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Determinants of attitude of postgraduate students towards research

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Abstract

Research is an essential component of postgraduate education as it develops critical thinking, analytical ability, and scientific reasoning. Students' engagement in research is strongly influenced by their attitude toward research, which is shaped by various personal, academic, and psychological factors. The present study aimed to measure the attitude of postgraduate students toward research and to analyse its determinants. Ex-post facto research design was used. A sample of 60 postgraduate students from B.A. College of Agriculture was selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected through personal interviews and analysed using SPSS. Linear regression analysis indicated that the independent variables together explained 67.90% of the variation in students' attitudes toward research ($R^2 = 0.679$). Step-down regression analysis identified achievement motivation, innovativeness, and number of family members as significant determinants. The findings suggest that students with higher achievement motivation and greater innovativeness tend to develop more favourable attitudes toward research. The study highlights the importance of psychological factors in shaping research orientation among postgraduate students.

Keywords: Postgraduate students, research, determinants, attitude and Anand

Introduction

Research is a systematic process of inquiry that helps generate knowledge, address problems, and support innovation and societal development. In higher education, particularly at the postgraduate level, it plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking, analytical ability, and scientific reasoning, while enabling students to apply structured methods to investigate and understand complex issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) ^[4]. Students' involvement in research activities is greatly shaped by their attitudes toward research. Attitude can be understood as an individual's tendency to respond positively or negatively toward a particular object, activity, or idea, as explained by Icek Ajzen (1991) ^[1]. In academic settings, attitude toward research encompasses students' beliefs, emotions, and behavioural intentions related to research processes and tasks. Favourable attitudes encourage curiosity, persistence, and active engagement in scholarly work, whereas unfavourable attitudes may result in anxiety, avoidance, and weaker research performance, as noted by Papanastasiou (2005) ^[6]. Understanding students' attitudes toward research is important in educational studies because these attitudes influence motivation, research competence, and academic performance. Positive attitudes support engagement and skill development, whereas negative perceptions such as viewing research as difficult or stressful can reduce participation and hinder learning outcomes (Brew, 2002) ^[2]. Research attitudes are shaped by several personal, academic, and environmental factors. Variables such as prior academic performance, research experience, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy influence students' perceptions of research

(Lei, 2008; Papanastasiou, 2014) ^[5, 6]. Institutional support, mentoring, resources, and peer environment also play a significant role in shaping research engagement (Brew, 2002) ^[2]. These determinants interact to influence students' willingness to engage in research and their ability to complete research tasks successfully.

Understanding these determinants is particularly important in postgraduate education, where students are expected to produce original research and contribute to the advancement of knowledge. By identifying the factors that influence attitudes toward research, educational institutions can design targeted interventions such as research training programmes, mentoring systems, and supportive learning environments to enhance research engagement and productivity.

Therefore, examining the determinants of postgraduate students' attitudes toward research is essential for promoting positive research orientation, improving academic performance, and strengthening research culture within higher education institutions.

Objectives

Keeping this in view, the present study has been conducted to measure the attitude of the postgraduate students towards research.

1. To analyse the determinants of postgraduate students' attitude towards research.

Methodology

The present study was carried out in Anand Agricultural University, Anand district of Middle Gujarat. Ex-post facto design was used for this study. The present study was

conducted on registered postgraduate students selected from B.A. College of Agriculture. The postgraduate students of higher education of respective disciplines were considered as respondents. The lists of postgraduate students studying in B.A. College of Agriculture, Anand were obtained and by simple random sampling method, 60 postgraduates from B.A. College of Agriculture were selected for the study

purpose. The data was collected through personal interview and data was analyzed by using SPSS.

Results and Discussion

Determinants of postgraduate students' attitude towards research

Table 1: Linear regression analysis of postgraduate students' attitude towards research

V. No	Independent Variables	Standardized regression coefficients	Standard error (SEb)	't' value	Sig.
X ₁	Age	0.009	1.266	0.085	.933
X ₂	Academic achievement	0.065	2.292	0.603	.550
X ₃	Fathers education	0.105	0.365	0.947	.350
X ₄	No. of members in family	0.189	0.759	1.761	.087
X ₅	Caste	0.073	1.579	0.621	.539
X ₆	Family income	0.009	0.00	0.081	.936
X ₇	Family occupation status	0.050	1.097	0.45	0.659
X ₈	Native of the student	0.060	2.505	0.575	0.569
X ₉	Participation in extra-curricular activities	0.037	0.631	0.345	0.732
X ₁₀	Achievement Motivation	0.507	0.414	4.134	0.00
X ₁₁	Innovativeness	0.430	0.314	3.272	0.002
R ² = 0.679		Adjusted R ² = 0.575		F = 6.530**	

** Significant ('F' at (K-1) and (N-K-1) df) at 1% level of probability

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability, ** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

From the Table 1, it can be seen that, coefficient of determination, R² value was significant. The R² value 0.679 indicates that, all the independent variables put together explained about 67.90% of variation in the dependent variable i.e. attitude of post graduate students towards research. Remaining 32.10% variation was due to the extraneous variables.

Step down regression analysis

In this method, one independent variable was dropped at each step based on its least contribution to R² (Co-efficient of multiple determination). All the independent variables together accounted for 70.09% variation towards farmers innovativeness. The final resulting variables with regression co-efficient (b), Standard Error (SEb), partial regression co-efficient are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Model summary of step-down regression analysis of determinants of postgraduate students' attitude towards research

Steps	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F value
1	.822 ^a	.675	.581	7.13478
2	.822 ^b	.675	.592	7.04278
3	.822 ^c	.675	.602	6.95597
4	.821 ^d	.674	.611	6.87747
5	.820 ^e	.673	.619	6.80779
6	.820 ^f	.672	.626	6.74423
7	.817 ^g	.667	.629	6.71653
8	.814 ^h	.663	.633	6.67494
9	.809 ⁱ	.654	.631	6.69562

From Table 2, it could be concluded that the variables in the last model accounted for 63.10% of variation in the dependent variable. Among all the independent variables, number of members in the family, achievement motivation and innovativeness were the most influential variables and hence they are retained in the model.

Table 3: Step down Multiple linear regression analysis of determinants of postgraduate students' attitude towards research at 10th step

V. No.	Independent Variables	'b' value	't' value	Sig.
X ₄	Number of members in the family	0.214	2.441*	.019
X ₁₀	Achievement motivation	0.506	4.824**	.000
X ₁₁	Innovativeness	0.404	3.810**	.000

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability, ** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

The results of stepdown regression analysis in the Table 3 showed that, three variables i.e., achievement motivation and innovativeness were significant at 1% level of probability. A unit increase in achievement motivation (X₁₀) and innovativeness (X₁₁) results in increase of 0.506 and 0.404 units ceteris paribus in attitude of postgraduate students towards research. Number of members in the family was significant at 5% level of probability. These are in line with the findings of Christian (2012) [3]. This may be due to the reason that high achievement motivation drives the students towards the objectives and helps the students to develop favourable attitude towards research.

Conclusion

The study concludes that achievement motivation and innovativeness are the most significant determinants of postgraduate students' attitudes toward research, while family size also plays a notable role. Psychological characteristics were found to be more influential than most socio-economic factors. Enhancing motivation and promoting innovativeness among students can help develop positive research attitudes. Therefore, educational institutions should focus on supportive learning environments, mentoring, and motivation-building strategies to strengthen research engagement and improve the overall research culture.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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None.

Author's Contribution

Boppana Jagadeeswari has conceived the research idea, designed the study, collected data, performed data analysis, and drafted the manuscript and Saikiran has given valuable suggestions during the research process, and contributed to final manuscript editing.

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