

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES IN OKLAHOMA K-12 SCHOOLS: A POLICY CONTENT
ANALYSIS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

PATRICIA A. COOK

Norman, Oklahoma

2016

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES IN OKLAHOMA K-12 SCHOOLS: A POLICY CONTENT
ANALYSIS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

Dr. Hollie Mackey, Chair

Dr. Theresa Cullen

Dr. Kathrine Gutierrez

Dr. Jeffrey Maiden

Dr. Angela Urick

© Copyright by PATRICIA A. COOK 2016
All Rights Reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not be possible without the support and sacrifices I have received from my family along the way. I am thankful to my husband, Ryvers, for always supporting my dream. Also, to my children Hayley and Hayden who inspire me each day with their brilliance. I am thankful to my grandparents, Elmer and Pauline Alvis, for teaching me to reach for the stars and to my mother Dr. Pam Hill for support along the way and for passing on a love of learning. To Dr. Hollie Mackey, thank you for your unending patience and faith in me; I could not have done this without you. To the faculty and students of the EACS department of the University of Oklahoma, thank you for the informative and inspiring lessons about ways to improve the teaching and learning process for students in our schools. I have learned so much from working with you and appreciate the quality of what you do. Finally, I want to thank the many students I have had the privilege to work with over the years; you have always been my inspiration. I believe Oklahoma schools can be better; our kids are worth it. The children in my classes are worth it, and so are the ones I tuck into bed each night. They need us to make sure that we are providing the best, quality education that is available anywhere to the children of this great state. That has always been the drive behind me seeking this degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
Background of the Problem.....	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Significance of the Study.....	5
Overview of Design.....	7
Research Question	7
Definition of Terms	7
Assumptions	10
Limitations.....	10
Summary.....	11
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	
Introduction	12
Social Media Technology.....	13
Academic Benefits of Social Media in Schools	14
Communication Benefits of Social Media in Schools.....	18
Technology Leadership	22
Challenges of Social Media in Schools	24

Legal Issues for Schools	27
Policies of Other Institutions	30
Federal and State Mandates	31
Need for Social Media Policy Analysis.....	33
Situating the Study	35
Theoretical Framework	37
Conclusion	41

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Question	42
Policy Analysis	42
Qualitative Content Analysis.....	45
Sample	46
Data Collection Procedures	53
Data Analysis.....	55
Trustworthiness, Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability.....	57

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction	59
Topics Addressed in Social Media Policies	60
Bridging Policy Strategies	60
Buffering Policy Strategy	67
Additional Findings	72
Conclusions	73

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

Introduction 75

Federal Programs..... 78

Leadership for Social Media Policies..... 83

Bridging & Buffering Framework..... 85

Conclusions 99

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Introduction 100

Research Question 101

Discussion..... 101

Recommendations for Future Studies 114

Conclusion 116

References 119

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: PPS Sample Oklahoma Schools	51
2: Initial Coding Categories Social Media Policy Content Analysis	56
3: Social Media Platforms on School Websites by District Size.....	73
4: Bridging and Buffering Continuum (Adapted from Honig & Hatch, 2004).....	87

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1: Bridging and Buffering Framework for Social Media in Schools	40
2: Policy Development Workflow.....	44
3: Social Media Policies by Community Grouping Model	59
4: The 100 Largest School Districts in the United States and Jurisdictions: School Year 2008-09	116

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines current trends in public school district policies regarding social media use in K-12 schools Oklahoma. Participants were selected from the Oklahoma Community Grouping Model using Probability Proportion Sampling (PPS) to stratify the sample of school districts in Oklahoma. The rationale for the study is based on the demands for leaders to develop policies that bridge learning and buffer inappropriate content on social media. The literature review focuses on academic benefits, legal challenges, and national trends in social media policy. The theoretical lens is Honig and Hatch's Bridging and Buffering framework (2004). Findings identify common policy content areas and also identify the need to educate young people in digital citizenry. The study's findings inform leadership in best practices of future social media policies in K-12 schools.

Keywords: social media policy, technology leadership, Bridging and Buffering policy framework, Digital Citizenry

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Across the state of Oklahoma, parents, teachers and students are active on social media. Individuals, organizations, businesses and groups are taking to social media to create relationships, share information, and to create open lines of communication to discuss important topics of conversation. Schools are no different. Administrators, teachers, parents and students are exchanging ideas about education on the social media site Twitter, using the hashtag #oked weekly. The site has connected educators across the state in conversations as a discussion board for best practices, legislative updates, and sharing of resources. Even state level leaders for schools such as the state superintendent for education (@Joy4OK) are posting on social media in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma State Board of Regents (@OKhighered) and the state department of Education (@oksde) both have a Twitter account. Even in the smallest rural towns in western Oklahoma, educators take to social media each day to spread their thoughts about education policy in the state and to share resources. Social media has become a normative component of contemporary education in Oklahoma.

Background of the Problem

Oklahoma residents, much like people across the rest of the country, are online regularly. A national survey found that more than 72% of adults in the United States use the Internet daily, with those numbers projected to increase (Brenner & Smith, 2013). As of January 2014, 74% of online adults use social networking sites (Pew Research Center, 2014). A 2015 report on social media found that nearly two-thirds (65%) of American adults use at least one social media site (Perrin, 2015). A September 2014 a survey found that of online adults, 71% participate in Facebook, 23% use Twitter, 26%

use Instagram, 28% use Pinterest, and 28% use LinkedIn (Pew Research Center, 2014). A study of four-year institutions of learning in the United States found that 100% reported some form of social media in use (Pomerantz, Hank, & Sugimoto, 2015). A recent census found that American teens use an average of 9 hours of media daily, not including for school or homework, with more than three hours a day of that time using social media (Rideout, 2015).

This prevalence of social media use in peoples' daily lives makes it inevitable that schools would find the need to address social media in district policy. However, there are also potential challenges for schools implementing social media policies. Some teachers have negative attitudes towards using social media. In a survey of over a thousand teachers, one study found that 80% use social media in their personal lives but only 18% integrate social media into their classroom for fear of repercussions. This same study said that only 29% of the teachers surveyed said they felt they had adequate training in using social media for education (Davis, 2014). There are unanswered questions regarding the best practices for social media policy for school districts. Researchers studying Twitter use in K-12 schools found many different approaches to social media in schools across the country. According to Carpenter and Krutka (2014) "Some schools block social media sites for students, others have embraced these technologies in imaginative ways, and many remain ambivalent" (p. 414). These findings reveal the need for clear social media policy guidelines for social network use in schools. School leadership must define expectations and help to build an understanding among school stakeholders about the best practices regarding social media.

Statement of the Problem

Social media use is happening in and around schools. However, there is limited research on how districts implement social media policies in K-12 schools, and what content current policies contain. School district leaders across the country need guidance and information in the area of social media policies. They need information on what the common trends are for school districts like theirs, and need to know recommendations for best practices. Once school leaders have that information, they can use that understanding to develop strategic plans for social media use as an emerging technology in K-12 schools. However, to date there is little information available about the content of current school district social media policies in Oklahoma, or across the nation. There is no research available analyzing the content of social media policies in K-12 schools at the state level available at the time of this study.

Social media is not going away. It is a real part of everyday life for all those connected to schools. A total of 95% of all children ages 12-17 are now online each day (Ribble & Miller, 2013). 90% of young adults age 18-29 use social media (Perrin, 2015). However, many schools are unsure of how to prepare students for the digital world that waits for them outside the schoolhouse doors. Schools that want to incorporate social media wish to do so in ways that will prepare students for their post-secondary lives. At the same time, they want to protect children from harm on the web while in schools. This fear of possible harm has led some to choose to turn a blind-eye to social media in schools, or worse, to try to eradicate its usage. Schools should be embracing social media, rather than blocking it; it is the new face of global communication (Journell, Ayers, & Beeson, 2014).

In order to maintain positive relations with stakeholders and reduce social media blunders, school leaders must provide guidance for social media use as part of school policy development and review. District developed social media policy can bridge the gap between schools and stakeholders, and are part of the ever-changing formal responsibilities of school leaders today. Social media can be a tool for building school family relationships and improving communication between the two. Social media can also improve the perceptions of the school as part of the community as a whole by creating an image or brand for the school that promotes the message and goals that school leaders are trying to present (Myers, 2014).

Studies have found that social media must be managed just as all other forms of media that organizations employ to meet desired outcomes (see Montalvo, 2011; Kaplan, 2010, & Wankel, 2009). However, social media are different from traditional or other online media because of their social network structure and the nature in which people have freedom to express their ideas (Peters, Chen, Kaplan, & Ognibeni, 2013). This creates a challenge for school leaders in developing effective policies that can promote positive social media use by school publics and reduce legal and social challenges. Models of best practices for social media policy are available to schools from other institutions (universities, government, businesses), but may fall short because of the fundamental differences between schools and other organizations. Therefore, school leaders must look at policy examples from similar educational institutions to create a guide of what are common and best practices in social media policy development for schools.

Purpose of the Study

This policy analysis of social media policy examined the current state of social media policies in K-12 public schools across Oklahoma. The purpose of this study is to identify the availability and content of social media policies in Oklahoma school districts so that leaders can identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the current policy, thereby improving purpose, construction of content and possibly, implementation. This analysis will add to the limited body of knowledge about social media policies in K-12 public schools and will contribute a framework of analysis to inform policymakers facing changes in the technology leadership landscape in the future.

Significance of the Study

Additional research is necessary to understand the content of social media policies. This study analyzes social media policies and provides information to leaders in Oklahoma schools engaging in the policy process of addressing social network policies in schools. Through scrutiny of content within the existing policies in the state, using the lens of the Bridging and Buffering framework, school leaders will have additional information for making decisions about how to address social media policies and how they can be used for effective academic and communication benefit or mitigate potential legal or social negative implications.

This information is currently unavailable and a problem of practice exists in schools districts attempting to navigate the challenges of social media in schools. This creates the need for content analysis of school district social media policies in Oklahoma and other states. Though the current policy environment addresses many

issues of privacy, security, accuracy-and archiving in some detail, much of the policy related to the use of social media predates the creation of social media technologies. As a result, many of the existing policies do not adequately address the technological capacities, operations, or functions of social media (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010). Furthermore, as social media use progresses and changes, there will be new concerns that will complicate multiple policy issues for many institutions in the future, including education. The policy development process is cyclical and must be ongoing to ensure relevance and meet the social media needs of the future (Hodgson, 2012). Therefore, by engaging in this study on current policy content, schools can create a model for analyzing future policy. This research examines the availability and content of policies statewide and identifies areas of similarities and difference throughout schools in the state. This work will provide baseline information to school leaders that informs further development and implementation of successful social media policies in schools in Oklahoma.

Social media can no longer be thought of as external to learning within schools. “The boundaries between online and “real-world” communities are rapidly deteriorating, particularly for the generation of young people whose lives are pervaded by social media” (Davis III, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2015, p.1).

Social media exchanges are a primary means of communication, social engagement, and learning for many members of the school community (Shear, 2015). Given these current times, educational leaders should begin to explore the potential to intentionally and strategically harness the power of these social media tools for the benefits of school. Therefore, a policy analysis into social media use in schools is a

viable way to contribute to the developing body of knowledge regarding social media and schools.

Overview of Design

This study examined current trends in public school district policy regarding social media use in K-12 schools Oklahoma. A qualitative approach was used to examine policy through content analysis of documents that are publicly available online. Participants were chosen from the Oklahoma Community Grouping Model (Bixler, Brown, Day, Hannaford, Shellenberger, & Parks, 2015) by applying the quantitative method of Probability Proportion Sampling (PPS) to create a stratified sample of 10% of the school districts in Oklahoma. The theoretical lens for this study was Honig and Hatch's Bridging and Buffering framework (2004). This framework was used to examine and compare how school districts are currently navigating the social media environment through policies.

Research Question

What can be interpreted and understood from the content of current social media policies in K-12 school districts across Oklahoma?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are used for the purpose of this study and give meaning to the select terms used in this dissertation.

K-12 School District. A public school district that serves students in the grades of kindergarten through twelfth grade within a set boundary of area. This study only included public schools accredited by the state and considered in the 2014 Oklahoma Community Grouping Model by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (Bixler,

Brown, Day, Hannaford, Shellenberger, & Parks, 2015). No charter schools were included in this study sample.

Social Media Technology (SMT). “Web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share content in digital environments” (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2015, p. 410). Social media includes text, images, and multimedia forms presented in a variety of formats such as blogs, microblogs, image sharing sites, and social networking sites.

Social Media Policy. A district policy providing the guidelines for communication in online networks in relation to the school district for employees, students, and community members. In this study, a social media policy can stand alone or be incorporated within an Internet Acceptable Use Policy, or be part of a broader Code of Conduct or Handbook outlining expectations of behavior.

Acceptable Use Policy. An acceptable use policy (AUP) is a document stipulating constraints and practices that a user must agree to for access to a network or the Internet for an educational facility. For school districts an Acceptable Use Policy outlines what is deemed acceptable behavior from users of hardware and information systems such as the Internet and any applicable networks (Rideout, 2015).

Millennials. Individuals born after 1980 who have always lived in an age of laptops, video games, and cell phones. These students have been raised with mobile technology as a seamless part of their everyday lives and a means of operating within the world (Perrin, 2015).

Digital Citizenship. “The quality of habits, actions, and consumption patterns that impact the ecology of digital content and communities” (Heick, 2013, p. 1). This is

discussed as a curriculum for Internet users in schools; to be taught through strategic planning and support with resources.

Internet Safety. This term is defined by two federal mandates; *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)* of 1998 and the *Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)* of 2011; as well as the 2011 update. These requirements spell out how schools should create policy regarding internet access to inappropriate content, and the protection of student's confidential information on the Internet.

Inappropriate Content. The definition of inappropriate content is derived from CIPA (2011) requirements which define inappropriate content as visual depictions that are obscene, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code; (B) child pornography, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code; or (C) harmful to minor. Harmful to minors is defined as:

Any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that-- (A) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; (B) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and (C) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors. (E-Rate Central, 2011).

Confidentiality: This term is defined in this study by The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and Rule (1998) and applies to individually identifiable information about a child that is collected online, such as full name, home address, email address, telephone number or any other information that would allow someone to identify or contact the child. This definition also covers other types of information -- for example, hobbies, interests and information collected through cookies or other types of

tracking mechanisms -- when they are tied to individually identifiable information (COPPA, 1998).

Assumptions

Content of policy will change as individuals and circumstances change. Mutual adaptation occurs when communities adapt, change and mold the program or policy in play to meet their unique needs (McLaughlin, 1976). These shifts change the meanings of policies for those competing interest groups, and therefore change meaning, meriting further study. Because of the concept of mutual adaptation, it is important to assume that each school district has unique characteristics that will influence the policy development process. However, because of the requirements of the *Child Internet Protection Act* and E-Rate funding mandates, similar policy requirements exist for many of the school districts, and so a saturation of data is expected within the required elements that are contained within funding mandates. However, even though school districts are required to include certain components within their internet use policy, specific content of these policies are not itemized. Therefore, the unit of analysis is individual school district policies.

Limitations

Research on social media, as well as policies to address use can be challenging because of the constant changes in the social media landscape. Both technical features and the need for policy can change in short order. Therefore, due to the ever-changing context of social media use, this study provides a snapshot of how school districts are currently addressing social media in policies during a particular period-of-time. With

time and emerging technological advances, school district policies may evolve to some extent.

Summary

The demands for leaders to develop policy that bridges emerging learning technologies with academic and communication benefits, while still providing protection for students by buffering inappropriate content is the rationale for this study. There is currently limited research examining social media in the content of policies in K-12 schools at the state and national levels. Findings from this study provide baseline data that might inform leadership in best practices for the development and implementation of future social media policies in K-12 schools in Oklahoma and in similar school districts across the country.

The literature review focuses on three areas: academic and communication benefits of social media use in schools; legal and social challenges of social media and schools; and national trends in social media policy development and analysis. Findings identified common policy content in the areas of Appropriate Tone, Inappropriate Content, Confidentiality, Copyright and Cyberbullying. Many schools also identified the need to educate young people in digital citizenry when using social media.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

Social media is a part of modern life both inside and outside today's schools. Yet, dramatic changes in usage over the last five years have left a gap in research about policies that address social media use in K-12 schools. Literature from a variety of related research areas was used to guide inquiry and situate the current study in order to understand what is already known about social media policy. This review emphasized the need for additional research along with identifying benefits, challenges, and implications for the use of social media technologies in K-12 public schools in Oklahoma.

The students in today's classrooms, called Millennials, are considered digital natives; members of Generation Y born after 1980 (Perrin, 2015). These individuals were born into an age of laptops, video games, and cell phones. These students have been raised with mobile technology as a seamless part of their everyday lives and as a means of operating within the world. Scholars at UCLA found that the average Millennial spends more than 9 hours a day exposed to digital technology and that they may experience fundamentally different brain development that favors constant communication and multitasking (Prensky, 2001; Small & Vorgan, 2009). Millennials have also been found to engage in social media technologies not only for the purposes of communication, but also for social engagement, information seeking, and community building (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2015). A survey of the generation found that Millennials will make online sharing in networks a lifelong activity (Anderson & Raine, 2010). However, school districts are still learning the best

ways to integrate this technological knowledge of students into classroom instruction practices and school activities.

Using technology is an important component of the requirements for the learner of 21st century skills and part of the expectations for students today. Skills facilitated by technology use include inquiry (Dove & Zitkovich, 2003), problem solving skills (Liu, 2004), critical thinking (Duda, Ogolnokztałcacych, & Poland, 2010), self-regulatory skills (Greene, Moos, Azevedo, & Winters, 2008), and scaffolding of learning (Gentry, 2008, Igo & Kiewra, 2007). Technology can be a key for bridging the gap between traditional learning experiences of the past and those that are needed today to address the 21st century technological advances and requirements of the graduates entering the modern workforce. “Technology not only allows teachers to provide differentiated instruction for gifted children and adolescents, but also serves as an educational and creative outlet for some of the best and brightest minds in the world” (Periathiruvadi, 2012, p.153). Social media is one technology that many schools are trying to understand how to use to benefit students, but are often unsure about the best practices for doing so.

Social Media Technology

Social media technology (SMT) is defined as “web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share content in digital environments” (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2015, p. 410). Social media includes text, images, and multimedia forms presented in a variety of formats such as blogs, microblogs, image sharing sites, and social networking sites. A common feature of social media is the ability for sites to disseminate user-generated content, often of a personal nature, via web-based or mobile applications

(Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2012). This content can be found in the forms of collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

An extensive body of literature exists on various aspects of social media. The Pew Internet & American Life Project is a leader in this area—conducting and making available a wide range of studies on the topic of social networking (Pew, 2014). There is also an active research community addressing the role of social media in such diverse areas of the demographics of all social media users (Duggan & Brennan, 2012), social media in the lives of teenagers (Boyd, 2008), personal privacy (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012), and political movements (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).

Literature on social media policies, however, has predominantly appeared in the business trade press (Pomerantz, Hank, & Sugimoto, 2015). This work addresses why organizations should have social media policies (Blanchard, 2011), how to write these policies (Brito, 2011), and how to leverage social media for the benefit of the organization (Barlow & Thomas, 2011; Smith, Wollan, & Zhou, 2011). There has been no examination of school district policies for social media in the K-12 schools at a state level at this time.

Academic Benefits of Social Media in Schools

Teachers have started to see the benefits of social media networks in classroom instruction. “The ways that individuals can connect via Twitter offer teachers unique opportunities to link students with real-time information and diverse ideological perspectives,” (Journell, Ayers, & Beeson, 2014, p. 64). Surveys of teachers have found

that Twitter has become a preferred method in the classroom for communication, class activities, and especially professional development for teachers (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014). There is also evidence that social media use in the classroom has increased (e.g., Ahrenfelt, 2013; Lee, Shelton, Walker, Caswell, & Jensen, 2012; Lu, 2011).

Another study found that college students prefer the use of social media technology as a means of communication in education arenas and feel that it increased positive relationships between teachers and students. “The marketization of academic educations has turned students into customers and professors into service providers, which has leveled power in the academic field” (Vercic & Vercic, 2013. P. 602). Researchers have suggested that university instructors around the world incorporate social media tools into their teaching practice; many times as a way to supplement face-to-face learning opportunities (Armstrong & Franklin, 2008; Chapman & Russell, 2009; Dohn, 2009; Joosten, 2012). Additional scholars have found additional benefits involving social media tools in the education setting (eg. Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009, Junco, 2012).

Social media use in education has been linked to increased student engagement in the learning process. Similarly, it has been linked to preparing students for Web 2.0 workplaces, increasing research skills, increasing collaboration between teachers and students, and offers chances for customizing and contextualizing their learning (Armstrong & Franklin, 2008; Conole & Culver, 2009; Grosseck & Holotescu, 2008; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Minicha, 2009; Meijas, 2006). Social media can also change the way technology innovations are integrated into learning. “Lessons supported by social media technology can involve real-world

problems, current and authentic informational resources, virtual tours of remote locations, simulations of concepts, or interactions with practicing experts and global communities” (Shapely, 2011, p. 299). Use of social media technologies in schools can help to connect students to the world around them, and can increase learning opportunities that might otherwise be limited by geography or lack of resources.

Studies have examined the role of social software in bridging the vast divide between formal and informal learning. This research examined the ways that social software crosses cultural boundaries and identifies 28 core values in systems that should inform the design of social software and policy to support usage (Pereira, Baranauskas, & da Silva, 2013). The demands for changing pedagogy, 21st century learning skills, and skillsets required for mobile technology use in education are real issues for school leaders trying to provide current and relevant social media policies for schools (Norris, Nussbaum, Sharples, So, Soloway, & Yu 2014). The 21st Century digital world requires that ethical and unethical behavior and appropriate use and inappropriate use of digital devices be at the forefront of education in this technological age (Franklin, 2011).

Scholars have analyzed social media use as strategy for achieving improved school and family relations and academic achievement. A recent synthesis review of social media studies determined a national baseline of current uses of social media as both a learning innovation and as communication tool for two-year post-secondary education institutions (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2015). The social media phenomenon was examined in relation to the current college student of today, and informed how institutions can strategically use social media in order to impact student outcomes. Implications for further research called for additional research

to define the value of social media technology as a tool for building academic and social capital for institutions of higher education (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & Gonzalez Canche, 2015). These conclusions support the need for additional understanding of social media policy in K-12 school districts as well, and raise the question of how to maximize social capital gains from social media technology. However, this research does not define the ways in which school leaders can establish clear guidelines for use or content that these social media policies should address. It also does not address how social media policy can be used to assist students in developing skills needed to effectively use social media networks in schools.

One of the necessary skills needed to participate in social media is digital citizenship (Bolton, 2013). “Social media use has become so pervasive in the lives of American teens that having a presence on a social network site is almost synonymous with being online” (Ribble & Miller, 2013, p. 137). Strategies for leaders who want to prepare students for using social media networks in positive ways include lessons under the themes of 1) protect yourself and others, 2) respect yourself and others, and 3) educate yourself and others. Scholars identify the challenge facing educators as the responsibility to prepare students for the future society that will meet them after education. “That society will be defined by effective attitudes and practices in digital decision making, ethical and legal issues, online safety, consumer security, and technology related health issues” (Hollandsworth, Dowdy, & Donovan, 2011, p.38). Schools hold part of the responsibility for developing these technological skills. “Who will own this challenge of guiding students toward a productive and safe technological society?” (Hollandsworth, Dowdy, & Donovan, 2011). School district leaders must

become educated about ways to structure social media policies in order to increase the benefits for schools. By creating clear policies, they can bridge the policy to effective instructional use, and academic benefits to students. .

Communication Benefits of Social Media in Schools

There are communication benefits that social media provide that other communication innovations may not offer. Social media are substantially different from the other media (e.g., Godes, Mayzlin, Chen, Das, Dellarocas, Pfeiffer, Libai, Sen, Shi, & Verlegh, 2005; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Hoffman & Novak, 2012). “In contrast to other media, they rather resemble dynamic, interconnected, egalitarian and interactive organisms beyond the control of any organization” (Peters, et al., 2013, p.2). Some researchers describe this dyadic relational interactivity as the main differentiating characteristic of e-communications in social networks compared to other traditional offline and online media (Alba, Lynch, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, & Sawyer, 1997).

Social media studies have found that they are powerful connections for likeminded individuals, providing an infrastructure for communities and supporting their coordination (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). This means that social media technologies can be a great tool for creating partnerships between schools and families. Social media analysis has also been found to support social capital formation because applications such as social network websites support discursive communication, (Boyd & Ellison 2007; Etter & Fieseler 2010; Pasek, More, & Romer, 2009) allow pursuers of political and social interests to join conversations, (Woodly, 2007; Gil de Zuniga, Veenstra, Vraga, & Shah, 2010) and bond with peers sharing similar views (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe. 2007). The structure of social media is considered an antecedent

to social capital creation and maintenance (cf. Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe. 2007; Adler & Kwon 2000), suggesting that online networks foster mutual enrichment through conversation, exchange, and participation (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2009). In addition, social media are believed to make it easier for like-minded citizens to come together around foci of interest (Nie, Miller, Golde, Butler, & Winneg, 2010; Wattal, Schuff, Mandviwalla, & Williams, 2010), therefore reinforcing social networks and creating a greater need for understanding and awareness of these social media networks in schools. Because of this, social media networks and policies require a distinct approach to measurement, analysis, and subsequently management within school districts. However, very few tools are currently available to school leaders to support the work of creating structure and language within social media policies that achieve desired outcomes.

Social media technologies also provide an infrastructure for communities, supporting their coordination (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). Many scholars have examined two-way communication between teachers and parents, finding it simultaneously keeps parents informed about their children's learning situation and school activities (Epstein, 2008). Emails and web pages historically have been the most important tool for communication between teachers and parents in schools (Thompson, 2008). A survey by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) involving 17,000 parents of students grades K-12 concluded that parents are receiving school generated emails (Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2013), indicating parents are able to access internet options and technology resources to engage in online communication with schools. This communication between schools and parents via mass media is a necessary part of the

modern education communication system; but with the invention of new technologies such as social media, the communication network has changed and created new pathways for communities and schools to communicate (Bernhardt, 2014).

Denis McQuail (2010) wrote about communication network theory and the ways networks facilitate exchange of information, A communication network refers to “any set of interconnected points (persons or places) that enable transmission and exchange of information between them” (p.4). In public schools, this occurs between school district administration, building staff, community members and their students. The school communication networks that exist via social media outlets can be part of the means of mass communication about events and ideas to support learning in schools.

Scholars have also examined the psychological effects of how the use of social networks has changed communication and perceptions by receivers of messages. The images we see online may interact with our knowledge and may alter perceptions through online social networks (Sparrow & Chatman, 2013). Simply seeing a photo of the sender attached to a social media message has been found to induce greater compliance to requests (Sparrow & Chatman, 2013). For the most part, mass communication theory is the use of networks that connect very many receivers to one source, such as the parents in a school district. McQuail, (2010) has further defined that social learning networks provide a more “synchronous,” (two-way or real time) form of communication that is closer to face-to-face interactions than email, which is “asynchronous” or one-way communication. As parents comment on social media posts, they are engaging in a real-time conversation about an issue and are therefore

engaged in synchronous communication through social media where the conversation goes both ways.

However, social media policies cannot be a “one size fits all” solution for schools. “Instead, researchers and school community members need to test which channels, which detailed designs of channels, and which habits and ground rules for using channels enable specific communications necessary for student support” (Pollock, 2013, p. 26). An appropriate infrastructure must be in place to support this network for communication to support young people’s success in schools.

Another study, sponsored by the Gates Foundation, found that 71% of recent dropouts believe that the most effective way to have kept them in school would have been to increase communication with families through social media (Altman & Meis, 2013). One social media platform highlighted in the study, Kininvolved, has been used to increase K-12 attendance through the use of technology integration and human capital. This setup allowed parents to receive notification when students were not within their regularly scheduled class. “Coupled with constructive, focused human capital, Kininvolved’s software is a means to an end; the software collects, organizes, and communicates attendance-driven data, which Kininvolved and its school and community based partners use to implement real solutions to attendance challenges” (Altman & Meis, 2013, p.330). Although it demonstrated communication benefits of social media, this study did not have any guidance on how schools can develop policies to address the implementation of this type or other kinds of social media platform in schools.

Schools have seen other positive benefits of social media in community relations and when soliciting support for school initiatives, such as a school district that used

twitter to foster support for a proposed bond initiative (Gord, 2012). There are great potentials for social media as a tool for schools, but not without challenges. Further benefits we might see in the future include gathering input from community stakeholders during the strategic planning process or development of cooperation between schools and community groups on collaborative projects to benefit schools. Social media polices can be used to bridge communication between schools and the communities in which they serve.

Technology Leadership

Increases in the availability of laptops, phones, and wireless capabilities have transformed the society in which education is situated. The need for policies regarding internet safety in use and copyright, as well as sound procedures for social media use, are all changing the way technology is viewed in public schools. There are challenges that the modern day principal faces when leading skill development in emerging technologies. According to Garland (2009) “As schools adopt these technologies for educational purposes, principals must plan carefully in preparing students for the digital society that exists already and is dramatically changing the future” (p. 48). Clear structures within social media policies can help school leaders ensure safe and effective use of emerging technologies deemed necessary to advance digital learning opportunities in schools.

One key factor for effective implementation of social media use policies in schools is how district leadership communicates plans for technology integration (Berrett, Murphy, & Sullivan, 2012). Any school district attempting to use social media policy within social networks that exist in schools can make decisions regarding best

practices by having an informed plan of leadership and clear communication strategies. How policies are presented to stakeholders can have an effect on those same outcomes. A historical review of federal mandates that required technology integration, as well as the perspectives of school leaders in the application and implementation of funding sources for technology, have been highlighted in a recent study (Berrett, Murphy, & Sullivan, 2012). Results focused on the need to share information and increase collaboration among administrators throughout a district when initiating a technology intervention in order to create a sense of community towards the project. “One understanding that emerged from this analysis was that the culture of the school impacts the successes and failures of the technology implementation at each school site” (Berrett, Murphy, & Sullivan, 2012, p.18). Additional research supported the need for understanding of ethos before implementing technology integration programs in schools. School leaders must look at the culture, purpose, and beliefs of a school before attempting any integration of technology (Byke, & Lowe-Wincentsen, 2014). However, additional studies have found that all components of the system must be addressed simultaneously in order to have effective technology integration in schools (Brown, & Farrell, 2010). Awareness of the social networks at play in social media policies could help leaders address the culture of beliefs that exist within the school. This can promote successful policy-driven implementation of social media use in schools for all stakeholders.

Yet, an additional study on designing effective policies for schools’ needs found that researched based practices for leading innovations in technology from the site and district level are very often ignored, and more traditional mechanisms and practices still

abound (Sheppard & Brown, 2014). The study called for reflection for improved leadership and implementation practices. “For instance, it is reasonable to assume that as the emerging technologies increasingly permeate the personal and work lives of today’s digital natives...the transformation of classrooms to technology-enabled, learner-centered environments will most likely gain momentum” (Sheppard & Brown, 2014, p. 94). This research encourages frequent engagement in policy analysis, but does not address desired components within policy for effective social media use in schools.

A cross-case analysis of eight award-winning secondary schools researched the various stakeholder groups involved in technology planning. Factors found to influence school reform through technology use included: vision, distributed leadership, technology planning and support, school culture, professional development, curriculum and instructional practices, funding, and partnerships (Vanderlinde, van Braak, & Dexter, 2012). These factors were considered part of a systems approach to education. Distributed leadership must be used to ensure that teachers are a part of the system of technology integration, and have a voice in implementation (Schrum & Levin, 2013). Other research has found that social media policy, when created and disseminated without teacher input, can create a sense of constrained agency in corporations based on the perceived social network (Weber, 2013). This research supports the need for understanding of best practices for social media technology leadership in order to create a bridge between policy and implementation in schools.

Challenges of Social Media in Schools

Current literature focuses on the use of social media and social learning networks as tools for education for students in grades k-12 in the areas of

appropriateness, safety, benefits, and risks to students (Livingstone & Brake, 2010). However, this research has also found problems with social media use related to privacy, security, intellectual property, identity management, access, and record creation and management (e.g. Cain, 2008; Collis & Moonen, 2008; Franklin & van Harmelen, 2007; Towner & Munoz, 2011; Duranti & Shaffer, 2013). Many of these issues are not centralized on the functions of social media technology, but rather the need for understanding and awareness of the components of emerging technologies and having relevant school district policy to address those needs. Additional research in what components are found in social media policies and how they relate to various community groups would help inform leadership in making decisions on how to best implement policies for use that are relevant, effective, and efficient.

Other research finds that students also do not understand effective social media use in an educational setting. These studies explored “acceptable and unacceptable behavior online” (Hooper & Kalidas 2012, p. 265). This indicates that young people might have a clear idea of what is unacceptable behavior online but are not as clear as to what is acceptable and may be influenced by social media networks when creating their system of values. This lack of clarity on social media use can pose great risk to school learning environments. Without school district policy, many valuable learning opportunities from social media may be shadowed by negative experiences due to lack of guidance. Students need guidance in social media use policies in schools.

Parents and community stakeholders need to understand social media policies as well. Social media use is inherent in society and can be an integral part of school and family relations as a communication tool. “The advent of technological resources—such

as Twitter, blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and a variety of Google tools—has made it easier to get the word out, as well as to collect important feedback from parents, teachers, and students” (Larkin, 2015, p. 67). However, sometimes there are miscommunications and different perceptions of events or conversations online that can lead to struggles between school communities when the social media becomes involved. Clear policies can help to increase communication benefits and improve stakeholder relations within the network of schools.

Social media use in schools can also affect new and seasoned professionals in the teaching field. Career teachers may need additional training on how they will need to alter traditional methods of instruction to address the needs of digital natives. Despite recent instances of teacher termination for some social media activities such as Twitter or Facebook posting, a current study found that digital natives who newly entered the profession of teaching did not feel social media postings were justified reasons for firing (Drouin, O’Conner, Schmidt, & Miller, 2015). This demonstrates that specific examples of what is and is not acceptable for employee social media use should be examined by school districts and used in the development of social media policies. Further, this highlights the need for training of employees who may have differing opinions on social media practices.

In order to avoid negative legal and social implications from social media technology use, schools must be ready to address differing views with clear policies and language that provide guidance and professional development to all teachers.

“Boundaries are more easily violated with social networking technology. What was once private is now very public” (O’Donovan, 2012, p. 34). This can have an effect on

the decreasing pool of applicants for teaching positions within Oklahoma schools, as well as perceptions of teachers in and outside of schools within the community. Clear understanding of expectations and communication of social media policy regarding use by all stakeholders in Oklahoma schools is necessary for the profession to buffer misuse and misunderstandings about social media in schools.

Legal Issues for Schools

There are also legal and social implications of social media use in schools by teachers or students. “We know the harm that can come from a Facebook posting of a personal photo or from a quick status update after a difficult day” (Ashley, 2014, p. 33). In other research, social media ranks in the top five risks for business (Griffin 2012), especially regarding brand and reputation. In an era of school choice and mass media coverage, this is an important consideration for any school administrator. Fear of legal concerns regarding social media have led to more than 20 states enacting laws that regulate when an employer or school may request access to the personal digital accounts of students, staff, and applicants (Shear, 2015). Free speech and privacy rights have led to intense debates between districts and students disciplined for actions on social media outlets.

In *Bell v. Itawamba County School Board*¹ the school won the case where a student posted a rap video defaming his teachers on YouTube and was later disciplined because the school district had a policy against this in place. The school district lost the case in *J.C. v. Beverly Hills Unified School District*², a student was disciplined by school officials for creating a post on social media making fun of another student. The

¹ 774 F.3d 280 (5th Cir. 2014).

² 80-03824 SVW (C.D. Cal. 2009)

U.S. District court did not uphold the disciplinary action because no policy for social media existed, and the school could not prove a substantial disruption to the business of school. In *Kowalski v. Berkeley County Schools*³ having a policy against online bullying via social media allowed the school to win the case when a student created a MySpace page that accused classmates of having sexually transmitted diseases. A similar student conduct policy regarding social media use was protected schools in *Doninger v. Niehoff*⁴ the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld a student's suspension from Student Council for making disparaging comments about the superintendent on a private blog. Having a specific school policy that addressed behavior on social media provides a way for schools to address social media networks and their effect on schools without legal ramifications. Yet little research exists to examine what that policy should contain, who it will affect, and in what ways.

Amidst so many challenges, many school districts are unclear on what is the best practice for social media policies in schools. In 2007, In *Layshock v. Hermitage School District*⁵ the suspension of a student for making a parody of his principal on a Myspace page was overturned. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the district violated the student's First Amendment rights by suspending him without a social media policy in place (O'Donovan, 2012). The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cnty. Sch. Dist*⁶, extended academic disciplinary measures to off-campus speech that may reasonably lead to disruption of schools. In the case highlighted above, many of the acts for which students were disciplined occurred outside of school hours,

³ 652F.3d 565, 567 (4th Cir. 2011), *cert denied*, 132 S. Ct. 1095 (2012)

⁴ 527 F. 3d41 (2d Cir. 2008)

⁵ 496 587 (W.D. Pa. 2007)

⁶ 393 U.S. 503 (1969)

off-campus, and usually on their own private technology devices. However, the courts have determined that actions on social media can have an inherent effect on school businesses, and have given the schools authority to monitor those actions. School districts are in need of guidance in the best practices for social media policies for appropriate levels of monitoring and how to handle disciplining student actions online, as well as teachers.

Districts have also had conflicts with school staff regarding the use of social media and schools. In a precedent setting case, *Pickering v. Board of Education*⁷ the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school staff have a right to voice matters of public concern, however also established the idea that off-campus conduct could be used in termination of teachers. Today, social media has provided networks inside and outside of the schools for off-campus conduct of staff to become public. This shift has developed the need for social media policy and interpretation of laws and existing policies.

*Payne v. Barrow County School District*⁸ is a highly publicized case of a teacher being fired for posting a picture of her holding a beer while on vacation in Europe, and has led many to begin looking deeper at school district social media policies. In *re Tenure Hearing of Jennifer O'Brien*⁹ courts upheld the right of schools to terminate a teacher who posted derogatory remarks about her students on Facebook. Other areas of recent litigation involve social media monitoring of students and employees, cyberbullying and social media impersonation, privacy policies, data use

⁷ 391 U.S. 563, 566 (1968)

⁸ Civil Case No. 09CV-3038-X (Super. Ct. Ga.).

⁹ No. A-2452-11T4 (N.J. Super. Ct., App. Div. Jan. 11, 2013)

policies, and terms of service (Shear, 2015). However, when used unwisely there is a potential for damage to professional and personal endeavors (Bernhardt, 2014). Social media policies set by school districts provide guidance to school stakeholders about social media use in school, while still buffering the negative implications to the institution of education.

Policies of Other Institutions

Policy-makers have taken action regarding social media use in United States institutions. In 2012, the International Bar Association stressed the need for all professionals to understand “the ethical and professional implications of online social networking” (International Bar Association 2012, p. 10). Members of employment relations groups have also addressed social media concerns. The National Labor Relations Board is an independent federal agency vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize and to determine whether to have unions as their bargaining representative (NLRB, 2015). The Board’s recent decision in *Hispanics United of Buffalo* (03-CA-027872) prohibits employers from firing employees for social media posts containing work-related grievances. The National Labor Relations Board ruled that employees have protected concerted activity to join with other employees in discussing the workplace; such as are done in labor unions; and that firing the employees for a Facebook post was an unfair labor practice.

The American Medical Association has urged doctors to separate professional and personal content online. They acknowledge the link between social media and a doctor’s reputations among patients and colleagues, identify potential consequences for their medical career (particularly for physicians-in-training and medical students), and

cites how social media can undermine public trust in the medical profession (American Medical Association Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs 2011).

A 2011 special report, *Social Media and Disasters: Current Uses, Future Options, and Policy Considerations*, informed the United States Congress on the implications of social media policies for use in disaster and emergency management situations (Lindsay, 2011). The New York City Department of Education has put social media policies in place to address student and staff use. New Jersey it is requires their schools to draft and implement policies that adhere to certain principles, with specific content based on community standards (Shear, 2015). These institutions have created examples of the ways that social networks transverse boundaries and have become a part of the culture of the world today, and illustrate a need for institutions to create policies. Likewise, education is not immune to the need for stakeholder understanding with regard to social media policies to minimize and buffer legal and social implications for school districts.

Federal and State Mandates

Recent legislation and mandates have encouraged technology integration into classrooms in order to prepare all students to be 21st century learners. There are current trends in social media policies by institutions and school districts that have surfaced because of mandates tied to federal and state funding sources for schools. Two federal policies educators need to consider when using social media in schools are the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA, 1998)* and the *Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of 2000*; as well as the 2011 update. These requirements spell

out how schools should create policy regarding internet access, and the protection of student's confidential information on the Internet.

There are five requirements for the new CIPA (2011) for schools to address in policy (E-Rate Central, 2011). First, schools must explain how they will restrict access of minors to inappropriate content on the web. Next, they must set guidelines for the safety and security of minors in email, chat rooms, or instant messaging. In addition, schools receiving E-Rate funding must describe in policy how they will protect the school network from unauthorized access, or "hacking". Further, the policy must address unauthorized disclosure of personal information of minors. Finally, a CIPA (2011) compliant internet safety policy must address how schools will restrict minors from access to harmful materials. Schools that do not annually submit a Form 486 that attests to having the above policy will not receive their Universal Service Fund payment (E-Rate, FCC 11-25). E-Rate provides a sample policy, but each policy is subject to local input and the review and revision by the public of the school district, as well as approval by the local school board. Little research exists to examine if there is variance in social media policies among different districts across the state, if the policies adhere to E-Rate requirements, or if policies are similar in content.

Some groups believe in restricting social media access in schools. They have drafted legislation that would ensure restriction. In an attempt to restrict social media use, Missouri's Senate Bill 54, the Amy Hestir Student Protection Act (2011) unsuccessfully attempted to prohibit direct social media contact between teachers and students unless the contact is appropriate, education-related contact in a public setting (Varlas, 2011). The governor of that state repealed section 162.069 of SB 54, after the

teacher's union in that state sued, saying that the legislation restricting social media use infringed upon teachers' constitutional rights. The state in turn enacted, Senate Bill 1, which says school districts in Missouri must have a written policy in place that outlines proper electronic communication between teachers and students, including social media (Heaton, 2011). This example highlights the different viewpoints, and emphasizes the need for schools to address the issue of social media use in schools.

In the state of Oklahoma, social media is addressed by the state department of education within state statutes § 823, §1058, and §1212 (OSDE School Law, 2014). These statutes address personal communication from a person exercising constitutional rights, employer access to online social media accounts of employees, and Internet homework tutoring chat rooms. No other policies or issues related to social media in Oklahoma are included in the current code of school law in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma State School Board Association provides custom policy writing services to members at a fee, however, social media policy is not within their current catalog of available policies to school districts (OSSBA, 2015). This void illustrates the need for researchers to identify and address present policy content for social media use in schools across local school districts in the state of Oklahoma. School leaders need information on ways to bridge policies to social media use they feel is beneficial to their districts, as well as strategies for buffering inappropriate content, and misuse of social media by school district stakeholders.

Need for Social Media Policy Analysis

There is only limited current research analyzing social media policies in public schools. This leaves few resources for school leaders to use when attempting to develop

social media policies; and these resources often are inadequate in providing a complete model of the current needs of schools.

We need to learn more about what these policies say with regard to social networks in schools and how they are framed by the context of outside influences on schools. Woodley and Silvestri (2014) suggest that social media policies should become part of the regularly reviewed curriculum of schools. This knowledge will help school leaders develop policies that are effective and efficient in addressing relevant and timely policies. Therefore, school district policies regarding social media use should be analyzed in order to provide guidance to all stakeholders in how to use these policies as tools for improving education. Teachers must be provided training on the best ways to implement new technologies for learning into curriculum as use of mobile technology use increases for students (Kikulska-Hulme, 2010).

There are some guidelines available to help schools with the challenges of social media use when it comes to free speech and in reference to bullying, but many other social media issues not addressed in research or mandates (Donegan, 2012). There is limited guidance available for schools on how to structure these policies in ways that can keep up with the demands of technology leadership in schools. “Although it is true that social media behavior is covered by legislation and guidelines and policies already in place in most institutions, there is a real need to explicitly link new forms of social media and existing policies and guidelines” (Lenartz, 2012, p. 342). This illustrates the need for additional studies into the structure of social media policies in order to help leaders develop and revise policies to guide stakeholder usage of social media in schools and to support open communication and sharing of information and concerns.

In the National Education Technology Plan (2016), the need for policies is explained, “With the growing popularity of social media in learning, districts should consider policies and guidelines for their safe and productive use in schools” (South, 2016, p. 74).

Situating the Study

The first stage of the policy analysis process is to gather information and complete a gap analysis. This allows school districts to look at policies of other schools and determine best practices and plans for implementation. However, if there is not research over the current trends in policy, school leaders are lacking resources to inform practice. A recent study in California found that many school leaders recognize the academic and communication benefits of social media, but commonly still choose to simply block social media sites rather than address challenges through policy because of not being adequately resourced to do so (Mawhinney, 2013). There have been few studies analyzing the content of social media policies in depth.

Boudreaux (2009) conducted an analysis of 46 social media policy documents that were publicly available online. He analyzed them according to several criteria and found that social media policies tend to evolve through distinct stages as they go through the implementation process (2009). Most of the social media policies that Boudreaux analyzed were from corporations, though some were from county and state level governments and branches of the U.S. military (2011). No schools were included in this study analyzing the content of social media policies.

Research into social media policies at institutions of higher education can also be useful in guiding present research. As of May 2015, only one study examined the

types of higher education universities with social media policies. This analysis found less than one-quarter of higher education institutions had an accessible social media policy (Pomerantz, Hank, & Sugimoto, 2015). However, there have been limited studies to date that look at these elements for K-12 school districts. The study of institutions of higher learning helped to inform decisions made when making comparisons during the current study between various school districts in Oklahoma.

A national study on k-12 schools analyzed policy frames for social media use in schools and found competing interests for U.S. schools that can have negative effects on student's access to learn and use new media tools (Ahn, Bivona, and DiScala, 2011). This study looked at the largest school districts in the United States, and found that few school districts in 2010 made explicit mention of social media tools in their Acceptable Use Policies (Ahn, Bivona, and DiScala, 2011).

Having school district social media policies examined for current trends in the content of a statewide policy analysis will help leaders make informed decisions that affect the mitigation, informational, and differentiation elements of the school social media policy process and would contribute to the body of knowledge for school districts. This knowledge would inform the practice of leaders in the future and can inform additional research on possible areas of analysis. Because there are no current studies that look at social media policies from a K-12 education aspect, this study can be useful in providing initial data for school leaders when identifying best practices for leadership.

Theoretical Framework

Social media technologies extend the social network of schools outside of the brick and mortar facilities and into the community at large. Technology leadership has become a key component of school leadership in modern times (Berrett, Murphy, & Sullivan, 2012). This creates competing policy frames that school leaders must negotiate when developing social media policy (Ahn, Bivona, & DiScala, 2010). The Bridging and Buffering framework gives us a lens for analyzing the content of school district policies (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Charnitski & Harvey, 2012; DiPaulo & Tschannen-Moran, 2012; Fennel & Alexander, 1987; Grimmet & Chinnery, 2009; Grimmet, Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010; Grunig, 2009; Honig & Hatch, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kim, 2014; Kim, Bach, & Clelland, 2007; McDonald, 2012). “This framework seeks to understand the complex relationship between organizations and their environment through organizational strategies to manage core technical activities in the face of external regulation and control” (Honig & Hatch, 2004, p.23). This applies to the context of public schools because of the need for school leaders to develop policies that protect stakeholders in schools from potential harm from social media; while at the same time seeking to increase academic, communication, and social capital benefits from social media use in schools. Public affair activities can be broken down into two types: activities that “buffer” from the social and political environment and activities that “bridge” with that environment. Public affair activities can bridge, buffer, or both (Meznar & Nigh, 1995).

Many school districts choose to follow buffering technology plans that attempt to create policies that have no action with regard to long-range goals or strategic

planning. These policies meet mandates or requirements for federal funding, but do not address actions to bridge policy. However, others may look to social media policies as a means to address strategic goals for technology education programs that promote positive outcomes. These policies outline what these districts have deemed worthy of sharing through a “bridging” of resources and policy driven action that promotes the communication, academic and social capital benefits of social media use in schools.

Bridging and Buffering are not exclusive of one another. There are strategies that an organization can employ to utilize both Bridging and Buffering frameworks when engaging in public affairs through social media. The competing interests of Bridging and Buffering frames that are addressed in policy content are ways that school leaders approach policy to represent the strategic goals of the district (Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010). Initiatives and structures aimed at meeting policy demands and goals align with the Bridging Model. Buffering is evidenced by resistance of policy goals, focusing instead on local objectives and priorities (Honig & Hatch, 2004). Content themes found in policy to prevent usage of social media technologies in specific ways are interpreted according to the Buffering Model. However, the Bridging and the Buffering models are not mutually exclusive and organizations can engage in both (Fennell & Alexander, 1987; Grimmer, 2009; Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010).

The Bridging and Buffering framework also discusses how implementation of new policies should be a process that school district leaders engage in to balance the competing interests and as part of continuous improvement. Changes in technology and society affect the sustainability of technology acceptable use policies and therefore challenge school leaders to frequently review and revise these policies to meet the needs

of schools (Charnitski & Harvey, 2012). This framework also explains how organizations respond to external regulation and control. The individual school districts are organizations in which members collectively negotiate externally policies of social media with their own internal goals and strategies. “Along the continuum of Bridging and Buffering, schools shape the terms of compliance” (Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010, p.213). The Bridging and Buffering Framework aids in understanding the different ways that district leaders across Oklahoma are balancing interests of stakeholders with developing technology policies. This facilitates the comparison of those district level policies across the state.

The lens of Bridging and Buffering as a means of analyzing policy has been found to maximize available resources for organizations (Aldrich & Herker, 1977) and to improve organizational outcomes (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005). This study determines if school districts in Oklahoma are engaging in policies that are “bridging” to meet the demands of the current policy environment regarding social media, engaging in policies that are only “buffering” negative implications of social media use in schools, or both.

This study examines school district social media policies using the Bridging and Buffering framework. School district leaders have to negotiate these two competing policy frames when addressing technology interests through policy development in an ever-changing environment of rapidly advancing technology (Ahn, Bivona, & DiScala, 2011).

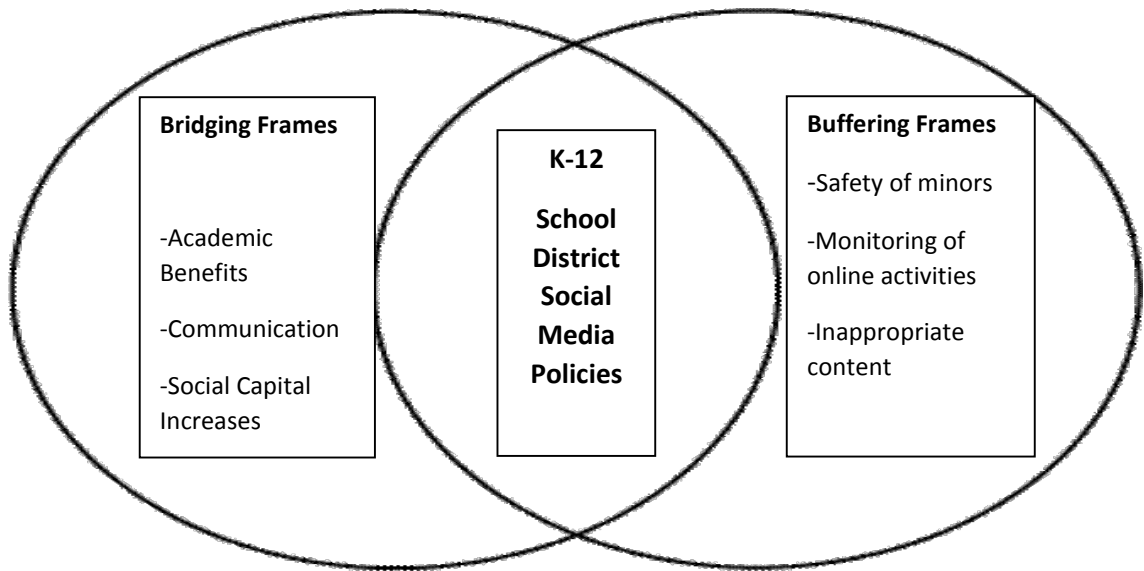


Figure 1: Bridging and Buffering Framework for Social Media in Schools

Schools develop Acceptable Use Policies for technology resources in order to achieve two goals: enabling access to beneficial resources and shielding students from harmful materials (Pierce, 2012; Isaacs, Kaminski, Aragon, & Anderson, 2014). In 1983, the federal report *A Nation at Risk* made the economic argument for technology integration in schools in order to prepare students for work. In the 1990's, the E-Rate program attempted to bridge the digital divide by providing equitable access to technology for students in all schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In 2010, the National Technology Plan promoted the realization of 24 hour-a-day connectivity to the Internet for students and asserted that 100% of schools in the United States would have access to the Internet by the year 2012 (Ahn, Bivona, & Discala, 2011).

The newest National Technology Plan released this year from the U.S. Department of Education calls for learning experiences enabled by emerging technologies that support intended educational outcomes” (2016. P. 22). This

policy frame encourages schools to bridge the digital divide and increase Internet access and use in schools. Yet, the *Child Internet Protection Act* (CIPA, 2011) requires that schools filter inappropriate materials, monitor the online activity of minors, and create Internet safety policies. This creates a policy frame where school leaders are asked to buffer school districts from any potential risks of Internet access by students.

Conclusion

The current literature available to school leaders has left a void in information about how superintendents can craft policies for social media use in schools that addresses the needs of the different policy relevant publics. Administrators need to understand more about their role in facilitating the academic and communication benefits of social media through communication networks with parents and communities. Teachers need to know how they can use social media in their personal and professional lives in a way that promotes positive interactions with schools. Students and parents need to be told by school leaders the ways that social media technologies can connect the world of learning inside and outside of the school building for the 21st century learner to progress. However, if no one examines how the structure and language of the policies put in place are interpreted and given meaning by these different groups, then a key piece of information for strategic planning of social media use in schools is missing. In order to assure that policies put in place are interpreted and understood as they are intended, additional research is needed in the structure and language that currently exist in social media policies for school districts.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative content analysis as a research methodology to analyze the content of school district social media policies in Oklahoma. I used a quantitative sampling method, Probability Proportional to Size (PPS), to select school districts. The study explored the content of twenty three K-12 public school policies in the state of Oklahoma. I retrieved data from documents that are publicly available online. I conducted analysis using the Bridging and Buffering framework for policy.

Research Question

What can be interpreted and understood from the content of current social media policies in K-12 school districts across Oklahoma?

Policy Analysis

This study is a qualitative content analysis of social media policy. Although the policy analysis process is used, this study focuses on the content of the current policies in place, and not the implementation nor the impact of the policy. Although these are components of policy analysis, that is outside of the scope of this study. A policy analysis workflow (Figure 2) helps to understand the process district leaders undertake during social media policy development (Hodgson, 2012). By understanding the policy development cycle within schools, leaders can develop policy that follow best practices, and provide acceptable paths for use in order to maximize benefits. For this study, the scope is limited to those parts of the process that occur within the boxed section of Figure 2.

The initiatives, above the boxed section, which began the policy development process, were federal mandates that require schools to address internet use in policy. For example, E-Rate federal funds for education mandate that a school district have a policy regarding technology use. This study will contribute to stages in the policy development process in side of the boxed section in Figure 2: gathering of information, and gap analysis. Analyzing the current trends of social media policies for K-12 schools is a significant part of the policy analysis process for school leaders. This study will contribute to that body of knowledge in providing a statewide policy analysis model for other schools to use in determining similarities and differences in content of social media policies for K-12 schools. I addressed the remainder of the policy development process in the discussion section because it is outside of the scope of the present study.

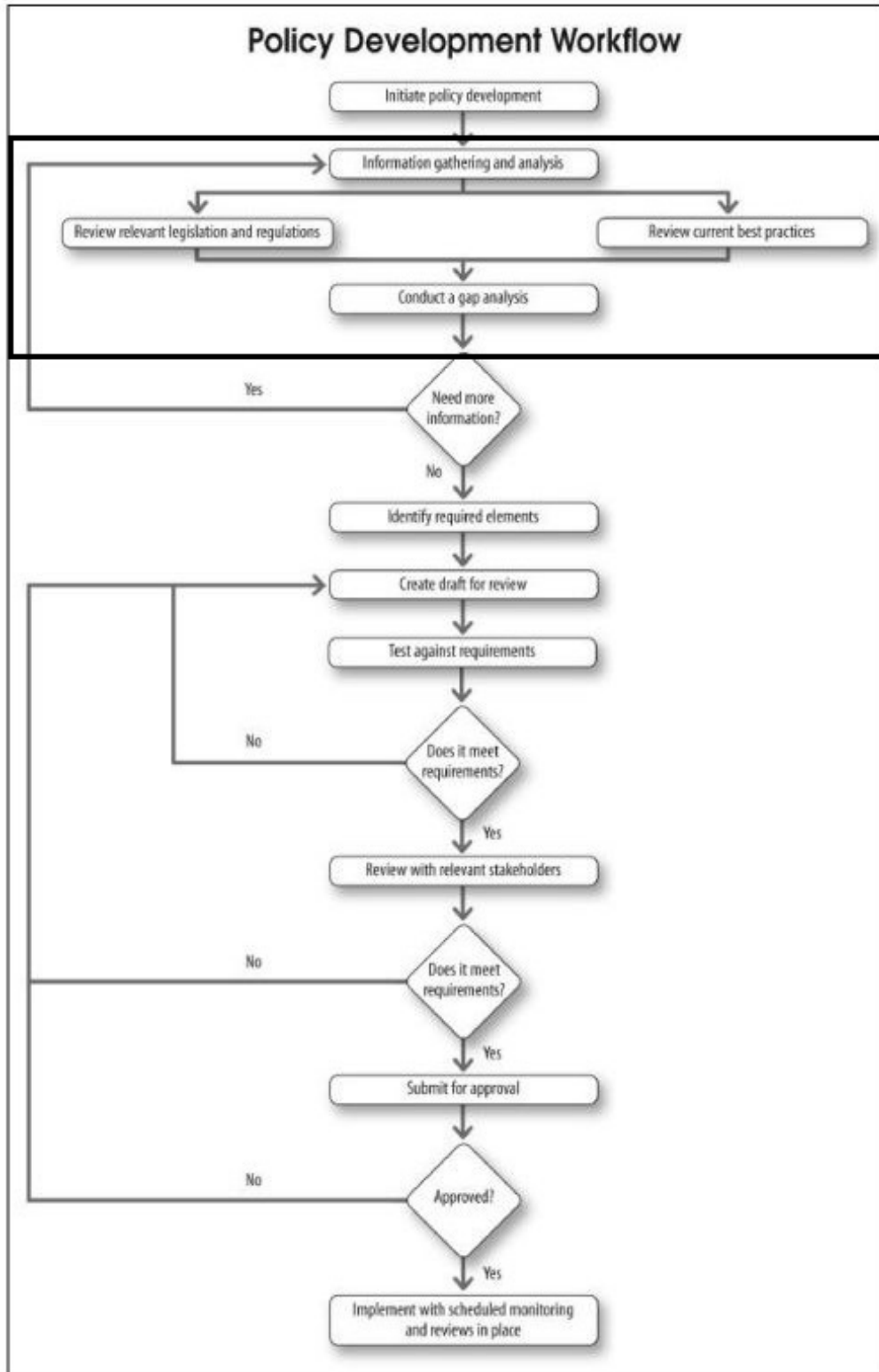


Figure 2: Policy Development Workflow (Hodgson, 2012)

Qualitative Content Analysis

This study used qualitative content analysis to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding social media policy in K-12 schools. For the study I defined, qualitative content analysis as a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through a systematic classification of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The content analysis begins with observation, and then develops codes during analysis derived from data. This study draws upon conventional methods of policy and organization research that consider documents as a window into policy intent and action theories (Russell, Greenhalgh, Byrne, & McDonnell, 2008). Qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as a means of communication with attention to the context or contextual meaning of the text (Budd, Thorp & Donohue, 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990). This methodology attempts to classify large amounts of text into efficient categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). “The goal of content analysis is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). The desired result of conventional content analysis is concept development or model building (Lindkvist, 1981). Qualitative content analysis is an effective tool for examining the policies of school districts that address social media use because it is systematic, flexible and reduces data (Schreier, 2012). The analysis of policy content across the state can help inform school leaders when attempting to create social media policy for schools.

Sample

I used quantitative and qualitative sampling methods in stratification of the sample. I used the quantitative sampling method of Probability Proportion to Size (PPS) for sampling of schools in Oklahoma. I used qualitative sampling through purposeful sampling of school districts. I found limited research regarding the use of this particular quantitative sampling method in a qualitative study. However, researchers have expressed qualitative and quantitative research can be effectively combined in the same research project (Hoepfl, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Patton, 1990).

Based on four recommendations by Marshall (1996), several steps taken ensure that the quantitative random sampling methods were appropriate for a qualitative study. First, I selected a large enough sample to reduce sampling error and bias, with an initial selection of 51 randomly selected school districts based on Probability Proportional to Size methods. This sample represented ten percent of schools in the state, and was based on the Oklahoma Community Grouping model for schools (Bixler, Brown, Day, Hannaford, Shellenberger, & Parks, 2015), which rates schools on the size of their Average Daily Membership (ADM).

Second, the study understood the characteristics under study of the whole population. I identified each school district based on size to ensure that all demographics of school district size had representation within the study. Thirdly, there is a normal distribution of research characteristics within the population. Finally, the qualitative researcher in this study acknowledges that some data sources of the sample may be “richer” in qualitative data than others.

Marshall (1993) acknowledges that a qualitative study can use quantitative sampling methods under certain conditions where the sample is purposeful, or based on judgement. “If the subjects are known to the researcher, they may be stratified according to known public attitudes or beliefs” (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). This method has been actively selected to be the most productive in order to stratify the sample to be representative of trends in Oklahoma and nationally.

Stratification is widely used as a technique for sample design. This provides for representation of subgroups and improves precision of estimators (Holt & Smith, 1979). When a stratified random sampling is used, it yields a sample with the same proportion of strata as the true value (parameter), eliminating statistical (random) error. (Lee Abbott & McKinney, 2012). Stratifying the sample ensures that the sample is representative of the population as a whole, while at the same time containing the appropriate variation for important variables. According to Gastwirth (1988), “Probability-based samples are the only ones which are representative of the population and to which the mathematical laws of probability can be applied to determine the magnitude of sampling variability in the results derived from the sample” (p.471). This study will analyze content of policies based on a sample that is representative of school district size in Oklahoma.

The data set for this study consisted of publicly available social media policies in Oklahoma school districts. The subjects of this study are K-12 public school districts. The Office of Educational Indicators has identified Oklahoma has 517 school districts, excluding charter schools, alternative schools and special education centers in its Profiles 2014 report of state schools (p.-24). This report identifies and Average Daily

Membership serving 668,054 students in the state during the 2014-2015 school year within individual school districts.

The Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) uses a “Community Grouping Model” within its’ state school accountability system. The A-F grading scale factor is used to rate school district indicators. It divides school districts in the state of Oklahoma into 16 categories based on the district’s Free and Reduced Lunch participation rates in comparison to the state average and by the school district size. School district size categories, (A-G) include school districts from 1- 20,000 or more students, divided into 8 categories of size (table 1). The Community Grouping model organizes the school districts into peer groups for comparison and allows for analysis amongst and between groups (Bixler, Brown, Day, Hannaford, Shellenberger, & Parks, 2015).

The sample for this study includes randomly selected school districts from each of the eight community grouping models, determined by the Index of Community Grouping Model (Bixler, Brown, Day, Hannaford, Shellenberger, & Parks, 2015). Ten percent of the 517 school districts in the state of Oklahoma are included in the sample. This figure rounded to 52 school districts selected for the final sample size. Anything larger than ten present would most likely result in data saturation, based on existing federal regulations of school internet safety (CIPA, 2011). The total school districts sampled does not include Charter schools within Oklahoma. These were not included in the data set for the 2014 Community Grouping Model.

I stratified the sample using the Community Grouping Model and the percentage of each size school district in Oklahoma (Bixler, Brown, Day, Hannaford,

Shellenberger, & Parks, 2015). I selected districts according to the proportional distribution of school districts in the state of Oklahoma to obtain a representative sample of schools. “Probability Proportional to Size, (PPS), allows researchers to equalize clusters through calculating the size of the cluster relative to the size of the population” (Lee Abbott & McKinney, 2012, p. 113). For each category of the Community Grouping Models size classification, the percentage of school districts in the state that fit that grouping model was calculated. Once this percentage of the total state weight was calculated, a proportional number of schools from that category represent the sample. For example, if a category had 20% of the schools in the state, then 20% of the sample should be representative of that category of school size.

I listed school districts in each of the community grouping models as they are organized in the Community Grouping model: alphabetically by county for each category. The list was loaded into in the order that they are in the Index by Community Group (p. B1-B12), in the Backgrounds and Methodologies report (2014). This data set for each category of the Community Grouping Model was loaded into an online randomizer (www.random.org). I used this program to select randomly a stratified sample that contained the correct number of school districts needed for the sample from each of the eight community groups.

I used the list randomizer option. “This form allows you to arrange the items of a list in random order. The randomness comes from atmospheric noise, which for many purposes is better than the pseudo-random number algorithms typically used in computer programs” (www.random.org, 2016). This resulted in a randomly selected position for each school district in the list of schools from that category. The final

sample set was comprised of a randomly generated list representative of all school districts from each group needed. If I needed 12 schools from group H, then the list of all the schools in-group H were loaded into the randomizer in the order they appear in publicly available documents. Once loaded, the randomized list emerges. If 12 names were needed for the study from group H, then I chose the top 12 names from the random list of school districts from that group. I collected time stamps and IP addresses from each randomization for records of the study. I repeated the process for each group of school districts until the desired sample from each group attained for the study.

This selection of schools is representative of national trends in school size. Larger school districts with twenty five thousand or more students, such as Oklahoma City and Tulsa, represent less than one percent of the schools in Oklahoma. A national study of the 100 largest public elementary and secondary school districts in the United States, found that larger school districts of this size represent less than one percent of all school districts in the United States (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010), so the sample from Oklahoma is congruent with school size trends nationally. I proportionally stratified the sample to ensure representation of school districts of all sizes in Oklahoma. This variety in school district size in Oklahoma from small, rural districts, to large urban schools will provide a stratified sample for research. The Probability Proportion to Size sampling criteria used in this study is contained in Table 1: PPS Sample of Oklahoma Schools.

Table 1

PPS Sample Oklahoma Schools

Community Grouping	Total in Oklahoma	Percentage of state	Selected for study	Percentage of sample
A 25,000+	2	<1%	2	3.92
B 10,000-24,999	10	2%	2	3.92
C 5,000-9,999	11	2%	2	3.92
D 2000-4999	35	7%	4	7.84
E 1000-1,999	72	14%	6	11.76
F 500-999	100	19%	9	17.64
G 250-499	156	30%	14	27.45
H Less than 250	131	25%	12	23.52
TOTAL	517	100%	51	99.9%

I guided selection criteria by trends in current literature for positive relationships between educational outcomes and larger school size due to economic efficiency (Robertson, 2007; Slate & Jones, 2005). In this sample, school districts with 5000 students or more are overrepresented in sample selection in order to allow for comparisons. Each group had a minimum of two school districts selected, which served as a source of comparison within groups. Because the largest school districts in Oklahoma represent less than one percent of schools, it was necessary to select a higher percentage of schools from this category because you cannot analyze data for a fraction of a school district.

Slightly underrepresented were the school districts with 1999 students or less in the sample in order to account for the need for at least two districts in each category. I reduced each category of smaller schools by one school district in the sample in order to maintain a sample number that is 10% of the total number of school districts in Oklahoma. This reduction in school districts of 1,999 students or less did not affect the

outcomes of the study due to data saturation within categories of smaller school districts. The sample maintained national trends in proportions of school district size with the total representation of school districts within the sample that had 2,000 students or less representing less than 80% of the total schools in the study. This is similar to national trends showing school districts with populations of 2500 students or less representing 72% of all schools nationwide.

I rounded selection calculations for each category to the nearest whole number when selecting the number of school districts for each category, so there are no partial districts contained within the samples. For example, if a school district category was less than 1% of the total state sample, then the percentage and the number in the sample set was rounded to one and so one school district would be selected; rather than a half of a district. Because of the proportional shift in data to a whole number, the percentage of some schools in the sample may be elevated in comparison with the actual percentage in the state with a deviation of <1%, due to the need to examine school districts as whole numbers.

I collected school districts in each of the community grouping models as they are in the Community Grouping Model. I listed school districts alphabetically by county for each category. The list was loaded in the order that they are in the Index by Community Group (p. B1-B12), in the Backgrounds and Methodologies report (2014). This data set for each category of the Community Grouping Model was loaded into an online randomizer (www.random.org). I used this program to select randomly a stratified sample that contained the correct number of school districts needed for the sample from each of the eight community groups.

I used the list randomizer. “This form allows you to arrange the items of a list in random order” (www.random.org, 2016). This resulted in a randomly selected position for each school district in the list of schools from that category. The number of needed school districts from each group that for the study guided selection from the randomly generated list into the final sample set. If I needed 12 schools from group H, then the list of all the schools in that group (H) were loaded into the randomizer in the order they appear in publicly available documents. I then created a randomized list using www.random.org. If 12 names were need for the study from group H, then I chose the top 12 names from the random list of school districts for the study for that category. I collected time stamps and IP addresses from each randomization for records of the study. I repeated the process for each group of school districts until I attained the desired sample from each group for the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The first step in policy analysis is the identification of artifacts that carry meaning for the relative policy issue. For this study, I collected data in the form of text from digital sources of school district policies on social media. I performed a Google search on each school district using the school district name as the search criteria. I noted the web address of the school district’s webpages. I also noted if the school district did not have a school webpage. The unit of analysis for each individual school district was board-approved policy that addresses social media use. If the school district did not have a policy directly attributed to social media, then I examined the Internet Safety Policy for technology for areas that specifically address social media use.

I completed a visual search of the website to determine if the any policy documents were available on the website. The website address of the location where I found the policy was noted, as well as the page number of where policies that address social media was found, if listed within a multipage document. If I could not locate a policy on the school's website, that was also noted. All information regarding the location and accessibility of each school district policy regarding social media has been recorded and coded and is reported in the findings section of this study.

Once I found the policy, I conducted a visual scan for the words "social media." If no specific policy labeled as "social media" was located, I searched for any policies including the words "Internet Usage", "Acceptable Use," or "Electronic Communication." I recorded the name and page number of any relevant policies, along with the date of adoption, dates of revision, and any other legal descriptors listed with the policy. I completed an in depth search of each school district website in order to ensure the inclusion of the maximum number of documents that could be considered social media policies or guidelines. This approach ran the risk of false positives, where some documents were identified that contained no social media policies or guidelines. However, I determined that a false positive would be less of a risk than a false negative where documents were not identified that might have contained relevant content. During further review of selected sample documents, I recorded any policies that I found to contain no policy of any kind addressing social media in any way within those documents.

Data Analysis

I read and reviewed each policy individually and then grouped them thematically, and then synthesized policies into units of comparison based on the community grouping model, and the Bridging and Buffering Framework. As I looked at the content of collected data, I coded, operationalized and examined them for similarities and difference that existed within the content across the state of Oklahoma. I completed the analysis of the content of the collected social media policies over the weeks of March 13-20, 2016.

I examined the coding process as a cyclical act that used multiple cycles of analysis to manage, filter, highlight and focus on the most important components of the qualitative data in order to generate themes and derive meaning. The process of codifying permits data to be broken down into understandable components and organize them in ways that represent a consolidated explanation of meaning (Hieha & Shannon, 2005).

During the first cycle in the coding process, I analyzed initial words, phrases or entire pages of text for first impression phrases. This allowed me to create categories of content found within the sample social media policies. I used these categories of content to describe trends in the content of policy documents (Holsti, 1969; Neuendorf, 2001). These coding terms or filters are descriptive in nature in order to document and categorize the breadth of qualitative data available for analysis of social media policy content in schools across Oklahoma. I defined and bound codes to create initial categories for first cycle based on Figure 1, as guided by existing research on social

media policies in other institutions (Boudroux 2009; Pomerantz, Hank, & Sugimoto, 2015).

Table 1

Initial Coding Categories Social Media Policy Content Analysis

Appropriate Content	Accurate	Personal Self	Trademarks
Represent	Appropriate Tone	Writing Style	Contact Media
Community	On Behalf Of	Confidential	Copyright
Legal	Permission	Other Policies	Contact Govt.
Comply w/law	Behavior	Conflict	Coworkers
Workplace	Personal Others	Events	

During the second cycle of coding, I reconfigured the developed codes to include initial units and longer passages of text into short descriptive codes. Once the data were coded into the different categories, with appropriate labels, I had a final unit of analysis for comparison available (Saldana, 2009). These units of analysis included the following categories of social media policy content: Appropriateness of posts, representation of the school district, compliance with current laws, conflict resolution, and other policies.

The central dimensions of the Bridging and Buffering conceptual framework guided the discussion of the research question and the interpretation of the results. I used content analysis for the social media policies examined. This approach involved counting and making comparisons of keywords and content following interpretation of the underlying context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to summarize the findings of the varied policies sampled. Using the Community Grouping Model (Bixler, 2016) I drew

conclusions regarding the content of policy categories that I found to exist currently in the school districts in Oklahoma.

Trustworthiness, Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability

Background experience plays a role in the ability to make sense of any situation. My background assisted in ensuring the creation of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the study. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is an essential component for the researcher to add credence to his or her work. In trustworthiness, the focus is on the quality of the information gathered and the researcher's ability to analyze the information (Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I established trustworthiness through an intensive pursuit of understanding about the context through examination of existing research, and identification of key categories for analysis based on the existing body of knowledge. This study is confirmed as trustworthy through the use of persistent observation. "The purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). This provides depth to the research and ensures trustworthiness.

Credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible and believable from the perspective of the participant in the research (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). I established credibility through the quality of the information gathered and the utilization of research-based methods of policy analysis to analyze and determine the trends of the current state of social media policies in school districts.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized to other contexts or setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I established transferability through the design of the study to examine the content of policy from school district of many different sizes, and through the framework of analysis that allows for multiple perspectives of policy analysis.

Dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). I established this through the review current policies of the multiple school districts of varying size and location within the state of Oklahoma and the inclusions of relevant legislation, mandates, and media related to those policies. The research includes descriptions of any changes that occurred in the setting and how these changes affected the study. I established the dependability of the study by ensuring the study is a snapshot of the current context, and recommendations for further research address changes needed for the future.

Confirmability is the degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). I established this by taking a neutral stance in the research, and the process, and through the defense of the study, and data audits with other researchers. I gave careful attention to policy content analysis as a research design; however, due to the nature of the process it was difficult to predict the results.

CHAPTER 4

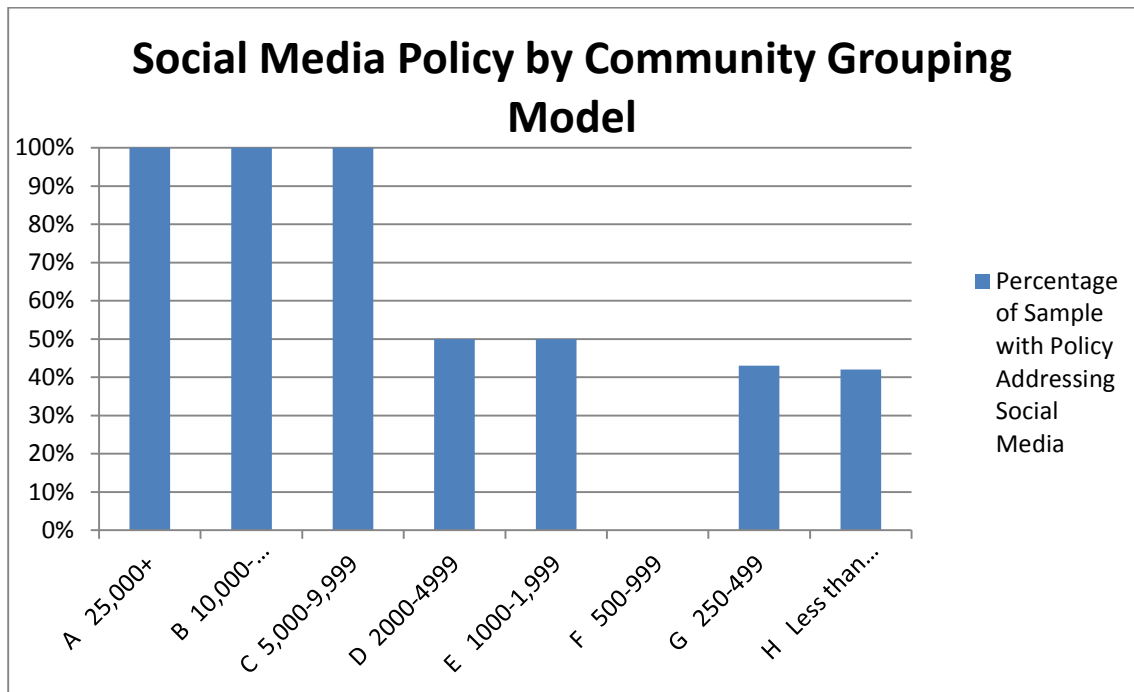
FINDINGS

Introduction

Twenty-two school districts (43%), sampled had a social media policy available for analysis and 29 did not (56%). I disqualified school districts that did not contain a policy that addressed social media or Internet use from further analysis. These school districts without policies available online existed in community groups H, G, F, E, and D; with the number of districts with policies decreasing as the size of the school districts decreased below 2000 students or less (see Table 3).

Table 4

Social Media Policies by Community Grouping Model



There were no available online social media policies for any of the nine school districts surveyed for the Community Grouping Model F. (districts with 500-999 students). It is worth noting that in, there were school districts in Group F that provided a link to policy documents on their webpage, but the link was not functional, or the page was under construction. Because the policy had to be viewable in order to examine the content for the study, I disqualified those school districts were from analysis that were not available online. I further address this lack of available online policy for Community Group F in the discussion section.

Topics Addressed in Social Media Policies

The content of the selected social media policies addressed many topics. I first examined these policies by initial codes and then divided these topics into categories based on frequency of existence in the sample, and synthesized them into coded units of comparison to provide a snapshot into the trends in the content of policies. The most frequent areas addressed in the content of the social media policies were representation of the school district, appropriateness of posts, compliance with current laws, conflict resolution, and policies establishing the school district's stance on purposes of social media use in schools. I reviewed these common trends in this section in reference to the Bridging and Buffering framework, which will be explained in more depth in the analysis section of this study.

Bridging Policy Strategies

Online Accessibility

Having school district policies available online is one example of the use of the Bridging strategy found in social media policy content. Forty-five percent of the school districts selected for this study had a policy addressing social media as a public

document available online. This demonstrates a desire to bridge awareness of expectations by almost half of the sample. This is an essential component of the policy development process.

Policy Titles

I also examined the title for each policy chosen for the study. Of the policies examined, less than twenty percent of the school districts sampled had a policy with “Social Media” or “Social Networks” in the title. These school districts were from schools in community grouping models A, B, C, and D and were school districts who served more than two thousand students. However, I found policy content addressing social media in schools to exist under multiple policy titles. The next title found to exist in the content of policies addressing social media was “Acceptable Use and Internet Safety,” and represented almost sixty percent of the policies sampled. Other policy titles included “Student Handbook or Code of Conduct” (14%), and “Bullying” (9%), and existed from school districts in the Community Grouping Models of D, G, and H. Although given different titles, each policy examined addressed social media use in some way.

I also found evidence of Bridging strategies in the titles and locations of policies addressing social media use in schools. Although a limited number of schools had a stand-alone social networking policy document, most institutions integrated social media policies into other policy documents, such as the Internet Safety Policy, Student Code of Conduct, or a faculty handbook.

Audience of Social Media Policies

Audience was also an important component of findings in the content of policies addressing social media use in schools. School district policies from this sample targeted three types of audience members addressed: School employees, students, and community members. Policies could include one or more of the audiences addressed.

Addressed for all users, behavior on social media networks was a positive content trend in the sample. I found discussions of student's rights and benefits of use in a large majority of policies examined. Parents were encouraged to be involved, aware and to set expectations for online behavior. Teachers were encouraged by some school districts to use social networks for learning, as well as instructed to educate students in digital citizenry. By having all stakeholders addressed in policy, school districts that addressed many audiences in social media policy demonstrated evidence of Bridging strategies for policy development.

School staff as audience. More than fifty percent of the school district policies sampled addressed employee use of social media as an audience for policy content. Several policies required that employee use of social media be limited to professional use only during work hours. Some policies discussed that teacher and student contact on social media should be limited to educational or extracurricular activities. One district policy stated that employees might be required to provide copies of electronic communications via social media. Another policy advised staff members to maintain copies of any communications with students regarding school sponsored activities for a minimum of ninety days.

One school district policy defined activities that would result in disciplinary action as, “Any public communication that impairs an employee’s ability to work, professional reputation, or effectiveness as an employee, as well as any conduct that negatively reflects upon the district” (Broken Arrow Public Schools, 2012). Another policy advised employees to treat social media with the same standards as the classroom. Multiple policies addressed to employees discussed the expectation that employees should educate students on appropriate online behaviors, including “interactions with other individuals on social networking websites and in chatrooms, and about cyberbullying awareness and response” (Tulsa Public Schools, 2014).

Students as audience: Of the school districts surveyed in this study, ninety-one percent of the policies surveyed addressed students as an audience for policy documents. The need for students to be educated on digital citizenship and appropriate behavior when using social media was addressed in many policies, as well as defining what that is. Many policies addressed directly towards student audiences included clarification of what is appropriate social networking use, what is not, and how social media actions relate to school behavior expectations and disciplinary actions. One school district social media policy addressed to an audience of students stated, “Students represent the school and should behave accordingly in all activities online” (Tipton ISD, 2016). Another school district indicated students as the responsible parties for content contained in electronic communications such as email, chatrooms, or social network sites (Webbers Falls ISD, 2015). Many school districts discussed the requirements for students to sign an agreement acknowledging that they have read the

school district policy for use of technology resources, and the explanation of behaviors that would result in loss of privileges on the school network.

Community members as audience: Stakeholders outside of school district personnel and students were the audience members in less than a quarter of the policies collected. Several school districts addressed community member use a purpose for social media, as well as an audience. “The Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram page(s) for the school district was created to provide a means to keep families and school patrons updated on great things happening in the district” (Elgin Public Schools, 2015). Multiple policies addressed parents and guardians as not only the audience, but also the responsible party, and the ones to give permission annually for student use of school networks until the student is eighteen year of age. “Ultimately parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources” (Cimmaron Public Schools, 2012). In one school district, policy addressed community members as an audience for the policy saying, “Staff, students, and community agree to attend annual Acceptable Use Policy seminar” (Leedey Public Schools, 2015).

Policies addressing the community as an audience are apparent as a theme in content. “All existing policies and behavior guidelines extend to school-related activities in the online environments, as well as on the school premises” (Stillwater Public Schools, 2015). One school policy stated that all users agree to the policy when they “like” the school districts Facebook page. These examples demonstrate that social media policy content addresses many audiences; including staff, students, and community.

Purposes of Use

Another finding in the content of policies is the area of purposes of use for social media. Although schools had differing approaches for addressing the purpose of social media as educational, or for communication purpose, many districts designated some examples of encouragement for the use of social media in schools for positive benefits. By clearly designating acceptable social media use, the districts created a pathway for use that all could follow. Despite the challenges of misuse of social media and online resources, the majority of policies listed purposeful use of social media networks in schools, “We recognize the importance of electronic tools and social networks as communication and e-learning tools” (Broken Arrow Public Schools, 2012). Some school district policies specified the use of social networks strictly for educational or research purposes, whereas others included extracurricular activities as acceptable and appropriate.

The majority of policies also addressed the need to educate students in digital citizenry and safety, and stated expectations that educators would undertake this responsibility as part of the acceptable use. “The goal in providing these resources is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication” (Idabel Public Schools, 2009). Other policies did not address a specific purpose of use for social media, but instead addressed acceptable use for all internet use under policies for electronic communication, “Netiquette”, or online bullying. In one school district, the policy states that purposes for use must be presented for approval by saying, , “All online instruction must be approved under supervision of the Board of Education” (Lindsay Public Schools, 2015). Another school district acknowledged that

not all social media use will be academic, “We understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and coworkers around the world” (Stillwater Public Schools, 2015).

Compliance with Current Laws

I found Bridging strategies to occur between school district policies and the need to address and comply with all current laws. All schools addressed required elements and suggested formats for policy development of Internet Safety Policies from requirements such as CIPA (2011), and COPPA (1998), which address appropriate internet content and protecting the privacy of children while online. This was an apparent Bridging strategy in all policies examined. Relationships between the school districts and law enforcement officials was also considered under a bridging framework with numerous policies giving instructions for when authorities would be brought in to collaborate on the resolution of inappropriate content or illegal behaviors.

One district policy expressed the goal of maintaining online activities that are, “...efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the school network” (Idabel Public Schools, 2009). Along with filtering inappropriate content from minors as specified in CIPA (2011), school districts discussed the need to protect the confidentiality of student identification information when using internet resources such as social media to meet requirements of COPPA (1998). Also noted were the components of the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) for guidelines for protecting student and staff information. Users were encouraged not to share any information about themselves or others that was to be private. Student contact information, photos, and other personal

information was discouraged from sharing on social media sites without prior consent from the parent or guardian if the student is a minor.

Additional safety measures specific to social media were addressed in some district policies, “Regardless of the user’s age, the user should never agree to meet with a person the user has only communicated with on the Internet in a secluded place or in a private setting,” (Harrah Public Schools, 2016). Along with confidentiality and internet filtering regulations, selected district policies also noted the free speech rights of individual’s in. “Users have the freedom to like, unlike, follow, or unfollow any posts they desire” (Elgin Public Schools, 2015). Also upheld within selected district policies were employee rights regarding inspection of personal devices without consent, and restrictions on school districts requiring an employee to disclose passwords to private social media accounts; demonstrating compliance with current laws.

Buffering Policy Strategy

Many school district policies were found to exhibit evidence of buffering practices in policy content; including those found not to have a policy for social media available online. Those schools following a buffering strategy towards social media are not addressing this area in policy and are therefore buffering the issue from the district; or they have simply chosen not to put their policies online. Excluded from the sample for not having a policy available online, one school district website was an example for the Buffering strategy in policy content. Listed on their website under the policies label it says, “School district policies may be examined in person at the administration office by appointment.” This demonstrates how to use the Buffering strategy for external

control of the environment in an attempt to maintain management of problematic behaviors (Kim, 2014).

Representation of the school district

The way that the school district policies examined representation of the school district is another finding for policy content. Schools in the sample have taken steps in policy to ensure that the representation of the school on social media is a positive one. The only things listed in social media policies for school districts regarding representing the school districts were the ways that users of the network are restricted. Policies contained language regarding the need for users to represent the school district in a positive light through social media use.

The way that social media users represent the school district was an apparent theme within examined policies. “Access to the social media by district network will only be used to increase awareness of district activities and achievements. Social media shall be defined as internet-based applications (such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, etc.)” (Grant Public Schools, 2016). Many district policies addressed speaking on behalf of the school district as prohibited and encouraged users to provide distinction between private and professional communications involving the school districts. Users were encouraged to be transparent in disclosing their roles within the school district, to maintain separation between personal and professional social media presence, and to provide disclaimers about posts. “Opinions here are the personal opinions of the author and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the school district” (Yukon Public Schools, 2015). Several school districts had specific policies regarding the posting of political lobbying, product advertisements, and use of the school logo and

trademark without expressed consent. Also addressed from the position of representing the school district was copyright in social media policies.

Along with requiring social media users to follow federal copyright regulations, several school district policies stated that when employees use the school network, “communications have no expectation of privacy, and are property of the school district” (Soper Public Schools, 2015). One school district policy defined the school district network to include “wired and wireless devices and peripheral equipment, files, storage, email, and Internet content (blogs, websites, collaboration, software, social networking sites, and wikis” (Moore Public Schools, 2014). School districts also designated within policies that addressed social media that all contact with the media should be through approved district chain of command, further addressing representation of the school district in regards to social networks. This creation of peripheral structures will be discussed further in the analysis section.

Appropriateness of Posts

Findings in social media policies also addressed appropriateness of posts. There are specific guidelines set up by CIPA (2011), COPPA (1998) and Cyberbullying regulations regarding inappropriate material on school Internet networks. However, there were differences in the definitions of inappropriate posts and appropriate tone within policies examined for this study.

The wide variety of policy variations in the explanations of appropriateness of posts was found to demonstrate buffering strategies at the local level to develop social media policies that best represent their district.

I identified appropriate content definitions as often included within school district policies that addressed social media. Many districts encouraged the use of accurate content that was factual as appropriate content. One school district further defined appropriate content instructing users to, “Take pride in communications; check spelling and grammar” (Wetumka, 2015).

Also addressed was the tone of communications universally in social networking policies with the term, “be polite,” being the most used phrase to define appropriate tone in social media. This content strand will be explored more in the discussion section. Cyberbullying, harassment, threatening, intimidation, as well as defamatory and libelous speech are additional examples of inappropriate tone as defined by multiple districts. One school district policy described the need for appropriate tone by saying,

While we encourage open communication both internally and externally in all forms, we expect and insist that such communication does not substantively demean our environment. This means that constructive criticism- both privately and publicly- is welcome, but harsh or continuous disparagement is discouraged (Yukon Public Schools, 2015).

The list of content deemed inappropriate for school social networks was lengthy and specific. Included in the list of unacceptable content for school district social media use was profanity or vulgarities, obscene material, racial slurs, impersonating another, content of a sexual nature, drug or alcohol references, damage to the schools networks or equipment; as well as any otherwise illegal activities.

Conflict Resolution

Another area of findings for school district social media policy and the Bridging and Buffering framework was in the content of policies addressing conflict on social networks surrounding schools. Policies examined for this study had high levels of

variance in the ways that districts chose to address conflict resolution for social media users. Buffering strategies are one way that school leaders attempt to keep their school independent from the environment. “Leaders who prefer this strategy reduce environmental influence as much as possible to protect the core tasks of teaching and learning” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005).

School district policies regarding conflict varied in severity of consequences from the removal of posts, banning from social networks, disciplinary action within schools, as well as possible referral to civil or criminal authorities. Resolution strategies also varied in suggested actions from addressing the conflict in person, to addressing to a district administration office; all centered on the goal of minimizing disruption of the primary mission of schools. Regardless of the variance, these contents of policy all demonstrate a buffering strategy for policy development in regards to conflict on social media.

A large number of school district policies also encouraged students and staff to notify supervisors and law agencies of violation of policies, and any illegal or suspicious activity found on school social media networks. For students, disciplinary actions listed in most policies included revocation of network privileges, as well as disciplinary action as stated within standard school district policies for disciplining students. A large number of policies explicitly addressed the expectation that behavior on social media networks should uphold the same expectations as any other school activity; following standard school disciplinary measures. One school district policy directly addressed conflicts involving the social media page maintained on behalf of the school district by saying, “Issues against students, teachers, and administrators should





























be handled with personal contact; not via social media” (Elgin Public Schools, 2015). A large number of policies also stated a waiver of liability for the school district in the event of misuse of online social networks.

Additional Findings

Many school districts disqualified from the study did have social media platforms listed on their websites. All but two of the school districts selected for the study had a school website that could be located via a Google search of the district name and the term “school”. The two school districts that did not have a school district webpage, did have a Facebook page for the school district that was available in the top five results from the google search performed. From the total sample, I found that 51% of the Oklahoma school districts selected had a social media presence on their website (Table 3). For school districts that had a policy addressing social media use, 68% had a social media presence on their website. Of the school districts disqualified from the study for not having a social media policy, 45% of those districts had logos for social media sites on their school district website homepages. The social media platforms found on the school websites in the sample were Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Schoolway, RSS Feed, ArrowVision, digg, and GooglePlus. Several districts provided from their school district website a link that connects users to more than 274 social media applications.

Table 3

Social Media Platforms on School Websites by District Size

Community Grouping Model	Social Media Platforms on School Websites
A 25,000+	   
B 10,000-24,999	    
C 5,000-9,999	  
D 2000-4999	 
E 1000-1,999	   
F 500-999	   
G 250-499	   
H Less than 250	 

The presence of the social networking platforms on the school district sponsored website demonstrates that social media social media platforms are active within those schools in the sample, despite the fact that many of those districts have no policy for social media use.

Conclusion

This study determined that K-12 schools in Oklahoma exhibited evidence of a bridging strategy in content for policies about social media use in the areas of online accessibility and titles of policies, audience, purposes of use and complying with current laws. Findings demonstrate evidence of buffering frameworks for policy content in

regards to representation of the school district, appropriateness of posts, and conflict resolution. Findings demonstrated trends in policy content and examples of Bridging, and Buffering strategies for policy development involving social media in K-12 school districts in Oklahoma. These findings will be further examined in the discussion and analysis sections of this study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

Introduction

Through the review of literature and context of policies, the creation of a theory-in-action and a research question, and the study and analysis of findings, this study engages in policy content analysis (Tatro, 2012). From this knowledge, the study conceptualizes the policy problem, comes up with viable policy alternatives based on evidence from research studies in the existing field, and offers suggestion for further research to inform policy makers on this under-studied issue for schools.

Research has found that schools are open systems that are influential and influenced by the context in which they exist (e.g., DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010; Weick, 1995). This study finds that within those systems, external regulation and control versus local decision-making and policy structures are two competing interests in K-12 school policy regarding social media in Oklahoma. There are trends in content analysis of policies that help us to understand how schools are addressing social media in policy (Ahn, Bivona, & DiScala, 2011).

The Bridging and Buffering framework for policy development is a useful way to attempt to analyze the current state of policies in K-12 schools (Ingle, Willis, & Fritz, 2014). Despite evidence of academic and communication benefits for schools that integrate social media use into the curriculum, many districts are still unsure how to achieve policies that bridge to laws and mandates, but still buffer schools from environmental influences that are against the mission and values of those school districts (DiPaulo & Tschannen-Moran, 2012).

This analysis was guided by current literature. The review of relevant literature found that there are potential academic and communication benefits of social media use surrounding K-12 schools (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009). However, other studies of case law for school districts have established that social media policies can involve challenges for school leaders (eg. Larkin, 2015). Analysis identified social media policies as a way that some school districts are strategic in planning for social media use in schools (Berrett, Murphy, & Sullivan, 2012). This planning ensures that social media is advancing core technical activities that lead to improved teaching and learning; such as communication, and virtual educational opportunities (Vanderline, van Braak, & Dexter, 2012). However, many other school district policies were interpreted as intransigent to social media use, viewing it as a violation of school expectations. This choice of action to bridge and buffer raised more questions. Social media policy is believed to assist schools in providing academic and communication benefits to schools and to reduce potential challenges to districts (Woodley & Silvestri, 2014). Why are leaders choosing to buffer social media from schools in policy, but still maintaining a social media presence on their school webpages? Is the absence of social media policy in smaller school districts a trend that extends beyond the state of Oklahoma? Is the absence of social media in school district policy due to outdated technology use plans, or is it a strategic decision to buffer the external demands of social media from schools.

After examining the contents of the sample school district social media policy it became apparent that a greater understanding was needed of how these policies were embedded into the context of modern schools. To understand policy, you must understand its origin, history and context of (Tatro, 2012). If this study had continued

and been part of a full school district policy development cycle of adoption for policy (Hodgson, 2012), it would have been expected to interview school leaders to understand their reasoning in the selection of Bridging or Buffering strategies for social media policy. However, that was outside of the scope of the present study.

This study engaged only in the initial phases of policy analysis, which is to gather input from official policy documents and to determine multidisciplinary perspectives of theory that are relevant to the analysis task (Tatro, 2012). Because this study did not engage in the full policy development cycle, additional research was necessary to create an understanding of the context in which the policy exists. Because policy cannot be fully understood until it is implemented (Lipsky, 1980), and becomes a program in action (Weiss, 1972), theory can have a role in policy analysis (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Cummings, 1999; Kjaer, 2004; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000; Tatro, 2008; Tatro et al., 2012; & Perrow, 1986).

Based on the design of the study, it was necessary to understand how the policies are expected to work in order to analyze content of policies (Majchrzak, 1984; Resnick et al., 2007, Weiss, 1998; and Tatro, 2012). This theory-in-action creates a framework for judging potential or actual success of a policy (Tatro, 2012). The theory-in-action for this study was that through engaging in the policy development cycle for social media, schools could bridge academic and communication benefits; while buffering challenges from misuse of social media. This study reflected on findings, and makes recommendations as based on analysis of valid and reliable information and by relevant theory (Bardach, 2000; Resnick et al., 2007; Weiss, 1998; Shavelson & Towne, 2002; and Tatro et al., 2012).

In order to understand the findings of this study and engage in a deeper analysis of the current state of policy it was necessary to investigate additional policy documents that helped to answer the question of why districts were Bridging and Buffering when it comes to social media. These documents met the standards for acceptable research to be used as “data sources” or “evidence” to support analysis (Shavelson & Towne, 2002; Booth, Colomb & Williams, 2008; Pallas, 1993). These additional documents are relevant to policy analysis of social media in K-12 schools in Oklahoma and existed within federal mandates. The policy documents used for understanding the context of social media policies were: E-Rate (2014), and the National Education Technology Plan (NETP, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2010) from the Office of Educational Technology, and ConnectED and The Future Ready Initiatives enacted from the President Barack Obama in the White House (2013).

Federal Programs

E-Rate is funded out of the “federal universal service fee” tagged onto phone and internet bills, and provides a discount program for public and non-profit schools and libraries to obtain high speed internet and telecommunications at affordable rates (Schaffhauser, 2016). The E-Rate plan was originally sized at \$2.25 billion in 1998, but the demand since 2012 has been double that (Fletcher, 2014). There has been a cap on overall E-Rate funding prior to 2014 and there was not enough money to meet all of the applications; so many schools never saw the benefits (Herold, 2015). A 2013 survey said only 8% of schools had funding they needed for Internet connectivity in schools (DiNisco, 2014). The last year E-Rate awarded money for internet connectivity

discounts was 2012-2013, and only half of the applicants got a portion of the \$809 million that was available (Herold, 2015).

E-rate funding since 2014 is based on a simple per student ratio (Herold, 2015). Smaller schools are eligible for less funding than larger schools due to discount matrix (Oh, 2014) This policy recommends 100 Mbps per 1, 000 students, but only 77% of schools nationwide meet this goal in 2016 (Schaffhauser, 2016). Preference for E-Rate money is also weighted to poverty rate and number of minority students (Oh, 2014), leaving many rural districts without assistance.

There is also a preference for high speed connectivity. An E-Rate advisor for schools, John Harrington explains the relevance of E-Rate funding to federal mandates for technology use in schools:

Almost every school in America is counting on the E-rate program for their Internet access. You've got to have that piece in place before you can really come in with some of the ed tech initiatives, and the personalized learning (Schaffhauser, 2016, p. 16).

Starting in 2014, discounts for phone services were removed in exchange for new E-Rate discounts for Wifi and school districts are now having to absorb those costs (Herold, 2015).

The FCC recently changed the priorities for funding in response to President Obama's ConnectED initiative (Fletcher, 2014). In 2014, "President Obama announced more than \$750 million in private-sector commitments to deliver cutting edge technologies to classrooms, including devices, free software, teachers professional development and home wireless connectivity" (Fletcher, 2014, p. 1). However, presently, only 63% of schools in U.S. can deliver the bandwidth recommended by Obama's plan due to lack of fiber optics in rural areas (Herold & Cavanaugh,

2015). ConnectEd has four goals: upgraded connectivity, access to learning devices, supported teachers, and digital learning resources (Denisco, 2014). In addition, Obama requested \$200 million in funding in 2015 towards paying for instructional coaches, digital content, and important online communication and collaboration (DeNisco, 2014).

The newest National Education Technology Plan was released in December of this year (2016). However, its predecessors have existed for the last 20 years and establish a contextual lens for examining technology education in the United States. An empirical content analysis of the NETP plans for 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2010 found that each progressive policy has created a greater need for increased funding, and support for federal-level initiative in terms of educational technology policy (Roumell, & Floring, 2014). The study of NETP plan content also found a “dialectical relationship in the language of policies between democratic free exchange of information and emancipatory learning, and a growing capacity for surveillance, control, centralization, and monopolization” (Roumell, & Floring, 2014, p. 394). The current NETP plan (2016) has a heavy emphasis on personalized learning opportunities driven by students and a focus on creating online professional development communities for teachers, as well as an emphasis for real-time feedback for educators and students (p. 7).

The 2016 National Education Technology Plan gives us this one sentence regarding the need for social media policy:

In addition to Internet access and device use, with the growing popularity of social media in learning, districts also should consider policies and guidelines for their safe and productive use in schools (NETP, 2016, p. 74).

There was no direction given to schools on how to craft these policies, what elements of content they should contain, what process should be used to develop the policies, what plans need to be made for successful implementation of the policies, nor is it discussed when the policies would be reviewed or revised. The National Education Technology Plan discusses multiple ways that schools are using social media to increase learning opportunities.

Highlighted learning experiences from school districts across the country are included within the most recent NETP (2016), as exemplars or models of technology use. One school system highlighted by NETP (2016) discussed how they have enabled free-share content that uses personalized learning, media production, and online communication via social media to educate (p.73). Another district highlighted by the NETP (2016) describes how social media was used as an aggregator to showcase photos and videos of student's learning experiences (p.11).

The NETP provides examples of how social media is being used by school districts to build connections across geographic boundaries to collaborate and develop richer understandings of content by students (2016, p. 30). There are also stories of how districts can use social media as a tool to expand communication with mentors, peers, and colleagues (NETP, 2016, p.23). The plan (NETP, 2016) displays districts that have engaged parents in open communication via social media and input into how to use it (p. 41).

The 2016 National Education Technology Plan also provided an example of how one school district, Baltimore Public Schools, has addressed social media:

Policy- Reflect a systemic shift in language that emphasizes empowering students and staff over mandating rules, and including social media as one outlet for communication of information (p. 67).

Technology leadership is also discussed in the NETP (2016). “Leaders are responsible for developing and maintaining robust infrastructure that is up to date and open to appropriate web content and social media tools to enable collaborative learning” (p.42). However, prior to 2014 update, the E-Rate application was difficult and tedious and many rural districts didn't have leadership capacity to navigate the red tape, leading to clerical errors in filing applications for funding (Herold, 2016). This lack of technology leadership for access to previous federal programs emphasizes the need for technology leaders for future initiatives. The director of the U.S. Dept of Education Office of Educational Technology identifies leadership as the base for school success with technology (DeNisco, 2014).

This historical and current context of national policy helps to explain the level of Bridging and Buffering that exists within the content of policies across the state. The NETP (2016), and the existing funding structures established through E-rate (2014) create competing external demands for schools at a national level. The National Education Technology Plan encourages schools to engage in Bridging activities to encourage digital learning experiences, however, the current structure of funds available from the federal government to support those efforts has led many districts to Buffer new innovations because they cannot afford the costs of developing infrastructure to support them.

This reinforces the need to examine state and district policies within the context of national mandates, and to identify reasons why schools across Oklahoma and other

states are Buffering social media. “Because U.S. educational policy is not centralized as in other countries and regions, in many ways relies on the diffusion and adoption of policy and practice through state and individual institutions” (Roumell & Salajan, 2014, p. 393). Therefore, state level analysis of policy content contributes to the greater national understanding, and has been found to be more useful when providing lessons for American schools, than comparisons with higher scoring countries (Carnoy, Garcia, & Khavenson, 2015).

This creates a need for policy analysis at the state level that is stratified to reveal underlying issues of demographics. This emphasizes the importance of having information on policy at the state level.

If students with similar academic resources in some states make much larger gains than in other states, those larger gains are more likely to be related to specific state policies that could be applied elsewhere in the United States (Carnoy, Garcia, & Khavenson, 2015, p. 4).

Therefore, creating understanding of national mandates for technology use at the state level can help to build a stronger contextual background when and contributes to understanding of best practices for school district policy.

Leadership for Social Media Policies

In order for districts to navigate the competing external demands on schools regarding social media, more needs to be understood about the reasons why those in leadership positions are choosing to Bridge and Buffer in regards to policy addressing social media and schools. Is it a lack of knowledge regarding best practices for social media or is it disregard for the use of new technology innovations ((Sheppard & Brown, 2014)?), or is social media just a small part of a larger breakdown in technology integration into schools caused by other factors dependent upon technology leadership

(Byke, & Lowe-Wincentsen, 2014)? If lack of resources, as well as support and infrastructure for networked learning communities is a conscious choice made by school district leadership, then what are the motivations behind those choices? To analyze the findings of this study, additional theories of leadership helped shape understandings of best practices and create additional lens for analyzing practices by district leaders in reagrds to social media policy.

Transformational leadership theory has been found to encourage teachers to use digital learning materials through policy, professional development, and creation of self-efficacy, positive attitudes and social norm (Vermeulen, Acker, Kreijns, & van Buuren, 2015). This leadership, focused on vision and capacity building, allows leaders to help support practice between from policy into the classroom and beyond. Without guidance from leaders through policy, and then supporting actions, it is difficult to predict the success of social media policies in schools. “Although many leaders may be reluctant to discuss the negative aspects of policy choices, good policy making requires awareness of how decisions are likely to affect the full range of values at stake” (Bridgehouse, Ladd, Loeb, & Swift, 2015). This collaboration led by leadership that involves reflection, dialogue and discourse built around information creates knowledge that is relevant to the institution and can be helpful in school development and professional learning (Jackson, 2006).

To better understand the motivation of leadership when it comes to social media policies in school districts, self-determination theory can also be applied. In contrast to motivations from external contingencies influencing policy, self- determination theory can be used to work with stakeholders to identify barriers to change and goals for

empowering change from within (Ryan & Weinstein, 2009). This theory also argues that using control from an outside force to change behaviors or enhance outcomes is typically ineffective over the long term and yields many hidden costs” (Ryan & Weinstein, 2009, p. 225). Leadership within school districts must be aware of how policies effect motivation and overall outcomes of innovations such as social media in schools. Also linked with positive psychological and behavioral outcomes, and autonomous motivation is mindfulness, or awareness and interested attention to what is happening oneself (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Understanding of self-determination theory and motivation of stakeholders is an essential component for school district leaders seeking to bridge policy to action for social media in schools.

By school leaders taking action as consultants within a theory of change for social media use within a school district, the subsequent interventions will be greatly enhanced (Lewin, 1942). “The flow of a change or managed learning process, then, is one of continuous diagnosis as one is continuously intervening” (Schein, 1996). Leadership can support this policy development action through knowledge and understanding of these perspectives. “These leaders set the agenda, provide the conditions in which it could be pursued and monitor progress in adopting the continuous improvement perspective” (Park, Hironka, Carver, & Nordstrum, 2013, p. 23). By better understanding best practices for leadership theory, we can better interpret and analyze the findings of social media policies of K-12 schools in Oklahoma.

Bridging and Buffering Framework

After examining the content of policies of twenty-two school districts in Oklahoma, and examining the inputs from federal policy mandates, variations were

found to exist across the state. As policies were coded and operationalized, it became apparent that a metric for measuring the spectrum of policy content of social media was necessary for additional analysis (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). The Bridging and Buffering framework is used a means of analysis when interpreting and understanding statewide school policies (e.g., Ingle, Willis, & Fritz, 2014). Researchers have identified the Bridging and Buffering framework as a method for analyzing policy content (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Charnitski & Harvey, 2012; DiPaulo & Tschannen-Moran, 2012; Fennel & Alexander, 1987; Grimmet & Chinnery, 2009; Grimmet, Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010; Grunig, 2009; Hing & Hatch; 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kim, 2014; Kim, Bach, & Clelland, 2007; Mcdonald, 2012). According to organizational theorists, the Bridging strategies can build relationships with stakeholders as a way of connecting policy to action (Meznar & Nigh, 1995). In contrast, the buffering strategy is a set of messaging activities designed to buffer the organization from policy (Honig & Hatch, 2004). According to the analysis done in this study, many schools are engaging in both Bridging and Buffering strategies when addressing social media use within their district policies.

The Bridging and Buffering framework creates a continuum in which school district policy action can be broken down into smaller components that are easier to understand (Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010). As school districts exhibited greater evidence of buffering strategies, they moved further to the right of the continuum. As districts increased policy development efforts regarding social media policies and academic and communication benefits, the results were interpreted as moving further to the left on the continuum (Honig & Hatch, 2014). Bridging & Buffering researchers

Honig & Hatch define policy development, “Along the continuum between bridging and buffering, schools shape the “terms of compliance” a process that can include selective symbolic implementation” (p.4).

Table 4

Bridging and Buffering Continuum (*Adapted from Honig & Hatch, 2004*)

	Bridging ←————→ Buffering				
Policy Related Activity	<i>Blur lines between external environment and organization</i>	<i>Shape terms of compliance to advance organization goals and strategies</i>	<i>Add peripheral structures</i>	<i>Symbolically adopt external demands</i>	<i>Suspend ties to the environment</i>

One presumption regarding the existence of Buffering strategies in small district schools is that those schools consider the potential costs of use and misuse of social media to be greater than the district is prepared to shoulder (Mawhinney, 2013). One study estimates for economies of scale for K-12 school districts to provide school services at the lowest cost reaches minimum efficient scale at 3,500 students (Dodson and Garrett, 2004). More than half of the schools in this study would fall below this scale. Therefore, the districts within the study that did not have policies did not reach the threshold of school district size for minimum efficiency set by previous studies

(Faulks & Hicks, 2014). These districts were found to be buffering social media policy and the external demands involved with its use, and are therefore located on the far right of the continuum.

Studies have also found that organizational size and environment were associated with an organization's preference for adopting the buffering strategy (Kim, 2014). Research in Arkansas has found that small school corporations are less efficient in educating students than larger corporations (Faulk & Hicks, 2014), many times due to limited resources available to smaller schools (Dodson & Garrett, 2004). Other research has determined that larger school corporations may be able to provide specialized services –computer labs, technology instructors, and offer more curriculum options– at a lower average cost because they provide those services for more students (Duncombe and Yinger, 2007). Analysis of E-Rate funding since 1996, found that rural schools pay 2 1/2 times more than larger schools for internet access, and bandwidth availability is limited, leading many schools to limit access to non-educational technology because they can't afford to pay for its use (Herold, 2016).

This analysis has concluded that school district size can have a relationship to school district policies and actions in regards to social media policy content when analyzed using the Bridging and Buffering policy framework. I discovered during the course of this study that as school district size decreased the buffering strategies for social media policy content increased. Results in this study correspond to national research findings regarding the relationship between school district size and economies of scale for small school districts (Faulk & Hicks, 2014). Some schools did not address social media use in policies at all. They did not address Internet usage in policies

available on their school webpages. They did not even address any school policies on their websites; but they did have a link to their Facebook on the homepage. These schools can be interpreted as suspending ties to the environment and reinforces borders between schools and the outside world (Kim, 2014).

The U.S. Department of Education found that these schools engaging in Buffering practices do not participate in programs, policies, funding streams or networks (1998b), and can be known to ignore negative feedback (March, 1994a). These districts choosing to follow a Buffering policy strategy are taking away the opportunity for academic and communication benefits for social media under a premise that they create organizations outside the regulatory system (Suchman, 1995), and that communities can maintain local control of schools without the need for policy (Charnitski & Harvey, 2012). It can be interpreted from the Buffering school district policies that many districts are trying to pretend that social media does not exist in or around schools, and they believe that existing policies that were put in place prior to many of the current social media platforms being created still meet the current need.

Buffering districts within the unit of analysis were any school district that did not have a social media policy that was accessible online or was restrictive in the use of social media online to support academic or communication benefits for schools. This provides additional evidence of buffering in social media policy content. However, Buffering by K-12 schools to federal mandates is not a new strategy. An analysis of education reform since 1965 found, “The K-12 resistance was strong and deeply rooted in professional and bureaucratic ideas, values, organizational culture, and in personal beliefs of policymakers, politicians, and K-12 school officials” (Kirst, 2010, p. 10). This

emphasizes the need for understanding policy at many levels; and identification of the fragmentation of education policy at the national level, as well as the tension between state authority and localism at the district level (Kirst, 2010). By understanding how various school districts in Oklahoma are approaching social media policy in schools in relation to national policies such as E-rate (2014) and NETP (2016), we can contribute information to practice for policy makers in the future who are attempting to understand how to create policy that reflects school district goals for social media in school districts.

One explanation for this policy action is the current fiscal climate of Oklahoma schools that is causing many districts to scrutinize already tight bottom lines; eliminating many teaching and administrative positions that were essential functions of core technical activities of school. Many rural schools are struggling to keep doors open five days a week and are not filling vacant or creating new positions. These factors predicate the need for strong technology leadership among school communities and the sharing of resources available through online resources and federal revenue sources to support districts who are concerned about having adequate resources (Mawhinney, 2013). It is understood that many struggling school districts do not feel that they have the capital capacity to go it alone when facing the choice to Bridge or Buffer to external policy demands (Honig & Hatch, 2004). However, strategic leadership is needed most in times of limited resources (Schmidt & Miller, 2015).

Another way that school district policies analyzed Buffered social media policy was through symbolic adoption of external demands, but not engaging in any action (Honig & Hatch, 2004). This strategy of buffering is “the policy on the shelf” that is in

writing, but is not viewed and gathers dust because it is adopted but not used for external demands (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Westphal & Zajac, 1994). Upon review of the policies of many of these districts, social media use was listed as an unacceptable activity within the school day by teachers or students. Most listed consequences for inappropriate use on school networks, but failed to address any benefits from use or suggested activities.

The school district will cancel Internet privileges of any user who violates the provisions of this agreement. The school district will determine the duration of the loss of the student's or other user's privileges (Webbers Falls Public Schools, 2015).

Although these districts did discuss that acceptable use of the internet for education purposes, there was no discussion of value placed on social media usage, or how the district planned to achieve any goals through its use. "All students will be educated about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response" (Stillwater Public Schools, 2015). The policies seem to fall flat and do not provide guidance on how students will be educated in appropriate online behaviors, responsibility for providing these services and curriculum, and for what purposes social media could be used to improve teaching and learning. These topics were not addressed in any standard model for policy.

Many policies felt outdated in language in comparison to the educational opportunities currently available to schools on social media and other internet based programs. Symbolically there was a policy in place, however, policies created no map for use of these applications, and were broad to address all Internet use, but did not expound on social media use. Therefore, the policy was symbolic in its language and

followed a Buffering strategy (Honig & Hatch, 2004). This strategy is seen when schools align mission goals, and reported practice to the external demands in policy but not action (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Cuban & Tyack, 1995; Spillane & Zeuli, 1999). These districts were found to have policies in place that mentioned social media, but never addressed implementation, or any means of determining when the goal had been achieved, or schedule for review.

Often this is because of adoption of language from policy samples but did not engage in the activities of the external demands (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Elmore, 1996; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Spillane, 2000a; Spillane & Zeuli, 1999). “Students will be polite in all of their Internet activities” (Tipton Public Schools, 2016). This was an apparent trend when policy after policy studied were found to have similar phrases, structures, and content areas addressed that mirrored the sample policy published by the 2011 E-Rate Federal guidelines. This analysis found, “Be Polite” to be an ongoing content strand that appeared across a large number of district policies statewide demonstrating use of a standard form. However, the varying levels of what is polite and what is not, was not explored nor explained within the contents of many policies containing this strand I content.

It is the opinion of this research study that policies that are exact copies of a suggested standard form for social media policies are engaging in symbolic Buffering and are not fully implementing the policy development process. Why are districts doing this? Some may argue that the policy development cycle is time consuming and requires skilled leadership and participation. Others may say that the cost of technology infrastructures to support the use of social media in schools is the greatest factor in a

school district decision to Buffer against social media policy. Many schools do not engage in policy development to meet external demands simply because they do not have the resources to do so (Honig & Hatch, 2004).

One school district had a developed Internet use policy but under the policy development section of the policy manual it states, “The District’s policies and regulations shall be considered public records and shall be open for inspection at the District’s administration building” (Newcastle Public Schools, 2016). Developing a policy for Internet acceptable use, but then keeping that policy where users cannot access it is a clear example of Buffering the external environment. However, with the growth of technology innovations, and the need for districts to be strategic with resources, this buffering strategy may not last forever. The widespread use of social media by students, teachers and parents outside of schools creates a sense of urgency for schools to understand the need for policies to address social media (Charnitski & Harvey, 2012). A buffering strategy may no longer be effective based on these updated external demands.

This study has confirmed previous research, which explains why school districts Buffer against policies, and suspend ties to the environment when it comes to policies that address social media use (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014). Many school district policies attempted to demonstrate that existing school arrangements meet or exceed environmental demands (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Elmore, 1996; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These districts had Internet use policies dating back to 2008 or earlier, and often had outdated terminology such as “Myspace”, and “chatroom” within content. Others, attempted to address online behaviors as part of the overall code of conduct for

students, but did not address areas in which there are specific challenges and opportunities available from social media use. Neither of these methods appeared in step with the policy development method introduced, and were both analyzed to be Buffering strategies of policy leadership.

Many times district policies that were addressing social media were interpreted and understood to use peripheral structures to interact with policy systems and to carry out particular environmental demands and determine the level to which the rest of the organization engages with social media (Honig & Hatch, 2004). In districts that were found to be buffering, this was seen as permission to use social media being activity dependent and tied to special permission from a librarian, principal, technology director, communications department or even the school board in one district. “All online instruction must be approved and under the supervision of the Board of Education” (Lindsay Public Schools, 2015). This demonstrates buffering to policy (Honig & Hatch, 2004).

To assume that every teacher is going to bring each technology integrated lesson plan before the Board of Education directly buffers teachers from implementing the innovation of teaching with social media into curriculum. This type of response in policy to buffer an action is a strategy for organization interaction with policy. A buffering policy against social media enables acquiescence to superiors without derailing local goals (Burns, 1980), and demonstrates compliance (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988).

By locating the gatekeeper of social media policy in a position or specified duty, schools can engage in both Buffering and Bridging strategies. Creation of new positions

related to policy and leadership in research provides opportunities and challenges in the form of committees (Burns, 1980) and new offices (Edeleman, 1992; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Westphal & Zajac, 1994) to address policy demands for organizations. However, it is the assumption of this researcher that in the school districts, studied new positions were not created, but instead additional responsibilities with social media were assigned to a current staff member. “The Superintendent shall designate those staff persons who have management or administration access to the district’s social media page” (Stillwater Public Schools, 2015).

School districts that are Bridging with the creation of peripheral structures do so in order to strategically plan, and start a discussion in the policy development process, and hope to create pathways for bridging with academic and communication benefits (Honig & Hatch, 2014). However, if these groups serve a primary function of censorship and limiting of potential learning opportunities, then a Buffering strategy is seen. If these positions are used to locate resources, train teachers and users, and extend learning via social media policy to stakeholders in the community, then Bridging policy to action is occurring (Westphal Zajac, 1994).

Capacity needed for Bridging through the addition of peripheral structures include large school district size, presence of personnel or human resources department, and unionization (Edelman, 1992; Westphal & Zajac, 1994). Technology leadership in schools for social media policy should focus on instructional leadership and innovations that develop present staff members within professional learning communities (Elmore, 1996). However, most school policies sampled in this study are not presently creating

that scaffolding within the content of policy for social media and continue to use Buffering strategies.

Policies identified as bridging were understood to be shaping terms of compliance to advance organization goals and strategies based on organizational understandings (Lipsky, 1980; Manning, 1982; Weick, 1995). School district policies that attempted to engage parents and community members in the conversation about social media in schools were interpreted to be Bridging policy to action within environmental expectations to advance goals (Honig & Hatch, 2014). This compliance and relationship of policy to action also connects external policymakers and schools through communication about the ways in which districts will comply with regulations and expectations (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). By creating a sense of understanding about the extents of policy, these districts engage patrons and create avenues for communication and demonstrate Bridging strategies through shaping terms of compliance.

Elgin Schools welcomes the involvement of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram users to assist in this process and, to that end, encourages anyone with an interest in the Elgin Public Schools or its students to "like" or "follow" our pages. Elgin Schools Social Media page(s) users have the discretion to "like" and "unlike" or "follow" and "unfollow" the page(s) as many times or as often as they wish (Elgin Public Schools, 2015).

Districts that shaped social media policies to represent the needs of the independent district were found to be proactive and taking steps to "act first" with strategic planning, rather than wait for a policy crisis to take policy action (Edelman, 1992; Westphal & Zajac, 1994). These policies demonstrated that technology leaders need to understand the complexities of social media, and must train teachers, students, and parents about the changes in the environment of education and social media

(Bernhardt, 2014). Ensuring that people at all levels of the organization understand how the environment is changing is necessary for schools to shape terms of compliance for policy (Gladstein & Caldwell, 1985; Huber, 1991a; Kanter, 1988; Levitt & March, 1988). Through awareness and strategic planning, Bridging district policies created understandings for how to achieve desired technology goals through professional development, and digital citizenship curriculums for students and parents (Grimmett & Chinnery, 2009). Seen as preemptive in minimizing possible issues or conflicts in advance, this Bridging strategy is more likely to be associated with organizational effectiveness (Kim, 2014).

Bridging district policy content also demonstrated school leadership that identified social media resources as a way to extend the school environment outside of the brick and mortar classroom by involving parent and community members in social media policies (Honig & Hatch, 2004). Therefore, these school policies have bridged social media policy into those existing policies and often reference other related policies; therefore bridging access to additional information and policy awareness (Kim, 2014). By using a Bridging strategy for the title and location of social media policies, these school districts ensured access and accountability for users of school networks. Audience of policy content is also an essential component of policy (Schreier, 2012). Through this leadership style of policy-making, Bridging policy leaders create an environment from where parents and students are in an ideal model of education (Elmore, 1996). Social media policies for Bridging districts created a framework where all members have the opportunity to speak up in the conversation, and where resources are available without constraints of classroom walls and tardy bells. By creating this

proximity to the public sphere, administrators create linkages between the school and the community (Edelman, 1992; Westphal & Zajac, 1994).

Strategic planning is an essential first step in the development of a results-based accountability system, and is defined as the process of addressing the following questions: Where are we? What do we have to work with? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? (Schilder, 1999). Leaders who have engaged school districts in conversations about missions, goals and strategic visions for technology use created pathways for social media and other innovations to become a part of the work of schools, and engage parents and community members in a partnership with schools (Hodgson, 2012).

Schools asking parents to set the standards of behavior, and setting parameters for parent participation regarding strategic planning for schools creates a potential learning environment that continues when students leave the classroom via social media use. “Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources” (Cimmaron Schools, 2012). By creating a hierarchy where parents have responsibility for student understanding of social media policy, organizational members (parents) create the understandings of the organization in relation to social media use inside and outside of the classroom. This wide range of audience members addressed demonstrates the Bridging strategy for policy development (Meznar & Nigh, 1995). The goals of a bridging strategy for policy are to solve problems between an organization and its stakeholders through proactive communication, and the policy development process (Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010).

This strategy results in a stronger organization, and can make schools more sustainable, ethical, authentic, and less susceptible to issues and crisis (Kim, 2014). This blurring of lines between the external environment and organization was apparent in school district social media policies that strengthened the school family relationship through social media use (Honig & Hatch, 2004). This finding supports previous research that encourages policy makers to increase capacity for involvement of external regulators and others in making decisions for the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Selznick, 1949), as well as establishing professional norms and affiliation (Manning, 1982). Management emphasizing improved business performances or making policies relevant to stakeholders in order to achieve a positive performance reputation is an example of bridging to policy needs (Kim, Bach, & Clelland, 2007).

Conclusions

Bridging and Buffering strategies were both seen in Oklahoma school district social media policies examined for K-12 schools. However, it is the motivation behind the choice to Bridge or Buffer that is the result that needs to be addressed by further research. School district size in relation to resources may be an external influence on the capacity of schools to enact policies that engage in the full development cycle. The reality of the changing context of schools in Oklahoma creates a paradigm where schools that are Buffering social media in order to maintain a sense of local control may find themselves falling behind the curve on innovations and leadership for technology that Bridging schools may have opportunities for.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Policy work is a very real part of education leadership in the modern school system (Schilder, 1997). Leaders must engage in this arduous and unpredictable task, being proactive and responsive to issues in a timely manner (Shear, 2015). School districts must try to predict the future and create policies to address what might be happening in classrooms of the future based on data and experiences from what has already happened in the past (Sheppard & Brown, 2014). School leaders might look to other districts for guidance, but ultimately, the local context of the school community is best suited to guide district policy development (Schrum & Levin, 2013). Because of the constant changes in the context of schools, the policy development process provides opportunities for review and revision as situations change and new trends emerge (Lenartz, 2012). By understanding the content of social media policy for schools districts in Oklahoma, we are better able to discuss required elements, processes for review with relevant stakeholders and support for the need for implementation with scheduled review and monitoring in place (Hodgson, 2012).

This study examined the content of social media policies of twenty-two school districts in Oklahoma. However, this sample can draw larger conclusions that are relevant to many school districts who want guidance in policy content and policy development for social media in K-12 schools.

Research Question

What can be interpreted and understood from the content of current social media policies in K-12 school districts across Oklahoma?

Discussion

There are a number of issues that the findings of this study bring to light that should raise questions for those in and around schools in Oklahoma when discussing social media policies. Although there were elements of social media policy content that could be highlighted from many individual school districts as exemplars, there were also obvious trends that demonstrated a need for further study and analysis of the factors that are influencing social media policy development for K-12 schools in Oklahoma. Factors of scale, accessibility, policy models, audience, information available, and policy intent are all areas where further discussion is warranted.

Ultimately, if resources are the drive behind Buffering policies, then a change to Bridging methods may provide the most efficient fiscal solution in order to engage in the process of strategically planning for technology integration (Montalvo, 2012). However, if schools are choosing Buffering in the hopes that social media and the Internet can maintain as separate from the core technical activities of school, then those leaders are not planning for the future or the student of today (Myers, 2014). District officials have an important role to play in this process by adhering to state and federal regulations, while also modifying, extending, and shaping the specifics of the policy to meet local goals and standards” (Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010). Technology leadership and the selection of an appropriate policy strategy for new technology innovations, like social media, is a relevant need for districts preparing for the future

and technology integration (O'Donovan, 2012). However, it is also important to understand why social media is not being addressed in policies at the state or federal level for schools.

With a limited number of policies to examine and even fewer research studies into K-12 social media policies, there is not an established body of knowledge in this area yet. What emerged from the content analysis of policies from Oklahoma school districts was an understanding that this is a topic that is not being discussed as part of the national vision for technology use in schools. Why not? Academic benefits have been identified from social media use (Journell, Ayers, & Beeson, 2014). Communications benefits have been found to exist when schools create networks with parents and the community (Altman & Meis, 2012). Studies of schools that faced challenges because of social media misuse recommend having a policy for use in schools (Ahn, Bivona, & DiScala, 2011). However, evidence of Buffering social media policy was still found to exist in Oklahoma school districts for a variety of possible reasons.

Factors of Scale

The most recently developed policies for social media in schools were found in the larger school districts in Oklahoma. These policies were updated within the last three years and were the policies that had the most locally independent content. Those districts that had a clear voice and set of values expressed in the content of their social media policies provided clear expectations of how the school district expected social media to be used or not used. These locally designed policies from larger school districts continued to address required elements of content, but also communicated a

framework for values and behaviors. These policies addressed the changing context of digital learning in schools and these districts are creating policies that have a strategy to Bridge the mandates of policy to the long-range strategic plans that the district foresees for emerging technologies. Findings from the study tell us that the policy development processes in larger school districts in Oklahoma are ongoing and routine, and involve multiple perspectives from stakeholders.

Economy of scale becomes a factor for discussion when looking at how school district size affected social media policy content in this study. This is supported by previous research that says that larger school districts have more economic efficiency due to size and have more resources available to complete initiatives (Robertson, 2007; Slate & Jones, 2005). Of the larger school districts in Oklahoma sampled, one hundred percent had updated, and locally independent content in social media policy. Further discussion of the differences in policy content from factors of scale will be discussed in recommendations for future study.

The lack of available policies online for the high percentage of small school districts in the state is an important finding. These findings are in line with previous research that found one quarter of institutions of higher education have social media policies available online (Pomerantz, Hank, Sugimoto, 2015). The strategy of ignoring social media in schools is no longer acceptable as Twitterstorms and Facebook drama are happening in communities across the state. Compounded by the fact that these districts with no policies in place all have strong ties to social media on their websites creates a paradox of integration minus supporting policy.

The number of districts in the study that have chosen to not provide parents, students, and staff their policy regarding social media use in schools online is an important finding from this study. It supports previous research that found that school leaders often ignore research-based suggestions for technology innovation for more traditional methodologies (Sheppard & Brown, 2014). Many may argue that smaller schools do not have the resources to implement large-scale policy processes, but social media use is occurring in those communities by those involved in schools.

Accessibility

Half of the schools sampled had no Internet use or social media policy publicly available online. Amidst financial struggles in the state and national context, this study tells us that the policies of many districts are not addressing strategic plans for teaching and learning resources available through social media. Although the policies examined may address management functions of the school districts, findings highlight the level to which content of policies create support for education outcomes. These conclusions are based on research in previous studies that emphasized the widespread use of social media by those related to schools (Rideout, 2015; Ribble, & Miller, 2013; Perrin, 2015; Journell, Ayers & Beeson, 2014), and research into the need for all organizations to manage their social media image and activity (Myers, 2014; Montalvo, 2011; Kaplan, 2010; Wankel, 2009; Davis, Deil-Amon, Rios-Aguilar & Canche, 2015).

Despite this widespread use and need for policy, many districts still chose a buffering strategy for social media policy. Buffering strategies are one way that school leaders attempt to keep their school independent from the environment. “Leaders who prefer this strategy reduce environmental influence as much as possible to protect the

core tasks of teaching and learning” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005). What was not revealed by this study was why those district leaders chose this strategy or to symbolically engage in the development process through policy models.

Findings from policies in the study with standardized content read verbatim to recommendations found in historical context, and addressed only the required elements for federal mandates and funding. The policies are reactive in nature in addressing inappropriate content and buffering negative behaviors online. However, strategic planning for use of social media, and digital citizenship curriculum’s for staff and students are often not addressed in policy templates because they are dependent on local input and development.

These suggested samples contain the required elements to ensure that the school district has met the mandated obligations of laws, mandates, or funding stipulations. However, these policies developed from this strategy of buffering do not fully engage in the policy development process. Therefore, they may not address actions needed to create long-range plans and strategic goals for social media use in schools due to being static in nature. These findings support previous research that buffering strategies towards technology through “one size fits all policies” are inappropriate for schools trying to improve academic outcomes (Pollock, 2013).

Implementing a standardized policy model is a temporary solution, but may disregard future needs involving technology that school leaders are not planning for in policy. The current content of social media policy in Oklahoma indicates that many school leaders have not been engaging in the policy development process for social media use in schools, and are in need of an update to current policies that represent

specific local needs. This input from stakeholders can be gained through application of the policy development process. The importance of understanding local culture when implementing technology into schools has been studied (Berrett, Murphy, & Sullivan, 2012; Byke, & Lowe-Wincentsen, 2014). Social media, and any future technology innovations must involve strong technology leadership for successful implementation.

Findings showed that many school leaders in Oklahoma are creating policy content that is static and meets requirements of mandates but essentially serves no action or strategic planning purposes for social media use in the local school district of today. Written to address the culture of a 2011 Myspace world, many of the existing Oklahoma social media policies studied may not be fully relevant to the needs of education today or in the future. Previous research has found that some schools have shown ambivalence or resistance to implementation of social media technologies in school districts (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014), and that often districts do not implement social media policies because they recognize benefits, but do not feel they have adequate resources (Mawhinney, 2013).

However, school leaders must frequently engage in scheduled review of policy content to ensure it is relevant to the needs of the organization. Bridging to external demands in relation to current laws is an important issue for school leaders engaging in strategic planning and the policy development process for social media use. The bridging framework for policy development aligns behaviors of corporations with the key stakeholder needs or issues (Grunig, 2009). Ensuring that social media users engage in legal and safe online activities when using social media networks is a key component

of complying with current laws and creating policies that improve schools abilities to use emerging technologies as they develop.

The content of policies that use standardized rhetoric from example forms such as, “be polite” demonstrate findings in previous research that many school district leaders are not engaging in the policy development process and are simply complying with mandates to have a policy. Amid a Twitterstorm of bad information, or an Instagram war or Facebook drama involving students, teachers or parents; “be polite” may not be able to bridge the gap between policy and action, and school leaders will eventually need to address the issue in policy. This analysis is supported by previous research on the need for schools to clarify digital citizenship expectations through development of technology integrated curriculum and policy (Hollandsworth, Dowdy & Donovan, 2011). Buffering is not an effective strategy. “In corporate communication practice, the buffering function is found in impression management, integrated marketing communication, and concepts of reputation management (Grünig, 2009). School district’s may strategically choose the buffering strategy for policy issues dealing with representation of the school district to reduce liability, but also to maintain a positive public relations and minimize damages to the district reputation by possible misuse of social media networks.

However, proactive leaders in education are creating policies today that can buffer those negative outcomes, while still bridging pathways to new and promising learning opportunities from social media technologies by engaging in meaningful discussions regarding social media policy content. Previous research has identified the need to link social media use to existing school district policies (Lenartz, 2012; South,

2016). By engaging in a Bridging strategy, policy can more effectively advance the needs of all stakeholders in a district.

Audience

An additional area of discussion from the findings of this study is the need to address social media policy to a wider audience. Teachers, community leaders, and families beyond school walls and windows use social media platforms. Policies that only address social media use by students neglect the professional development needs of teachers, as well as the need to communicate with parents and those in the community. If teachers and parents are to collaborate in supporting relevant student use, then they too must have information on how to support intended use. Teachers need guidance from school districts on the pedagogy and curriculum for social media use that integrate social media use into teaching and learning. Policies should create pathways for strategic use to meet intended education outcomes. Social media will not support learning if students and teachers do not know how to best use it for educational outcomes.

Findings of the study emphasize previous research that teachers need guidance in implementing a digital learning curriculum that teaches students responsible use and the implications of their social media profile. Schools expect educators to teach these lessons as part of learning for the future, yet most policies only addressed teachers from a human resource perspective. Many of the policies examined in this study did not provide guidance for teachers on the how social media can or should be used to promote learning. These findings support previous research that curriculum development for

social media needs to be addressed in content of policy for social media in schools (Norris, Nussbaum, Sharples, So, Soloway, & Yu 2014; Davis, 2014).

There was also a lack of discussion in many policies of how social media can bridge communication and resources between schools and families. Parents as social media users in schools policies were addressed only with restrictions on appropriate tone and content, or with the responsibility of monitoring student use. However, parent and school partnerships and communications were not apparent in most social media policy content examined. If schools want to engage parents in the policy development process, then parents can become aware of the benefits of social media use and have a voice in the strategic plans of the districts for the future. Without this involvement, school district policies for social media use fall short in activating potential benefits for schools, and fail to address the needs of users outside of the school building. The large number of policies in this study that did not address the adult needs from social media use in schools is an area of findings that supports previous research into the need for all stakeholders to be addressed in social media policy (Larkin, 2015; Drouin, O'Conner, Schmidt, & Miller, 2015).

Information

The lack of information available to school leaders on best practices for social media policies in K-12 schools is highlighted by the limited body of knowledge available on this topic in research. Technology progression is time sensitive and relevant to the conversation of education research, yet examination of this topic has only begun. Without research into policies for social media use at the elementary and secondary level of education then as educators, we cannot learn how to improve upon

practice. Government agencies, universities, hospitals, and CEO's are all asking policy analysts for research into social media, but social media in K-12 schools is currently not part of the conversation for policy analysts. How can we provide best practices for developing policies and strategic plans for social media use in schools if there is no research based evidence to support the best ways to do that?

How can we understand the policy development process that schools undergo to create policies that bridge social media use to learning outcomes if everyone is just copying the same standard model? School leaders will soon be forced to answer questions, but are in need of a greater body of knowledge to turn to in order to find best practices. This study is a place to start, but there are many more questions that still need to be answered.

Policy Intent

At the time of this study, several new national initiatives promote Bridging strategies for policy development in the area of social media use in school districts. In December 2015, Congress authorized the Every Student Succeeds Act (PL No 114-95), which includes the Effective Use of Technology (Title IVA). School districts that have previously attempted to buffer their institutions from the advances in digital learning opportunities must begin the process now of adapting and implementing technology leadership for the future in a way that fits with local values and plans for social media technology in schools. If schools do not engage in the policy development process for social media, then the benefits of social media resources and desired outcomes may not be realized.

To follow a Buffering strategy and simply and say that social media will not be used in schools may no longer be an acceptable policy in the digital age. School leaders must consider the potential benefits of social media use by those in and around schools. Findings demonstrate that district leaders in schools who are bridging social media policy to action know the importance of building relationships with parents and improving communication throughout school networks and are choosing to do this through social media policy as part of the strategic planning process. These conclusions are supported through previous research that schools must engage in the policy review process regularly (Woodley and Silvestri, 2014).

In order to maximize benefits in the areas of academics and communication, schools must bridge policy to action in ways that create teaching and learning opportunities via social media. However, these resources must be addressed through the policy development process to ensure outcomes from implementation as intended (Hodgson, 2012). Policies written from the Bridging strategy engage in all stages of the policy development process, including input from all stakeholders, and regular monitoring and revision of policies that are needed (Grunig, 2009). This understanding challenges school leaders to participate in the remaining stages of the policy development workflow that are not addressed within the scope of this study.

This study contributes to information gathering and analysis, by reviewing relevant regulations and mandates, as well as review of current best practices. The next step in the process is for school leaders to decide which elements of identified content of social media policies are most important to their district and create draft policy for social media use in schools that best aligns with district goals and strategic plans. Once

that policy has been created, it should be reviewed with relevant stakeholders and implemented with scheduled monitoring and reviews in place. This process emphasizes the need for an understanding of policy content, but also intentions for use, as well as understanding of available resources and strategic planning for their use (Hodgson, 2012).

Schools facing shrinking budgets and increased demands for additional resources to support schools must calculate the academic benefits of infinite online resources available via social media. Monetary consideration must also be given to the potential losses for a school district without effective policies that is involved in social media use gone wrong for students, staff or the community. In order to maximize benefits and minimize losses, school leaders must engage in new policy development for social media. “Board members and senior leaders should be interested in developing a strategic plan if they don’t want to be seen as reactive or crisis-prone in responding to challenges or issues” (Ewy, 2009, p.2). This attention to security is addressed within national standards for school leaders (ELCC 3.3). Distributed leadership is needed by districts during strategic planning for social media policy (ELCC 3.4). Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great: Social Sectors* describes the strategic planning team as Level 5 Leadership. These are the people who have to make tough decisions, and are ambitious for the cause (Collins, 2005). These leaders must be willing to ask tough questions, and be prepared for the answers with solutions for how schools can navigate the demands of social media.

Resources are available for school leaders who are ready to bridge the gap between current technology policies identified in this study. In response to President

Obama's ConnectEd Initiative (2013), many school district superintendents across the country are signing the Future Ready pledge. This program provides training and access to resources for schools. Districts pledging to bridge policy to action through strategic planning have access to resources for technology leadership in K-12 schools. This study demonstrates that many school districts in Oklahoma are in need of support for the policy development process for social media as an important component of bridging that culture of digital learning.

Policy development experts have also argued that this is a more sophisticated approach to social media to address policy as part of institutional culture; bridging to already established expectations of practice (Kim, 2014). School leaders are challenged to provide vision and monitoring for the creation of a culture of digital learning citizenship in schools. Educators, students and community members need to be prepared to be responsible representatives of the school district through knowledge of expectations of digital citizenship, and training and professional development on the best practices for implementing online learning networks for education purposes.

Responsible use plans that include digital citizenship curriculum for social media are key components in educating those in and around schools on the best ways to apply these resources for the betterment of schools when following a Bridging rather than a Buffering strategy. One expert on Internet law explained, "Such policies may be sufficiently flexible to withstand future developments in technology and the endless creativity of its misusers" (McDonald, 2012, p.5).

If school leaders want social media policy to withstand future challenges and reap learning benefits, then local strategic goals and input should be considered when

creating policies demonstrating the need for technology leadership. And establishing a greater culture of digital citizenship by staff, students, and community members.

Recommendations for Future Studies

In addition to this study, work is needed to help school district leaders identify best practices for social media policy content. This study examined the current content of social media policies in Oklahoma using the Bridging and Buffering framework, but did not make any analysis of what school districts had content elements that were superior to others. This study researched guidelines and recommendations for best practices in social media policies as set out by marketing experts, businesses, and government agencies; but limited information was available on best practices for social media policies in school districts. Are there particular policy elements that bridge learning activities more than others do? Are there distinct policy elements that are best practices for K-12 schools who are addressing specific problems? The required elements of school district social media policy have yet to be identified and are needed in future research.

Studies are also needed to follow the full policy development process for school district social media policies; including implementation and the continuous improvement cycle. How do stakeholders respond to the social media policy development process? How do teachers, students, staff, and the community agree interpret the elements of policy regarding social media that a district proposes? Once approved by the school board, how often should school districts schedule reviews and monitoring? How will the social media policies of today evolve and change over the next decade in schools? These are all questions in need of further study.

Finally, additional quantitative and qualitative analysis is needed into how the demographics of different school districts influence policy development decisions, and technology infrastructure advancements. School district size was a clear factor in the schools with updated policy content. Why is this? Is it due to resources available to districts due to economy of scale, or advancement of other technology driven initiatives outside of social media, or is it other factors that currently exist in the context of the larger school districts. How can smaller districts with limited resources, utilize social media policy as a part of a larger system of strategic planning and policy development for future expansion of digital resources?

National data tells us that 72 percent of all regular school districts in the United States had fewer than 2,500 students” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The distribution of the largest school districts in the United States can be seen in Figure3. The percentage of smaller school districts in the United States closely matches the challenges that small school districts across the country face when attempting the bridge policies to actions in regards to social media policy development and long-range technology planning for schools.



Figure 4: The 100 largest school districts in the United States and jurisdictions: School year 2008–09

Oklahoma contains very few large school districts, and so questions answered in future studies analyzing motivations behind buffering strategies to policy development in regards to school district size could inform a larger body of knowledge. Additional qualitative studies into how school district size influences social media policy decisions are also needed to understand how resources from school size influence social networks.

Conclusion

How to use social media in schools should be part of a larger curriculum that addresses digital learning technologies that exist today and those that will emerge in the future. Policies for social media can be the start of that conversation at the local level, and can bridge positive communication and academic benefits, while buffering negative outcomes by defining expectations for appropriate content and tone. By using locally developed content in social media, leaders can ensure that the policies bridge with the

strategic plans and goals of the school district, and still meet federal requirements for safety of students. These policies can be reviewed and monitored as part of the policy development process so as technologies change; the school district policies continue to represent the current needs of the district.

This study contributes to the understanding of best practices in developing school policy, as well as frameworks for future analysis of policy. School district leaders can benefit from the contributions of this study, because it provided baseline, qualitative data regarding the current state of social media policies for school districts in Oklahoma. The need for social media policy in schools has been identified as a best practice for school administrators (Larkin, 2015). With a better understanding of how to maximize the benefits of social media, school leaders will be able to understand the ways to develop policies that bridge the academic, communication, and social benefits of social media; as well as buffering schools from harm.

This study has examined the content of current social media policies for K-12 schools in the state of Oklahoma and has identified trends in current policies across the state, as well as evidence of Bridging and Buffering strategies towards social media policy development by districts. There is very little research available on this specific topic. Therefore, this study provides beginning steps in answering questions and providing guidance to school districts in developing future policies.

Due to the prevalence of social media in today's society, and ultimately within schools, this knowledge will allow school communities to address benefits and challenges created by social media. As members of a pluralistic society, schools today need to provide open access to information, as well as address the diverse needs of the

varying communities of influence. Social media has been found to transcend the barriers of the many interest groups and has potential benefits for schools if structured effectively by school leadership. This need for ethical and moral decision making in schools, makes this a beneficial contribution of knowledge to provide to the field.

Content analysis of the current state of social media policies helps schools to navigate a pathway where the benefits of technology enhance and promote learning in schools, while at the same time buffering stakeholders from the dangers and risks to social capital that can occur when social media use goes wrong. Therefore, this study creates a place for school leaders to begin when they are attempting to create policy to support the goals and outcomes desired for using social media technology within their school systems. This content analysis of social media policies in K-12 school districts in Oklahoma provides a snapshot that can serve as a small piece of the policy development process.

REFERENCES

- Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S. W. (2000). Social capital: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Knowledge and social capital: Foundations and applications*, 2000, 89–115.
- Ahn, J., Bivona, L. K., & DiScala, J. (2011). Social media access in K-12 schools: Intractable policy controversies in an evolving world. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 48(1), 1 – 10.
- Ahrenfelt, J. (2013). Immersive learning in the history classroom: How social media can help meet the expectations of a new generation of learners. In T. Haydn (Ed.), *Using new technologies to enhance teaching and learning in history* (pp. 152–161). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Alba, J. W., Lynch, J., Weitz, B., Janiszewski, C., Lutz, R., & Sawyer, A. (1997). Interactive home shopping: Consumer, retailer, and manufacturer incentives to participate in electronic marketplaces. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(3), 38 – 53.
- Aldrich, H. E., & Herker, D. (1977). Boundary spanning roles and organizational structure. *Academy of Management Review*, 2(2), 217 – 230.
- Altman, M., & Meis, A. (2013). Kinolved: Utilizing technology to communicate, evaluate, and advocate for improved attendance and family and community engagement. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 41(4), 319-332.
- American Medical Association Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs. 2011. Opinion 9.124: Professionalism in the use of social media. Code of Medical Ethics, 2012–2013. Chicago: American Medical Association.
- Amy Hestir Student Protection Act, 2011 Mo. Laws 1162, repealed by Act of Oct. 21, 2011
- Anderson, J. Q., & Rainie, L. (2010). Millennials will make online sharing in networks a lifelong habit. *Pew Research*. Retrieved from *Pewinternet.org website: <http://pewresearch.org/millennials>*.
- Anderson-Levitt, K. (2003). *Local meanings, global schooling*. New York, NY: Palgrave McMillan.
- Armstrong, J., & Franklin, T. (2008). A review of current and developing international practice in the use of social networking (Web 2.0) in higher education.
- Ashley, H. (2014). Don't Get Trapped by Social Media. *Virginia Journal of Education*, 106(4), 8 – 12.

- Bardach, E. (2000). *A practical guide for policy analysis: the eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. New York: Chatham House Publishers.
- Barlow M., & Thomas D. B. (2011). *The executive's guide to enterprise social media strategy: How social networks are radically transforming your business* (1st ed.). Hoboken, N.J: Wiley.
- Byke, S., & Lowe-Wincentsen, D. (2014). *A leadership primer for new librarians: tools for helping today's early-career librarians become tomorrow's library leaders*. Elsevier.
- Bell v. Itawamba County School Board* (2011)
- Bernhardt, J. M. (2014). A social media primer for professionals: Digital dos and don'ts. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15(2), 168 – 172.
- Berrett, B., Murphy, J., & Sullivan, J. (2012). Administrator insights and reflection: technology integration in schools. *The Qualitative Report* 17(1), 200 – 221.
- Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M. (2010). Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies. *Government Information Quarterly* 27(3), 264 – 271.
- Bixler, A., Brown, D., Day, B., Hannaford, D.B., Shellenberger, D.K., & Parks, J. (2015, May 22). *Profiles 2014 State Report*. Retrieved February, 18, 2016, from Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program website: <http://www.schoolreportcard.org/state-report>
- Blanchard O. (2011). *Social media ROI: Managing and measuring social media efforts in your organization* (1st ed.). Indianapolis, Ind: Que Publishing.
- Bolton, R.N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Migchels, N., Kabadayi, S., Gruber, T., Loureiro, Y.K. and Solnet, D. (2013), “*Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: a review and research agenda*”, *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 245-267.
- Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams, J.M. (2008). *The craft of research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Boyd D. Taken Out of Context: American Teen Sociality in Networked Publics. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network; 2008 Dec. Report No.: ID 1344756. Available: <http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1344756>.
- Boudreaux C.. (2011). *Social Media Policies*. In Wollan, R., Smith, N., & Zhou, C. (1st edition) *The Social Media Management Handbook*: pp.274–285. Hoboken, N.J: Wiley

- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210 – 230.
- Brenner, J., & Smith, A. (2013). “72% of Online Adults are Social Networking Site Users.” Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/socialnetworking-sites.aspx>.
- Brito, M. (2011). *Smart business, social business: A playbook for social media in your Organization* (1st ed.). Indianapolis, Ind: Que Publishing.
- Brown, N., & Farrell, J. (2010). Confessions of two technophobes: A self-study of two teacher educators’ efforts to understand and develop a participatory culture within a technological environment. *The Eighth International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices*.
- Budd, R. W., Thorp, R. K., & Donohew, L. (1967). *Content analysis of communications*. New York: Macmillan.
- Burns, L. R. (1980). The Chicago School and the study of organization environment relations. *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*, 16, 342 – 358.
- Cain, J. (2008). Online social networking issues within academia and pharmacy education. *American journal of pharmaceutical education*, 72(1), 1-7.
- Carnoy, M., Garcia, M., & Khavenson, T. (2015). Bringing it back home: Why state comparisons are more useful than international comparisons for improving U.S. education policy. *Economic Policy Institute*.
- Carpenter, J. P., & Krutka, D. G. (2014). How and why educators use Twitter: A survey of the field. *Journal of research on technology in education*, 46(4), 414-434.
- Cavanagh, S. (1997). Content analysis: concepts, methods and applications. *Nurse Researcher*, 4(3), 5 – 16.
- Chapman, A., & Russell, R. (2009). Shared Infra-structure Services Landscape Study: A survey of the use of Web 2.0 tools and services in the (UK HE sector). Retrieved from <http://opus.bath.ac.uk/17809/>.
- Charnitski, C. & Harvey, F. (2012). Acceptable Use Policies in Schools: An Initial Study. In P. Resta (Ed.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2012* (pp. 4808-4813). Chesapeake, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).
- “Children’s Internet Protection Act.” Federal Communications Commission, 05 May 2011. Web. 03 Apr. 2016

- Collis, B., & Moonen, J. (2008). Web 2.0 tools and processes in higher education: Quality perspectives. *Educational Media International*, 45(2), 93 – 106.
- Collins, J. C. (2005). *Good to great and the social sectors* (p. 19). Harper Audio.
- Conole, G., & Culver, J. (2009). Cloudworks: Social networking for learning design. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 25(5), 679-692.
- “ConnectED.” *The White House*. The White House, June 2013. Web. 03 Apr. 2016.
- Creswell, John W. "Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five designs." (1998): 1 – 15.
- Cuban, L., & Tyack, D. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cummings, William K. 1999. The Institutions of Education: Compare, Compare, Compare! *Comparative Education Review* 43 (November): 413–37.
- Daly, A. J., Nienke, M., Bolivar, J. M., & Burke, P. (2010). Relationships in reform: The role of teachers’ social networks. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 48(3), 359 – 391.
- Davis, C. H. F., Deil-Amen, R., Rios-Aguilar, C. & González Canché, M. S. (2012). *Social media and higher education: A literature review and research directions*. Tucson, AZ and Claremont, CA: University of Arizona Press and Claremont Graduate University Press.
- Davis, C. H. F., Deil-Amen, R., Rios-Aguilar, C., & González Canché, M. S. (2015). Social media, higher education, and community colleges: A research synthesis and implications for the study of two-year institutions. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(5), 409 – 422.
- Davis, M. (2014). Teachers found to avoid social media. *Education Week*
- DeNisco, A. (2014, July). Navigating ConnectED and E-rate. Retrieved May 09, 2016, from <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/navigating-connected-and-e-rate>
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(April), 147–160.
- DiPaola, M. F., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2005). Bridging or buffering? The impact of schools’ adaptive strategies on student achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(1), 60 – 71.

- Dohn, N. B. (2009). Web 2.0: Inherent tensions and evident challenges for education. *Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 4(2), 343 – 363.
- Dodson, M. E., & Garrett, T. A. (2004). Inefficient Education Spending in Public School Districts: A Case for Consolidation? *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 22(2), 270-280.
- Dove, M. K., & Zitkovich, J. A. (2003). Technology-driven group investigations for Gifted elementary students. *Information Technology in Childhood Education Annual*, 45(2), 223 – 241.
- Downe-Wamboldt, B. (1992). Content analysis: Method, applications, and issues. *Health Care for Women International*, 13(3), 313 – 321.
- Drouin, M., O’Conner, K., Schmidt, G., & Miller, D. (2015). Facebook fired: Legal perspectives and young adults opinions on the use of social media in hiring and firing decisions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 46 123 – 128.
- Donegan, R. (2012). Bullying and cyberbullying: History, statistics, law, prevention and analysis. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 3(1), 33 – 40.
- Doninger v. Niehoff*, 527F. 3d41 (2d Cir. 2008).
- Dowling, J., & Pfeffer, J. (1975). Organizational legitimacy: Social values and organizational behavior. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 18(1), 122–136.
- Duda, B. J., Ogolnoksztalcacych, Z. S., & Poland, Z. (2010). Mathematical creative activity and graphic calculator. *International Journal of Technology in Mathematics Education*, 18(1), 3 – 14.
- Duggan, M., & Brenner, J. The Demographics of Social Media Users, 2012. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, 2013.
- Duncombe, W., and J. Yinger. 2007. “Does School District Consolidation Cut Costs?” *Education Finance and Policy* 2(4): 341-375
- Duranti, L., & Shaffer, E. (2013). eLearning records: Are there any to manage? If so, how." *Social media and the new academic environment: Pedagogical challenges* 273 – 291.
- Edelman, L. B. (1992). Legal ambiguity and symbolic structures: Organizational mediation of civil rights law. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97(6), 1531–1576.

- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook “friends”: Social capital and college students use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1143 – 1168.
- Elmore, R. (1996). Getting to scale with good educational practice. *Harvard Education Review*, 66(1), 1–24.
- Elmore, R. F., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1988). *Steady work*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Epstein, J. L. (2008). Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *Education Digest*, 73(6), 9 – 12.
- Etter, M., & Fieseler, C. (2010). On relational capital in social media. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 10(2), 167 – 189.
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). PL No 114-95. Retrieved February 1, 2016 from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177/text>
- Ewy, Robert W. *Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning in Education: A Practical Guide for Developing and Deploying Successful Long-Range Plans*. (Milwaukee: ASQ Quality Press, 2009).
- Fennell, M. L., & Alexander, J. A. (1987). Organizational boundary spanning in institutionalized environments. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 30(3), 456 – 476.
- Flaherty K., Lam S., Lee N, Mulki J., Dixon A. (2012) Social network theory and the sales manager role: Engineering the right relationship flows. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 32(1), 29 – 40.
- Fletcher, G. H. (2014). E-Rate Reform Picks Up Speed: Spurred on by President Obama's ConnectED Initiative, the FCC Is Moving to Prioritize WiFi over Outdated Technology, and There's Still Time for Districts to Speak Up about What They Need. *THE Journal (Technological Horizons In Education)*, 41(5), 24.
- Franklin, T. (2011). Mobile learning: At the tipping point. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 10(4).
- Franklin, T., & Van Harmelen, M. (2007). Web 2.0 for content for learning and teaching in higher education. *JISC www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/digitalrepositories/web2-contentlearningand-teaching.pdf*.
- Garland, V. E. (2009). Emerging technology trends and ethical practices for the school principal. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 38(1), 39-50.

- Gastwirth, Joseph L. *Statistical reasoning in law and public policy: volume 2: Tort law, evidence and health*. Vol. 2. Elsevier, 1988.
- Gentry, J. (2008). E-publishing's impact on learning in an inclusive sixth grade social studies classroom. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 19(3), 455 – 467.
- Gil De Zuniga, H., Veenstra, A., Vraga, E., & Shah, D. (2010). Digital democracy: Reimagining pathways to political participation. *Journal of Information Technology Politics*, 7(1), 36 – 51.
- Gladstein, D., & Caldwell, D. (1985). Boundary management in new product teams. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 161–165.
- Godes, D., Mayzlin, D., Chen, Y., Das, S., Dellarocas, C., Pfeiffer, B., Libai, B., Sen, S., Shi, M., & Verleghe, P. (2005). The firm's management of social interactions. *Marketing Letters*, 16(3/4), 415 – 428.
- Gordon, D. (2012). Districts Create Community Connections with Social Media. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 78(3), 59-62.
- Greene, J. A, Moos, D. C, Azevedo, R., & Winters, F. I. (2008). Exploring differences between gifted and grade-level students' use of self-regulatory learning processes with hypermedia. *Computers & Education*, 50(3), 1069 – 1083. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2006.10.004
- Greenhow, C, Robelia, B., & Hughes, J. E. (2009). Learning, teaching, and scholarship in a digital age: Web 2.0 and classroom research: What path should we take now? *Educational Researcher*, 38(4), 246 – 259.
- Greenwood, D. J. (1997). Organizational learning II: Theory, method, and practice. *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*, 50(4), 701.
- Griffin, J. (2012). Social media ranked as a top source of risk. *The Australian*.
- Grimmett, P. P., & Chinnery, A. (2009). Bridging policy and professional pedagogy in teaching and teacher education: Buffering learning by educating teachers as curriculum makers. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 39(1), 125-143.
- Grosbeck, G., & Holotescu, C. (2010). Microblogging multimedia-based teaching methods best practices with Cirip. Eu. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2(2), 2151 – 2155.
- Grunig, J. E. (2009). Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalization. *Prism*, 6, 1-19.

- Heick, T. (2013, February 2). The definition of digital citizenship. [Image]. Retrieved from <http://www.teachthought.com/technology/the-definition-of-digital-citizenship/>
- Herold, B. (2016, January 13). 'Washington Gave Us Leverage': E-rate Reforms Bring Hope to Rural Schools. Retrieved May 09, 2016, from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/2015/rural-schools-broadband/federal-erate-reforms-affordable-broadband-internet.html>
- Herold, B. (2015). The E-Rate Overhaul in 4 Easy CHarts. *Education Week*, 13-13. Retrieved May 9, 2016.
- Herold, B., & Cavanaugh, S. (2015). E-Rate Undergoing Major Policy, Budget Upgrades. *Education Week*, 1-2. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/01/07/e-rate-undergoing-major-policy-budget-upgrades.html>
- Hicks, M., & Faulk, D. *School Corporation Size and the Cost of Education* (pp. 1-9) (Ball State University, Center for Business and Economic Research). Retrieved April 23, 2016, from http://projects.cberdata.org/reports/school_Corp_Size-web.pdf
- Hodgson, Cynthia. (2012) Using Social Media in Organizations: A Technical Report. *Association of Records Management and Administrators*, 1-26.
- Hoepfl, M. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1), 47-63.
- Hoffman, D. L., & Fodor, M. (2010). Can you measure the ROI of social media marketing? *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 52(1) 41 – 49.
- Hoffman, D. L., & Novak, T. P. (2012). Toward a deeper understanding on social media. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(2), 69 – 70.
- Hollandsworth, R., Dowdy, L., & Donovan, J. (2011). Digital citizenship in K-12: It takes a village. *TechTrends*, 55(4), 37-47
- Holt, D., & Smith, T. M. F. (1979). Post stratification. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (General)*, 33-46.
- Hooper, V., & Kalidas, T. (2012). Acceptable and unacceptable behavior on social networking sites: A study of the behavioral norms of youth on Facebook. *Electronic Journal Information Systems Evaluation* 15(3), 259 – 268.
- Honig, M. I., & Hatch, T. C. (2004). Crafting coherence: How schools strategically manage multiple, external demands. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 16 – 30.

- Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. J. (2013). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (9th ed.) New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research, 15*(9), 1277 – 1288.
- Huber, G. P. (1991). Organizational learning: The contributing processes and the literatures. *Organization science, 2*(1), 88-115.
- Igo, L. B. & Kiewra, K. A. (2007). How do high-achieving students approach web based copy and paste note taking? *Academics, 18*(4), 512 – 529.
- Ingle, W. K., Willis, C., & Fritz, J. (2014). Collective Bargaining Agreement Provisions in the Wake of Ohio Teacher Evaluation System Legislation. *Educational Policy, 0895904814559249*.
- International Bar Association. 2012. The impact of online social networking on the legal profession and practice. Available: http://www.ibanet.org/Committees/Divisions/Legal_Practice/Impact_of_OSN_on_LegalPractice/Impact_of_OSN_Home.aspx
- Isaacs, N., Kaminski, K., Aragon, A., & Anderson, S. K. (2014). Social networking: Boundaries and limitations part 2: Policy. *TechTrends, 58*(3), 10.
- Jackson, D. (2006). The creation of knowledge networks. *Improving schools and educational systems, 274-291*.
- Jackson, M. O. (2010). An Overview of Social Networks and Economic Applications. In Benhabib, J., Bisin, A., & Jackson, M. O. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of Social Economics, Volume 1B* (511-585). San Diego, CA: Elsevier.
- J.C. v. Beverly Hills Unified School District, 80-03824 SVW* (C.D. Cal. 2009).
- Joosten, T. (2012). *Social media for educators: Strategies and best practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Journell, W., Ayers, C. A., & Beeson, M. W. (2013). Joining the conversation: Twitter as a tool for student political engagement. *The Educational Forum, 77*(4), 466 – 480.
- Journell, W., Ayers, C. A., & Beeson, M. W. (2014). Tweeting in the classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan, 95*(5), 63-67.
- Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2011). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of computer assisted learning, 27*(2), 119-132.

- Junco, R. (2012). The relationship between frequency of Facebook use, participation in Facebook activities and student engagement. *Computers & Education*, 58(1), 162 – 171.
- Kanter, R. M. (1988). When a thousand flowers bloom: Structural, collective, and social conditions for innovation in organization. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 10, 169–211.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59 – 68.
- Keys for Developing Social Media Policy. (2013). *Information Management*, 11, 42-44.
- Kim, J.-N., Bach, S. B., & Clelland, I. J. (2007). Symbolic or behavioral management? Corporate reputation in high-emission industries. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(2), 77-98.
- Kim, S. (2014). *Understanding two paradigms of public relations strategies: Buffering and bridging* (Doctoral dissertation, PURDUE UNIVERSITY).
- Kirst, M.W. (2010). The Political and Policy Dynamics of K-12 Education Reform from 1965 to 2010: Implications for Changing Post-Secondary Education. *Research Priorities for Broad-Access Higher Education*.
- Kjaer, A.M. (2004). *Governance*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Kowalski v. Berkeley Cnty. Sch., 652F. 3d 565, 567 (4th Cir. 2011), *cert denied*, 132 S. Ct. 1095 (2012)
- Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2010). Learning cultures on the move: Where are we heading? *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 13(4), 4 – 14.
- Larkin, P. (2015). Say it with social media. *Educational Leadership*, 72(7), 66 – 69.
- Layshock v. Hermitage School District, 496 587 (W.D. Pa. 2007).
- Lee Abbott, M. and McKinney, J. (2012) Learning from Populations: Censuses and Samples, in *Understanding and Applying Research Design*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ, USA. doi: 10.1002/9781118647325.ch8
- Lee, V. R., Shelton, B. R., Walker, A., Caswell, T., & Jensen, M. (2012). Retweeting history: Exploring the intersection of microblogging and problem-based learning for historical reenactments. In K. K. Seo & D. A. Pellegrino (Eds.), *Designing problem-driven instruction with online social media* (pp. 23–40). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

- Lenartz, A. J. (2012). Establishing guidelines for the use of social media in higher education. In L. A. Wankel and C. Wankel (Eds.), *Misbehavior online in higher education* (pp. 333 – 353). Bingley, England: Emerald Publishing.
- Levitt, B., & March, J. G. (1988). Organizational learning. *American Review of Sociology*, 14, 319 – 340.
- Lewin, K. (1942). Field theory and learning. ✓
- Lindsay, B. R. (2011). *Social media and disasters: Current uses, future options, and policy considerations* (CRS Report No. R41987). Retrieved from Congressional Research Service. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/R41987.pdf>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lindkvist, K. (1981). Approaches to textual analysis. In Rosengren, K. (ed.), *Advances in Content Analysis* (pp. 23-41). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Livingstone, S., & Brake, D. R. (2010). On the rapid rise of social networking sites: new findings and policy implications. *Children & society*, 24 (1). 75 – 83.
- Liu, M. (2004). Examining the performance and attitudes of sixth graders during their use of a problem-based hypermedia learning environment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 20(3), 357 – 379. doi:10.1016/S0747-5632(03)00052-9
- Lowi, T. J. (1972). Four systems of policy, politics, and choice. *Public administration review*, 32(4), 298-310.
- Lu, A. (2011, July 13). Twitter seen evolving into professional development tool. *Education Week*, 30(36), 20.
- Manning, P. K. (1982). Organizational work: Structuration of environments. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 33(1), 118–134.
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family practice*, 13(6), 522 – 526.
- Mawhinney, D. M. (2013). The importance of an appropriate social media policy for K12 education. Master's Theses and Capstone Projects. Paper 88.
- McDonald, SJ. An Introduction to Internet Law: An Essay on Updating Your Typewriter Use Policy. 2012 National Conference on Law and Higher Education. London: Franklin Consulting; 2008 p.141.

- McLaughlin, M. (1976). Implementation as mutual adaptation: Change in classroom organization. *The Teachers College Record* 77(3), 339 – 351.
- McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. J. W. (2010). Personalized and self-regulated learning in the Web 2.0 era: International exemplars of innovative pedagogy using social software. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 26(1), 28-43.
- McTavish, D. G., & Pirro, E. B. (1990). Contextual content analysis. *Quality and Quantity*, 24(3), 245 – 265.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. Sage publications.
- Mejias, U. (2006). Teaching social software with social software." *Innovate: Journal of Online Education* 2.5: 2.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363.
- Mezner, M. B., & Nigh, D. (1995). Buffer or bridge? Environmental and organizational determinants of public affairs activities in American firms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(4), 975-996.
- Minicha, S. (2009). A study of the effective use of social software by further and higher education in the UK to support student learning and engagement. Retrieved August 25, 2015, from <http://www.jisc.uk/media/documents/projects/effective-use-of-social-software-in-education-finalreport.pdf>
- Montalvo, R. E. (2011). Social media management. *International Journal of Management & Information Systems (IJMIS)*, 15(3), 91-96.
- Myers, C. (2014). The new watercooler: Implications for practitioners concerning the NLRB's stance on social media and workers' rights. *Public Relations Review*, 40(3), 547 – 555.
- National Labor Relations Board. OM 12–59: Report of the Acting General Counsel Concerning Social Media Cases. 2012. Available: <http://mynlrb.nlr.gov/link/document.aspx/09031d4580a375cd>.
- Noel, A., Stark, P., & Redford, J. (2013). Parent and Family Involvement in Education, from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2012. First Look. NCES 2013-028. *National Center for Education Statistics*.
- Nie, N. H., Miller, I. D. W., Golde, S., Butler, D. M., & Winneg, K. (2010). The World Wide Web and the U.S. political news market. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 428 – 439.

- Norris, C., Nussbaum, M., Sharples, M., So, W. M. W., Soloway, E., & Yu, S. (2014). E-learning in school education in the coming 10 years for developing 21st century skills: Critical research issues and policy implications. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 17(1), 70 – 78.
- O'Brien vs. Patterson* (2013)
- O'Donovan, E. (2012). Social media: Guidelines for school administrators. *District Administration*. 34-36.
- Oh, S. (2014). Effects of the discount matrix on e-rate funds from 1998 to 2012. *Telecommunications Policy*, 38(11), 1069-1084.
doi:10.1016/j.telpol.2014.06.009
- Oklahoma State Department of Education School Law Book. (2014). Code § 51-24A.14
- Oklahoma State Department of Education School Law Book. (2014). Code § 40-173.2
- Oklahoma State Department of Education School Law Book. (2014). Code § 70 1210.556.
- Oklahoma Office of Accountability, *Profiles 2014: State Report*.
- Pallas, A. (1993). Schooling in the course of human lives: The social context of education and the transition to adulthood in industrial society. *Review of Educational Research*, 63, 4.
- Pasek, J., More, E., & Romer, D. (2009). Realizing the social internet? Online social networking meets offline civic engagement. *Journal of Information Technology Politics*, 6(3), 197 – 215.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Payne v. Barrow County School District. (2009). Civil Case No. 09CV-3038-X (Super. Ct. Ga.).
- Pereira, R., Baranauskas, M. C. C., & da Silva, S. R. P. (2013). Social software and educational technology: Informal, formal and technical values. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 16(1), 4 – 14.
- Periathiruvadi, S. (2012). Technology in gifted education: A review of best practices and empirical research. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 45(2), 153 – 169

- Perrin, Andrew. "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015: 65% of adults now use social networking sites – a nearly tenfold jump in the past decade." Pew Research Center, Washington D.C. (October 2015). <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2005/>
- Perrow, C. (1986). *Complex organizations: a critical essay*. New York: Random House.
- Peters, K., Chen, Y., Kaplan, A., & Ognibeni, B. (2013) Social media metrics: A framework and guidelines for managing social media. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27(4), 281 – 298.
- Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Social Networking. Available: <http://www.pewinternet.org/topics/social-networking/>.
- Pickering v. Board of Educ., 391 U.S. 563, 566 (1968)
- Pierce, M. (2012). Equal measure: Shielding students and enabling access. *THE Journal*, 39(2), 36 – 40.
- Pollock, M. (2013). It takes a network to raise a child: Improving the communication infrastructure of public education to enable community cooperation in young people's success. *Teachers College Record* 115(7), 1 – 28.
- Pomerantz J., Hank C., & Sugimoto C. R. (2015) The state of social media policies in higher education. *PLOS ONE* 10(5), 1-7
- Prensky, M. (2001) Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9 (5), 1 – 6.
- Resnick, L., Besterfield-Sacre, M., Mehalik, M., Sherer, Z. J., & Halverson, E. (2007). A framework for effective management of school system performance, in *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 106 (1), 155–185.
- Ribble, M., & Miller, T.N., (2013). Educational leadership in an online world: Connecting students to technology responsibly, safely, and ethically. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* 17(1), 137 – 145.
- Rideout, V. (2015). The common sense census: Media use by tweens and teens. *Common Sense Media Research*.
- Robertson, F. W. (2007). Economies of scale for large school districts: A national study with local implications. *The Social Science Journal*, 44(4), 620-629.
- Roumell, E. A., & Salajan, F. D. (2014). The Evolution of US e-Learning Policy A Content Analysis of the National Education Technology Plans. *Educational Policy*, 0895904814550070.

- Russell, J., Greenhalgh, T., Byrne, E., & McDonnell, J. (2008). Recognizing rhetoric in health care policy analysis. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy, 13*(1), 40 – 46.
- Rutledge, S. A., Harris, D. N., & Ingle, W. K. (2010). How principals “bridge and buffer” the new demands of teacher quality and accountability: A mixed methods analysis of teacher hiring. *American Journal of Education, 116*, 211 – 242.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). Chapter 1: An introduction to codes and coding. *J. Saldana, The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3-21.
- Shapley, K., Sheehan, D., Maloney, C., & Caranikas-Walker, F. (2011). Effects of technology immersion on middle school students’ learning opportunities and achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research, 104*(5), 299-315.
- Shavelson, R. J., Towne, L., & the Committee on Scientific Principles for Education Research. (Eds.). (2002). *Scientific research in education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Shear, B. (2015). 5 ways to keep social media from being a legal headache, *THE Journal. 1*, 6 – 7.
- Sheppard, B., & Brown, J. (2014). Leadership for a new vision of public school classrooms: Technology-smart and learner-centered. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(1), 84-96.
- Schaffhauser, D. (2016). Funding Technology: E-Rate reboot removes broadband hurdles. *T H E Journal, 12-16*.
- Schilder, Diane . "Strategic Planning Process: Steps in Developing Strategic Plans." Harvard Family Research Project, 1 Jan. 1997. Web.
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Sage Publications.
- Schrum, L., & Levin, B. B. (2013). Lessons learned from exemplary schools. *TechTrends, 57*(1), 38 – 42.
- Slate, J. R., & Jones, C. H. (2005). Effects of school size: A review of the literature with recommendations. *Essays in Education, 13*(1), 1-24.
- Small, G. & Vorgan, G. (2009). *I-Brain: Surveying the technological alteration of the modern mind*. New York, NY. Harper Collins Publishers.

- Smith, N., Wollan, R., & Zhou, C. (2011). *The social media management handbook. Everything You Need to Know to Get Social Media Working in Your Business*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Social Networking Fact Sheet: Highlights of the Pew Internet Project's research related to social networking. Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (September, 2014). <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>
- South, Joseph. "National Education Technology Plan. Office of Educational Technology." *Office of Educational Technology*. U.S. Department of Education, Jan. 2016. Web. 03 Apr. 2016.
- Sparrow, B., & Chatman, L. (2013). Social Cognition in the Internet Age: Same as it ever was? *Psychological Inquiry*, 24(4), 273-292.
- Spillane, J. P. (2000a). Cognition and policy implementation: District policymakers and the reform of mathematics education. *Cognition and Instruction*, 18(2), 141–179.
- Spillane, J. P., & Zeuli, J. S. (1999). Reform and teaching: Exploring patterns of practice in the context of national and state mathematics reforms. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 21(1), 1–27.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Stromquist, N. and Monkman, K. (2000). *Globalization and education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stutzman F., & Hartzog W. (2012) Boundary regulation in social media. Proceedings of the ACM 2012 Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work. New York, NY, USA: ACM. pp. 769–778. doi:10.1145/2145204.2145320
- Suchman, M. C. (1995). *Localism and globalism in institutional analysis: The emergence of contractual norms in venture finance*. In W. R. Scott & S. Christensen (Eds.), *The institutional construction of organizations* (pp. 39–63).
- Tatto, M. T. (2008). Teacher policy: a framework for comparative analysis. *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, XXXVIII (38), 4 / 148, p. 487–508.
- Tatto, M. T., Bruner, J., Chang, F. H., Cramfield, C. G., Kintz, T. M., Kuo, N. C., & Sharif, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Learning and Doing Policy Analysis in Education: Examining Diverse Approaches to Increasing Educational Access* (Vol. 16). Springer Science & Business Media.

- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. Bristol, PA: Falmer.
- Thompson, B. (2008). Characteristics of parent–teacher e-mail communication. *Communication Education*, 57(2), 201 – 223.
- Towner, T. & Muñoz, C. (2011) ‘Facebook and education: a classroom connection?’ in C. Wankel (Ed.), *Cutting-Edge Technologies in Higher Education: Educating Educators with Social Media* (33-57). Bingley, UK.: Emerald
- Tufekci Z., & Wilson C. (2012) Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations From Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 363 – 379. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01629.x
- United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform : a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: The Commission.
- United States Department of Education. (1998a). Guidance on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. Washington, DC.
- U.S. Congress, 1998. *Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act*, 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501 6506.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Future Ready Learning: Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education, Washington, D.C., 2016.
- Vanderlinde, R., van Braak, J., & Dexter, S. (2012). ICT policy planning in a context of curriculum reform: Disentanglement of ICT policy domains and artifacts. *Computers & Education*, 58(4), 1339 – 1350.
- Varlas, L. (2011). Can social media and school policies be" friends. *ASCD Policy Priorities*, 17(4).
- Vercic, A. & Vercic, D. (2013) Digital natives and social media. *Public Relations Review*, 39(5), 600 – 602.
- Wankel, C. (2009). Management education using social media. *Organization Management Journal*, 6(4), 251 – 262.
- Wattal, S., Schuff, D., Mandviwalla, M., & Williams, C. B. (2010). Web 2.0 and politics: The 2008 US presidential election and an e-politics research agenda. *MIS Quarterly*, 34(4), 669 – 688.

- Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic content analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Weber, R. (2013). Constrained agency in corporate Social media policy. *Technical Writing and Communication*, 43(3) 289 – 315.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Weiss, C. (1972). Evaluation research: Methods of assessing program effectiveness. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall.
- Westphal, J. D., & Zajac, E. J. (1994). Substance and symbolism in CEOs' long-term incentive plans. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39, 367–390.
- Wilson, S. M., & Peterson, L. C. (2002). The anthropology of online communities. *Annual review of Anthropology*, 31(1), 449 – 467.
- Woodly, D. (2007). New competencies in democratic communication? Blogs, agenda setting and political participation. *Public Choice*, 134(1–2), 109 – 123.
- Woodley, C., & Silvestri, M. (2014) .The internet is forever: Student indiscretions reveal the need for effective social media policies in academia. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 28(2), 126 – 138.
- Zhang, W., Johnson, T. J., Seltzer, T., & Bichard, S. L. (2009). The revolution will be networked: The influence of social networking sites on political attitudes and behavior. *Social Science Computer Review*, 28(1), 75 – 92.