

## *A Mixed-Method Investigation of Information Seeking Anxiety in Pakistani Research Students*

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### *Abstract:*

This mixed methods study investigated information seeking anxiety among postgraduate students of the University of the Punjab, Lahore. It was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, survey method using the questionnaire, containing ISAS, was employed for data collection. This was followed by a qualitative phase in which data were collected from purposively selected participants using interview guide. The results from both quantitative and qualitative data sets indicated the manifestation of information seeking anxiety among postgraduate students. In the quantitative phase, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) yielded six-factor solution to the Information Seeking Anxiety Scale (ISAS), namely, (1) Resource Anxiety; (2) ICT Anxiety; (3) Library Anxiety; (4) Search Anxiety; (5) Mechanical Anxiety; and, (6) Thematic Anxiety. While in the qualitative phase, the eight dimensions were identified that corroborated some of the dimensions ascertained in the quantitative phase. These include:

- (i) Procedural Anxiety; (ii) Information Overload; (iii) Resource Anxiety;
- (iv) Deficient Library Services; (v) Perceived Information Competence;
- (vi) ICT Anxiety; (vii) Language Anxiety; and (viii) Thematic Anxiety.

These results provided useful insights into the factors causing information seeking anxiety which can be used as a guide in developing useful directions for information literacy programs.

**Keywords:** 1. Information Seeking Anxiety; 2. Postgraduate Students; 3. Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Methods; Pakistan.

### *Background of the Study:*

Study of users' anxiety in information search process is, and has been, of fundamental concern to the information professionals working in academia and engaged in information literacy instructions (e.g. Bostick;<sup>1</sup> Erfanmanesh, Abrizah, & Karim;<sup>2,3</sup> Jiao & Onwuegbuzie;<sup>4,5,6</sup> Jiao, Onwuegbuzie, & Lichtenstein;<sup>7</sup> Kuhlthau;<sup>8,9,10</sup> Meier;<sup>11</sup> Mellon;<sup>12</sup> Shoham & Mizrachi;<sup>13</sup> Van Kampen.<sup>14,15</sup>) It is through the results of such studies that these professionals are able to develop useful directions for information literacy programs that are compatible with students' needs and result information literate individuals.<sup>16,3,17</sup>

A perusal of available research on users' anxiety in information search process (ISP) indicated that this phenomenon had been extensively investigated using university students of all levels, that is, under-graduate, graduate, and post-graduate. Most of these studies examined users' anxiety in a conventional library setting which was known as library anxiety (e.g. Abdul Karim & Ansari;<sup>18</sup> Abusin & Zainab;<sup>19</sup> Anwar, Al-Kandari & Al-Qallaf;<sup>20</sup> Anwar,