DIGITAL LITERACY AMONG TEACHERS OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES IN KENYA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC.

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General

The topic of this study is the importance of and use of digital technologies by teachers of students with disabilities Czech and Kenyan special schools. This is a topic deserving of current study. Overall, this is a very ambitious study addressing the topic of teacher digital literacy competencies and self-efficacy. The rationale for the study is well laid out with a need to justify why the candidate focused only on teachers in special schools. The citations in certain sections are quite old. The method, including instrumentation and data analysis, is well presented with some minor technical questions to be answered. The comparison of the findings between the two countries is quite informative and the results have relevant implications for policy and practice in special education and teacher preparation.

Specific

In the abstract, the candidate refers to their study design as descriptive. They have, however, implemented inferential statistical techniques (e.g., Chi-square).

The statement of the problem is well laid out from the geo-economic and policy perspectives of each country. It would be helpful to see specific examples as well as non-examples of digital literacy in both countries.

Under conceptual framework and depicted specifically in Figure 1, an explanation of the selection of the potential intervening variables is warranted.

The literature review provides a comprehensive contextual underpinning of policies and current implementation of technologies in Czech and Kenyan school systems.

On p. 24, the candidate cites two studies in support of using smart phones in educating students with disabilities, but does not make a clear connection between the studies and his conclusion. This is partly because he provides very limited detail about those two studies.

The sections on Laptops, Mobile Devices, Internet Searching, Text Messaging, Social Media, and Application of Speech Recognition (SR) in Special Education have outdated citations.

On p. 31, it is unclear why the candidate titled the section "Application of digital technologies in Special Needs Schools" when technologies he is describing is just as well applicable in inclusive settings.

On p. 50, 2nd para, clarify which three categories of technology you are referring to. 3rd para – provide context to your statement "The primary aim of teacher education programs is to equip

prospective teachers with the necessary skills to effectively utilize technology in their classrooms."

In the section on ICT Infrastructure in the Schools, the candidate makes it clear when he is writing about the ICT situation in Kenya, but does not specify in which context the other studies mentioned were conducted.

The section on Teacher Training on the Use of ICT in Education is solely focused on the African context, with no mention of the Czech Republic or EU countries.

In the method section, the candidate refers to their research design as descriptive, using a comparative paradigm. It can be argued that his design reaches beyond descriptive as he conducts inferential statistical tests to discern differences between groups.

In the method section, it is not clear which section of the analysis was part of the pilot study and which of the main study, especially in the section on internal consistency of the instruments. In addition, it is unclear whether the psychometric analysis were performed only on the quantitative parts of the questionnaires or also on the observation checklists.

In the data analysis section, I commend the candidate for standardizing the total scores for questionnaires in each country, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of differences between the countries than comparing raw scores on individual items.

One of the key recommendations that is not mentioned is strengthening teacher preparation programs at universities to incorporate digital literacy in their course offerings.

Conclusion

The findings described in the candidate's thesis provide a new and important contribution to special education in the Czech and international contexts. The topic of digital literacy among teachers of learners with disabilities is very timely in the era of technological boom across disciplines. The candidate was able to highlight the positives as well as the gaps in teacher use of digital literacy in the Czech Republic and in Kenya with a specific focus on working with students with disabilities. On the basis of my review, I recommend the thesis as ready for candidate's defense.

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