May 4th, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Investigation of the Externship Selection Process Across ASHA-Accredited Speech Language Pathology Programs

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Background

- Speech-language pathology (SLP) graduate training requires 400 supervised direct-contact hours with clients[1]
  - The vast majority of hours are typically completed during externships
- No studies to date have evaluated how graduate programs in SLP select students to apply or match with externship sites
- Externship coordinators in allied professions prioritize student abilities (strength/weaknesses)[2]
- 64.51% of underrepresented students in the discipline experienced microaggressions[3]
- Methods of selecting students for externship experiences may present opportunities for bias

Purpose

To investigate how accredited Master's degree programs in SLP select students for externship experiences and describe steps within the externship selection process
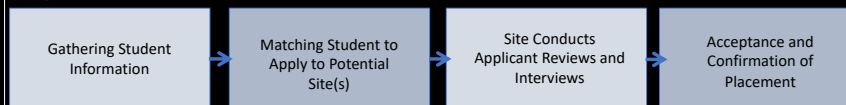
Methods

- Websites from each accredited SLP program (303) were searched to identify email addresses for:
  - The externship coordinator(s)
  - The department chairperson
  - The department graduate advisor
  - A general department contact
- Email invitations sent to complete a Qualtrics Survey
  - One follow-up email was sent to each address
  - If no response, progressed to next contact
  - Survey open between 2/21/2022 to 4/6/2022
  - 90 responses received
- Qualtrics Survey consisted of 33 questions including closed and open-ended questions to inquire about:
  - Constraints of their externship matching
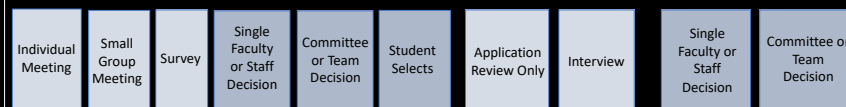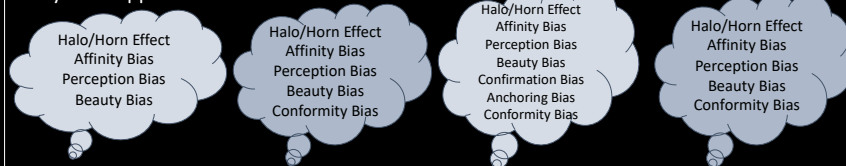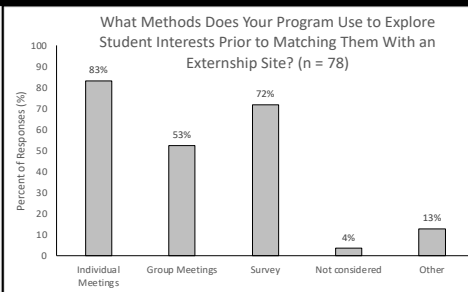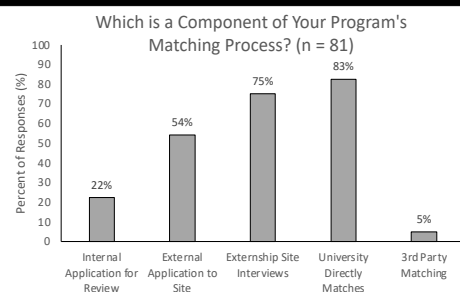 - Number of faculty who matching students to sites
  - Matching process

Scan to see our survey

National Student Speech-Language and Hearing Association (2021). Retrieved April 19, 2022, from https://blog.nsslha.org/2021/03/09/clinical-fellowships-and-externships-put-your-best-foot-forward/

Results (cont.) and Analysis

Scan to learn more about types of bias in externship selection:

Steps

Gathering Student Information → Matching Student to Apply to Potential Site(s) → Site Conducts Applicant Reviews and Interviews → Acceptance and Confirmation of Placement

Methods

Individual Meeting | Small Group Meeting | Survey | Single Faculty or Staff Decision | Committee or Team Decision | Student Selects | Application Review Only | Interview | Single Faculty or Staff Decision | Committee or Team Decision

Analysis of Opportunities for Bias

- Halo/Horn Effect, Affinity Bias, Perception Bias, Beauty Bias
- Halo/Horn Effect, Affinity Bias, Perception Bias, Beauty Bias, Conformity Bias
- Halo/Horn Effect, Affinity Bias, Perception Bias, Beauty Bias, Confirmation Bias, Anchoring Bias, Conformity Bias
- Halo/Horn Effect, Affinity Bias, Perception Bias, Beauty Bias, Conformity Bias

Results

Which is a Component of Your Program's Matching Process? (n = 81)

- Internal Application for Review: 22%
- External Application to Site: 54%
- Externship Site Interviews: 75%
- University Directly Matches: 83%
- 3rd Party Matching: 5%

What Methods Does Your Program Use to Explore Student Interests Prior to Matching Them With an Externship Site? (n = 78)

- Individual Meetings: 83%
- Group Meetings: 53%
- Survey: 72%
- Not considered: 4%
- Other: 13%

- 69.14% of programs have faculty or staff select students to apply or match with externships sites (n = 81)
- 80.6% reported receiving no formal training or continuing education related to externship matching (n = 72)
- 0% use computerized methods of matching (n = 81)

Discussion

- Majority of programs have faculty or staff, who are not trained on externship matching, making selection decisions
  - Training to reduce potential bias may include inclusive hiring practices and power dynamics
- Selection processes for externships and interviews create opportunity for bias
- Consider inclusive methods for selection to mitigate potential opportunity for bias
- Consider automated methods, such as computer-generated matching, as previous research demonstrates **comparable results** to manual matching with increased efficiency[4]
- Significant variability to the selection process is consistent with other allied professions[5]
- Additional analyses are ongoing

References

1. American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (n.d.). *2020 Standards and Implementation Procedures for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology.* Retrieved 4/15/2022 from https://www.asha.org/certification/2020-slp-certification-standards/.
2. Gangaway, J. M. & Stancanelli, J. M. (2007). Factors influencing student decision-making for clinical site selection. *Journal of Allied Health, 36*(2), 124-141.
3. Abdelaziz, M. M., Matthews, J. J., Campos, I., Kasambira Fannin, D., Rivera Perez, J. F., Wilhite, M., & Williams, R. M. (2021). Student stories: Microaggressions in communication sciences and disorders. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 30*(5), 1990-2002.
4. Shoaf, L. D. (1999). Comparison of the student/site computer matching program and manual matching of physical therapy students in clinical education. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education, 13*(1), 39.
5. Rindflesch, A., Flom-Meland, C., McCallum, C., Prescher, K., Reynolds, E., Scardillo, J., ... & Redd, T. E. (2021). Toward standardization of the placement process used in full-time clinical education experiences: Findings and recommendations of the placement process task force. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education, 35*(3), 171-181.