

ANALYSING THE INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR OF VETERINARIANS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Information behaviour of veterinary surgeons was studied in terms of four elements viz., information seeking behaviour, storing behaviour, processing behaviour and dissemination behaviour. Information seeking behaviour of most of the veterinarians was high while information storing and processing behaviours were medium. Nonetheless, information dissemination behaviour was low. Even if the veterinarians are gathering the needed information, they are not storing or processing it properly. Also the quantum of information transferred to the livestock owners is very meagre.

KEYWORDS: Information Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Veterinarians are the backbone of livestock sector in Kerala. They are acting not only as clinicians but also as the policy makers of the state. They play an important part in the food safety and security areas also. Hence they should have access to right information at the right time in the needy areas. The information required will differ between the persons according to the purpose for which it is being used. The present study has attempted to study the information behaviour of veterinarians of Kerala state.

Information behaviour is the many ways in which human beings interact with information *ie* the process or activity of attempting to obtain, store, process, utilise and disseminate the information in both human and technological contexts (Bates, 2010). Information seeking behaviour is the act of actively seeking information in order to answer a specific query. According to Zipf's law, the information seekers prioritize the most convenient path to acceptable information and it is known as the principle of least effort.

Globalization and technological change are the main goals of ICT. One of its main sectors that should be changed and modified is education. ICTs greatly facilitate the acquisition and absorption of knowledge; offering developing countries unprecedented opportunities to enhance educational systems, improve policy formulation and execution and widen the range of opportunities for business and the poor. One of the greatest hardships endured by the poor and by many others, who live in the poorest countries, is their sense of isolation. The new communication technologies promise to reduce that sense of isolation and open access to knowledge in ways unimaginable. ICT is having great potential in the systematic dissemination of information to provide ready access to comprehensive, up-to-date and detailed knowledge and information, particularly in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

Information behaviour was operationalised as the activities performed by the veterinarian in acquiring, storing, processing and dissemination of scientific information from different sources. It was measured using the schedule developed by Nisha (2008). The information seeking behaviour was assessed by a seven- item scale which helped to find out the regularity of acquiring scientific information. The information storing behaviour was assessed using a five- item scale. Evaluation and treatment of the information was studied in information processing behaviour. Information dissemination behaviour was assessed using a six-item scale. The respondents were classified into low, medium and high categories for the four information related behaviours.

RESULT

Information behaviour of veterinary surgeons was studied in terms of four components viz., information seeking behaviour, storing behaviour, processing behaviour and dissemination behaviour.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Table 1: Distribution of Veterinarians Based on Information Seeking Behaviour n=60

Sl. No.	Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	0-9	0	00
2	Medium	10-19	2	3.30
3	High	20-28	58	96.70
Total			60	100.00

Data in Table 1 show that information seeking behaviour of 96.7 per cent of the veterinarians was high and that of the rest 3.3 per cent was medium.

Information Storing Behaviour

Table 2: Distribution of Veterinarians Based on Information Storing Behaviour n=60

Sl. No.	Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	0-2	1	1.70
2	Medium	3-4	50	83.30
3	High	5-6	9	15.00
Total			60	100.00

Data in Table 2 indicate that information storing behaviour of majority of the respondents *i.e.*, 83.3 per cent was medium, followed by that of 15 per cent high and of only 1.7 per cent were low.

Information Processing Behaviour

Table 3: Distribution of Veterinarians Based on Information Processing Behaviour n=60

Sl. No.	Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	0-2	14	23.30
2	Medium	3-4	41	68.30
3	High	5-6	5	8.40
Total			60	100.00

Data in Table 3 show that 68.3 per cent of the respondents had medium information processing behaviour followed by 23.3 per cent low and the rest 8.4 per cent high.

Information Dissemination Behaviour

Table 4: Distribution of veterinarians based on information dissemination behaviour n=60

Sl. No.	Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	0-8	58	96.70
2	Medium	9 –16	2	3.30
3	High	17 – 24	0	00
Total			60	100.00

Data in Table 4 depict that 96.7 per cent of the respondents had low information dissemination behaviour while the rest 3.3 per cent had medium information dissemination behaviour.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Information seeking behaviour of most of the veterinarians was high while information storing and processing behaviours were medium. Nonetheless, information dissemination behaviour was low. Even though, the veterinarians are gathering the needed information, they are not storing or processing it properly. Also the quantum of information transferred to the livestock owners is very meagre. This trend may be because, the field veterinarians are entrusted with clinical and official duties and hence they are not finding enough time to process the information and disseminate it through various channels of communication. In her study, Nisha (2008) reported that all the component elements of information behaviour viz, acquisition behaviour, storing behaviour, processing behaviour and dissemination behaviour were low for the extension personnel in Tamil Nadu.

In the new scenario, there should be a high level of technological advancements to share knowledge and skill in order to provide sustainable services to farmers. According to Shanthy and Thiagarajan (2011) computer-based extension tools viz., interactive multimedia modules, decision support systems and interactive websites can be developed for the benefit of the farmers. Computer-based modules are a permanent source of learning material that are readily available. Hence, computer aided transfer of technology should also be attempted to supplement other extension efforts. According to Vezzosi (2009) doctoral students rely heavily on the internet for their research work. Nel and Fourie (2016) found that the information needs of researchers are influenced by the research environment and expectations for research output and most needs for information and support services are met from library services. George et al (2006) found that in using Internet for information search, convenience, lack of sophistication in finding and using resources and course requirements affect the information behaviour of graduate students.

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SCHEDULE

Information seeking behaviour

Please mention the regularity of acquiring scientific information regarding animal husbandry

Table 5

Sl. No.	Source	Regularity				
		Daily	Once in a week	Once in a month	Once in a year	Never
1	Scientists/university/ other research stations					
2	Fellow Veterinarians					
3	Leaflets/folders/ Journals/ Books/magazines					
4	Newspaper/Radio/television/Internet					
5	Trainings/seminars					
6	Informal contacts					
7	Others					

Information Storing Behaviour

- By memorizing
- By writing in a notebook/ diary
- By maintaining information as it is in a file
- By saving in a computer/ mobile phone
- Others(specify)

Information Processing Behaviour

a. Information evaluation

Do you evaluate the received scientific information?

If yes, which of the following criteria will you apply to evaluate the information?

- Economic feasibility
- Local condition
- Availability of inputs
- Easy to operate

- As it is

b. Information treatment

Do you communicate the scientific information received by you as such?

If no, what methods do you use to treat the information?

- Prepare points in local language
- Prepare only important points
- Prepare teaching aids

Information Dissemination Behaviour

At what frequency do you disseminate the scientific information to farmers?

Table 6

Sl. No.	Method	Periodicity
1	Office calls	
2	Group discussions/Seminars	
3	Leaflets/folders/pamphlets/other publications	
4	Radio/television	
5	Trainings	
6	Others	

