

## Self-Analysis of Information Behavior

People always seek out information every day. Every second someone in the world is googling something, looking up a word in a dictionary, reading the newspaper etc... People look up information to get knowledge about news, hobbies, new books, or to see what their favorite celebrity is doing. People do not deeply think about how their information behavior affects them or anything about it to their day to day. This week that changes for me as I will for three days at least focus on my own Information seeking behavior.


Information seeking is "is a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge" (Case). People going to the library for example and looking up a book on the catalog would be information seeking because the person is seeking information on where the book is in the library. Information Behavior is "encompasses information seeking as well as the totality of other unintentional or passive behaviors as well as purposive behaviors that do not involve seeking, such as actively avoiding information" (Case). The information behavior I recorded over the three days was my social media usage. I recorded the date, time, why I went on there, my mood before going on it, what the social media(s) were, how long I spent on them, interaction, and my mood afterwards.

I choose to do social media as appose to something else because I spent most of my time this past year on social media the most in compared to reading online, or playing video games, so I wanted to see how my behavior is. I did almost choose reading online because that is what I do almost all the time but since it's the internet era I thought the social media one would be more fun. I was already seeing a bit of a pattern just by looking at the data briefly, but it became more obvious after using the theory I choose to look closer at my data.

I choose the social exchange theory for my information behavior analysis. I will explain what social exchange theory is before diving any deeper to better help understand my information behavior and how the social exchange theory explains. The social exchange theory foundation was created by George Homans, Peter Blau and Richard Emerson. The researchers had slightly different opinions on the definition of social exchange theory. Homans defined social exchange theory as, "...as the exchange of activity, tangible, or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two parties" (Cook). What Homans mean by cost was thing if a party is engaging in one activity, then it costs the opportunity to engage in a different one.

Blau on the other hand define it as, "refers to voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (Cook). Blau agree with some of Homans points of social exchange theory but shifted gears and changed some of it to go with his line of research of thoughts of the theory. Homans theory had some flaws in it, and it focused on a reward system type while Blau's did not. His social exchange theory focused more on that there is an expectation of getting some kind of a return, but the person has no idea what it is. Blau's theory involves cost vs. lost and has more to do with people socializing together than is what is needed for my information behavior. Emerson's theory as well as more to deal with power structure and how boss socialize with employee's type theory which is not what I am after. Social media is generally about socializing with others, but I do not do that.

That leaves me with Homans theory. His theory is helpful for my type of information behavior because of his theory deals with benefits and punishments. He laid out his theory with five different propositions. The first proposition is called the success proposition, it states that if the results of whatever behavior the person did causes benefit, they are most likely to repeat that

behavior. The second proposition is called the stimulus proposition. The stimulus proposition is that “that behavior that has been rewarded on such occasions in the past will be performed in similar situations” (Cook). The third proposition is called the value proposition, if the benefit has more benefit or value to the person performing the behavior then they’re more likely to repeat it. The fourth proposition is called the deprivation-satiation proposition. It states that if the person keeps getting the same reward multiple times in a row, the reward’s value to the person would decrease. The last proposition states that people will react negatively if they do not receive the reward they expect to receive when performing their behavior. Homans proposition greatly helps with my information data because in social media it is all about the proposition Homans describe. 

As I mentioned before, the information behavior I recorded over the span of three days was my activity on social media. In terms of Homans social exchange theory, the first party(A) was me and the second party(B) was the social media websites or apps. The data I collected over the past three days was the date, time, why I went on there, my mood before going on it, what the social media were, how long I spent on them, interaction, and my mood afterwards. By interacting I mean liking and reblogging the content. I would like to clarify that reblogging is not the same as reposting, one of the social medias, Tumblr, I use most often has a feature of reblogging someone’s post. The original poster gets the credit, and it just appears on my blog. It is not the same as taking someone’s content and posting it as my own. Over the span of three days, I only got on two different social medias, but I spent quite a long time on them. I did not make any content during the three days so I could not add it in to my data and I am interested to see if that would have any change in the data.

The reason why I recorded my moods and why I was on there is related to Homan's social exchange theory. Since his relay on benefits, I tried focusing on recording data to prove the benefits in relation to his theory. Most of the time I spent it on Tumblr, the reason for me getting on social media most often was that I was trying to feel more awake, or I was bored and needed something to do and going on social media is the quickest and easiest thing to do. I also kept going back to the social media apps when I wanted to disconnect from reality. I have a bad time procrastination and I used social media a lot to procrastinate on it.

Most of my interaction was on Tumblr I reblogged a variety of content but most of it was posts surrounding fandoms I am in. The posts were fanarts or head cannons, but I also interacted with other types of posts like poems, or some information posts people make about different topics. In line with Homan's propositions, I kept going back to the social media because it gave me the benefit of being happier or more relax after being on them for a while. I think the third proposition and the first proposition. The better the mood I was left with after being on social media the more, I wanted to go back and stay on longer although I am aware looking at a screen for so long is bad for the eyes.

The information behavior assignment was more fun than I imagined it would be, it made me feel like a real researcher collecting data on what I was doing although I think researching someone else would have been more beneficial. Since it was me, I could have unconsciously tried getting the results I wanted so a third party would make it more neutral and a better experiment. The social exchange theory helped me better understand why I get on social media so much. Social media does bring benefits to me, but I should probably find other ways to give me the same benefits without having to stare at a screen for so long.



Case, Donald. *Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs and Behavior (Library and Information Science)*. 3rd ed., Emerald Group Publishing, 2012.

Cook, S.K., Cheshire, C., Rice, E.R.W., & Nakagawa S. (2013) *Social Exchange Theory*.

Data I collected over the three days:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Date	Time	Why	Mood	Social Media	How Long	Intercation?	Mood after
2	5/20/2022	8:00:00 AM	Just woke up	Tried, goggy	Reddit	40 mintues	likes/reblog	Less goggy
3	5/20/2022	12:40:00 PM	Waiting for work	Bored	Redit/Tumblr	15 mintues	ikes	Bored
4	5/20/2022	4:20:00 PM	Stalling reading	anxious	Reddit	3 hours	likes	anxious
5	5/20/2022	8:00PM	Want to see yt	Sleepy	Youtube	2 hours	likes	really sleepy
6	5/21/2022	9:00:00 AM	Woke up	Sleepy	Reddit	1 hour	no likes	annoyed
7	5/21/2022	12:30:00 PM	Waiting for work	Bored	Reddit	15 mintues	no likes	sad
8	5/21/2022	4pm	Stalling reading	anxious	Tumblr	4 hours	50 reblogs	clam
9	5/21/2022	10:00:00 PM	reading before bed	sleepy	tumblr	1 hour	10 reblogs	sleepy
10	5/22/2022	9:00:00 AM	reading to wake up	sleepy	tumblr	30 mintues	20 reblogs	awake
11	5/22/2022	2:00:00 PM	Waiting for work	Sleepy	reddit	15 mintues	likes	awake
12	5/22/2022	6:00:00 PM	enteriment while eating	bored	Youtube	4 hours	like	sleepy
13								