



The Influence of Gender on Personal Grooming Behaviors among ERAU Students



Austin Wood

Abstract

Preening behaviors are a type of self-grooming behavior that people engage in to maintain their desired appearance. It is well-established that preening behaviors are prevalent among both men and women, with research suggesting that women engage in more preening behaviors than men (Daly, 1983, p. 183). This observational study investigates whether the reported gender difference in preening behaviors persists among contemporary college students. A total of 200 observations were conducted for 30-minute intervals at randomized times for two weeks. The results suggest that there is no significant difference in the number of preening behaviors performed by each gender, supported by a p-value greater than 0.05. However, both genders exhibited a significant display of hair adjustments, with an average of 1.80 adjustments per student, significantly exceeding the composite average of 1.29 preening behaviors per student. While this study provides an initial look at preening behaviors among ERAU students, further research is needed to fully understand the factors that influence these behaviors.

Objective

This observational study examined male and female ERAU students to determine which gender performed more preening behaviors when entering ERAU's student union.

Results

Observing 200 ERAU students, the researcher found students perform an average of 1.29 preening behaviors upon entering the student union, with fixing hair being the most prevalent among both genders, averaging 1.80 adjustments per student.

On average, female ERAU students exhibited a greater number of preening behaviors compared to their male counterparts. Although no statistical difference is observed in the overall number of preening behaviors performed, female students engaged in more hair adjustments compared to male students, with an average of 1.85 and 1.75 adjustments, respectively. This trend is also evident in clothing adjustments, with female students averaging 1.32 adjustments compared to 1.18 for male students. Similarly, female students performed an average of 1.22 accessory adjustments, while male students averaged

1.00. Interestingly, both male and female students exhibited the same number of posture adjustments upon entering the student union, with an average of 1.00 adjustment.

Methods

- Observations commenced once subjects entered the ERAU student union and concluded once subjects reached a marker 25 feet from the door.
- While in the testing area, the number of preening behaviors a subject performed was recorded in addition to qualitative data for unusual or noteworthy instances.
- A total of 200 observations were conducted, equally divided by gender.
- Observations were conducted for 30-minute intervals at randomized times from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for two weeks.

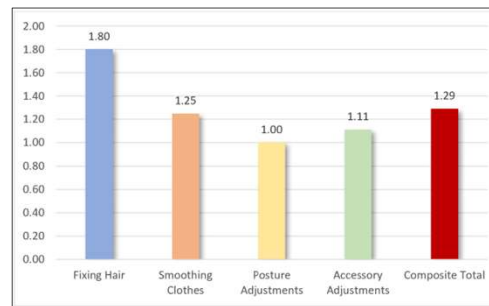


Figure 1: Preening Behaviors Composites

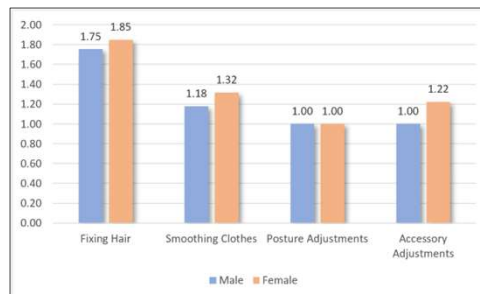


Figure 2: Composites of Male and Female Preening Behaviors

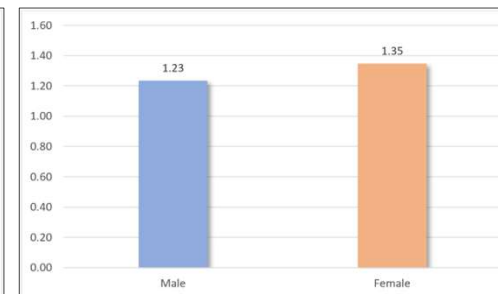


Figure 3: Composite Total of Preening Behaviors by Gender

References

- Daly, J. A., Hogg, E., Sacks, D., Smith, M., & Zimring, L. (1983). Sex and relationship affect social self-grooming. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 7, 183-189. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00986949>
- Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Hickson, M. L., III. (2012). *Nonverbal behavior in interpersonal relations*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Areas for Future Research

- The motivations behind preening behaviors
- The impact of social context on preening behaviors
- The relationship between preening behaviors and self-esteem and self-confidence