Information literacy and the digitalisation of the workplace

This book on information literacy in the modern workplace is written mainly by the researchers from Åbo Akademi with the help of colleagues from Sweden (two) and Norway (one) as well as one from the Turku School of Economics. One chapter on information literacy for career transition is authored by a team from Edinburgh Napier University. This constellation allows the editors to achieve significant coherence of the text though it addresses a variety of aspects related to workplace information and digital or similar literacy. Moreover, the book introduces an exclusively European, and one can say Scandinavian, perspective on research of information and related types of literacy in the work-related environments.

The Introduction and Conclusion parts of the book provide an overview of the topical structure of the book and discuss the common features found in the concepts of different types of literacy addressed in research as well as their relation with each other and with the digitalization of the modern workplace. The acceptance of the diversity of concepts, definitions and approaches is demonstrated in the very first chapter providing a bird's eye and world-wide overview of the research literature addressing information literacy. However, this diversity is strongly anchored in understanding of work and information literacy as socio-material practices presented in chapter 2 and salient, or at least implied, in all other chapters.

The methodology chapters would be helpful for many researchers, especially, the younger ones as they provide serious foundation for choice of research methods and procedures. The overview of the information literacy related to different career moves, from being employed to moving up the career ladder, is based on a huge body of previous research and suggests an intriguing range of possible research problems for investigation. In addition, it suggests ready-made conceptual frameworks for several of them. A very useful chapter for those intending to refresh or change their research direction.

My favorite is a short chapter on the role of information literacy in "secretive organizations". The issues of fragmented knowing, uncertainty, trust in "lacking" or "leaking" information sources, and personal integrity have followed my recent studies persistently. This chapter, though addressing a rather specific organizational environment, has helped to frame differently some elusive concepts.

So far, all the chapters were based on previous work and discussed important theoretical, methodological or empirical elements of information (and other) literacy at work or in different organizational environments and situation. But there are two chapters presenting original empirical research. Both represented studies use quantitative data, one of large international data set from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, another one of specially assembled sample of Finnish entrepreneurs. These two chapters demonstrate the possibilities of two different ways to treat quantitative data, both important either on a more general or on the more local level. I am not sure if these studies were selected deliberately or just happened to be readily available, but they provide a beneficial opportunity for empirical and methodological discussions, not only useful research results.

This book will be useful for university libraries serving faculty and students of economics, organizational studies, not to speak of library and information science departments. I would also suggest that some information managers in organizations will find it useful for understanding not only variety of information literacy types but also the workplace so fundamentally affected by digital technologies.

Elena Maceviciute
Vilnius University
March, 2024