

Pursuit of the Speech-Language Pathology Doctorate: Who, Why, Why Not

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The purpose of the present research was to help improve our understanding of the factors that influence speech-language pathologists' (SLPs')

ABSTRACT: This study was designed to investigate the factors that influence the decision of individuals to pursue or not pursue a research doctoral degree in speech-language pathology or to not continue a doctoral degree program once they have enrolled. Survey 1 was mailed to 384 speech-language pathologists (SLPs) with master's degrees, and Survey 2 was sent to 168 doctoral candidate advisors throughout the United States. Three hundred and five (79%) usable questionnaires were returned by SLPs, and 92 (55%) by faculty. Results indicated that people who were most likely to pursue a doctoral degree had strong research interest, were seekers of knowledge, and currently worked in higher education. People who were least likely to pursue a research doctoral degree worked primarily in the public schools and cited family obligations as a reason for not pursuing the degree. People who did not complete a doctoral degree after they enrolled cited family obligations, frustration with losing advisors, and the length of the program as reasons why they did not complete their program. Faculty advisors of doctoral students ranked failure to complete the dissertation, program difficulty, and family considerations among the most common reasons for failure to complete the doctorate.

KEY WORDS: doctorate, graduate education, speech-language pathology, survey, research

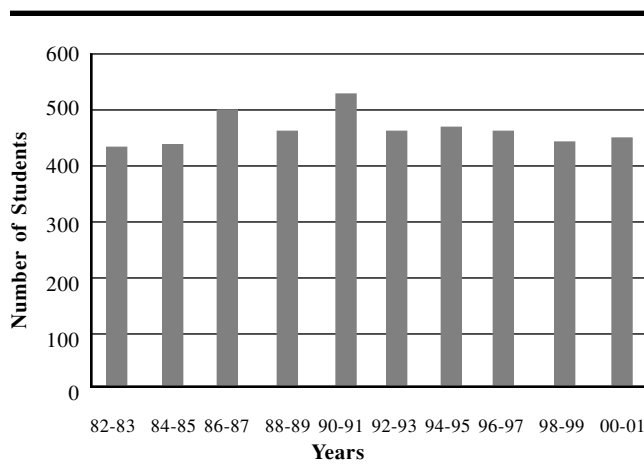
decisions to pursue, not pursue, or not complete doctoral degrees in their chosen field. Concern has been expressed about the number of available people with earned doctorates in audiology, speech-language pathology, and speech science (Busacco, 1999; Geffner, 1997; Lof, Mullen, & Rabinowitz, 1999; Minifie, 1997; Seymore, 1997; Smit, 1996). These concerns have focused on the PhD degree and implications for the research future of the discipline as well as the practical issue of faculty availability for the training of the clinicians needed to meet the demand for services.

Although the number of doctorates granted each year in speech-language pathology has declined, the pattern of degree completion warrants reevaluation. In previous reports (Geffner, 1997; Mills, 1996), data were presented in validation of the growing concern about the doctoral shortage. The 1994 Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) survey reported 65 doctorates granted in speech-language pathology and a total of 115 when audiology and speech science were included. These data were presented as evidence of "a nearly 50% decrease of doctoral degrees awarded since 1981–1982" (Geffner, 1997). In retrospect, and with the advantage of additional years of data, it appears that the number of degrees reported awarded in 1981–1982 was an outlier. The 116 speech-language pathology and 200 total doctorates reported in the 1981–1982 survey are inconsistent with the 1984–1998 pattern established by subsequent surveys. Actually, both the number of speech-language pathology doctoral students enrolled in programs nationally

(Figure 1) and the number of doctorates granted (Figure 2) have remained relatively stable from 1984 to 1998, with a slight decline in the number of completions (CAPCSD, n.d.). The most recent CAPCSD survey reported the number of speech-language pathology doctoral degrees granted to be 105. Although there has not been the dramatic decline in completed degrees as some thought, there does seem to be a shortage of available doctoral-holding applicants for academic positions, as supported by observational and anecdotal evidence. The number of advertised positions available, reports from colleagues at institutions looking to fill positions, and reports from candidates interviewing for positions all suggest that there is a shortage of available candidates for available positions. Also, colleagues at doctoral degree-granting institutions frequently report low numbers of qualified applicants for doctoral degree programs. CAPCSD data (CAPCSD, n.d.) show an average of 130 research doctoral-level faculty openings per year 1991–2002. Analysis of the future needs for people with earned doctorates in academia has been done (Oller, 2001), and confirms the current shortage and the implications for the future.

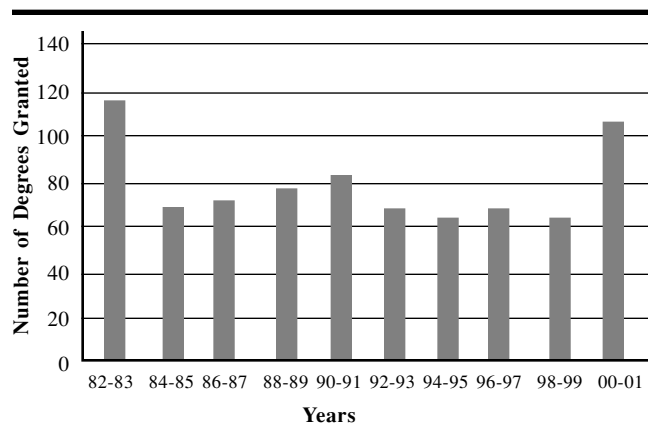
The possible explanations for the shortage of PhD applicants for academic positions include (a) fewer numbers of doctorates being granted 1984–1998 than 1982 and earlier, (b) proportionately fewer of the doctoral pool choosing careers in academia, and (c) too few people pursuing doctoral degrees. All possible explanations beg for a better understanding of the factors that influence decisions to pursue, not pursue, or not complete doctoral degrees. At this time, our understanding of who might be interested in pursuing a doctorate, the strengths of their motivation to pursue the degree, and the reasons why some do not complete their programs is limited. Mendel (1997), based on a limited survey, reported that 4 of 16 master's degree students considered pursuing a doctoral degree. Those indicating no interest in pursuing a doctorate noted financial concerns, lack of research interest, unfamiliarity

Figure 1. Doctoral students enrolled full and part time in speech-language pathology 1982–1983 through 2000–2001.



Note. Based on Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) survey data.

Figure 2. The number of doctoral degrees granted in speech-language pathology 1982–1983 through 2000–2001.



Note. Based on CAPCSD survey data.

with doctoral study, burnout, length of program, fear of the dissertation, and lack of interest in teaching as reasons. By contrast, the 4 who were considering pursuit of the doctorate gave interest in research, desire for focused expertise, respect and credibility of the degree, desire for the highest degree, and interest in academic career as reasons.

The purpose of the present study was to gain a greater understanding of the reasons why those currently holding master's degrees in speech-language pathology might choose to pursue, not pursue, or not complete a doctoral degree. Through a national survey, this study sought to identify those reasons that were important in the decision to pursue, not pursue, or not complete a doctoral degree and those that were relatively unimportant in those decisions. Through a similar, companion, national survey, this study also sought to address those same reasons from the perspective of faculty associated with doctoral degree-granting programs.

METHOD

Two surveys were prepared. Survey 1 was designed for professionals in the field of speech-language pathology who held master's degrees and who were listed in the directory of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Survey 2, a companion survey, was designed to be responded to by faculty who were involved in doctoral education.

Survey 1

Three hundred eighty-four potential respondents received the questionnaire designed for SLPs holding a master's degree. Questionnaires were mailed to 64 SLPs from each of the six geographic regions used by ASHA for demographic purposes, thus assuring a sufficient and geographically balanced respondent pool for a national survey.

Potential respondents were randomly selected from the ASHA membership directory. Respondents were provided with an explanation of the study, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Questionnaires were numbered for tracking purposes, but no other identifying information was included. Reminder/thank you cards were sent to all potential respondents within 2 weeks of the initial mailing.

Survey 2

Potential respondents selected to receive Survey 2 were faculty members who were currently employed in a university and listed in the *ASHA Guide to Doctoral Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders* (ASHA, 1998). Respondents were faculty members who were qualified to serve as doctoral student advisors at universities with master's degree programs accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of ASHA. Respondents were employed at 56 doctoral degree-granting universities. Three faculty members were chosen from each university. One of the three respondents included the department/program chair and the others alternated between the first and third and the second and last person on the faculty list for that university.

RESULTS

Survey 1

Of the 384 surveys mailed throughout the United States to ASHA members holding a master's degree in speech-language pathology, 305 (79%) were completed and returned. All surveys were usable for analysis purposes, although not all questions were answered by each respondent. Responses were well balanced across geographic regions (see Table 1). The respondents included 288 females (94.4%) and 17 males (5.6%).

Respondents were asked (Question 3) to indicate the year they received their master's degree. The responses ranged from 1955 to 1999, with the mean year being 1986. Respondents were also asked to indicate their age at the time they received their master's degree (Question 4). The

Table 1. The number and percentage of responses by geographic region.

Region	Area	Number of responses	Percentage ^a
1	Western	56	18
2	Southwestern	49	16
3	Central	52	17
4	Northeastern	48	16
5	Southern	50	16
6	Mid-Atlantic	50	16

^aPercentage of total responses rounded to the nearest percentage.

mean reported age was 27 years. Questions 4 and 5 sought to document the percentage of respondents who entered their master's program within 1 year of receiving their baccalaureate degree and the percentage who attended graduate school on a full-time basis. Analysis showed that 70.5% entered within 1 year, and 89% attended full time. The employment setting of the respondents was addressed in Question 7, and the data are presented in Figure 3. At the time they responded to the questionnaire, 37% reported being employed in the public schools, 24% in clinics or hospitals, 16% in higher education, and 15% in private practice.

The next series of questions was designed to improve our understanding of the reasons why people do not pursue doctoral study. Respondents were asked whether or not they had ever seriously considered pursuing a doctoral degree. If they responded that they had not, they were asked to go to a list of reasons why and select and rank those that applied. Respondents who indicated that they had seriously considered pursuing a doctoral degree were asked whether or not they had made application. Those who indicated that they had not applied, though they had seriously considered pursuing the degree, were asked to go to the list of reasons why and select and rank from the choices provided. Those who applied were asked to indicate whether or not they had been accepted for doctoral study. Those who applied and were accepted were asked whether or not they had enrolled. Those who indicated that they had not enrolled, though they had been accepted, were asked to indicate the reasons why in a fashion similar to those who had indicated no interest in doctoral study, or who had not applied.

Table 2 presents data on the number and percentage of respondents who had and had not seriously considered pursuing a doctorate, who had and had not applied to a doctoral program, who had been accepted, and who had ultimately enrolled. Given the current and foreseeable shortage of earned doctorates in speech-language pathology, it is encouraging to find that 42% of the respondents reported giving serious consideration to pursuing a doctorate,

Figure 3. Employment setting of respondents.

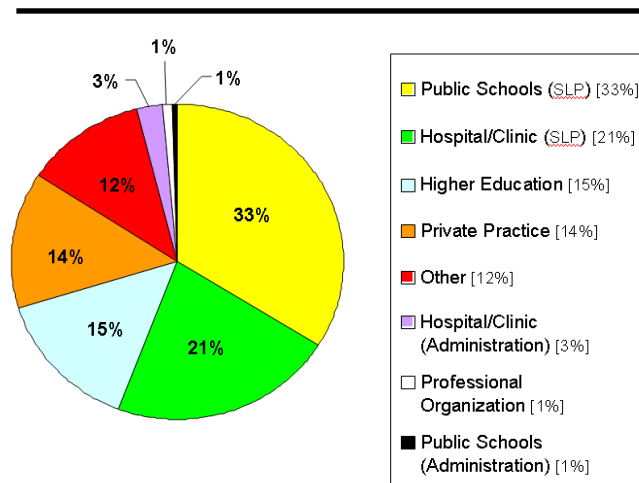


Table 2. The number and percentage of respondents reporting seriously and not seriously considering getting a doctoral degree, and respondents who applied and who did not apply, who were accepted, and who enrolled in doctoral programs.

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Not seriously considered	177	58
Seriously considered	128	42
Applied	(42)	(33) ^a
Did not apply	(86)	(67) ^a
Accepted	(40)	(98) ^b
Enrolled	(37)	(93) ^c

^aBased on the 128 who seriously considered obtaining a doctoral degree. ^bBased on the 42 who applied to a doctoral program.

^cBased on the 40 who were accepted to a doctoral program.

and 33% of those who seriously considered a doctorate actually applied. For those who applied, being accepted to a doctoral program did not seem to be a problem. Ninety-eight percent of those who applied were accepted.

The number and percentage of respondents who seriously considered pursuing a doctorate and who actually enrolled in a doctoral program is presented by work setting in Table 3. Those who seriously considered pursuing a doctorate came primarily from a public school, hospital/clinic, or higher education work setting. These data show clearly that those who reported their work setting to be higher education were much more likely to actually enroll in a doctoral program. Of the 32 respondents who worked in higher education and seriously considered pursuit of the doctorate, 20 actually enrolled. This represents 7% of the total (305) respondents. Because 63% of those from a higher education work setting actually enrolled in a doctoral program, as compared with 25% from a hospital/clinic setting and 6% from the public schools, it seems reasonable to conclude that those who were already familiar with higher education and have been employed therein are more likely to pursue a doctorate.

Table 3. The number and percentage of respondents who seriously considered getting a doctoral degree and the number and percentage of those who enrolled, by work setting.

Employment setting	Seriously considered number	Seriously considered percentage ^a	Enrolled number	Enrolled percentage ^a
Public schools (SLP)	34	11	2	1.0
Public schools (Administration)	1	0	0	0.0
Hospital/clinic (SLP)	36	12	9	3.0
Hospital/clinic (Administration)	5	2	0	0.0
Higher education	32	10	20	7.0
Private practice	21	7	5	2.0
Professional Organization	0	0	0	0.0
Other	14	5	4	1.0

^aPercentage of total responses (305).

Of the total respondent pool, 128 indicated that they had not seriously considered pursuing a doctorate, or had not applied although they had seriously considered pursuing the degree, or had not enrolled when accepted for doctoral study. All 128 selected and ranked the reasons for not pursuing a doctorate as presented in Question 13. Their rankings were based on 1 being the most important reason for nonpursuit through as many options as applied to their situation. Thus, the lower the mean, the more important that reason was to the respondent for not pursuing a doctoral degree. Apparently, a variety of personal reasons were important in peoples' nonpursuit of the doctorate because "other" (2.38) was the choice with the lowest mean. This was followed by "family obligations" (2.80), "lack of research interest" (3.00), and "satisfaction with current position" (3.17). "Lack of interest in teaching," "influence of a significant other," and "criteria of getting accepted" were the least frequent selected and lowest ranked reasons for nonpursuit of the doctorate (see Table 4).

Respondents who answered "yes" to the questions regarding considering, applying, and enrolling in a doctoral program were asked to choose and rank (1 being most important) from a list of possible factors those that best characterized their reasons to pursue the doctorate. This selection and ranking was completed by 177 respondents. The number of respondents who selected each choice, and the mean and standard deviation for each choice, are presented in Table 5. Again, it should be noted that the lower the mean, the more important the reason for pursuing the doctorate. "Desire for knowledge" (2.20), "research interest" (2.80), and "interest in teaching" (3.28) were the most important reasons given. The reasons ranked less important included "dissatisfaction with current degree" (6.20) and "prestige and title" (6.70). These results are encouraging because they seem to reflect the classical values that should guide one's desire to pursue doctoral education.

Respondents who indicated that they had entered a doctoral program but did not complete the degree

Table 4. Reasons for not pursuing a doctoral degree ranked according to mean (lower mean is indicative of increased importance).

Reason	Number of responses	M	SD
Other	63	2.38	1.75
Family obligations	132	2.80	2.52
Lack of research interest	135	3.00	2.88
Satisfaction with current position	133	3.17	2.19
Satisfaction with current degree	135	3.40	2.29
Length of program	105	3.60	2.10
Cost of program	92	3.84	2.30
Long hours	71	4.15	2.35
Distance/location of program	62	4.19	3.73
Lack of interest in working in higher education	86	4.37	3.30
Satisfaction with current salary	78	4.50	3.31
Lack of financial support	61	4.57	3.54
Lack of interest in teaching	72	4.63	3.63
Spousal/significant other influence	57	5.49	4.36
Criteria of getting accepted	33	6.52	3.63

Table 5. Reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree ranked according to mean (lower mean is indicative of increased importance).

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Desire for knowledge	30	2.20	1.27
Research interest	27	2.80	1.70
Other	5	3.00	1.87
Interest in teaching	25	3.28	2.03
Wanted better life for family/ children	7	3.57	2.67
Working with a particular scholar	10	3.60	2.72
Spousal/significant other influence	3	3.67	4.04
Dissatisfaction with current position	7	3.71	2.92
Interest in higher education	19	3.84	2.06
Making contribution to the discipline	26	4.00	1.62
Future salary possibilities	9	4.44	2.92
Availability of financial support	13	5.30	2.25
Dissatisfaction with current degree	5	6.20	2.77
Prestige and title	10	6.70	2.63

requirements were asked to select and rank from a list of possible reasons those that best characterized their circumstance (see Table 6). Although only 12 respondents met this qualification, it was deemed important because lack of completion of the doctoral degree has been an important factor in the current shortage of doctorates in the field. The question/task was framed in a similar fashion to earlier questions regarding the reasons for and the reasons for not pursuing the degree. The reasons ranked highest (lowest mean) were “family considerations” (1.71), “loss of advisor” (2.00), and “overall length of program” (2.00). Of least importance as factors causing people to not complete their programs were “personal treatment” (3.14) and “loss of financial support” (3.67). Although based on a limited sample, responses to this question do suggest some areas that might be addressed to help alleviate the problem of attrition. The length of doctoral programs can certainly be reviewed by respective faculties. Although the loss of advisor can be a difficult scholarly issue, faculties might look for creative ways to provide the mentorship needed to complete the degree.

Table 6. Reasons for not completing a doctoral degree ranked according to mean (lower mean is indicative of increased importance).

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Family considerations	7	1.71	0.95
Loss of advisor	3	2.00	0.00
Length of program	4	2.00	1.41
Disillusioned with research	4	2.50	1.00
Loss of interest	4	2.75	0.50
Other	9	2.78	1.71
Cost of program	4	3.00	1.00
Current job satisfaction	4	3.00	2.45
Did not complete the dissertation	3	3.00	2.00
Personal treatment in the programs	7	3.14	2.34
Loss of financial support	3	3.67	1.55

Survey 2

Survey 2 was a companion survey that was also designed to address the issue of pursuit, nonpursuit, or noncompletion of the doctoral degree, but from the perspective of doctoral advising faculty. One hundred sixty-eight questionnaires were sent, and 92 (55%) were returned. There were 56 universities represented among the returned questionnaires. Eighty-six (51% of those sent) questionnaires were usable for analysis purposes.

Fifty-two (60%) of the 86 respondents held the doctorate in speech-language pathology, and another 19 (22%) held their degree in audiology. The remaining 18% either held doctorates in speech science, a related field (e.g., education, linguistics, psychology), or failed to report. Respondents were also asked to indicate the approximate number of doctoral candidates who they had directed/advised to completion during their careers. Eighty-five respondents to this question averaged seven candidates advised to completion. When asked to estimate the amount of time it takes for a typical doctoral student to complete his or her degree requirements, 84 respondents offered an averaged estimate of 4.4 years, with a range from 3 to 10 years.

In a fashion similar to Survey 1, faculty members were asked to select and rank reasons why people in the profession do not pursue doctoral degrees (see Table 7). Faculty perception was that “lack of research interest” (2.92), “length of doctoral program” (3.91), and “lack of financial support” (4.47) were among the most important factors. “Criteria for getting accepted,” “lack of interest in teaching,” and the “long hours” of work were thought by faculty not to be important as reasons people do not pursue the doctorate.

Next, faculty members were asked to select and rank reasons why doctoral students do not complete their degree program (see Table 8). Here, “other” (2.00) was the category with the lowest mean, and faculty provided a number of personal and professional reasons they thought

Table 7. Reasons provided by doctoral faculty for why people do not pursue a doctoral degree ranked according to mean (lower mean is indicative of increased importance).

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Lack of research interest	69	2.92	2.74
Length of doctoral program	55	3.91	3.07
Lack of financial support	44	4.47	3.87
Cost of doctoral program	44	4.66	3.79
Other	6	4.67	5.32
Lack of interest in working in higher education	47	4.83	3.50
Family obligation	41	4.88	2.77
Satisfaction with current position	39	5.46	30.10
Spousal/significant other influence	32	5.66	2.74
Satisfaction with current degree	37	5.86	3.29
Satisfaction with salary	34	6.06	4.06
Distance/location of program	25	6.16	3.47
Long hours	33	6.30	4.07
Lack of interest in teaching	36	6.61	3.47
Criteria for getting accepted	26	7.69	4.05

Table 8. Reasons provided by doctoral faculty for candidates not completing their doctoral program ranked according to mean (lower mean is indicative of increased importance).

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Other	9	2.00	1.00
Did not complete the dissertation	57	2.22	1.61
Difficulty of program	48	2.72	2.17
Family considerations	37	3.49	2.26
Loss of interest	49	3.57	2.22
Length of program	46	3.61	1.96
Disillusioned with research	41	3.79	2.34
Cost of program	28	4.54	2.41
Personal treatment in the programs	26	4.87	2.99
Loss of advisor	23	5.57	2.64
Loss of financial support	23	5.67	3.14
Current job satisfaction	21	5.83	3.56

important. The most common theme related to lack of research interest (e.g., “fear of completing research,” “failure to be captured by the unknown,” “can’t find a good research topic”). These reasons seem consistent with “did not complete the dissertation,” which was ranked the second most important reason (2.22). “Difficulty of program” and “family considerations” were also ranked highly by faculty as reasons why people do not complete their degrees. Faculty ranked “current job satisfaction,” “loss of financial support,” and “loss of advisor” as least important reasons for degree noncompletion.

Finally, in an attempt to better understand, from a faculty perspective, what the motivations are for people to complete their doctoral programs, faculty were asked to select and rank from a list of possible explanations for success in degree completion (see Table 9). Not surprising, “research interest” (2.29), “desire for knowledge” (3.40), and “interest in higher education” (3.71) and “desire to teach in a university setting” (3.93) were highest ranked. In the other

Table 9. Reasons provided by doctoral faculty for why people do not pursue a doctoral degree ranked according to mean (lower mean is indicative of increased importance).

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Research interest	80	2.29	1.59
Desire for knowledge	58	3.40	2.09
Interest in higher education	56	3.71	2.51
Desire to teach in a university setting	68	3.93	2.48
Making contribution to the discipline	56	4.70	2.21
Prestige/title	49	4.82	2.87
Interest in working with a particular scholar	42	4.98	2.87
Wanted to build a better life for themselves and children/family	27	5.30	3.20
Future salary possibilities	27	5.48	3.27
Other	6	5.50	5.01
Dissatisfaction with current position	27	5.96	3.74
Availability of financial support	28	6.79	3.83
Dissatisfaction with current degree	22	7.68	3.67
Spousal/significant other influence	16	8.94	2.93

category, “strong advisor” and “mentoring and explicit teaching of academic culture by faculty are extremely important” were among the anecdotal comments provided.

DISCUSSION

The present surveys were designed to generate data that would help us better understand why people pursue, do not pursue, or do not complete academic doctorates in speech-language pathology and to do it from two perspectives—that of the person currently holding a master’s degree, and that of faculty members from doctoral degree-granting programs. The present data provide empirical information that could be helpful in finding some solutions to the problem of doctoral-level faculty shortage.

The fact that 42% of master’s degree holding respondents reported themselves as having seriously considered obtaining a doctorate is encouraging, as is the number of respondents who made application and enrolled in doctoral programs. The present study found that 1 in 3 of those who seriously considered obtaining a doctorate actually applied to a program, and nearly all were accepted and subsequently enrolled in it. Among the respondents to the survey sent to those holding a master’s degree were 12 people who enrolled in but did not complete a doctoral program of study. Although these 12 respondents represent only 4% of all respondents, they do represent 32% of those reporting that they enrolled in a doctoral program. Reasons offered by these respondents included two reasons for noncompletion that programs may be able to positively address. Overall length of program may be reducible with careful planning and a dedicated effort to provide timely guidance to candidates. Given the need for appropriate mentor expertise at the doctoral level, loss of advisor may be more problematic. However, increased commitment to the use of adjunct faculty from other institutions might help. It was encouraging to find that personal treatment and financial considerations were among the least important reasons for noncompletion of doctoral degrees.

It is interesting to contrast the views of potential doctoral students with those of faculty. Those with master’s degrees (Survey 1) indicated that personal issues and family obligations were among the most important reasons for not pursuing a doctorate. Faculty, by contrast, thought that length of program and financial considerations were among the most important reasons. There was agreement between the two groups of respondents with respect to the importance of lack of research interest.

In times of economic uncertainty, financial consideration may become a more important factor in the decision to pursue or to not complete doctoral degrees. It is also possible that retirement rates of present doctoral faculty will decrease, as least temporarily, and the availability of faculty positions will decrease relative to what was expected. The lack of availability of resources to fund faculty positions and/or the closure of programs in difficult economic times may also be factors influencing the market for academicians, thus making the pursuit of doctoral degrees less of an issue.

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APPENDIX A. SURVEY 1

RESEARCH PROJECT SURVEY

Factors that influence the decision-making process of individuals to pursue, not pursue, or discontinue a doctoral program

1. Please indicate the region in which you are currently employed. _____

2. Please indicate gender Male _____ Female _____
3. What year did you receive your master's degree?

4. What age were you when you received your master's degree?

5. Did you begin your master's program within 1 year following completion of your bachelors degree?
Yes ___ No ___
6. Did you pursue your highest degree full time or part time?
(please circle) F/T P/T
7. Current employment status. Please check your current employment setting
____ Public schools (SLP)
____ Public schools (Administration)
____ Hospital or clinic (SLP)
____ Hospital or clinic (Administration)
____ Higher education
____ Private practice
____ Professional organization
____ Other _____
8. Have you ever seriously considered getting a doctoral degree?
Yes ___ No ___
(If you answered no, go to question #13).
9. If you answered yes to question #8, did you apply to a doctoral program? Yes ___ No ___
(If you answered no, go to question #13).
10. If you answered yes to question #9, were you accepted?
Yes ___ No ___
(If you answered no, you have now completed the questionnaire. Thank you!)
11. If you answered yes to question #10, did you enroll?
Yes ___ No ___
(If you answered no, please go to question #13. If you answered yes, please go to question #12).
12. If you answered yes to question #11, how old were you when you entered the doctoral program?
____ years (now please go to question #14).
13. To better understand your reasons for **not pursuing** a doctoral degree, please respond to the following.
If you answered no to #8, please indicate all that apply and rank in order of most important
(1= most important, 2 = next important, etc.).
____ Lack of research interest
____ Spousal/significant other influence
____ Distance/location of programs
____ Lack of financial support for doctoral students (i.e., TA)
____ Criteria for getting accepted
____ Family obligations
____ Satisfaction with current salary
____ Satisfaction with current position
____ Long hours
____ Satisfaction with current degree
____ Lack of interest in teaching
____ Cost of doctoral program
____ Lack of interest in working in higher education
____ Length of doctoral program
____ Other (please explain)
14. To better understand your **reasons for pursuing** a doctoral degree, please respond to the following.
If you answered yes to #8, please indicate all that apply and rank in order of most important
(1= most important, 2 = next important, etc.).
____ Research interest
____ Spousal/significant other influence
____ Wanted to build a better life for you and your children/family
____ Future salary possibilities
____ Prestige/title
____ Interest in higher education
____ Dissatisfaction with current degree
____ Desire to teach in university setting
____ Dissatisfaction with current position
____ Availability of financial support
____ Desire for knowledge
____ Interest in working with a particular scholar
____ Make contribution to the discipline
____ Other (please explain)
15. If you enrolled in a doctoral program and did not finish, what were your **reasons for not completing** the degree? Indicate all that apply and rank them in order of most important
(1 = most important, 2 = next important, etc.).
____ Loss of advisor
____ Overall length of program
____ Cost of program
____ Current job satisfaction
____ Difficulty of program
____ Loss of interest
____ Did not complete the dissertation
____ Disillusioned with research
____ Personal treatment in the programs
____ Family considerations
____ Loss of financial support
____ Other (please explain):

For those responding to question #13, you have now completed the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Thank you very much for responding to my questionnaire. I believe this study will lead to some important answers regarding the reasons why some people choose to pursue, not pursue, or discontinue a doctoral degree. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or my project, I will be happy to answer them. Thanks again for your time.

APPENDIX B. SURVEY 2

RESEARCH PROJECT SURVEY

Factors that influence the decision-making process of individuals to not pursue, not complete or complete a doctoral program

1. Is your doctoral degree:
 speech-language pathology audiology
2. What is the approximate number of PhD candidates you have directed or advised to completion?

3. In your experience, what is the typical length of time for students to complete a doctoral program?

4. To better understand why you think students **do not pursue doctoral programs**, please respond to the following. Indicate all that apply and rank in order of most important (1 = most important, 2 = next important, etc.).
 Lack of research interest
 Spousal/significant other influence
 Distance/location of program
 Lack of financial support for doctoral students (i.e., TA)
 Criteria for getting accepted
 Family obligations
 Satisfaction with current salary
 Satisfaction with current position
 Long hours
 Satisfaction with current degree
 Lack of interest in teaching
 Cost of doctoral program
 Lack of interest in working in higher education
 Length of doctoral program
 Other (please explain)
5. When students enroll in a doctoral program and do not finish, what do you think were common **reasons for not completing** the degree? Indicate all that apply and rank them in order of most important (1= most important, 2 = next important, etc.).
 Loss of advisor
 Overall length of program
 Cost of program
 Current job satisfaction
 Difficulty of program
 Loss of interest
 Did not complete the dissertation
 Disillusioned with research
 Personal treatment in the program
 Family considerations
 Loss of financial support
 Other (please explain):
6. To better understand why you think students **do complete doctoral programs**, please respond to the following. Please indicate all that apply and rank in order of most important (1 = most important, 2 = next important, etc.).
 Research interest
 Spousal/significant other influence
 Wanted to build a better life for themselves and children/family
 Future salary possibilities
 Prestige/title
 Interest in higher education
 Dissatisfaction with current degree
 Desire to teach in a university setting
 Dissatisfaction with current position
 Availability for financial support
 Desire for knowledge
 Interest in working with a particular scholar
 Make contribution to the discipline
 Other (please explain):

Thank you very much for responding to my questionnaire. I believe this study will lead to some important answers regarding the reasons why some people choose to pursue, not pursue, or discontinue a doctoral degree.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or my project, I will be happy to answer them.

Thanks again for your time.