
Title: Informationsstrategier och yrkesidentiteter – en studie av sjuksköterskors relation till fackinformation vid arbetsplatsen (Information strategies and occupational identities – a study of nurses' relation to professional information in working life)

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This thesis explores nurses' relation to professional information at the workplace. The aim of the thesis is to reach a deeper understanding of social significances of professional information in occupational life. This is accomplished by making visible the symbolic values of professional information, through which professional interests, power relations, and occupational identities can be created, sustained and altered. The tool for these activities is information strategies conducted both at an individual and an occupational level, in relation to the individual's own occupation as well as to the surrounding society.

The metatheoretical point of departure is taken from an epistemological position that emphasises the social character of knowledge. Three theoretical perspectives are introduced: library and information science, sociocultural theory, and theory of professions. The three perspectives create an interpretative framework for a special interest in the social aspects of professional information. The main research data consists of 56 unstructured interviews with 20 specialist nurses from anaesthesia, operation and intensive care undertaken at their respective workplaces. The analytical focus is on the relation between the nurses' accounts of their information seeking and use and the sociocultural context these accounts are created within. The interviews are supplemented with a literature study that focuses on ways of regarding professional information as expressed within the profession. These are analysed in relation to changes and development within the profession's knowledge domain over time. Furthermore, field notes are used to describe the local context of the participants.

The results show that professional information and the meaning attached to nurses' information seeking and use can be regarded as part of their professional project. This information strategy, carried out at the occupational level, has contributed to the creation of a new occupational identity of nursing. Nurses' information needs, seeking and use can be seen as inherent in this identity, but its norms and values have had difficulties in gaining ground in medically dominated work places. A methodological conclusion is that the participants' accounts of information seeking and use to some extent can be interpreted as a way for them to demonstrate that they master the new occupational identity. The results also show how nurses that have appropriated the new occupational identity often describe their seeking and use of professional information as information strategies used for influencing power relations at the work place. Furthermore, participants have developed information strategies to navigate between the medically dominated workplace community and the nursing dominated occupational community when they make relevance judgements of professional information.

Key words: Information Seeking and Use, Professional Information, Information Strategies, Occupational Identity, Nursing, Nurses, Qualitative Research, Sociocultural Theory, Library and Information Science, Theory of Professions
