends, Mosques/Churches, Billboards and Bulletins. But regrettably, it also showed low information utilisation levels through libraries, information centres, and the Internet. This is inconsistent with their level of education. This finding suggests that PLHIV under study may be socially withdrawn and thus are constrained from visiting libraries, information centres or perhaps cybercafes. Consequently, they sit at home and seek information from Newspaper, Radio, Television, and Religious homes, and from close friends.

The study found no significant relationship between self-concept and information utilisation among PLHIV. Invariably, their high level of self-concept shows no association with their information utilisation. This finding is incongruous with Purkey (1970) in his study of self-concept and academic achievement. A possible explanation of this finding is that though their level of self-concept is high, their information utilisation did not lend support.

In the same vein, the study showed that there is no significant relationship between information needs and information utilisation among PLHIV. This means that the respondents' information needs did not correlate with information utilisation. The importance of this finding is that the information utilised by PLHIV via some sources is not related to their actual information needs. In other words, information utilised may not be in the area of their information needs. This is actually startling, given the fact that the study has earlier revealed the same respondents as having relevant information needs. This could be due to the discrepancy earlier revealed with regards to sources of information utilization by the respondents, which showed low utilisation levels for libraries, information centres, and the Internet. This study corroborates Ankem (2006).

There is a significant difference in the self-concept of the respondents based on gender. The study showed that the female respondents have higher self-concept assessment of themselves than the males. This suggests that the female among PLHIV are quicker in realising their condition than the male. It also indicates that the female gender may be better prepared in terms of self-assessment towards their future goals and possibilities for success than their male counterparts.

The study also showed that gender was not a factor with regards to the respondents' level of information utilisation. There is no significant difference in the information utilisation and indeed information sources utilised by the male or females. The finding suggests that both genders tend towards low utilisation of information from libraries, information centres, and the Internet, and high use of Radio/Television, Newspaper/Magazines, Religious homes, etc. for information. Though they have the relevant information needs, the sources through which they seek needed information should be improved upon to include the aforementioned credible sources of information.

IX. Conclusion and Recommendations

Information utilisation by PLHIV under study needs improvement, especially with regard to information sources. Their high level of self-concept and true information needs are a successful story for HIV/AIDS prevention advocacy in Nigeria. Information utilisation by PLHIV is not positively related to either their self-concept or information needs. In other words, adequate use of information is not always contingent upon intrinsic variables. Female PLHIV have a better self-assessment, though information utilisation levels are the same for both genders. In a nutshell,

HIV/AIDS campaigns can be favourably influential in helping PLHIV to have a positive self-concept, which in turn propels them towards finding their true information needs. Nonetheless, this is not a guarantee for an entirely positive use of information from all credible sources.

It is, therefore, recommended that all those involved in HIV/AIDS advocacy, counseling, and rehabilitation should intensify their efforts in order to maintain the level of self-concept and the complementary information needs among PLHIV. HIV/AIDS advocacy must address the need for PLHIV to increase their utilisation of information in libraries, information centres, the Internet, and other reliable sources. This would adequately complement their self-concept and information needs.

Environmentally stimulating and other external factors should be explored as a way to improve upon information utilisation from dependable sources.

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Submitted to CLIEJ on 24 January 2010.

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Adetoro, Niran; Oyefuga, A. B.; & Simisaye, A. O. (2010). Persons with HIV in Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Self-concept and information needs. *Chinese Librarianship: an International Electronic Journal*, 29. URL: <http://www.iclc.us/cliej/cl29AOS.pdf>
