The purpose of this research is to report the outcomes of teacher education candidates’ performance on a state certification examination. Through participants' lived experiences of preparing for the GACE ECE content examination, the study also examined participants' motivation and level of perception of program quality. This study examined the relationship between selected variables and factors that influence minorities' demonstrated ability to pass the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators Early Childhood Education content examination on the first attempt. Additionally, this research was conducted to build on the recommendations of educational researchers, particularly recommendations from doctoral dissertations on teacher education at HBCUs, state and federal accrediting agencies, and national reports on the affects of certification testing on minority preservice teacher candidates.

Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework for the study is based upon the QUAN-QUAL-QUAN mixed method design. The quantitative portion of the research study focused on the demonstrated ability to successfully pass content examinations on the first attempt. The research design required the use of correlation, descriptive statistical analysis and semistructured purposefully selected interviews based upon survey results. The qualitative research was utilized to provide the lived experiences of the purposively selected participants who responded to the survey and participated in the follow-up interview. Using a survey questionnaire followed by semistructured interviews conducted by the researcher, the researcher analyzed the data to discern the themes that emerged from the interviews. Through triangulation, the last quantitative portion of the research study triangulated the qualitative findings with the quantitative independent and dependent variables to ascertain if any significance existed between number of attempts on test #001, number of attempts on test #002, ACT, SAT, HSGPA, CGPA, motivation, and program quality. Hence, the selected findings from the private HBCU should not be used to generalize beyond the documented and observed phenomena within the research settings.

Research Questions:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between the first time pass or fail results on the GACE ECE tests #001 and #002 of selected ECE graduates and completers and each of the selected independent variables: ACT, SAT, HSGPA, GPAPST, CGPA, number of failed attempt test #001, and number of failed attempts test #002?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between number of failed attempts on test #001 after the first attempt and selected independent variables (ACT, SAT, HSGPA, GPAPST, CGPA) for the class of 2012 between March 2011 - March 2012?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between number of failed attempts on test #002 after the first attempt and selected independent variables (ACT, SAT, HSGPA, GPAPST, CGPA) for the class of 2012 between March 2011 - March 2012?
RQ4: What were the findings for the survey items from the survey completed by the purposively selected participants?

RQ5: As a result of the review of the survey items, what narrative reflections were provided from follow-up interviews of purposively selected participants who passed the test as Early Childhood Education majors and those who did not pass the test as Educational Studies majors?

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between the motivation of candidates to take the GACE test and selected independent variables (ACT, SAT, HSGPA, GPAPST, CGPA) for the class of 2012?

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between perception of program quality and selected independent variables (ACT, SAT, HSGPA, GPAPST, CGPA) for the class of 2012?

RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between first time pass or fail rate and perception of program quality for the class of 2012?

Conclusions:

It is concluded that the demonstrated inability of preservice teacher candidates in this research study to successfully pass certification examinations on the first attempt are affected by many variables. From an analysis of the interviews, it was suggested that participants who passed the content examination and graduated with the desired degree of Early Childhood Education attributed their passing to their motivation not to what was attained through classes in the planned program. Additionally, Educational Studies participants also indicated they were motivated to pass on the first attempt and stated that material covered in their classes did not assist them with passing the content examination. The analysis suggests that by controlling for attempts negatively it highlights the importance of SAT as a predictor of test performance as well as content knowledge.

REFERENCES:


***This presentation is about a completed research project***