

## Disaster-Related Information-Seeking Behavior of The Community

Hermawan

*Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administrative Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia*

**ABSTRACT:** This research aims to determine the information-seeking behavior of the community affected by an earthquake in Sembalun Lawang Village, Lombok, Indonesia, in meeting their disaster-related information. This was a descriptive study with a quantitative approach. The samples were victims of the 2018 earthquake living in Sembalun Lawang Village. Using the Slovin formula, we obtained 98 community members as the study samples. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Findings confirm that the community members of Sembalun Lawang Village, as disaster victims, show good information-seeking behavior related to the 2018 earthquake in their area. Findings also reveal the supporting and inhibiting factors for such behavior. The supporting factors include the high enthusiasm of the community to seek information. They also show good social factors like good communication and social interaction and the excellent characteristics of information sources. The inhibiting factor, however, is also related to their characteristic in looking for information, in which they only focus on information needed at the present time without considering the one they may need in the future.

**Keywords:** Information-seeking behavior, information, disaster victims, earthquake

### I. INTRODUCTION

Information is crucial in human life. Under disaster circumstances, it can be a life-saving instrument; it can answer questions or determine choices and decisions in action.[1] Under normal conditions, everyone needs information to support their activities. It can be concluded that information is an idea, concept, or decision that is made into something meaningful and can influence someone. Information will provide standards and direct decisions to achieve better-predetermined goals based on the information obtained.[2] However, it cannot be denied that the widely spread information is not all of high quality. So, as an information user, one must be wise when receiving and processing all the information obtained to match one's requirements. In addition, one must also pay attention to the quality of the information by performing the right information search process to obtain the correct information. Information comes from an event, no matter what form the event takes. In other words, people need information to complete and support their lives. However, people must be careful when taking information because it can have double meanings, real and unreal, so it is understandable that information can empower the community or vice versa.[3][4]

In 2018, the people of Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, witnessed an earthquake in their area, including the local people of Sembalun Lawang Village. As disaster victims, these people need various information about the disaster, including how to prepare for and deal with or react to such a disaster should it occur in the future. As such, we were interested in exploring the topic of the information-seeking behavior of the people affected by the earthquake by having the local people of Sembalun as the research subjects. The benefits of the information under disaster circumstances are a) increasing knowledge and public service [5], b) reducing uncertainty, c) reducing the risk of failure, d) reducing unnecessary diversity, and e) providing standards, rules, measures, and decisions to determine goals and objectives. By providing accurate information supported by the trust of the public as recipients of the information, the disaster management aspects at the pre-disaster stage have been fulfilled.[6]

The study dug deeper into the tendency of disaster victims to search for information related to the disaster and the supporting and inhibiting factors for such behavior. There has not been much research on this topic, so this study is expected to add insights into the topic.

## II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study has two research problems: 1) What is the information-seeking behavior of people affected by the earthquake in Sembalun Lawang Village, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara? What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for earthquake victims in searching for information?

## III. RESEARCH PURPOSES

This study analyzes the information-seeking behavior of people affected by the earthquake in Sembalun Lawang Village, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, and the supporting and inhibiting factors for earthquake victims in searching for information to anticipate similar future events.

## IV. THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Disaster-related Information

Grouping information helps to see its nature and characteristics. Information can be grouped into two types:

1. Oral information is not discussed in books because, apart from being very large in quantity and difficult to measure and prove, it is also less useful for general human knowledge development. In the context of a disaster, information can come from traditional leaders, mountain caretakers, disaster victims, etc.
2. Recorded information is based on reality, is considered valid, and can be taken into official consideration by individuals and society. Recorded information is divided into scientific information and unscientific information. This information can come from government institutions, academics, SAR (search and rescue) teams, researchers, etc. [7]

In literature, information is differentiated between primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary information is first published by a publisher or a source completely and originally, such as original research studies, interviews, speeches, diaries, letters, official documents, and raw data. Secondary information interprets or analyses primary sources. Finally, tertiary information is information or writing from certain sources that can be used to find or trace secondary sources of information.

### Sources of Disaster-related Information

Information sources are media or means that bridge information users and the information itself. Theoretically, information sources are divided into several categories; [8]

1. Documentary sources are formal sources, written or recorded.
2. Secondary information sources contain information from primary information sources.
3. Tertiary sources do not contain reviews of scientific disciplines but only provide primary and secondary literature reviews. This source is used as a tool to use primary and secondary sources.

### Needs of Disaster-related Information

Krakauer (2020) [8] mentions that information needs are based on the urge to understand, master the environment, answer curiosity, and explore, starting with questions and looking for answers. There are many types of information needs because each person's information needs are very diverse. Information-seeking behavior emerges due to the demand to fulfill information needs. Information-seeking behavior is the action of a person or group to fulfill their information needs.

### Disaster-related Information-seeking Behavior

Information-seeking behavior is an action carried out by a person or group to fulfill their information needs. Abdelraheem (2021) [9] state that information behavior is the entire pattern of human behavior related to information. According to Wilson (2000) [10], there are several limitations regarding information behavior and its aspects, including:

- Information behavior is the totality of human behavior related to sources and channels of information, including search behavior and use of information, both actively and passively.
- Information-seeking behavior is an effort to find a specific goal due to the need to fulfill a specific goal.
- Information-seeking behavior is behavior at the micro level, in the form of searching behavior shown by a person when interacting with an information system. This behavior consists of various forms of interaction with the system, both at the level of interaction with the computer and at the intellectual and mental level.
- Information user behavior consists of physical and mental actions when a person combines the information they find with their previous basic knowledge.

### Models of Information-seeking Behavior

Wilson suggests several characteristics of information-seeking behavior based on his research on social researchers, scientists, and engineers. Behimehr (2020) [11] groups these activities into;

1. Starting means that the individual starts looking for information, for example, asking an expert in one of the scientific fields in which the individual is interested.
2. Chaining is the activity of writing things considered important in a small note; it is a blueprint for a particular piece of writing.
3. Browsing is the activity of searching for structured or semi-structured information. In this activity, the user already knows the information needed. This stage can be done by searching from various sources of information, whether looking for information from other people, searching on the Internet, or other media.
4. Differentiating is an activity of dividing or reducing data or selecting which data will be used and which ones are not necessary. This stage usually differentiates information sources and filters them based on the reference quality according to what is needed.
5. Monitoring means searching for the latest (up-to-date) news or information.
6. Extracting is the activity of taking useful information from a particular information source, such as a file from the World Wide Web (www).
7. Verifying means checking the size of the data taken.
8. Ending is the end of the information search and knowing the final results of information searches.

### Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Information Search

Supporting and inhibiting factors are part of everything, including searching for information. Obstacles in seeking information are anything that prevents someone from obtaining certain information. Wilson separates barrier variables into three types, including:

1. Personal character consists of cognitive and psychological factors (factors related to an individual's motivation to behave), selective pressure (a situation where a person is more open to ideas aligning with their interests, needs, or attitudes), the level of education and basic knowledge a person has, emotional characteristics (obstacles related to mental and emotional conditions when searching for information), and demographic variables (obstacles in the form of age, gender, socio-economic status, and others).
2. Social factors (social/interpersonal/role-related barriers) connect individuals with other people during the information search process. In this case, obstacles can be a person's attitude.
3. Environmental factors refer to time, geography, national culture, economic constraints, and character of information sources.

## V. RESEARCH METHODS

This was a descriptive study with a quantitative approach. The method used for data analysis was descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistical analysis aims to get a general picture of the various characteristics of an existing phenomenon or problem (Asra in Rofiqoh, 2019:75). This research uses the mode value (the value that appears most frequently) of each item to measure and provide conclusions from the indicators that have been studied.

This study included the 2018 earthquake disaster victims living in Sembalun Lawang Village, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. In mid-2018, the population was 4,444. Using the Slovin formula with a precision of 10% and a confidence level of 90%, the number of samples in this study was 97.7, rounded up to 98.

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were the Sembalun Lawang Village community members experiencing the 2018 earthquake; data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. Secondary data came from documents, journals, and books relevant to the research theme.

## VI. RESULT

The following part presents the data collected from the Sembalun Lawang Village community members who experienced the 2018 earthquake. The data were collected using a questionnaire.

### Models of Information-seeking Behavior

#### 1. Starting

The starting indicator consists of 2 sub-indicators: determining the information topic and selecting the information source. In addition, it consists of 3 question items (X1, X2, and X3). Furthermore, for X1, 43 respondents (42%) stated "always", 38 respondents (39%) stated "often", 14 respondents (14%) stated "rarely", and 5 respondents (5%) stated "never". The mode value in X1 is 4. For X2, 36 respondents (37%) stated "always", 28 respondents (29%) stated "often", 24 respondents (24%) stated "rarely", and 10 respondents (10%) stated "never". The mode value in X2 is 4. For X3, 35 respondents (36%) stated "always", 34 respondents (35%) stated "often", 24 respondents (24%) stated "rarely", and 5 respondents (5%) stated "never".

The mode value in X3 is 4.

The following is a statement from one of the respondents.

“We had limited time and network to fulfill the information needs at that time. As such, before searching for information, we had to determine the topic to save time. We also had to be selective when choosing information sources. You know, out there, many fake accounts shared hoaxes.” (Umam Zakaria, Head of the Region, October 21, 2020)

Thus, it can be concluded that respondents always determine the topic of information before searching for it, make a list of information before searching for it, and select and determine the source of information before searching for it.

Starting is one of the indicators used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. The results show that the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to determine information topics, make lists of information, and determine sources of information before searching for information related to the 2018 earthquake disaster. So, for the first aspect (starting), the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, have implemented it well. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), stating that individuals seek information according to events that occur and their needs.

## 2. Chaining

Item X4 in the chaining aspect shows 43 respondents (42%) stated “always”, 38 respondents (39%) stated “often”, 14 respondents (14%) stated “rarely”, and 3 respondents (3%) stated “never”. The mode value in X4 is 4. It can be concluded that respondents always choose the original source of information.

Item X5 in the chaining aspect shows 38 respondents (39%) stated “always”, 40 respondents (41%) stated “often”, 14 respondents (14%) stated “rarely”, and 6 respondents (6%) stated “never”. The mode value in X5 is 3. It can be concluded that respondents often look for the original source of the information they have. This finding aligns with the following statement:

“Referencing with the original source is a must; we always look for the original source. For example, the government has provided complete information through BMKG (*Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi, dan Geofisika* - Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency) with its updated content. Well, information abuse still exists no matter what.” (Umam Zakaria, Head of the Region, October 21, 2020)

Chaining is the next indicator used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. The research results show that the Sembalun Lawang community, as disaster victims, tends to choose or look for original sources of information. Good habits must be maintained and considered by the government to continue providing education about the importance of separating false from genuine or original information. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), stating that we have first to filter the source of information we need.

## 3. Browsing

Item X6 in the browsing aspect shows 47 respondents (48%) stated “always”, 35 respondents (36%) stated “often”, 13 respondents (13%) stated “rarely”, and 3 respondents (3%) stated “never”. The mode value in X6 is 4. It can be concluded that respondents always choose the Internet as the source of information.

Item X7 in the browsing aspect shows 11 respondents (11%) stated “always”, 20 respondents (20%) stated “often”, 42 respondents (43%) stated “rarely”, and 25 respondents (25%) stated “never”. The mode value in X7 is 2. It can be concluded that respondents rarely choose the mass media/printed media, such as newspapers, as the original source of information.

Item X8 in the browsing aspect shows 29 respondents (30%) stated “always”, 32 respondents (33%) stated “often”, 29 respondents (30%) stated “rarely”, and 8 respondents (8%) stated “never”. The mode value in X8 is 3. It can be concluded that respondents often choose other people as the original source of information. This finding aligns with the following statement:

“In this modern era, the handphone, or smartphone, has been an integrated part of our lives, so it is understandable that we prefer the Internet to other sources, such as the newspaper, to look for information. We also look for information from other people that we can trust. For villagers, they still uphold their values and maintain good social interaction.” (M. Hirman Irawadi, BPD, October 21, 2020)

Browsing is the third indicator used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. The research results show that the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to

search for information from various sources, except print media. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), stating that the needs and conditions of the place where people live affect the form of information sources they prefer.

#### 4. Differentiating

Item X8 in the differentiating indicator shows 27 respondents (28%) stated "always", 32 respondents (33%) stated "often", 18 respondents (30%) stated "rarely", and 21 respondents (21%) stated "never". The mode value in X9 is 3. It can be concluded that respondents often prepare keywords while looking for information.

Differentiating is the fourth indicator used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. According to the research results, the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to filter the information they obtain and compare it with information from several sources. Preparing keywords is important because internet access is limited during a disaster. The signal or network to access the internet or other sources of information may be lost or non-existent during a disaster; apart from that, by preparing keywords, time efficiency can be maintained in searching for the information. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), which states preparing what information to look for in advance helps people gain the suitable and best quality information they need.

#### 5. Monitoring

Item X11 in the monitoring indicator shows 30 respondents (31%) stated "always", 45 respondents (46%) stated "often", 19 respondents (19%) stated "rarely", and 4 respondents (4%) stated "never". The mode value in X10 is 3. It can be concluded that respondents often monitor how new information develops. Item X12 in the monitoring indicator shows 28 respondents (29%) stated "always", 46 respondents (47%) stated "often", 21 respondents (21%) stated "rarely", and 3 respondents (3%) stated "never". The mode value in X12 is 3. It can be concluded that respondents often monitor the development of the information source they use.

This finding aligns with the following statement:

"Well, during the earthquake, the electricity and the internet network did not function, so we could not get the new information. After the network was restored, we got all the updates from BMKG (*Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi, dan Geofisika* - Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency), BNPB (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana* - National Disaster Management Agency), and other relevant parties." (Nopa S.Si, Sembalun Lawang Village Secretary, October 21, 2020)

Monitoring is the fifth component used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. According to the research results, the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to follow the latest information from the 2018 earthquake disaster. Monitoring can prevent the spread of false information or hoaxes. In this case, the government also plays a role in educating the public on how to choose and select trusted sources of information. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), which states that people will always monitor or look for the most updated information.

#### 6. Extracting

Item X13 in the extracting indicator shows 45 respondents (45%) stated "always", 44 respondents (44%) stated "often", 6 respondents (6%) stated "rarely", and 3 respondents (3%) stated "never". The mode value in X13 is 4. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents always choose trusted sources of information. Item X14 in the extracting indicator shows 38 respondents (39%) stated "always", 39 respondents (40%) stated "often", 16 respondents (16%) stated "rarely", and 5 respondents (5%) stated "never". The mode value in X14 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often filter information from various sources. Item X15 in the extracting indicator shows 36 respondents (37%) stated "always", 39 respondents (40%) stated "often", 17 respondents (17%) stated "rarely", and 6 respondents (6%) stated "never". The mode value in X15 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often compare information from various sources.

This finding aligns with the following statement:

"Well, yeah, we have to choose trusted sources of information to ensure that the information is accurate. We also ask the officials in charge so we can validate the information." (M. Hirman Irawadi, BPD, October 21, 2020)

Extracting is the sixth indicator used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. The research results show that the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to explore one source of information considered essential for obtaining information. By comparing information

from various sources, the public will get the most accurate information possible. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), which states that we must choose the most accurate information.

## 7. Verifying

Item X16 in the verifying indicator shows 35 respondents (36%) stated "always", 31 respondents (32%) stated "often", 30 respondents (30%) stated "rarely", and 2 respondents (2%) stated "never". The mode value in X16 is 4. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents always review the information obtained. Item X17 in the verifying indicator shows 25 respondents (26%) stated "always", 41 respondents (42%) stated "often", 28 respondents (29%) stated "rarely", and 4 respondents (4%) stated "never". The mode value in X17 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents always evaluate the information obtained. Item X18 in the verifying indicator shows 25 respondents (26%) stated "always", 36 respondents (37%) stated "often", 28 respondents (29%) stated "rarely", and 9 respondents (9%) stated "never". The mode value in X18 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often classify the information needed. Item X16 in the verifying indicator shows 33 respondents (34%) stated "always", 39 respondents (40%) stated "often", 22 respondents (22%) stated "rarely", and 4 respondents (4%) stated "never". The mode value in X19 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often recheck the information obtained. Item X20 in the verifying indicator shows 35 respondents (36%) stated "always", 35 respondents (36%) stated "often", 24 respondents (25%) stated "rarely", and 4 respondents (4%) stated "never". The mode value in X20 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often check the accuracy of the information obtained.

This finding aligns with the following statement:

"Surely, we check the accuracy of the information we obtained. Nowadays, it is easy for people to spread false information, which we cannot account for. That's why we must review and recheck the information; do not just assume or accept it as it is." (M. Hirman Irawadi, BPD, October 21, 2020)

Verifying is the seventh indicator used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. According to the research results, the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to check the accuracy of the information obtained during the 2018 earthquake so the information can be used well when making a decision or taking action. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), which states that information obtained must be checked and evaluated for accuracy.

## 8. Ending

Item X21 in the ending indicator shows 35 respondents (36%) stated "always", 34 respondents (35%) stated "often", 22 respondents (22%) stated "rarely", and 7 respondents (7%) stated "never". The mode value in X21 is 4. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents always take information as needed. Item X22 in the ending indicator shows 36 respondents (37%) stated "always", 38 respondents (30%) stated "often", 19 respondents (19%) stated "rarely", and 5 respondents (5%) stated "never". The mode value in X22 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often determine the information needed for policymaking. Item X23 in the ending indicator shows 34 respondents (35%) stated "always", 38 respondents (39%) stated "often", 18 respondents (18%) stated "rarely", and 2 respondents (2%) stated "never". The mode value in X23 is 3. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents often obtain suitable and accurate information for decision-making.

This finding aligns with the following statement:

"We seek information to know what to do and when to do the action. We look for information, well during the earthquake, about the earthquake, the handling, and other information so we know what to do." (Tahip, Kanit, October 21, 2020)

Ending is the eighth indicator used as a benchmark or reference in assessing a person's information-seeking behavior. From the research results, the Sembalun Lawang community, as disaster victims, can finally obtain a final result, i.e., information about the 2018 earthquake disaster. Accurate and suitable information is highly valuable for decision-making. These results align with Ellis' theory in Yusuf and Subekti (2010:105), which states that at the end of searching, the information obtained must meet the need.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it can be found that many factors influence people's information-seeking behavior. This behavior may be different in each disaster-affected area;

### 1. Individual Characters

Personal character is one of the indicators used as a benchmark or reference to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors in seeking information. Apart from individual characteristics, the existence of

social networks and individual perceptions also play a role in explaining differences in participation in social movements [12]. The research results show that the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, tend to be quite highly motivated to search for information. However, people only look for and understand the information they need at that time while not giving much attention to the future situation. So, this personal character can be a supporting factor and an inhibiting factor in searching for information about the 2018 earthquake disaster. This result contradicts Wilson's theory, which states that motivation, information filtering ability, and the level of knowledge influence the information obtained.

## 2. Social Factors

Social factors are one of the indicators used as a benchmark or reference to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors in seeking information. The research results show that the Sembalun Lawang community, as disaster victims, tends to have good social factors. They show good interaction and collaboration patterns [13] and no problems in building communication and good opinions with others. [14] So, this social factor is one of the supporting factors in searching for information related to the 2018 earthquake disaster. This result contradicts Wilson's theory, which states that information distribution can be constrained by interactions with other people.

## 3. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors are one of the indicators used as a benchmark or reference to determine the supporting or inhibiting factors in seeking information. The research results show that the Sembalun Lawang community, as disaster victims, tends to have good environmental factors and social networks. [15] The information sources are good; people rarely find time constraints when choosing information sources, and they also choose accountable information sources and managerial approach selectively. [16] [17] This result contradicts Wilson's theory, which states limited time is an obstacle to searching for information.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the people of Sembalun Lawang, as disaster victims, have good and thorough information-seeking behavior about the 2018 earthquake disaster. The research results show supporting and inhibiting factors in searching for information about the 2018 earthquake disaster. The supporting factors include the high enthusiasm of the community to seek information. They also show good social factors like good communication and social interaction and the excellent characteristics of information sources. The inhibiting factor, however, is also related to their characteristic in looking for information, in which they only focus on information needed at the present time without considering the one they may need in the future.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

BMKG (*Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi, dan Geofisika* - Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency), as a provider of information related to disaster mitigation and real-time disaster information, must pay attention and provide solutions to areas having problems accessing information when needed by the people in such areas; for example, in Sembalun Lawang with the network or signal problem. BNPB (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana* - National Disaster Management Agency) is expected to periodically and routinely provide information about disasters that are likely to occur in an area to make it easier for people to evacuate themselves and provide first aid when a natural disaster occurs.

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**Corresponding Author: Hermawan**

**Faculty of Administrative Science, Universitas brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia**