THE EFFECTS OF LIMITED MUSIC EDUCATION OFFERINGS IN GEORGIA HBCUS: UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL CHOICE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA

by

JONATHAN EDGAR THOMPSON

(Under the direction of Alison P. Farley)

ABSTRACT

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) conducted a national report which indicated a disproportionate percentage of music education and performance graduates according to race, with black students graduating at 6.6% (McKoy, 2012). HBCUs are vital to improving the representation of Blacks, especially in high-need schools and communities (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). HBCUs produce around 50% of the nation's black teachers (Fenwick, 2021), however most of the 4-year HBCUs in the state of Georgia do not offer music education as a degree program (GAPSC, 2020). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the school choice decision of music ensemble students who attend Georgia HBCUs that do not offer music education.

The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework was used to guide this study, accompanied with a quantitative method of descriptive study design. I collected data via the College Choice Survey, created by the U.S. Department of Education where I surveyed 88 participants. Research questions were developed to understand how and in what way did the lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of black students, as well as the reasons that

influenced the school choice decision of music ensemble students who studied at HBCUs. The study also found that the majority of music ensemble students from these HBCUs attracted students who did not desire to become certified music educators. Also, the results indicated that students' choice of undergraduate institution was influenced by larger scholarship offers from their university, friends/family are attending or have attended the university of choice, academic level and reputation of university of college choice is high including faculty and facilities, better choice of music ensembles at their university, the university showed a more personal interest in the student, smaller class size available at their university, and wanting to go out of state to be further from home. Factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influenced the school choice decision of music ensemble students who studied at HBCUs.

INDEX WORDS: Opportunity Gap Explanatory Framework, socioeconomics, music, disparity, Historically Black College and University (HBCU), Predominately White Institution (PWI), achievement gap, Richard Milner, music education

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughters, Jimaya and Jaslyn Thompson. They have been my motivation throughout my matriculation here at the University of Georgia. I also dedicate this to my mother, Barbara Thompson, who always told me to, “handle your business”. I remembered this quote during many late nights and early mornings while traveling on the road to and from school, and while balancing my career and school responsibilities. She has been supportive of my career in music and provided me with every opportunity to be successful in my life. To my brother Calvin Thompson, thank you for your continuous support and motivation. You and mom have been there for me since Day 1. I am truly grateful for both of you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the state of Georgia, there are limited opportunities to study music education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for African Americans. Although Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) offer music education throughout the state of Georgia, studies have revealed barriers in access to PWI music education programs for Black people in our country (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). These barriers for Blacks to study music education at PWIs include standardized test scores and GPA benchmarks, European influenced music audition standards, and the cost of attendance (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). In the past, researchers have established the lack of diversity in the field of music education that exists between Whites and non-Whites (McKoy, 2012) however, there remains no conclusive findings on why this disparity exist. This is especially concerning due to the low graduation rate of Blacks in the field of music education (Elpus, 2015). Milner (2012) suggested the achievement gaps in education are caused by opportunity gaps and recommended that researchers examine the underlying disparities that lead to low graduation rates in the Black community. The U.S. Department of Education (2016) has reported that HBCUs are essential to increasing the number of Black educators in the classroom. However, the majority of HBCUs in Georgia currently do not offer music education degree programs, while 22 PWIs offer music education degree programs. (GAPSC, 2020). In addition, Georgia HBCUs comprises 13% of the African American population who attend one of the University System of Georgia (USG) schools

(University System of Georgia, 2008). It is important that Georgia students who attend HBCUs have similar educational opportunities.

Background of the Problem

Many studies have highlighted how educational offerings at HBCUs are not equal to those of PWIs, resulting in students of African American descent seeking educational opportunities at Predominantly White Institutions (Karkouti, 2016). This can be a problem for African American students who wish to earn their undergraduate music education degree. In the field of music education, minorities who wish to attend PWIs can experience difficulties meeting university entrance requirements, affording the cost of attendance, succeeding despite lower graduation rates for lower socioeconomic students, and microaggressions from fellow students, faculty, and administrators (Abramo & Bernard, 2020; Hess, 2017; Hughley, 2019). Research indicates disparities in experiences for minority music education students who attend PWIs throughout the country (Boykin et al, 2017, Palmer et al., 2016).

Hughley (2019) interviewed seven Black music education doctoral students who reported overt racism and microaggressions during their studies at PWIs across the south, including the state of Georgia. Hughley (2019) found the following themes in his study: existence of White privilege, subtle discrimination, and more scrutiny involving research ideas or performances. In a separate study, Meyers (2017) interviewed five women of a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds who were completing a doctorate in music education from various PWIs. Meyers found that both gender and racial/ethnic backgrounds presented obstacles including feelings of isolation, stress, and lack of collaboration during the participants studies. Meyers concluded that further research is needed to examine racial and ethnic disparities in relation to gender.

Researchers have also highlighted varying degrees of retention and graduation rates of African American students studying at university/college levels in PWIs. Educational institutions report their retention and graduation rates, reasons behind these graduation rates are important to understand in relation to student equity. Hall (2017) reported that African Americans attending PWIs are less likely to continue their education and/or graduate than their White counterparts. Nichols & Evans-Bell (2017) found Blacks at HBCUs experienced better rates of retention and graduation levels than Black students at PWIs when comparing similar percentages of lower socioeconomic students; however, higher rates of retention and graduation found within HBCUs were influenced by the students' sense of belonging and involvement in the university system (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Strayhorn, 2018). If music education programs are not readily available for students at HBCUs, students may encounter reduced success rates in graduating (Strunk, Locke & Martin, 2017).

Problem Statement

During the 2010-2011 school year, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) produced a national report which stated a graduation rate of 6.6% for Black music education and performance graduates (McKoy, 2012). A study performed by Abramo and Bernard (2020) indicated systematic racial discrimination related to admission requirements that existed at PWI music schools for low socioeconomic students of color (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). Researchers reported barriers for minority participants including GPA and test score benchmarks, along with music department audition standards (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). In the State of Georgia, a limited number of HBCUs offer music education to college students, while twenty-two PWIs offer higher music education programs throughout the state of Georgia (GAPSC, 2020).

Milner (2012) suggested researchers and theorists should look at the opportunity gaps that drive achievement disparities in education including graduation rates. The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework considers disadvantages and equity disparities associated with students' race, ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic status that often affect students of color achievement. Dating back to the nineteenth century, HBCUs have offered Blacks an opportunity to further their studies beyond the secondary level, and since have become an academic cornerstone for the Black community (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Further, HBCUs offer a quality education at a lower cost than PWIs, flexible admission requirements, and a culturally inclusive environment for Black students (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Opportunity and equity in education for Blacks has been a historic issue in the United States (Brooks and Starks, 2011), with equity and inclusion continuing to be a concern in higher education in present day society (Klonoski, Barker, & Edghill-Walden, 2018).

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the school choice decisions of music ensemble students who attend HBCUs that do not offer music education. This issue was important to study due to the disproportionate percentage of Black music educators, with Whites making up 86% of certified music educators in the United States (Elpus, 2015). Cherng and Halpin (2016) suggested that minority teachers' presence in the classroom assisted in the motivation and achievement of minority students. Currently, little research exists on the reasons that undergird the lack of Blacks in music education. Abramo and Bernard (2020) suggested more research is needed regarding the barriers that students of color may face when applying to undergraduate schools of music. Considering the previous research findings, this study focused on the school

choice decisions of HBCU music ensemble students. Additionally, these students were asked about their interest in music education, and their plans to earn certification.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: How and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators?

RQ2: Did factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influence the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs?

Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative methodology following a descriptive research design to determine the reasons Black music ensemble students decided to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that do not offer music education. I investigated how Black music ensemble students determined what educational institution to attend, asking all participants the same survey questions allowed data to be collected that could aid in answering the research questions and determining any statistical significance. How did asking the students the same survey questions help in determining statistical significance? (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data were collected using Qualtrics software program utilized at many research universities and results were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Opportunity Gap Explanatory theoretical framework. This framework was constructed to examine the existing disparities that impact the achievement gap in our country's educational system through assisting the researcher in naming, capturing, and

transforming explanations related to the issues of equality and equity in education (Milner, 2012). Milner (2012) stated, "I argue that this framework can be used in explaining, problematizing, and perhaps more deeply understanding educational practices beyond an overreliance on an achievement gap…" (p. 698). The achievement gap in education is sizeable between students according to race, ethnicity, and gender through comparing rates of graduation, grades, and test scores (McClennan et al., 2018). In music education, African Americans are grossly underrepresented in this profession, with the profession remaining predominately White (Elpus, 2015). The lack of African Americans achieving undergraduate music education degrees indicated a need for researchers to examine the disparities/opportunity gaps that lead to underachievement of minority and low-income students. The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework is guided by five central tenets that can be used in explaining, problematizing, and understanding educational practices including: a) color blindness, b) cultural conflicts, c) myth of meritocracy, d) low expectations, and e) context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). Each tenet is described below.

Color Blindness. Color Blindness is the belief that race does not play a role with individuals' daily interactions or decision-making, therefore promoting the ideals that institutional racism is no longer prevalent in society (Neville, Gallardo & Sue 2016). However, educational curriculum and instructional practices that do not consider differences relating to race, culture, and socioeconomic challenges of minorities can result in a barrier for students from marginalized populations (Colgren & Sappington, 2015). For example, Colgren and Sappington (2015) found that students of color scored seven points lower on the American College Test (ACT) than their White classmates in Advanced Placement Courses in the state of Illinois, also minority AP students test scores were equal to White students enrolled in less challenging math

classes. Researchers believed this indicated instructional practices and pedagogies that were beneficial to White students but not as beneficial to students of color (Colgren & Sappington, 2015). Through rejecting color blindness, educators can create a learning environment and instructional pedagogies that considers the diversity of others that will be more inclusive and educationally beneficial to non-White students (Abramo & Bernard, 2020).

Cultural Conflicts. The tenet of cultural conflicts is inter-related with the previous tenet of color-blindness. Cultural conflicts occur when the learning community does not accommodate for the vast cultural differences in White vs. non-White students (Milner, 2012). In viewing interactions in the classroom, instructors who fail to recognize students' cultural differences, create a learning environment that stimulates feelings of insignificance (Milner, 2012). In relation to the achievement gap, this is where we see high percentages of minority students in special education, low percentages of minorities in gifted courses, and more disciplinary referrals for minority students (Milner, 2012). Further, low socioeconomic students of color often report that they do not fit within the college culture, due to the unfamiliarity of professor pedagogical methods, coursework, and feelings of isolation (Phillips et al., 2020). This leads to disengagement and poor outcomes in student achievement and retention, grades, and graduation rates (Phillips et al., 2020). Competent educators recognize cultural differences of students, which assists in creating culturally responsive pedagogy and practices (Colgren & Sappington, 2015**).**

Myth of Meritocracy. The myth of meritocracy is the belief that all students are granted the same opportunities for success regardless of race, class, and socioeconomic differences between students, no matter of personal or societal obstacles (Garrison, Rice & Liu, 2021). In education, this attributes low academic achievement to poor decisions and work-ethic instead of

the factors related to culture, race, and socioeconomics (Angerame, 2019). Universities graduate 51% fewer students from low socioeconomic, first-generation families than those who are from continuing education families (Phillips et al., 2020). Garrison et al. (2021) explained that the myth of meritocracy was the assumption that failures and lack of advancement were linked to work-ethic instead of systematic racial and classist prejudices against minorities. However, research indicated that income was the best predictor of who attended and graduated from college (Cahalan et al., 2019), suggesting an uneven playing field that benefited those from continuing education and high-income families (Phillips, Stephens, Townsend & Goudeau, 2020).

Low expectations and Context neutral mindsets and practices. The tenet of low expectations attributes low achievement of minorities with race, promoting the belief that African Americans are intellectually inferior in the classroom (Milner, 2012). Educators who correlate student achievement or bad behavior with race can create educational environments that are adverse for Blacks (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Bottiani, Bradshaw, and Mendelson (2016) found that African American students felt their White teachers had low expectations and displayed nonchalant behavior regarding their academic achievement. This attitude results in rigid policy designs and practices producing feelings of isolation and unimportance in the learning community. The context neutral mindsets and practices tenet occurs when educators do not recognize deep-rooted realities within the school community (Milner, 2012). Competent educators recognize the issues of low-income students and adapt practices to meet their students' needs for success. In lower socioeconomic communities, transportation limitations prevent students from receiving tutorials outside of school to prepare for standardized test prep resulting in lower test scores (Richmond & Sibthorp, 2019). Another example of context neutral mindset

in music is the standard audition needed to gain access to PWIs schools of music. The lack of access to classical training for some Blacks is a direct result of problems such as affording private lessons, and lack of interest in the genre of music (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). Policies that do not take these limitations into consideration create systematic barriers (Abramo & Bernard, 2020).

The five tenets above support the need for students of color to be in an academically and culturally inclusive learning environment that addresses their opportunity gaps, including access to music education programs at HBCUs. Milner (2012) believed that low achievement in minority populations could be attributed to the opportunities available to minorities and low-income students. In the state of Georgia, the lack of opportunity for African Americans to study music education at HBCUs serves as an equity issue. The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework anchored this study because it shifted the focus from a shallow viewpoint of the achievement gap statistics related to graduation rates in music education between Whites and non-Whites, and placed emphasis on the resources and structures responsible for the achievement gaps that existed between the two (Abramo & Bernard, 2020; Milner, 2012). The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework allowed the researcher to examine the systemic problems for Blacks in relation to studying music education in the state of Georgia.

Summary

Using the Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework, I investigated institutionalized and systemic barriers that may have existed due to the limited music education program offerings in Georgia HBCUs. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature that utilized peer-reviewed articles and studies that focuses on the role opportunity gaps play in our educational system. The literature review begins by discussing equity disparities in education. This section is followed by

an exploration of opportunity gaps in education including socioeconomic disparities, differential treatment according to race and gender, and differential teaching. Chapter 2 concludes with information regarding the experiences of Blacks at PWIs and the reason why HBCUs are still needed in the 21st century. The third chapter provides a detailed account of the methodology used, in addition to how data was collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 reveals the results of the study and Chapter 5 concludes with a strong discussion of the results and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education Inequity and Opportunity Gaps in American Education

In 1947, President Harry Truman spoke about the importance of overcoming opportunity disparities in our country's educational system, recognizing barriers to accessing academic opportunities for low socioeconomic Americans and people of color (Klonoski et al., 2018). President Truman understood that formal education for American youth would be required for occupational and social advance and would impact race and class distinctions (Klonoski et al., 2018). For many years, schools and universities have offered multicultural education, ensuring reform on campus and in administration so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds experience equity in education (Banks, 2015).

This idea of educational equity has played a major role in the American education system and is defined as equal access to education affairs (Cahalan et al., 2019). Additionally, equity in education means providing students, regardless of their racial, ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic background, with what they need to succeed (Milner, 2012). However, the Pell Institute recently reported that inequity in higher education is rampant based on family income, race/ethnicity, parent education, and geographic location concerning the negative impact on people of color (Cahalan et al., 2019). Cahalan et al. (2019) found that in 2013, students born into the wealthiest families and pursued an undergraduate degree graduated at a rate of 99%, while students from the lowest-income families have a graduation rate of 21%. African Americans are

disproportionately represented by this statistic due to having the highest percentage of people in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2017), widening the graduation achievement gap.

The achievement gap explains differences in racial/ethnic groups in the areas of graduation rates, gifted and advanced placement courses, and standardized tests (McClennan et al., 2018). Milner (2012) explained in his Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework that the achievement gap disparities could be attributed to opportunity gaps experienced by minorities. This framework focuses on underlying problems associated with achievement gaps in education through examining the roles that socioeconomic status, cultural differences, and race differences contributes to achievement disparities for students of color (Phillips et al., 2020). When examining areas of inequity in any learning community, individuals should examine areas of teacher attitudes, student-teacher interactions, and curriculum (Poesen-Vandeputte & Nicaise, 2015). The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework uses five tenets to identify and explain these disparities: (a) color blindness, (b) cultural conflicts, (c) myth of meritocracy, (d) low expectations, and (e) context neutral mindsets. These tenets are critical in examining the reasons for the achievement gap in education for Whites vs. non-Whites.

Using the opportunity gap framework, researchers from the University of Connecticut performed a study that examined representation of students of color at their university's school of music (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). Their results indicated that high school students of color in their study had a low interest in playing classical literature, playing alone, and an unfamiliarity with the researchers' college environment; each acting as a barrier for minorities to continue their musical studies. Researchers discovered that most students had not taken a private lesson due to financial, transportation, and time constraints. Participants also indicated a lack of financial resources to afford tutoring for standardized exams, which were attributed to lower test

scores for minorities affecting admissions eligibility. These examples demonstrate how opportunity gap issues affect achievement for minority students. The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework assists educators, education leaders, and policy makers to be conscious of the underlying challenges of minority students that affect their educational achievement (Milner, 2012). Policymakers, administrators, and practitioners need to understand how opportunity gaps can affect the educational institution itself and the African American community.

Opportunity Gaps that Influence African American Achievement

African Americans have experienced a plethora of achievement disparities related to college graduation rates throughout the history of African American education (Skiba et al., 2011). The low graduation rate of Blacks has contributed to a lack of diversity in the teaching field, with a shortage of African American educators in the classroom (White et al., 2020). When studying ethnic and racial disparities within the American education system, Quintana and Mahgoub (2016) discussed the importance of understanding and reducing these disparities. They found three sources of inequity which leads to opportunity gaps including: social class differences, differential treatment based upon racial status and gender, and differential teaching in educational practices.

Socioeconomic disparities. Stephens et al. (2015) discussed how social class disparities were on the rise between working-class and middle-class university students. There is a demographic of African American students who come from low income, working-class families and parents who do not have a four-year college degree. The United States Census Bureau (2017) reported that demographics paved the way to the disparities experienced by racial minorities within the American education system. Additionally, African American students were

more likely to experience an unequal distribution of academic resources due to these demographic differences. This can include school funding, recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced teachers, and a lack of textbooks and technologies in the classroom (Dumas, 2016).

School readiness is also of concern for students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Many students living in poverty and within the working class have lower readiness in reading and mathematics (Banerjee, 2016). African American parents of lower socioeconomic status may not read to their children as often as higher socioeconomic status families due to having longer work hours (GarcĆa & Weiss, 2015). Previous investigations have indicated that social class is one of the most significant predictors, if not the single most important predictor of their chances for educational success (Banerjee, 2016; Garca & Weiss, 2015). Social inequalities can lead to performance gaps during the earliest years of children's lives, which can prevent them from succeeding in the future. Children who start behind are likely to stay behind as it can be challenging to make up lost ground. Individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds and one-parent families have a lack of access to preschool that contributes to educational disadvantage. For example, children of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to have parents with not enough time to be involved in their academic progress (Garca & Weiss, 2015). Additionally, some parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were prevented from acquiring sufficient education, thereby affecting their ability to read to their children (Garca & Weiss, 2015). Researchers indicated that student education achievement such as test scores, college entrance rates, and college degree attainment were correlated with the parent’s academic achievement (Cahalan et al., 2019). In 2004, the percentage of African Americans who attended college from

first generation college families dropped significantly from 92% to 69% over the course of 32 years (Cahalan et al., 2019).

There are also disparities in the high school educational experiences of African American students that affect college preparation skills. Tsoi-A and Bryant (2015) stated that by the year 2020, two-thirds of jobs in the American labor market would require college experience. If African American students graduate from high school unprepared for college, they might miss career opportunities and higher education experiences that may aid in the reduction of poverty. (Tsoi-A & Bryant, 2015). To highlight the lack of college preparation that African American students experience, research has shown that 34% of African American students met college-readiness benchmarks in English, but only 16% met college-readiness in reading (Royster et al., 2015). Additionally, in mathematics, only 14% of African American students were college-ready, and in science, only 10% of students were college-ready. Therefore, these disparities in education are based not only on racial and ethnic backgrounds, but also on socioeconomic status (White et al., 2016).

Differential treatment and race. Differential treatment can occur within educational institutions providing African American students with obstacles to achievement, especially in their high school years (Vega et al., 2015). Vega et al. (2015) gathered data from 18 African American and Latino urban high school students focusing on their educational experiences. The authors found that relationships with their teachers, the school counselors, as well as classmates are crucial to effective learning experiences. If these relationships are sour and discrimination-filled, students will not likely have positive and effective educational experiences. Students also reported discriminatory school policies and lack of safety as crucial to their learning experiences.

Griffin et al. (2016) focused on the perceptions of African American high school students and the barriers and differential treatment they have experienced due to their race. The researchers showed that an absent or negative relationship with teachers, school counselors, peers, school policies, and lack of safety in their communities negatively affected academic performance. African American students who noted fewer encounters with racial discrimination were from a school with a diverse student population and campus climate.

Lindsay and Hart (2017) focused on teacher relationships with African American and Caucasian students and whether students' exposure to same-race teachers provided different disciplinary actions towards students at a school district in North Carolina. African American students who had same-race teachers were less likely to receive exclusionary discipline methods such as out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and expulsion. Their exposure to same-race teachers lowered office referrals across all grade levels when it came to willful defiance. This study suggested that a difference in relationships for African American students and their same-race teachers, yet the results could also account for higher levels of teacher discretion when it came to same-race teachers responding to negative behaviors of their African American students (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). African American students perceived a more favorable classroom experience when they learned from a minority teacher (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Irizarry (2015) examined racial differences in teachers' evaluations of students and found that there were significant racial gaps in teachers' perceptions of race. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics' (2015) data from 2002 found that on average, high school teachers expected that 58% of White students will go on to obtain a college degree. In contrast, they only expected 37% of African Americans to follow suit.

Differential treatment and gender. Throughout history, a person's gender has been the basis for inequity in higher education within the United States. Szewczok and Parslow (2018) reported that females have been a minority misrepresented in the field of science, particularly those who are studying within gender-segregated fields such as that of nursing, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers, early education, and family studies. During their study, the authors found that faculty members within these gender-segregated fields experienced fewer opportunities for advancement and a lack of mentorship based upon their gender. Research determined that this is still occurring today, as many recent research studies have examined ways to reduce gender inequity. Taylor et al. (2017) completed a study that focused on the link between faculty empowerment and climate and retention. The authors reported that since 2001, the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE program has awarded over $130 million USD in grants to enhance work climate, professional success, and increase the retention and recruitment of females in STEM fields. To better understand the link between faculty empowerment and climate and retention, the authors found that departments in a college or university that had at least one faculty member participate in the ADVANCE program, experienced significant improvements in work climate and job satisfaction levels, as well as a significant reduction in turnover rates. This study demonstrated that it was important to design intervention programs throughout higher education to ensure equal opportunities and advancement for minorities.

In a study regarding music education, Meyers (2017) examined the experiences of five women doctoral students through a qualitative study with the objective of gaining insight into the important experiences and concerns that they have encountered during their studies. The researcher gathered participants who varied in personal and professional characteristics. At the

time of the research, they were either enrolled or recently graduated from a music education doctoral program. The researchers raised three questions: how women doctoral students experienced their graduate music education, the commonalities, and differences in the experiences of the women, and the incentives and barriers for women when pursuing a doctorate in music education. Meyers (2017) found that both gender and racial/ethnic backgrounds played a role in their experiences throughout their doctoral program at Predominantly White Institutions. This included feelings of anxiety, lack of meaningful relationships, isolation, stress, lack of mentorship, and a lack of collaboration. Some participants claimed that having teachers who purport to be colorblind do more harm than good. When professors are colorblind, claiming they do not see race as a factor, this does not help African American students. Instead, they felt even more marginalized and overlooked. Some participants claimed that they became anxious about complaining and speaking up because they believed this would make them look like they asked for special treatment. Participants also claimed that they had encountered structural racism due to the lack of diversity in student and faculty populations. Further research is necessary to highlight racial and ethnic disparities in relation to gender.

Differential teaching disparities. Teachers can adjust their teaching methods in a manner to connect to individual learners through differential teaching (Caro et al., 2016). Although there appeared to be disparities in how teachers teach their subjects to students of different races, there were many teaching strategies that highlighted diversity in the classroom. For example, when teaching a class of diverse students, it is important for teachers to understand racial, ethnic, and cultural differences to focus on how their students learn and then match their behavior to the appropriate setting (Tomlinson, 2015).

Boucher (2014) conducted a case study where a Caucasian teacher built solidarity with his African American students. By adjusting his teaching style to reflect the diverse student population, the teacher was able to be successful in aiding his African American students to develop a positive racial identity, provide high expectations, and high support. The teacher adjusted his teaching skills to the student's needs by being curious about his students' culture and providing a strong sense of purpose. As a result, African American students learned in a positive environment developed because of the given support and high expectations while maintaining their own culture.

Bottiani et al. (2016) focused on African American students' perceptions towards their Caucasian teachers. The study found that African American students who had Caucasian teachers perceived that their teachers were less caring and equitable in the classroom and undermined them with low expectations. In other words, Caucasian teachers who taught African American students may demonstrate disparities when it comes to differential teaching. African American students felt undermined academically and discouraged from performing better than their Caucasian counterparts.

Disparities of African Americans at PWIs

Karkouti (2016) showed that higher education's commitment to students of color has declined for a variety of reasons including America's changing climate regarding racial issues and downturns in the US economy. African Americans enrolled in PWIs lacked access to the same opportunities as their White counterparts (Boykin et al., 2017; Palmer et al., 2016). Karkouti (2016) examined Black students' experiences in PWIs and revealed that the majority perceived their experiences as negative. These students perceived the campus racial climate as being hostile, alienating, and culturally insensitive, which affected how they were able to tap into

available opportunities. Results showed that even if PWIs sought to be more inclusive, diversity issues continued to exist. These problems hindered African Americans from having efficient learning experiences and graduating promptly.

Hall (2017) reported that African Americans attending PWIs were less likely to continue attending the universities than their White counterparts. African Americans from a lower socioeconomic background were more likely to have higher graduation and retention rates when attending a HBCU, however, many African American students believe that higher quality of education is available at PWIs (Karkouti, 2016). According to Karkouti (2016), the disparities at HBCUs, including limited program offerings, serve as the reason why students of African American descent sought educational opportunities at PWIs, even if they dealt with racial discrimination among other negative experiences. Hunn (2014) purported African American students who studied at PWIs experienced a lack of cultural sensitivity when it came to pedagogy. This contributes to lower retention rates for African American students studying in PWIs in the United States. African American students studying at PWIs have reported loneliness and exclusion, omission from relevant group work, and discomfort around students who have differing racial/ethnic backgrounds (Hunn, 2014). Higher retention and graduation rates found within HBCUs are likely a result of the students' sense of belonging and involvement in the university system, (Strayhorn, 2018).

Additionally, African American students sometimes struggle to obtain entry into PWIs. Palmer (2011) completed a study focused on African American students attending PWIs and found that less than half of the universities surveyed had admission policies that considered the disparities associated with the African American community. The combination of these effects demonstrates opportunity gaps in studying at PWIs for African Americans within the United

States. The Association of Governing Boards for Colleges and Universities (2020) stated that HBCUs remain as a prominent gateway for African American students to complete their higher education studies.

Importance of HBCUs

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have educated more than 300,000 students throughout the nation, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). HBCUs are renown for the educational experiences afforded to Black students including support from faculty and staff members, character development, cultural relevance, and a smoother transition into the college/university environment (Broady et al., 2017). Historically, a free and equal educational system has not been available to Black Americans, as opportunity and equity associated with race has been found throughout periods of time in our country.

Segregation in education. Brown versus Board of Education (1954) was a historic case heard by the supreme court that outlawed segregation in schools. However, due to desegregation, many schools took their time to move towards the case's ruling. Although this landmark case paved the way for African Americans to receive equal education, the road has been long and difficult. Although Brown versus the Board of Education was a public-school ruling, college segregation has also been an issue throughout history. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began to support African American students in their fight for equality. The NAACP provided lawyers for students who encountered discriminated in their application for professional schools (2011). Hocutt vs. Wilson and the University of North Carolina was an early case taken by the NAACP, which involved a HBCU graduate denied admission to a PWI based on his race (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Even though the NAACP lost in

this case on a technicality, this case served as a basis for similar lawsuits in the future (Brooks & Starks, 2011).

In reaction to these cases, states decided to create a scholarship fund for HBCU graduates to attend another HBCU, many times outside the state of their residency (sometimes to a PWI in another state). Since most HBCUs did not offer professional degrees, applicants had to move to other states (Brooks & Starks, 2011). In the case Missouri ex rel. Gaines vs. Canada, the U.S. Supreme court ruled in favor of HBCU graduate Lloyd Gaines. This ruling determined that the University of Missouri had wrongfully denied Gaines admission to law school (Brooks & Starks, 2011). In turn, the state of Missouri created a law school at state funded HBCU, Lincoln University, for Black graduates to attend instead (Brooks & Starks, 2011).

HBCUs in the 21st century. Today, there are over 100 HBCUs in the United States of America, while only making up 3% of all colleges and universities (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Brooks and Starks (2011) reported that HBCUs were responsible for producing one-third of black graduates with bachelor's degrees, 75% of all Black PhDs, 46% of all business executives, 50% of all Black engineers, 80% of Black federal judges, 50% of all Black doctors, and 50% of all Black attorneys. In addition to the graduation rate, Black high school students have a positive perception of the experience they can receive at a HBCU. During a study performed by Wiggan and Scott (2015), participants reported that HBCUs resonated with them because it was a familiar environment that promotes positive social and educational opportunities. The same participants noted that PWIs were catering to non-African Americans (Wiggan & Scott, 2015). Reasons for this belief is due to the racial make-up of the student population, high admission standards for GPA and Test Scores, and the selectiveness involving the admissions decision process (Wiggan & Scott, 2015).

For HBCUs that have included music education within their curricula, benefits have aided in shaping young African American music students' identities. Carter (2013) focused on four African American students who identified as gay and attended HBCUs in the United States' southern geographical region. Using a qualitative methodology, Carter determined different perceptions and experiences from the participants, who reported that attending an HBCU music program aided in developing their identity in a positive manner due to the supportive university community. Maxile (2009) also discussed the importance of music education programs within HBCUs. Promoting music programs in HBCUs may diversify music groups (e.g., the Society for Music Theory) by including African American students, teachers, and alumni, to complement current historical, analytical, and critical discourses of music.

Summary

In conclusion, there are many educational disparities between White and non-Whites within the field of music education. While some HBCUs offer music education degree programs, the list of music program offerings in the majority of Georgia HBCUs is not as comprehensive as those of PWIs. Research has demonstrated that African American students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to continue attending PWIs than their White counterparts. African American students of HBCUs are more likely to continue their education and graduate. This literature review revealed a problem and a gap in the literature that made this study viable, highlighting the need to understand the impact of limited music education degree program offerings in Georgia HBCUs on current music ensemble students' college choice. The United States has reached a critical time in history to push for racial equity in education. Past legal remedies, such as affirmative action and desegregation, have paved the way for society to deal with racial equity in education, however, there is a lot more to do. The present educational

system is still failing to address the dynamic nature of the poor graduation rate for Blacks in education and how working with society as a whole aid in reconceptualizing the different pathways towards advancing racial equity in education (White et al., 2020). While there have been studies that addressed the educational disparities between White and Black students, research remains sparse regarding the poor graduation rate of Blacks in music education. This quantitative descriptive study aimed to determine the school choice decisions of current music ensemble students who attend an HBCU.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive study was to determine why African American music ensemble students decided to attend their Historically Black College and University (HBCU) due to factors such as university cost of attendance, the university's music program offerings, admission requirements, scholarship opportunities, and proximity to their home city. This study also investigated students who desired to become music educators, and their plans for certification post-graduation. There are many disparities in educational opportunities for students who attend HBCUs in the State of Georgia (Boykin et al., 2017; Palmer et al., 2016). Currently, the State of Georgia has few opportunities for students wanting to complete degrees in music education at HBCUs; Albany State University, Savannah State University, and Spelman College are the only HBCUs that provide the opportunity for students to become certified music educators (GAPSC, 2020). This is only 3 out of 8 traditional Georgia HBCUs.

The conservative number of HBCUs offering music education is concerning due to the shortage of Black students completing their undergraduate degrees in the field of music education (Elpus, 2015) and the shortage of Black educators in the classroom (White et al., 2020). Researchers indicated that African Americans may not receive adequate private training to successfully gain entrance into PWI schools of music, while some may not be attracted to preparing the style of music required for audition (Abramo & Bernard 2020; Albertson, 2015;

Koza, 2008). HBCUs are recognized for having a culturally inclusive learning environment and flexible admission policies that assist students of color with continuing their education beyond the secondary level (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Having limited opportunities to study music education at HBCUs serves as an equity disparity and can serve as an opportunity gap for students who attend. This chapter provides the study's methodological design, participants, instruments used for collecting data, study procedures, data analysis, and the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: How and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators?

RQ2: Did factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influence the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs?

This study was guided by the Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework, assisting the researcher in naming, capturing, and transforming explanation related to the issues of equity in education (Milner, 2012). The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework is governed by five central tenets to identify disparities and cultural differences in education including: (a) color blindness, (b) cultural conflicts, (c) myth of meritocracy, (d) low expectations, and e) context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). The research questions were guided by the tenets of cultural conflicts, myth of meritocracy, and context neutral mindsets and practices.

The tenet of context neutral mindsets and practices explains the importance of understanding the community in which students live, and potential educational needs and

opportunities needed for their success. In the case of the second research question, the researcher recognized that limited music education offerings were an issue of equity for those who wished to study at a HCBU, causing an issue of equity. With having only three HBCU music education programs in the state, students who resided outside the geographical areas of these institutions may have encountered barriers in attending school due to familial obligations at home and socioeconomic limitations (Schultheis, 2013). The context neutral mindset and practices tenet also acknowledges the benefit for lower socioeconomic students and Black students to have an opportunity to attend a HBCU because of the lower cost of attendance and a higher graduation rate for lower socioeconomic Black students (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Milner (2012) believed that lack of opportunities available to minorities and low-income students attributed to low achievement in minority populations. Research has been consistent in that HBCUs have provided a pathway for Blacks to continue undergraduate educational studies (Karkouti, 2016; Nichols & Evans-Bell, 2017).

Research Methodology and Design and Recruitment

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive approach. A descriptive study allowed me to establish associations and relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, I explored the reasons why African American music students decided to attend their Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). During this study, I collected data by distributing surveys to African American music ensemble students in Georgia. I selected a quantitative methodology to investigate how university costs, university's music program offerings, admission requirements, scholarship opportunities, and proximity to their home city influenced their school choice. A qualitative methodology would not be as appropriate as these types of methodologies focus on perceptions and lived experiences rather than the investigation

of how factors are associated or related to the phenomenon of a topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

To participate in this study, participants met the following criteria:

1. Participants identified as being racially Black.
2. Participants were currently an active member in a Georgia HBCU music ensemble.
3. Participants currently attended a 4-year HBCU.
4. Participants attended a HBCU that did not have music education as a major.

The researcher utilized a purposive sampling procedure, participants were invited to participate in the study based upon the above characteristics of the population and the purpose of the study (Etikan, 2016). The researcher invited participants to the study after his research was approved by both the research university and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval, the researcher provided participants with a consent form, confidentiality agreement, demographic information, and the study survey via Qualtrics (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Instruments

I utilized a pre-designed instrument to collect data, the College Choice Survey, designed by the U.S. Department of Education (2019). The U.S. Department of Education administered this survey to more than 23,000 high school students nationally and was proven to be statistically significant at the .05 level using a two-tailed Student's t-test. The U.S. Department of Education (2019) reported, "In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize effects of non-sampling errors, such as item response, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error". This survey has also been utilized in previous higher education research studies since 1992.

Nineteen survey questions were administered through Qualtrics, a web-based survey program provided by the University of Georgia. Participants provided demographic background information such as gender, ethnicity, type of high school attended, and the amount of exposure that a participant had with their university before attending. When completing the College Choice Survey, participants scored each statement on a Likert-type Scale, on a scale of zero to four, with zero representing the statement not being a factor, and four representing the statement being a significant factor. The survey also included yes/no questions that inquired about participants interest in becoming a music educator, in addition to whether enrollment requirements such as college/university GPA and standardized testing benchmarks influenced participants college choice. Last, the survey included open-ended short answer questions to give the participant the opportunity to share their rationale for their school-choice decision (Appendix).

The survey was modified to accommodate the purpose of this study adding items related to cost of attendance, standardized test scores, cultural significance, audition standards, and choice of major. Migliore (2020) explains that modifications to existing surveys work best when the original instrument is proven to be both valid and reliable. Surveys can be modified to better align with your topic of study, population, and to collect/capture efficient data (Migliore (2020). The researcher had doctoral classmates at the University of Georgia to pilot the survey, which provided helpful feedback pertaining to the modifications made to the existing instrument. The researcher changed survey questions that were not in alignment and discussed recommendations with his research supervisor to finalize the data collection instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Before I began the study, I obtained permission from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), then prepared the survey on Qualtrics, a survey distribution platform. Once the survey was ready, I reached out to ensemble directors at Georgia HBCUs to recruit students to participate in the study. Ensemble directors at Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Paine College, and Morris Brown College were contacted via phone call and/or email. Each director was sent the link for their students to participate in the study. This is in addition to the music ensemble students who attend Fort Valley State University. After receiving permission from the groups' administrators, I emailed the link for participants to access the survey. I recorded the Participant responses through Qualtrics, I ensured that no other individual, other than my research supervisor, had access to the data, and I will delete the data after the appropriate timeframe of five years. After collecting the data, I then prepared the data for data analysis. When preparing the data, I followed these steps:

1. Identified any incorrect values of the specific variables,
2. Checked to ensure that the data met the inclusion criteria as outlined in the study.
3. Surveys that did not meet the study's criteria were deleted.
4. Checked for any duplicate surveys and deleted any as necessary.
5. Checked for any missing data or outliers. I did not use and remove all missing information.

Finally, I completed a statistical analysis that examined the correlational relationship between the variables in relation to the college of choice.

Confidentiality

The participants in this study were anonymous as each person completed the survey independently online. Before agreeing to take the survey, participants provided their consent

through the informed consent form found on first page of the survey. The consent form provided participants with information about the study and the level of risk involved. In this study, the level of risk was minimal as the participants only answered questions relating to their college choice and selection process. I collected demographic information that included the participants' gender, age range, level of education, job position, and years working as a music educator in their current place of employment. I maintained confidentiality by providing each participant who completed the survey with a random number, which referred to each individual participant and his or her response. Only I will have access to the data with the information being a password-protected file (Richards, 2014). I will delete all survey data five years after completion of the study.

Assumptions

In this study, my first assumption included the respondents of the study. I assumed that each participant would have the ability to answer each question openly and honestly, to provide me with valid data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Another assumption was that the inclusion criteria of the sample were appropriate, assuring that all participants had experienced similar phenomenon as in the study (Robinson, 2014). These assumptions aided in collecting valid quantitative data.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was that of the survey itself. Pedersen (1992) states that surveys could have inherent biases when I was the one who adapted the multiple-choice items. I utilized a pre-designed and developed the survey from the College Choice Survey to assist in avoiding the perception of bias. Another limitation that occurred in this study was that of geographical significance. Because this study explored the effect of that HBCUs chose not to include music programs in their curricula in the State of Georgia, it was important to note that the results of this

study may not be generalized to other areas located outside of the geographical area. Therefore, future studies of similar topics could focus on other geographical regions (Smith, 2018).

Delimitations

There were some delimitations in this study; namely, the sampling criteria for the participants participating in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). I chose to collect data from African American music students currently attending a HBCU due to their ability to provide information that pertains to the reasons that influenced their decision to attend their HBCU. Focusing on current African American music ensemble students provided greater insight into the reasons that influenced college selection for individuals studying at HBCU.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive study was to determine why African American music ensemble students decided to attend their Historically Black College and University (HBCU). This study surveyed participants to understand impacts of cost of attendance, music program offerings, admission requirements, scholarship opportunities, and proximity to their home city on college decision. This study utilized Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel to analyze data and descriptively report results.

Data Summary and Overview

Survey data were downloaded from Qualtrics once collection was completed. The original data set contained 88 survey participants who reported basic demographic background information such as gender, ethnicity, type of high school attended, and the amount of exposure that a participant had with their university before attending. The Qualtrics data file was cleaned to remove incomplete survey responses resulting in 81 total responses to be analyzed, which was a 92% response rate. When completing the College Choice Survey, participants scored each statement on a Likert-type with a range of zero to four, with zero representing the statement not being a factor, and four being a significant factor. The respondents also answered questions regarding their choice of major, the influence university enrollment benchmarks (i.e., standardized tests/GPA) had on their college choice, and their interest in becoming a music educator. Qualitative data was also collected from participants to better understand their college choice decision.

Data Analysis Protocol

Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool, and Microsoft Excel were used to perform all quantitative analyses. Demographic data were collected as part of the survey design: gender, ethnicity, type of high school attended, and the amount of exposure that a participant had with their university before attending. The following research questions guided this analysis:

RQ1: How and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators?

RQ2: Did factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influence the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs?

Demographic Statistics

Demographic data were presented as part of the survey design in Table 1 as follows: gender, ethnicity, type of high school attended, geographical areas of high school.

Gender. The sample included 61 men respondents (70.93%) and 25 women respondents (29.07%).

Ethnicity. Over 94% of the respondents were Black compared to 1.16% each for American Indian, Latin American/Hispanic, White American/Caucasian, Other and those who preferred not to say.

High school attended. Seventy-nine of the sample respondents attended public school (91.86), while six attended a private high school (6.98%), and one attended a charter school (1.16%).

Geographical areas of high school. Over 46% of the sample respondents attended high school in a suburban region, 31.40% in an urban region, while 22.09% attended high school in a rural geographical area. Table one illustrates the demographic data collected from respondents.

Table 1

Sample Background (N = 81)

Characteristics	%	*n*
Gender		
Men	70.93%	61
Women	29.07%	25
I prefer not to say	0.00	0
Ethnicity		
American Indian	1.16%	1
Asian	0.00%	0
Black	94.19%	81
Latin American/Hispanic	1.16%	1
White American/Caucasian	1.16%	1
Other	1.16%	1
I prefer not to say	1.16%	1
High School Attended		
Public School	91.86%	79
Private School	6.98%	6
Charter School	1.16%	1
Home School	0.00%	0
Geographical Ares of High School		
Urban	31.40%	27
Suburban	46.51%	40
Rural	22.09%	19

Participation in events hosted by university of choice before attending. Many participants had never participated in events hosted by the university of choice before attending (48.15%), this was followed by students who attended one to two times (29.63%), while students who had participated three to four times or more than five times in events hosted by the university of

choice before attending had the least response (11.11%). Based on the respondents' data, geographical location did not play a role as to the accessibility to university events or visits. This was indicated by 42 rural, urban, and suburban students attending events sponsored by the university versus 39 students who did not attend an event.

Visits before attending. The results show that 53.09% of the sample respondents had visited the school one to two times before attending. This was next to students who never visited the school before attending (28.40%); students with three to four visits (11.11%); while students who had visited more than five times before attending the university had the least response (7.41%).

Top Choice. Most students believed they were attending the top choice for undergraduate studies (60.49%), while 39.51% indicated that they were not at their top choice for their undergraduate studies. Below, Table 2 includes respondents experiences with the college of their choice, and whether they were attending their top choice for school.

Table 2

Sample Background (N = 88)

Characteristics	%	*n*
Participation in events hosted by university of choice before attending		
Never	48.15%	39
1-2 Times	29.63%	24
3-4 Times	11.11%	9
More than 5 Times	11.11%	9
Visits before attending		
Never	28.40%	23
1-2 Times	53.09%	43
3-4 Times	11.11%	9
More than 5 Times	7.41%	6
Are you attending your top choice for Undergraduate studies?		
Yes	60.49%	49
No	39.51%	32

Quantitative Results by Research Question

Research Question 1: How and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators?

Interests. Over 69% of the sample respondents indicated that they were not interested in becoming a music education major as they selected their college/university. There were 18.42% of respondents who selected "*maybe"*, while students who picked "*yes"* to being interested in becoming a music education major had the lowest response with 11.84%. All the students who answered "yes" to this question were men, however, 3 women answered "maybe".

When asked of their interest in becoming a music educator post-graduation, 71.43% had no interest in becoming a music educator post-graduation, while 28.57% were interested in

becoming a music educator post-graduation (Table 3). Men were the majority of participants desiring a career as a music educator post-graduation, with only 5 women who indicated interest.

Table 3

Percentage Distribution of Students Interest in Becoming Music Educators

Characteristics	%	*n*
Were you interested in becoming a music education major as you picked your college/university?		
Yes	11.84%	9
No	69.74%	53
Maybe	18.42%	14
Do you have an interest in becoming a music educator post-graduation?		
Yes	28.57%	22
No	71.43%	55

Research Question 2: Did factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influence the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs?

College entrance requirements. From the analysis, 70.13% of the students felt that college entrance requirements such as GPA criteria played an important role in their undergraduate college decision; 29.87% felt it did not pay any role. The results also identified that most student respondents believed that college entrance requirements such as SAT/ACT benchmark criteria played a role in their undergraduate college decision (63.64%). The remaining 36.36% believed college entrance requirements such as SAT/ACT benchmark criteria did not play any role in their undergraduate college decision. Additionally, 50.65% of the respondents believed that college entrance requirements such as the music school audition criteria played an important role in their undergraduate college decision, which was slightly higher than 49.35% of student respondents that believed it played no role. These findings are outlined below in Table 4.

Table 4

Percentage Distribution of Students Entrance Requirement

Characteristics	%	*n*
Did college entrance requirements such as GPA criteria play a role in your undergraduate college decision?		
Yes	70.13%	54
No	29.87%	23
Did college entrance requirements such as SAT/ACT benchmark criteria play a role in your undergraduate college decision?		
Yes	63.64%	49
No	36.36%	28
Q13 - Did college entrance requirements such as the music school audition criteria play a role in your undergraduate college decision? If you answer yes, please explain.		
Yes	50.65%	39
No	49.35%	38

Teacher Certification. Only one (4.55%) student had ever visited the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) or communicated with an employee of the GaPSC while the remaining 21 (95.45%) who provided answers to this research item did not visit GaPSC or communicate with an employee of the GaPSC.

Likert Scale Reliability. Given a 5-point Likert scale (0=Not a factor, 4=Significantly Influenced), the threshold or acceptance region should lie just after the mean of the Likert scale (Lionello et al., 2021). The mean in this case is two, thus values greater than two can be of high importance due to being higher than the mean for the Likert scale. The respondents who answered, “not a factor (0)”, were excluded from the mean calculation. This left answer selections Slightly Influenced (1), Moderately Influenced (2), Influenced (3), and Significantly

Influenced (4) to be calculated for each question. In terms of reliability, an item analysis was performed to determine if the Likert scale items were reliable.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used to calculate the Cronbach's alpha (α), a statistic used to determine internal consistency between Likert scale items. The Cronbach alpha for the seven items used on the Likert scale was α=.606. This score falls in the moderate, yet acceptable range of stability and consistency (Daud et al., 2018). The researcher also included confidence intervals (CI) to determine the probability that the participants answers will fall between two set values. At a 95% confidence level, the means for each item falls between the lowest and highest confidence level ranges.

Influencing Factors. With a mean of 2.94 (*SD* = .87) participants (1=9.88%, 2=17.28%; 3 = 29.63%; 4 = 32.10%) indicated their school choice decision had been influenced by the better choice of music ensembles at their university. The remaining respondents at 11.11% were of the opinion it was not a factor. The participants with a mean of 2.56 (*SD=1.23)*, 62.95% (1=17.28%, 2 = 14.81%; 3 = 8.64%; 4 = 22.22%) indicated that going out of state had an impact on their school choice. However, a large percentage of students selected that attending an out of state university was not a factor at 37.04%. With a mean of 3.05 (*SD*=1.11), most of the students' decision had been influenced by larger scholarship offers from their university. This can also be confirmed as most of the students at 88.88% (1=12.35%, 2 = 14.81%; 3 = 17.28%; 4 = 44.44%), reported larger scholarship offers from their university was important; while 11.11% felt it did not influence their decision regarding their undergraduate institution.

A mean of 2.73 (*SD*=.94) suggested that smaller class sizes available at the university was an influence on the decision of students' decision to choose their undergraduate institution. This was supported as 83.95% (1=6.17%, 2 = 32.10%; 3 = 23.46%; 4 = 22.22%) of the sample

respondents believed smaller class sizes available at their university was a significant factor; 16.05% were of the opinion it was not a factor and did not influence their decision.

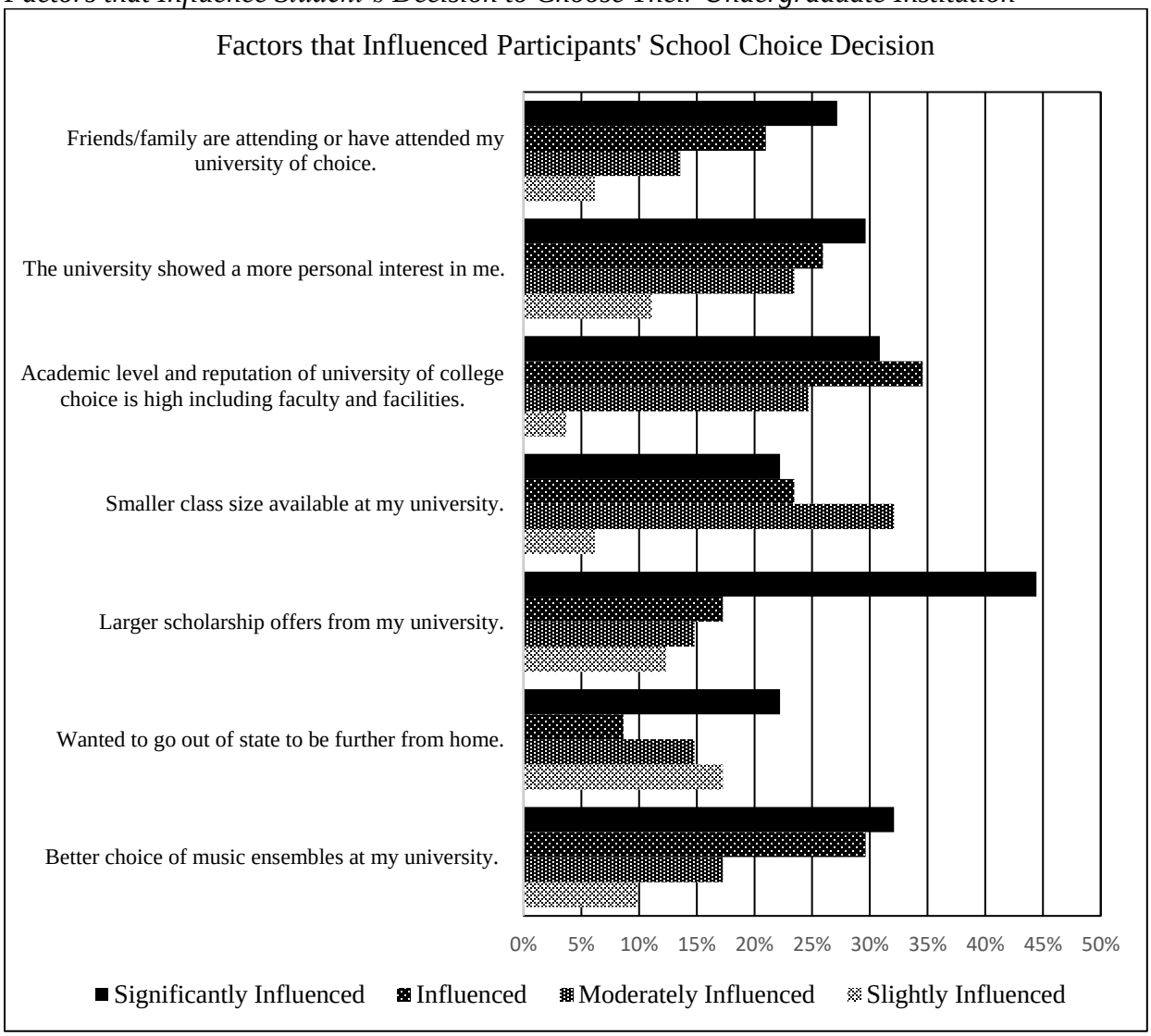
Academic level and reputation of university of college choice (including faculty and facilities) was shown to impact students' decision with a mean of 2.98 (*SD*=.87). This was supported as the majority, 93.82% (1=3.70%, 2 = 24.69%; 3 = 34.57%; 4 = 30.86%) of the respondents, chose that academic level and reputation of their university of college choice is high including faculty and facilities was a significant factor; 6.17% were of the opinion it was not a factor and did not influence their decision.

A mean of 2.82 (*SD*=1.03) suggested that the university showing more personal interest in a student was an influence on the decision of students to choose their undergraduate institution. This was indicated by 90.13% (1=11.11%, 2 = 23.46%; 3 = 25.93%; 4 = 29.63%) of respondents answering that their university showing more personal interest in them was important. While 9.88% were of the opinion it was not a factor on their decision to choose their undergraduate institution.

Students responded that friends/family who are attending or have attended their university of choice was not a factor, 32.10% had the highest response single category response out of all items. However, 67.9% (1=6.17%, 2 = 13.58%; 3 = 20.99%; 4 = 27.16%) of the student respondents believed friends/family who are attending or have attended their university of choice was essential with a mean of 3.01 (*SD*=.99) which is above our threshold suggests that it had a great influence on their decision.. The percentages for each Likert-scale selection are displayed below in Table 5.

Table 5

Factors that Influence Student's Decision to Choose Their Undergraduate Institution



*Not a factor results are not displayed above due to not being calculated in the reported mean and standard deviation.

Summary

This chapter covered the analysis and interpretation of the survey data. The chapter began with descriptive analyses of demographic data and included items on gender, ethnicity, type of high school attended, geographical areas of high school, and the amount of exposure that a participant had with their university before attending. The survey items associated with each research question were examined. Frequencies, mean, and standard deviation (*SD*) were

determined for each of the survey items. An overview of the frequencies and relative means was completed for all domains. The participants indicated that their choice of undergraduate institution was influenced by; "*larger scholarship offers from their university", "friends/family are attending or have attended the university of choice, "academic level and reputation of university of college choice is high including faculty and facilities", "better choice of music ensembles at their university", "the university showed a more personal interest in the student", "smaller class size available at their university", and "wanting to go out of state to be further from home".*

The study also indicated that the participants school choice decision was based on the availability of music scholarship, ensemble play, racial and cultural identity of their school, and quality of their ensemble. Factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture were seen to have largely influenced the school choice decision of music ensemble students who studied at HBCUs. Students identified that college entrance requirements such as GPA criteria, college entrance requirements, such as SAT/ACT benchmark criteria, music school audition criteria played an important role in undergraduate college decisions. The next chapter will conclude the dissertation by providing a discussion of the results, highlighting the studies implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the state of Georgia there are limited opportunities to study music education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for Blacks. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the school choice decision of music ensemble students who attended HBCUs that did not offer music education. The results indicated that students' choice of their undergraduate institution was largely influenced by; "larger scholarship offers from their university", "friends/family are attending or have attended the university of choice, "academic level and reputation of university of college choice is high including faculty and facilities", "better choice of music ensembles at their university", "the university showed a more personal interest in the student", "smaller class size available at their university", and "wanting to go out of state to be further from home". This chapter concluded the dissertation by providing a comprehensive interpretation of the results utilizing Milner's (2012) Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework as a basis to analyze and explain the data. The Opportunity Gap Explanatory framework is governed by five central tenets including: (a) color blindness, (b) cultural conflicts, (c) myth of meritocracy, (d) low expectations, and e) context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). This chapter also identified and discussed limitations of the current study and recommendations for future studies.

Interpretation of Results

This study was guided by the following two research questions:

RQ1: How and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators?

RQ2: Did factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influence the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs?

This section will provide a comprehensive discussion on the interpretation of the results, answering each research question in relation to previous research.

RQ1: How and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators?

The first research question examined how and in what way do lack of music education offerings in Georgia HBCUs affect choices of Black students who desire to become certified music educators. The results of this first research question indicated that HBCUs that do not offer music education as a major attracted music ensemble students who did not desire to become certified music educators. The students in this survey indicated that their school choice decision was not based on the availability of music education at their university, therefore the lack of music education did not affect their school choice. The data from participants also indicated this in their answer selections and feedback provided on the survey, where 69.74% of respondents did not have an interest in becoming a music education major when they selected their college/university. Further, 71.43% of participants indicated they were not interested in becoming a music educator post-graduation. The participants were then asked why they selected their school if music education was not available. The participants school choice decision was

influenced by the attractiveness of the school's music ensembles, school's reputation, interest in another offered major, and scholarship opportunities.

Abramo and Bernard (2020) found that minority band students preferred ensemble play and community-based events and were not attracted to playing a solo music audition to qualify for collegiate music ensembles or the university's music school. Albertson (2015) also reported that there are barriers for students of color based on audition requirements found at PWIs due to the performance audition requirements, theory assessment, and aural training needed for admission. The myth of meritocracy is inter-related with the previous tenet and first research question. For example, students of color may struggle to pay for private music lessons and test-prep tutorials for standardized test, transportation to outside tutorial learning events, or access to a quality instrument for music study necessary to obtain admissions to a PWI. (Albertson, 2015; Richmond & Sibthorp, 2019).

In a separate question, students were asked to provide any other feedback that would assist in understanding their school choice decision. The participants responses included the rich history and reputation of their HBCU, the school being close to home, the culture being a super loving family environment, the assistance with the application process, and the flexible admissions benchmarks. HBCUs offer a quality education at a lower cost than PWIs, flexible admission requirements, and a culturally inclusive environment for Black students (Brooks & Starks, 2011). The affordability of their school and music scholarship were major factors found in the data regarding participants' school choice. Therefore, providing financial resources for Black students wanting to attend college better ensures that they will experience more equal opportunities at accessing higher education (Freeman, 2005). This point is supported by only 11.11% of the respondents stating that the scholarship was not a factor, while the remaining

88.89% were influenced by scholarship offers in reference to school choice. Milner's (2012) framework stressed the importance of evaluating students' socioeconomic backgrounds when considering minorities achievement in education.

Socioeconomics. The results of this study indicated that the socioeconomic conditions of Black students continue to influence their college choice. Freeman (2005) reported during her study that the overwhelming consensus of Black students at one high school in Atlanta, GA believed they did not have the financial resources to attend college. The context neutral mindset and practices tenet acknowledges the need for lower socioeconomic students and Black students to have equitable academic opportunities that are affordable (Milner, 2012). HBCUs have both a lower cost of attendance and a higher graduation rate that benefits Black students from various socioeconomic backgrounds (Brooks & Starks, 2011). Worthy, Lavgne & Romero (2020) define socioeconomics as the following, "Socioeconomic status (SES) is an economic and social combined total measure of a person's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation; however, SES is more commonly used to depict an economic difference in society... (chapter 9, pg. 7)". The U.S. Census Bureau (2018) categorized African Americans as having the highest poverty rate in the country being at twenty-one percent of the poverty class. Poverty is defined as follows, "the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions" (Merriam-Webster, 2021). This fact places an extreme amount of financial pressure on families who are living in poverty and could potentially make college unaffordable (Freeman, 2005). Many African American students come from working-class families where they experience low income and parents who do not have a four-year college degree (Freeman, 2005). The socioeconomic status of each Black family play an important role in college selection and whether to continue their education after high school

(Freeman, 2005). The scholarships received by the students were essential for the participants to afford college (Freeman, 2005). These highlighted socioeconomic disparities create opportunity gaps that Blacks experience within the American education system (Milner, 2012).

Major Selection and Socioeconomics. Black and Hispanic students also focus greatly on the cost to attend college in relation to the perspective career income that will come from earning a degree due to the socioeconomic disparity (Freeman, 2005). Freeman (2005) believed students may elect to join the workforce instead of college if a clear path to their aspiring career is not present through undergraduate studies. The schools used in the study have music performance degree tracks students could have chosen as a major. The survey results indicated that only 10 participants currently major in music, making it plausible that music ensemble students were cautious concerning the benefits of the degree programs offered at their institutions.

The attainment of a music performance degree is a great accomplishment that can lead to a rewarding career path. However, this field has a competitive job market after graduation (Kowarski, 2021). The job market median income earned for musicians who sing and/or play instruments in a live or recorded session is $31.40 per hour (U.S. Labor of Statistics, 2020). This equals out to $62,800 a year. This is a sharp contrast from aspiring performance musicians at the bottom of the wage earnings reported to earn $11.17 per hour (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, 2020), acquiring a much lower salary of $22,340. This lower rate can be an insufficient salary for those who need to support their family. Additionally, the music performance degree is not necessary to find work as a performer, unless you desire a career in the classical arts (U.S. Department of Statistics, 2020). This over saturates the music industry causing some musicians to experience lingering periods without work. (Kowarski, 2021). The instability of work and wages could be

viewed as a risk for minority students seeking a 4-year degree. Further, this can account for the lack of interest in these university music programs who only offer music performance degrees instead of music education that leads more seamlessly into a career in education after college. Music teaching jobs are in abundance for those who desire a career in education (Hash, 2021).

In this study, 9 participants had interest in majoring in music education as they selected their college. Additionally, 22 total participants stated interest in becoming a music educator after graduation. The absence of music education from Georgia HBCUs serves as an opportunity gap for those who aspire to teach. Milner (2012) believes that is it essential for educators to provide exemplary learning opportunities for minorities. Milner (2012) explains that the lack of minority teachers in the classroom leads to academic gaps and behavioral issues in communities of color. The lack of music education offerings at these HBCUs limits the number of minorities in the field of music education. The Georgia Department of Education (2019) reports that the average salary for entry level teachers who completes the state's pre-service certification requirements, holds a bachelor's degree, and completes a teacher preparation program will be considered a T-4 educator earning a base salary of $37,092 in the State of Georgia. The salary for teachers in the state of Georgia offers a stable income for music graduates. Additionally, teaching positions have incentives such as annual salary raises based on work experience, in-field degrees attained, health and retirement benefits.

RQ2: Did factors such as PWI enrollment benchmarks, audition standards, school location, cost of attendance, and university culture influence the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs?

The second research question aimed to determine factors that influenced the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs. The participants of this study highlighted that larger scholarship offers from their university, friends/family are attending or

have attended the university of choice, academic level and reputation of university of college choice is high including faculty and facilities, better choice of music ensembles at their university, the university showed a more personal interest in the student, smaller class size available at their university, and wanting to go out of state to be further from home influenced their school choice. These results also appear in alignment with previous research.

Enrollment Benchmarks. Enrollment criteria such as GPA and test scores did play a role with the greater percentage of the study participants. The enrollment benchmarks at universities that do not consider race, culture, and socioeconomics of Blacks when making admission decisions can result in systemic barriers (Milner, 2012; Abramo & Bernard, 2019). Respondents were clear that their high school cumulative GPA influenced their college choice, in which 70.13% indicated that their GPA was a factor. The following question of the survey also inquired about the influence of the participants SAT/ACT scores on college choice, and similarly participants (63.64%) responded that the standardized test needed for admissions influenced their decision. Milner (2012) asserts that the underlying reasons for minorities lower test scores on standardized test is due to the lack of access to quality schools and test prep courses (Milner, 2012).

Most participants (60.49%) indicated that they were attending their top choice for undergraduate studies. These statistics are interesting being that all participants currently attend a HBCU, indicating their test scores and GPA contributed to their decision to attend a HBCU from an academic and testing standpoint. HBCUs have historically employed flexible enrollment standards to give students of color excellent opportunities to further their education in a variety of disciplines (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). This point is important due to Black students having lower achievement on average than their White counterparts when taking standardized tests

(Toldson & McGee, 2014). Toldson & McGee (2014) writes that the average enrollment GPA for HBCUs is a 2.5, while the average test scores are 18 for the ACT and 905 for the SAT (Toldson & McGee, 2014). These data were taken across all HBCUs in the nation including 2- and 4-year institutions both private and public (Toldson & McGee, 2014). The HBCU national test score average corresponds directly with the average test scores for Black students being 17 (2012) on the ACT, and 860 (2013) on the SAT.

Flagship PWIs are noted for having higher admission standards although there is no clear minimum GPA or test score requirement that has been provided for these schools nationally (Toldson &McGee, 2014). The PWIs in Georgia are no exception to this standard of having higher testing enrollment benchmarks (U.S. News, 2022). Below are the testing averages for Georgia PWIs that offer music education (Table 6).

Table 6

Test Scores of Georgia PWIs that Offer Music Education

School Name:	Sat Score Average:	ACT Score Average:
Augusta University	1020-1210	19-26
Berry College	1065-1240	23-29
Brenau University	900	19
Clayton State University	1050	20
Columbus State University	860-1080	17-23
Georgia Southwestern State University	940-1110	19-22
Georgia State & College University	1100-1245	23-27
Georgia State University	950-1160	20-26
Emmanuel College	1110-1280	23-29
Georgia Southern University	993-1170	18-24
Georgia Southwestern State University	940-1110	19-22
Kennesaw State University	1030-1200	19-25
LaGrange College	980-1123	19-24
Piedmont University	980-1140	19-25
Reinhardt University	940-1160	19-24
Shorter University	950-1160	18-24
Tocoa Falls College	930-1130	17-24
Truett McConnell University	920-1140	17-25
University of North Georgia	1060-1210	21-26
University of Georgia	1220-1400	27-32
University of West Georgia	900-1040	17-22
Valdosta State University	930-1100	17-21

Influence of Audition Standards. In this study, 50.65% of participants selected ‘yes’ that the audition process was a factor in their school selection. The students indicated the quality of the overall music program, mandatory audition to being granted membership into their ensemble, and the music ensemble director as influential factors. The most common reason for auditioning for their program was to fulfill requirements needed for music scholarship. This aligns with research literature on the importance of affording post-secondary education (Freeman, 2005). The participants placed a high value in both ensemble participation and music scholarship opportunities that derived from the audition in relation to their school selection process.

In considering the PWI music audition minorities have been found to have a lack of access to classical training due to familial obligations at home, lack of transportation to out-of-school appointments such as private lessons, and a lack of interest in the classical-based solo literature studies (Abramo & Bernard, 2020). Milner (2012) speaks of the context neutral mindset and cultural conflicts as a barrier in education for minorities where educator practitioners and leaders do not consider understand or create policies to accommodate students who are of non-White descent or of low-socio-economic status. These issues limit access for minorities to study music at PWIs (Abramo & Bernard, 2020).

School Location. Participants stated that the proximity to home affected their school selection. Studies show that minority low-income students feel more confident with attending college close to home due to familial obligations and/or familiarity with the area or institution (Schiltheis, 2013). Participants commented that being close to home, having family close by, and not having to move from their home city as reasons that assisted in their school choice decision. This point could have influenced the major selection of current music ensemble students if attending a HBCU near home was more important than the available majors offered at their school.

Cost of Attendance. The students in this study overwhelmingly selected affordability as a key part of their decision to attend their school. Out of 81 respondents, 72 answered that their scholarship was a factor for their school choice, thus supporting that the myth of meritocracy is underlying factor in education. Additionally, the United Negro College Fund (2022) reported that HBCUs cost of attendance is 28% less than their non-HBCU counterparts. The myth of meritocracy is the belief that all students are granted the same opportunities for success regardless of race, class, and socioeconomic differences between students, no matter of personal

or societal obstacles (Garrison, Rice & Liu, 2021). Boyington et al. (2021) reported that college costs have skyrocketed over the last twenty years. The out-of-state cost of attendance for state universities has increased 171%, while in-state university fees increased 211% (Boyington et al., 2021). African Americans are impacted by the cost for college due to having the highest percentage of people in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2017), thus supporting the reason participants deemed the music scholarship offerings as an important factor for their school choice. During a study performed by Schultheis (2013), both minority high school students and their parents were part of the final decision pertaining to college. The school costs and benefits for attending potential schools were debated prior to a decision being made, emphasizing the importance of having affordable higher education options (Schultheis, 2013).

University Culture. The participants in this study were asked why they selected a HBCU vs. PWI. Participants were very clear in their responses including feeling more at home because people look like me, the atmosphere, family-like environment, the cultural experience, feeling at home while visiting the campus, and trusting that attending a HBCU will develop them into the best adults personally and professionally. Milner (2012) states that having an inclusive culture in the classroom is essential in the overall academic, social, and behavioral achievement of Black students. In relation to the achievement gap, this is where we see high percentages of minority students in special education, low percentages of minorities in gifted courses, and more disciplinary referrals for minority students (Milner, 2012).

Black students in Rochell's (2019) study indicated that they chose an HBCU to be within a familiar culture, heritage, and sense of belonging. The family-like environment and opportunity to form meaningful relationships including mentorships were noteworthy reasons as well (Malloy, 2019). Although more Blacks attend PWIs, HBCUs produce more Black graduates at a

disproportionate rate (Freeman, 2005). Michael Lomax who serves as the president of the United Negro College Fund stated that, “HBCUs produce about 50 percent of Black teachers…” (Zhao, 2021). HBCUs are integral to the Black community offering smaller class sizes, favorable classroom experiences, and a more inclusive environment. These points align with the results of this study as the participants reported that it is important for the university to show a more personal interest in students and smaller class sizes (Goodwine, 2019). One participant noted that they chose an HBCU due to better connection, better support, and the professors being more invested in their students. While another participant chose an HBCU because of the atmosphere, and the belief that his/her teacher genuinely want to see (him/her) be successful.

Similarly, in high school Black students perceive that when being taught from a minority faculty member, they are more apt to have increased positive classroom experiences (Vega et al., 2015). Black students who have same-race teachers are less likely to receive exclusionary discipline methods such as out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and expulsion (Lindsay & Hart, 2017), demonstrating the importance of inclusivity, school climate, and a stronger sense of belonging. Many high school teachers perceive that their Black students will not be successful in their educational endeavors, as high school teachers expected that 58% of white students will go on to obtain a college degree, in comparison to 37% of Black students (Irizarry, 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). This could account for why many of the participants stated that learning from teachers of a similar race mattered in their undergraduate college selection.

Implications

The implications discussed in this section include the lack of diversity at PWIs, few music education offerings at HBCUs, financial limitations, and having to pursue alternative certification due to not having music education programs. These areas operate as underlying reasons or opportunity gaps that can negatively affect the graduation rate of Blacks, limiting the number of people of color in the music education profession.

Diversity. The first implication discussed will be the need for more diversity at PWIs. Although music education is available throughout the state of Georgia at PWIs, previous research has also highlighted that African Americans enrolled in PWIs may experience micro-aggressions from fellow students and professors (Boykin et al., 2017; Palmer et al., 2016). The meaning of diversity is "the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Diversity will contribute to a better educational experience of Black students at PWIs, leading to a higher retention and graduation rate. Blacks from a lower socioeconomic background are more likely to have better rates of retention and graduation when attending a HBCU; however, many Black students believe that higher quality of education is more achievable at PWIs (Karkouti, 2016). This establishes the need for a diverse faculty at PWIs.

The current study identified several critical elements that influenced the school choice decision of music ensemble students who study at HBCUs. This included selecting an HBCU for their undergraduate studies due to feeling more comfortable in a learning environment with students and teachers who share the same race. The shortage of Black educators does not promote for a more equitable experience in the classroom for Black students, as previous literature has highlighted how Black faculty members can increase the positivity of Black

students' learning environment, increasing their academic achievement levels (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Meyers, 2017; Taylor et al., 2017). Therefore, by increasing the representation of Black faculty members, colleges and universities can begin to work through disparities and barriers for Black students.

The problem with having lack of diversity occurs with educators who report that they are colorblind when it comes to working with minority students (Meyers, 2017). For example, in Meyers' (2017) study, the participants reported that professors who identify as being colorblind, claiming they do not see race as a factor, do not help Black students. Rather, when Black students have a professor who claims to be colorblind, they felt even more marginalized and overlooked. Some participants of Meyers' study claimed that they became anxious about complaining and speaking up because they believed this would make them look like they had asked for special treatment. Therefore, it is important for all colleges and universities to provide appropriate training and professional development opportunities for all faculty members and staff to better educate them about diversity, inclusion, and how to better assist Black students (Goodwine, 2019).

Available degree programs at Georgia HBCUs. Georgia HBCUs that do not offer music education limit the opportunity for Blacks to major in music education. By not offering a full range of degree offerings in education, Black students are affected not only by school choice, but also career paths. This is troubling due to the lack of Black music educators in the field of music education. The U.S. Department of Education (2016) wrote that more educators of color are needed in the classroom. HBCUs and alternative routes to certification are important to improving the representation of Blacks, especially in high-need schools and communities (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). HBCUs produce around 50% of the nation's Black teachers

(Fenwick, 2021), however most of the 4-year HBCUs in the state of Georgia do not offer music education as a degree program (GAPSC, 2020). When examining the current state of diversity, the statistics show a disproportion in education, in addition to music education. The National Center of Education Statistics (2018) confirmed that 75% of undergraduates earning bachelor's degrees in education were White. Moening (n.d.) shares that 80 percent of the public-school teachers are White, however many public-school students enrolled are not classified as White throughout the nation. This percentage represents the lack of diversity and availability of certified teachers of color in the classroom.

In music education, the percentage gap to White vs. Black educators is even larger. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) conducted a national report which indicated a disproportionate percentage of music education and performance graduates according to race, with Black students graduating at 6.6% (McKoy, 2012). This is in sharp contrast to Whites who are represented at 86% (Elpus, 2015). Fletcher (2020) suggests that focusing on 4-year institutions with a high population of African American students could assist in producing more Blacks in education. HBCUs are essential in offering an opportunity for more Blacks to become educators and should be supported. Further, it is essential for policymakers and HBCU executive leadership to address the challenges of entry-level requirements and certification benchmarks such as the Praxis/GACE exams that impact the Black college student negatively as compared to other races (Fenwick, 2021).

Alternative Certification. There were twenty-one participants who responded that they were interested in becoming a music educator post-graduation on the provided survey. However, only one participant visited the GaPSC website to review certification standards. Future graduates of these programs will need to seek alternative certification programs post-graduation

to have a career in teaching. This is due to the HBCUs in this study not offering music majors the requisite education program and testing requirements to graduate as a certified educator (GaPSC, 2022). In the state of Georgia, being a certified educator is a requirement to have long-term career as a music educator (GaPSC, 2022). The state of Georgia will allow new uncertified teachers three years to complete a certification program before their non-renewable certificate expire (GaPSC, 2022). In music and arts, 13 percent of teachers who entered the field needed alternative certification (National Council of Teacher Quality, 2018). Although this route can lead to becoming a music educator, there are hardships associated with not earning your certification in your undergraduate program.

In a study performed by Clement & Cochran (2020), the researchers sought to discover differences in teacher experiences with certification vs. teachers who did not attain certification or matriculate though a teacher-preparation program. Teachers who attended the traditional 4-year teacher preparation program in college felt more prepared to teach content, classroom management, communication, and assessment. Clement & Cochran (2020) also found that job opportunities are plentiful for those who graduate from preservice teaching programs, with some who may have job offers prior to graduation. These teachers will also have a better chance to work in districts that place high emphasis on new teacher orientation programs (Clement & Cochran, 2020).

However, the teacher with no preservice teacher training reported high stress in completing daily activities, lesson planning, and grading. This teacher left the profession after her first year (Clement & Cochran, 2020). Teachers who lack preservice training and traditional certification will have a more difficult process finding a job. This is in addition to completing certification measures needed to maintain employment during the year (Clement & Cochran,

2020). Teachers who have alternative certification are more represented in schools with minorities and lower income public schools. In the state of Georgia, only 1.44% of uncertified teachers work in schools that are considered as a low-minority school (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). However, the percentage is much larger in high-minority schools being 5.84% (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). Further, teacher orientation programs may not be offered to the non-certified employee due to working at a smaller learning community such as a rural public school district or private school. Based on these data, teachers who lack certification often start their careers in schools with limited options with where they work. This can be viewed as a problem with recruitment and retention of black educators, being Blacks and Hispanics were the highest percentage of teachers entering the field with alternative certification (National Council of Teacher Quality, 2018).

Limitations

There were some limitations with this study. The first limitation includes the survey that I used to collect the data. Surveys can have inherent biases when researchers are the ones who had adapted the multiple-choice items (Pedersen, 1992). To combat this form of bias, I had classmates at the University of Georgia test pilot the pre-designed survey developed by US Department of Education (2018). Therefore, the way the respondents answered each survey question could act as a limitation (Pederson, 1992), as they were unable to answer all questions in their own words; rather, they had to select pre-designed answers. The opportunity to include more qualitative data could illuminate other potential barriers to becoming a music educator that were not found in this study. However, using a survey that included open-ended questions allowed for larger amounts of data to be collected to better examine both correlations and relationships.

Recommendations for Future Studies

There are some recommendations for future studies that need to be discussed. Researchers should continue researching this topic from a qualitative standpoint. Completing qualitative research will allow researchers to continue to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of Black music students and educators regarding the influences of school choice when it comes to music education. A qualitative approach will allow the participants to provide more information regarding the phenomenon, through the examination of their personal or lived experiences. as they can answer questions. Further, a qualitative approach allows for the participant provide feedback that the researcher may not have considered, contributing the literature of minorities in music education. Future researchers could also ask follow-up questions to current participants in this study the participants socio-economic class in relation to college choice, the challenges of working as an educator and achieving alterative certification, and to inquire about job opportunities for those who graduated without certification. Additionally, it is recommended that future studies focus on geographical areas outside of the state of Georgia. Completing studies outside of the state of Georgia could provide additional information that otherwise was not highlighted within this current study while identifying other issues applicable to other areas of the United States. Studying HBCUs who do not offer music education outside the state of Georgia will expand the current study's scope of music education, HBCUs, and people of color in music.

Conclusion

The topic for this dissertation was inspired by the limited options for Georgia students to study music education at Georgia HBCUs. Therefore, the purpose of this descriptive study was to examine the school choice decision of music ensemble students who attended HBCUs that did

not offer music education but wanted to become a certified teacher. The results of this study indicated that students' choice of undergraduate institution were largely influenced by; "larger scholarship offers from their university", "friends/family are attending or have attended the university of choice, "academic level and reputation of university of college choice is high including faculty and facilities", "better choice of music ensembles at their university", "the university showed a more personal interest in the student", "smaller class size available at their university", and "wanting to go out of state to be further from home".

This chapter concluded the dissertation by providing a comprehensive interpretation of the results in relation to previous literature and an examination of the study's implications while also identifying and discussing the limitations and recommendations for future studies. It is imperative for all colleges and universities to offer equal opportunities for all students, allowing them stronger choices, especially when seeking music education programming.

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APPENDIX: Music Student Survey Questions.

Questions	Survey Questions

Demographic Questions:

1. Select your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. I prefer not to say

2. Please select your ethnicity below:
   A. American Indian
   B. Black
   C. Asian
   D. Latin American/ Hispanic
   E. White American/Caucasian
   F. Other: _____
   G. I prefer not to say

3. Please indicate the type of high school attended:
   A. Public School
   B. Private School
   C. Charter School
   D. Home School

4. Select the geographical area that best fits the location of your high school.
   A. Urban
   B. Suburban
   C. Rural

5. What is your undergraduate major?
   Undergraduate Major: _____

6. Do you have interest in becoming a music educator?
   A. Yes
   B. No

College Choice Questions:

7. Did you participate in any events or activities hosted by your undergraduate university of choice before attending?
   A. Never
   B. 1-2 Times
   C. 3-4 Times
   D. More than 5 Times

8. How many times did you visit your undergraduate university before attending?
   A. Never
   B. 1-2 Times
   C. 3-4 Times
   D. More than 5 Times

9. Are you attending your top choice for undergraduate studies?
   A. Yes
   B. No

10. The following is a list of factors that may have influenced your decision to choose your undergraduate institution. For each factor circle a number between 0 and 4 to indicate the degree to which that factor influenced your decision to attend another institution where 0 = Not a Factor and 4 = A Significant Factor.

	Not a Factor		A Factor But Not Significant		A Significant Factor
a. Better choice of music ensembles at my university	0	1	2	3	4
b. Wanted to go out of state to be further from home	0	1	2	3	4
c. Larger scholarship offers from my university	0	1	2	3	4
d. Smaller class size available at my university	0	1	2	3	4
e. Academic level and reputation of my university or college choice is higher including faculty and facilities	0	1	2	3	4
f. The university showed a more personal interest in me	0	1	2	3	4

g. Friends/family are attending or have attended my university of choice 0 1 2 3 4

11. Did college entrance requirements such as GPA criteria play a role in your undergraduate college decision?
    A. Yes
    B. No

12. Did college entrance requirements such as SAT/ACT benchmark criteria play a role in your undergraduate college decision?
    A. Yes
    B. No

13. Did college entrance requirements such as the music school audition criteria play a role in your undergraduate college decision? If you answer yes, please explain.
    A. Yes _____
    B. No

14. Why did you choose to attend a HBCU vs. attending a PWI?
    _____
    _____

15. Are you aware of the process to become a certified music educator?
    A. Yes
    B. No

16. Have you ever visited the GaPSC website, or communicated with an employee of the GaPSC (Georgia Professional Standards Commission)?
    A. Yes
    B. No

17. How do you plan to become certified after receiving your undergraduate degree?
    A. Certification program offered by hiring school district
    B. Certification program offered by a university
    C. Other, please list: _____

18. Please provide any other feedback you think would assist in understanding why you selected the university you attend.
    _____
    _____