



Investigating the source of higher rates of anxiety among female college students for online classes

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Abstract

The use of online courses by universities has shown an increase in recent years. Studies have shown that females have higher levels of anxiety compared to males when taking online courses. In this qualitative study the aim is to investigate the possible sources of anxiety in female college students when engaged in online courses.



Literature Review

Yu (2021) looked at factors other than gender that might influence studies on online anxiety including education level and personality. He hypothesized that gender is significantly correlated to online learning. Both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered. Yu's research showed that females have a slightly stronger aversion to online learning (Yu, 2021).



Literature Review

McKnight & McKnight (2012) conducted research on anxiety by looking at face-to-face classes and video conferencing courses. Online courses are conducted in real time, or synchronous. The researchers set out to see how gender affects anxiety levels in video-based courses. This research showed that although the difference in overall anxiety between males and females was similar, women had higher physical symptoms of anxiety.

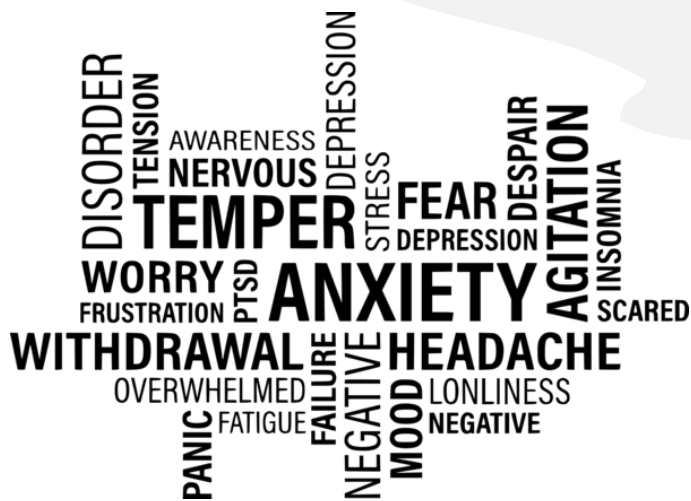


Literature Review

Saade and colleagues (2017) gathered information to examine if anxiety affects performance in online courses. Researchers found that females had higher percentages of anxiety while taking an online course in these four categories; (1) bad feelings, (2) online courses scare me, (3) confidence, (4) feeling anxious. While there is no measurable difference in performance outcomes among the genders, females report 35% more anxiety than male students.

Rationale

- The aims of this research is to investigate sources of anxiety in female college students while taking online courses.
- Information gathered by this research has the potential to help students develop coping mechanisms that can decrease feelings of anxiety, and help educators design online curriculum that minimizes factors that cause anxiety



Hypotheses/Research Questions

The hypotheses are positive correlations between the following variables:

1. Anxiety and a lack of student/teacher interaction
2. Anxiety and peer to peer interaction
3. Anxiety and the use of technology and
4. Anxiety and the lack of two-way communication.

Participants

The sample for this study will consist of volunteers of female students who attend a rural university in the West Texas. Qualifying students will be those currently enrolled as full or part-time students, and those who have taken at least one or more online courses.



Procedures

Volunteer students will be given an online survey to complete. The survey will include the following questionnaires: Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Scale of Online Course Anxiety (SOCA) (Li et al., 2021), a curriculum design portion scale, and demographics.

The predicted results are that female students will identify components of online classes that affect anxiety.

The mediating factors of anxiety may correlate to (1) lack of student/teacher interaction, (2) lack of peer-to-peer interaction, (3) use of technology, (4) lack of communication.

Limitations

One limitation is that the sample population is small.



This research is based on self-reporting by the participants.



This research does not consider the number of classes a participant has taken online, nor does it separate synchronous classes from asynchronous classes.



References

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