Information Behavior of Lecturers’ at Universities in Hochiminh City, Vietnam

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Abstract - Since the 1990s, the term "information behavior" has been formed, derived primarily from the concept of "demand and use of information" since 1960. Information behavior is a matter of research in many fields such as psychology, information science, etc. This paper is based on the summary of a doctoral thesis submitted to the Hanoi University of Culture, Vietnam which aimed to provide the overall picture of lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city. Keywords: information behavior, lecturers, academic libraries, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, doctoral thesis, Hochiminh city.

Keywords: Information Behavior, Hochiminh City, Vietnam, User Studies, Information seeking.

INTRODUCTION

Educational quality of university is based on not only curriculum but quality of lecturers. The quality of lecturers’ is evaluated at quantity and qualification, in which include professional capacity, teaching capacity, capacity of scientific research, community service, professional ethics, experiences and other skills. Besides, each lecturer should recognize about their role and responsibility in university, as well as enhance their capacity in other to satisfy the university’ requirements.

There are many ways for lecturers to enhance their capacity, learn, research and serve community, etc... Among those activities, seeking information is considered as one of important activities with the aim of improving quality of the lecturers’ teaching, research. Moreover, the main role of lecturers is teaching, they are also responsible for participating research, applying new knowledge into practical activities, providing guides and directions for students who take part in those activities. In order to fulfill their mission, it requires for lecturers to interact with many information resources, various kinds of information, in which, academic library is considered as an very effective and useful information resource.

For lecturers, academic library have efficient and systematic storage of knowledge about academic fields, sciences to satisfy with teaching and research activities. It is also a place where provide lecturers with new and updated information, help them update their lectures. On the other hand, academic library also help lecturers conduct teaching methods of improving the self-learning and creative-thinking ability of students.

It could be clearly seen that, determing information need, information seeking behavior as well as information using and sharing behavior is influenced by various factors. Specially, in context of information technology, users’ information behavior in general, and lecturers’
information in particularly has prominent characteristics related to the changes of information technology, or their psychology is also related to their information seeking activities.

In field of library and information science, researching information behavior is understood basically as the research of the personal behaviors in need, seek, receive and use information. Those behaviors are discovered in the affecting context of psycholological factors, personal characteristics as well as social environment.

Based on results of observations about the lecturers’ information behavior, lecturers have tendencies of choosing various information resources such as their personal collections, colleagues, etc... Many lecturers have not considered the academic library as useful information resources for teaching and research activities. Almost lecturers have not spend much time for using library. It is shown that the role of library as well as academic library does not play important role in providing information with lecturers and impacting lecturers’ information behavior.

Therefore, recognizing and determining characteristics of lecturers’ information behavior and proposing some solutions for enhancing lecturers’ information behavior and information users is the main mission which the academic library must conduct. This requires academic librarian understand how the characteristics of lecturers are, what information-need-determining behavior and expectations of lecturers are, when information seeking and using behavior happen, or what factors impacting on lecturers’ information behavior are. Then, the academic library could recognize, forecast the tendencies of lecturers’ information behavior, provide information products and services with lecturers as well as conduct suitable solutions and support usefully lecturers’ information behavior. Besides, this also helps academic library develop strategy of library marketing.

Hochiminh city is area where has large number of universities, in which, all universities have academic libraries and information centres with the aim of supporting teaching and research activities. These are also basements for academic libraries to propose some specific solutions in enhancing the effectiveness of library as well as implementing the lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city in particularly and in Vietnam in generally.

With the above reasons, providing the overall view of lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city and suggesting the suitable solutions in order to enhancing their information behavior is very necessary in the context today. Therefore, “Researching lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city” is essential issue for the doctoral thesis.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of research lecturers’ information behavior is to propose some solutions of enhancing lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city. To get the purpose of the study, it should be conducted three following main objectives:

- Systematicalize the theory of information behavior, information behavior of lecturers
- Surveying lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city; Analyzing the factors impacting the lecturers’ information behavior, recognizing characteristics of lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city.
• Proposing the solutions for enhancing the lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Researching lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city (including six universities in Hochiminh city that present for six groups of field) from 2014 to 2017

METHODOLOGY

Methodology of this thesis is combination between research literature review, scientific works about users’ information behavior in general, lecturers in particularly. Besides, the thesis also use method practical research through social investigation to conduct the thesic. Then, the thesis also makes clearly the characteristics of lecturers’ information behavior and propose the solutions to enhance lecturers’ information behavior.

Research methods:

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<td>- Theory and practice about information behavior of information users and lecturers&lt;br&gt; - Proposing the further research</td>
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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research questions

RQ1. What are characteristics of lecturers’ information behavior and what are factors impacting on their information behavior?
RQ2. What should lecturers, universities, academic libraries do to implement the lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city?

Scientific hypothesis

Information behavior of lecturers at universities in Hochiminh city are affected by some different factors and their information behavior are not perfect because of many various causes.

It should be built a model of lecturers’ information behavior. Besides, based on that model, it ought to be implemented some solutions for realization of the model with the aim of making lecturers’ information behavior more perfect at universities in Hochiminh city.

VALUE OF THE STUDY

Scientific significance

- Make clearly contribution about theory of users’ information behavior such as concepts of information behavior, model of information behavior, factors impacting information behavior

- Theory of lectures’ information behavior would be applied for considering, identifying and evaluating overally the characteristics of lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Hochiminh city.
Practical significance

- Making contribution to the scientific basement for the leaders of the school or university in implementing the solution to improve the lecturers’ information behavior.

- This is reference for learning and teaching library and information science at universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information behavior has long been studied by many foreign scientists in many fields with the issues related to the concept of information behavior, the manifestations of information behavior, the study of factors influencing information behavior. Many scientists have studied the proposed information behavior models that describe the processes of information behavior such as the identification of information needs, the process of seeking information, using and sharing information. A number of typical research results on these issues are presented in the following categories.

Concepts of information behavior

Behavior is not only a physical activity, but also an interspersed process of cognitive and affective which guide someone decides in a certain time [10, p.2]. All behavior is described as individual effort to change from one state to another, or to maintain the present state [15, p.49]. Information behavior is a sub-discipline in the field of information science and is an interdisciplinary field that is approached from a variety of perspectives such as cognitive psychology, organization, communication, philosophy, anthropology, biology. The research on information behavior has typical tendencies.

With the cognitive approach to information behavior, the authors considered information behavior which focus on users, using information, transferring and exchanging information, satisfaction of information users [23, p.198] or the information need in daily life [26, p. 53]. In addition, information behavior is "the way people need, seek, provide and use information in different contexts, including workplaces and daily life" [19, p.44]. Information behavior is concerned with the study of information seeking behavior, discovery, organization and use of information [20, p. 258]; or simply "the way for people to access and process information" [2].

With the general approach that related to the cognitive needs of the users as well as related to the factors influencing the users in the process of using the information sources, the research indicated that: Who use information? How to use information, when, where and why? What information sources are used? What factors? [6, pp. 74-74].

Model of information behavior

Some theoretical research and models research of information behavior focus on the components of the information behavior model, which is the behavior that determines the needs of the user; information seeking behavior; information using and sharing. These factors are closely related. Each information behavior model shows different approaches including behavioral attitudes, cognitive-behavioral attitudes, cognitive-affective attitudes, and integrative perspectives.

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From a behavioral approach, Ellis's model [4] has eight main stages based on studies of social scientists, physicists, chemists, engineers, researchers in the factory. Then, Meho and Tibbo [15] also modified the model with adjustable flexibility in the stages of the Ellis model, covering four broad phases: lookup, access, processing, and termination.

From the cognitive point of view, Kuhlthau's model is considered to be the typical model for this approach. The author has researched and developed the general model of the process of searching information consists of 6 specific stages. This model emphasizes the active role of information users in the search process. In addition, Dervin is one of the authors of Dervin's Sense-Making. Some authors have also included specific analyzes that analyzed and introduced Dervin's model [3]. Chelton, Mary K. and Cool, Colleen [1] have developed an information retrieval model that includes seven stages: initialization, selection, exploration, presentation, collection, presentation and evaluation. This model describes the thoughts, actions, and general feelings of students in each stage of the process.

From a cognitive-behavioral perspective, the Johnson model [8] consists of seven components that are grouped into three main groups (pretendents, influence factor, and information seeking activity). However, this model is one-dimensional, does not reflect the loop between the activities and elements in the model.

From an integrated perspective, the authors have proposed and analyzed a number of models with different aspects of information behavior such as Wilson's model for information retrieval [10, p.553] and information behavior [25, tr. 253]. T.D. Wilson (1999) presents a brief outline of the information seeking model and other aspects of the information behavior [10]. The author also points out the relationship between communication and information behavior with the process of searching information in general in the search system. In another study, the author presents the outlines of information search models and other aspects of HVT, which illustrate the relationship between communication and general information and information search and information retrieval in the search system [24, p.553].

In addition, a number of other models have been developed by Leckie GJ and others [12]. The model of information behavior is based on the linguistic analysis approach of information users who seeking for information [21].

**Contexts and factors influencing information behavior**

In the late 1990s and early 21st century, scientists expanded their perception of information behavior by combining the whole of the environment, including the natural, social, and technological environment in research into the human’s interaction with information. Many scientists research information behavior in a new way compared to traditional methods used for a long time. They argue that there is a need to understand the context in a broader sense and that more detailed, detailed and complete research is needed on specific cases and contexts in order to understand the ways in which people can receive, create or information processing.

The information behavior research was conducted in different groups of users. In the context of daily work, the results of the survey need to understand the reasons for information, the information seeking behavior of veterinarians from different sources. The author suggests some solutions such as developing information services; support information users in using information. In general, the purpose of the project is to assess the insight of the veterinarians’
information behavior in South Africa in order to recommend and develop appropriate information products and services [14].

In the context of the school, Eric M. Meyers, Karen E. Fisher and Elizabeth Marcoux [5, p.326] conducted the information behavior of teenagers. The topic is aimed at exploring the context in which teenagers seek information, information sources, the reasons and ways of finding information, and the factors that influence the search process. Based on this, the author proposes professional services to assist in the process of finding and using the teenagers’ daily information.

In other contexts, Devon L. Greyson, Colleen Cunningham and Steve Morgan [3] examined the pharmacist's information behavior in the Canadian pharmaceutical industry, including the characteristics of information needs, the sources of information used by the group of users such as electronic resources and trusted organizations. Similarly, authors Kostagiolas PA, Bairaktaris KD, Niakas D. also conducted a survey on pharmacists' information behavior in Greece as well as the perceptions of information users on library services with the aim of their career development in the future [11, pp. 46-56].

In addition, there are many other studies of Williamson, K. [22, pp.345] that carried on the information need and information seeking behavior of adults in Australia, or Ian Rowlands and Maggie Fieldhouse studies the academic information behavior, especially under the influence of the Internet to the information behavior [7, p.26].

In the context context of the social network, Juan Daniel Machin Mastromatteo [9] analyzed information behavior in the community on the social network. The objective of the study was to investigate the effects of web 2.0 and effect of social networking on user's information behavior. The dissertation provides an overview of the information behavior of users in the information system, a deeper understanding of information users and towards build information systems which satisfied with users' needs.

Maghferat, Parinaz, & Stock, Wolfgang G. [13] conducted the survey on differences in information seeking activities of male and female students. Research focuses on the specific differences in sex when they seek information with the support of conventional search engines and specialized web-based information services. In addition, the authors observed the behavior of participants in seeking information and differences between sex groups.

In Vietnam, many authors in the country have studied information literacy, information needs, habits of seeking and using information, etc. of different information user groups. These works mainly focus on information needs, the user's behavior of seeking information for specific types of documents, such as studied by Nguyen Hong Sinh, Hoang Thi Hong Nhung [16]. The authors focused on surveying behavior of seeking information on online databases in Central Library, Vietnam National University, Hochiminh city.

Research on the information needs of users in the university has received much attention from many local authors. Nguyen Thanh Tung [17] focuses on basic information needs and habits of using information of users.

From a sociological perspective, another study has focused on the information seeking behavior of the information users through using journals of the National Academy of Politics in Hochiminh city. The dissertation examined the behavior of seeking information from
journals and newsletters of users in the library, assessed the ability to meet information demands for information users of the academy [18].

Other related studies were conducted in one or several of the universities, which focused on information need, reading need of habits of using library of information users. Meanwhile, there have not been any research topics on information behavior of users in the university, especially the lecturers of universities in Hochiminh city.

In general, the research on information behavior of domestic and foreign users has the following characteristics:

- There are a number of studies that lack inheritance between previous research and subsequent research. This is reflected in the few works that refer to the use of theories and models of previous authors in their own research.
- The scope and object of research are broader in many areas such as in work and in daily life. Most of the studies focus on individual information behavior rather than coordinated information behavior.
- Research has increasingly focused on the information needs, the information seeking behavior of the users. There has very few research studies information behavior comprehensively, have not studied fully from different views of information behavior such as research information behavior is closely linked to the design of an effective search system, or the emphasis is on the role of the library.
- Some works focus on analyzing factors influencing information behavior, especially impacts of information technology and telecommunication to users' information behavior such as digital environment, Internet environment, etc.
- There is a increasing tendency of descriptive studies for users’ information behavior. Many research focus on analyzing the real situation of information information of the users, related to solutions based on actual conditions.
- In terms of research methodology, most empirical studies use qualitative methods. Many authors also use a variety of methods when researching information behavior of users.

Based on the results of the literature review of domestic and foreign researches, the author of the dissertation has adopted the following issues:

Relating to information behavior, there are many approaches to information behavior including systematic approach, integrated approach and action approach. Each approach is associated with different theories and models of information behavior. Some theories and models also show inheritance, however, this inheritance is not really clear. Similarly, many different definitions of information behavior are derived from the viewpoints of information science, behavioral sciences, library science, etc. The work has clarified some basic concepts related to information behavior. This help building the theoretical foundations for further studies, including theoretical foundations of lecturers’ information in the subject area. However, along with the process of selecting and inheriting previous theoretical foundations, the systematization, unification and finishing of the theoretical basis for lecturers’ information behavior is essential.

Factors influencing information behavior: There are a number of factors that influence the information behavior of the users mentioned in several studies, including personal, social, cultural and psychological factors. The overview of these works also contributed to clarify
the relationship between the influencing factors for lecturers’ information behavior. Therefore, when analyzing these influencing factors for lecturers’ information behavior at universities in Ho Chi Minh City, it requires special attention to specific factors related to the role of lecturers in the environment of the university - the context of forming the lecturers’ information behavior.

-About information behavior, the models are formed from different perspectives such as behavioral models, cognitive-emotional models, cognitive-behavioral models, integrated information behavior models and other models. Each model has certain advantages and disadvantages, built into a specific context which illustrated the most common manifestation of user information behavior including defining the need for information, search, use, and sharing. Based on the model analysis and practical research, the model of lecturers’ information behavior would be constructed at the universities in Hochiminh city.

About the information user: The information user's researches provide a detailed review of the information users in specific contexts. Some similarities in previous studies lecturers’ information behavior may contribute to provide a comparative view of lecturers’ information behavior at the universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Some methods of information behavior research in these studies can be applied in researching lecturers’ information behavior in Hochiminh city.

**STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The thesis consists of the introduction, 3 chapters, references and appendix.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of information behavior, including the concept of information behavior, some typical models of information behavior. The contents of chapter 1 also focus on analyzing the basic theory of lecturers’ information behavior, the factors influencing lecturers’ information behavior, the requirements for lecturers’ information behavior and the characteristics of lecturers in universities.

Chapter 2 presents some characteristics of information needs, behavior of determining information needs and factors influencing behaviors of determining information needs of lecturers. Besides, Chapter 2 also analyzes the characteristics that related to the information seeking and using behavior of lecturers such as identifying sources of information, searching information in the search system, evaluating and selecting information; the fair use and sharing of information, the factors affecting the information searching behavior, the using and sharing of information, etc. Besides, chapter 2 also identifies the characteristics in the lecturers at universities in Hochiminh city.

Chapter 3 of the thesis presents the solutions to improve lecturers' information behavior at the universities in Hochiminh city. As one of the foundations of the solution groups to improve the information behavior of lecturers, first of all, chapter 3 develops the standard model of lecturers' information behavior including goals, theoretical and practical basis, requirements of proposing model and requirements for lecturers' information behavior in Hochiminh city. Since then, three main groups of solutions have been put in order to apply the model of lecturers' information behavior into the practice. There are some main solutions for the academic libraries, solutions for lecturers and solutions for the universities managers.
CONCLUSION

Researching information behavior of information users as well as lecturers is one of the issues that are of great concern in the field of library and information. In each context, information behavior of users has different characteristics. From the results of the literature review and three chapters, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The results of research on theoretical and practical foundations of information behavior of information users as well as lecturers at universities in Ho Chi Minh City show the importance of research information behavior for universities managers, academic libraries, and individual lecturers in teaching, research, and self-learning. At the same time, results of the research also show the need for research lecturers' information behavior in academic settings. Based on the analysis and inheritance of basic research theories of information behavior of the users, the thesis has presented the concept of information behavior, identify the factors affecting the lecturers' information behavior, the model of lecturers' information behavior, and the importance of researching information behavior in the academic environment of the universities.

Information behavior of lecturers at the universities in Ho Chi Minh City are influenced by many factors, in which the role of lecturers is the decisive factor and directly influences the information needs of lecturers, information seeking, using, and sharing behavior. In particular, the information need is based on the requirements of teaching and research. Besides, the time management of lecturers has a great impact on the behavior of information seeking, using, and sharing. Besides the outstanding advantages in lecturers' information behavior, the limitations in their information behavior also affect the process of using information in teaching, research, and self-learning activities of lecturers.

The development of a standard model of information behavior to measure the lecturers' information behavior in teaching, research, and self-learning is very essential. Some proposed solutions include the solutions for lecturers, the solutions for the academic libraries, and the solution for the universities managers. Among of those solutions, the role of the academic libraries plays a big part in the process of completing lecturers' information behavior at the universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Depending on the needs and capabilities of each library, they could choose and prioritize appropriate solutions at each stage. Since then, these groups of solutions will contribute to the improvement of lecturers' information behavior at the universities in Ho Chi Minh City.

Result of research will be opened the new research such as development of the relationship between the liaison librarians and lecturers in supporting lecturers information behavior; Building the integration model between academic libraries and faculty libraries; Research the influence of lecturers' traits on their information behavior; Developing the information services for enhancing lecturers' information behavior; Research the role of lecturers in researching information behavior; Establishing the set of standards for evaluating the lecturers' information capacity and so on.

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