

The Factors Influencing The Late Graduation Of Inner Cities Students Of Los Angeles

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Research Methodology

Introduction

To replicate this present study, sufficient information needs to be provided. Chapter 3 defines its methodological procedures and research design. A description of the research design, including the particular strategies adopted, starts off the chapter. The description follows sections addressing data analysis, data trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and an explanation of the data-gathering process. Limitations and delimitations conclude the chapter.

Exploring the factors influencing the rate of students graduating on time from middle and high school in the inner city of Los Angeles was the general intent of this study. Specifically, a sequential mixed method design was employed by the study to discuss & examine the educational institution and the issues faced by it and also make recommendations based on the findings of this study. These findings can then be utilized to enhance the possibility of [student success](#) within the district. This chapter will detail the investigation techniques, ethical considerations, procedures for data collection and trustworthiness.

Statement of the Problem

The general target of the study was to explore factors influencing the late graduation of inner-city students in Los Angeles. The students, specifically in inner cities of Los Angeles, are not able to complete their high school graduation on time; the study seeks to find the reasons behind the late graduation among high school students in Los Angeles. The study will help schools, students, and families to determine the predictors of late graduation.

Research Questions

1. Why some students do not graduate on time? What are the roles of socioeconomic status, school status, and family?
2. How does student failure impact the student and the family?
3. What is the impression school teachers have of the accomplishment of students in rural Los Angeles?

4. What are the perspectives of instructors on the advancement of students in rural Los Angeles?

Research Methodology

The most important and influential tool in guiding a man towards advancement and development is research. There will be a very slight development and progress without organized research. Technical and systematic research guides and directs towards some good development and progress in any stage of life. The increase in relevant research in biotic and organic, physical, psychological and societal fields has discovered new concepts, ways, products and proofs (Creswell, 2013). Nowadays, research is not only carried out in research laboratories or scientific laboratories. Throughout the function of the scientific process, the only reason for carrying out the research is to find the solutions to the problems. To find out or to search for any fact that is not exposed or founded so far can only be discovered from research as it is its main purpose. In cooperation with the quantitative and qualitative types, they both have a series of various activities which involve the investigation and scrutiny of information (Hahn, Knopf, Wilson, Truman, Milstein, Johnson & Moss, 2015). The numerical procedures and techniques used in the quantitative analysis tend to be used in developmental research. The solutions to the problems are presented by numerical or arithmetical research or techniques, which hold an important place in research (Balfanz, R., Byrnes & Fox, 2015).

Quantitative Research

The mathematical or numerical functions and procedures and info or data are carried out in the quantitative analysis to examine its characteristics and properties. The groups or collections of info and data that are used for measuring levels are ratios, intervals, and ordinal and nominal, which are the most significant factors in selecting the appropriate forms of analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative Research:

It is a technique of analysis which is used in different types of theoretical subjects, including the biological and physical sciences and social sciences; however, it also includes non-academic settings like a business, service demos by nonprofits and market research (Creswell, 2013).

Research Design

The primary purpose of this research was to discover the factors that are causing students not to graduate on time from middle or high school in the inner city of Los Angeles. For this purpose, to be addressed, a research approach known as mixed-methods sequential-explanatory research was employed. The study was particularly suited for the mixed method approach because the weaknesses found in quantitative or qualitative studies were addressed by it.

A mixed methods design was required for the nature of the research questions. Research questions one and two, as an example, sought the perspective of individuals, which required an in-depth qualitative approach, while questions 3 and 4 interrogated the relationship between variables, therefore requiring a quantitative approach. Thus, qualitative or quantitative approaches shall not be taken solely to answer the questions of this research.

The design had two phases. The first phase involved the researcher taking a quantitative approach to examine relationships among variables (ethnicity, family status, gender, grade retention and mobility). These variables were examined to determine the relationship to graduation status among a cohort of students in inner-city Los Angeles.

Data for students who enrolled in the school during the fall of 2012 and graduated in 2016 was provided by district cumulative records. The traditional quantitative strategies that were implemented throughout the research provided a thorough understanding of the study. However, the quantitative strategies were not able to provide a holistic view, which could have been obtained through the use of quantitative analysis. Hence, both principals and teachers gave a total of 57 responses during phase 2.

Population and Sample Selection

Participants for Phase I:

In the inner city of Los Angeles, nine middle schools were presented with the information for this study. This sample of study for phase I comprises a unit of those students who are at the high school stage in the inner city of the Los Angeles school district. The unit of high school students was from 2012 sessions of school. In 2016, a total number of 391 students were expected to be graduated.

The school district and student population were selected for 2 motives. Firstly, students started to take a long time before exiting this scheme or system, and those high school students formally dropped out of the high and middle schools, as stated by researchers. A greater part of students who drop out of school concentrate on minors and lower grades and ranks, and this problem started years ago as it is emphasized in educational spaces from elementary to the 8th grade.

The experts discussed how to reduce and prevent the problem of the lower number of graduates in the upcoming years of high school. Furthermore, these authorities also argue about academic failure, which starts in the primary years, and that's why there are many students who fail to graduate every year. Bad grades and lower self-confidence are a result of poor attendance, which initially begins in elementary school and leads a student to make bad progress. Due to the lack of knowledge, a student's behaviour is not beneficial or helpful in leading them to success and academic achievements (Krueger, Tran, Hummer & Chang, 2015). This research started by examining student information from the aggregate of student accounts and records. The investigator noted the

registrations of students, primary admission in the school district, and educational results, such as dropouts, lower number of graduates, graduates who moved, homeschooled, and those who are still enrolled. They also noted each student's background, family status, gender and grade retention. Moreover, the school district of Los Angeles was used for this research because it has the highest rates of lower graduates in the state.

Phase II Participants and Design Overview

Questions 3 and 4 were directed by the research that the members were graded and arranged in a sample of teachers and principals, which was based on the inner city of Los Angeles school district. However, an unplanned process was used to choose individuals from this graded sample, as it is recorded that this sample was not planned to be a demonstrative sample. The intention was to give a considerable and important opinion to the quantitative info or data. This sample of administrators, teachers, and principals are cohorts and units from Phase 1 who remained in the lives of the students. The sample of students who were quizzed was from the elementary or nursery groups in phase I, and only graduates and late-graduates were included. Those students who were omitted from the sample were the ones who drew back for other reasons.

The sample of administrators and teachers comprised 25 educationalists, and a sample was chosen from a total of 290 teachers and 22 K-12 administrators in 63 districts of Los Angeles. A random sample was used to get a demonstrative sample of both teachers and administrators. Additionally, 150 students who were late graduates and graduates from the kindergarten unit group were offered by the district to the investigator; the number of names used in the study was 150.

The school officials at the board office gave names to the researchers of all the teachers and administrators. It was important to take into account all the teachers and administrators who were representing all the schools in the district to decrease and avoid discrimination in the research. The names of the administrators were categorized separately in one group, and the names of the qualified teachers were placed in 12 different groups.

Each group represented a school presently in the district with two schools that were closed; however, they were present before the union. The names from the main list were certified, and the groups were labelled and tagged to guarantee that the teachers who were appointed to those schools were in the correct group. The random sample of teachers comprised of only qualified teachers,

The head sample comprised counsellors, instructional coaches, principals and district supervisors in the school district. Until an initial group of teachers was created, one teacher was aimlessly nominated from each group. When 12 teachers were separately representing one teacher from each school in the district, the remaining teachers from all rankings were assigned to one group, and an extra three names were represented for an overall of 15 teachers. A random sample of heads was selected from the group, which was marked as leaders, which involved principals, instructional coaches, and district supervisors. Ten names were selected from the group. A total number of 25

teachers and leaders were assigned to the research. Teachers and leaders were communicated through e-mails and phone to plan a suitable time for the interviews.

Sixty-four students were selected from the kindergarten unit. The names and contact numbers of 150 students were provided by the district in the quantitative stage. The cohort students were then contacted by the interviewer whose names, contact numbers and original elementary school; everything was attained from the board of education. The sample only represented those students who had graduated and who were late graduates.

The questions were planned for the investigator to get a view of the success of students from the teachers and leaders in the district area. Questions about the constituents of the school were discussed by questioning the leaders about school climate, grade retention practices, strategies for preventing late graduation and school equity. The environment of the family was also discussed in the feedback form by questioning teachers and their opinions on how families view the concept of late graduation, homeschooling, and the role of the family. The aspects of the community were also focused on queries about what the community thinks about the matter of late graduates.

Lastly, the section on the individual student was spoken with questions that concentrated on how students succeed and what students think about the late graduates. To understand the late graduation info better, it was important to address late graduates. Questions were created based on the four foundations' achievements and models that gave the opinions of the student graduates, too. The questions which involved the foundation of the school were focused on questions about the school's role in the success of students and what educationalists in the district could do to guarantee the success of students.

Instrumentation

The records of a cohort of students were examined during the first phase of the research. The University approved an IRB proposal, and the project was approved by the local school board. Meetings with the district principals, instructional supervisor, superintendent, and seven other community officials of the district were held to debate the relationship & the project to the objectives and goals of the district.

The researcher requested the names of the students enrolled in kindergarten classes in the school year 2015. Cumulative records of students were attained from the central office of the school district enrollment. School officials were contacted by the researcher to set up a reasonable time to review the enrollment records of the students once all the permissions were granted.

A system of coding was set up for all the different variables to be recognized or documented before the researcher's initial visit to review the records (e.g., female = 0 and male = 1). The main focus in developing the design was the four variables which attributed to student success (community, schools, students, & family). One of the first elements to be incorporated into the research was the

school element of the theoretical framework. A code was assigned that consisted of a three-digit code, plus three numbers representing the student and the elementary school in which children were enrolled instead of using student names to ensure confidentiality of the students in the study (i.e., 332002 the last three digits represented the student ID, and 002 would be the elementary school number).

Data regarding father/mother/another status, ethnicity, educational outcomes, gender, and some grade retentions (e.g., homeschooled, moved, still enrolled, passed away, and graduate, dropout, etc.) were recorded in PASW (SPSS 18) on campus, through every appointment. The element of family (e.g., under the care of mother only, father only or other guardian), school factors such as (e.g., withdrawal status and number of grade retentions), and the individual student (e.g., gender, mobility, student, race) were all looked into for the research and obtaining the best results from it. This study consisted of two dependent variables, which were late graduation and on-time graduation, although documentation of other delays of graduation statuses was also done. It was important to document not only the late graduation and on-time graduation ranks but also the other conditions of late graduation of students in the district area, which needed to be covered for an ample amount of research (Morrow & Villodas, 2017).

The researcher made several attempts to discover information on missing enrollment once all the data was collected. The school district pupil personnel office assisted the investigator, and with their aid, many enrollment cards were found, but not all of the student information was attained. District staff not returning registration cards to the correct location on time or not being filed correctly were some of the reasons why all the data was not attained.

Similarly, the community element was a keen concern where students were asked regarding those difficulties that they usually face, along with community roles that played a significant role in achieving high success and the community how the basic dropping out concept is observed. Moreover, the individual element also focuses on the student by getting them to force for driving graduate and about their success what they give confirmation.

Hence, the research questionnaire was also formulated for the students who were left fall, which was the same as the formulation for a graduate student. Similarly, the nature of the questions was sensitive, and the students did not gain success within the high school. By participating in the research, the chances of similarity increased. Five different questions were formulated based on the elements. The element of the school helped in collecting knowledge regarding retention of the grade and what could be done to prevent students from falling out and gives them prevention. The individual and the community elements of the student focus on the reason why students fall out within the country and community views of the fall out of the students. The element of family was also asked from the student as to how the perception of family is taken as a critical matter regarding fallout students (See Appendix D for student fall questionnaire).

Validity

For the research, all the interviews taken with leaders, student dropouts, student graduates and teachers were properly recorded and coded. In a mixed combination of numbers and letters, interviews were carefully given codes that helped the researcher in response tracking (such as certified teacher interviewee = CTI, administrator interviewee = ADMI, student dropout = SDI, and student graduate = SGI). In a systematic format, every question was analyzed in a grouped response format, and proper themes were presented for the questions asked. From an accuracy perspective, inner-cities high school district of Los Angeles students and educators are significant for the research study validation perspective.

Reliability

Four different elements were presented for qualitative research purposes. However, for qualitative research, there is credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability presented according to researchers (Archambault, Janosz, Dupéré, Brault and Andrew, 2017). Similarly, the research process is elaborated as a transparent and conformable perspective to the researcher. In this aspect, the research will be done clearly. Moreover, the data will be gathered and discussed in the coded system, and a copy of the system will be given.

Likewise, the research study is based on employing credibility, in which different methods of research have been formulated for the study, and the research is done to identify the weaknesses in the study in a systematic format. To develop an in-depth understanding, the researcher used different ways. To validate the research in a cross-verification way, the researcher used triangulation that supports recording the student data, background context, and different aspects. As a part of the research study, the finding shows that the research is credible, believable, and trustworthy. The researcher used transferability with the concern of background aspect to validate the research. Similarly, it is important to increase transferability in the research, which helps the researcher make different assumptions and elaborate on things in a careful way. According to the researcher, there are different transferability obligations presented in the study in terms of the natural aspect (Dallavis, 2011). An inquiry audit determined the dependability. For the current study, the researcher belongs to a native country and age of 24 years. He is a former student. Moreover, the researcher was not an educator in the inner-cities high school district, but she feels that there are biases in the almost 69 possibilities presented. However, the interview findings were properly summed up. Afterwards, the consistent findings and their interpretations were reviewed, and feedback was received.

Data Collection and Management

For all the groups, a format of the interview was chosen to get the maximum information to be collected from respondent's experiences. Therefore, the approach that was used was named the

general interview format. For exploratory research, the semi-structured interview permits 66 essential analytical questions. According to the research, the interview approach is used to develop the consisting questions. However, questions were made in open-ended shape. Within this approach, interviewers suggested to themselves, “Just what about this thing puzzling me?”

For the research, face-to-face interviews were conducted as per setting and done in a natural perspective at the time of the teacher’s planning or after passing hours of school so that no barriers occur for the respective administrators and teachers. The leaders’ interviews were taken in their offices at school or in an empty classroom. For every interview, proper permission was obtained from the interviewer before initiating any interview. For every person, the same method was used, and the same questions were asked at the time of the interview. If any of the respondents were not available, the researcher rescheduled the meeting to a convenient date as he was sensitive and flexible. Hence, the respondent had the opportunity to give additional comments after completion of the interview if things were not covered during the questions of the interview.

A total of 150 students’ names were given by the board to the researcher in the time 1997-1998 within the group cohort. These belonged to the high school that shows elementary schools for the research. Within the two different results, lists were made in which fall out, and graduates’ phone numbers, along with their names, were presented. However, the number of fall-out students was 45, and the number of graduates was 105. These graduates were called for an interview. If any of the respondents were not interested in an interview, if the concerned student was not at home, or if the number was disconnected, all the things were carefully documented. On different days, these students were called out if earlier they were not presented at home. All the students were contacted via phone until any response was received. In a similar aspect, the fallout list of students also proceeded. Within the interview, a total of seventeen graduates agreed and responded. However, from 67, a total of 45 respondents who participated were a dropout. The same questions were in the same order, and every interview was done with each student. The total time for telephonic interviews was 15 minutes. Thus, the researcher obtained prior permission to record the interview before initiating any questions.

Data Analysis Procedures

Various crosstabs, statistical tests on the kindergarten cohort and descriptive statistics were attempted by the researcher after entering all the data with the help of the most recent instalment of PASW (SPSS 18). The researcher examined each elementary school by gender, grade retention, ethnicity, late graduation status, and family situation through crosstabs.

The district’s entire student kindergarten population was brought under examination to understand the bigger picture of the late graduation status of students. Students may have passed away, moved out of the school district, graduated on time, graduated late or transferred to the home school. What variables are statistically and correlated relevant with students graduating in the inner-city school

district of Los Angeles? Similarly, what variables are statistically & correlatedly significant with students graduating late? The code of late graduates initially consisted of the following variables: the graduate and late graduate, but the variables needed to be re-coded. Then, for the late graduate code, a dummy variable was put into place, and similarly, for the graduate code, a separate variable was put into place (i.e., late graduate = 0 and graduate = 1). All of the data was run through the Chi-Square test for independence. This statistical test is most commonly used to examine differences in categorical variables. When frequency data has been collected to determine how well a normal distribution fits an observed frequency distribution, a nonparametric inferential test is used; this test is known as the Chi-Square test for independence. The two categorical variables are analyzed, and implications are made about the existence of a relation between them by the test.

To determine the dependent factors of graduation and late graduation and if the two variables are related in any way (e.g., family status, mobility, gender, ethnicity & grade retention), the researcher will use the statistic used in the Chi-Square test to his aid. The factors influencing graduation and late graduate rates will have no significant differences between them in the inner-city school district of Los Angeles, as stated by the null hypothesis. Contrarily, the factors influencing graduation and slow graduation rates will have a significant difference between them in the inner-city school district of Los Angeles, as stated by the alternative hypothesis, and this assumption is supported by the researcher. The .05 level of significance is the alpha level set for this study.

To understand the quantitative findings better, a deeper investigation was needed, even though the results of the quantitative findings provided a wealth of information. Valuable insight was discovered when the focus was shifted to the four variables which constitute student success concerning late graduation status, grade retention, mobility, gender, family status and race, but additional questions are also raised by the results, which can be answered only through qualitative research. As an example, why did one school have more late graduations occur than another school in its area? Another example is that retention of grades almost always results in a student inevitably graduating late. Why? By looking through the lens of the four elements which contribute to the success of a student, building on the theory of achievement and based on the findings of this study, researchers discovered more open-ended questions which better informed them while the perceptions of school leaders, graduates, late graduates, and teachers were also attempted to be highlighted.

Ethical Considerations

Studies involving human subjects are supposed to be completed under federal and institutional ethical guidelines. This is ascertained by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Even though this study may be exempted from the review by the IRB on the basis of the fact that it is within acceptable educational settings and normal educational practices are in place, it still falls under the domain that needs the Internal Research Review Board (i.e., IRRB) consent (Isik-Ercan, 2010; Thornberg, 2014; Worrell, 2014). The researcher will ensure that only anonymous and no-risk surveys and observations will be done. If any identifying information is needed, this will be confidential and will not be included

in the final report (Bosworth *et al.*, 2011).

The researcher will ensure that they follow the ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association. There are six in total, and they include competence, integrity, scientific and professional responsibility, respect for the dignity and the rights of the participants, concern for their welfare, and having a social responsibility. Regarding competence, the researcher will only attempt the work that they are competent to undertake. On integrity, they will be honest and fair regarding their professional cooperation with others. There will be scientific and professional responsibility, and this is where high standards of professional behaviour will be maintained. Respecting the dignity and rights of others involves the right to confidentiality. The concern for others will involve coming up with the work that facilitates the bridging of the gaps in research, and this is closely related to social responsibility, where the researcher will meet this code by using their skills to the benefit of society (Meral & Turnbull, 2014).

Limitations and Delimitations

The research understood that the required data for the study was accessible at the district-level office and the inner-cities high schools and that the student records were simply obtainable for data collection and review. This study investigated only one inner-city Los Angeles school district. Though several reasons can add to the late graduation of high school students, this research investigated the exact variables inside the parameters of the four components of the model for student success. It can be argued that the strength of the current research undertaken is similar to its limitations.

Summary

This chapter on research methodology includes the participants of the research, techniques of investigation, the techniques utilized for data collection, ethical considerations, and limitations. The study used a mixed methods research approach to the research problem. The sample of participants included in phase I of this research includes a cohort of high school students in the inner cities of Los Angeles. The research was conducted by examining the factors of late graduation by conducting an interview with a random sample of teachers and students in the inner cities of Los Angeles. The families of such students were also interviewed. The next chapter will present the findings of this research.

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