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Effects of motives of search and prior experiences on online browsing performance: Considerations from searchers cognitive load

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Abstract: The present study aimed to develop effective education methods of online search for unskilled college students. In the preparatory stage of the study, an experiment using simple browsing tasks was conducted to examine the effects of important factors of searching focusing on cognitive load. Under two conditions (Casual and Formal) promoting different motivations, search result lists were displayed to fifty-nine college students to look for two types of information: seeking statistical data (task A) and seeking views and opinions to answer open questions (task B). Analyses of each task using two factors (the conditions and their presentation orders) revealed that in task A, only when the Casual condition was first, the participants performed better in the Formal condition. In task B, only when the Formal condition was first, browsing time in the Casual condition was shorter. We assume that these effects are associated with the workload of browsing.