

## Joyful Information Seeking in Serious Leisure Practice

Yazdan Mansourian, PhD

Charles Sturt University

Wagga Wagga, Australia

[ymansourian@csu.edu.au](mailto:ymansourian@csu.edu.au)

### 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

- Adesoye A. A., & Ajibua M. A. (2015). Exploring the concept of leisure and its impact on quality of life. *American Journal of Social Science Research*, 1(2), 77-84.
- Case, D.O. (2010). A model of the information seeking and decision making of online coin buyers. *Information Research*, 15(4), retrieved from <http://InformationR.net/ir/15-4/paper448.html>
- Fulton, C. (2009). The pleasure principle: The power of positive affect in information seeking. *Aslib Proceedings*, 61(3), 245–261.
- Fulton, C. (2017). Urban exploration: Secrecy and information creation and sharing in a hobby context. *Library & Information Science Research*, 39(3), 189-198.
- Gorichanaz, T. (2015). Information on the run: Experiencing information during an ultramarathon. *Information Research*, 20(4), retrieved from <http://InformationR.net/ir/20-4/paper697.html>
- Gorichanaz, T. (2017). There is no shortcut: Building understanding from information in ultrarunning. *Journal of Information Science*, 43(5), 713-722.
- Hershkovitz, A. & Hardof-Jaffe, S. (2017). Genealogy as a lifelong learning endeavour. *Leisure*, 41(4), 535-560.

- Hartel, J. (2003). The serious leisure frontier in library and information science: Hobby domains. *Knowledge Organization*, 30(3/4), 228–238.
- Hartel, J. (2006). Information activities and resources in an episode of gourmet cooking. *Information Research*, 12(1), retrieved from <http://InformationR.net/ir/12-1/paper282.html>
- Hartel, J. (2010). Managing documents at home for serious leisure: A case study of the hobby of gourmet cooking. *Journal of Documentation*, 66(6), 847–874.
- Hartel, J. (2014). An interdisciplinary platform for information behaviour research in the liberal arts hobby. *Journal of Documentation*, 70(5), 945–962.
- Hartel, J., Cox, A.M. & Griffin, B.L. (2016). Information activity in serious leisure. *Information Research*, 21(4), retrieved from <http://InformationR.net/ir/21-4/paper728.html>
- Heo, J., Stebbins, R. A., Kim, J., & Lee, I. (2013). Serious leisure, life satisfaction, and health of older adults. *Leisure Sciences*, 35(1), 16–32.
- Iwasaki, Y. (2007). Leisure and quality of life in an international and multicultural context: What are major pathways linking leisure to quality of life? *Social Indicators Research*, 82, 233–264.
- Lee, C., Sung, Y.-T., Zhou, Y., & Lee, S. (2018). The relationships between the seriousness of leisure activities, social support and school adaptation among Asian international students in the U.S. *Leisure Studies*, 37(2), 197-210.
- Lee, K. & Ewert, A. (2019). Understanding the motivations of serious leisure participation: A self-determination approach, *Annals of Leisure Research*, 22(1), 76-96.
- Prigoda, E. & McKenzie, P. J. (2007). Purls of wisdom: A collectivist study of human information behaviour in a public library knitting group. *Journal of Documentation*, 63(1), 90–114.
- Stebbins, R. A. (1982). Serious leisure: A conceptual statement. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 25, 251-272.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2001). Serious leisure, *Society*, May/June 38(4), 53-57.
- Stebbins, R.A. (2009). Leisure and its relationship to library and information science: Bridging the gap. *Library Trends*, 57(4), 618–631.

Veal, A. J. (2017). The serious leisure perspective and the experience of leisure. *Leisure Sciences*, 39(3), 205-223.