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**THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA LITERACY IN LEADERSHIP
EDUCATION: FACTORS RELATED TO DATA USE IN
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Abstract:

In an era of increased accountability and high-stakes testing, school principals need to think very differently about instructional leadership, and to use data to inform instructional practice. Reinforcing data use for decision making in education promotes continuous improvement of student academic performance. Using the theoretical framework of information use environments, this study examined principals' use of data in instructional leadership and identified factors related to data use. Using the theoretical framework of information use environments, this study examined 183 principals' use of data in instructional leadership in a Midwest state in the US and identified the factors related to data use. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which high school principals use data in instructional leadership, and to identify factors in the principals' work environments that may affect their data use in instructional leadership. The guiding research questions were: 1) To what extent do high school principals use data in addressing the administrative problems of instructional leadership? and, 2) What are the factors in principals' Information Use Environment that influence their data use in instructional leadership? Survey results indicate that data were frequently used by the principals for instructional leadership. Principals' data literacy including perceptions of data quality and data analysis skills significantly predicted their frequency of data use in instructional leadership. School district's requirement of data-driven decision making, data accessibility, and school team of data analyses did not seem to serve as the significant predictors. Results provide insights and implications guiding data literacy education in school leader preparation. This research will help school leadership educators and district administrators better understand the factors affecting data use in instructional leadership. It will further assist school leadership educators to recognize the importance of educating information literacy in school leader preparation.

Keywords:

principal, data use, instructional leadership, data literacy, data-driven decision making

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