

# Factors influencing the information seeking behaviour of Postgraduate students of University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur

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## ABSTRACT

*The present study was undertaken to examine the factors influencing information seeking behaviour of postgraduate students at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur. The study followed an ex-post-facto and descriptive research design. Data were collected from postgraduate students using a structured questionnaire. Selected factors such as achievement motivation, scientific orientation, curiosity, level of understanding, intelligence, aptitude, general ethics, proximity of the university library and familiarity with the library were analysed using frequency, percentage and correlation. The findings revealed that postgraduate students possessed considerable levels of achievement motivation, scientific orientation, curiosity and a sound level of understanding. Most respondents also reported high levels of intelligence, aptitude and general ethics. With respect to institutional factors, a large proportion of students perceived the university library as easily accessible and reported familiarity with library facilities. The findings indicated that psychological, cognitive and institutional accessibility factors collectively created a favourable environment for effective information seeking among postgraduate students. The study highlighted the need to strengthen academic motivation, cognitive skills and library orientation programmes to further enhance information seeking behaviour.*

**Keywords:** Information seeking behaviour; Postgraduate students; Motivation; Library familiarity.

## Introduction


Information seeking behaviour plays a crucial role in postgraduate education, where students are expected to independently search, evaluate and utilise information for academic and research purposes. The effectiveness of information

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seeking depends not only on availability of resources but also on individual psychological and cognitive attributes as well as institutional accessibility factors.

Factors such as motivation, scientific orientation, curiosity, intelligence and aptitude influence an individual's inclination and ability to seek information. Ethical orientation further governs responsible use of information, while proximity and familiarity with library facilities determine ease of access and utilisation of information resources.

Although several studies have examined information seeking behaviour among students, limited attention has been given to the combined role of psychological, cognitive and institutional factors among agricultural postgraduate students. Hence, the present study was undertaken to analyse selected factors influencing information seeking behaviour of postgraduate students at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur.

### **Research Design**

A survey research design was used to understand the information-seeking behaviour of postgraduate students in relation to ICTs (Information and Communication Technology) during the academic year 2022-23. The research focused on the university library located on the Raichur campus.

### **Sampling Design**

The census method was employed for data collection. The target population comprised 449 students, including M.Sc. (Agriculture), M.Tech. (Agricultural Engineering) and Ph.D. scholars. Questionnaires were distributed to all 449 respondents. However, despite best efforts, only 375 completed questionnaires were retrieved. Thus, the final sample size for the study consisted of 375 students, representing a diverse cross-section of the student population.

### **Tools and techniques**

A self-structured instrument was developed by the researcher after a thorough review of literature and consultation with subject matter specialists to measure achievement motivation, scientific orientation, curiosity, level of understanding, intelligence, aptitude general ethicst, proximity of University library and familiarity. The content validity of the instrument was ensured through expert evaluation.

### **Method of Data Collection**

A well-structured questionnaire was designed based on a review of relevant studies and consultations with experts in agricultural extension and related subjects.

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## Statistical Tools Used

The collected data were systematically tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage and correlation analysis, to summarize key trends, patterns and relationships among the variables.

## Results and discussion

### Achievement motivation

The results revealed that 62.40 per cent of the postgraduate students exhibited a medium level of achievement motivation, followed by 20.53 per cent with low achievement motivation. Only 11.20 per cent of the students showed a high level of achievement motivation, while a small proportion (05.87 %) fell under the very low achievement motivation category. The predominance of students with medium to high levels of achievement motivation suggests a favourable academic environment for effective information seeking behaviour among postgraduate students.

The present findings are supported by Rajpurakar and Sujata (2017), who reported that academic requirements such as examination preparation, project work and class-related activities acted as strong achievement motivation for information seeking among student-teachers. This reinforces the role of achievement motivation in promoting active information seeking behaviour among postgraduate students.

### Scientific orientation

With respect to scientific orientation, a large majority of the respondents (71.11 %) exhibited strong scientific orientation, followed by 17.96 per cent who were somewhat strong. Very strong scientific orientation was observed among 09.87 per cent of the students, while only 01.06 per cent were not strong. The predominance of strong scientific orientation reflects students' inclination towards scientific methods, empirical evidence and logical reasoning. Such orientation enhances students' preference for authentic and credible information sources such as research journals, theses and scientific databases. Strong scientific orientation is particularly important for postgraduate students as it shapes their approach to information evaluation and encourages reliance on validated and peer-reviewed sources.

### Curiosity

The findings showed that more than half of the postgraduate students (51.73 %) were curious and 42.40 per cent were very curious. Only a negligible proportion of students were somewhat curious (04.53 %) or not curious (01.34 %). High levels of curiosity indicate a strong intrinsic interest in learning and exploration.

Curiosity acts as a psychological trigger for information seeking, motivating students to search beyond prescribed materials and explore emerging concepts and research developments. Curious students tend to engage more actively with information systems and are likely to develop diverse and dynamic information seeking patterns.

The present results showing high levels of curiosity among postgraduate students are in agreement with earlier studies, where Orlu, 2016 reported that curiosity significantly influenced information seeking behaviour among master's students.

### **Level of understanding**

The results indicated that 75.20 per cent of the respondents had a good level of understanding, followed by 19.20 per cent who had a very good level of understanding. Only 05.60 per cent reported a somewhat adequate level and none of the students fell under the 'not well' category. A higher level of understanding enables students to clearly identify information needs, formulate appropriate search queries and critically analyse retrieved information. This finding suggests that postgraduate students generally possess sufficient academic comprehension to engage effectively with complex and specialised information, thereby enhancing the quality of their information seeking behaviour.

The present results indicating a high level of understanding among postgraduate students are in agreement with earlier studies, where Avhad, 2023 reported that postgraduate students demonstrated good understanding of information sources and research processes due to regular academic and research exposure.

### **Intelligence**

Regarding intelligence, nearly equal proportions of students fell under high (46.93 %) and average (47.20 %) categories, while only 04.80 per cent had very high intelligence and 01.07 per cent had very low intelligence. This distribution indicates that most students possessed adequate cognitive ability to comprehend, process and synthesise academic information. Intelligence contributes to students' ability to understand complex research materials, draw meaningful inferences and apply information effectively. Adequate cognitive ability supports systematic and purposeful information seeking, especially in postgraduate level research activities.

### **Aptitude**

The findings revealed that 47.73 per cent of students had high aptitude, followed by 39.73 per cent with average aptitude. Very high aptitude was observed among 10.14 per cent of respondents, while only 02.40 per cent reported very

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low aptitude. Aptitude reflects an individual's potential to learn and perform academic tasks efficiently. Students with higher aptitude are better equipped to adapt to different information sources, learn new search techniques and effectively utilise available information resources. The predominance of high and average aptitude among respondents indicates a favourable learning capacity that supports effective information seeking behaviour.

The present findings indicating high and average aptitude among postgraduate students are in agreement with earlier studies, where Avhad, 2023 reported that students with better academic aptitude demonstrated effective learning ability and efficient utilisation of information sources.

### **General ethics**

With respect to general ethics, 55.73 per cent of the respondents exhibited strong general ethics, followed by 21.33 per cent who were having very strong general ethics. About 20.27 per cent exhibited somewhat strong general ethics and only 02.67 per cent exhibited not strong general ethics. General ethics is an important factor governing responsible information use, including proper citation practices, avoidance of plagiarism and respect for intellectual property rights. Strong ethical values among postgraduate students contribute to responsible and credible information seeking and utilisation, which is essential for maintaining academic integrity in research and scholarly work.

The present findings indicating strong general ethics among postgraduate students are in agreement with earlier studies, where McCabe et al, 2016 reported that strong ethical values among students promote responsible information use, proper citation practices and adherence to academic integrity norms.

### **Proximity of the university library**

The results showed that 62.94 per cent of the students perceived the university library as near or very near (25.33 %). Only 09.60 per cent reported it as far and 02.13 per cent as very far. Physical proximity of the library significantly influences the frequency and ease of library use. Students who perceive the library as easily accessible are more likely to visit regularly, consult reference materials and seek assistance from library staff. The favourable perception regarding proximity indicates a supportive institutional environment that facilitates information seeking behaviour.

The present findings are supported by Deenadhayalu, 2016 who reported that distance of the library was a major factor limiting frequent library visits among students and other users. This highlights the importance of physical proximity of library facilities in promoting regular information seeking behaviour.

### Familiarity with the library

In terms of familiarity, more than half of the respondents (54.93 %) were familiar with the library, while 36.54 per cent were somewhat familiar. Only a small proportion were very familiar (05.06 %) or not familiar (03.47 %). Familiarity with library facilities enhances students' confidence in navigating information systems, locating resources and utilising library services effectively. Moderate levels of familiarity observed among the majority suggest scope for further strengthening orientation and training programmes to improve students' efficiency and comfort in information search activities.

The findings of the present study are in agreement with Rathour and Priti (2017), who reported a relatively high level of awareness of library resources and services among students. This suggests that familiarity with library facilities plays an important role in enhancing effective information seeking behaviour.

**Table 1. Factors influencing the information seeking behaviour of Postgraduate students (n=375)**

Sl. No.	Criteria	f	%
1	<b>Achievement motivation</b>		
	Highly motivated	42	11.20
	Motivated	234	62.40
	Somewhat motivated	77	20.53
	Not motivated	22	05.87
2	<b>Scientific orientation</b>		
	Very strong	37	09.87
	Strong	216	71.11
	Somewhat strong	118	17.96
	Not strong	4	01.06
3	<b>Curiosity</b>		
	Very curious	159	42.40
	Curious	194	51.73
	Somewhat curious	17	04.53
	Not curious	5	01.34
4	<b>Level of understanding</b>		

	Very well	72	19.20
	Well	282	75.20
	Somewhat well	21	05.60
	Not well	0	00.00
5	<b>Intelligence</b>		
	Very high	18	04.80
	High	176	46.93
	Average	177	47.20
	Very low	4	01.07
6	<b>Aptitude</b>		
	Very high	38	10.14
	High	179	47.73
	Average	149	39.73
	Very low	9	02.40
7	<b>General ethics</b>		
	Very strong	80	21.33
	Strong	209	55.73
	Somewhat strong	76	20.27
	Not strong	10	02.67
8	<b>Proximity of the University library</b>		
	Very far	8	02.13
	Far	36	09.60
	Near	236	62.94
	Very near	95	25.33
9	<b>Familiarity</b>		
	Very familiar	19	05.06
	Familiar	206	54.93
	Somewhat familiar	137	36.54
	Not familiar	13	03.47

f = frequency and % = per cent

Relationship between factors influencing the information seeking behaviour of Postgraduate students with the information seeking behaviour of the students

The relationship between selected independent variables and information seeking behaviour of postgraduate students was analysed using correlation analysis and the results are presented in Table 2.

The results revealed that achievement motivation showed a positive and highly significant relationship with information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.30^{**}$ ), indicating that students with higher achievement motivation tended to exhibit better information seeking practices. Motivation encourages goal-oriented academic activities and persistence in searching for relevant information.

Scientific orientation was found to have a positive and significant relationship with information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.25^*$ ). Students with a stronger scientific orientation are more inclined to rely on authentic, evidence-based and peer-reviewed information sources, thereby enhancing their information seeking behaviour.

A positive and significant relationship was also observed between curiosity and information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.21^*$ ). Curiosity stimulates the desire to explore new ideas and information, motivating students to search beyond prescribed academic materials.

Level of understanding exhibited a positive and highly significant relationship with information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.26^{**}$ ). Students with a better level of understanding are able to clearly identify their information needs, formulate appropriate search strategies and effectively process retrieved information.

The variable intelligence showed a positive and highly significant relationship with information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.34^{**}$ ), indicating that students with higher cognitive ability were more efficient in searching, comprehending, and utilising academic information.

Similarly, aptitude was positively and significantly related to information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.22^*$ ). Higher aptitude enhances learning capability and adaptability, enabling students to make effective use of diverse information sources.

Proximity of the university library also showed a positive and significant relationship with information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.23^*$ ). Easy physical access to the library encourages frequent visits and greater utilisation of information resources.

In contrast, general ethics did not show a significant relationship with information seeking behaviour ( $r = 0.02$  NS). While ethical orientation is essential

for responsible use of information, it may not directly influence the frequency or intensity of information seeking activities.

**Table 2. Relationship between factors influencing the information seeking behaviour of Postgraduate students with the information seeking behaviour of the students**

Sl. No.	Factors influencing Information Seeking Behaviour	'r' value
1	Achievement motivation	0.30**
2	Scientific orientation	0.25*
3	Curiosity	0.21*
4	Level of understanding	0.27**
5	General Ethics	0.02 <sup>NS</sup>
6	Intelligence	0.34**
7	Aptitude	0.22*
8	Awareness	0.04 <sup>NS</sup>
9	Proximity of the library	0.23*

\*\* = five per cent level of probability, \* = one per cent level of probability,

NS = Non-significant

### Conclusion

The study concludes that postgraduate students of UAS Raichur generally possess favourable psychological, cognitive, and institutional factors that support effective information seeking behaviour. High levels of motivation, scientific orientation, curiosity, understanding and ethical orientation, along with accessibility and familiarity of the library, create a conducive academic environment. Strengthening these factors through academic mentoring and library orientation programmes can further improve information seeking practices.

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