The Relationship between Columbia Basin School Districts' Minority Demographics and Dropout Rate

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A Special Project

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FACULTY APPROVAL

The Relationship between Columbia Basin School Districts'

Minority Demographics and Dropout Rate

Approved for the Faculty

_____, Faculty Advisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive research study was to investigate the relationship between minority student demographics and school district dropout rate in the Columbia Basin. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, from which related inferences, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated. An analysis of data presented in Chapter 4 indicated there was no significant coefficient correlation between dropout rate and minority rates for selected school districts of the Columbia Basin.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background of the Project

Bob Wise, President of the Alliance for Excellent Education, emphasized the importance of a high school diploma as follows:

> In a world in which a meaningful high school diploma has become the minimum qualification necessary to obtain a good job and support family well-being, far too many American students are being allowed to fall off the path to prosperity (The House Education and Labor Committee, 2007 p.1).

Dropout prevention has become a critical part of America's educational agenda. To be successful and to meet the high educational standards, our youth need to be in school. In 2004, the dropout rate in America was at an astonishing 32 percent for all students and the dropout rate was even higher for minority students. The dropout rate for Hispanic, American Indian, and black students' nearly 50 percent (Orfield, et al., 2004). President George W. Bush expressed the following concerns regarding the Nation's dropout problem:

> Too many children in America are segregated by low expectations, illiteracy, and self-doubt. In a constantly changing world that is demanding increasingly complex skills from its workforce, children are literally being left behind (p. 1)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) established standards for schools in an effort to ensure student success (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). President Bush (2001) believed holding schools accountable was the only way to ensure all students would have a chance at a better life. If our educational system continued down the same path, too many youth would have been without necessary skills needed for a successful life.

Statement of the Problem

The significance of earning a high school diploma and the number of minority students dropping out provided justification for determining the relationship between minority populations and dropout rates of public school districts in the Columbia Basin. According to Orfield (2004), nationally, about one third of *all* students drop out of school, while approximately one half of minority students drop out (Orfield, 2004). The social and economic implications on society were alarming. Dropouts were much more likely to be unemployed, in prison, unmarried or divorced, and living in poverty (Baum, & Payea, 2004). Ultimately, society was paying the price.

Phrased as a question, the problem which represented the focus of the present study may be stated as follows: Is there a relationship between minority student demographics and school dropout rate in Columbia Basin school districts in Eastern Washington?

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive research study was to investigate the relationship between minority student demographics and school district dropout rate in the Columbia Basin. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, from which related inferences, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated.

Delimitations

The study focused on minority student demographics and dropout rates of the Columbia Basin during the 2005-2006 school year as reported by school districts and made available to the public by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). This information was the most recent available at the time of this research study.

The sample was comprised thirty (30) selected public school districts located throughout the six (6) Columbia Basin counties including: Benton, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima counties. Districts varied in size from a few hundred to several thousand students.

Assumptions

The Columbia Basin agricultural area has become dependent on migrant workers to complete the harvest of crops grown in the region. Over time, more and more migrant families have decided to call the Columbia Basin home because

of year-round agriculture opportunities for work. Nonetheless, this posed unique challenge for school districts. Some families have relied on their older children to work and to help provide for the family. When both work and school became too challenging, these children were inclined to leave school permanently.

Hypothesis or Research Question

There was a high relationship between minority student demographics and dropout rates of public school districts in the Columbia Basin during the 2005-2006 school year.

Null Hypothesis

There was no significant relationship between minority student demographics and dropout rates of public school districts in the Columbia Basin during the 2005-2006 school year. Significance was determined for $p \geq .05$, .01, and .001.

Significance of the Project

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2006), minorities make up about 25% of the Columbia Basin population and about 26% nationally. However, the public educational system has not met the needs of minority groups which resulted in a high minority student dropout rate. As the Columbia Basin has similar demographic characteristics compared to the nation, the region has experienced the same kind of economic, social, and cultural issues related to the

student dropout rate. In a publication entitled Dropouts in AmericaU (2004), Orfield explained:

> At an absolute minimum, adults need a high school diploma if they are to have any reasonable opportunity to earn a living wage. Most businesses need workers with technical skills that require at least a high school diploma. Yet the United States is allowing a dangerously high percentage of students to disappear from the educational pipeline before graduating from high school, a situation that is receiving little notice (p.41).

Procedure

To undertake the study, Columbia Basin public schools and school districts were identified from data obtained from the OSPI. The thirty (30) selected school districts from six (6) Columbia Basin counties included: East Valley, Ellensburg, Ephrata, Finley, Goldendale, Grandview, Granger, Highland, Kennewick, Kiona-Benton, Kittitas, Mabton, Moses Lake, Mt. Adams, Naches Valley, North Franklin, Omak, Pasco, Prosser, Quincy, Richland, Royal, Selah, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Wahluke, Wapato, West Valley, Yakima, and Zillah.

Once the sample group was determined, minority student demographics and accompanying dropout rate was determined for the 2005-2006 school year. These data were retrieved from the OSPI website and organized in tabular form. Next, dropout rates and minority demographics of the sample Columbia Basin school districts were calculated using the *Spearman rho* statistical analysis. From

this analysis, it was possible to determine the relationship between minority student demographics and school district dropout rate in the Columbia Basin.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of the present study have been defined as follows:

annual yearly progress. A statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which required each state to ensure all schools and districts made Adequate Yearly Progress.

common core of data. A program of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics that annually collected fiscal and non-fiscal data about all public schools, public school districts and state education agencies in the United States. The sample was scientifically selected to represent the civilian noninstitutional population.

current population survey. A monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey has been conducted for more than 50 years.

demographic. The characteristic of a human population or part of it, especially its size, growth, density, distribution, and statistics regarding birth, marriage, disease and death.

descriptive research. Data Analysis technique enabling the researcher to meaningfully describe many scores with a small number of numerical indices.

dropout. A student who enter grade nine, but has left the educational system and not completed high school requirements within the four (4) years typically taken to do so.

event dropout rate. Event dropout rates described the proportion of youth ages 15 through 24 who dropped out of grades 10-12 in the 12 months preceding October of the identified year. Demographic data collected in the Current Population Survey (CPS) permitted event dropout rates to be calculated across various individual characteristics, including race/ethnicity, sex, region of residence, and income level.

minority. As described in the Webster Dictionary minority typically includes a part of a population differing from others in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment

quantitative research. The collection of numerical data to explain, predict, and/or control phenomena of interest.

spearman rho. A measure of correlation appropriate when the data for at least one of the variable are expressed as ranks,; it produces a coefficient between .00 and ± 1.00.

Acronyms

AYP. Annual Yearly Progress

CCD. Common Core of Data

CPS. Current Population Survey

ERIC. Educational Resources Information Center

NCES. National Center for Educational Statistics

NCLB. No Child Left Behind

OSPI. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

RCW. Revised Code of Washington

WASL. Washington Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The review of literature and research summarized in Chapter 2 was organized to address:

- The History of Public Education and Dropouts.
- Description of Dropouts in America.
- The Importance of Earning a Diploma.
- Dropout Factors.
- Summary.

Data current primarily within the last 5 years were identified through an on-line computerized literature search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), the internet, and Proquest. A hand-search of selected research materials was also conducted.

The History of Public Education and Dropouts

One hundred years ago, most school aged children worked in mines, glass factories, textiles, agriculture, canneries, home industries, as newsboys, or as peddlers (Child Labor Public Education Project, 2000). Wages were cheap, but this work was something young Americans could do to contribute to the family. Because of the need for children to work, less than in 10 children finished high school. Public officials, parents, and educators were not happy with students not

completing their education, but their concern was not valued because the majority felt contributing to the family was more important. Children working to help their families instead of attending school was a norm in America (Dorn, 2001).

Public education began as early as the 1600's in the New England colonies. Public school systems were founded on the ideals of Thomas Jefferson who believed the government should have greater control of education and that all students should have access to public schools. After the Declaration of Independence was signed, seven of the 13 states made specific provisions for education. Until the 1840's, schools were mostly localized and only for the wealthy. Reformers such as Henry Barnard and Horace Mann wanted all children to gain the benefits of education. Reformers believed public schools could create good citizens, unite society and prevent crime. In 1850, the first laws were passed making it mandatory for children to attend elementary school. It was not until 1918 that all states established laws for children to attend elementary school (Public Education in the United States, 2007).

High schools were not compulsory at the time elementary school attendance became mandatory. In the early 1900's, students who left high school were termed early-school-leavers because it was seen as more of an option to attend (Dorn). After political influence and legislation regulated child labor laws the label for students who left high school changed to dropouts. In 1938, federal regulations called the Fair Labor Standards Act controlled the minimum age for

children to work as well as the hours a child could work. About this time, The National Child Labor Committee worked to end child labor and combined efforts to provide a free, compulsory education for all children. After these battles were won, children soon became expected to attend school (Child Labor Public Education Project, 2000).

Not until the 1960's was the term dropout commonly used in America to describe children leaving school before completion. Henceforth, children who left school early were regarded as deviant juvenile delinquency (Shannon & Bylsma, 2003). Once labor laws were established, schools were in session for longer periods of time and young children began to attend regularly. The rise in American high school attendance was one of the most striking developments in U.S. education during the 20th Century. Between the years of 1950 to 1960, about 50 percent of teens earned a high school diploma (Public Education in the United States, 2007).

Since the number of students increased following efforts to reduce child labor, the need for children to complete school as part of the national agenda diminished. During the 1970's, interest in completing high school was rekindled after studies on graduation rates were published. Not until the 1983 Nation at Risk Report was published did the dropout issue draw national concern because the report identified urgent national statistics. At the 1993 Yale Teacher's Forum, the National Goals 2000 initiative established a goal of 90 percent graduation rate.

Through the years, the percentage of students dropping out reduced, but the number of dropouts still remained significant and was considered a crisis. Though the nation knew of the significance of the issue, school officials did little to correct the problem because they were not being held accountable (Shannon & Byslma).

In an effort to "build the mind and character of every child, from every background, in every part of America," President Bush established NCLB Act of 2001 (White House, 2007). With legislative backing, public schools were held at a higher level of accountability for student attendance. Part of the new requirements for schools, districts, and states was reporting graduation rates to prevent schools from pushing out low performing students to achieve better test scores needed to assure Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), in specific content areas (Bylsma & Ireland, 2005). Since each student who was pushed out would reflect negatively towards AYP, schools became more concerned with student improvement. Additionally, some states now required school districts to establish graduation and dropout goals. Districts were now required to improve graduation rates of all racial groups and to report dropout rates to state officials (Bergeson, 2003).

With all of the changes in public education, from support of an opportunity to receive an education to mandated requirements from the federal government, although the dropout rate has reduced concern still remain. In 1972

the national dropout rate was 6.1%, whereas in 2004 the rate was reduced to 4.7% (Laird, et al., 2006).

Description of Dropouts in America

Since the inception of the public school system, the rigors of school and countless other social, physical, and mental factors have taken a toll on all of America's youth. In many cases, students have not been able to overcome factors which contributed to dropping out. Characteristics of students who did not complete school, include low socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, immigrant student, low English proficiency, and disability (Shannon & Bylsma). According to Orfield, "Only about two thirds of all student, and only half of all blacks, Latinos, and Native American who enter ninth grade graduate with a regular diploma four years later" (p. 24). Orfield concluded that no matter what their race, significant numbers of young people were not completing their public education to the process established by the public education system.

Unfortunately, leaving behind students, especially minority students, has become a trend within American public schools. Since the 1970's, many reports and studies have been conducted on dropout rates which have found minority rates considerably higher. According to the Census Bureau, in the 1970's the national dropout rate for white students was about 15 to 17 %, whereas dropout rates for Hispanic and black students ranged between 25 and 30 % (Orfield). As efforts to decrease these rates were implemented, dropout rates have gone down,

though the discrepancy between white and minority dropout rates has remained. In the late 1990's the national white dropout rate had been reduced to 11.5 %, the black dropout rate was 18.3 %, and the Hispanic dropout rate was 21.6 % (Orfield).

Statistics cited by Laird, et al. (2004) in the Common Core of Data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) compared minority student dropout rates to white students. According to these authorities, dropout rates for students 16 to 24 years old by race/ethnicity were: whites, 3.7 %; African Americans, 5.7 %; Hispanics, 8.9 %. From that same age group, the low socio-economic status student dropout rate was 10.4 %, mid socio-economic status student dropout rate was 4.6 percent, and high socio-economic status student dropout rate was 2.5 %. With large minority populations, within the western region of the United States had the highest dropout rate at 6.1 percent in 2001. Within the region, Washington State had the highest dropout rate of 7.1 % (Laird, DeBell, & Chapman, 2004).

Dropping out of school was an outcome for minority youth much more than white students. What established the dropout rate as a crisis was the fact there has been a tremendous shift in nationwide population. The national minority population in schools during the 1970's was 13.1 % black, 5.3 % Hispanic, and 80 % white. In the 1990's, the national public school population grew to 15.8 % black, 11.6 % Hispanic, and 68.3 % white (Orfield). Because of

characteristics, minority students have been left behind without an appropriate education. According to Crideya (1999), by the year 2050 the white population will have become the minority and neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces as we have known them will be significantly altered.

The Importance of Earning a Diploma

Orfield described how the world has been changing at a tremendous rate, the worldwide population increase, the explosion of technological advances, and, sadly, how only minimal expectations are required of working citizens to operate at a high level. This researcher explained how our economy continues to grow into the service and information age, while the number of students failing to earn a high school diploma has become greater than ever. Most businesses need workers with technical skills that require at least a high school diploma. Those who have not earned a diploma were not able to be competitive for better jobs and have faced additional challenges. Dropouts were more likely to be unemployed, to live in poverty, to have chronic poor health, are dependent on social services, and many go to jail (Milliken, 2007).

The only way to contribute to the American economy and to provide for a family was to hold a job and make a living. With accompanying economy advancing, gaining employment has become highly competitive. About 9 % of individuals who dropped out of school were unemployed in 2003 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). National unemployment rates by race/ethnicity

for dropouts were 13.9 % for blacks, 8.2 % for Hispanics, and 7.8 % for whites (Baum, & Payea, 2004).

According to Baum & Payea, the ability to choose a career has become limited for dropouts. Without a diploma, only a certain number of jobs were available, and most of those did not pay well (2004). Further, the average annual income for dropouts was $21,600 while those who earned a high school diploma were $30,800. Of those who did not earn a high school diploma, minority groups earned less: Blacks earned $18,800; Hispanics earned $20,000; and whites earned 22,900. Also, average lifetime earnings for dropouts was 26 % less than those with a high school diploma. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2007), American families would have over 74 billion dollars of accumulated wealth if all heads of households had graduated.

Although dropping out of school has affected the individual and their families greatly, the strain dropouts have placed on the rest of society was also significant. With lower earnings, dropouts have paid less in taxes annually by $1400 less than those with a high school diploma (Baum & Payea). According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, the nation would have saved 17 million dollars in health care costs per year, over the lifetime of the total dropout population. If dropouts graduated at the same rate as white students, 310 billion dollars would have been added to the economy by 2020.

Orfield contended that because employment was more challenging and earning a decent living was almost impossible, many dropouts have chosen a life of crime. In American prisons, two thirds of all inmates were high school dropouts. Minority populations were more affected. Over half of the black population in their thirties with criminal records were dropouts. Obviously, any reduction in criminal activity would produce economic relief for the greater society. The economy would have seen a savings and revenue of over 7.7 billion dollars in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if just the male high school graduation rate increased by five percent (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004).

Socially, the significance of the dropout rate has become a crisis because this cycle has become ongoing. Furthermore, children of dropouts more likely attended weak schools, attended irregularly, and like their parents dropped out of school. As stated by Orfield, this phenomenon has led to an "intergenerational social problem" (Orfield).

Dropout Factors

A student who has elected to drop out of school did not make the decision because of one issue. Many times, one factor led to another. When those factors were combined, students believed leaving school represented the path of least resistance. Personal problems, family backgrounds, and socio-economic status have all contributed to the challenges faced by dropouts (Alspaugh, 1998).

Public high schools have been expected to produce student ready for work in our high technological, global economy. Schools have now been held accountable by NCLB for producing students equipped to meet these high standards. Accordingly, schools must now provide students more assistance to prevent them from leaving early. The term "pushouts" has been used to identify students who left because the educational system allegedly pushed them out of the door. The intent of NCLB was to give all students an equal chance, but NCLB has done the opposite for many (Light, 2003).

Countless other school-related factors have contributed to dropping out. Assam (2007), studied dropouts and identified five major reasons for leaving school early, including:

1. Forty seven % were bored.
2. Forty three % missed too much school.
3. Forty two % spent time with people not interested in school.
4. Thirty eight % had too much freedom and not enough rules.
5. Thirty eight % were failing.

Similarly, Shannon & Bylsma identified a number of factors inside the school that contributed to minority students dropping out of school, including: Conflict between home and school culture; lack of relevant curriculum; not being taught to a culture's learning style; low expectations; and, no appropriate language instruction.

According to Shannon & Bylsma, factors outside of school that contributed to dropping out were: Socio-economic status, race, frequently changing schools, poor achievement, bad attendance, low English proficiency, and having parents who dropped out. Racial issues also faced minority students and low English proficiency students more than white students. In agricultural areas, frequently changing schools was a factor minority students experienced more than white students. These challenges may have been experienced by all students, but challenges were magnified for minorities.

Summary

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 supported the following research themes:

1. Although fewer young people leave school early to contribute to parental financial support as in past years, challenges related to the school dropout crisis still remain, particularly for minority students.

2. The US Census Bureau found the National dropout rate for white students was 15-17 %, whereas dropout rate for Hispanic and Black students has ranged from 25-30%.

3. Recent advances in technology require workers with technical skills requiring at least a high school diploma. Dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, to live in poverty, to have chronic poor health, are dependent on social services, and more likely to go to jail.

4. A combination of factors have contributed to leaving school early, including: Being bored; Missing too much school; spending time with people not interested in school; having too much freedom and not enough rules; and, failing. Factors outside of school include: Conflicts between home and school culture; lack of relevant curriculum; not being taught to a culture's learning style; low expectations; and, no appropriate language instruction.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive research study was to investigate the relationship between minority student demographics and school district dropout rate in the Columbia Basin. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, from which related inferences, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated.

Methodology

The present correlational research study involved collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. The relationship between dropout rates and minority rates was studied.

Participants

The sample for this population for this correlational research study of percent minority and dropout rate during the 2005-2006 school year focused on 30 public school districts from the Columbia Basin in Eastern Washington. The Columbia Basin has been characterized as an agricultural area with a diverse population which is reflected throughout this region in public school districts of the communities, as illustrated in Table 1.

Because there were only 15 districts in the Yakima Valley, districts around the Columbian Basin that were geographically close in proximity to Yakima County were used in the project. A total of 30 school districts were used in the study. A complete list of the school districts included in the study has also been included in Table 1. Several school districts could not be used in the study because their demographic information was not diversified or because their population was too small. All district data was collected from the OSPI (2007b). Each district's demographic information including dropout rate, percent minority, and total population can be found on Table 1.

Several districts, Grandview, Granger, Highland, Mabton, Mt. Adams, North Franklin, Prosser, Quincy, Royal, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Wahluke, Wapato, and Yakima had minority populations over 50 percent. The sizes of those districts varied; seven were over and seven had below 2,000. East Valley, Ellensburg, Ephrata, Finley, Goldendale, Kiona Benton, Kititas, Naches Valley, Moses Lake, Omak, Selah, Thorp, West Valley, and Zillah had below 50 percent minorities. Districts with above 2,000 students were East Valley, Ellensburg, Ephrata, Moses Lake, Selah, and West Valley. The rest had below 2,000.

The dropout rates for these districts ranged from 1.2 to 12.2. Districts with above the mean of 5.3 % dropout rate were Goldendale, Grandview, Kennewick, Kiona-Benton, Moses Lake, Mt. Adams, Pasco, Selah, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Quincy, Wahluke, Wapato, and Yakima. Districts below The mean

were East Valley, Ellensburg, Ephrata, Finley, Granger, Highland, Kittitas, Mabton, Naches Valley, North Franklin, Omak, Prosser, Richland, Royal, West Valley, and Zillah. The highest dropout rate belonged to Sunnyside School District and the lowest belonged to Zillah School District.

Instruments

Districts in Washington State were required to report school, student, and staff information yearly to the state as it was part of the NCLB Act of 2001 and RCW 28A.55.030. The information was used to determine AYP, the evaluation of school's improvement in different categories, for NCLB. The Washington's Accountability Commission reviewed the information as well to determine if districts were improving graduation rates.

The Report Card section on the OSPI website organized the data on every public school district in Washington State. The data for this project was found under the student demographic section.

Design

For purposes of this study, the Spearman RHO test was used to find the relationship between minority rates and dropout rates for public school districts of the Columbia in the year 2005-2006. The Spearman RHO test was used to create a scatter graph to describe the degree of linear association between the two variables.

Procedure

To undertake the project, the researcher identified all school districts in the Columbian Basin. In an attempt to have a sample of at least 30 school districts that reflected the diversity of the region and reported dropout rates, the sample group was reduced to 30 districts. To keep the focus on Eastern Washington, the researcher chose districts from counties neighboring Yakima County. Yakima, Benton, Grant, Franklin, Kittitas, and Klickitat Counties were used in the project.

Treatment of the Data

The data collected from the OSPI website on each school district's dropout rate and minority rate was computed to determine the degree of coefficient correlation using the Spearman rho test from the STATPAK software (Pearson Prentice Hall, 1992). The results were reported in Chapter 4.

Summary

The sample group from the Columbia Basin was made up of 30 school districts. The ideal sample size was 30, so the researcher was sure to incorporate at least 30 districts in the project. District data was computed using computer software to ensure precision and reliability.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The present study focused on the coefficient correlation of dropout rates and minority rates for public school districts in the Columbia Basin of Eastern Washington. The result helped to determine whether minority students were at a disadvantage and if districts made accommodations, adaptations, and used interventions to help minority students find success in school and to graduate on time.

Description of the Environment

The project focused on dropout rates and minority rates of public school districts in and around the Columbia Basin during the 2005-2006 school year. This year was selected because OSPI data was the most recent available at the time of the project. The sample was comprised of public school districts from the Columbia Basin and some neighboring districts due to the geographic proximity of those districts to Yakima County.

Hypothesis

There was a high relationship between minority demographics and dropout rates of public school districts in the Columbia Basin during the 2005-2006 school year.

Null Hypothesis

There was no significant relationship between minority demographics and dropout rates of public school districts in the Columbia Basin during the 2005-2006 school year. Significance was determined for $p \geq$ at .05, .01, and .001 levels.

Results of the Study

After computing school district data from Table 1 into the Spearman RHO test, the researcher was able to use information from the results to determine significance of the hypothesis as well as the ability to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

For the districts used in the study, the mean for dropout rates was 5.3 percent and the mean for minority rates was 53.2 percent. Spearman RHO was .34 and the degrees of freedom was 28. Results were located in Table 2. Using this information, the researcher was able to determine the significance of the Hypothesis using the value of t, which was shown in Table 3.

Table 1

Districts' Demographics during the 2005-2006 school year

District	Percent Dropout	Percent Minorities
East Valley	4.0	38.1
Ellensburg	2.9	16.4
Ephrata	3.0	22.1
Finley	1.5	24.8
Goldendale	9.5	18.7
Grandview	7.4	85.1
Granger	3.4	93.2
Highland	4.4	65.0
Kennewick	5.4	32.7
Kiona-Benton	9.4	28.1
Kittitas	2.2	19.8
Mabton	4.8	95.2
Moses Lake	8.3	38.4
Mt. Adams	8.9	90.3
Naches Valley	3.7	17.0
North Franklin	4.5	64.5
Omak	3.0	44.7
Pasco	9.2	73.8
Prosser	2.6	51.5
Quincy	9.5	77.1
Richland	2.9	15.6
Royal	1.9	77.2
Selah	5.4	29.4
Sunnyside	12.2	86.6
Toppenish	5.4	95.6
Wahluke	7.8	69.4
Wapato	7.6	94.0
West Valley	1.5	22.8
Yakima	6.0	68.2
Zillah	1.2	41.6

Note. Mean of Dropout Rate=5.3.
Mean of Percent Minority=53.2.
Table 2

Comparison of rho score Values of Districts' Percent Minority and Dropout Rate

Statistic	Values
Number of pairs	30
RHO value	0.34
N	30
Degrees of Freedom	28

Note. *p≤.05 (Gay and Airsian, 2000), not significant

$$RHO = 1 - \frac{6\pounds D^2}{N(N^2-D)}$$

$$RHO = 1 - \frac{6(35)3^2}{30(30^2-3)}$$

$$RHO = .93$$

Table 3

Distribution of t

	P		
df	.05	.01	.001
28	.3809	.4869	.5974

Findings

As shown in Table 4, the hypothesis was not supported at any of the levels of significance. Because the Spearman RHO value, .34, was less than the level of freedom at .05, .01, and the .001 levels, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant coefficient correlation between dropout rates and minority rates for districts of the Columbia Basin. Figure 1 represented the relationship; by being spread among the graph there is no linear correlation. If there was a correlation between dropout rates and minority rates, Figure 1 would have a tight cluster of dots.

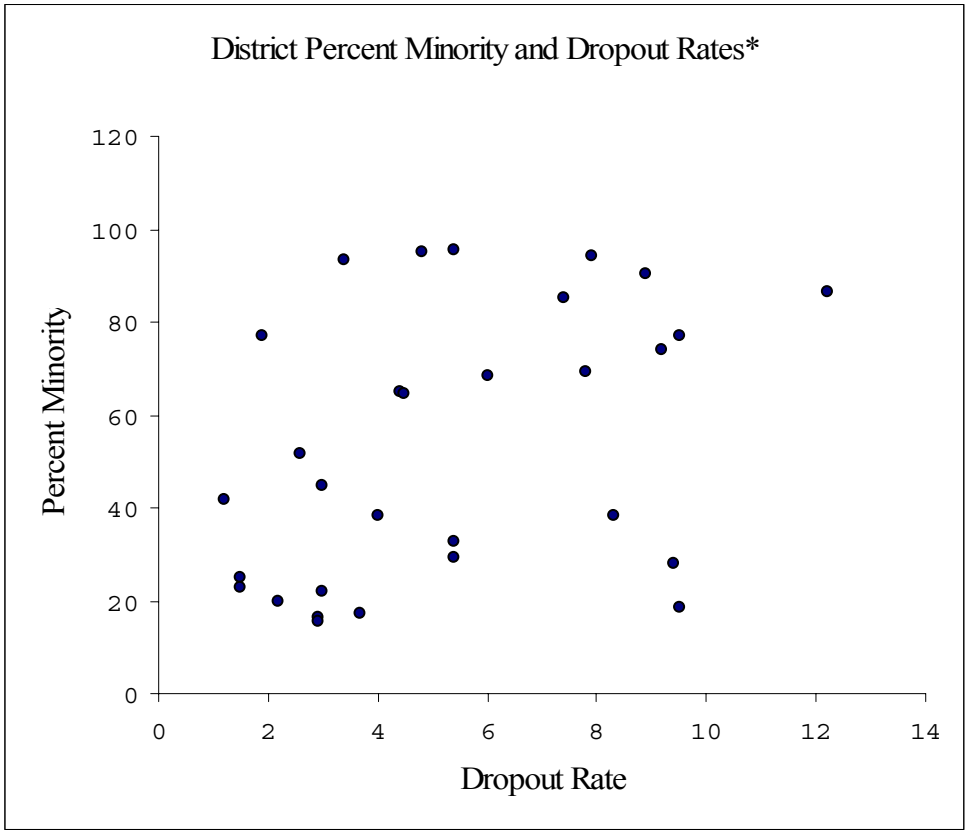
Table 4

Degrees of Significance

	.05	.01	.001
Null Hypothesis	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Hypothesis	N/S	N/S	N/S

Note. N/S = Not Supported

Figure 1



*Scatter Graph for Degree of Linear Association between Percent Minority and Dropout Rate.

Discussion

At each significant level of correlation the researcher identified no significant relationship between dropout rates and minority rates. Several of the districts with higher minority rates had higher dropout rates, but the results represented the total sample which helped the researcher to determine there was not a significant correlation.

The researcher had made the assumption there would be some level of correlation; at least at the .05 level. The results surprised the researcher. However, the results did help to determine that districts with high minority populations were not more significantly affected by dropout rates than districts with smaller numbers of minorities. No matter what the size of the minority population in a school district, the district was able to provide close to the same educational experience for all students.

Summary

The present study sought to determine whether a relationship existed between minority student demographics and school dropout rate in Columbia Basin school districts in Eastern Washington. An analysis of data presented in Chapter 4 indicated there was no significant coefficient correlation between dropout rate and minority students rates for selected school districts of the Columbia Basin.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive research study was to investigate the relationship between minority student demographics and school district dropout rate in the Columbia Basin. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, from which related inferences, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated.

Conclusion

Based on the review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2, and an analysis of data presented in Chapter 4, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Although fewer young people leave school early to contribute to parental financial support as in past years, challenges related to the school dropout crisis still remain, particularly for minority students.

2. The US Census Bureau found the National dropout rate for white students was 15-17 %, whereas dropout rate for Hispanic and Black students has ranged from 25-30%.

3. Recent advances in technology require workers with technical skills requiring at least a high school diploma. Dropouts are more likely to be

unemployed, to live in poverty, to have chronic poor health, are dependent on social services, and more likely to go to jail.

4. A combination of factors have contributed to leaving school early, including: Being bored; Missing too much school; spending time with people not interested in school; having too much freedom and not enough rules; and, failing. Factors outside of school include: Conflicts between home and school culture; lack of relevant curriculum; not being taught to a culture's learning style; low expectations; and, no appropriate language instruction.

5. An analysis of data presented in Chapter 4 indicated there was no significant coefficient correlation between dropout rate and minority rates for selected school districts of the Columbia Basin.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions sighted above, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. To address the school dropout crisis in America, education leaders need to formulate a variety of alternative programs designed to meet this challenge.

2. US Census Bureau statistics should be considered to fully understand how the dropout rate negatively impacts Hispanic, Black, as well as white students, understanding dropout rates nationally still surpasses 30%.

3. To avoid being banished to a life of unemployment, poverty, poor health, and a dependency on social services, educators need to provide potential

dropouts with education programs which provide fundamental training in technology.

4. To fully understand the combination of factors that have contributed to leaving school early, educators should be well versed with respect to the following:

a. In-School Factors; Being bored; Missing too much school; spending time with people not interested in school; having too much freedom and not enough rules; and, failing.

b. Factors Outside of School; Conflicts between home and school culture; lack of relevant curriculum; not being taught to a culture's learning style; low expectations; and, no appropriate language instruction.

5. Schools/school districts interested in research focused on the national crisis resulting from leaving school early may wish to utilize information contained in the present study or, they may with to undertake further research more suited to their unique needs.

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