

Abstract

Computer Anxiety Among Graduate Students in the Universities in Palestine and its Relation to Locus of Control

The role of computers today has expanded dramatically and it is becoming evident that the future is for this kind of technology also the expansion of computers into an increasing number of our life demanded from individuals to have at least a minimal knowledge about computer utilization, therefore the ability to use computers effectively will be of critical importance to success in many different fields, when computers are introduced many students respond enthusiastically and quickly master the skills necessary for successful utilization of computers, other students show an unpleasant experience with computers, these students exhibit varying degrees of anxiety when required to learn about or use computers, and therefore have more than the usual difficulty in mastering computer skills, (Jay, 1981) describes these negative feelings / attitudes as computer anxiety or computerphobia, (Howard et al, 1986) in (Anderson, 1996) defines computer anxiety as "the fear of impending interaction with computers that is disproportional to the actual threat presented by the computer".

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of computer anxiety to locus of control and the effect of some demographic variables on computer anxiety: age, gender, district, major field (specialty), marital status, prior computer experience and the ownership of computer.

The subjects (male=162, female=97) were randomly selected from the universities in Palestine, stratified across the graduate students. All subjects received the same survey in the spring of 1997-1998. Subjects self-reported their level of computer anxiety and locus of control by completing a scale. Subjects' general demographic information and their experience with computers were collected through a self-reported participant inventory form.

After collecting data & analyzing it statistically, the following results were obtained:-

- There were no significant correlation between computer anxiety and locus of control.
- There were no significant difference in computer anxiety due to gender, district, specialty and marital status.
- There were a significant differences in computer anxiety due to age, computer experience and ownership.
- There were a significant interaction between (gender and prior computer experience) and (gender and computer ownership).
- The best variables to predict computer anxiety were prior computer experience, followed by computer ownership.

As a result of this study the researcher recommends: -

- To study other factors and variables that can affect the level of computer anxiety such as: self-efficacy, math anxiety, motivation, presence of computers to use, prior experience in computer use.
- Studying the relationship between computer anxiety and the actual use of computers in teaching.
- Making new studies about the ways and approaches that will reduce the amount of computer anxiety, in order to design suitable courses to deal with anxiety.
- In this study the researcher used the descriptive method in studying the construct of computer anxiety and recommends doing the same study using qualitative analysis to know the individual differences in both type and level of computer anxiety.
- Designing and implementing special courses about computer utilization.