## Library anxiety and computer attitude among Israeli B. Ed students / Diane Mizrachi

## Abstract:

Professional academic librarians have long noticed the inhibitions, hesitations, confusion and lack of self-confidence that students often display when using the library and its resources for their class assignments. Constance Mellon was the first to systematically study this phenomenon, which she called 'library anxiety,' and found that 75-85% of first year college students suffer such an experience (1986). Recognition of her theory produced a flurry of discussions and studies. In 1992 Sharon Bostick developed the Library Anxiety Scale, an instrument that has since been used in numerous studies for measuring library anxiety quantitatively. Nearly all of these studies have been performed in American universities and colleges. No study or discussion of library anxiety involving Israeli students or researchers had ever been undertaken before this one.

In today's academic library environment computer literacy is essential. Resources are found by using online computerized catalogs, multi-media databases on CD-ROM, local network databases and the Internet. Because of the implementation of the computer into all aspects of society many studies have been made which measure different aspects of computer attitudes. But no study had ever been done which tried to seek a relationship between library anxiety and computer attitudes. This study is the first to investigate this question. It also adds the analysis of an original factor to library anxiety - the anxiety caused by performing library searches and using academic material in the English language by students whose mother tongue is not English in an academic institution whose language of instruction is not English.

Two instruments were used in this study; the Hebrew Library; Anxiety Scale based on Bostick's scale, and a Hebrew translation of the Computer Attitude Scale by Loyd and Gressard (1984). A demographic questionnaire was also

included. Tree hundred and thirty-nine students from the school of education

at Beit Berl College completed the questionnaire in their classrooms. It was

then decided to extend the sample population to include an additional 325

B.Ed. students from seven other teacher colleges from throughout the

country. This was done in their respective main libraries. No significant

difference in the structure of the factors was found between these two

population groups in either of the instruments.

Seven factors were created in the H-LAS - Staff, knowledge. Language,

Physical Comfort, Library Computer Comfort, Library Policies/Hours, and

Resources. All showed adequate internal reliability except for the

policies/hours factor, which was kept in the additional checks because of its

theoretical importance to library anxiety.

All three factors of the Computer Attitude Scale, computer liking, confidence

and anxiety, showed adequate internal reliability.

The sample population totaled 664 B.Ed. students from eight teacher colleges

throughout Israel. The average age of this sample is 25.94, eighty-eight

percent of whom are female, and eighty-two percent list Hebrew as their

mother tongue.

In this survey, 71% of the students reported either "some" or "much" home

computer usage. Fifty-one percent of the students reported "some" or "much"

computer usage at work. Word processing was used far more than any of the

other types of computer usage surveyed including games, electronic

spreadsheets, internet and programming languages.

This study investigated three different research questions regarding library

anxiety and computer attitudes:

What is the level of library anxiety and computer attitudes among Israeli B.Ed.

students?

Does a relationship exist between library anxiety and computer attitudes?

3. What are the effects of age, gender, native language, year of study and

computer usage upon these conditions?

This study found that on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest level of

anxiety both library anxiety and computer attitudes scored around the mid-

point at 2.51 and 2.58 respectively. It can be assumed that while neither forms

an overwhelming affective block, both conditions should be addressed and

improved. The English language search and resource factor was found to be

overwhelmingly the most debilitating factor of library anxiety.

A positive correlation was found between all seven library anxiety factors and

all three factors of computer attitudes, thus establishing a relationship. The

strongest correlation v as between the computer anxiety factor and the

knowledge factor of library anxiety. The knowledge factor was affected the

most by computer attitudes, but the staff and language factors also showed

strong relationships to computer attitudes. It can be assumed that positive

computer attitudes help decrease library anxiety in Israeli B.Ed students.

All of the independent variables related to two or more library anxiety factors,

indicating significant relationships. In general, younger female students in

their second or third year of study showed the most library anxiety with native

Arabic and Hebrew speakers showing mixed anxiety levels. More computer

usage, especially at home, seems to reduce library anxiety and shows

particularly strong relationships with the staff, knowledge and language

actors.

The effects of the independent variables on computer attitudes showed that

age and gender had no significant correlation to computer attitudes. Arabic

speakers showed more computer confidence than Hebrew speakers, but no

significant differences were found in the liking or anxiety factors. All forms of

computer usage showed strong negative relations to all factors of computer

attitudes, meaning that more computer usage has a definite relationship to

more positive computer attitudes, including less computer anxiety. The

strongest single relationship shown is between home usage and computer

anxiety.

1. Three important points are revealed from this study that must be

addressed:

1. More computer usage increases positive computer attitudes.

2. More positive computer attitudes result in less library anxiety.

3. Anxiety from using English language searches and resources is the

most dominant factor of library anxiety in Israeli B.Ed. students.

By requiring and enabling more computer training and experience colleges

and their libraries can help remedy poor computer attitudes which in turn

would help reduce library anxiety. Strengthening students' English skills can

ease anxiety caused by searching and using English language resources, but

simultaneously more college and research level material should be published

in the Hebrew language.

The findings of this study should provide useful guidelines for college libraries

in planning and pacing their computerization and bibliographic instruction

programs, especially institutions with multi-lingual users and !resources.

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