Gender and Computer Anxiety, Motivation, Self-Confidence, and Computer Use

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Gender-related differences toward the use of computers are well established. Males have traditionally dominated the use of computers and their applications in technological fields. Many researchers have attributed this gender gap in computer use to anxiety about using computers. Computer anxiety among females does not lessen with age or with experience using computers, and females have held a more negative attitude toward using computers than males. Thus females have been underrepresented in occupations that require using computers.

Purpose of the Study: This study explored the relationship between gender and (a) computer anxiety, (b) motivation, (c) self-confidence, and (d) the use of computers in a job or career. A random sample of 157 first-year students (77 females and 80 males) at Near East University in North Cyprus completed the Computer Attitude Scale.

Findings: A significant difference was found between females and males in computer self-confidence, females recording significantly lower scores than males. Male respondents recorded significantly higher scores of self-confidence on this scale than females did, although females and males expressed confidence in accomplishing work using computers. Mean scores for males were higher than female scores for computer anxiety, motivation, and use of computers, but group means did not differ significantly. Females and males disagreed or strongly disagreed about enjoying talking about computers, although females expressed significantly greater dissatisfaction toward discussing computers than males expressed.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Female students require greater motivation and self-confidence to use computers; otherwise, more males than females will continue to enroll in computer-related courses and programs, and more males than females will pursue careers in information technology. Future teachers, particularly female teachers, need encouragement to use computers and other technologies and develop...
positive attitudes toward their use. The extent to which students use computers depends, in part, upon the comfort that teachers feel toward using computers in the classroom, the extent to which they integrate computers within courses and programs, and the extent to which students receive opportunities to use them.

Keywords: gender studies, pedagogical issues, secondary education, improving classroom teaching, teaching/learning strategies