

Psychological Factors Associated with Information Seeking Behaviour among Library Users

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***Abstract** - The present article deals with the psychological factors associated with the information seeking behaviour of library users. The library services are improved as per the needs of the users. The understanding of various psychological traits associated with information seeking would be beneficial for development and improvement of existing library services.*

Keyword: Psychology, Information Seeking Behaviour, User Studies, Psychological Factors

Introduction

It is a well known saying that 'Knowledge is power' and knowledge is gained through information. The Latin word 'Information means' to give from to mind, 'instruct' as per Webster's Dictionary. Chen & Herson (1982) defined information as "all knowledge, ideas, facts, data and imaginative work of mind which are communicated formally or/ informally in any format". Information about the things around us is the vital sources for surviving. Taylor (1968) introduced the concept of 'Information Need' as a personal, psychological expressible/inexpressible, unclear and unconscious condition. A gap in knowledge triggers the process of information Seeking. Information Seeking is a purposive process in which an individual seek info. In order to satisfy some goal (Wilson, 2000). It is a dynamic & changeable process and it depends on contextual and individual factors. It is vital to understand psychological processes to understand information Seeking behaviour.

In order to adapt to changes in this rapid growing society, the individuals must have a grown capacity to handle information. Different traits of an individual are associated with information Seeking behaviour the decision of seeking, information is dependent on various psychological factors like Motivation, Thinking, Perception, Memory. Interest, Cognitive Schemes, Emotions and Personality traits. The aim of this article is to being various psychological traits associated with library users information seeking behaviour under one umbrella. Many Psychological Traits are associated with the process of seeking information. First factor is motivation which can be either of cognitive or emotional origin. The individuals must perceive the situation or Information Seeking process to be rewarding or himself competent enough to actually seek into. (Wilson, 1991) Interest influence the Information Seeking behavior of the individual (Limberg1998). Humans tend to seek more Information about the topic which interest them the most.

Perception of estimating the knowledge creates discrepancies in Information Seeking behavior. A tendency to overestimate knowledge leads to reduction in Information Seeking behaviour (Radecki & Faccard, 1995) The Style of cognitive processing of Information is another Psychological trial associated with Information Seeking behaviour. Individual with

Holistic style are more explorative in information Seeking than their serialist counterparts. (Ford et al. 2002)

Familiarity, Matching information (Ingwerson, 1982) and positive attitudes like self-confidence are the positive psychological aspects of Information Seeking. A lot of negative psychological traits are also associated with Information Seeking behaviour. The cognitive uncertainty aspects like unfamiliar situations, lack of technical skills may give rise to pessimism and insecurity (Wilson et. al. 2002).

Frustration, impatience, information overload & anxiety are the emotional aspects that affect information seeking behaviour. Understanding of personality traits of info. Seekers are considered to be very crucial in understanding the IS behaviour of library users. Many quantitative studies and researches have been conducted in order to establish the relationship of personality traits and information Seeking behaviour.

Personality is the system of those psychophysical structures of an individual that determine its unique character and thought (Allport, 1953). The Personality structure is more or less stable and predictable over time. The five Factor Model (McCrae & John, 1992) is a well established test and almost covers one or more measures of all the personality tests. Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are the five factors of five factor model. The high score on Neuroticism trait suggested negative emotionality may act as an impediment and may cause insecurity and anxiety (Ford et. al. 2011) It has negative correlation with Information Seeking behaviour (Nahl, 2001).

Extraversion trait reflected enthusiastic, active & confident approach towards information seeking behaviour (Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 1998). However, (McCown & Johnson, 1991) found that extravert students devote more time to social activities than in IS.

On openness to experience dimension, it was found that people who are intellectually curious and the higher their interest, more profound is the need for Information Seeking (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Dunn, 1986) individuals with high score on openness to experience dimension showed signs of curious, creative unconventional and imaginative. They hunt for more source of information Hence more seekers. The fourth factor competitiveness has a dual impact on IS behaviour if individual are impatient by nature it would act as a psychological barrier in information Seeking Behaviour (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Conscientious individuals work hard in order to gain relevant information. The determination and strong will along with conscientiousness leads to more info. Seeking (Kernan & Mojena, 1973, Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The present paper laid an emphasis on psychological mechanisms associated which influence IS among library users. The awareness of the profound differences in ways of Information Seeking it is clearly stated the library usage not only depends on library environment but the adaptation of users to search procedures. The search systems and information Services may be improved further better on account of Information Psychological differences.

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