

Comfort Level with Technology & Perceived Support in College Faculty

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 PSYC 4170
 Advanced Research
 in Psychology

Abstract

Technology has become prevalent in all aspects of the teaching and learning process, from communication to content delivery. The successful integration of technology appears to be mediated by several factors including comfort level with technology and the quantity and quality of available support. However, the relationship between comfort level with technology and support has not been explored in detail.

In this study, faculty from a community college in Toronto were surveyed on their attitudes toward technology and the type of technology support they receive at their institution. Results showed that there was a strong correlation between positive indicators of comfort level with technology (Optimism and Innovativeness) and support tactics that centre on communication and the creation of environments conducive to experimentation and innovation.

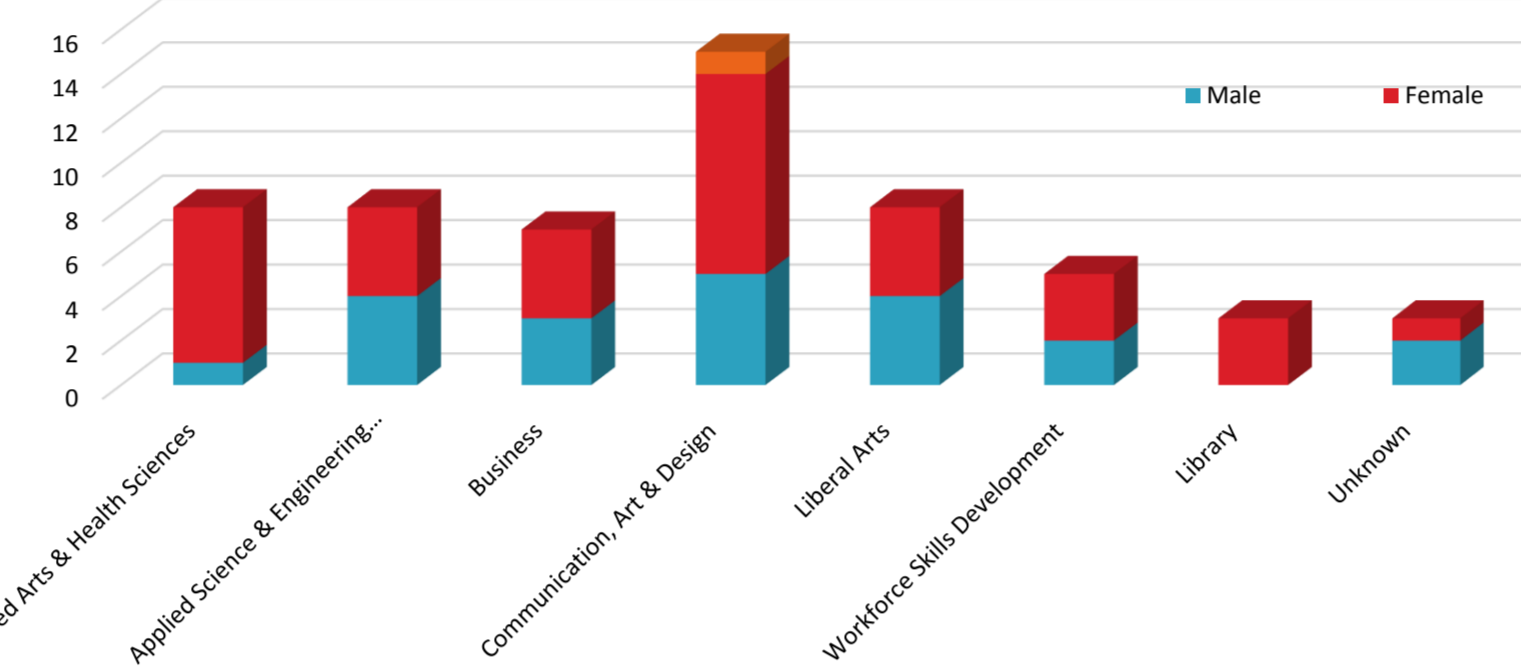
The findings demonstrate the need for institutions to engage with faculty in intentional, meaningful dialogue around technology and to provide support and designate time to foster experimentation and innovation.

Participants

52 teaching faculty from Seneca College

Seneca

Breakdown of participants by school/department and gender

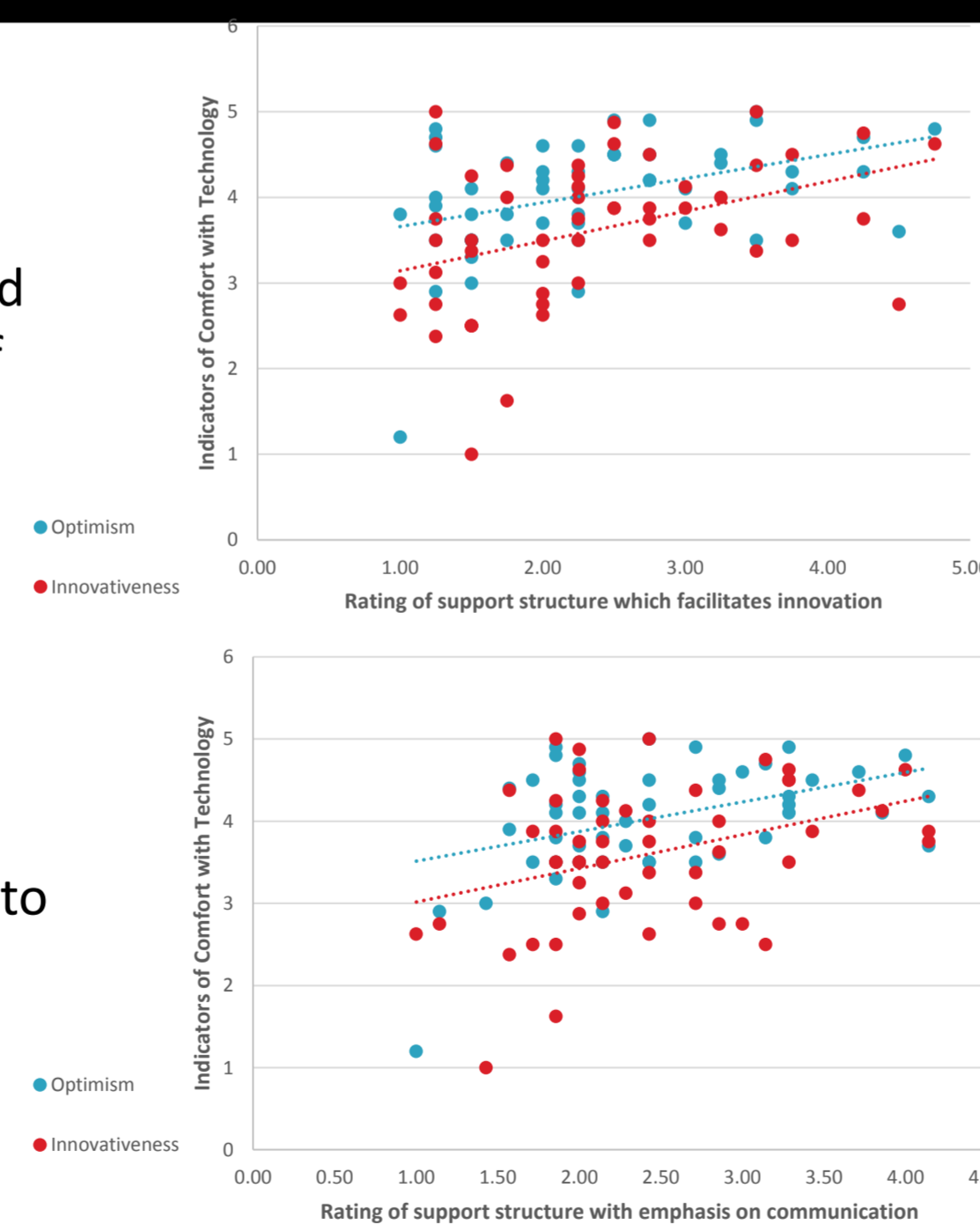


Methods

- **Online Survey**, 15-20 minutes to complete
- 36 items measure variable 1: **comfort level with technology**.
- Questions derived from the **Technology Readiness Index** (Parasuraman, 2000).
- 14 Items measure variable 2: **perceived type of support**.
- Questions derived from the **Leadership Action Survey** (Goldstein, 1982)

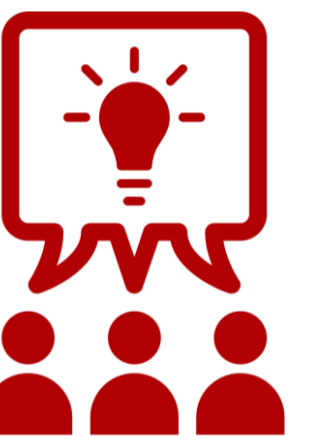
Results

A significant relationship was found between indicators of positive comfort level with technology (Optimism and Innovativeness) and support tactics based on communication (figure 1) and on conditions conducive to experimentation and innovation (figure 2).



Conclusions

- Technology in education thrives on a bi-directional relationship: innovators need a supportive environment, and that same environment is validated and improved by the presence of innovators.
- Mandated change does not necessarily have negative consequences.
- Optimism toward technology is sustained not only through successes but through well-managed failures.
- Important to allow time for experimentation.
- Important to set aside time and budget for training and support in addition to the budget for the hardware and software.



Research Question

I posed two hypotheses exploring the following question:

Is there a relationship between a faculty member's **comfort level with technology** (indicated by **optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, and insecurity**) and the type of **support** they believe they are receiving from their institution (emphasizing **strong communication, conditions favourable to innovation, or mandated change**)?



IMAGE CREDITS

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