

Principal Researcher: Mireia Usart - Universitat Rovira i Virgili

Title: Mind the Gap: A Snapshot of digital skills gender differences in Spain.

Main purpose of the project: Draw a clear picture of the *digital gender gap*: when it starts and how it develops, looking into the divergence between males' and females' educational and career choices by examining the difference in their e-skills self-perception and its relation to STEM dropout, in Spain.

Design/methodology/approach: A disruptive quantitative design will be conducted: we will measure existing Big Data on e-skills performance and STEM dropouts across educational levels, compare and complete this information with Small Data retrieved from e-skills tests and surveys. All in a representative sample of Spanish students from primary education to post-graduate levels.

Potential results: The main outcome of this project will be to draw the profile of STEM female students and professionals, in term of e-skills self-perception and evaluation. When and where the *digital gender gap* emerges and expands, and its effect on females' presence in the STEM job market in Spain. A re-usable set of quantitative tools for measuring e-skills among all educational levels will be published.

Social relevance of the research: Despite all the efforts and existing initiatives on gender equality, *the digital gender gap* remains a significant issue across different educational levels. It is necessary to investigate which factors shape this inequality, in order to bridge the gender imbalance in the fields of engineering and computing and help future initiatives for gender equality in all educational areas.

Originality/value of the project: It addresses the *digital gender gap* problem from a totally new perspective, it explores a key element for success in STEM that until now has been neglected, known as self-perception of e-skills, and the relation between these two constructs:

“The ground-breaking approach of the digital gender gap that goes beyond the mere use of technology, will provide new insights into gender differences in Spain and will give strategies to empower women to lead the technology market.”