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Attitude of Navsari Agricultural University students towards application of distance education

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Abstract

In India, education is viewed as a pathway to enhance social status. A quality education is perceived as the foundation for achieving a successful career trajectory. Presently, there is a rising trend among adults to seek advanced education to enhance their competitiveness in the workforce. Objectives of the study were to study the profile of post graduate students, to analyse the attitude of post graduate students towards application of distance education in agricultural education and to study the association between profile of the post graduate students and their attitude towards application of distance education in agricultural education. The investigation was carried out in South Gujarat. Navsari Agricultural University was purposively selected. N.M. College of Agriculture was purposively selected by keeping in view availability of the post graduate students at college, limitation of time and funds by the researcher. Ex post facto research design was used. The sample size for the study was 50 post graduate students. From each department 5 post graduate students studying M.Sc. Agriculture were randomly selected. Most of the post graduate students were 1st and 2nd born children, belonged to rural family background, had father's education up to graduation, and mother's education between high school to higher secondary school, agriculture, service and business as family occupation, average to low reading habit, high level basic knowledge of internet, annual income of Rs. 1.5 lakhs to 2.5 lakhs, knowledge of 3 or more languages, visited library from twice in a week to once in a fortnight, low to very low self-confidence and favourable to highly favourable attitude. Further, father's education, family occupation, reading habit and self confidence were found positive and highly significant. Institutions need to be prepared to support distance education. Events like COVID-19 highlighted both the challenges and the need for effective distance learning solutions. Teachers should be trained for remote instruction, and students should be educated on how to engage with distance learning when necessary.

Keywords: Profile, online learning, hybrid learning and online teaching

Introduction

In India, education is viewed as a pathway to enhance social status. A quality education is perceived as the foundation for achieving a successful career trajectory. Presently, there is a rising trend among adults to seek advanced education to enhance their competitiveness in the workforce. It had led to increase in demand for higher education. The educational institutions are innovating by introducing new programs utilizing modern technologies. Numerous online distance learning courses have been devised to cater to this expanding requirement. The current investigation would provide answers to some questions to like what was the educational, social, psychological background of the student, what were the factors that were influencing the attitude of students and what were the problems perceives by the students in case of distance education. Objectives of the study were to study the profile of post graduate students, to analyse the attitude of post graduate students towards application of distance education in agricultural education and to study the association between profile of the post graduate students and their attitude towards application of distance education in agricultural education. Based on the objectives null hypothesis was formulated as there was no association between profile of the post graduate students

and their attitude towards application of distance education in agricultural education.

Methodology

The current study was part of authors PG course completion named "special problem". The investigation was carried out in South Gujarat. Navsari Agricultural University was purposively selected as the author hailed from the university during research period. N.M. College of Agriculture was purposively selected by keeping in view availability of the post graduate students at college, limitation of time and funds by the researcher. Ex post facto research design was used for the current investigation as the factors affecting their attitude were occurred prior to the investigation. The sample size for the study was 50 post graduate students studying M.Sc. Agriculture in various departments of N. M. College of Agriculture, NAU, Navsari. Number of departments in N.M.C.A. were 10. Hence, from each department 5 post graduate students studying M.Sc. Agriculture were randomly selected. The investigation was carried out during 2020. The data was collected with the help of Google form in online mode as the period has gone through COVID and convenience to the researcher. Based on the objectives null hypothesis was formulated as there

was no significant association in between profile of post graduate students and their attitude towards application of distance education in agricultural education. For the present investigation eleven independent variables and one dependent variable was selected. For the independent variable self-confidence, scale developed by Heartheton and Polivy (1991)^[5] was used with due modifications. For other ten independent variables schedule developed by Khadayata

(2013)^[7] was used. For dependent variable attitude scale developed by Patel and Chauhan (2012)^[12] was used with minor modifications. The statistics viz., frequency, percentage, mean, arbitrary method of categorization, standard deviation, rank and linear regression analysis were used.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of post graduate students according to their profile N=50

Sr. No.	Variables	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Birth order	1 st born children	18	36.00
		2 nd born children	15	30.00
		3 rd born children	10	20.00
		4 th born children	3	06.00
		5 th born children	4	08.00
2	Family background	Rural	22	44.00
		Rurban	13	26.00
		Urban	15	30.00
3	Father's education	Illiterate	2	04.00
		Primary school (1 to 7th standard)	3	06.00
		High school and higher secondary school (8 to 12th std)	18	36.00
		Graduate	19	38.00
		Above graduate	8	16.00
4	Mother's education	Illiterate	5	10.00
		Primary school (1 to 7th standard)	13	26.00
		High school and higher secondary school (8 to 12th std)	19	38.00
		Graduate	10	20.00
		Above graduate	3	06.00
5	Family occupation	Agriculture	13	26.00
		Agriculture + animal husbandry	6	12.00
		Agriculture plus service	11	22.00
		Only business	12	24.00
		Only service	8	16.00
6	Reading habit	Very Low	8	16.00
		Low	9	18.00
		Average	18	36.00
		High	7	14.00
		Very High	8	16.00
7	Basic Knowledge of internet	Low (<3 score)	3	6.00
		Medium (3 score)	5	10.00
		High (>3 score)	42	84.00
8	Family income	Up to 1,50,000 Rs	18	36.00
		1.51 lakh to 2.5 lakh Rs.	18	36.00
		2.51 lakh to 3.5 lakh Rs.	6	12.00
		3.51 lakh to 5.0 lakh Rs.	6	12.00
		Above 5 lakh Rs.	2	4.00
9	Knowledge of different languages	1	0	0.00
		2	5	10.00
		3	31	62.00
		4 and above	14	28.00
10	Frequency of visit and use of the library	Everyday	1	02.00
		Twice in a week	15	30.00
		Once in a week	8	16.00
		Once in a fortnight	9	18.00
		Once in a month	10	20.00
		Once in three months	2	04.00
		Once in six months	1	02.00
		Once in a year	2	04.00
11	Self confidence	Everyday	1	02.00
		Very Low	13	26.00
		Low	24	48.00
		Average	12	24.00
		High	1	2.00
		Very High	0	00.00

Profile of the post graduate students

From the table 1 it is evident that, slightly more than one third (36.00%) of the post graduate students were first born child, followed by 2nd born children (30.00%), 3rd born children (20.00%), 5th born children (8.00%) and 4th born children (6.00%). Two fifth (44.00%) of the post graduate students belonged to rural background, followed by urban background (30.00%) and rurban background (26.00%). Nearly two fifth (38.00%) of the students' father's education was up to graduate level, followed by high school and higher secondary school (36.00%), above graduate (16.00%), primary school (6.00%) and illiterate (4.00%). Nearly two fifth (38.00%) of the students' mother's education was up to high school and higher secondary school, followed by high school and primary school (26.00%), graduate level (20.00%), illiterate (10.00%) and above graduate level (6.00%). Nearly one forth (26.00%) of the students' family had the occupation of agriculture, followed by only business (24.00%), agriculture + service (22.00%), only service (16.00%) and agriculture + animal husbandry (12.00%). More than one third (36.00%) of the students had average level of reading habit, followed by low (18.00%), very low (16.00%). More than one third (36.0%) of the students had average level of reading habit, followed by low (18.00%), very high (16.00%) and very low (16.00%) and high (14.00%) level of reading habit.

Majority (84.0%) of the students had very good level of basic knowledge of internet, followed by good level of basic knowledge of internet (10.00%) and low level of basic knowledge of internet (6.00%). One third (36.00%) of the post graduate students' family had income up to Rs 1,50,0000, followed by Rs.1.51 lakh to Rs.2.50 lakh (36.00%), 2.51 lakh to 3.5 lakh Rs. (12.00%), 3.51 lakh to 5.0 lakh Rs. (12.00%) and above 5 lakh Rs. (4.00%). Majority (62.00%) of the post graduate students had knowledge of three languages, followed by knowledge of four and above (28.00%) and knowledge of two languages (10.00%). Less than one third (30.00 per cent) of respondents use library twice in a week, followed by once in a month (20.00%), once in a fortnight (18.00%), once in a week (16.00%), once in three months (4.00%) and once in a year (4.00%), everyday (2.00%) and once in six months

(2.00%). Less than half (48.00%) of post graduate students had low level of self-confidence, followed by very low level of self-confidence (26.00%), average (24.00%) level of self-confidence and high (2.00%) level of self-confidence.

Attitude of post students towards application of distance education in agriculture education

From table 2 it is evident that majority (60.00%) of the post graduate students had favourable to highly favourable attitude towards application of distance education in agriculture education, followed by neutral attitude (30.00%), favourable attitude (26.00%) unfavourable attitude (10.00%) towards application of distance education in agriculture education.

Table 2: Distribution of the post graduate students according to their attitude towards application of distance education in agriculture education (N=50)

Sr. No.	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Most unfavourable	0	0.00
2	Unfavourable	5	10.00
3	Neutral	15	30.00
4	Favourable	13	26.00
5	Highly Favourable	17	34.00
Total		50	100.00

From table 3 it is evident that majority (62.00%) of the respondents felt that DEAAE (Distance education application agriculture education) creates educational opportunity to those who want to learn while earning, followed by those who felt that DEAAE is need of hours to fill gap between actual need of able human resources for agricultural development and their availability (58.00%), there is need to implement DEAAE programme because of its flexibility (54.00%), don't think offering master's and doctorate programme on agriculture through DE is possible (52.00%), DEAAE has the potential to bring out innovation (50.00), like to learn through DEAAE as it provides opportunity to learn at any time (46.00%), dislike DEAAE because it does not follow formal way of learning (42.00%) and DEAAE is relevant to the ever-increasing higher agricultural educational needs of India (42.00%).

Table 3: Distribution of post graduate students according to each statement of scale (N=50)

Sr. No.	Statement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	I feel that DEAAE is need of hours to fill gap between actual need of able human resources for agricultural development and their availability. (+)	29	58.00
2	I believe that there is need to implement DEAAE programme because of its flexibility. (+)	27	54.00
3	I don't think offering master's and doctorate programme on agriculture through DE is possible (-)	26	52.00
4	I dislike DEAAE because it does not follow formal way of learning. (-)	21	42.00
5	I like to learn through DEAAE as it provides opportunity to learn at any time. (+)	23	46.00
6	I feel that DEAAE creates educational opportunity to those who want to learn while earning. (+)	31	62.00
7	I feel that DEAAE is relevant to the ever-increasing higher agricultural educational needs of India. (+)	21	42.00
8	I believe that DEAAE has the potential to bring out innovation. (+)	25	50.00

Association between profile of the post graduate students and their attitude towards application of distance education in agriculture education

The results in the table 4 indicated that father's education (0.3741 **), family occupation (0.4300 **), reading habit (0.3764 **) and self confidence (0.3650 **) were found

positive and highly significant with their attitude towards application of distance education in agriculture education. Moreover, family background (0.3038 *), mother's education (0.2809 *), basic knowledge of internet (0.2795 *) and family income (0.2859 *) were found positive and significant. Whereas, frequency of visit and use of the

library (-0.2832 *) was found negative and significant with their attitude towards application of distance education in agriculture education. Only Birth order was found negative and non-significant with their attitude.

Table 4: Association between profile of the post graduate students and their towards application of distance education in agriculture education (N=50)

Sr. no.	Variables	'r' value
1	Birth order	-0.0208 NS
2	Family background	0.3038 *
3	Father's education	0.3741 **
4	Mother's education	0.2809 *
5	Family occupation	0.4300 **
6	Reading habit	0.3764 **
7	Basic Knowledge of internet	0.2795 *
8	Family income	0.2859 *
9	Knowledge of different languages	0.0223 NS
10	Frequency of visit and use of the library	-0.2832 *
11	Self confidence	0.3650 **

NS Non-significant * Significant at 0.05 level ** Significant at 0.01 level

Discussion

Most of the children were found to be 1st born, 2nd born and 3rd born. The probable reason for such result might be the family planning adopted by the families and most of the families having only 2-3 children. Birth order was found negative with their attitude but wasn't found significant. This finding is in line with the finding of Kayzin and Vaghchipawala (2023) [6]. Most of the students had rural and rural family background and the reason for such result could be the preference of agriculture by students from rural background and urban settled rural background. Those who had urban background have shown favourable attitude towards distance education than those who belonged to rural background. The reason could be the difference in facilities available at the rural and urban areas. This finding is in line with the finding of Sharma (2022) [13]. Most of the students' fathers were educated up to high school and higher secondary school and graduates. As the father's education was better, students had favourable attitude. It could be due to the awareness and environment in which they have been grown up, accessibility to internet of things and their annual income. This finding is in line with the finding of Ahmad *et al.* (2023) [1].

Most of the students' mothers were educated up to high school and higher secondary school. The reason might be that the parents of students were aware about the importance of education hence they gave them the proper education to their children. With higher education of mother's, students' attitude was also found favourable. This finding is not in line with the finding of Alibraheim and Taifour (2023) [2]. Most of the students had family occupation of agriculture, agriculture plus service and only business. It could be due to their rural and rural family background and education level of their parents. In case of family occupation, those whose parents engaged in service/business had favourable attitude than those whose parents were engaged in farming. It could be due to the exposure received by students to digital platforms whose parents were in service/business. This finding is not in line with the finding of Moneva *et al.* (2019) [9]. Most of the

students had average reading habit. It could be due to their busy academic schedule, regular examinations and their engagement in field activities for their master's research work. Most of the students had very low to low self-confidence. The reason for such result could be the non-participation of students in personality development programmes and lack of exposure to external environment. Reading habit and Self-confidence of student could have resulted into development of less dependent nature in the student to learn and his belief in himself to learn in distant mode. These findings are in line with the findings of Yaqoob *et al.* (2023) [14] and Bhat (2022) [4].

Most of the students had very high level of basic knowledge about the internet. It could be due to their access to mobile phones, laptops and personal computers, availability of the internet at cheaper costs, availability of social media platforms and their surrounding environments. As the basic knowledge about internet has increased, favourable attitude was formed. The knowledge of internet might have helped students in building confidence to learn in distance education mode. This finding is in line with the finding of Paris (2004) [11]. Most of the students had annual income above 1.5 lakh Rs. The reason for the higher income could be their parents' occupation as service along with farming and operating business. Annual income might have played a key role in owning mobile phones/ laptops/ internet, which further led to forming a favourable attitude. This finding is not in line with the finding of Anita (2014) [3]. Most of the students had knowledge of 3-4 languages. The reason for the above result could be their academic programmes having 3 languages during school education and some of the students were from ICAR quota so they might have exposure to different states and languages. Most of the students visited library from twice in a week to once in a fortnight. It could be due to their busy academic schedule, regular examinations and their engagement in field activities for their master's research work. Those who had visited library frequently had shown unfavourable attitude towards distance education. It could be due to their habit of learning in physical mode in the premises of institution. This finding is not in line with the finding of Namugera *et al.* (2023) [10]. Students had high to very high favourable attitude towards distance education in agriculture education. The reasons for above result could be the advantages of distance education such as it facilitates everyone to get higher education, low cost of the education within reach of rural people and in-service students, plenty of individual learning opportunities, expenditure on education becomes very low, flexibility to the learners and adjustment of time *etc.* This finding is in line with the finding of Koshy *et al.* (2023) [8].

Conclusion

Most of the post graduate students were 1st and 2nd born children, belonged to rural family background, had father's education up to graduation, and mother's education between high school to higher secondary school, agriculture, service and business as family occupation, average to low reading habit, high level basic knowledge of internet, annual income of Rs. 1.5 lakhs to 2.5 lakhs, knowledge of 3 or more languages, visited library from twice in a week to once in a fortnight, low to very low self-confidence and favourable to highly favourable attitude. Further, father's education,

family occupation, reading habit, self confidence, family background, mother's education, basic knowledge of internet and family income were found positive and significant. Whereas, frequency of visit and use of the library was found negative and significant. So, it can be concluded that this positive outlook can be leveraged to enhance the implementation of diverse distance education programs in this sector. Village-level kiosks should be established, and additional information about distance learning programs should be made available. Distance education providers could offer vocational courses such as gardening, fruit and vegetable value addition, seed production, and plant protection. The institutions should be equipped and ready to facilitate learning in distance education mode. The situations such as COVID-19 has also significantly affected the learning at that period. But at the same time, it had created opportunity as well as need to facilitate the learning programmes in distance mode. The teachers must be trained to provide education in distant mode as well as the students must be made aware and trained to access the education in distant mode whenever the situation demands.

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