

USING THEORY OF REASONED ACTION (TRA) IN UNDERSTANDING SELECTION  
AND USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES: AN INFORMATION RESOURCE  
SELECTION AND USE MODEL

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ABSTRACT

With advanced computer and networking technologies, more and more information can be accessed electronically. Information overload has become an issue and it is increasingly difficult for a user to quickly identify and locate useful information resources. In order for libraries to provide user-centered services, it is important to examine not only what, but also why information resources are selected and used by users. The present study aims to examine how resource characteristics, library environment, and individual differences factors affect users' selection and use of information resources by testing a proposed model-Information Resources Selection and Use Model (IRSUM) based upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

Public health students in a higher institution in the Midwestern United States were study subject. Data was collected through both focus group and self-reported questionnaires and was analyzed with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques.

The study found that electronic resources were the public health students' primary resources. Three behavior beliefs (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived least physical effort) and two normative beliefs (instructor's influence and reference librarian's influence) largely mediated the effect of external variables on the primary resource selection, while fully mediating their impact on the actual resource use. These findings provide important theoretical and practical implications in library and information science and library services.