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Motivating Factors Contributing to Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Students' Choice of Career Path

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Cover Page Footnote

Motivating Factors Contributing to Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Students' Choice of Career Path Nicole Wells, MHS, CF-SLP, Danielle R. Osmelak, EdD, MS, CCC-SLP/L, FNAP, Angela Riccelli, Ed.D., CCC-SLP, & Ravi Nigam, Ph.D., CCC-SLP Department of Communication Disorders Governors State University 1 University Park, IL 60484 Authors' Note Correspondence concerning this manuscript should be addressed to Danielle Osmelak, Department of Communication Disorders, Governors State University, 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484. email: dosmelak@govst.edu

Motivating Factors Contributing to Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Students'

Choice of Career Path

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Abstract

Speech Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) are important support personnel who play a key role in the field of communication sciences and disorders. As the client base for communication disorders grows and diversifies, there is a continuous need for service providers, including SLPAs. Given the notable shortage of skilled communication sciences and disorders professionals and the advantages that assistants can provide, exploring SLPA career decision making is especially timely and important. The current study surveyed 75 students enrolled in SLPA programs across the United States via an online 12 question survey tool, regarding their demographics, reasons for choosing to become an SLPA, and anticipated work setting(s). Results of the study indicated that SLPA students were often identified as non-traditional students who, in addition to having diverse educational backgrounds, were working either full-time or part-time jobs while completing their education. Results of the current study revealed that the primary motivating factor that contributed to the students' decision to pursue a career as an SLPA was the desire to work in a helping profession. The school setting was the most anticipated work setting of SLPA students upon graduating from their program; however, the majority (60%) of current SLPA students planned to pursue a master's degree to become a speech-language pathologist in the future. Understanding the demographics of SLPA students and identifying the motivating factors specific to their career choices may be advantageous in the warranted recruitment process within the field of communication sciences and disorders.

Keywords: speech-language pathology assistant, motivating factors, recruitment, higher education, allied health

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SLPA STUDENTS

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has been the nation's leading professional, credentialing, and scientific organization for communication sciences and disorders (CSD) professionals since 1925. Professionals governed by ASHA include those engaged in clinical or research-based work surrounding communication disorders and is mostly comprised of speech-language pathologists (SLPs), audiologists, speech, language, and hearing scientists, and support personnel such as speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) and audiology assistants (ASHA, n.d.-a). Individuals labeled as support personnel include SLPAs and audiology assistants who work under the supervision of ASHA-certified SLPs or audiologists. Prior to 2020, SLPAs and audiology assistants were required to meet specific academic and professional standards per their respective state licensing boards to practice clinically; however, ASHA did not endorse or provide certification. Beginning in the fall of 2020, assistants had the option to take a credentialing exam, while meeting educational and clinical requirements, which allowed them to become certified practitioners. In 2020, ASHA identified 32 associate-level SLPA programs across the United States. (ASHA, n.d.-b)

As the client base for communication disorders grows and diversifies, there is a continuous need for service providers, including SLPAs. Assistants allow more flexibility for the supervising SLP or audiologist and more therapy opportunities for those in need. According to ASHA, it is advantageous for an SLP to incorporate SLPAs in their practice as it provides an opportunity to extend services (ASHA, n.d.-c). In the 2009 ASHA Membership Survey Report, thirty-six percent of SLPs noted that the use of support personnel was indicated to allow the SLP more time to work with patients or clients with more complex needs. Moreover, thirty-three percent of SLPs also reported that utilizing assistants decreased the time they spent engaging in clerical duties (ASHA, n.d.-c). Furthermore, approximately one quarter of SLPs who indicated

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that they employed support personnel at their facility reported that incorporating an assistant into

their practice allowed them to increase the frequency or intensity of services for clients (ASHA,

n.d.-c).

Though SLPAs can perform various duties and responsibilities surrounding therapeutic

speech and language services, it is important to note that there are also limitations that fall

outside of the SLPA scope of practice. For example, it is unethical for an SLPA to falsely

represent themselves as an SLP (ASHA, 2022). SLPAs are restricted from administering or

interpreting feeding and swallowing screenings, checklists, and assessments. Also, outside of

SLPAs' scope of practice is participating in parent conferences in the absence of the supervising

SLP, writing or developing treatment plans, signing any formal documents such as reports,

discharging an individual from services, and making referrals for additional services (ASHA,

2022). Moreover, SLPAs are restricted from treating medically fragile patients/clients

independently, developing swallowing strategies or precautions for patients, and selecting

augmentative and alternative communication systems (ASHA, 2022). These responsibilities

cannot be undertaken by SLPAs, solidifying the importance of SLPs' supervisory role in the

supervision of SLPAs.

A benefit of the utilization of assistants arises with the continuous reports of professional

shortages in the field of communication sciences and disorders. The need for speech, language,

and audiology services continues to grow within the general population, as well as in the

geriatric population. As individuals age, mental and physical abilities tend to decline, resulting in

an increase of disabilities and a need for treatment (Brodsky & Cooke, 2000). The shortage of

SLPs in the school setting is also concerning as many students who need speech and language

services are not being served or are being served by out-of-field professionals (Edgar & Lugo,

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2007). According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for an additional 40,500 SLPs, a

25% increase, is projected between the years 2019 and 2029 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

The national shortage of communication disorders professionals calls for further analysis

of the importance of support personnel, such as SLPAs. The shortage of qualified professionals

has motivated researchers to delve deeper into the underlying factors that contribute to an

individual's decision to pursue a career in communication sciences and disorders (Brodsky &

Cooke, 2000; Fuse, 2018; Keshishian & McGarr, 2012; Stone & Pellowski, 2015). In order to

recruit students to a communication disorders program of study, identifying commonalities

amongst students regarding their personal and educational background may be advantageous.

The factors that may contribute to students' academic success or failure as they move through a

communication disorders program of study must also be considered. To recruit qualified

professionals into the field of communication sciences and disorders, it is important to identify

potential barriers that may hinder a student from graduating to ensure that students are receiving

any needed support for success in the academic realm, and consequently, success upon working

in the field. In order to support recruitment efforts, it is crucial to identify the specific factors that

have influenced a student's decision to pursue a career in communication sciences and disorders.

Stone and Pellowski (2015) conducted a quantitative study to further identify factors

affecting career choice among speech-language pathology and audiology students. The study

explored the relationship between career choice and direct or indirect personal exposure to the

field of communication sciences and disorders. Based on their findings, Stone and Pellowski

(2015) conclude that because the majority of participants in the study indicated their dedication

to working in a helping profession was an influential career factor, attempts to increase exposure

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of the clinical practices within the field of communication sciences and disorders may be

effective in future recruitment efforts.

Though various research studies have explored career choice in communication sciences

and disorders, more specifically within SLP and audiology graduate programs, no study to date

has specifically explored SLPA career decision making. Moreover, minimal research has been

conducted regarding the profession of the SLPA and the individuals who choose that career path.

Given the shortage of skilled professionals of communication sciences and disorders, the

advantages that assistants can provide, and the 2020 assistant credentialing process initiated

through ASHA, exploring SLPA career decision making is especially timely and important.

Identifying the motivating factors specific to SLPAs' career choices may be advantageous in the

warranted recruitment process within the field of communication sciences and disorders.

The aim of this study was to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the demographics of current SLPA students?

2. What are the factors impacting students' decision to pursue a career as an SLPA as

    opposed to other career options within the field of communication sciences and

    disorders?

3. What clinical work setting(s) do SLPA students anticipate working in as a future SLPA?

Methods

Participants

The Governors State University Institutional Review Board granted approval for the

current study, IRB-FY2021-70. Participants included 75 students over the age of 18 enrolled in

SLPA programs across the United States. Participants included 74 females (98.67%), 0 males

(0%), and 1 non-binary (1.33%). Participants were recruited via a members-only internal

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community message-board, specifically the "Higher Education" community posting board, via ASHA. In addition, emails were sent to 33 SLPA program department chairs.

Survey Materials

An online survey tool, the SLPA Student Survey, was created and distributed via Survey Monkey to current SLPA students from across the United States. The goal of the survey was to gather information regarding the demographics of SLPA students, the motivating factors behind their decision to pursue a career as an SLPA, and their anticipated work setting upon completion of the SLPA program. Content validity was ensured by having three certified SLPs and a practicing SLPA review the survey tool prior to dissemination. Survey information explicitly informed participants that the survey was voluntary, anonymous, and that no identifying information was gathered. The SLPA Student Survey was reformatted for offline reading and is included in Appendix A.

The first section of the SLPA Student Survey was a consent form that informed participants of their right to exit the survey at any time or skip any questions they did not want to answer. The survey was divided into four main sections: introduction and informed consent, demographic information, ranking of reasons for choosing to become an SLPA, and anticipated work setting. Participants who indicated that they were not a current SLPA student were automatically exited from the survey and were directed to a screen that indicated appreciation for their willingness to participate as well as their failure to meet criteria for the current study.

    1.) Section one: Introduction and informed consent. The introduction section was composed of a brief overview of the research study, including participant inclusion criteria and the approximate survey completion time. The informed consent section

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notified participants that the study was voluntary, and that basic demographic

information would be collected.

2.) Section two: Demographic information. The first question asked participants to

indicate whether they were a student in an SLPA program to establish participation

eligibility. Section two of the survey further included questions relating to

participants' gender, age, race, state of residence, employment, and academic

background.

3.) Section three: Reasons for choosing to become an SLPA. This section of the survey

included three questions that looked to assess reasons why participants chose to

pursue a career as an SLPA.

4.) Section four: Anticipated work setting. The final section of the survey asked

participants their anticipated work settings after graduating as an SLPA.
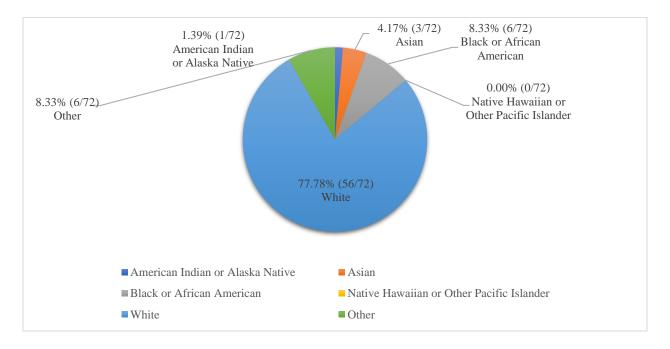
Results

Research Question One:

Descriptive statistics, means, and frequency counts were calculated to obtain measures of

central tendency with respect to survey data. Survey questions were created to answer three

proposed research questions. The first research question was intended to explore the

demographics of current SLPA students including their gender, age, state of residence, ethnicity,

and academic and/or occupational commitments. Data was analyzed descriptively based on

responses gathered from the SLPA Student Survey. A total of 75 participants responded to this

question. Ages of current SLPA students ranged from 19 to 50 years of age, with the average age

being 27.25 years. Of the 75 participants who responded to this question, 17 students (22.67%)

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indicated that they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, while 58 students (77.33%) indicated that they were not.

Current SLPA students were asked to indicate their ethnicity. A total of 72 participants responded to this question. Of the 72 responses, 56 participants (77.78%) indicated that they were white. Six participants (8.33%) indicated that they were Black or African American. Three participants (4.17%) specified that they were Asian. One participant (1.39%) indicated that he or she was American Indian or Alaska Native, while no participants specified that they identify as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Furthermore, six participants (8.33%) indicated that they would describe themselves as a different ethnicity. Participants who did not identify with a listed choice were prompted to specify their ethnicity. Responses included: Hispanic/Mexican, Puerto Rican and French Creole, Hispanic, Hispanic/Latino, and Hispanic/Do not wish to respond. Responses to this question on the SLPA Student Survey are displayed in Figure 1.
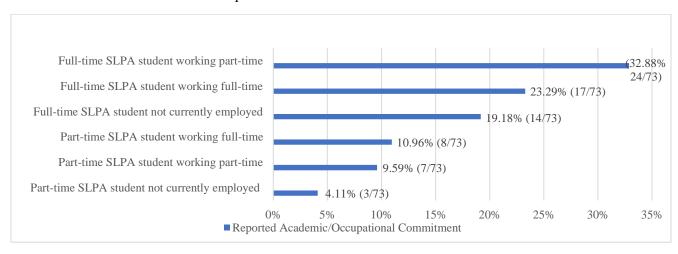
Figure 1

Ethnicities of SLPA students

Research question one also explored current SLPA students' occupational and academic responsibilities. Participants were asked to indicate the statement that best described their time commitment to work and school (e.g., part-time vs. full-time worker or student). Full-time work was described as 30 or more hours per week, while part-time work was described as less than 30 hours per week. Of the 73 participants who responded to the question, 24 (32.88%) indicated that they were a full-time SLPA student working part-time, while 17 participants (23.29%) reported that they were a full-time SLPA student working full-time. Eight of the 73 participants (10.96%) indicated that they were a part-time SLPA student working full-time, while seven participants (9.59%) reported that they were a part-time SLPA student working part-time. Furthermore, 14 participants (19.18%) reported that they identify as a full-time SLPA student not currently employed, and three participants (4.11%) indicated that they are a part-time SLPA student not currently employed. In sum, 56 of the 73 participants (77%) reported that they worked either full or part-time. Twenty-five of the 73 participants (34%) reported working full-time, while 31 of the 73 respondents (42%) reported working part-time. The results of this question are displayed in Figure 2.
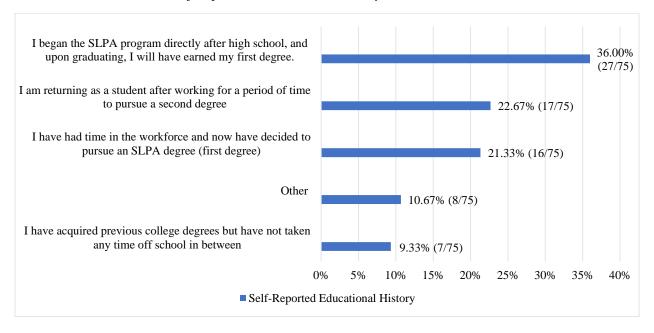
Figure 2

SLPA students' academic and occupational commitments

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Additionally, participants were asked about their educational history. This survey question looked to determine if current SLPA students were obtaining a first degree or a subsequent degree as well as the amount of time spent away from school in the workforce or for other reasons. The results to this survey question are displayed in Figure 3. A total of 75 participants responded to this question. Twenty-seven of the total number of participants (36.00%) indicated that they began the SLPA program directly after high school, and upon graduating, will have earned their first degree. Seventeen participants (22.67%) reported that they are a returning student after working for a period of time to pursue a second degree. Sixteen participants (21.33%) indicated that they have had time in the workforce and have decided to pursue an SLPA degree as their first degree. Seven participants (9.33%) reported that they have acquired previous degrees but have not taken any time off school in between. Additionally, eight participants (10.67%) indicated that none of the listed choices described their educational background. These participants were prompted to report more specific information regarding their educational experience. Several respondents reported that they completed college courses but took time away from their studies before returning to school to pursue a degree in an SLPA program. Several participants indicated that they received a bachelor's degree prior to embarking on their SLPA program journey. Two of these participants acquired a bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders, but neither were accepted into a graduate program to become SLPs and subsequently decided to pursue certification as an SLPA instead. One participant indicated that she graduated with a bachelor's degree in science, spent time in the workforce, and decided to return to school to become an SLPA.

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Figure 3

Current SLPA students' self-reported educational history

Research Question Two

The second research question was intended to determine the motivating factors behind students' decision to pursue a career as an SLPA. Participants were also asked to indicate why they chose to become an SLPA rather than an SLP, as well as if they plan to pursue a master's degree as an SLP in the future. Data was analyzed descriptively based on responses gathered from the SLPA Student Survey.

In order to better understand current SLPA students and to support future recruitment efforts of students to the field of communication sciences and disorders, participants were asked to choose their top three reasons or motivating factors for pursuing a career as an SLPA. Given a list of ten reasons as to why one would choose to pursue a career as an SLPA, participants were asked to pick their top three reasons. Of note, participants were allowed to select more than one response, making the collective sum greater than 100%. Fifty-six of the 75 participants (74.67%) reported that, "Desire to work in a helping profession" was one of their top three deciding factors

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to pursue a career as an SLPA. Fifty-two participants (69.33%) indicated that, "Interest in the topic of speech and language" was within their top three reasons. Forty-nine of the 75 respondents (65.33%) reported that, "The variety/flexibility of work settings" was one of their top three reasons for pursuing a career as an SLPA. Thirty-eight respondents (50.67%) indicated that, "Personal experience (e.g., yourself/family member received speech-language services" was a primary motivating factor as to why they chose to pursue a career as an SLPA. Twenty-eight participants (37.33%) indicated that, "Expected salary" was one of their top three reasons for pursuing a career as an SLPA while 20 participants (26.67%) reported that, "Length of program" was a primary motivating factor. Nineteen of the 75 participants (25.33%) reported that a top reason for pursuing a career as an SLPA was because they were, "Not accepted into a communication disorders program". Twelve of the 75 participants (16.00%) reported that, "Cost of program" was within their top three reasons for choosing to become an SLPA. Eleven participants (14.67%) indicated that, "Rigor of program" was a primary motivating factor while another eleven participants (14.67%) reported that, "Family member works in the field" was a top three reason for pursuing a career as an SLPA. The results of this question are noted in Figure 4.

Research question two also explored current SLPA students' plan to pursue a master's degree to become an SLP in the future. Results of this survey question are displayed in Figure 5. A total of 75 participants responded to this question and were given the answer options of "yes", "no", or "unsure". Of the 75 respondents, 45 (60.00%) indicated that they plan to pursue a master's degree to become an SLP in the future, while six participants (8.00%) reported that they do not. Twenty-four participants (32.00%) indicated that they are unsure if they will pursue a master's degree to become an SLP in the future.

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Figure 4

SLPA students' top three reasons for choosing to become an SLPA

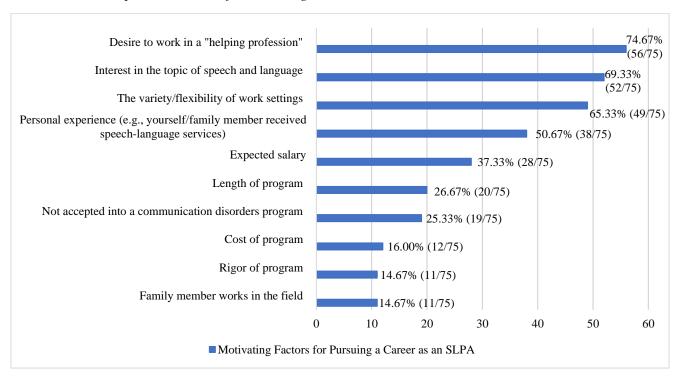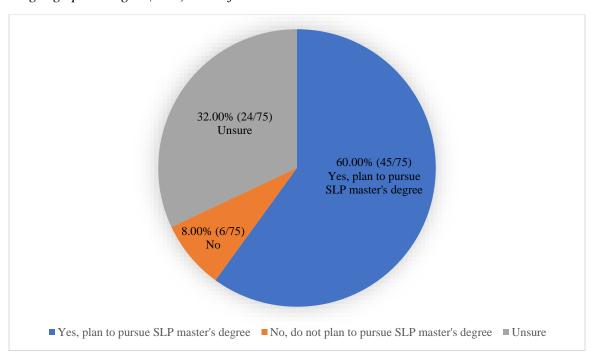**Figure 5**

Percentage of SLPA students who plan to pursue a master's degree to become a speech-language pathologist (SLP) in the future
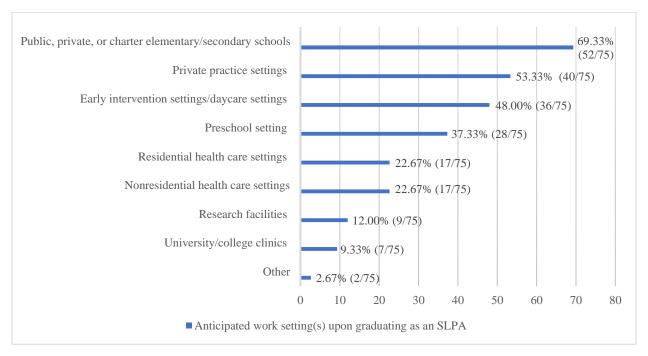
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Research Question Three

The third research question intended to explore students' anticipated work setting(s) upon graduating as an SLPA. For this survey question, participants were prompted to choose all anticipated work settings that apply. Since participants were allowed to choose more than one option, the total sum would exceed 100%. A total of 75 participants responded to this question. Fifty-two participants (69.33%) indicated that they anticipate working in a public, private, or charter elementary/secondary school. Twenty-eight respondents (37.33%) reported that they anticipate working in a preschool setting. Thirty-six participants (48.00%) indicated that they expect to work in the early intervention or daycare setting. Seventeen out of the 75 participants (22.67%) anticipate working in residential health care settings (e.g., long-term care and skilled nursing facilities), while another seventeen participants (22.67%) reported that they expect to work in nonresidential health care settings (e.g., 22.67%). Forty participants (53.33%) reported that they anticipate working in a private practice setting. Nine respondents (12.00%) indicated interest in working in a research facility, while seven participants (9.33%) indicated interest in working in a university or college clinic. Two additional participants (2.67%) reported that their anticipated work setting was not listed on the survey and have interest in working in the hospital setting upon graduating as an SLPA. Results of the third research question are displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Percentages of self-reported anticipated work setting(s) upon graduating as an SLPA

Discussion

Findings illustrated that SLPA students were often identified as non-traditional students with diverse educational backgrounds. Additionally, the majority of students reported that they worked while completing their SLPA program. Of the 73 respondents, seventy-seven percent (*n=*56) reported that they worked either full or part-time. The primary motivating factor that contributed to students' decision to pursue a career as an SLPA was the desire to work in a helping profession; however, participants further reported motivating factors that were specific to SLPA programs, such as lifestyle and the desire to gain experience before entering a master's program. Furthermore, the majority of current SLPA students reported that they plan to pursue a master's degree to become an SLP in the future.

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Of the 72 participants who reported their ethnicity, 56 (77.78%) indicated that they were white while only six participants (8.33%) indicated that they were Black or African American. Three participants (4.17%) specified that they were Asian. One participant (1.39%) indicated that he or she was American Indian or Alaska Native. According to ASHA (2021), approximately 8.5% of ASHA members and affiliates identify as racial minorities. Study findings of SLPA students are consistent with ASHA membership with regard to ethnicity, as the vast majority of ASHA members do not identify as belonging to a racial minority group. Study findings of SLPA students are consistent with the results of the 2020 CSD Education Survey, emphasizing a lack of ethnic diversity amongst individuals pursuing a career within the field of communication sciences and disorders.

With respect to the greatest motivating factor for pursuing a career as an SLPA, a desire to work in a helping profession was number one with 56 of the 75 participants (74.67%) including this factor in their top three reasons. The desire to work in a helping profession as a primary motivating factor for students pursuing a career in the field of communication sciences and disorders in general can be seen as a trend throughout previous research (Stone and Pellowski, 2015). Results further indicated that over half of the participants indicated that they plan to pursue a master's degree to become an SLP in the future, suggesting that, for many students, an SLPA program is a stepping-stone in achieving a desired career in the field of communication sciences and disorders.

Results indicated that the school setting (public, private, or charter elementary/secondary schools) was the most anticipated work setting for current SLPA students with 52 of the 75 participants (69.33%) reporting interest in this particular setting. These results align with a previous study conducted by Ostergren and Aguilar (2012) that surveyed 61 registered SLPAs in

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the state of California. The majority of participants, 32 (56.5%), reported that they provide speech and language services at a school. Furthermore, according to ASHA (2021), more than half (51.0%) of SLPs work in schools, the primary employment facility.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in the present study. A major limitation was the small sample size (n=75) of participants. A larger sample size would yield more responses and increase confidence in response trends. The present study used an online survey-based format with fixed responses to collect data. The survey primarily consisted of multiple-choice questions, and, aside from one open-ended question, respondents were restricted in how they were able to answer each question. Furthermore, the results to the question that probed participants' anticipated work setting upon graduating as an SLPA were somewhat ambiguous. The question prompted participants to choose all anticipated work settings; however, the reasoning behind respondents' choices was not explored. Students may have chosen work settings based on personal interest, expected compensation, or lack of knowledge of particular settings. SLPA students may have been unaware of the roles and responsibilities that certain settings entail while responding to this particular survey question. If students were not informed of the possibility of working as an SLPA in a given setting, it is unlikely that they would choose it from a list of anticipated work settings.

Also, survey questions that explored the demographics of current SLPA students were limited. Additional survey questions may have been included to better understand the demographic background of SLPA students. The current study did not address participants' geographic location, socioeconomic status, or familial status; all of which are demographic factors that may have revealed additional response trends amongst SLPA students. Furthermore,

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though participants were prompted to choose primary reasons for pursuing a career as an SLPA, there were no questions that explored how students were introduced to the field of communication sciences and disorders, and more specifically, the profession of an SLPA.

Conclusions

In sum, the present study explored three research questions that were designed to gather information about current SLPA students nationally. Findings revealed that SLPA students were often identified as non-traditional students. In addition to having diverse educational backgrounds, the vast majority of students were working either full or part-time jobs while completing their education. Results of the current study revealed that the primary motivating factor that contributed to the students' decision to pursue a career as an SLPA was the desire to work in a helping profession; however, participants further reported motivating factors that were specific to SLPA programs such as lifestyle and the desire to gain experience before entering a master's program. SLPA students noted that the school setting was the most anticipated work setting of SLPA students upon graduating from their program. Additionally, the majority of current SLPA students plan to pursue a master's degree to become an SLP in the future. Given the continuous reports of professional shortages in the field of communication sciences and disorders, additional recruitment efforts are warranted.

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Appendix A

The SLPA Student Survey

Motivating Factors Contributing to Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Students' Choice of Career Path

Dear Participant:

We are inviting you to participate in a survey about current speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA) students. The survey is a part of the research study titled Motivating Factors Contributing to Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Students' Choice of Career Path. The study is being conducted by researchers at Governors State University in Illinois by Dr. Danielle Osmelak and graduate student researcher, Nicole Wells. We are inviting you to participate because you meet the inclusion criteria for the study. You are currently an SLPA student.

The survey should take no more than 5 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions regarding your choice to pursue a career as an SLPA and the clinical setting you anticipate working in upon graduating. Your basic demographic information will also be collected.
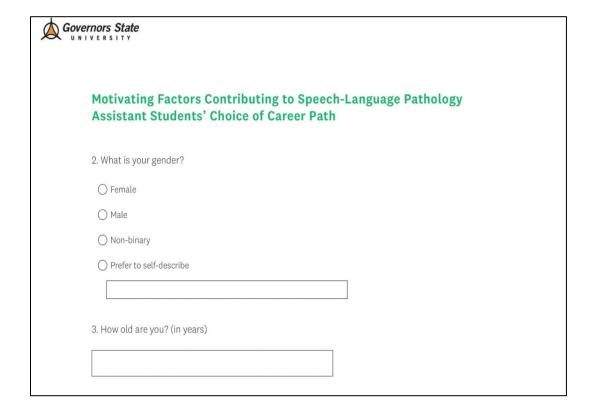
Participation in the survey is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or exit the survey at any time. You may also skip any questions you do not want to answer.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Dr. Danielle Osmelak (dosmelak@govst.edu) or Nicole Wells (nwells4@student.govst.edu). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Governors State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 708-235-2147or email at irb@govst.edu.

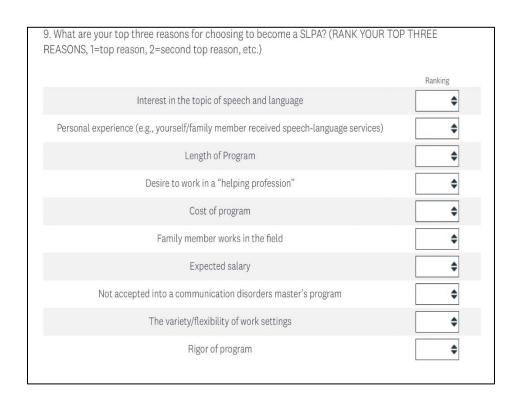Thank you for your important contribution to this study!

Next

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SLPA STUDENTS

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Governors State UNIVERSITY

Motivating Factors Contributing to Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Students' Choice of Career Path

2. What is your gender?

○ Female

○ Male

○ Non-binary

○ Prefer to self-describe

[   ]

3. How old are you? (in years)

[   ]

4. Are you of Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin?

○ Yes

○ No

5. How would you best describe yourself?

○ American Indian or Alaska Native

○ Asian

○ Black of African American

○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

○ White

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

6. In what state do you reside?

[⬍]

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SLPA STUDENTS

7. As a student in an SLPA program, which of the following statements best describes you? (Work Full time= 30+ hours/week, work part-time= less than 30 hours/week)

○ A full-time SLPA student working full-time

○ A full-time SLPA student working part-time

○ A full-time SLPA student not currently employed

○ A part-time SLPA student working full-time

○ A part time SLPA student working part-time

○ A part-time SLPA student not currently employed

8. Which of the following statements best describes you?

○ I began the SLPA program directly after high school, and upon graduating, I will have earned my first degree.

○ I have acquired previous college degrees but have not taken any time off school in between.

○ I have had time in the workforce and now have decided to pursue an SLPA degree (first degree)

○ I am returning as a student after working for a period of time to pursue a second degree

○ Other (please specify)

9. What are your top three reasons for choosing to become a SLPA? (RANK YOUR TOP THREE REASONS, 1=top reason, 2=second top reason, etc.)

	Ranking
Interest in the topic of speech and language	⬍
Personal experience (e.g., yourself/family member received speech-language services)	⬍
Length of Program	⬍
Desire to work in a "helping profession"	⬍
Cost of program	⬍
Family member works in the field	⬍
Expected salary	⬍
Not accepted into a communication disorders master's program	⬍
The variety/flexibility of work settings	⬍
Rigor of program	⬍

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SLPA STUDENTS

10. Briefly describe why you decided to pursue a career as a speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA) rather than a speech-language pathologist (SLP):

11. Do you plan to pursue a master's degree to become a speech-language pathologist (SLP) in the future?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Unsure

12. In what setting(s) do you anticipate working in after graduating as a speech-language pathology assistant? (Choose all that apply):

☐ Public, private, or charter elementary/secondary schools

☐ Preschool setting

☐ Early intervention settings/daycare settings

☐ Residential health care settings (e.g., long-term care and skilled nursing facilities)

☐ Nonresidential health care settings (e.g., home health agencies, adult day care settings/clinics)

☐ Private practice settings

☐ University/college clinics

☐ Research facilities

☐ Other (please specify)

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