

# ABSTRACT

**THESIS:** The Adoption of the Use of Computers: A Case Study of Students of the School of Social Development, National Institute of Development Administration

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The objectives of this study were threefold: 1) to explore the state of the use of computers of the students of the School of Social Development of the National Institute of Development Administration; 2) to examine factors affecting attitude toward computers, and 3) to investigate these students' opinion about the course of SD. 502 (Computers for Social Development).

The population of the study comprised all students who were studying in the School of Social Development of the National Institute of Development Administration in Bangkok in October, 1994, during which the researcher conducted this research. The accidental sampling technique was used to gather the sample, which consisted of 173 cases. A questionnaire was constructed for collecting the data.

The major findings were as follows:

1) Generally, the students had a favorable attitude toward computers. Innovativeness was found to have a positive relationship with attitude toward computers.

2) Regarding the characteristics of the innovation, the majority of students believed that a computer was useful and compatible with their tasks and that it was neither too difficult nor too easy to use a computer

3) Age, attitude toward computers and innovativeness were found to be able to discriminate among the three groups of students: those who had not yet adopted the use of computers, those who had adopted it through the authority decision, and those who had adopted it through the optional decision. Students who had adopted the use of computers through the optional decision seemed to be very young and more innovative and have a high positive attitude toward computers, whereas students who had not yet adopted the use of computers appeared to be rather old and less innovative and have a low positive attitude toward computers. Students who had adopted the use of computers through the authority decision fell between these opposite sets of attributes. In other words, they were neither very young nor very old. Their levels of innovativeness and of attitude toward computers were of average magnitude. However, the classification power was not great; the correct classification rate was 57.23 %. It was also discovered that students' jobs were associated with the innovation-decisions. Those students who never worked or had a job at the low level were more likely to adopt the use of computers by their own will whereas those students who had a job at the higher level were more likely to adopt the use of computers by necessity either due to work or due to studying SD. 502.

4) Only three kinds of the computer use were reported: printing, calculation, and retrieval. The perceived complexity of using a computer was found to be the most influential factor affecting the ways students used a computer for all kinds of the computer use. Other factors were such as types of students and age.

5) Most students who always used a computer by themselves gave the reasons that it was convenient to do the task on their own and that they could produce a better output when they used a computer by themselves. On the other hand, most students who did not at all use a computer by themselves reported the reasons that they could not use a computer to produce the desired results and that they had personnel in charge of doing the tasks for them. Most students who sometimes used a computer by themselves and sometimes had someone else do the computer work expressed a combination of reasons of the two groups above. In other words, they used a computer by themselves if it was

convenient or if they could generate better results but had others do the computer work they did not how to do it or let their personnel do the work for them

6) Several students who did not use a computer by themselves now expressed that in the future they would try to use it by themselves to some degree. And almost all students who used a computer by themselves now said that they would continue to use it by themselves in the future.

7) Many students used a computer at the School's computer lab most frequently and most students expressed that there were insufficient computers in the School's computer lab for students to use

8) It was discovered that no matter what the students used a computer for and where they used it, most students had similar problems about computer knowledge and gaining access to computers but had other different problems depending on where they used a computer. Regarding the suggestions about using a computer, most students expressed that they wanted to have a well-conditioned computer lab

9) It was discovered that whether SD 502 should be a required or selective course was a function of the level of computer knowledge the students wanted to have, which in turn was a function of how likely they would use a computer again after graduating. Some students wanted SD 502 to be a required course because they wanted a great deal of computer knowledge and in turn because they were more likely to use a computer again after graduating whereas some students wanted SD 502 to be a selective course because they wanted a small amount of computer knowledge and in turn because they were less likely to use a computer again after graduating.

The researcher's suggestions were as follows:

1) The School should offer two different computer courses: one as a required course and one as a selective course.

2) The School's computer lab should be modified to facilitate the students' use of computers.