

## Information Seeking Behavior Patterns of SMKN 1 Medan Students Regarding Contemporary Idols

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**Abstract:** This study discusses the information-seeking behavior patterns of SMKN 1 Medan students regarding contemporary idols. The research aims to understand how the information-seeking behavior patterns of SMKN 1 Medan students unfold in the context of contemporary idols. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that SMKN 1 Medan students exhibit unique patterns when seeking information about contemporary idols, although there are some similarities with the Information Search Process theory previously proposed by Khultau. These patterns begin with problem recognition and the identification of information needs, followed by selecting a search system, formulating queries/keywords, conducting in-depth searches, filtering acquired information, and finally presenting the information. This outlines the information-seeking behavior patterns of SMKN 1 Medan students concerning contemporary idols.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini membahas Pola Perilaku Pencarian Informasi Siswa SMKN 1 Medan Seputar Idola Masa Kini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana pola perilaku siswa SMKN 1 Medan seputar idola masa kini. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah kualitatif, dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan yaitu, wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa SMKN 1 Medan memiliki pola tersendiri dalam mencari informasi seputar idola masa kini walaupun terdapat beberapa kesamaan cara dengan Teori Information Search Process yang sebelumnya dikemukakan oleh Khultau. Dimulai dari mengenali masalah dan kebutuhan informasi yang dicari, memilih sistem pencarian, merumuskan query/ kata kunci, melakukan pencarian yang mendalam, menyaring informasi yang didapat hingga melakukan penyajian informasi. Demikian pola perilaku pencarian informasi siswa SMKN 1 Medan seputar idola masa kini.



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## INTRODUCTION

In this era of rapid technological advancement, information is indispensable in people's lives. Individuals actively seek out information until they find the specific information they need. It can be argued that information is just as essential as basic needs. Information can be defined as data, symbols, or numbers that have been processed and communicated to others, providing value to those who require it (Cahyani & Christiani, 2015).

Different segments of society require varying types of information due to several influencing factors. An individual's information-seeking behavior is influenced by various aspects, including their social life, information technology, and available resources (Purwaningtyas, 2022). According to Pamen as cited by Ishak (2006), one of the most common factors is occupation, including professional activities, preferred fields of study, habits, and work environment (Ishak, 2006). Additionally,

Sulistyo (2004) identifies several factors that drive an individual's need for information: 1) the range of available information, 2) the intended use of the information, 3) personal backgrounds, motivational orientations, and individual user characteristics, 4) the social, economic, and political systems in the user's environment, and 5) the consequences of information use (Sulistyo, 2004).

The most common context for information seeking behavior is found in the field of education. In education, students are the primary seekers of information. When students are assigned tasks by their teachers to grasp the subject matter, they will make every effort to search for the required information until they obtain it. This information-seeking process aligns with their specific information needs.

There are numerous methods that can be employed to acquire the necessary information, such as conducting online searches on the internet, utilizing electronic journals, and employing various search engines.

The information-seeking process gives rise to a behavior often referred to as information seeking behavior. Information Seeking Behavior entails seeking information as a consequence of the need to fulfil certain objectives. Throughout the search, individuals may interact with manual information systems such as newspapers or libraries, or with computer-based systems like the World Wide Web (Wilson, 2000).

There are six aspects to consider in information seeking according to Khultau as cited in Pendit (2006), including:

1. Initiation: At the onset, when an individual first becomes aware of the need for certain knowledge, they often feel uncertain and anxious. This is because they recognize the requirement for information.
2. Selection: This involves identifying and choosing a general topic.
3. Exploration: It's characterized by feelings of confusion, uncertainty, and doubt that tend to increase over time, compelling users to initiate their information search.

4. Formulation: This stage marks a focus or clarity on the information discovered during the information search.
5. Collection: Refers to the gathering of information that is focused on a particular topic. It's a process during which there is effective and efficient interaction between the user and the information system.
6. Presentation: Involves presenting what has been searched for and discovered (Pendit, 2006).

The Information Search Process theory is a common framework used by individuals to convey their experiences, enabling them to share with others, with a system serving as the foundation for this sharing (Kuhlthau, 1991).

The conclusion drawn from the Information Search Process is the acquisition of new understanding or a solution that is shared with those who require it. In essence, information signifies the outcomes where users mutually share their newfound knowledge (Septian & Arfa, 2019).

Individuals' information search processes vary from one person to another, yet there may still be similarities in how they seek information. Differences in information-seeking are related to the openness to experiences, agreement, and information needs. Not every student employs the same methods in seeking the information they require (Browne et al., 2017).

Students at SMKN 1 Medan can be considered as part of Generation Z, a generation closely tied to technology and the internet for fulfilling their needs. They don't just seek academic information but also information beyond the academic realm (Wahyuni et al., 2020). This also applies to the phenomenon of idolization in the present day, which is characteristic of adolescence. "Admiring celebrities as idols or role models is a normal part of identity development in childhood and adolescence" (Maltby et al., 2006).

By idolizing someone, students undoubtedly engage in information-seeking related to their idols. Through the media (the internet), teenagers obtain information

about their idols. The rapid development of media today makes it easy for individuals to access various types of information, including details about the lives of their idolized celebrities. Objects of idolization come from various domains of life such as entertainment, music, political leaders, community figures, and pop stars. Through social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok, teenagers can closely monitor the daily activities and continue to interact with their idols (Dwiratri, 2020).

Previous research on information-seeking behavior has been conducted by several authors, including a study by Shendy Septian titled "Student Behavior in Information Seeking in the Library of SMA Negeri 1 Kota Tegal for the Academic Year 2016/2017." Additionally, a study by Desi Wahyuni et al. in 2020 titled "Information Seeking Behavior of Generation Z in SMA Negeri 8 Pekanbaru."

Based on the issues outlined above, the author is interested in investigating how students at SMKN 1 Medan, in this age of technological advancement, fulfill their information needs regarding their idols.

## METHODS

In the research process of studying the behavior of students at SMKN 1 Medan in meeting their information needs, a qualitative research method was employed, specifically using a case study research design. Qualitative research, according to Moleong (2012), involves collecting descriptive data through words conveyed by participants, which can be observed by the researcher (Moleong, 2018). The aim of this study is to gain a deep understanding from the chosen informants or participants through purposive sampling, a sampling technique. The sample selection in this research includes representatives from two departments at SMKN 1 Medan: tourism services and office administration.

Data collection was conducted through observation and interviews. The researcher opted to use a semi-structured interview method. In the data analysis phase,

the researcher will categorize and extract meaning from the interviewees' responses based on their experiences. The data analysis process involves steps such as data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Ramadhan & Irhandayaningsih, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Information Seeking Behavior of SMKN 1 Medan students is guided by the Information Search Process Theory, which consists of six stages in information seeking:

Table 1. Information Search Process Theory-Based Information Retrieval Phases.

No	Stages in ISP	Common Actions in Each Stage	Appropriate Tasks According to Khultau
1.	Initiation	Recognizing information needs	Recognizing
2.	Selection	Identifying a general topic	Identifying
3.	Exploration	Investigating information about the topic in general	Investigating
4.	Formulation	Formulating a focus	Formulating
5.	Collection	Collecting information related to the focus	Collecting
6.	Presentation	Completing information retrieval	Completing

In the research conducted by the author, not all students behave in information seeking in accordance with the information search process theory. Instead, the students of SMKN 1 Medan have their own way of seeking information about their idols.

The first stage in searching for information about idols by SMKN 1 Medan students is Recognizing the problem and the information needed. Information users, in this case, SMKN 1 Medan students, can recognize the problem and the information they need through motivation. Motivation can come from internal factors (curiosity

within oneself, for example, when a teacher asks a question) and external factors (the environment, for example, current trends or issues). From these factors, users become "aware" of the problem they want to search for. At this stage, users already know what information they are looking for.

Students of SMKN 1 Medan state that their motivation for seeking information is their curiosity about the lives of their idols. The curiosity they possess arises because students always want to know the latest information about their idols. This is one of the characteristics of today's adolescents, known as the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), where they worry about missing out on the latest information.

In this context, the idols of SMKN 1 Medan students are primarily K-POP artists who are currently widely covered in the media, and some also idolize popular politicians. The information they typically seek about their idols includes the idol's biography, updates on their latest life events, and the events they will be participating in.

The second stage for SMKN 1 Medan students in searching for information about their idols is Selecting the search system. In information retrieval, they first choose a search system. Based on the research conducted, the majority of students are already knowledgeable and capable of selecting a search system by utilizing emerging information technology such as Google and popular social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter. These websites and social media provide engaging, diverse, and interactive information in various formats, including visuals, audio, and text.

The third stage carried out by students of SMKN 1 Medan is Formulating Queries/Keywords. Using keywords in information retrieval facilitates users in finding the required information. Based on the research conducted, SMKN 1 Medan students indirectly use keywords when searching for information about their idols. Although they may not fully comprehend Boolean logic, students are already able to formulate keywords

with their needs by including the core topic and title of the information.

The fourth stage for SMKN 1 Medan students in seeking information about their idols involves Conducting In-Depth Searches. Students conduct in-depth searches using predefined search systems to facilitate information retrieval. SMKN 1 Medan students typically use information technology like mobile phones when initially searching for information.

Utilizing gadgets when searching for information allows users to access information anytime and anywhere, making them more selective in their internet searches, thus ensuring that the information matches their needs.

Furthermore, the approach adopted by SMKN 1 Medan students for conducting in-depth searches involves cross verifying the obtained information for accuracy, reliability, and relevance to their specific information requirements.

The fifth stage involves Filtering the acquired information. Filtering information is a crucial step that must be performed, and in this regard, students of SMKN 1 Medan have developed the ability to filter the information they receive. Information needs to be filtered to ensure it is genuinely valid and relevant as per their requirements. Typically, SMKN 1 Medan students filter information by consulting multiple websites and making comparisons. Subsequently, they identify information that is valid for consumption.

The sixth stage for SMKN 1 Medan students in searching for information about their idols is Presenting the information. The search concludes when students have found the information they require and proceed to present it. The presentation carried out by SMKN 1 Medan students involves summarization, recollection, turning it into a lesson, and finding motivation. This marks the final stage of the information retrieval process typically followed by SMKN 1 Medan students when seeking information about their idols.

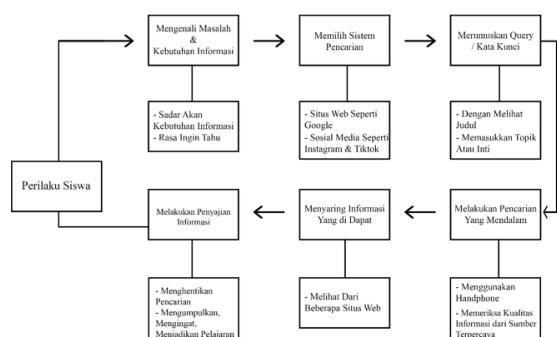


Figure 1. Information Seeking Patterns Regarding Idols Among SMKN 1 Medan Students

## CONCLUSION

Based on the previous discussion, the author concludes that the information-seeking behavior of SMKN 1 Medan students does not entirely follow the stages of the information search process theory. SMKN 1 Medan students have their own distinct pattern of information seeking.

Firstly, SMKN 1 Medan students, in their quest for information, begin by recognizing their information needs and problems. In this stage, students become aware of their need for information and develop a curiosity to seek information about their idols. The next stage involves selecting the search system to be used. SMKN 1 Medan students typically opt for search systems like Google, searching websites, and popular social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter.

Subsequently, they formulate queries or keywords. In this stage, while students may not fully grasp the proper formulation of keywords, they are capable of searching for information by inputting titles and core topics they are seeking. Following this is the stage of conducting in-depth searches. When searching for information, students utilize gadgets like smartphones. Additionally, they assess the quality of information from reliable sources.

The next stage is the process of filtering the obtained information by comparing data from various websites to ensure that the information is genuinely relevant for consumption. The final stage involves presenting the information. SMKN 1 Medan students halt their search and proceed to summarize, record, learn from, and gain motivation from the information obtained.

It is hoped that SMKN 1 Medan students will develop even more effective information retrieval strategies to meet their information needs. Effective strategies involve more systematic searches and the application of Boolean Logic to refine their keyword selection when using search engines.

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