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Youngjoon Yang

*Faculty of Humanities, Airlangga University, Indonesia, youngjoon.yang-2019@fib.unair.ac.id*

Edi Dwi Riyanto

*Faculty of Humanities, Airlangga University, Indonesia, edi-d-r@fib.unair.ac.id*

Imam Yuadi

*Department of Information and Library Science, Airlangga University, Indonesia, imam.yuadi@fisip.unair.ac.id*

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**Imam Yuadi**

*Department of Information and Library Science, Airlangga University, Indonesia*

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**Edi Dwi Riyanto**

*Faculty of Humanities, Airlangga University, Indonesia*

**Imam Yuadi**

*Department of Information and Library Science, Airlangga University, Indonesia,*

*Corresponding author: imam.yuadi@fisip.unair.ac.id*

## **Abstract**

YouTube is the most used social media platform in the world where users search for information through various search tools provided. This study aims to analyze the behavior of information-seeking on YouTube among undergraduate students in Surabaya, Indonesia. We examined their information-seeking behavior and its implementation in daily life. We also evaluated the information needs and interests. This research conducted online questionnaires that were sent to undergraduate students from 27 August 2021 to 6 September 2021 and received 143 responses. We then analyzed the data based on the response results and statistics from Google Forms. The results showed that they used it as a channel to seek information as needed where they spent times for 1-2 hours every day. The most in-demand information is music, dance, and movies. The main intention of usage was for having fun and entertainment. They tended to search, select and use the information on YouTube manually rather than using information through the recommendation system provided.

**Keywords:** YouTube recommendation; Social Media; Information-Seeking Behavior

## **Introduction**

The advances in information and communication technology provide human options to seek information quickly and online from various sources. YouTube is an example of an online information source that provides interactive and accessible video anywhere. On the contrary, offline information seeking takes a lot of time to acquire the desired information and also the limited method that can be provided from the tools. Therefore, YouTube is ranked second behind Facebook in the number of social media users worldwide and was the most used social media platform in Indonesia in 2020. Therefore, it has become the main channel for watching videos and seeking information. Similarly, users can find information through videos, enjoy free time, create communities, become influencers who influence society, and communicate with their favorite stars by watching music, dance, movies, and dramas.

YouTube has a borderline display of content from a fixed recommendation of the overall appearance. These simple principles will help people find the videos they want to watch and rate the content provided. Furthermore, users can find recommendations via the homepage as they enter it is a mix of content based on past views and subscriptions as well as recent news. Likewise, they can also see recommendations in the provided panel while they are watching a video.

However, information-seeking behavior can be divided into different levels depending on the information source, interaction, level of communication, and many scholars approach information behavior in different ways. Therefore, Wilson T.D. (1999) examined the models of various scholars studying

information-seeking behavior and found similar problems addressed by each model.

According to Wilson (1999), information behavior is a concept above the integrated model, which means the totality of human behavior related to information sources and information channels, and includes active and passive information seeking and information use. This includes passively receiving information, such as watching TV commercials, and face-to-face communication with others. Information-seeking behavior is part of information behavior and is a concept related to methods for accessing information sources and finding information. Unlike information behavior, information-seeking behavior refers to deliberately seeking information to fulfill a need to achieve certain goals, also interacting with the system (Wilson, 2000). Information-seeking behavior, the most sub-concept of the integrated model, is a concept that focuses on the interactions between users and computer-based information systems. Human-computer interactions, such as using the mouse or clicking on links, intellectual-level behaviors scouring library shelves to determine which books are most useful, and mental behaviors such as determining whether information retrieved is appropriate are all examples of information-seeking behavior.

This study aims to analyze the behavior of seeking information on YouTube by undergraduate students in Surabaya. This study will examine how undergraduate students in Surabaya use YouTube in their daily lives. Then, will see what information needs and interests they have. Specifically, will look at how they find information on YouTube. YouTube offers several ways for users to find

videos on YouTube. First, users can enter a search term to find videos. Second, users can watch videos recommended by YouTube by analyzing their interests. In addition, after watching one video, users can automatically continue watching related videos recommended by YouTube.

## **Literature Review**

The general term used in its most comprehensive sense as a term related to information-seeking behavior is 'user study'. Also, terms such as 'information need' and 'information use' appear. After 1966, reviews of user research began to appear periodically under the 'information needs and use' category in the Annual review of information science and technology. At the same time, the concept of 'information' and the relationship between information, data, and knowledge is constructed about 'information needs and uses'. Next, terms such as need, demand, want, use and requirement are mentioned, and concept formation for these individual terms is attempted.

Wilson developed and used the term 'information need and use' (1994) from the common name 'user research' (1981). In subsequent papers, the terms 'information behavior' or 'information-seeking behavior' are mainly used, and related concepts including information behavior and information-seeking behavior are defined.

According to him, 'information behavior' is the totality of human behavior related to information sources and channels of information, including active or passive information seeking and information use. Thus, this includes face-to-face

communication with others but also passive reception of information, such as watching TV commercials. Information-seeking behavior is the purposeful pursuit of information as a result of the need to achieve a goal. During the search process, individuals may interact with manual information systems such as newspapers or libraries, or computer-based systems such as the Web. Information-seeking behavior is behavior at the 'micro level' that a seeker performs when interacting with any type of information system. 'Information-using behavior' consists of the physical and mental behaviors that occur when integrating discovered information into one's existing knowledge base (Wilson, 2000, 49-50).

Therefore, information behavior is the most common area of research, information-seeking behavior is a subfield of information behavior that is specifically interested in the various methods adopted for finding and accessing information sources, and information-seeking behavior is a subfield of information seeking, in particular the field interested in interactions between information users and computer-based information systems (Wilson, 1999, 163).

However, although he does not define 'user research' separately, it appears that he understands user research and information behavior as the same concept. For example, the same model presented by him is sometimes referred to as the 'scope of user research' (Wilson, 1994, 16) or as the 'information behavior model' (Wilson, 1999, 251). Also, 'user research' begins with information users entering 'information-seeking behavior' in response to a perceived 'need' (Wilson, 1994, 16), understanding user research and information behavior on the same path, it

was revealed that information need and information-seeking behavior is a sub-field.

Johnson (1996, 26) states that 'information seeking' can be simply defined as the acquisition of information from selected information carriers. Here, it is assumed that information seeking is primarily intentional, and this intentionality is associated with the attainment of certain goals in mind (Johnson, 1996, 26), suggesting that information seeking is a purposeful act.

According to Case (2002, 5, 223) is also called 'information behavior' as an appropriate term to describe the characteristics of various types of human behavior related to information. It is used as a general term for information behavior, including information needs and information seeking and use of information. He further uses it in a more comprehensive sense than Wilson's, including not only involuntary passive behavior but also purposeful behavior such as not seeking information and actively avoiding information.

The change in terminology from 'user research' to 'information behavior' or 'information-seeking behavior' also means that the focus of research has changed. In other words, it means that user research or information behavior research is changing from system-oriented research that identifies preferred information sources and information channels to human-centered research that tries to understand human behavior more.

In early research, the problem was 'how do formal information systems serve the primary needs of the research group', and such systems or system-oriented research was called information needs and use research or user research.



However, in the 1970s, when the emphasis shifted from structured information systems to people who are producers and users of information, the term 'information retrieval' began to be preferred (Case, 2002, 6).

In particular, this phenomenon began to occur after the 1980s when user research methods were changed from quantitative methods to qualitative methods. In other words, it has evolved from systems-oriented approaches such as 'how people use systems' to people-oriented research that seeks to understand various aspects of user behavior, including user information needs and information-seeking behavior. With the adoption of qualitative research methods, human behavior research becomes possible, and theories and models that can be applied to human behavior research can be built.

There are several models of information-seeking behavior, including the model of Dervin, Ellis, Kuhlthau, and Wilson 1996. Furthermore, Dervin (1983) presented the 'Sense-Making Method' in the background of communication studies. The human need is to create meaning in the world, and the creation of meaning through the process of situations, gaps, and uses. Here the situation is the spatial and temporal context in which the information search occurs, the gap refers to the perception of the information need, and the usefulness refers to the method of utilizing the information. Dervin's Sense-Making Method has contributed a lot to transforming existing information-seeking research into research that is more human-centered, experience-oriented, process-oriented, and situation-oriented.

Ellis (1989; 1993) applies grounded theory and presents a model of the information-seeking process that represents 6 activities in the context of a research

project by a group of social scientists. The six activities are starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. After that, Ellis, Cox & Hall (1993) applied the same methodology and presented a model that added two categories, namely verifying and ending. The contribution of the Ellis model is to present a convincing empirical model in the absence of an empirical model based on empirical data at the time.

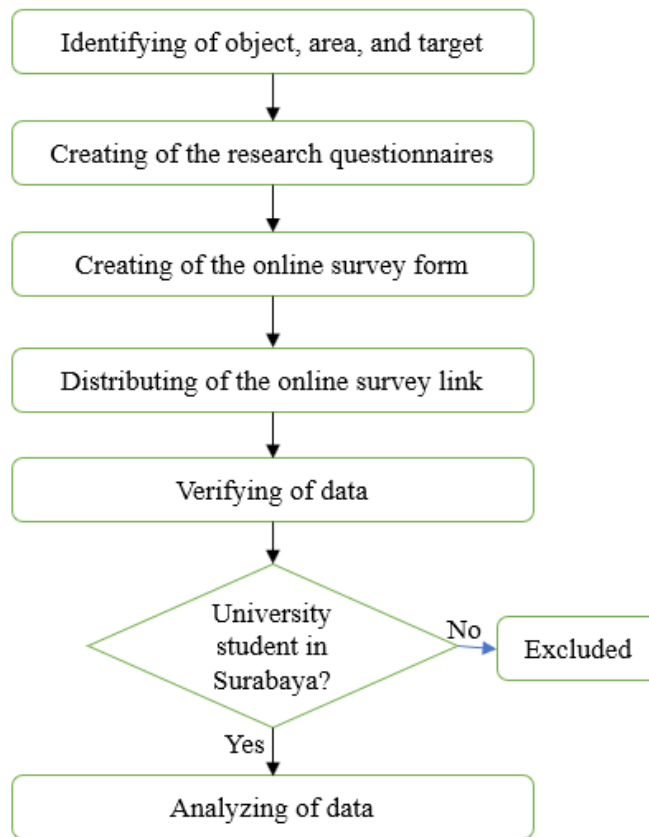
Kuhlthau (1991) derived the 'Information Search Process (ISP)' model through a longitudinal study of task-oriented information-seeking behavior targeting secondary school students borrowing from constructivist learning theory. Information seeking is a construction process from uncertainty to understanding (1993, 345). It is an active constructivist activity of users who find meaning from information to expand the state of knowledge about a particular problem or topic (1991, 361), this problem-solving process is information seeking. This model has the advantage of being a comprehensive model (1993, 343) that combines changes in 3 areas of experience, namely cognitive thoughts, emotional feelings, and physical actions, as well as a 6-stage search process, namely initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation.

Wilson (1996) presented the first model in 1981 and the second model in 1996. Wilson's second model presents a general model of information behavior from an interdisciplinary perspective in informatics, decision making, psychology, innovation theory, health communication, and consumer research. As a constructive information search concept, it presents humans in context, the context of information requests, activation mechanisms, and intervention

variables. To explain the operation of these variables, 3 processes are presented: generation of information needs, information retrieval, and process and use of information. The user of information exists in a certain context, and information needs occur in this particular context, and the information-seeking behavior of passive attention, passive search, active search, and continuous search is created under the influence of the intervention variable and the active variable, and the information obtained is processed and used.

### **Research Methodology**

We conducted a sophisticated survey online for undergraduate students in several universities in Surabaya Indonesia. We offered a reliable way to gather information during pandemic Covid-19. Fifteen item questionnaires on YouTube usage status and search status were completed using Google Forms. The questionnaire items consist of 4 questions about personal information, 5 questions about YouTube usage behavior, and 6 questions about YouTube video browsing and recommendations. Then, the survey link was sent to undergraduate students in Surabaya, and 143 responses were received from 27 Aug 2021 to 6 Sep 2021. Based on these answers, we will analyze the data using the response results and statistics in Google Forms.



**Figure 1.** Research Method Flowchart

Figure 1 shows the flow of this research method.

1. The objectives, subjects, and areas of this research are set. The target set is YouTube users among undergraduate students in Surabaya.
2. Questionnaire questions for the set targets are decided, and the validity and appropriateness of the questions are reviewed. Finally, a total of 15 questions were decided on the respondent's information, YouTube general usage status, and YouTube function usage status.
3. This study conducted an online survey and used Google Forms among various online survey tools.

4. The link to the questionnaire created in Google Forms is distributed to undergraduate students in Surabaya.
5. The validity of the collected data is verified. Among the total 159 respondents, they were not undergraduate students in Surabaya at the time the responses were issued. After being excluded, the final number of respondents was 143 respondents.
6. Information-seeking behavior of undergraduate students in Surabaya was analyzed through the collected data.

## **Results**

This section describes the results of research on information-seeking behavior on YouTube by undergraduate students in Surabaya. This research was conducted from 27 August 2021 to 9 September 2021 via Google Forms. Respondents of this study amounted to 159 people. However, 16 people were not active during the survey. Therefore, 143 people were the final research respondents because this study focused on active undergraduate students.

### **User Profile Results**

**Table 1.** Gender

Respondents	%
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Male	32	22.4
Female	111	77.6
Total	143	100.0

Table 1 shows that 111 women (77.6%) and 32 men (22.4%). Among the respondents, female students were significantly higher in number. This shows that female students participated more actively in this survey than undergraduate students. In addition, these results may indicate that there are more female YouTube users than male students among undergraduate students in Surabaya.

**Table 2. Age**

	Respondents	%
19 or below	44	30.8
20 – 24	84	58.7
25 – 29	13	9.1
30 – 34	2	1.4
35 or above	0	0.0
Total	143	100.0

Table 2 shows that 143 people answered and the age of the most respondents was 84 respondents (58.7%) aged '20 - 24'. The next largest number of respondents was 44 respondents (30.8%) aged 19 or younger. Next are 13 respondents (9.1%) aged '25 - 29'. Followed by 2 respondents (1.4%) aged '30 - 34'. Then, there are no respondents who are over 35 years old. In general, the age of undergraduate students in Surabaya is in their early 20s, and it can be concluded that the early 20s are the core users of YouTube users.

**Table 3.** Respondent Origin

	Respondents	%
Yes	46	32.2
No	97	67.8
Total	143	100.0

Table 3 shows that 97 respondents (67.8%) came from outside Surabaya. The number of respondents from Surabaya was 46 respondents (32.2%). This shows that the distribution of undergraduate students in Surabaya consists of students outside Surabaya, not in Surabaya. In addition, the results of this response indicate that it cannot be considered as a characteristic of the Surabaya area as a whole, but must be seen as a result without regional characteristics.

**Table 4.** Respondent Degree

	Respondents	%
Yes	143	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	143	100.0

Table 4 shows that 143 respondents (100.0%) were active students during this survey. The number of respondents to this survey was 159 people. However, 16 people answered 'No' to this question. Therefore, 16 respondents were excluded from this study, and finally, 143 respondents became the respondents of this study.

### **YouTube General Usage Results**

**Table 5.** Frequency of Watching YouTube

	Respondents	%
Every day	75	52.4
5-6 days a week	20	14.0
3-4 days a week	25	17.5
1-2 days a week	21	14.7
Several times a month	1	0.7
Seldom	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows that 75 respondents (52.4%) answered they use YouTube every day. After that, 25 respondents (17.5%) answered that they use it 3-4 days a week. 21 respondents (14.7%) answered that they used it 1-2 days a week and 20 respondents (14.0%) used it 5-6 days a week. 1 respondent (0.7%) said that he uses it only a few days a month, and 1 respondent (0.7%) said that he rarely uses it. More than half of undergraduate students in Surabaya use YouTube every day, and 70% of undergraduate students use it for at least three days. This shows that YouTube has become an important and daily activity in undergraduate student life in Surabaya.

**Table 6.** Duration of Watching YouTube

	Respondents	%
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Less than 1 hour	32	22.4
1 hour	35	24.5
2 hours	37	25.9
3 hours	25	17.5
4 hours	5	3.5
5 hours	5	3.5
Etc	4	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6 shows that 37 respondents (25.9%) answered that they watched for about 2 hours. 35 respondents (24.5%) answered that they watched for about 1 hour. It was followed by 32 respondents (22.4%) who said that they used less than one hour. Then, 25 respondents (17.5%) with 3 hours, 5 respondents with 4 hours (3.5%), 5 respondents with 5 hours (3.5%), and several other responses. It can be seen that more than half of undergraduate students in Surabaya spend 1 to 2 hours watching YouTube. In addition, more than 90% of undergraduate students spend less than 3 hours watching YouTube, which can be concluded that undergraduate students in Surabaya have a limit of 3 hours to watch YouTube.

**Table 7.** Equipment for watching videos on YouTube?

	Respondents	%
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Smartphone	107	74.8
Laptop	28	19.6
Desktop	1	0.7
Tablet	3	2.1
Smart TV	1	0.7
Others	3	2.1
Total	143	100.0

Table 7 shows that 107 respondents (74.8%) answered that they mostly watch YouTube using their cell phones. 28 respondents (19.6%) answered they use laptops. In addition, some answers say that they use more than one device. At this point, it can be seen that the main tool for undergraduate students in Surabaya to watch YouTube is a cellphone. However, even though there is a small number of users of smart TVs, tablets, desktops, etc., it can be seen that the equipment using social media is starting to diversify, seeing that there are users who use multiple devices rather than a single device.

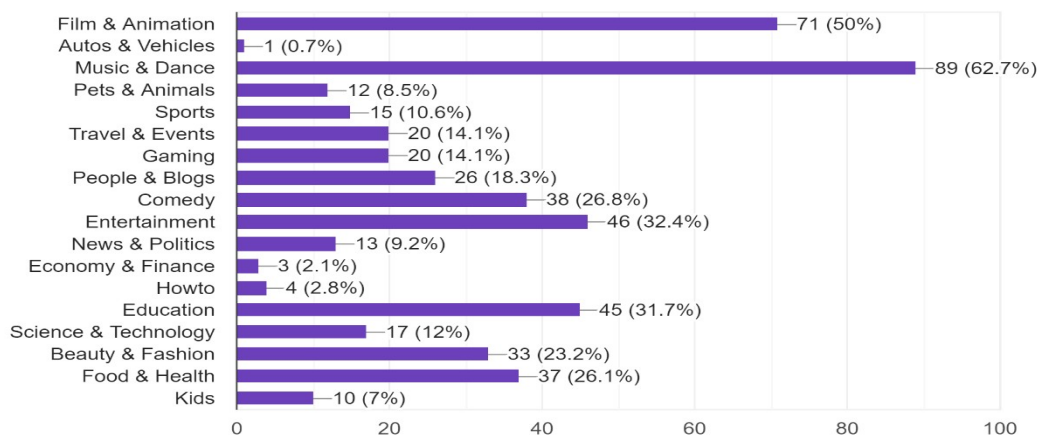
**Table 8.** Watching Resaon

	Respondents	%
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To learn how to do something or progress in a task	24	16.8
To relax	28	19.6
To be entertained and inspired	55	38.4
To pass time	5	3.5
To see something new that cannot be found anywhere else	4	2.8
To learn something new	12	8.4
To find information on products and services	2	1.4
To pursue a hobby or interest	3	2.1
To feel connected with people and communicate	4	2.8
To stay up to date and on top of trends	0	0.0
Others	6	4.2
Total	143	100.0

Table 8 shows that 55 respondents (38.4%) said they watch YouTube be entertained and inspired. Then, 28 respondents (19.6%) said watching YouTube relax. 24 respondents (16.8%) said they watch YouTube learn how to do something or progress in a task. 12 respondents (8.4%) said they watch YouTube when they want to learn something new. 5 respondents (3.5%) said they watch YouTube when they want to pass time. Other answers that are less than 5 respondents are not mentioned. More than half of undergraduate students in Surabaya watch YouTube for fun and relaxation. It can be seen that YouTube is mainly used for entertainment and recreational life. Also, they use YouTube when they need information and learning.

Jenis video apa yang biasanya Anda tonton di YouTube? (dapat dipilih max. 5)  
 응답 142개



**Figure 2.** What types of videos do you usually watch on YouTube?

For the questions in Figure 2, each respondent is allowed to answer a maximum of 5 answers. Figure 2 shows that 89 respondents (62.7%) said they watch videos about music and dance. Furthermore, 71 respondents (50.0%) said they watch film and animation. 46 respondents (32.4%) answered that they watch videos related to entertainment. 45 respondents (31.7%) said that they watch videos about education. 38 respondents (26.6%) answered that they watch videos about comedy, 37 respondents (26.1%) about food and health, and 33 respondents (23.2%) about beauty and fashion. For other answers below 20%, see Figure 2. From the results above, it can be seen that the main interests of undergraduate students in Surabaya are related to cultures such as music, dance, and films. It also shows that it can be linked to the explosion of young people's interest in current cultures such as the 'Korean Wave'.

### Results of using YouTube features

The next 5 questions are about YouTube's recommendation system. YouTube organizes and displays videos recommended by YouTube according to users in stages on the first screen after accessing the YouTube app or website. The user can click and watch these customized recommended videos, or he can enter a search term and choose from among the videos he is looking for to watch. In addition, after watching one video, YouTube recommends videos related to the previous video and provides an autoplay function that automatically continues watching the next video.

**Table 9.** YouTube recommendation

	Respondents	%
I search for myself	112	78.3
I enter YouTube recommendations	31	21.7
Total	143	100.0

Table 9 shows that 112 respondents (78.3%) answered that they watch YouTube videos by searching for videos themselves. 31 respondents (21.7%) answered that they watch videos recommended by YouTube.

The next question was asked in a narrative form about the reasons for watching YouTube videos in the same way as above. Respondents who said that they searched and watched videos themselves gave the following reasons. First, they replied, 'I want to find the exact video I want to watch. Second, they replied, 'Because YouTube recommended videos are not what I want. Third, they answered, 'Because it is more accurate and faster to find the desired video directly'. Other answers are 'because I love finding what I do' and 'because I know how to find the videos I want. Respondents who said they watch YouTube's

recommended videos answered the following reasons. First, they replied, 'Because YouTube recommended videos are what I want to watch'. Second, they answered 'Because it's convenient. Third, they replied, 'The thumbnail looks interesting'. Fourth, they replied, 'I want to watch a new video'.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these two questions. Most of the undergraduate students in Surabaya search for it themselves and watch the videos they want to watch. It can be seen that YouTube's specific recommendation algorithm is recommended only for about 20% of undergraduate students, and does not make appropriate recommendations for 80% of undergraduate students. In other words, it can be seen that the recommendations were adjusted through YouTube A. My algorithm did not arouse the interest of undergraduate students in Surabaya. On the other hand, undergraduate students in Surabaya prefer to collect information directly and independently.

**Table 10.** Satisfaction of recommendation systems

	Respondents	%
Very satisfied	32	22.4
Satisfied	54	37.7
Neutral	49	34.3
Less satisfied	8	5.6
Dissatisfied	0	0.0
Total	143	100.0

Table 10 shows that 54 respondents (37.7%) answered 'satisfied', 49 respondents (34.3%) 'neutral', 32 respondents (22.4%) 'very satisfied', and 8

respondents (5.6%) 'less satisfied'. All students except 8 respondents responded positively about the YouTube recommendation video system. The paradox is that respondents who watch the videos they search for themselves have positive reactions to YouTube's recommendation system. Perhaps the intent of this question was not communicated to the respondent. This is recognized as a mistake by the author of the questionnaire questions. Among positive respondents to this question, it is estimated that respondents who search for videos themselves give positive answers to YouTube because they are satisfied with the video search results.

**Table 11.** YouTube's recommendation opinion

	Respondents	%
Yes	63	44.1
No	17	11.8
Maybe	63	44.1
Total	143	100.0

Table 11 shows that 63 respondents (44.1%) answered 'maybe' about YouTube's recommended video neutrality. 63 respondents (44.1%) answered 'neutral', and 17 respondents (11.8%) answered 'not neutral'. Most of the answers are 'maybe' and 'neutral'. This shows that students in Surabaya do not have much awareness or interest in whether YouTube's recommendation system is neutral or not. Or, it could be said that they are not convinced or do not believe in the neutrality of YouTube's recommendation system. It can be seen that 40% of respondents who stated that they were neutral had a positive view of the YouTube application or YouTube's AI system.

**Table 12.** 'autoplay' feature to watch the next video

	Respondents	%
Yes	65	45.5
No	78	54.5
Total	143	100.0

Table 12 shows that 78 respondents (54.5%) answered 'do not use autoplay'. 65 respondents (45.5%) answered 'use it'. 1 respondent did not answer. The YouTube autoplay function refers to the function that continuously watches related videos recommended by YouTube after watching one video. About 20% of respondents answered that they 'watch YouTube recommended videos. The answer 'use autoplay function' is doubled to 40%. It can be seen that the related videos recommended by YouTube for autoplay after watching the first video show slightly better aspects than the first page recommendations in terms of generating relevance and interest. On the other hand, around 40% of undergraduate students in Surabaya prefer to watch videos related to one field in sequence.

**Table 13.** Automatic playlist on YouTube

	Respondents	%
Yes	73	51.0
No	70	49.0
Total	143	100.0

Table 13 shows that 73 respondents (51.0 %) answered 'I have an automatic playlist on YouTube', and 70 respondents (49.0%) said 'I don't have it. 1 respondent did not answer. These results show something similar to YouTube's autoplay function. In other words, it can be seen that about half of undergraduate



students in Surabaya watch YouTube while gathering related videos they want to watch and automatically play them continuously. It can be seen that about half of undergraduate students in Surabaya prefer the pattern of watching videos automatically and continuously, be it YouTube's auto-play function or playlists that you create yourself.

## **Discussion**

Undergraduate students in Surabaya used YouTube as a channel to find information and use it for 1-2 hours every day, they see that they are looking for the information they need. This shows that in undergraduate students' information-seeking behavior, information seeking through 'video' has become the most common method for them. Moreover, it shows that they are actively using electronic devices they always have at their disposal, such as smartphones, so that they can find the information they are looking for 'quickly' and 'anytime'. The researchers revealed that the recommendation factors, showtime, date, and video uploads are an important part of YouTube's facilities and specifications that are of concern to users (Guttman, 2019).

However, videos that are engaging and emotionally persuasive about drama are more likely to attract students' attention than those that have statistical and scientific evidence (Hastal, 2013) and also to find out more information about a virus (Pathak, 2015). The information that undergraduate students in Surabaya are most interested in is entertainment such as music and movies, which occupies more weight than specific studies or knowledge. Also, the biggest reason to use

YouTube is for fun and enjoyment. Through this, it is seen that undergraduate students in Surabaya express their desire to feel and experience the pleasures of life on YouTube. They need the information to enable them to experience the joys of life in a personalized life, and also in the non-face-to-face society triggered by COVID-19. They are finding such information through YouTube and they are enjoying it.

When undergraduate students in Surabaya searched for information on YouTube, instead of consuming information through the YouTube AI system, they searched for, chose, and consumed the information they want. This means that they enjoyed the information-seeking process, wanted to discriminate and select information on their own, and still valued their autonomy over being controlled or driven by a computer system or other people, and exhibited uninterrupted information-seeking behavior. Therefore, many companies use popularity-based video prediction models (Wu, 2016) for marketing purposes targeting information seekers in terms of characterizing and modeling on YouTube (Borgol, 2011). This has become the focus of marketing researchers as an advertising medium that they broadcast (Welbourne, 2016).

## **Conclusions**

Corresponding to all Indonesians, YouTube is used deeply in undergraduate students' life in Surabaya, and YouTube videos have become the main channel for their search and information retrieval. For the young generation, videos are their main channel of information, and now they enjoy their fun and enjoyment through

videos anytime, anywhere. They are actively and independently seeking content that gives them pleasure and enjoyment. Rather than computer systems like A.I, they want to find the information they want on their own, and they enjoy the process of finding their pleasure.

In this way, this study comprehends how undergraduate students in Surabaya search for information on YouTube. Through their information-seeking behavior on YouTube, hope to understand undergraduate students' life in Surabaya and a little bit about what they are pursuing. In the future, it is hoped that more in-depth research on the response to bias and neutrality of the AI algorithm among undergraduate students in Surabaya has not been discussed in this article, and how it affects their ability to search and pursue information is expected to continue.

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