

Application for ISIC doctoral Workshop 2016, Zadar, Croatia
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Information behaviour and special information needs of gender minorities

Introduction:

The aim of my doctoral thesis is to study information behaviour of gender minorities and parents of intersex children as well as to investigate production and distribution of information on gender minorities. Gender minorities consist of people who have some kind of conflict between their psychological and biological gender or who are not unambiguously women or men: transgender (transmen, transwomen, cross-dressers and gender nonconforming people) and intersex people.

Gender minorities have been studied at medical, psychiatric, psychological, sociological and anthropological fields for the last couple of decades (see e.g. Vidal-Ortiz 2008), but there is only a little knowledge concerning their special information needs. Available information on gender minorities can be outdated, unreliable or even misleading when it comes to terms, laws, rights and medical care (Pohjanen & Kortelainen 2016). Reliable and relevant information of gender minorities is vital for the target group of my thesis in order to build up their gender identity, and it is also needed by their family, in medical professions as well as broader in society. Individuals belonging to gender minorities live in a social reality, where they are outsiders of the categories of male and female even from the moments of birth, when the very first question to the parents would be: "Is it a boy or a girl?" These two categories of gender are all the time repeated and confirmed in school, sports, media and all around in our social world. This creates the context where information behaviour of the target group takes place.

Working plan:

My doctoral thesis will be an article-based dissertation consisting of four peer-reviewed scientific articles. The first article of my thesis published in Journal of Documentation, "Transgender information behaviour" (Pohjanen & Kortelainen 2016) provided new understanding on information needs and changes of the needs of transgender individuals, and utilized information sources in information seeking and sharing. Results of this study indicated multiple barriers to preventing receiving relevant information of transgender phenomenon and significance of other transgendered as a source of information.

At the moment I am working on the second substudy. It will extend the topic of my first substudy by including individuals from all groups of gender minorities: transmen, transwomen, cross-dressers, gender nonconforming people, and intersex people. Research questions of this substudy concern information needs and sources gender minorities use and differences between gender minority groups. Barriers and contributing factors influencing to target groups' information behaviour will be studied. In order to answer these research questions questionnaire to all gender minorities and semistructured interviews from 20 to 30 people will be made at spring and summer 2016. Article based on this study will be offered to peer-reviewed journal at the end of the year. Theoretical background of the substudy is

based on information behaviour theories and models in which surrounding reality and social interaction are central (e. g. Chatman, 1999 and 1991; Williamson 1998; Wilson, 1997).

My third substudy will focus on information behaviour of parents of intersex children and data will be collected with interviews. This substudy will be made at 2017 and the third article of my thesis will be written based on this study. The fourth substudy will investigate production and distribution of information on gender minorities. Results of the fourth substudy will be compared to information needs found in three previous substudies in order to locate possible areas where more information is needed more. An article based on this study will be offered to peer-reviewed journal at spring 2019. My doctoral studies will be accomplished at the end of year 2019. My research plan was accepted at February 2016 by my doctoral follow-up group consisting of two professors and one docent participants in fields of scientific communication, gender studies and cultural anthropology.

Discussion at ISIC 2016:

Research challenges I would like to talk about with my colleagues at ISIC doctoral workshop are related to the models and theories of information behaviour: How the theoretical background should be formulated when theories or models define key terms (e. g. information behaviour) differently or if the theories have different metatheoretical background?

I would also like to discuss study of the context: In which way the context of information seeking can be studied if the context is the whole surrounding culture, and how it can be re-formed to questions in questionnaires and interviews? I would also like to discuss about methodological concerns when studying an intimate and socially challenging topic.

References

Chatman, E. A. (1999), "A Theory of life in the round", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, Vol. 50 No. 3, pp. 207–217.

Chatman, E. A. (1991), "Life in the small world: Applicability of gratification theory to information-seeking behavior", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, Vol. 42 No. 6, pp. 438–449.

Pohjanen, A. and Kortelainen, T. (2016), "Transgender information behaviour", *Journal of Documentation*, Vol. 72 No. 1, pp. 172–190.

Vidal-Ortiz, S. (2008), "Transgender and transsexual studies: Sociology's influence and future steps", *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 433–450.

Williamson, K. (1998), "Discovered by Chance: The Role of Incidental Information Acquisition in an Ecological Model of Information Use", *Library & Information Science Research*, Vol 20 No. 3, pp. 23–40.

Wilson, T.D. (1997), "Information behaviour: an interdisciplinary perspective", *Information Processing and Management*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 551–572.

CURRICULUM VITAE

4th of March 2016

ISIC 2016

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Qualifications:

26.9.2013 *Master of Arts.* University of Oulu.
Major: Information Studies, minor: Marketing.
Thesis title: "Transgendered identity building oriented information behaviour"

26.5.2011 *Bachelor of Arts.* University of Oulu.
Major: Information Studies, minor: Literature, movie studies.

Language skills:

Finnish – native speaker
English – excellent command
Swedish – basic communication skills

Funding:

1. University of Oulu, Faculty of Humanities: Funding to Doctoral thesis, 6 months.
2. Kone Foundation: Funding to Doctoral thesis 1st year, 12 months.

Research interests:

Information behaviour Gender minorities Health literacy

List of Publications:

Peer-reviewed journal articles:

1. Pohjanen, A. and Kortelainen, T. (2016), "Transgender information behaviour", *Journal of Documentation*, Vol. 72 No. 1, pp. 172–190.

Other publications:

1. Pohjanen, A. (2013), "Transsukupuolisten identiteetin rakentamiseen liittyvä informaatiokäyttäytyminen", [Transgendered identity building oriented information behaviour] Master's thesis. Published in Culture for all –portal (in Finnish).
http://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/doc/monikulttuurisuus_kansio/Pohjanen_Aira_Pro_gradu.pdf

Guest Lectures:

1. Pohjanen, A. 17.11.2015. "Information needs and information barriers of gender minorities", Guest lecturer in course *Basics of information studies*, University of Oulu.
2. Pohjanen, A. (16.3.2016, forthcoming) "Information behaviour of gender minorities." Guest lecturer in course *Health information and literacy*, University of Oulu.

Work experience:

9/2015 – 12/2015 Information Specialist, substitute, *Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Library*.

Duties included: Information service at desk and in virtual chat, interlibrary loans, journal registration, and teaching information seeking to marketing students for their thesis.

6/2014 – 12/2014 Archive Assistant, *The Finnish Defence Forces, North Finland Logistics Regiment, Archive and Registry*.

Duties included: Registration and archiving to incoming and outgoing documents, information services, and archive arrangements.

11/2013 – 5/2014 Coordinator, substitute, *Regional State Administrative Agency for Eastern-Finland, Archive*.

Duties included: Team leading in registration, information services of archived files, corresponsive of information architecture in organization, archive arrangements and transfers, and part of information security team.

9/2012 – 9/2013 Library Assistant, part-time, *University of Oulu, Library*. Duties included: Information service and shelving.

5/2013 – 8/2013 Summer Trainee, substitute for Information Specialist, *Bank of Finland, Library*.

Duties included: Information service, cataloging, database updates, book acquisitions and invoices.

6/2012 – 8/2012 Trainee, *National Audiovisual Archive, Department of cataloging and documentation*.

Duties included: Cataloging incoming movies and television shows to movie database.

ISIC 2016 Pre-Conference Doctoral Workshop Submissions

8/2010 – 5/2011 Library Assistant, part-time, *Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Library.*

Duties included: Information service and shelving.

6/2010 – 7/2010 Library Trainee, *Oulu Film Centre, Library and archive.*

Duties included: Information service, cataloging, registration for incoming journals, and registration and archiving of paper cuttings.

6/2009 – 7/2009 Library Assistant, *City of Oulu, Library.*

Duties included: Information service in magazine unit and registration for journals, magazines and newspapers.

Awards:

2016 Medal of 3rd class of active student union work,

Student Union of University of Oulu.

2014 Recognition and diploma of the thesis of the year,

Librarians' Foundation in Finland. Grant 500 €