Qualitative Research Study Proposal

Assignment 2

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 Background of the Study

The purpose of this study will be to identify and investigate the leadership characteristics exemplified by urban school principals in terms of technology integration and digital age learning. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine 1) the impact of leadership characteristics on technology integration and digital age learning in elementary schools in urban districts, 2) the correlation between the leadership characteristics of principals and the integration of technology in urban elementary schools, 3) the correlation between the leadership characteristics of urban school principals and the accessibility to technology resources at the school level.

Need and Value for this Study

Now, more than ever, there is a need to prepare students with the 21st Century skills and education needed to compete in a global economy. This would include access to technological resources and exposure to media literacy, collaboration, problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, high school graduates must be fully prepared to meet the demands of college and career readiness. In an effort to achieve this goal, students should be provided with the digital literacy skills needed to compete globally. Adequate exposure to technological resources at an early age will also build a solid foundation in which to build upon in future years. This is one of the main reasons why it is essential to promote technologically-rich learning environments beginning in the elementary school years.

As a result of this study, the researcher will identify schools in urban districts that have demonstrated the innovative use of technology integration and the impact on student achievement. The researcher will also explore best practices for technology implementation and alignment into the curriculum. The results of this study will be shared with elementary school principals in order for them to be better positioned to replicate the successful integration of technology at their own school.

Research Questions

The focus of the investigation will be centered on the following questions:

1. To what degree do the leadership characteristics of elementary school principals impact technology integration and digital age learning in urban schools?
2. To what degree is there a correlation between the leadership characteristics of principals and the integration of technology in urban elementary schools?
3. To what degree does the integration of technology impact student achievement?
4. To what degree does accessibility to technology resources impact student achievement?

 Relevant Literature

 Styron, J. and Styron R. (2011) surveyed 500 Blue Ribbon School principals within the United Stated to identify the characteristics of successful school leaders. The perceptions and the technology usage of K-12 principals were also investigated in the study. The literature review indicated that when technology was utilized regularly and incorporated properly, it had a positive effect on student achievement. The research also suggested that school leaders should

seek funding for technology initiatives that promote real-world experiences. Furthermore, it was also recommended that school leaders seek meaningful ways to promote social interaction via Web 2.0.

 Banoglu’s (2011) study analyzed the technology leadership competencies of 134 primary and secondary school principals. The research for this study was conducted in Istanbul, Turkey. The results of the findings indicated that school principals had positive perceptions of technology usage in education.

 Eren, E.S., & Kurt, A. A. (2011) examined the technological leadership behaviors of 870 Turkish elementary school principals from within 16 cities. This study focused on the supply and use of educational technology. According to the findings, principals demonstrated high levels of technological leadership behaviors. It was also determined that their technological leadership behaviors did not differ with respect to their gender.

 Gulcan’s (2012) research further explored the issue of instructional competencies among school principals. As a result of the study, it was determined that the instructional competencies of school principals depended on their field and the type of work that they performed.

 Dyal, A., Carpenter, L. B., & Wright, J.V. (2009) provided school leaders with the guidance and knowledge needed to support students with special needs in order to increase student achievement with the use of assistive technologies.

 Kowch (2013) examined the role of educational administration and educational technology through a critical lens in an effort to build the capability of school leadership.

Methodology

 As discussed earlier, the purpose of this study is to identify and investigate the effective leadership characteristics exemplified by urban school leaders and the impact on technology integration and student achievement. This study will consist of a qualitative approach to methodology. Creswell (p.185) recommends the use of multiple sources of data such as interviews, observations and documents instead of relying on a single source of data collection. Once all of the data has been gathered, it will be analyzed and organized into categories or themes in order to establish patterns or commonalities across the various sources of data.

The results of the Technology Literacy Assessments of a specific grade across all elementary schools within a large urban district in northern New Jersey will also be analyzed to determine if there is a correlation between the results of the TLA and the findings from the school leadership technology surveys.

Population/Sampling

The participants in this study are elementary school principals in large urban communities within the state of New Jersey. Two hundred participants representing both elementary schools and middle schools will be surveyed in all. Broad bases of educational institutions will be reflected in this study including the public, charter and private sector.

The design for this population will consist of a cluster sampling in which groups and/or organizations will be identified in the process. The selection process for individuals will be

based on a random sample. The study will also consist of the stratification of the population before a sample is selected. According to Creswell, (p.158) stratification ensures that the sample reflects the true proportion of the population.

 Instruments

The researcher will identify a testing instrument that will assess the leadership qualities of school administrators based on the ISTE Standards and the Performance Indicators (2009). The testing instrument will be aligned to the following ISTE Standards for Administrators: Visionary Leadership, Digital Age Learning Culture, Excellence in Professional Practice, Systematic Improvement and Digital Citizenship.

Once the school leaders are identified, the permission letters for the participants which will include a link for the testing instrument will need to be photocopied and mailed to the respective parties. A reminder will be sent out two weeks prior to the submission date. A qualitative computer data analysis program will be used to assist in analyzing the data. The potential risks for failure may include a low participation rate in terms of survey completion. In this case, the number of participants will be expanded.

 Several key documents will be incorporated within this study. The Jersey City University Institutional Review Board will need to grant permission to conduct this study. The superintendents of the individual urban school districts will also receive a letter requesting permission to utilize and analyze the TLA assessment results to gather data. Furthermore, the

superintendent will also receive a letter written by the researcher requesting permission to complete a questionnaire on technology integration and principal leadership styles. Once the surveys have been received and the data has been compiled, the superintendent of schools of a large urban community in New Jersey will receive a letter requesting permission to discuss the findings with the school leaders in his/her district.

 Timeline

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| Activity | Proposed Date | Completed (Y/N) | Comments |
| Submit IRB to NJCU | August 2016 |  |  |
| Receive Approved IRB | October 2016 |  |  |
| Request Permission to Districts to Conduct Study and to Utilize TLA results | October 2016 |  |  |
| Photocopy and Disseminate Study | (early) November 2016 |  |  |
| Send Out Reminder to Participants | (mid) November 2016 |  |  |
| Compile Study | December 2016 |  |  |
| Complete Chapters 4, 5, 6 | January 2017 |  |  |
| Defend Dissertation | February 2017 |  |  |
| Request Permission to Share Findings | March 2017 |  |  |
| Graduate | May 2017 |  |  |
| Complete Chapters 1, 2, 3 | January 2016 |  |  |
| Select a Survey Instrument | January 2016 |  |  |
| Recruit Survey Participants | February 2016 |  |  |

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