

„Human-in-context” and the experience of information: an interdisciplinary dimension of information behaviour research

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10/27/2023

Structure of the presentation

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2. Information behaviour as umbrella concept
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4. Information behaviour – categorisation
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7. Context Interdisciplinary and multidimensional view of human information behaviour (in selection)
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1. Aim and rationale

The aim is to propose to identify, define and manifest a multifaceted understanding of information behaviour of the "person-in-context" in an anthropocentric, multidimensional perspective (although it deals with selected aspects), allowing the experience of information and the interdisciplinary character of information perpetration to be distinguished

- the goal also stems from contemporary dynamic theoretical and empirical research and paradigm shifts;
- the breakthrough years of the 1990s - a constructionist and constructivist perspective emerges, which concerns the exploration of information behaviour from a) cognitive-social aspects, which highlighted the role of experience and the social construction of knowledge, b) cognitive-affective, and c) social aspects
- the research dealt with environments outside the professional information environment, occupational environments, information practices (embodied), information behaviour in everyday life, during leisure activities, hobbies, during crisis situations, etc.

2. Information behaviour as the *umbrella concept*

- 1) refer to a direction of inquiry, coherent, both theoretical and practical, multidimensional, multifaceted, which concerns the study of man (the user of information) and the understanding of his relationship with information
- 2) constitute a sub-discipline of informatology, are related to several phenomena, concepts that are closely related to all the activities that man undertakes in relation to information and usually in a specific context
- 3) denote all reactions of humans (their behaviour) and people (collectives) that are manifested in relation to information resources, sources, channels of information, concern information seeking, processing, management and use - this includes intuitive, accidental, passive information perpetration, as well as intentional and conscious behaviour related not to information seeking but, for example, to information avoidance (Cisek, 2017)

5) are heterogeneous and multifaceted

6) They are understood through a general, overarching category, a common concept (umbrella concept) for human activities, encompassing how users "need, seek, manage, transmit and use information in a variety of contexts" (Savolainen, 2007)

7) can be seen as a set of valuable activities that constitute a set of beneficial characteristics that allow the development of an individual's knowledge and skills and shape the information environment in which a person functions

8) a variety of genetic, evolutionary, cognitive, affective and social and cultural correlates have an important influence on their adaptation to the multidimensional context of the information space (Spink, Heinström 2011)

Information behaviour refers to the totality of activities in which people engage and interact with information, in one way or another.

*In fact, life is an information behaviour, because **we cannot survive without information.***

We are constantly taking in information with all our senses.

We are constantly behaving in relation to information.

Tom Wilson, 2020

- it is a synonymous with the life and functioning of the individual in an external, but also internal, highly individualised environment with a qualitative dimension
- a broad spectrum of human capacities and activities in relation to information, interrelated processes using perceptual, cognitive, affective, embodied, as well as phenomena relating to making sense, building a world view, creating knowledge, and finally conscious participation in the human collective

3. Information behaviour

Information practice Information experience

Information culture

Information behaviour

- reveal "how people identify information needs, how they acquire, manage and use information in a variety of contexts" (Fisher, Erdelez, McKechnie 2005, p. XIX)
- "the activities that a particular human being is able to engage in when recognising [identifying] his or her own information needs, retrieving specific information in a variety of ways, and using or communicating that information" (Wilson 1999, p. 249)
- "the totality of human activity in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive processes of information acquisition and use" (Wilson 2000, p. 49)
- the integrated process of seeking information on single or multiple issues, acquiring it, making (making) sense of it, retrieving and organising it, and using it (Spink, Park, Cole 2006)

Information practices

- an equivalent term to informational behaviour (constructivists, e.g. Reijo Savolainen)
- human, socially situated action, activities often undertaken habitually through routine monitoring of activities in everyday life, emphasising the role of the competent, rational and engaged human being making sense of a variety of activities and behaviours (Savolainen 2009);
- the role of **habitus** (Savolainen, 2008); the essence of **discourse** (McKenzie, 2003); **domain analysis** (Hjørland, Albrechtsen, 1995)
- 'a set of socially and culturally established ways of identifying, retrieving, using and sharing information available from a variety of sources such as television, newspapers and the Internet', and refers to learned, routine and behavioural activities, information behaviour (Savolainen, 2008)
- the aim is to produce "a shared understanding and mutual agreement on how to know and recognise how action is performed, enabled and constrained in collective, situated action" (Lloyd, 2011) - repetitive practices, actions in the environment, both professional and non-professional

Experiencing information, information experience

- refers to actions, activities, processes that a person undertakes consciously, but also unintentionally or accidentally in relation to information
- refers to the interdisciplinary, considering multiple approaches (e.g. evolutionary, affective, cognitive, social, biological, as well as ecological), holistic optics of ways of subjectively experiencing, feeling, sensing information acquisition, processing, using, exploiting, sharing information, creating new knowledge - wisdom (Bruce et al., 2014)
- experiencing information at a sensory, emotional, cognitive, bodily level, centred on the individual who, from a first-person perspective (FPS), biases engagement with information processes and activities, seeks proficiency and makes sense of their own existence (Gorinchanaz, 2019)

Information culture, information literacy

- subspace, a category of information behaviour, but also as a way of experiencing the world
- a transdisciplinary concept, closely related to information processes and behaviours, especially regarding feeling and relating to information, which leads to knowledge, as well as being constituted by information practices, socially
- refers to information experience - research currents relating to the formation of processes that allow learning and knowledge attainment, and ultimately wisdom, and the ways in which the individual engages in ongoing information activities, dependent on the situation or context of the moment intentional, active functioning in the information space
- a set of developed values, attitudes, norms and information skills that concern activities that are part of conscious and specified and responsible information behaviour - from the identification of information needs, knowledge of information sources to the conscious acquisition of information, its search, selection, evaluation, synthesis, use to compensate for any deficiencies in knowledge, modify it and strive for excellence (e.g. Kisilowska, 2016).

4. Categories of information behaviour

- within the discipline there are attempts to synonymise, unify but also categorise information behaviour
- a range of terms, metaphrasing (e.g. foraging for information, berrypicking, milling)
- It was used the categorisation proposed by Sabina Cisek (2017) based on defined and established terms and the subsequent categorisation by Monika Krakowska based on an attempt to unify and typify behaviours, practices, experiences of information (Krakowska, 2022)

- **need for information**, awareness and verbalisation of information need
- **information seeking, information gathering**
 - a) active, purposeful, informed and targeted information seeking
 - browsing, scanning
 - searching for information in specific resources and sources, in information retrieval systems, information retrieval, information searching
 - b) exploratory search (Materska, 2020)
 - c) routine information gathering (Natalyia Godbold 2006)
 - d) information discovery (Wilson, 2020)
 - e) passive acquisition of information
 - f) information encountering, opportunistic discovery of information, serendipity (Sanda Erdelez)

- people **respond to information** (Godbold, 2006)
 - a) further search for information (consecutive, follow-up)
 - b) noting the existence of some information "just in case", taking mental note
 - c) avoiding, ignoring and denying information
 - d) concealment or destruction of information
 - e) understanding information, incorporating it into the structures of existing knowledge, experience (memory)
- **evaluation, selection of information, processing, information storage** (information management, personal information management, management of collected information)

- **Information use**

(a) information sharing, information transfer, dissemination, information exchange, information sharing, information transfer

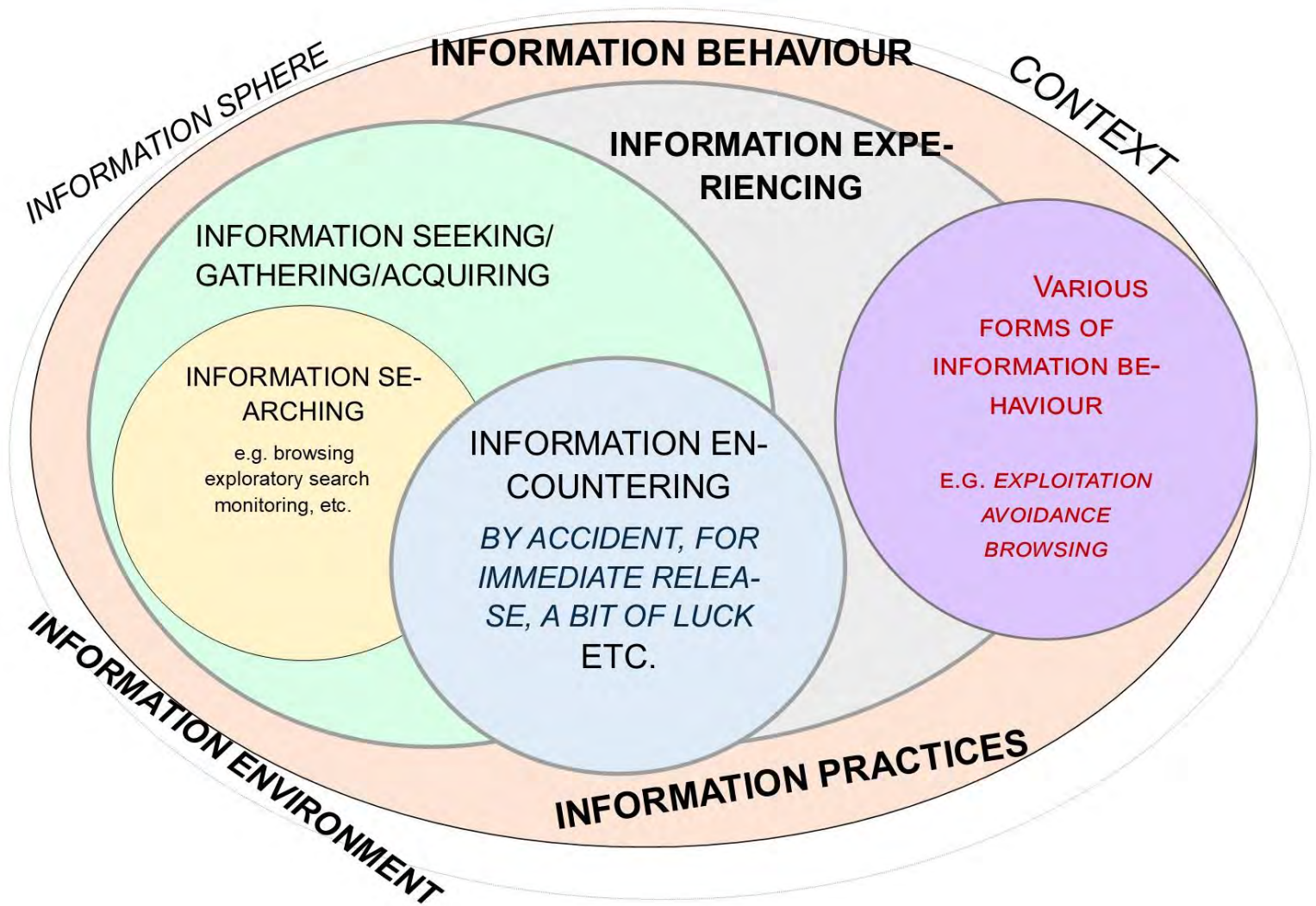
(b) taking a decision based on information

(c) solving the problem or carrying out or performing a task

(d) making sense or recovering meaning (Dervin, 2000)

Information behaviour in everyday life: mutually permeating, simultaneous processes:

making sense, monitoring, acquiring, using, searching, accidental acquisition, foraging, organizing, browsing, sharing, multitasking informational behavior related to decision-making, multitasking, berrypicking, social networking (interaction and social networking), and surfing and verifying information (Lakshminarayanan 2010)



Source: Krakowska, M. (2022). *Zachowania informacyjne człowieka w kontekście zjawiska epistemicznej bańki informacyjnej : propozycja nowej koncepcji*. Kraków, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

5. Determinants of information behaviour and the experience of information

- properties, parameters of problem situation, task, information problem, information situation
- individual conditions – properties, features, distinguishing features of an individual or a human being
- the conditions of the domain, the epistemic space in which man functions, the domain, the knowledge, the competence
- determinants of the information environment – context, space, time, place, socio-cultural properties and conditions, features of information geography in which people live

Determinants of information behaviour:

- evolutionary – biological, physiological, genetic
- affective - psychological
- cognitive - mental
- contextual – individual, created and creating a subjective informational space
- professional – professional, conditioned by activities undertaken in the professional environment and in everyday life
- social – conditioned by norms, culture, community, collective

Determinants of information behavior (2):

- information needs
- information barriers (various typologies, e.g. Marzena Świgoń, Tom Wilson, Reijo Savolainen)
- (a) related to the acquisition of information and related to the use of information
- (b) individual, interpersonal, environmental, related to sources of information, but also: physical, interpersonal, related to information skills/competences, conditioned by cognitive affective features, resulting from the context (e.g. physical, social, educational, demographic, etc.)
- (c) related to sources of information, unawareness and lack of knowledge, terminology, psychological (related to anxiety, lack of self-confidence), time as an information barrier

6. Person-in-context or Human-in-context

- the anthropological and social person-in-context approach to the individual is a key element of understanding the essence of the context itself, as well as the placement of the human being and his or her activity in it, which has been reflected in the study of patterns of informational behaviour
- a holistic approach to conscious existence, people's lived experience in their life-worlds
- the inseparability of man and the artefacts and phenomena through which he acquires information,
- it becomes important to recognize what is experienced as information and how it is experienced, how the individual is present in the world and how information is felt in his or her in the world, how it shapes the human world, what role it plays, what impact it has on the individual and the world in which he or she lives (Bruce et al., 2014).
- context defines the information space, the environment, the infosphere, the ,infodiversity'



7. What is context?

- situation-environment-environment
- distinction: context vs. situation
- **situation** – epistemological spatiotemporal context (e.g. B. Dervin, R. Savolainen); connection of people, place and event; the moment in time space that the individual is able to record; in the context of the need to understand something and make sense of reality or circumstances;
- it is conducive to acquiring and searching for information, because a person is in a changed situation or participates in it, experiences it, by understanding information needs, giving meaning to an event or information that was a stimulus to initiate information activities

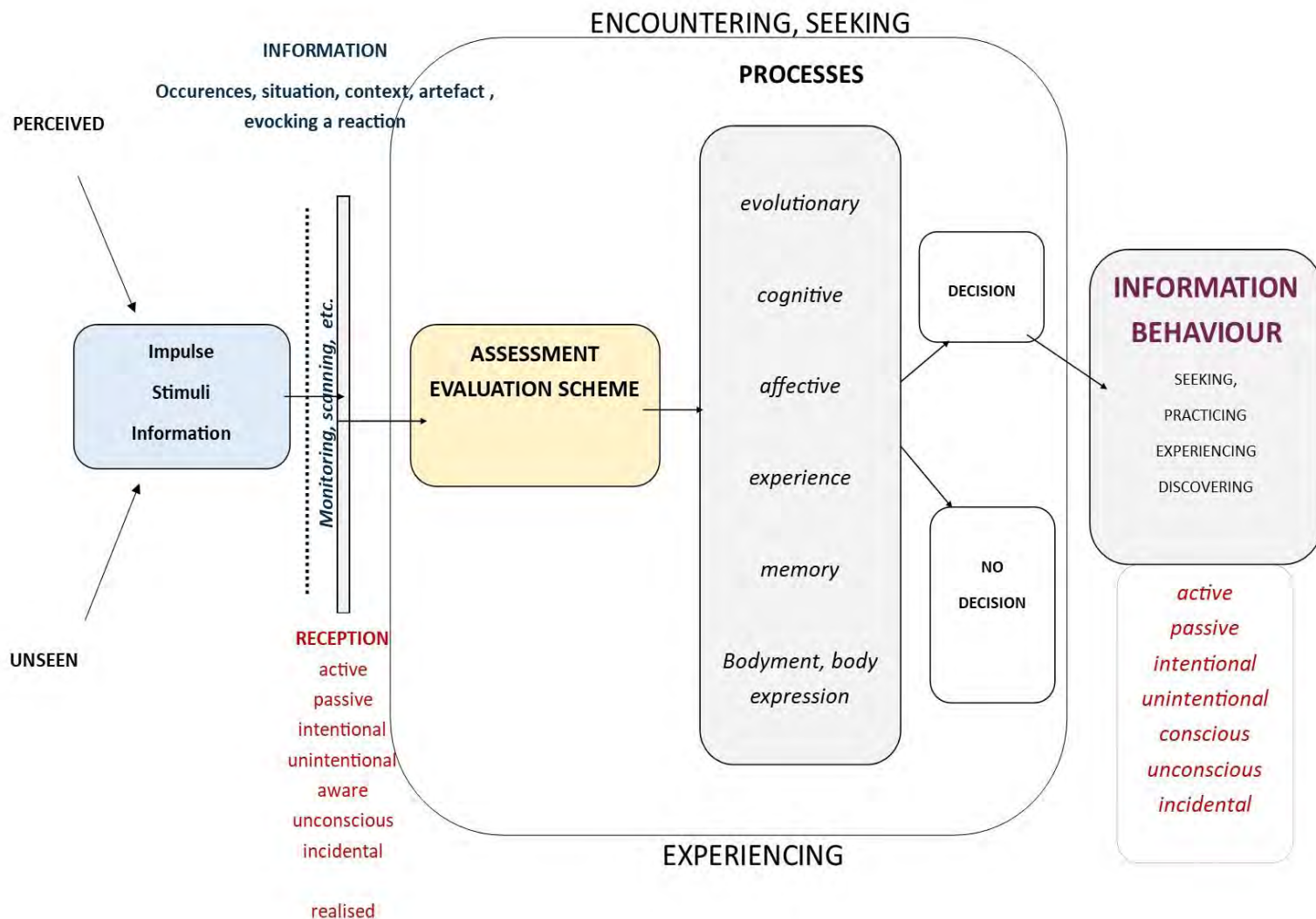
Context

- a set of factors coexisting, related (to each other, to something), defining something that means and gives meaning
- a set of facts, circumstances related to the situation, the event, the circumstances in which the event occurs, as well as the environment of the event
- action – can be actively created during experiential and informational behaviours
- the core of current, past and future situations generating informational behaviour
- multidimensional, multifaceted – along with the attributes: time, space, place, purpose, task, situation, processes, human agency, his informational behaviour, but also other people
- formal (professional) and non-formal (relating to everyday life)

Context

- filter, reservoir (Agarwal, 2018)
- frameworks of meaning (Cool, 2001)
- information and social environment of man – information geographies – a metaphorical approach to space, infosphere, information environment – limitation, framework
- human functions and interacts with the existing reality, discontinuous, full of gaps and gaps in knowledge, dynamically changing over time, available only in context (Savolainen, 2006); this requires avoiding overly schematic, simplifying, concise analysis and definition of context (Dervin, 2003)
- shaped by the time-dimension-of-social and cultural factors

8. An interdisciplinary and multidimensional picture of human information behavior & information experience (selected)



Source: Krakowska, M. (2022). *Zachowania informacyjne człowieka w kontekście zjawiska epistemicznej bańki informacyjnej : propozycja nowej koncepcji*. Kraków, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.



The evolutionary dimension

- metaphorical meaning (interpenetration of paradigms, optics), biological
- The background is the information environment, nature, communities, conditions, processes, etc.
- the imperative to survive from an evolutionary perspective – informational behaviours related to the evolution of the species and changes in the brain (e.g., Amanda Spink's research) and other physiological systems
- faceted model by Sonnenwald and livonen (1999) – personality, matter (purpose, resources); energy (agency, experience, behaviours, processes); space; the time at which the events occur
- optimal foraging, information exploration, information paths and landscapes, information diet, information scent models, berrypicking model



Source: Henry, Matthew (2023).Burst. <https://www.shopify.com/stock-photos/photos/finger-on-a-large-aged-book?q=user+library> (odczyt: 25.10.2023)

The Embodied Dimension

- embodied cognition – the language of thought
- the amodal mind - independent of sense form
- Merleau-Ponty's concept – the body is something that can be a cognitive organ, it is the body that gives meaning to the world
- Individuals receive different sensory information regarding the same event, due to the characteristics of their body or the body's position in space
- moreover, what a person perceives is influenced by expectations and assumptions; when you focus on a particular task, you can sense things but not notice them: what Ch. Lueg calls "inattentive blindness" (sometimes you even sense things that aren't there)
- bodies shape the information we receive, and present feelings interact in complex ways with what we perceive, and current feelings trigger physiological changes (Lueg, 2015)



Source: Vecstock (2023). Freepik. https://www.freepik.com/free-ai-image/glowing-synapse-multi-colored-neural-communication-abstract-design-generated-by-ai_41283933.htm#query=cognition&position=30&from_view=search&track=sph (odczyt: 25.10.2023)

Cognitive dimension

- cognitive acts, thought processes - related to the acquisition, organization, including analysis, evaluation and use of information, understanding it, as well as mental models, mental representations, also about the behavioural aspect of action, determining the functioning of a person and taking various actions, reactions to any information
- interpreting the external world, various stimuli coming from the environment in which the individual functions, as well as thought processes, reasoning, analysing, inference and planning actions, problem solving
- the role of decision-making, awareness, intuitiveness, planned behaviours (Ajzen),
- information needs – aware gaps, gaps in knowledge; insufficient state of knowledge; uncertainty
- processes of making sense through epistemic cognition and information discovery
- mental models as internal imagery of the world



Source: Vecstock (2023). Freepik. https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/beauty-motion-young-women-splashing-water-generative-ai_41074237.htm#from_view=detail_alsolike (odczyt: 25.10.2023)

Affective dimension

- cognitive-affective aspect of behaviour and experiencing information
- the role of affective phenomena – emotions, feelings, moods, motivations
- emotions and affective phenomena as: a) direct reaction to stimuli from the environment, b) feeling, feeling c) evaluation or d) motivation to react to information
- **feelings-as-information** theory is concerned with conceptualizing the role of subjective experiences, such as moods, emotions, metacognitive experiences, and the role of bodily sensations in evaluation and decision-making processes = a person understands and treats their own emotions and feelings as sources of information, activating various cognitive processes
- **emotional and cognitive potential** that influences human interactions with information – concepts of affected load theory (Nahl, 2007), the trilogy of the mind – cognition, acts of will, attachment (Afzal, 2018), information flow – awareness of the intense experience of information and emotions
- the role of **individual traits** – personality, identity



Social dimension

- embedded in the social framework of norms, values, interpersonal relationships, information activities and practices, conscious experience of information
- normative informational behaviour (e.g. small worlds) – refers to the construction of a social world, the meaning of which is shaped by norms and to which various individuals entering into relationships, who can create an image of themselves, control access to the area of their thoughts, feelings, intentions (i.e. the subjective world) are subordinated
- information practices, through which community and collective knowledge are created, are understood as mastering situations, conditions, which are a fragment of the world constructed based on facts, norms and experiences
- concepts of social learning (Bandura, 2000) – the desire to imitate a particular group and perceived similarity with members of a given community can significantly enhance the influence of norms on patterns of information interaction and information activities
- The role of cognitive authorities, which can be represented by both people and institutions – an individual's cognitive structures are influenced by language, history, and social and cultural factors, e.g. cultural domain and environment, although it is generally assumed that the creation of knowledge and interpretation takes place in the individual minds

9. Research on users' information behaviour (potential for research on library users) – postulates and suggestions



Source: Sollo, Josephiina (2023). Are you working on your thesis during the summer? Sign up for an information seeking workshop! Helsinki University Library. <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-university-library/follow-news-0/are-you-working-your-thesis-during-summer-sign-information-seeking-workshop> (odczyt: 25.10.2023).

- research on information needs
- research on information spaces of individual users and collectives (social groups)
- research on users' information behaviour, e.g. in the face of crisis situations
- affective-cognitive dimensions of information behaviour of library users, information acquisition
- recognizing patterns of information behaviour of library users (small worlds, temporary information places) – what is new?
- research on information culture and users' information competences



- research on information practices, epistemic cultures (libraries), the collective pattern of information behaviour
- surveys of expectations and satisfaction
- research on the impact of the organization (library) on the information behaviour of users
- digital context and digital information space of the user (e.g. digital libraries)
- personalization of library information services
- research on the experience of information in the library
- algorithmizing and information bubbles – user navigation behaviour (e.g. [LibraryThing](#)), information overload, information isolation

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