

Correlation between Information Needs, Information Seeking Behavior and Information Literacy of Social Sciences Research Scholars from Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur

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Abstract

While there is no dearth of articles on information seeking behavior showing behavior patterns based on elementary classification of data, very few ones have tried to establish correlation between the different variables involved in the process. What kind of influence information needs exert on information seeking behavior and what is the impact of the latter on information literacy is an interesting dimension that needs to be investigated. This study has been planned to probe into the information seeking behavior of the research scholars in Social Science to understand the entire scheme of things related to their information seeking behavior in the context of their information needs as well as its impact on information literacy.

Keywords:

Information needs,

Information literacy,

Information seeking

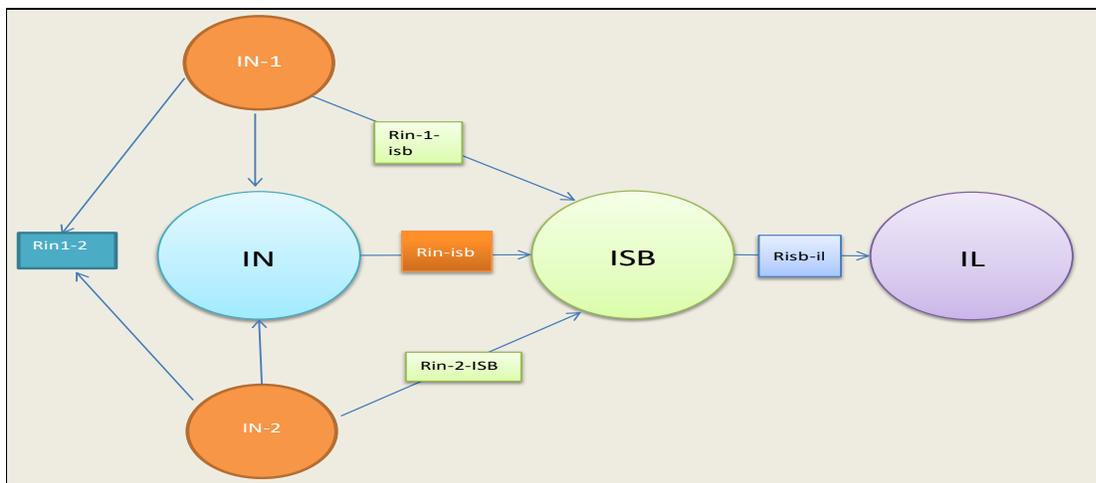
behavior, Social Science.

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Introduction

A study was undertaken to investigate the information seeking behavior of research scholars from the Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTMNU) in the faculty of social sciences. After doing an exhaustive literature review, it was found that studies galore showing primarily the information seeking behavior in terms of elementary analysis like what sources are used, how often library is used and things like that. Shouket Ahmad Lone et. al (2017) have carried a study under the title “Information Seeking Behavior of Research Scholars of Faculty of Social Science, University of Kashmir: A Study”. The data analysis is largely in the form of plain frequency tables without any hypotheses being set and without any application of statistical tools. Thus this gap was quite vivid. It was found that analytical studies trying to correlate things are missing. That was the main motivation for the study. Its aim was to plot a relationship on a model like structure given below –



In the above model R is the correlation. IN, ISB and IL are the abbreviations for information needs, information seeking behavior and information literacy respectively. Two types of information needs variables were formulated in the form of inter-disciplinary information needs (IN-1) and complex and dynamic information needs (IN-2.)

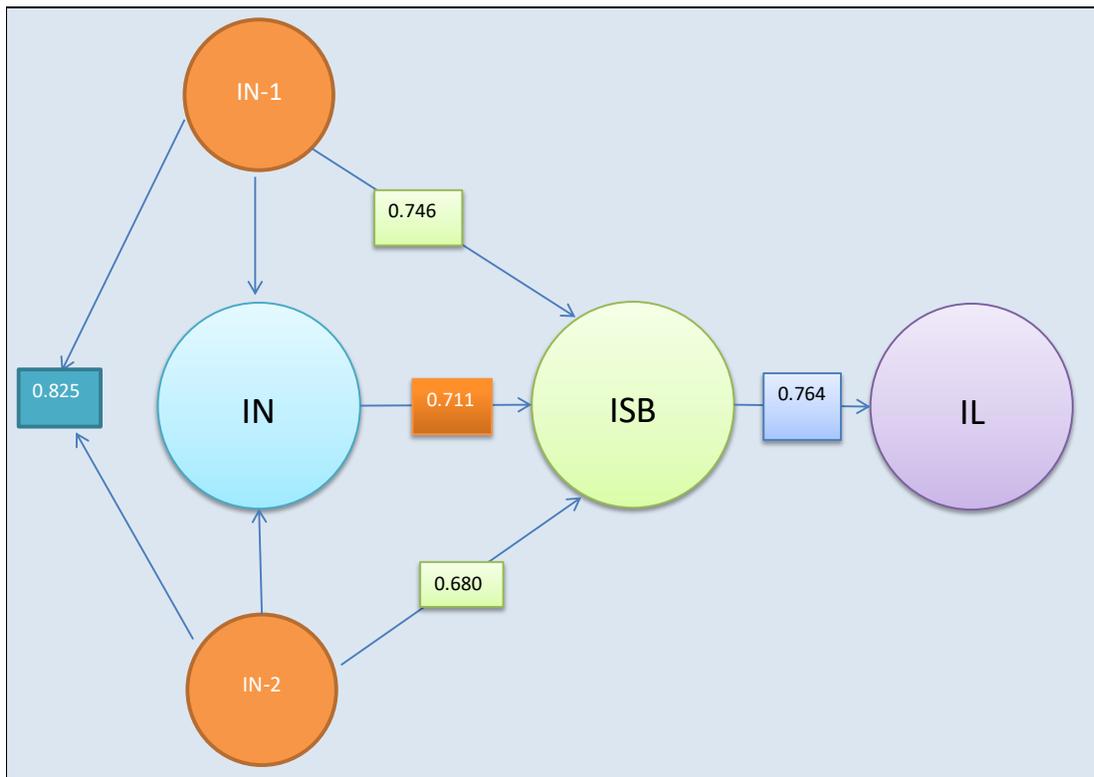
Literature Review

1. Ian Gordon et. al (2018) in their study found that Chemists from academic institutions use a variety of resources and strategies to remain current and to track scholarly information, patents, and news.
2. Mohammed Fathy Mahmoud Elgllabet. al (2017) in their study found that the respondents information seeking consists of four main steps : identifying the information needs, selecting the keywords, examining the results and filtering the results.
3. Remigiusz Sapaet. al (2014) found out that some significant differences existed between the information seeking behaviour of two groups of mathematicians. This was attributed to different levels of experience in scientific work, distinct tasks undertaken within the academic environment, and the change in the general paradigm of information searching.
4. Wilson's (2000, 49-55) investigation of human information behavior brought up that information-seeking behavior is the purposive seeking for information as an outcome of the need to satisfy some goal. He also described information-seeking behavior as the sum total of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, covering both direct and indirect information-seeking, and information use.
5. Krikelas (1983, 5-20) scrutinized the patterns and concepts of information-seeking behavior. He stated the concept as an activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that meets a perceived need. The activity is triggered when someone perceives that the current state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issue (or problem).

As stated earlier these and many more such articles are confined to elementary classification analysis and that is the gap on which this article eyes on.

Research Methods

The study was carried on a sample of 300 research scholars of the social science faculty from RTMNU. A structured questionnaire under 10 sections was administered and responses were collected largely on a likert agree-disagree scale. These were then quantified with rank values for the responses and based on statistical techniques data analysis was done to establish amongst other things correlation between the Information needs, Information seeking behavior and Information literacy.



Where IN is the Information Needs variable, ISB is the Information Seeking Behavior variable and IL is the Information Literacy variable.

Between the two IN variables, IN-1 & IN-2 the correlation was found to be 0.825. With individual correlations of 0.746 & 0.680 respectively, their average correlation with the ISB variable was found to be 0.711. Finally the correlation between ISB & IL was found to be 0.764.

The individual correlation coefficients between the five ISBs & IL were as under –

Table 1 – Correlation between ISB & IL variables

ISB & IL variables	Correlation coefficient
ISB-1-IL	0.641
ISB-2-IL	0.347
ISB-3-IL	0.201
ISB-4-IL	0.658
ISB-5-IL	0.692

Discussion

A correlation of 0.825 between IN-1 and IN-2 indicates a strong positive relationship between the needs. When we correlate these two needs with the ISB the correlations were 0.746 & 0.680 for IN-1 and IN-2 respectively. Collectively these two showed a correlation of 0.711 with the ISB. When ISB was correlated with IL, the correlation that we got was 0.764. This again indicated a strong positive relationship.

Interestingly when we tried to correlate individual ISB components with IL we got surprising results. While three of the five ISB variables (refer table 1) showed a correlation in excess of 0.60, other two ISB variables, namely ISB-2 & ISB-3 showed a relatively lower correlation of 0.347 and 0.201. This then shows that some ISB variables have a more profound impact on IL as compared to the others. This was also seen in the case of IN variables impact on ISB.

Conclusion

Analysis beyond elementary data classification is very much a possibility with responses collected from information seeking behavior surveys. Thanks to capabilities like XLSTAT, SPSS, SAS etc. sophisticated data processing techniques can be easily used. In fact these techniques are widely used in other research like that of management sciences etc. What has been presented in the article was only a small attempt to construct a model and figure out things. The obvious advantage with the modeling and correlation exercise is that we can understand relationships better. Moreover we can get an idea of relatively higher influencing and lower

influencing variables. Definitely there is a lot of scope for applying many more advanced and sophisticated data analytical methods to research related to information seeking behavior.

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