

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES TO GED STUDENTS' MATRICULATION TO COLLEGE

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Introduction and Problem

- 338,000, or 43% of the 788,000 students who were enrolled in the GED program in 2009 cited furthering their education as the main motivation for completing the GED courses (Quigley, Patterson, & Zhang 2011).
- Only 55,814, or 11.8% of the 473,000 General Education Diploma (GED) students who passed the GED test in 2009 are transitioning to college within a year of receiving their GED.

Purpose

- The purpose of this research was to identify what GED students perceived as challenges to matriculating to college upon completion of a GED program in order to assist colleges and GED programs in developing plans that will address the reported challenges.

Significance

- Some research has been done on barriers that GED students face going into college (Cross, 1981) (Quigley, Patterson, & Zhang 2011); however little has been done since the adoption of the new 2014 GED test (GED Testing Services, 2015).
- Grant money is linked to student matriculation (Illinois Community College Board, 2012-2015), therefore the results of this study could help adult education programs financially (Foster, 2012) .
- The results could help to develop programs that would help GED students overcome challenges (Cross) (Quigley et al.) to college matriculation.

Literature

- Cross (1981), identified three types of barriers, which will be referred to in this study as challenges , to adult educational participation: situational, institutional, and dispositional.
 - Cross defined situational as barriers that “ arise from an individual’s life” (p 98, 1981).
 - Institutional barriers: Rules and regulations which define the time, place and entry requirements of courses of study, or simply the non-availability of a course of study required by the individual (Cross).
 - *Dispositional Barriers*: Relate to the learner’s own attitudes and self-perceptions (Cross).

Literature

- It is suspected that there are situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers that prevent students from completing a college degree (Quigley, Patterson, & Zhang, 2011).

Literature

- Harrison (1993) claims that to fully understand the lack of adult education participation , all three barriers (situational, institutional, and dispositional) need to be studied and addressed.
- Researchers Tokpah, Padak, Baycich, Trehan, and Turnidge (2006) suggested that identifying the needs of GED students who are matriculating into college could relieve and eliminate some barriers for students before it resulted in non-entry or dropout

Literature

- It is important for GED students to complete a college degree due to the economic advantages that come with a college diploma or certificate for the student and the community in which they reside (Penner, 2011; Patterson, 2010).

Research Questions

- **RQ 1**

What do GED students identify as potential situational challenges to college matriculation?

- **RQ 2**

What do GED students identify as potential institutional challenges to college matriculation?

- **RQ 3**

What do GED students identify as potential dispositional challenges to college matriculation?

- **RQ 4**

What relationships exist in reported challenges as a factor of age, gender and ethnicity?

Participants

- To obtain data results, a survey was issued, through Survey Monkey [®],
 - GED students at a Midwestern Community College.
 - Ten GED social media pages,
 - Church bulletin
- 117 participants took the survey
- Age range 17-68
- 39 male, 75 female, 2 – did not disclose
- 68 Caucasian, 17 African American, 14 Hispanic, 4 Asian, 1 Native American, 3 did not disclose

Survey Tool

- Modified version of the Adult Learning Questionnaire/Deterrents to Participation Scale-General (DPS-G) (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1990)
- The alpha reliability coefficient for the DPS-G is .86(Darkenwald & Valentine, 1990).
- For the purposes of this study the subscales will be categorized into to three areas; institutional, dispositional, and situational challenges.

RQ1 – RQ3 Analytical Methods

- Data from the survey was sorted into the Statistical Package for Social Science ® (SPSS 16) to complete analysis.
- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the responses to each of the eleven survey questions relating to situational, dispositional, and institution challenges.
- The mean and standard deviation were calculated to determine which questions the participants ranked as the greatest situational, dispositional, or institutional challenges.

RQ1 – Results

- RQ 1

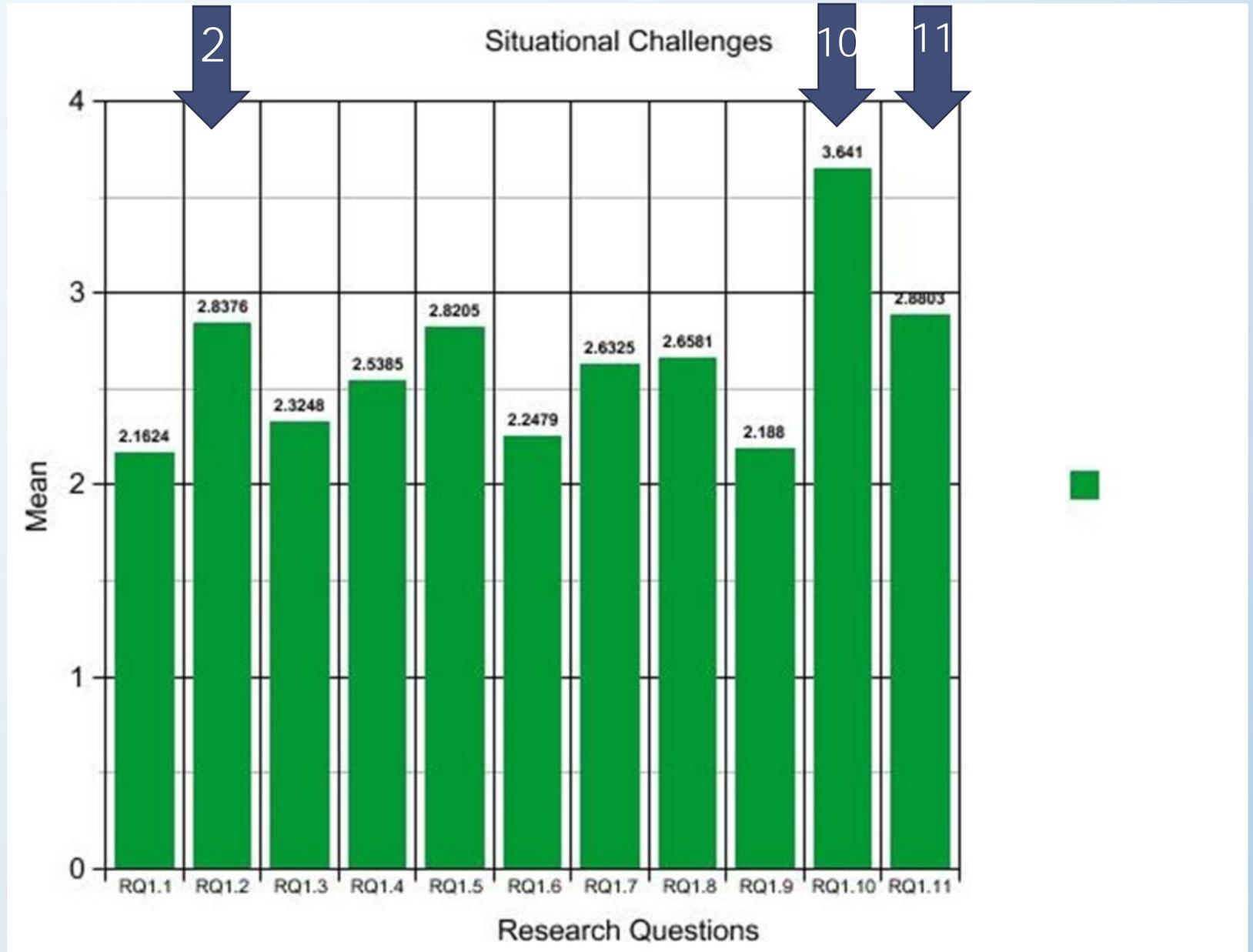
What do GED students identify as potential situational challenges to college matriculation?

The three most identified situational challenges

- students could not afford the miscellaneous expenses such as travel, and books (RQ1_item10)
- students' employers will not provide financial assistance or reimbursements (RQ1_item11)
- students didn't have the time for studying required (RQ1_item2)

RQ 1 Graph

- students didn't have the time for studying required (RQ1_item2)
- students could not afford the miscellaneous expenses such as travel, and books. (RQ1_item10)
- students' employers will not provide financial assistance or reimbursements (RQ1_item11)



RQ2 – Results

- **RQ 2**

What do GED students identify as potential institutional challenges to college matriculation?

The top three identified institutional challenges

- students could not afford the registration or course fee (RQ2_item5)
- students wanted to learn something specific and the courses offered were too general (RQ2_item1)
- courses were not offered in a convenient location (RQ2_item4)

RQ 2 Graph

- students wanted to learn something specific and the courses offered were too general (RQ2_item1)
- courses were not offered in a convenient location (RQ2_item4)
- students could not afford the registration or course fee (RQ2_item5)



RQ3 Results

- **RQ 3**

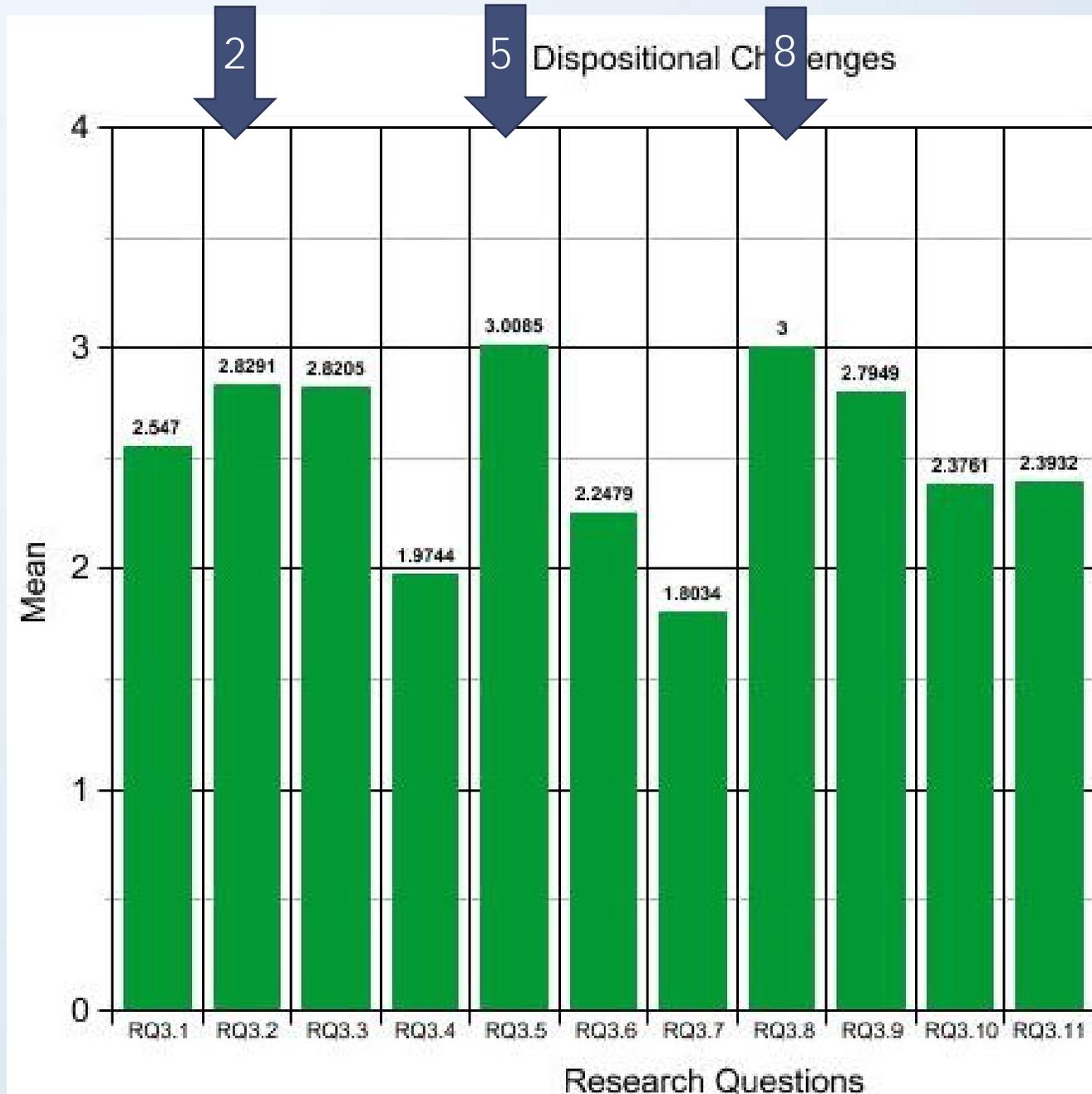
What do GED students identify as potential dispositional challenges to college matriculation?

The top three identified dispositional challenges

- students were not confident in their learning ability (RQ3_5)
- students felt unprepared for college courses (RQ3_8)
- students didn't enjoy studying (RQ3_2)

RQ 3 Graph

- students didn't enjoy studying (RQ3_2)
- students were not confident in their learning ability (RQ3_5)
- students felt unprepared for college courses (RQ3_8)



RQ4 – Analytical Methods

- RQ 4

What relationships exist in reported challenges as a factor of age, gender, and ethnicity?

- Independent *t*-tests were performed in SPSS 16 for gender and ethnicity in their relationship to the reported challenges.
- Caucasian categorized into the group titled White. African American and Hispanic categorized into the group titled Non-White.
- To find if a relationship existed between the three potential challenges (institutional, situational, and dispositional) and age, a Bivariate Pearson Correlation was performed and a chart was produced to show the results.

RQ4 – Results

- RQ 4

What relationships exist in reported challenges as a factor of age, gender and ethnicity?

Gender and Ethnicity

- No statistically significant relationship was found to exist among gender and institutional, situational, or dispositional challenges as the t values were more than 0.05
- No statistically significant relationships were found between ethnicity and situational, institutional, or dispositional challenges. The t values were more than 0.05

RQ4 – Results

- RQ 4

What relationships exist in reported challenges as a factor of age, gender and ethnicity?

Age

- No statistically significant correlation existed between situational challenges and age, the $r=0.137$, $n=117$, $p=.0.141 > 0.01$.
- A statistically significant correlation was not found between dispositional challenges and age, $r=0.089$, $n=117$, $p=0.339 > 0.01$.

RQ4 – Results (Continued)

- RQ 4

What relationships exist in reported challenges as a factor of age, gender and ethnicity?

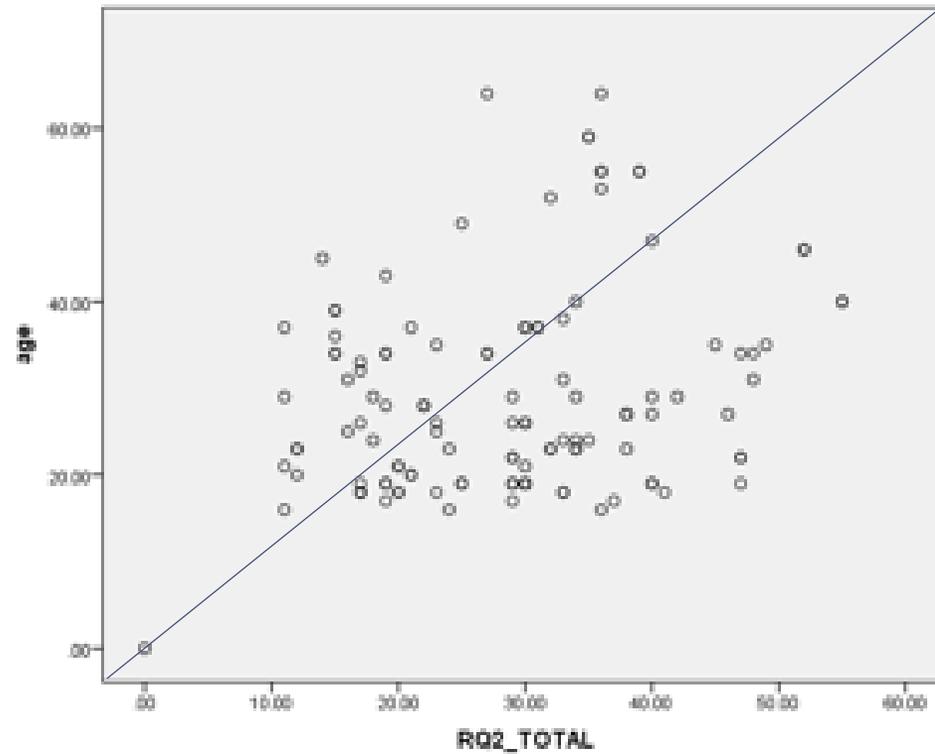
Age

- A statistically significant relationship was found between institutional challenges and age, $r=0.275$, $n=117$, $p=0.003<0.01$
- The correlation coefficient of 0.275 indicates that age and institutional challenges are positively correlated, which means that as the age increases, the amount of institutional challenges reported also increases.

Scatterplot for the correlation of Age and Institutional Challenges

Figure 1

Scatterplot for Bivariate Pearson Correlation for Age and Institutional Challenges



correlation coefficient of 0.275

Limitations

Three limitations identified

- The current study only sent the survey to GED students currently enrolled in programs.
- The number of participants compared to the projected number based on the GED student population was lower than expected.
- The survey tool used, DPS-G, was not specifically designed for GED students.

Implications

- Programs and institutions must understand and implement programs to address the challenges being reported by the GED students.
 - further efforts and program development that will assist in college matriculation of GED graduates.
- Colleges ought to increase the awareness of student services available to GED graduates
- GED students need assistance from colleges to perform at the academic level expected by the instructors and professors

Recommendations

- Repeat the current study aiming to reach a higher participant rate, thus getting closer to being able to generalize the results.
- Target the population that has graduated from the GED program and has not matriculated into college.
- Programs address the challenges of finances and self-concept
 - GED transition counseling
 - Awareness of community social services
 - Mentoring program

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