Joyful Information Seeking in Serious Leisure Practice

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Abstract

This poster presents early findings of an ongoing research project about Human Information Behaviour (HIB) in the context of Serious Leisure (SL). The term of SL was originally coined by Robert Stebbins in 1982. He defines this concept as continuous pursuit of an amateur, hobby, or volunteer activity that fascinates its participants with its complexity and challenges. SL is mainly profound, enduring and often requires commitment, skills and experience (Stebbins, 2001). SL which can be done in various forms of collecting, making, tinkering, arts, games and sports usually brings several personal and social benefits for the participants such as self-actualisation, fostering confidence, self-gratification and sense of achievement. Also, SL can reduce risk of depression, loneliness and boredom. As a result, SL participants experience positive psychological wellbeing such as durable pleasure and resilience. SL helps people to reduce everyday life stress and increase self-confidence to be more empowered to cope with life challenges. Therefore, SL can contribute in developing a joyful and hopeful perspective for the participants (Iwasaki, 2007; Adesoye and Ajibua, 2015; Veal, 2017; Lee et al, 2018).

The informational aspect of SL is a productive topic in HIB (Hartel, 2003; Stebbins, 2009; Fulton, 2009, Hartel, et al. 2016) because it entails constant pursuit and creation of knowledge and often involves several types of information related actions including identifying information needs, seeking, browsing, sharing, using and producing. Therefore, during recent years informational aspects of SL have been explored in different contexts such as gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2006, 2010), coin collecting (Case, 2010), urban exploration (Fulton, 2017), museum visiting (Skov, 2013), ultra-running (Gorichanaz, 2015, 2017), knitting (Prigoda & McKenzie, 2007), and genealogy (Hershkovitz & Hardof-Jaffe, 2017).

In these studies various facets of HIB have been examined and this poster presents some findings about the emotional aspect of information seeking in this ground. This is an
exploratory qualitative study using semi-structured interview as its data collection technique and Thematic Analysis as the data analysis method. The early findings indicate that SL participants do not consider their information seeking as a tedious task to complete or an urgent problem to be solved. They enthusiastically look for information to actually enjoy a hobby or passionately participate in an entirely volunteer action. Furthermore, they do not always need information for themselves. They frequently seek information to share it with their peers in a community of interest. Thus, they enjoy a joyful information seeking experience. Besides, information seeking in SL has a positive impact on their overall wellbeing as it provides them with numerous opportunities to feel a deep sense of pleasure through searching for appropriate and meaningful information. In terms of practical implications, the researcher believes promoting SL can contribute in enhancing general wellbeing in society and providing easy and efficient access to relevant and reliable information can play a substantial role in this context. Overall, this is a productive area to generate positive impact on the society which brings numerous personal and social benefits for different groups of people.

References


