

Reasoned Action Analysis Theory as a Vehicle to Explore Female Students' Intention to Major in Information Systems

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ABSTRACT The low number of female enrollees in computer-related fields such as information systems, information technology and computing sciences does not match the increasing IT related jobs – thus creating a gender imbalanced workforce in a field that has become ubiquitous. This paper examines the factors why female students do not major in information systems and suggests possible solutions. The researchers used a behavioural model based on the theory of reasoned action and a survey of the students enrolled in a bachelor of commerce degree to help them answer the fundamental question “what factors influence female students to major, or not, in information systems?” Multiple regression analysis was used to predict the intention to major in IS. The study found that a “genuine interest in IS” and the “perceived self-efficacy” most account for a woman’s decision to major in information systems. Equally important are those reasons that students gave why they did not pursue IS, including such matters as “unfamiliarity with the field prior to university” or “the perceived difficulty of the subject”. Implications for practice are explained.