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A study on computer phobia in secondary-level students in the rural area of Murshidabad in West Bengal

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Abstract
This study explores the phenomenon of computer phobia among secondary-level students in the rural district of Murshidabad, West Bengal. Despite the increasing integration of technology in education, a significant portion of students in rural areas experience anxiety and negative attitudes toward computers, hindering their ability to acquire essential digital skills. Using a descriptive survey methodology, data were collected from 210 students, examining their personal experiences, attitudes, and the impact of social influences and opportunities on their perception of computer learning. The findings reveal that 57.39% of students exhibit computer phobia, characterized by nervousness, fear of making mistakes, and mental pressure. While 42.61% of students show a positive outlook, acknowledging the importance of computer literacy, 68.79% of respondents cite positive social and institutional support as critical in reducing anxiety. However, 31.21% report insufficient opportunities and an unsupportive environment. This study underscores the need for targeted interventions to address students' fears and enhance their confidence in using computers. By fostering a supportive learning atmosphere and equipping educators with ICT training, schools can bridge the digital divide and empower students to embrace technology for their academic and professional development.

Keywords: Technophobia, Computer literacy, Educational technology, Digital learning, Teacher training

1. Introduction
Since its birth, computers have played a vital role in communication. They act as regulators of modernity. Their journey has been tremendous, enabling communication with the entire world. Now, I can connect with anyone globally. Computers are turning the world into a global village. Before computers were invented, radio and television were the only ways to learn about the world. As a result, our knowledge was limited at that time. However, thanks to this modern machine, we now have a seamless flow of information. This machine is used in many places today. In the process of knowledge production, it has become easy to accumulate, manipulate, process, and manage all kinds of data.

Nowadays, computers have become integral to our lives and are well-known to most people. However, despite their prevalence, there are still challenges in learning to use these machines, including interactive media. A major issue in computer learning was the fear of computers, often referred to as computer phobia. Terms like computerphobia and technophobia emerged, reflecting various synonyms such as technophobia, computerphobia, and computer anxiety. Over time, technophobia has become a common term, frequently appearing in newspapers and demographic studies. This encompasses the meaningful internal dialogue that occurs during actual computer interactions or when anticipating future interactions with computers.

The proposed title addresses the fear of using computers among secondary school students and teachers in the Murshidabad district. Before proceeding to the proposed title, the researchers would like to focus on some basic knowledge about the genealogy of computers in the pages of history. The curiosity inherent in human nature and the origins of computers illustrate how this technology has flourished. Human nature has always been driven by curiosity to discover everything, making it easier to identify and learn.

People live longer lives, and in the process of development, human life has become more comfortable. This success has been achieved through innovations in many aspects of human life. Computers are one of the significant scientific innovations in people's lives, reducing human effort through programming. Next-generation computer developments are enhancing our ability to save everything in a minute.

With technology becoming more and more integrated into every part of our lives, social change and advancement are happening more quickly these days. New devices and software are created every day to improve upon current technologies and make our lives easier. New generations' priorities, lives, mindsets, and learning requirements have changed significantly in comparison to older generations as a result of the widespread integration of technology across many industries. The ways that the present and past generations approach reading, studying, doing their homework, and engaging with their surroundings change significantly. Previously non-technological jobs now require technology daily. The number of computers in homes has increased, and more individuals are learning how to use them. Through social networking, messaging, internet surfing, interactive gaming, and other digital activities, both adults and children use technology regularly. Our culture is changing technologically and has grown increasingly dependent on these developments. Education systems have had to adjust as a result of these technological advancements, which have changed student profiles and educational outcomes. Curricula are rapidly incorporating contemporary electronic gadgets and e-learning applications to improve teaching and learning efficiency, interactivity, and engagement. With the use of ICT and instruction on a variety of devices, the teacher's role has changed to centre on influencing students' futures. Smart classrooms are now necessary since the introduction of computers has made it simpler to use audiovisual techniques in instruction. But when it comes to adopting new technologies, there is still a noticeable divide between educators and learners in rural places. A lot of teachers in the area suffer from content phobia, which keeps them from implementing this cutting-edge method of teaching. Teachers and students have developed phobias about technology as a result of this anxiety. According to polls, both teachers and students in the Murshidabad district have a serious phobia of computer-based learning. The goal of current research is to determine if educators are prepared to get over this fear and use new technologies in the classroom.

Students are increasingly using tablets and mobile devices for learning these days. Students now have access to a wide range of resources thanks to technology, which has also made teaching much easier. Knowledge is power, and both educators and learners can use cutting-edge technology to investigate fascinating subjects and undertake research in addition to improving the teaching-learning process. The use of computers in the classroom, various electronic devices, the internet for distance learning, and social media for everyday communication are some of the most important technical advancements that have revolutionized education. These developments present fascinating prospects that have enormous learning potential for students. By adjusting to the needs of the students and their learning settings, contemporary technology makes lessons more student-centred. By incorporating the newest resources and techniques into the classroom, they facilitate seamless learning experiences. To get the most out of these technologies, though, one needs to be in charge of them and understand how they operate. Effective and participatory use of technology is essential to the teaching and learning process effectiveness. Therefore, how teachers incorporate and use these technologies into their teaching methods is directly related to the genuine potential of technology to improve teaching and learning results.

2. Review of Related Literature

Gupta & Kapri (2018) [6] researched “A comparative study on computer phobia in junior high school students.” The objective of the study was to it has been discovered that when one gains expertise and understanding in computers, their fear lessens. We compared data on computer phobia in secondary high school students using descriptive research survey methods. Findings show that when one gains expertise and understanding with computers, their fear of them reduces.

Sharma & Pathak (2017) [8] a study on "Computer fear among senior secondary school teachers of various genders and boards: a research." This study looked at any differences in computer phobia among higher secondary school teachers by board and gender. The method of the survey will be descriptive. Findings suggest that computer fear among high school teachers differs greatly across genders and body types. Board, however, does not significantly factor into this reference as a single variable.

Chandini (2016) [3] on the study “Teachers at secondary schools' attitudes toward the use of computers in the classroom.” The results of this study show that secondary school teachers' attitudes toward computer use in the classroom differ significantly according to age. This study is a descriptive survey conducted to examine attitudes and the relationship between secondary school teachers and computer use. This result suggests that teachers arm themselves through computer literacy training.

Hong & Koh (2015) [7] conducted a study on “Anxiety and attitudes towards computers of rural secondary school teachers: Malaysian perspective.” This study examined the relationship between computer anxiety and computer attitudes, anxiety and computer attitudes, and the differences between anxiety and attitudes based on demographic characteristics in rural secondary school teachers. A description of the Locality method will be used. The findings indicated that secondary school teachers in rural Malaysia did not have excessive computer phobia and had favourable attitudes about computers.

Gihar & Tyagi (2012) [5] in the study “ICT Culture and Computerphobia of Student-Teachers in the Indian Context: Some Inspiring Guidelines.” The goal of this investigation was the present study sought to determine levels. student teacher computer phobia.

3. Statement of the Problem

A study on computer phobia in secondary level students in the rural area of Murshidabad in West Bengal

4. Objectives of the Study

- To study the level of computer phobia among senior secondary school students with respect to gender.
- To study the level of computer phobia among senior secondary school students with respect to the government and private sector.

5. Methodology

A descriptive survey method is used to the present study for analysing the data. Qualitative approaches use to examine the data, this study is likewise regarded as qualitative.

5.1 Population & Sample

The study's population consists of all senior secondary school pupils enrolled in Murshidabad, West Bengal. A total of 210 students, 85 males and 125 females, were purposefully selected from among them.

5.2 Sampling Procedure

A purposive random sampling procedure was used to collect the sample from the population.

5.3 Tool Used

A self-created questionnaire was used to collect data for this investigation. Researches analysis focuses on the questionnaire's face validity.

5.3.1 Dimensions of the Tool

In the study, two dimensions have been chosen to fulfil the objectives that are below

1. In the perspective of Personal Experience and Attitude Towards Computers
2. Problem of Social Influences and Opportunities

Delimitations of the Study

The researchers has confined the scope of this study to the Murshidabad district in West Bengal. They have chosen to focus on secondary & senior secondary school students from the underprivileged section. A total of 210 students have been selected, all from secondary & senior secondary schools.

6. Analysis and Interpretation: Dimension Wise Analysis

6.1 Dimension 1: Personal Experience and Attitude Towards Computers

Table 1: The percentage of secondary and senior secondary schools in West Bengal reporting positive and negative attitudes towards their personal experiences with computers.

Percentage of personal experience and attitude towards computer	Yes	No
	57.39	42.61

Interpretation

Table no 1 The study reveals a mixed attitude towards computers among secondary and senior secondary students in West Bengal. It shows that 57.39% of students express anxiety or negative feelings about using computers, while 42.61% hold a positive attitude. Based on responses to the questionnaire, some students feel nervous or insecure when using computers and experience mental pressure during computer-related exams; moreover, many fear making mistakes and show little interest in learning computer skills. Some students also believe that computer skills are not essential for the future and consider computers to be complex and challenging. These findings indicate that addressing students' fears and negative attitudes towards computers is crucial, as such mindsets could hinder their ability to acquire technological skills. Educational institutions should focus on boosting students' confidence by providing effective training and proper guidance, which can enhance their interest and competence in technology and support their future use of digital skills in professional life.

6.2 Dimension 1: Problem of Social Influences and Opportunities

Table 2: The distribution of positive and negative responses from secondary and senior secondary schools in West Bengal regarding their social influences and opportunities.

Percentage of problems of social influences and opportunities	Yes	No
	68.79	31.21

Interpretation

Table no 2 indicates that 68.79% of students responded "Yes," showing a positive outlook, which suggests they are satisfied with the computer learning opportunities, social influences, and educational support available at their schools. These students feel that the school environment and social dynamics play a supportive role, boosting their interest and confidence in learning computers. In contrast, 31.21% of students responded "No," indicating a more negative perspective. This group feels that there are not enough opportunities for learning computers at their schools, or that social influences and the school environment are not supportive enough and may even hinder their learning. These findings highlight that, while a majority of students have a positive attitude toward learning computers, there is still a significant portion who feel they need more opportunities and a more supportive environment. Therefore, teachers should strive to create a more encouraging and nurturing atmosphere for these students, helping them overcome any fears about learning computers and enabling them to feel more comfortable and confident in their learning journey.

7. Findings

After analysis of this data, we find some major findings that are given below

7.1 Personal Experience and Attitude towards Computers

- 57.39% of students expressed anxiety or negative feelings about computers.
- Common issues included fear of mistakes, mental pressure during exams, and doubts about the importance of computer skills.
- 42.61% of students displayed positive attitudes, showing interest in learning and recognizing computers' potential benefits.

7.2 Social Influences and Opportunities

- 68.79% of students acknowledged positive social influences and sufficient opportunities for computer learning.
- Positive responses highlighted the supportive school environment and educational encouragement.
- 31.21% expressed dissatisfaction, citing inadequate opportunities and lack of support for learning computers.

8. Conclusion

The study highlights the prevalence of computer phobia among secondary and senior secondary school students in the rural areas of Murshidabad, West Bengal. While technological advancements have revolutionised education and increased access to digital learning tools, a significant portion of students still experience anxiety and apprehension

when interacting with computers. Findings indicate that personal experiences, attitudes toward technology, and social influences play pivotal roles in shaping students' outlook on computers. The study revealed that while a majority of students benefit from supportive social environments and opportunities, a substantial number still struggle with limited access and negative perceptions of computer learning.

To bridge this gap, educational institutions must adopt a more inclusive and supportive approach to integrate technology into teaching and learning processes. This includes offering structured training, fostering a positive attitude toward technology, and addressing the specific fears and challenges faced by students. Empowering teachers with adequate ICT training and creating a nurturing school environment will ensure that students can overcome their anxieties and embrace digital tools as essential assets for their personal and academic growth. Overall, the study underscores the need for a collaborative effort among educators, policymakers, and communities to reduce computer phobia and ensure that all students, regardless of their background, can harness the transformative potential of technology in education.

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