

Abstract

Introduction and Objectives: Several factors play a role in the process of searching and information retrieval in the Web environment. In this regard, the contextual factors including the experience and information search skills play an important role in the process of searching and information retrieval on the web. On the other, searching for information is a kind of problem solving activity. As in this process, the person begins a conscious search for information by observing the vacuum in his knowledge. Information search tactics represent the key level and search activity throughout the information search process. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between problem solving styles and contextual factors with Web search tactics among graduate students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences.

Materials and Method: The present study was an applied research and a cross-sectional (descriptive-analytic) study. Data were collected through questionnaires and file registration records. The research population consisted of all postgraduate students studying at Kerman University of Medical Sciences. A sample of 44 people was selected using the sampling formula. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics and analytical statistics were used with SPSS software.

Results: The navigation tactic with an average of 3.7 was common tactic used by users. The query tactic with an average of 3.5 was most commonly used among low search engine users. The average use of query tactics and navigation tactics for experienced people was lower than those with little experience. So experienced users were using less query tactics and more navigating. The results showed that there was no relation between problem solving styles and search tactics. The search skill was related to the level of familiarity with the databases and the way information was searched from the databases. Experienced people had more confidence in solving the problem than those with little experience. Experimenting with experienced people was more than the skill of searching for people with little experience. The contextual factors influenced the information search tactics on the web, but the problem solving styles had little effect.

Conclusion: As user education can enhance the search process on the Web, it is suggested that workshops be organized and designers tailor the information systems to a variety of user information search skills.

Keywords: problem solving styles, search tactics, information search, contextual factors, graduate students, web