

The Correlation between Knowledge Assumptions and the Gathering of Research Information among South African Doctoral Students

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ABSTRACT This article, based on a qualitative case study among a group of ten enrolled South African doctoral students, explored the correlation between their knowledge assumptions and their respective behaviour during research information gathering activities while compiling their research proposals for the doctorate. The ten participants interviewed were all doctoral students from the College of Education at the University of South Africa. Six divergent models of epistemological development from the research literature (in chronological order) as well as an information search process model formed the conceptual, theoretical framework for the investigation. The findings of this study provide insights into the impact of students' epistemological beliefs on their information seeking patterns and provide, in addition, a rich theoretical foundation for future information-seeking behaviour research among doctoral students. The findings furthermore confirm the correlation between core epistemological beliefs and information gathering patterns amongst South African doctoral students and provide substantial justification for using epistemological beliefs in the supervision of doctoral students.