

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR: A SURVEY OF LITERATURE**

**Erratul Shela Eshak**

Faculty of Business Management,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia

**Siti Nurul Akma Ahmad**

Faculty of Business Management,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia

**Wan Nor Syazana Wan Hashim**

Faculty of Business Management,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia

*Corresponding Author's Email: [sitinu8498@uitm.edu.my](mailto:sitinu8498@uitm.edu.my)*

### ***Article history:***

*Received* : 22 Julai 2022

*Accepted* : 17 Oktober 2022

*Published* : 21 Oktober 2022

### **ABSTRACT**

Challenges in information delivery and gaps in knowledge contribute to effective information delivery of either in an academic institution or any other sectors. Seeking information behaviour can help to understand and manage daily operational issues and engage in effectiveness of information delivery. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the influences that contribute to information-seeking behaviour. The current study involves a reviewed research articles which were gathered from selected Online Databases from the year 2014 to 2022. It was observed that there are various factor influences information seeking behaviour. The identified influencing factors such as innovative behaviour, information need, information sources and personality traits. This paper also helps to understand the conceptual knowledge of information seeking behaviour and its affecting factors in various sector. The debate about factor influences information seeking behaviour is still at its beginnings and it is suggested to promote further investigation on the determinants of such behaviour. In this scenario, we have explored the possible influencing factors affecting information seeking behaviour, which today is a crucial component of successful information literacy skills.

**Keywords:** Information-Seeking Behaviour, Innovative Behaviour, Personality Traits, Information Literacy

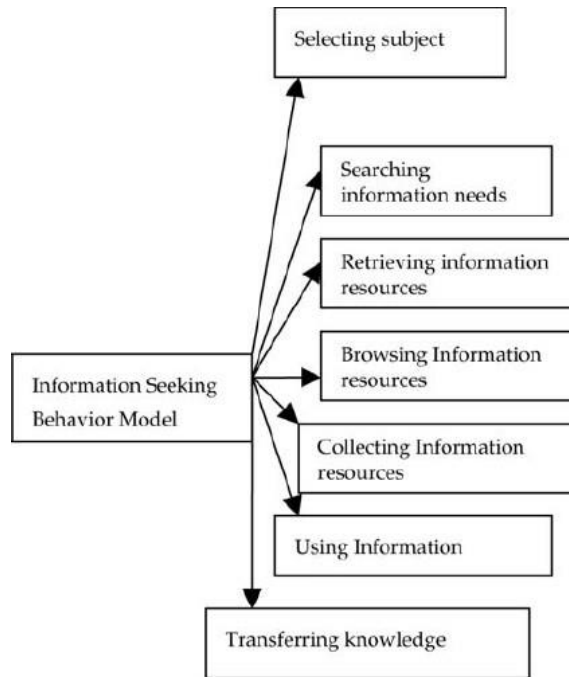
## **INTRODUCTION**

Information-seeking behavior is important for providing a holistic view of information behavior (Heinström, 2005). Reliance on electronic materials for supporting information-seeking activities has increased an ability to process such information varies between individuals (Weiler, 2005). Added by (Zhuoran et al., 2021) information-seeking is one of the most important proactive behaviors that new-comers can use to reduce uncertainty about how to complete tasks efficiently and productively in new environments. Furthermore, Maslinda & Juhana (2013) added that the growth of information technology has made a positive impact on Web usage in searching for information. Furthermore, information seeking depends on the individual's personality and situational requirements that are determined by the access to information and the validity of the information sources (Sirikul et al., 2016).

Previous researchers have developed a few model related to information seeking behaviour studies. Some of the models are Information Search Process Model, Ellis's Behavioural Model of Information Behaviour and Wilson's Model of Information Behaviour. Information Search Process Model is a six stages model by Kuhlthau which includes feelings, thoughts and actions attributes into the stages of the model. Unlike Information Search Process Model, Ellis's Behavioural Model focuses on six characteristics for seeking information. The six features of Ellis's Behavioural Model are called starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting. Those characteristics provide a basis for the design of information retrieval system. Several elements in Wilson's Model of Information Behaviour are not present in Information Search Process Model and Ellis's Behavioural Model. Wilson's Model of Information Behaviour includes stress/coping, risk reward and social learning theories as activating mechanism that motivates an individual to search for information. (Maslinda & Juhana, 2013)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The review of literature has been organized to observe the factors influencing information-seeking behaviour and the concept or definition of information seeking behaviour. Based on the reviews, few information seeking behaviours models have been observed in the study. One of the models include the information seeking behaviour model of academic staff in Iran's university as presented in the following figure. This model covers selecting subject, searching information needs, retrieving information resources, browsing information resources and to name a few as the basic elements in information seeking behaviour model.



**Figure 1:** Information-Seeking Behavior Model of Academic Staff in Universities of Medical Sciences in Iran

Source: Mozhdeh Salajegheh and Zouhayr Hayati. Modelling Information-Seeking Behaviour Patterns of Iranian Medical School Academic Staff. *Libri*, 59, 290-307

## DEFINITION OF INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

In general, information-seeking behaviour could be defined as a behaviour which comprises of information needs as well as information search, selection and use of information relevant to the identified needs. (Maslinda & Juhana, 2013). While (Assefa &

Stansbury, 2018) defined information seeking is an essential facet of day-to-day life that often arises in the broaderscope of personal and professional lives. People seek and use information to meet variousneeds. The term “information need” is often understood as an individual or group’s desire to locateand obtain information to satisfy a conscious and unconscious need (Owusu & Kankam, 2019) added that.

**Table 1:** Definition and Concept of information seeking behaviour from various sources

Researcher	Definition
Hosam (2017)	The process of information seeking is a cognitive activity that involves long-term and short-term memory, background knowledge, spatial cognition, and mental models, to name a few critical factors
Wilson (2000)	Information-seeking behavior is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy a goal
Maslinda (2013)	Information seeking behaviour could be defined as a behaviour which comprises of information needs as well as information search, selection and use of information relevant to the identified needs.
Williamson (2008)	Information seeking behaviour includes information needs, the use of information sources to retrieve information and ends with the use of the retrieved information
Majid (2000)	Set of actions such as information needs identification, searching for information, selecting information and using the retrieved information to satisfy the information needs identified earlier.

## FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Recent study found that risk perceptions and attitudes regarding online health information are critical factor to online health information seeking behaviour particularly in health-condition context (Link et al., 2021). Curiosity, which has been defined as a motivating condition that encourages exploration and the seeking of information in order to reduce uncertainty, has been found in previous studies to be a contributing factor to the information seeking behavior (Kidd & Hayden, 2015). While, Charpentier et al. (2018) discovered that when the outcome was most unknown, people were more likely to seek out information.

In the era of COVID-19 pandemic, trust issues and satisfaction with the government and health authority's responses to a COVID-19 pandemic result in varied information seeking (Diers- Lawson et al., 2021). Besides, the advancements in technology have enhanced the availability of information and its creation process. This has resulted in the development of vast information sources, particularly in digital format. Although printed sources of information remain important, electronic sources of information offer various advantages,

such as faster access to information when compared to print sources (Owusu & Kankam, 2019). In addition to that, Liu and Yang (2004) found a number of factors that affect access to and use of information sources. These factors are: (1) support for physical information sources, (2) support for online information sources, (3) matching of learning styles, and (4) convenience of location and time.

**Table 2:** Factors contribute to information seeking behaviour

<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Factors</b>
Link et al., (2021)	Attitudes toward seeking health information online and risk perceptions
Kidd & Hayden (2015)	Curiosity
Charpentier et al. (2018)	Uncertainty
Diers-Lawson et al., (2021)	High levels of trust and satisfaction in the government
Komissarov & Murray (2016)	Convenience
Owusu & Kankam 2019	Information sources

## **IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY**

Efficient information seeking, whether through an online domain or a physical platform, can benefit from these reviews, as the discovered predictors in information seeking behaviour allow for a more precise understanding of effective information delivery. However, as suggested by Link et al. (2021) which the focus of their study is on the health contexts, information providers should be informed that online platforms may fail to reach out to relevant elements of the target audience because only individuals with higher self-efficacy are likely to access online information. Additional approaches beyond the online services are thus recommended to avoid information underserving of individuals who do not believe in their abilities to search and acquire online information. Thus, this review provides a clear understanding on the influencing factors that lead to increase individual information seeking behaviour which will benefit to the information provider.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To summarise, numerous variables have been recognised as contributing factors to information seeking behaviour, including curiosity, uncertainty, high levels of trust and satisfaction in the government, convenience, and to name a few. Based on the reviews, this study concluded that there is plethora of research in identifying the contributing factors of information seeking behaviour. Even most of the study are focusing on the health context with health information seeking behaviour is the most being studied, however, the development of this research has also been found in educational institution context and has been extended on other sector as well.

## REFERENCES

- Assefa, S., & Stansbury, M. (2018). Information seeking behavior of the poor: the study of parents' school choice decisions. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, 67(6–7), 377–395. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GKMC-12-2017-0111>
- Charpentier C. J., Bromberg-Martin, E. S. & Sharot T. (2018). Valuation of knowledge and ignorance in mesolimbic reward circuitry. *PNAS*. 115(31): Pp. E7255–64.
- Diers-Lawson A, Johnson S, Clayton T, Kimoto R, Tran B. X., Nguyen L. H. & Park, K. (2021). Pandemic Communication: Information Seeking, Evaluation, and Self-Protective Behaviors in Vietnam and the Republic of Korea. *Frontier in Communication*. 6:731979.
- Different Health Statuses: German Representative Cross-sectional Survey. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*. 23(12). Pp. 1-14.
- Heinström, J. (2000). The impact of personality and approaches to learning on information behaviour. *Information research*, 5(3).
- Hosam, A.S, Atef, E & Husameddin, D. (2017). The Impact of Personality Traits on Users' Information-Seeking Behavior. *Information Processing and Management*, 53, 237-247.
- Kidd C & Hayden BY. (2015). The psychology and neuroscience of curiosity. *Neuron*. 88(3):449–60.
- Komissarov, S & Murray, J. (2016). Factors that influence undergraduate information-seeking behaviour and opportunities for student success. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 42, 423-429.
- Link, E., Baumann, E. & Klimmt, C. (2021). Explaining Online Information Seeking Behaviors in People With
- Liu, Z. and Yang, Z.Y. (2004), "Factors influencing distance-education graduate students' use of information sources: a user study", *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 24-35, doi:10.1016/j.jal.2003.11.005.
- Majid, S., & Kassim, G. M. (2000). Information-seeking behaviour of international Islamic University Malaysia law faculty members. *Malaysian Journal of Library & information science*, 5(2), 1-17.

- Maslinda, M.N & Juhana, S. (2013). Information seeking behavior factors: A measurement model. 3rd International Conference on Research and Innovation in Information Systems. Maslinda, M.N & Juhana,S. (2013). Information Seeking Behaviour Factors: A measurement Model. International Conference on Research and Innovation in Information Systems (ICRIIS) pp. 168-173. doi: 10.1109/ICRIIS.2013.6716703.
- Mozhdeh Salajegheh and Zouhayr Hayati. Modelling Information-Seeking Behaviour Patterns of Iranian Medical School Academic Staff. *Libri*, 59, 290-307
- Owusu, Charlotte & Philip Kwaku Kankam 2019) Information Seeking Behavior. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, 69(4/5), 205-220.
- Sirikul, P., Sirikul, P., Dorner, D. and Dorner, D. (2016),“Thai immigrants’ information seeking behaviour and perception of the public library’s role during the settlement process”,*Library Review*, Vol. 65 Nos 8/9, pp. 535-548.
- Weiler, A. (2005). Information-seeking behavior in Generation Y students: Motivation, critical thinking, and learning theory. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 31(1), 46-53.
- Williamson, K., Bernath, V., Wright, S., & Sullivan, J. (2008). Research students in the electronic age: Impacts of changing information behavior on information literacy needs. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 1(2), 4.
- Wilson, T. D. (2000). Human information behavior. *Informing science*, 3(2), 49-56.
- Zhuoran, Z., Xiang, Y., Shuai, Y., Yingxing, D., & Chao, G. (2021). Big Five Personality Influences Trajectories of Information Seeking Behavior. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 173.