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EVERYDAY INFORMATION PRACTICES OF PAKISTANI URBAN TEENS: A WORK IN PROGRESS
PAPER

Abstract

In this study everyday information practices of Pakistani urban teens will be analyzed by using pragmatism worldview and by applying sequential explanatory mixed method research. It explores the information practice of urban teens along with perceived usefulness of acquired information to fulfill their information needs. The theoretical framework of this proposed study will be based upon the “information practice model”, “information source horizon” and “information pathways”. In Pakistan many studies have been carried out on information need and seeking behavior of diverse groups, but not a single study has been done so far on everyday information practices of Pakistani urban teens. This research is a humble endeavor to understand the issues of Pakistani teens that may lead to design systems for fulfilling their everyday life information needs. Results of this study will be helpful for academicians to understand Pakistani teens’ information practices and policy makers to introduce diverse information related services in their schools and curricula along with the development of information literacy programs.

Key words: Information practice, Teen’s everyday Life, Information use, Information sharing.

Introduction

Everyday life information practice is an alternative term of everyday life information seeking and everyday life information behavior. The term everyday life information seeking (ELIS) was first coined by Savolainen (1995) in the field of library and information science. According to Savolainen (2007) the growing popularity of the concept of information seeking behavior does not mean that all the researchers accept this phrase without reservation. Even though information behavior is a popular phrase, the reflective discourse on information behavior has remained fragmentary, and the concept is largely used in an unreflective fashion. “These concepts are called (alternative) umbrella concepts referring to the ways in which people articulate their need of information or seek, use, share and manage information” (Savolainen, personal communication, June 08, 2018).

In general, information behavior may be conceptualized as including “how people need, seek, mange, give and use information in different context” (Pettigrew, Fidel & Bruce, 2001, p.44). Information practice approach has its distinctive characteristic and represents “a more sociologically and contextually oriented line of research.” (Talja, 2005, p.123). Tuominen, Talja, Sanna and Savolainen (2005) highlighted that from the constructionist perspective, the concept of information practice is preferred over information behavior, since “the former assumes that the processes of information seeking and use are constituted socially and dialogically, rather than based on motives of individual actors. All human practices are social and they originate from interactions between the members of community” (p.328). The researcher of this study prefers the concept of information practice to the

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concept of information behavior due to its social and contextual nature and takes the phenomena of information practice as a starting point. In this study, exploring the everyday life information practices of urban teens, one of the important communities of the Pakistani society, the teens, has been selected for research.

Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective of this study is to explore the everyday life information practices of urban teens through mixed method research. On the basis of the research objectives, following research question are formed.

1. How do Pakistani urban teens students seek, use and share their everyday life information?
2. What is the urban teens' perceived usefulness of the acquired information to fulfill their everyday information needs?
3. What are the relationships between the urban teens' demographics (age, gender, grade, and number of siblings) and their everyday information practices?
4. What challenges do urban teens have to face in seeking, using and sharing information?
5. How do urban teens life-world experience on individual, social, perceptual, and practical level regarding their information practices?

Problem Statement

The teens are labeled as generation Y, net generation, google generation and millennials as they grew up with technologies and deal with information differently from their elders. Literature also established that this generation is confident, strongly oriented toward teamwork, and digitally literate (Gibbins, 2007; Howe & Strauss, 2000).

However, in the perspective of developing countries like Pakistan, some of the areas and aspects of information seeking behavior have been focused, but no literature is available on everyday information practices of any target group. Everyday Information Practices (EIP) of Pakistani urban teens has not yet been explored which is an important area of information behavior research. It is, therefore, imperative to explore the teens' everyday information practices, their actual life-world experience and the barriers they face.

Literature Review

To understand the background and the concepts of this study, relevant literature is searched and reviewed. Special focus is on the background behind the conceptual frameworks for this research such as information Seeking (IS), Information use (IU), and Information sharing (ISH). Various sources were searched like Books, thesis, dissertations, conference papers and databases like Google Scholar, Information Science and Technology Abstract, ProQuest etc.

The literature review is divided into the following sections:

- Information Seeking
- Information use
- Information sharing

Information Seeking:

When we discuss the term everyday information practices, the first question which comes in our minds is, what the exact meaning of everyday information practices are or what everyday information seeking, using and sharing is and when it occurs? Beheshti and Andrew (2013) discussed that 'everyday life information seeking (*ELIS*)' occurs on daily basis. Savolainen (2010) described, "The key word is everyday life, which refers to a set of attributes characterizing relatively stable and recurrent qualities of both work and free time activities. The key attributes of everyday life are familiar, ordinary, and routine. Mai (2016) mentioned *ELIS* is a departure from the majority of information behavior research that tends to focus on work task and occupations.

The base of *ELIS* is Bourdieu's (1984) concept of "*Habitus*" (Which are habits and way of life) and Savolainen's own concept of "*Mastery of life*". Two core concepts were introduced by Savolainen (1995) in his *ELIS* Framework known as "*Way of life*" and "*Mastery of life*". These concepts were used to describe the

information activities of individual's life and how they made the choices for themselves in daily life. Dankasa (2015) explains that ELIS model is based on seeking orienting information and problem-solving (practical) information.

Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2005) carried out their research for ELIS for the young adults of urban and they presumed that the habits of young adults in their everyday life information seeking are determined by their social lives. They focused on three-research question, types of ELIS, what media they use and the people sources they use. A sample size of 27 students between the ages of 14 to 17 was taken up from Philadelphia. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell concluded that ELIS for teens' is gathering and processing of information to facilitate the teen to adulthood maturation process. The interesting thing they reported that teenagers do not use the libraries as a preferable source, as they do not perceive libraries helpful for ELIS. Overall this study shows as stated by their authors "the necessity of tying youth information-seeking research to developmental theory" Spink and Cole (2001) stated in their study that as anyone seeks information with any goal, in the same way ELIS "is fluid depending on the motivation, education, and other characteristics of the multitude of ordinary people, seeking information for a multitude of aspects of everyday life" (p. 301). They also mentioned that it is not compulsory that ELIS will be carried out to fill a gap but as a mastery of life. Moreover, they stated that the ELIS studies should also focus on cultures and situations and should develop those models and theories that will be applicable for such situations. Dankasa (2015) emphasized the need to understand ELIS through the lens of a variety of cultural and social situations. Given (2002) conducted in-depth qualitative interviews to explore the information seeking behavior of students and to know about the overlapping concept of work and non-work. The author has mentioned that "information behaviors cannot be purely defined by the situation, but must also take account of other areas of individual's lives that help to inform situational context" (p 28). This statement supports the findings of Agosto and Hughes-Hassel (2005). They introduced the typology and reported that friends and families are the preferred ELIS sources.

Meyers, Fisher, and Marcoux (2009) did their research to know the everyday life information behavior of tweens and their main focus was why people ask other people for everyday information (p. 307). These authors tried the six principles, which were introduced, by Harris and Dewdney (1994) to examine the ELIS of tweens and discovered that adults mostly search for the information to know about the success of others. Laplante (2010) inquired the ELIS behavior of young adults in relation to music. In depth semi structured interviews of 15 young adults were done whose age ranged from 18 to 29. The results of this study show that the young adults prefer the informal sources such as family and friends for their everyday life information needs. Music industry and librarians were not their preferred sources.

Kari and Savolainen (2003) proposed a model (*Contextual model of information seeking on the web*) in relation to web searching. They explained that ELIS on WWW can be investigated by looking into the participants 'life, their situations, their information actions, sources and information seeking behaviors with the use of world wide web. Williamson, Qayyum, Hider, and Liu (2012) conducted a qualitative in depth study in an Australian University to explore how the media support the students' ELIS. They found that the print media, TV, local news channels and radio were their most used sources. It was also reported that print media is still in use by the young people and they do not go for Facebook and other social networking sites. This study also revealed that ELIS is not specific to sources. Smith (2012) also reported the same information.

ELIS is depended on culture and social values. Yadamsuren (2009) investigated the incidental exposure to online news in everyday life information seeking. Author found that online news reading behavior was not only an individual process, it was also affected by society, culture, and other people. Through this study the assertions of Savolainen (1995), Spink and Cole (2001) and Smith (2012) were also confirmed that the culture have an important and significant role in everyday life information seeking. Sin and Kim (2013) explored that international students wanted to get information about finance, health and the information about their countries. McKenzie (2003) proposed a model about information practices that was based on information seeking of everyday life. This model also emphasized the importance to non-active information seeking along with active information seeking. For developing this model, the author enquired from the participants to highlight important events of their information seeking. There were four modes identified to make individual-in-context model which suggested for seeking information in everyday life people go through "*active seeking; active scanning; non-directed monitoring; and gaining information by proxy*".

The information horizon concept is equally important in everyday life research. The same information horizon concept was compared by Dankasa (2015) to the small world as used by Chatman (1991) in the study *“Information use environment of religious professionals: A case study of the everyday life information seeking behavior of Catholic clergy in Northern Nigeria”*. In this study the Calergy was examined as a group to see what makes up their information horizon

Information Use

Dervin (2003) stated that the information seeking is purpose based and this purpose may be personal, social or academic and the humans will use the collected information in any case. Thinking will be required for meeting the needs and as Kuhlthau (2004) mentioned, thinking will occur throughout the search process and this thinking process will also indicate the information use. Todd, (2003, p. 40) adolescents are not “passive, robot-like processors of information; rather they are active creators of new knowledge” how do they construct and apprehend the knowledge is significant. Pertaining to this understanding that information use recommends to modify the structure of knowledge. Todd (1999) explored the information needs of teen aged girls about drug use. A cognitive structure of information use was identified. Todd further explored that girls used information for different purposes like for getting clear picture, for getting a changed picture, verifying and within picture for getting a position. He also addressed the role of community but the basic emphasis was not on this, the basic focus was on cognitive individuals within the framework of information seeking behavior. Gross (2006); Hirsh (1999); Large, et al., (1998) explored the information use through relevancy criteria and regarding their seeking results what judgment youth makes. These studies suggest that youth are able to make use of verity of criteria on relevance of information. Gross (2006, p.136) provided such example by describing that children aged 10 and above observed similarity in their information seeking and suggested that cognitive engagement “follows the Piagetian scheme” and moving towards age 11 they were capable of making relevancy judgments. Hirsh (1999) explained that youth used different ways to assess different area of relevance like novelty, peer interest and topicality and their personal knowledge grew with the adaption of their relevance criteria. Large, et al (1998) Suggested that youth are far better at relevancy judgments then the search strategies.

Information Sharing:

Information sharing is another behavior and varies culture to culture. The web environment has also changed the information sharing environment. Wilson (1981) was the first researchers who focused upon the information exchange and its role. He also introduced information sharing is multidimensional and this also varies from context to context. Pilorot (2012) was having views that information sharing is a predominant concept and is vague in its nature. It is, therefore, difficult to find out its activities and relevant issues. Wilson (2010) mentioned only few researchers worked on information sharing in library science field. These researchers reviewed the literature and stated that due to World Wide Web many new information sharing devices are introduced. Six hundred papers were reviewed by this researcher and he predicted many latest technologies like information portals, Wikis, cloud computing and google will increase the interest of researchers. Mohammed and Norman (2017) explored the millennial generation’s organizational information sharing practices through semi structured interviews, think aloud and observations. Peel and Rowley (2010) measured the information sharing attitudes of workers, working for children and young people’s organization. Information sharing attitudes of personal information sharing were measured. The results of this study showed the participants were well aware with the importance of information seeking and the problems in sharing information were also addressed. Lips and Eppel (2017) shared the information sharing behaviors, motivations, and conditions under which individuals share their personal information in their daily lives. Wei, Choy, Chew, and Yen (2012) explored a sample of undergraduate students of public and private Malaysian universities. They mentioned that students used to share the information in response of the questions asked by their peers. They also found the motivational factors behind the information sharing behavior and mentioned that the desire to help others and self- satisfactions are the main factors which motivates the students to share the information with others.

Theoretical Framework

This study will address three main constructs; Information seeking (IS), Information use (IU), and Information sharing (IS).

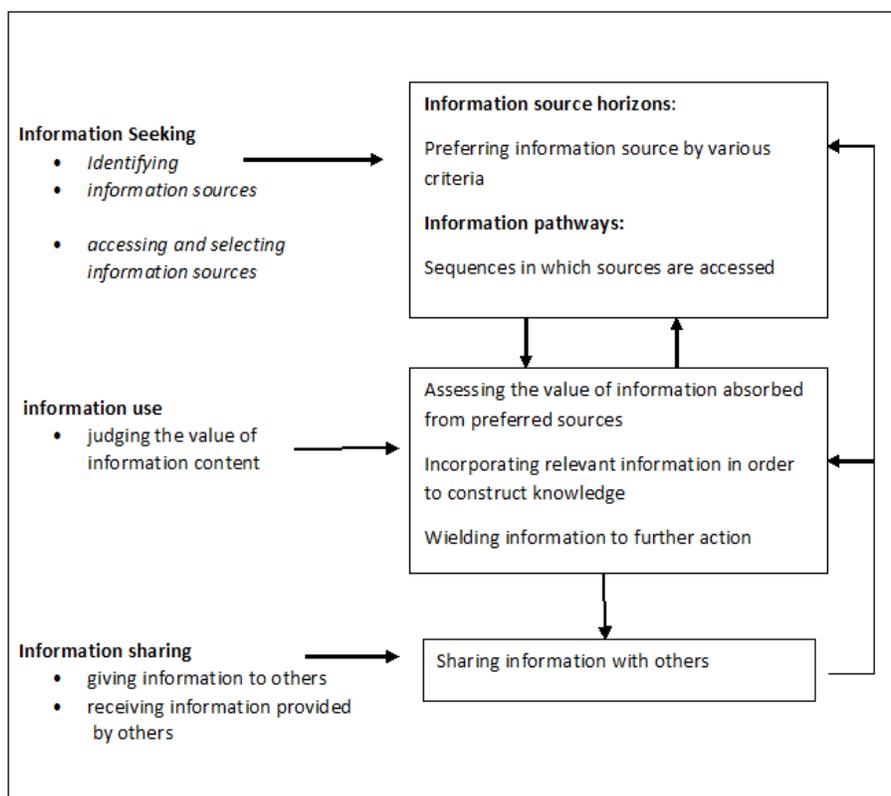


Figure.1 Major Components of everyday Information practices. (Savolainen, 2008, p.49)

The theoretical framework is based on the Model of Everyday Information Practices. (Savolainen, 2008, p. 65) The concept of ‘*information source horizon*’ will also be used for the constitution of everyday information practices. The concept of information source horizon was introduced by Sonnenwald (1999). She approaches information seeking as an activity that is located in specific context and situation and within a context and situation there is “*source horizon*”. The Information Horizons further identified the five information sources as follows: human, printed, networked, and organizational (Savolainen, 2008).

Savolainen (2008) discussed that “*information source horizons*” and “*information pathways*” are constitutive of the practice of information seeking (p.64). The concept of information source horizon originates from the study of Sonnenwald (1999) who mentioned that within a context there is an “*information horizon*” and we act accordingly. Further, she explained that information horizon is based upon variety of sources as libraries, colleagues, books, documents, information retrieval tools. Later, internet was also included in information source horizons (Savolainen & Kari, 2004) following three zones included:

“Zone 1= Most strongly preferred information source”

“Zone 2= Information sources of secondary importance”

“Zone3=Peripheral information sources”

Johnson (2003) proposed the concept of “*information fields*” this concept is a stem of the concept of “*information pathway*” which is formed by Johnson (2006) and his associate provides an effective approach to explain the information source horizon.

This proposed study will be based upon the “*information practice model*”, “*information source horizons*” and “*information pathways*” and theoretical framework of current study will be established on these three constructs.

Research Design and Methodology

The research design of this study will be based upon following sequential mixed method.

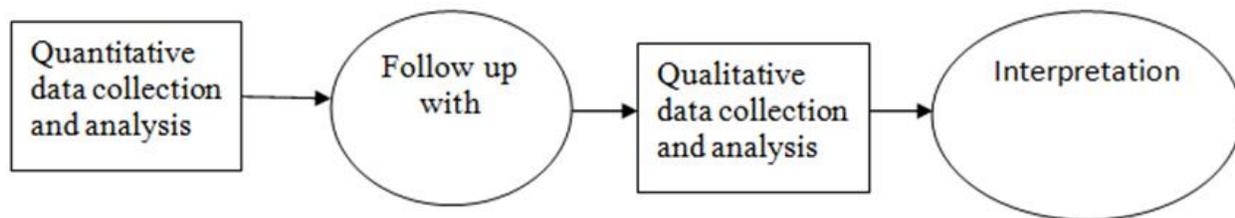


Figure 2. Visual Diagram of Sequential Explanatory Mixed method, (Creswell, 2014, p.220)

Total 1000 enrolled urban teens' students will be part of this study through convenient sampling. To meet the objective of the study, a questionnaire survey along with 10 interviews of teens students will be conducted. Survey instrument and interview guide is developed with the help of literature including "Information Seeking Self-regulation questionnaire (SRQ-IS)" and "Scale of knowledge sharing" (Yuen; Majid & Wey, 2011). Validity and reliability of questionnaire is also checked by expert opinion of National and International senior researchers. The questionnaire will be distributed to the students/urban teens with the permission of school principal. The collected data will be analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be applied for the data analysis. Interview technique will be used to answer the last question about urban teens' life-world experience. On the basis of the findings and patterns of the quantitative data, 10 urban teens will be further selected through convenient sampling for the detailed interview. After interview the collected data will be analyzed qualitatively and thematic analysis will be done.

Significance of the study

In Pakistan, many studies have carried out on information needs and seeking behavior of diverse groups, but there is no study on everyday information practices of teen students. This study is specifically designed to explore the ways through which Pakistani teens seek, use and share their everyday information practices. The results of this study will be helpful for academicians to understand Pakistani teens' information behaviors and policy makers to introduce diverse information related services in their schools and curricula along with the development of information literacy programs. This research would be a humble endeavor to understand the issues of everyday life information practices of Pakistani teens. The life experiences of the teens will also be explored which will further help in understanding their problems and finding their solutions.

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