Information Searching Behaviour In Efforts To Complete Postgraduate Students' Theses

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ABSTRACT

Researchers found that University of Dehasen Bengkulu postgraduate students strongly favored online resources when seeking information. These students utilized platforms such as Google Scholar and Unived journals to meet their research needs due to the extensive information requirements of their studies and the restricted library collection. The study uncovers a consistent pattern in their information-seeking behavior using a qualitative and descriptive approach. Students usually begin by selecting their sources and then dedicate approximately 1-2 hours each day to searching, comparing information, and monitoring updates. Tasks such as verifying and extracting information were frequently neglected. The study concludes that the students' search strategies consist of initiating, chaining, browsing, differentiating, and monitoring. When searching for information, the processes of extracting and verifying are often neglected due to being deemed insignificant. All students engage in the conclusion phase when finalizing their information search. Postgraduate students exhibit strong skills in selecting suitable information sources, choosing relevant sources, employing effective search strategies, critically evaluating information, and synthesizing information from diverse sources.
Keywords: information source search behavior; information source; thesis.

ABSTRAK

Banyaknya informasi yang dibutuhkan mahasiswa pascasarjana, menjadikan mahasiswa menjadi makhluk yang sangat membutuhkan informasi. Mahasiswa Pascasarjana Manajemen Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu melakukan pencarian sumber informasi sepenuhnya menggunakan internet, dikarenakan lebih efektif dan efisien serta tidak adanya koleksi di Perpustakaan Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu. Metode yang digunakan yaitu kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan mahasiswa pascasarjana melakukan pencarian informasi dengan memulai pencarian informasi dengan menentukan sumber informasi yang akan digunakan, melakukan pencarian melalui website google scholar dan jurnal Unived dengan menghabiskan waktu sekitar 1-2jam/hari, membandingkan informasi, memantau perkembangan sumber-sumber informasi, dan mengekstrak dan memverifikasi informasi di anggap tidak penting, serta mengakhiri pencarian informasi dengan mematikan komputer/handphone. Pada akhir pencarian mahasiswa mendapatkan informasi yang memuaskan selama pencarian informasi, dapat dikatakan bahwa starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, cenderung sama. Dalam pencarian informasi, extracting dan verifying tidak dilakukan karena dianggap tidak penting. Ending dilakukan oleh semua mahasiswa sebagai akhir dalam penyelesaian pencarian

informasi. Mahasiswa pascasarjana menunjukkan kemampuan yang baik dalam memilih sumber informasi yang tepat melalui sumber informasi yang mereka gunakan, mampu memilih sumber informasi yang relevan, menggunakan strategi pencarian informasi yang tepat, mampu mengevaluasi informasi dengan kritis, mampu mensistensi informasi dari berbagai sumber.

Kata Kunci: *perilaku pencarian sumber informasi; sumber informasi; tesis.*

INTRODUCTION

Dehasen University Bengkulu has six faculties, namely the Faculty of Computer Science, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Letters, and Faculty of Social Sciences. It has 26 study programs with 24 study programs being undergraduate (S1) and 2 postgraduate study programs (S2), namely Management and Public Health, based on data obtained from the Higher Education Data Base of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, total data on Postgraduate Students from University Management Study Programs Dehasen Bengkulu includes 13 students in the odd semester of 2022, 20 students in the even semester of 2023, and 15 students in the odd semester of 2023. If the total number of postgraduate management students is 48 students.

Considering the large amount of information needed by postgraduate students, of course there is no escape from information seeking activities by postgraduate students regarding theses, one of which is the Master of Management students at Dehasen University, Bengkulu, both offline and online information search behavior which is increasingly abundant in line with current developments. Based on data obtained from the field of postgraduate students who are writing their theses, namely students in the first period of the even semester of 2022 with a total of 13 students, each student did not search for information directly in the library but instead searched for information via the internet. Due to the lack of information provided in the Dehasen Bengkulu University Library and the busy schedule of every student, the internet is the main source of information.

Postgraduate Management students prefer to search for information via the internet because the internet provides more information needed as well as the ease of access obtained via the internet and the lack of resources in the library. The platform/website that students most often use as a source of information is Google, Google Scholar due to ease of access. Not all students can search for information based on stages based on procedures so that they can find accurate and precise information, there are even students who do not search for information through trusted sources such as Sinta.

Postgraduate students start searching for information by typing keywords related to their thesis research topic. The search is carried out using a cellphone/laptop by opening the Google Scholar website. Students type keywords in search related to the title of their thesis, selecting information that is close to the title of the thesis. The topics most relevant to the research title are downloaded and used as research references.

Postgraduate Management students have different search patterns from other postgraduate students, where Postgraduate Management students only use the internet completely as a source of information in searching for information about the thesis and make Google Scholar the main source of information on the internet. The need for information is important for every individual. in everyday life.

Information can be obtained from various sources, both conventional and modern. This has spurred the development of information and communication technology that can help and facilitate the search for information as it is today. This has led to changes in information sources, previously information sources only existed in printed form, whereas currently many information sources are in electronic or digital form (Nurfadillah & Ardiansah, 2021). Changes in student behavior in seeking information have occurred. They now prefer to use search engines rather than reading books in the library. This is due to the ease and speed of access to information offered by search engines (Nurhayati et al., 2014)

Information can be obtained from various sources, both conventional and modern. So the need for information is essentially considered a creation of humans themselves. Information is anything in the form of data and facts that occurs and is then processed in such a way that it has value and benefits for its users (Purnama, 2021). The information needs of every human being are essentially different, especially students who are at any university. The motivation of each student is different, especially postgraduate students are required to have higher knowledge and skills than undergraduate students, because the scientific scope is greater and the knowledge is more in-depth (Ahlis Ahwan, 2022).

Previous research regarding the information seeking behavior of postgraduate students was conducted by Ali Sander and Anis Masruri with the title "Information Search Model for the Millennial Generation of IPI Postgraduate Students at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Class of 2018". This research aims to find out how creative IPI postgraduate students are in choosing information search models. Students are the main actors in implementing information search models, these models can make it easier for students to search for information, the knowledge that students have becomes an obstacle in itself in searching for information. For IPI postgraduate students class of 2018, it is most appropriate to use Ellis' information search model. (Sander & Masruri, 2020). The second research by Muh Ahlis Ahwan was entitled "Characteristics of Postgraduate Students in Searching for Information in College Libraries." The aim of this research was to find out how Undip linguistics postgraduate students behave in looking for information and the factors that influence this behavior. (Ahwan Expert, 2022). The third research was from Yasir Riadi et al with the title "Information Search Behavior of Fully Online Masters and Doctoral Students in Completing Studies at the Open University". The aim of this research is to find out how students with special needs at the Open University search and find information, find out what models are used in searching for information so that it can provide suggestions and input for the Open University in meeting the needs of students with special needs. (Riady et al., 2023). Based on previous research mentioned previously, this research discusses the behavior of searching for information sources in completing graduate students' theses at the Dehasen Bengkulu University Management Study Program.

This research aims to find out how information-seeking behavior is carried out by Postgraduate Students at Dehasen University Bengkulu when looking for information about theses. The results of this research use qualitative research methods, and are based on several theoretical indicators that will be used, namely Ellis' information search theory.

METHOD

The researchers utilized a qualitative approach with descriptive methods in their research. This research focuses on postgraduate students enrolled in the Management Study Program at Dehasen Bengkulu University who are currently working on their thesis. The research was conducted at Dehasen Bengkulu University situated at Jalan Meranti No.32, Sawah Lebar, Ratu Agung District, Bengkulu City. The participants in this study were postgraduate students seeking information for their thesis. The criteria for informants are postgraduate students enrolled in the Management Study Program at Dehasen Bengkulu University who are working on their thesis and have the highest GPA. Three key informants (HJS, FK, YH) were involved in this research.

The data was collected through direct observation of Postgraduate Management Students at Dehasen University Bengkulu using cellphones/computers to search for information. Conducting face-to-face interviews with informants and using photos as supplementary documentation. Analysis involves categorizing data based on specific themes, verifying the alignment of the article's content with the research topic, and then presenting the findings. The research utilized triangulation to validate the data by cross-referencing information gathered from observation, interviews, and documentation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the interview results, each informant began their search for information with the common goal of completing their master's studies. They first decided to use the internet as the information source for their thesis. The Dehasen Bengkulu University library does not provide the necessary information sources for postgraduate management students, like previous research, due to the absence of printed collections. As a result, students primarily rely on the internet for information. The informant mentioned that Google Scholar and campus journals (https:jurnal.unived.ac.id) were used to search for thesis information.
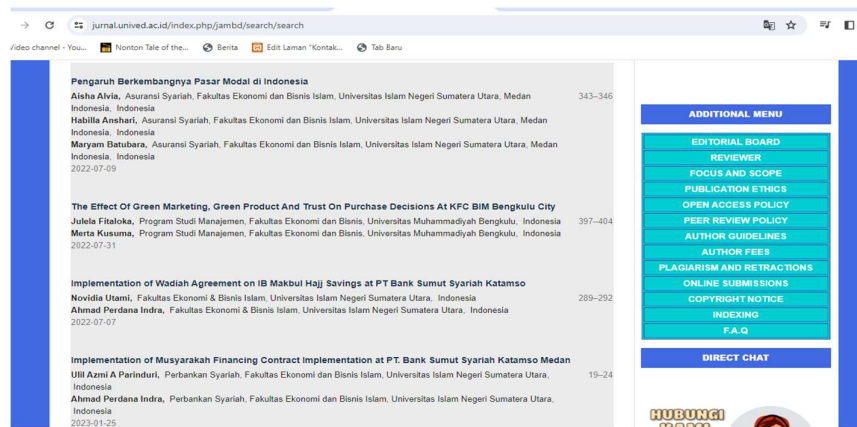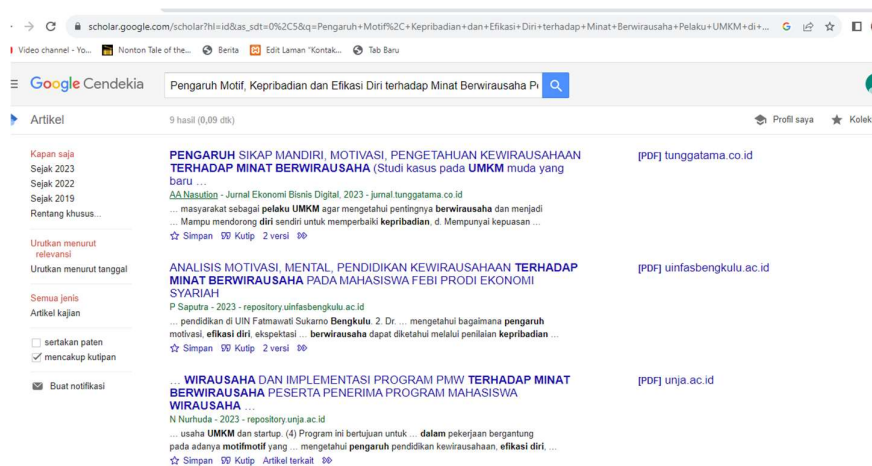

Figure 1. Unived journal website

figure 2. Google Scholar

Source: 2023 research data

The website is utilized due to its convenience and the lack of resources in the Dehasen Bengkulu University Library. Students initiated their information search by accessing the Google Scholar website and entering research topics into the search engine. Informants encountered challenges when initiating their search for information, particularly in locating the appropriate reference journal that correlated with the thesis title.

Informants do not fully engage in the activity of identifying sources during their search for information. One recommended activity is to document important information before conducting research on their topic, which is often deemed unimportant. The informant from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) mentioned that if they document the materials to be searched for, they tend not to do it as they can recall the necessary information. Informant YH prepared a list of search material in advance to facilitate the retrieval of information, contrasting with the previous method.

The relevance and accuracy of information to the research topic determine its suitability. Keywords for information media searches are selected based on the research topic of each informant's thesis. When searching for information, the informant also seeks assistance from friends to locate the necessary information.

Students initiate their information search by accessing their computer or cellphone, opening the Google Scholar website and Unived journal, entering keywords in the search bar, reviewing the title and abstract of the source, and downloading a journal that aligns with their thesis research topic. Once students locate the necessary information on Google Scholar, they no longer search on other websites. This can save them 1-2 hours per day starting at 20.00 WIB. Challenges in information retrieval include locating past research and obtaining information relevant to the current research thesis.

The informants compared the information obtained from one source with another based on interview results. One informant did not cross-reference the information gathered from different sources, claiming that the information obtained was entirely adequate. The informant also lacked awareness of the significance of comparing information. The acquired information is deemed

adequate, requiring additional time for comparisons with other sources.

Monitoring the information development at sources is deemed somewhat insignificant but is still conducted sporadically, as the acquired information is adequate for research purposes. Distrust in current irrelevant information leads to a lack of monitoring of recent developments, and ignorance of sources is another contributing factor.

Informants reported that they did not engage in activities to extract or organize the information obtained, according to interview results. The informant cross-references the title, abstract, and contents of the journal to ensure it aligns with the required information. The informant exited the webpage used for information search upon completion. The informant expressed that the information gathered was adequate to fulfill their information requirements during the search.

Efficiently and effectively completing all stages of the model (Ellis et al., 1993) involves starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, extracting, verifying, and ending. Management graduate students demonstrate proficiency in formulating precise research statements, selecting pertinent sources of information, employing suitable information search strategies, critically evaluating information, synthesizing information from diverse sources, and utilizing information to address problems or make decisions. The informant has completed all stages except for the extraction and verification activities.

The behavior of seeking information sources to complete the thesis of Postgraduate Management Students at Dehasen University, Bengkulu, as described above, can be considered commendable. Various factors such as psychological conditions, demographics, societal role, environment, and information source characteristics can influence the behavior of seeking information media (Wilson, 1999).

CONCLUSION

Postgraduate students in the Management Study Program at Dehasen Bengkulu University follow similar search patterns when looking for information to complete their thesis. These patterns include starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, extracting, verifying, and ending. Variations in factors lead to differences in students' information-seeking behavior. Students' online search behavior can be indicative of their unique character traits. Postgraduate Management students at Dehasen Bengkulu University rely on the internet for information due to the lack of resources provided by the university library.

Further research is required to explore the unique and intricate characteristics of each student. It is essential to acquire new discoveries that are varied and thorough. This study aims to elucidate the factors influencing postgraduate students' information-seeking behavior in the library.

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