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The experiences of undergraduate students of color in the field of speech-language pathology

Charu Dwivedi

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The Experiences of Undergraduate Students of Color in the Field of
Speech-Language Pathology

by

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Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Special Education

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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in

Speech-Language Pathology

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

Dedication

For everyone who has ever struggled to find their voice...

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Abstract

This qualitative research study explored why undergraduate students of color have pursued degrees in speech-language pathology. The population of the United States consisting of individuals of color is rapidly increasing. However, the demographic of individuals of color in the field of speech-language pathology is not. Interviews with undergraduate students of color were completed to understand their journey that led them to the field. The results of the study indicated that the students of color who succeeded in getting accepted into a speech-language pathology major had support, internal motivation, and were financially stable.

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Chapter 1: Review of Literature

Introduction

Demographics. The United States is developing into a more culturally and linguistically diverse country. Approximately 38% of the United States population represents individuals of color, and by 2060, the percentage is expected to increase to 56% (US Census Bureau, 2015). A person of color is defined as an individual who is non-Caucasian, for example, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American (Vidal-Ortiz, 2008). As the nation's demographic shifts, so too has the composition of students in higher education. The relative proportion of each racial/ethnic group of enrolled undergraduate students has increased overtime. For example, the number of Hispanic students increased from 6% to 17%, and the number of Black students increased from 10% to 15% from 1990 to 2013 (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016).

Challenges that students of color face. While admission to higher education for students of color has increased, the graduation rates are lacking (US Census Bureau, 2012). Most recently, the National Center for Education Statistics (2017) reported that 32% of students who graduated with an undergraduate degree during 2014 were of color, which includes Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and two or more races. Thirty-two percent of master's degree recipient were of color along with 30% of doctoral degree recipients. These statistics indicate that students of color are facing barriers to accessing and attaining degrees in higher education.

Researchers have reported common challenges that students of color face in higher education, including financial stress and lack of support (Dulabaum, 2016; Dumas-Hines, 2001). These students often lack the financial resources needed to access and continue in higher education (Boatman & Long, 2016). The cost of higher education is substantial, and many students of color rely on financial aid (Unverth, Talbert-Johnson, & Bogard, 2012). While

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financial aid is readily available, many students of color are uninformed and unsupported concerning financial aid options and repayment (Museus, 2009). In addition to financial challenges, these students may be unprepared for college because they lack the academic and social supports needed for success in higher education (Dulabaum, 2016). In K-12 education, family members are the most important supports for academic success (Cheng & Starks, 2002). However, when students of color enter higher education, their support system changes, and the support that they receive from faculty and peers becomes critical for their academic success (Baker, 2013). Some students of color have difficulty balancing college with work and family life as the demands of the family can conflict with school demands (Sy & Romero, 2008). These students are also more likely to face hate crimes and bias incidents (Liang & Alimo, 2005). They experience more harassment than their White peers. Specifically, hate crimes such as racist literature, name calling, and physical attacks have occurred in universities across the country (Allen, 1992). In addition to blatant forms of racism, students of color also experience microaggressions, which contribute to isolation and lack of success in higher education (Hubain, Allen, Harris, & Linder, 2016).

Recruitment and retention strategies. Strategies and efforts have been made to increase recruitment and retention of students of color in higher education (Mitchell, 2014). Recruitment strategies that work for Caucasian students do not necessarily work for students of color. Recruitment should begin early at the middle and secondary school level to encourage these students to pursue higher education (Diversity Pipeline Alliance, 2002). In an effort to open the lines of communication, interacting with racially and ethnically diverse students through career and college fairs, graduate school fairs, the community, and the workplace are all necessary efforts (Donnell, Edwards, & Green, 2002). The presence of both faculty and students of color

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would provide an incentive for students of color, as this shows an appreciation for diversity (Cabrera, Nora, & Terenzini, 1999).

In order to increase retention for racially and ethnically diverse students, faculty and staff must create an environment that is supportive of all the challenges that these students endure in the transition to the university. Pre-college programs that provide high school students with information regarding college requirements and degree programs can help pave the way for the academic support that students of color need in order to succeed at higher education institutions (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], 2017b). Once enrolled, these students should have access to comprehensive programs such as counseling, tutoring, and career planning implemented by staff and faculty who are culturally competent (Dumas-Hines, 2001). Furthermore, creating cultural organizations and activities can provide strong social support for students of color and lead to integration as other students and faculty come to appreciate the significance of diversity (Dumas-Hines, 2001). It is important that students of color feel their campuses are minority-friendly (Smith, 1991). Minority-specific mentoring programs may increase positive feelings about campus climate and have been shown to increase retention as well (Holloway, 2002).

Diversity in speech-language pathology programs. Higher education programs in speech-language pathology severely lack diversity. Current research suggests that the speech-language pathology programs do not reflect the cultural diversity of the United States. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) and ASHA published the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) Education Survey National Aggregate (CAPSCD & ASHA, 2016). Across 173 participating universities, only 23% of undergraduate students in the communication disorders majors are of

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color (CAPSCD & ASHA, 2016). Additionally, across 204 participating schools, only 15% of master's students were of a racial/ethnic minority or international students (CAPSCD & ASHA, 2016).

ASHA has provided recruitment and retention recommendations for increasing diversity in higher education programs. ASHA (2017a) outlined vital elements for successful recruitment and retention of diverse students to speech-language pathology programs: early and extended awareness programs, outreach efforts, use of media to communicate information about CSD studies and careers, admission process adaption/flexibility, collaboration by institutions, and recruitment from special programs. However, once a student of color is recruited, efforts must also be made to retain that student. The specific retention elements that have been cited to increase diverse students to speech-language pathology programs are curricular modification, expanded faculty roles and responsibilities, mentoring and tutoring assistance, professional networking opportunities, and using college/university resources (ASHA, 2017a).

Efforts have been made by universities to increase the recruitment and retention of students of color to continue to increase diversity in higher education speech-language pathology programs (ASHA, n.d.). However, there has been a minimal increase in the enrolled number of students of color in communication sciences and disorders programs. In 2012-2013, the enrollment of undergraduate students of color was 19.7%, while in 2015-2016, it was 23.6%. In 2010-2011, the enrollment of students of color in graduate programs was 13.6% and increased to 16.6% for 2015-2016 (CAPSCD, 2017). Efforts to increase diversity have also been made by ASHA for almost 20 years, yet it has been unable to reach the 10% goal of diversity in the field. There is a higher enrollment of students of color in speech-language pathology graduate programs than the number of individuals completing the degree. This completion gap leads to a

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limited number of speech-language pathologists of color. Currently, ASHA (2017c) reports that only 7.9% of its members are of color.

Chapter 2: Study Outline

Purpose of the Study

While qualitative research has been conducted with students of color in higher education in general, no published research to date has examined the experiences of students of color majoring in speech-language pathology. Understanding the experiences that led undergraduate students of color to choose a degree in speech-language pathology can help shape strategies to increase diversity in the field of speech-language pathology (Stewart & Gonzalez, 2002). This study gave a voice to students of diverse cultures and backgrounds, which may eventually help to inform support systems for them.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of undergraduate students of color who are majoring in speech-language pathology, a population whose voices are not heard often. The study also investigated the barriers to success that may be experienced by students of color. Students of color pursuing a degree in speech-language pathology have complex needs. By learning more about their stories, speech-language pathologists can learn how to better support this dynamic group of individuals.

Justification and Significance

As the number of students of color in the field of speech-language pathology increases, speech-language pathology programs need to find better ways to support these students of color so that they can successfully graduate. Understanding the experiences of students of color through this qualitative study could help change the recruitment and retention process for speech-language pathology programs in higher education institutions. Furthermore, the results of the study could potentially lead to research on how to increase diversity in the field of speech-language pathology. The United States is developing into a much more racially and ethnically

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diverse population. For this reason, it is imperative to diversify future speech-language pathology programs. Given America's changing demographic, a field lacking in diversity is limited in progress. Speech and language disorders are more prevalent in culturally and linguistically diverse populations (ASHA, 2017a) and cultural mismatch between speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and their clients and families can generate challenges. For clients with communication barriers, the additional hurdle of a cultural barrier may be restrictive to therapy.

Research Questions

The overarching research question addressed for this project was as follows: What have been the experiences that have led students of color to choose a major in speech-language pathology and persist toward degree completion? Examples of specific interview questions were as follows:

1. How did you first hear about the field of speech-language pathology?
2. What attracted you to the field of speech-language pathology?
3. What supports have you experienced since declaring speech-language as your major?
4. What trials have you experienced since declaring speech-language as your major?

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study employed qualitative research, which allowed the researcher to share the experience of the participants by giving them voice. This method allowed for the generation of deep understanding of the experiences of undergraduate students of color (Kozleski, 2017). Specifically, I used phenomenology as the chosen mode of qualitative research. Phenomenology utilizes an individual's voice to better understand a specific experience. In a phenomenological approach, each participant shared her experience. Common themes emerged to tell the story of the participants' experiences (Ostergaard, Dahlin, & Hugo, 2008).

Sampling

The sample consisted of three undergraduate students of color majoring in speech-language pathology/communication sciences and disorders, between the ages of 21 to 23. Participants were not discriminated based on sex, socioeconomic status, or religion. Individuals were recruited by contacting the faculty advisor for the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) of universities in the United States and asking to share information about the research project and how to get in contact with the researcher if interested in participation.

Data Gathering

For the interviews, Seidman's three-part interview process where life history, details of the experience, and reflection on meaning was utilized (Seidman, 2006). Qualitative data included transcripts and notes taken from recordings of interviews and the researcher's notes during the process to summarize common ideas that are formed and then interpreted (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). I chose to conduct interviews because I believe that the participants can best share their experiences in a verbal format. During the course of the interviews, I was

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present and paid careful attention to what the participant was expressing. After completing the consent form, participants were interviewed one or two times with the first interview lasting approximately one to two hours in length and any additional follow-up interview lasting 15 to 30 minutes. Following the interview, I sent the recording to a professional transcriptionist, who is aware of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and institutional review board practices for protecting patient identity. The transcriptionist provided a transcript that was used for analysis.

Data Analysis

I used a modified version of Hycner's (1985) phenomenological data analysis. In the beginning, I analyzed the data by reading through the transcript to understand the general idea. Then, I examined the details that were relevant to my research topic. The specific quotes from each participant guided me to common themes that emerged within the interview. I then summarized the interviews to form a conclusion.

Definition of Terms

- *Culturally and linguistically diverse*: Culturally and linguistically diverse individuals come from diverse social, cultural, or economic backgrounds. They often have limited proficiency in Mainstream American English (Gonzalez, Pagan, Wendell, & Love, 2011).
- *Microaggression*: Microaggression is the subtle verbal and nonverbal actions that lead to negative attitudes against individuals of color. (Harwood, Hunt, Mendenhall, & Lewis, 2012).
- *Racial/ethnic group*: Racial/ethnic group is based on a general race or ethnic heritage. They include White, Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific

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Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and two or more races (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016).

- *Student of color*: A student of color is an individual who is non-Caucasian (Vidal-Ortiz, 2008)

Chapter 4: Data

Participants

Three participants were interviewed regarding the experiences that led them to pursue the major of speech-language pathology. Two participants self-identified as African American and one self-identified as South Asian. All of the participants were women in undergraduate institutions who held senior class standing. All of the participants have recently graduated with a bachelor’s degree in speech-language pathology and are planning on pursuing their master’s in speech-language pathology. Aamaira always knew college was going to be the next step to achieve success. In her culture, successful careers are admired and she wanted that acknowledgement. Imani’s parents sacrificed a lot to immigrate to the United States. Imani worked hard to make sure their effort was not forgotten. Sarah is grateful for the financial support that her family provided her to enroll in college. This chapter introduces the participants and discusses the stories of Aamaira, Imani, and Sarah as they reflect on the memories and experiences. See table 1 for this list of participants and their racial identity.

Table 1. Participant Summary

Participant’s Name	Participant’s Race
Aamaira	South Asian
Imani	African American
Sarah	African American

Aamaira. Aamaira is a 21 year-old female who graduated from a Midwestern public university this past April 2018. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in speech-language pathology. She is the second of four daughters in the family. Both of her parents emigrated from Pakistan and completed master’s degrees in engineering in the United States. Her siblings vary in their occupation ranging from graphic designer to behavior therapist. Aamaira has been married

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for a year to a respiratory therapist who is currently in administration.

At the initial encounter with her, Aamaira appeared to be outgoing. She was a board member of her university's National Student Speech Language Hearing Association chapter and worked contingent as a respiratory therapist her last few years of college. Aamaira explained her difficult transition from "suburbia" to "isolation":

During the recession, my dad lost his job here so we moved when I was in eighth grade and so it was a huge transition from the suburban area. So we moved... and it was even more isolated and just nobody in the school except my sister and me who wore a hijab and then I think about maybe 10 or 20 max...in the entire school who were brown and black. So that was a completely different experience.

When discussing deeper personal experiences dealing with racism and religious views, she became more reserved. She timidly shared, "I think it was more of a personal struggle, being more comfortable with yourself when nobody else looks like you... you have to be confident in who you are and ready to call out people." She went on to explain, "Even now in college, you have like professors that say stuff to you and there are obviously micro-aggressions all the time which is crazy." Aamaira shared that education is valued in her family: "I feel like the majority of my childhood that I can remember is just school. We were in sports and stuff over the summer but never during the school year just because my parents value education." The medical side of speech-language pathology is what sparked Aamaira's interest in the field along with the opportunity to work in a variety of settings, the ability "to work in a school or a hospital or literally anywhere."

Imani. Imani is a 23 year-old first generation African American woman whose parents came from Nigeria. She recently completed her undergraduate degree in speech-language

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pathology from a small, public university. Throughout the interview, she was calm and collected while sharing her story. Born in New York, Imani had a diverse preschool experience: “All of us were of African descent because of the area. It was in Brooklyn, so mostly Black people.” She and her family then moved due to safety issues. However, the transition to kindergarten in a new area was unsettling. She shared how some individuals were not exposed to different cultures:

“There was this White girl that asked me. Like there was another Black guy that I didn’t know and she asked me if that was my brother. And I said no. I didn’t fit in.” She was also made fun of in school for her unique name and eventually had to shorten it for the convenience of others:

“That bothered me so much. To the fact that I kind of shortened my name.” Throughout Imani’s K-12 education, her family moved a total of five times. However, she explained that for her social circle, that was never a problem:

I guess because I knew people that were going to the next school or because the school that I was moving too, like my neighborhood friends went there so I just felt comfortable, like “Oh, G is going to that school so I will know someone that is there.”

For Imani, the approval of her parents is important, which included succeeding in school:

“Because they were coming to America just so they could have a better life for their children. They just want better opportunities for us.”

Imani referred to herself as an African American individual. She explained the difference between Black and African American: “So they [Blacks] won’t identify with African because they have no connection with it, so I specifically wouldn’t call them African Americans---just Black Americans.” Imani explained how important her culture is to her: “I am connected to a lot of Africans, like specifically my tribal group. I go to a Christian church and most of us are Nigerian or West African.” She went on to say, “We even we have cultural groups where we

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come to talk about things back home.”

Sarah. Just like Imani, Sarah is an African American senior in a small, public undergraduate university. Her family consists of her divorced mother and father, one younger brother, and one half-sister. Both of her siblings received speech-language pathology services. She appeared very bold, as she confidently responded to all questions asked, and friendly, as she openly shared her experiences growing up. As a girl, she noticed skin tones of others around her: “There is no one in here that looks like me and I don’t know who to invite to my house because I don’t know if they are going to want to come because my house is different probably than theirs.” She went on to say,

Even coloring, when I would do the coloring, I would color the skin brown and they would all just leave it white. I think I was more aware that I was one of the few students that looked like me in elementary school.

In school, Sarah had a few teachers who were role models because they looked out for her slightly more, since they were also of color:

I wanted to be in those classrooms because I thought that they would care a little bit more. I wasn’t just another student in their classroom; it was more of a personal connection. I could talk to them about what is going on at home and they wanted to hear sometimes a little bit more than I would say that my White teachers wanted to hear.

Sarah’s resilient nature was shown when she shared a story about her earlier years of high school: “I remember one time I was in a store and these White girls were stealing but they [cashiers] were so focused on me, that they didn’t even realize that the White girls were stealing.”

Sarah shared what drew her towards speech-language pathology: “It was just a lot of

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things that attracted me to it but the initial thing, the biggest thing, was that both of my siblings had worked with someone [speech-language pathologist]." She shared, "My sister's SLP was very informative and she really seemed like she wanted me to do something like that. She made it sound so wonderful. Like a great option."

Theme: Financial Stability

The theme of financial stability was present with the participants throughout their education, especially in college. Financial stability to the participants meant having the financial resources to pay for items, with no grave concerns about payment. It also meant that a monetary fund was available to aid in emergency situations. Financial stability was achieved from their families, scholarships, and jobs.

Growing up, Sarah recognized her family was monetarily fortunate and expressed concerns of what other African American peers assumed. She said, "They are going to think, they don't want to bring me to their house because her house has all these things that work and my house may not have everything that works all the time." She worried that driving a Toyota Foreigner made other African Americans say, "Where did you get the money for that car?" and then later having to explain [her] dad is a doctor and he can provide things for [her] that maybe not everyone can have." She had concerns that others thought, "She is Black but she didn't grow up in the hood' or 'She didn't have to struggle the way we might have.'" In high school, Sarah played on a travel volleyball team. She shared, "There weren't many girls of color in that because it is a more expensive thing to be in and is like doing more than just being on the school volleyball team." She explained, "I do think it creates a barrier if I bring that [background] up too soon or if someone thinks, I think I am better than them because of where I come from. They think I am going to look down upon them." However, in the classroom setting, Sarah believed

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that she was just like everyone else; there, she had to earn her education, and she did not receive special privileges.

All of the participants shared how they were fortunate to have free K-12 public school experience. Imani's Nigerian parents encouraged their children to read to have the best education since "they had to pay school fees to go to school, and in America, school is free for K-12."

Aamaira described her family as the average middle class family. Her father was the sole earner and they "live a very comfortable lifestyle." She commented, "I'm not sure why my parents chose public school and not a private school, but I think it's because the private schools in the area didn't have a significant advantage over the public schools." Sarah recalled, "As far as I know, my parents were financially stable. We never had instances where the lights were cut off, or we didn't eat dinner."

The participants paid for college through a combination of finances from parents, scholarships, and work. Each participant was awarded scholarship money. Sarah received a scholarship for all four years of her undergraduate program. Imani explained, "I have loans and I have scholarships. I felt like I had to take out loans either way because the scholarship I got wasn't too big or anything but it helped." Imani's parents assisted with her college bills early on but as Imani became well informed of the variety of scholarships available, they helped less. Aamaira was awarded scholarships due to her academic excellence. She said, "I got a full ride at [university]." She credited the faculty at the university with helping achieve financial stability: "I think the faculty has been amazing here. I actually just got an email. Apparently, they nominate two people from the speech department every year, and I was one of them. That was a scholarship that I wasn't expecting." Sarah explained that often students of color do not know "about applying to scholarships per se or how to get financial aid help, so they have accumulated

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debt they didn't want and they are more worried about getting into grad school." She suggested, "Maybe if colleges reached out to them [students of color] more somehow and made it more widespread that way." Both Sarah and Imani's parents helped financially. Sarah shared that her parents fully paid for her college. She said, "I have zero dollars of debt right now and I know a lot of students of color that do have debt." Along with academic expenses, Imani's father also supported some of her living expenses. Imani stated, "My father has always helped me buy a car and helped me with car issues."

Aamaira, Sarah, and Imani all worked part-time throughout college to help gain additional income. Aamaira started working part-time at a hospital after two semesters of receiving her full ride as a respiratory therapist to "make sure she had a good school, work, and family life balance." Also, Aamaira's husband is a respiratory therapist, which helps with finances. Similar to Aamaira, Sarah worked as a patient attendant for 16 hours per week during her undergraduate years to pay for living expenses and provide support with family bills when possible. Imani worked 15–20 hours every week at an assisted living facility. The income was used for living expenses and books.

Sarah and Imani both feel that they were blessed that their parents were financially able to provide for them. Sarah murmured, "It definitely makes it seem like grad school is more possible, it is not an unreachable or unattainable thing. It is something I can do because I have the financial support that I need." Imani concurred, "I would say I am kind of privileged because if I needed money, I would drive home to them [parents] or if I needed extra food, I could drive home to them [parents]. Some students don't have that." However, Sarah and Imani stated that they do not want to always rely on their parents. Sarah has found other means to receive financial support and stated,

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I am trying to apply for a bunch of scholarships and trying to lessen whatever burden I can because it is not just me, my brother is in college as well. They have two students in college and that is an expense for them. So whatever I can do, I try to help.

In looking toward the future, Sarah lamented, “Especially with grad school, I know I am probably not going to be able to work as much as I would like to so I am going to need their help probably even more financially.” She explained, “I worked a lot in undergrad but I feel like after going to a lot of the grad school information sessions, a lot of the people I talked to were in the program and they don’t have time to work.” She reflected, “If I can’t work then I am definitely going to need financial help.” Similarly, Imani stated that her parents would assist with finances if necessary, but she doesn’t want to rely on them too much: “Sometimes I don’t want to count on them, and I just apply for scholarships as much as I can, so I won’t feel like I am bothering them.” She later voiced, “My family is not having a good time because they are struggling financially so I can’t go back to them.” Sarah responded to why there aren’t many students of color in speech-language pathology. She voiced,

But I think finances are the main...it is a heavy one. I don’t know if it is the main always in every case. Because I know I am not the only African American girl that has a dad that is a doctor so there is a lot of academic students that do have financial resources but there are other things that can get in the way---like if you have children, you might not think it is possible for you. Or if you went to school and stopped for a while and now you are trying to get back to school. There are a lot of obstacles sometimes.”

Theme: Support

All three participants provided examples of support when narrating their stories. Support for the participants came in the form of family members, professionals, and friends guiding and

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encouraging them to a goal. The participants valued the support provided by these individuals, voicing the sacrifice observed, advice suggested, and friendships developed.

Aamaira, Sarah, and Imani's family provided unconditional support throughout their education. Aamaira recalled how her family supported her "in every way." When Aamaira's parents immigrated to the United States, her mother homeschooled Aamaira and her siblings for three years "to make sure we had that upbringing since there weren't a lot of Muslims in the area." Aamaira expressed the sacrifice her mother made: "My mom also has her master's degree, but she chose to stay home with us." Likewise, Imani's family moved a great distance because her parents wanted to provide her with a safer environment. Aamaira's parents desired for their children to be exposed to important South Asian cultural values. She acknowledged, "My mom is more religious than my dad and so my mom put a lot of making sure we are involved in our mosque...and going to weekly learning services." Similarly, Imani's parents always encouraged education for the children. Imani shared, "My parents always tried to keep us in the house so we could study more....They were always telling me to read more and now I understand...because reading is knowledge. You can learn a new thing every day by reading." Since she was 16, Aamaira's parents made the time to drive her to and from clinical sites once she began studying for respiratory therapy. When talking about her husband and his unconditional support, Aamaira confessed, "I will text him and say I will stay here [at school] until 9 tonight and he would be fine with that." Like Aamaira, Sarah was also thankful for the support her parents have always provided her. She voiced, "I can always go to my parents if I have had a long day or if I just really need to complain about something, they are going to listen." Imani also concurred,

They have provided so much for me and I just want to show them that their hard work has paid off in their children... I hear people say their mom wasn't there to take care of

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them or their father wasn't there...I would say in a lot of Black families, the father is absent. That is not my situation.

She went further to share, "My mother taught me how to cook... A lot of students don't have that. They don't have parents to take care of them."

Sarah shared how her mother considered her future when she decided on her name.

Sarah confided,

My mother told me why she named me [name] was so that people wouldn't know automatically that I was of color...She said it's mainly so when you write your name down on an application, people don't know right away that you are a person of color.

Sarah was thankful for her mother's early decision, as she has witnessed her African American peers struggle in class when their names were often mispronounced. However, Sarah lamented that just having a White-sounding name does not prevent bias. Sarah disclosed her experience of a cashier, assuming she was going to steal at the mall and the following advice her mother provided her:

She just told me that was going to happen to me sometimes. You don't need to let it bother you. If you are not stealing anything then you are not doing anything wrong so you don't need to worry about it.

Sarah broadly reflected on the importance of parental support to succeed. She mused, "Students of color don't have the parental support. Of course they can call them but their parent isn't right there if they need help. That might negatively affect."

Many of the participants' teachers have supported and encouraged them to succeed in their professional life, along with making them feel included and accepted in a classroom environment. Aamaira reminisced,

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The first time I can remember a teacher actually telling me this was when I was in 6th grade was that you are going to become a doctor and you are going to do great things.

And I think every single year since then, I can at least pinpoint one teacher that has told me that. One teacher even said I was going to cure cancer... So I think it was great to have people that really believed in me.

Both Aamaira and Sarah felt included and supported in the classroom. Aamaira recalled when a teacher reached out to her and her family to ensure she joined a class event. She said,

We were having a Christmas party in class and obviously, we don't do Christmas so I wasn't going to go and that wasn't a big deal to me at all because I just get to stay home from school, and my teacher actually called my mom and said, "If you are not going to send [Aamaira] to the Christmas party, I just want to let you know it is a holiday party as we would love to have her." So I did end up going which was really nice.

Sarah recollected countless memories of the positive impact her K-12 teachers had on her. They provided her with a comfortable environment and often encouraged her to follow her hobbies and interests. These teachers created an interactive area for her where school was also fun. Sarah disclosed how her second grade teacher took special interests in her: "She noticed that I really loved to read and so she would bring me books and suggest books. She got me interested in poetry."

Sarah also spoke fondly of her third grade teacher: "She was very fair so most people would think she was a White woman, but she was biracial---I think African American and White. She was very nice too." Although her elementary school teachers were supportive, Sarah contemplated what would have occurred if she had more African American adult role models to see at school. She wondered,

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I guess I didn't realize that maybe I needed to have an African-American teacher. I just maybe thought that wasn't what African-Americans did; they didn't teach at that time probably and I didn't think that was what we did because I didn't have any. Well, my grandmother was a principal at one of the local high schools but in third grade I didn't realize that and I didn't care. But until I realized my grandmother and grandfather both worked in the school systems so maybe I didn't realize until then that African Americans worked in the school system other than being lunch monitors or janitors---just not in the teaching position or the principal.

However, interactions with the limited staff and faculty of color were cherished by Sarah. She recalled a middle school teacher of color:

I think he had a way of looking out for us students of color. If we were late to school, he would ask if something was wrong or if something was going on, if we needed more help getting to school...he would be more concerned.

She followed with, "It made me feel special and cared for. Someone actually had an interest in making sure that I was going to do well in school." Sarah also had some lunch supervisors of color who she often socialized with. She grinned, "They would come up to our tables and make us laugh and tell us different things that we would understand, more so than the White students."

She justified the reason for wanting more role models of color:

Other than just making sure that I get my work done. They care for me because I look how I do and because they do want me to do well...sometimes it is nice to have someone that represents you. You think, "I can do that," because you see someone who looks like you.

Sarah yearned to be in the classrooms of teachers of color. She revealed, "They would care a

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little bit more. I wasn't just another student in their classroom; it was more of a personal connection." She continued, "I could talk to them about what is going on at home and they wanted to hear sometimes a little bit more than I would say that my White teachers wanted to hear." Imani expressed the same feelings as Sarah and Aamaira and commented, "I would say most of my teachers were nice throughout elementary school." Specifically, she remembered her impactful high school teachers. She shared about her marching band teacher: "She shouted at us but only because she wanted to see us do good. She taught us how to discipline ourselves because marching band is not easy...so just that experience was good." Similarly, about her Spanish teacher, she remarked, "My Spanish teacher was Caucasian but he was good at teaching the class, and he made sure we spoke Spanish instead of trying to short cut around it." Aamaira, Sarah, and Imani all had unique moments with their classmates during their K-12 education. Aamaira's class voted for her in a mock-presidential election. She remembered, "I ended up winning as president of the classroom. So that was really nice...that my classmates would vote for me." Sarah and Imani enjoyed other peers who could relate to their background and make them feel more comfortable. Both formed their closest friendships with other African American students.

As these participants transitioned to their undergraduate institutions, they were supported by advisors who guided them to the field of speech-language pathology when they were trying to switch majors. Aamaira first learned about speech-language pathology because of her special education counselor. Aamaira shared, "She said there is something called speech pathology and you can go work in a hospital or work in a clinic." Similarly, Imani sought an advisor who explained to her about speech-language pathology. Sarah's advisor helped her follow the right path to graduation. She reported, "She was very understanding, and she worked with us if we

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were struggling; she wanted to make sure we understood what was going on.” Sarah initially had observed a speech-language pathologist working with her younger sister, which sparked her interest towards the field. Sarah noted,

I was lucky that the speech pathologist that [sister] worked with was very like, “Do you want to know what is going on?” She was explaining things to me without me even initially asking. I would go back there sometimes and watch her therapy session and sometimes she would explain to me what was going on afterwards.

Sarah continued, “She made it sound so wonderful- like a great option.” Later, in college, when she was considering changing her major, her mother reminded her of her interest in the field and so she decided to pursue it. All three participants have experienced positive staff and faculty interactions in their universities. Aamaira praised, “I think the faculty has been amazing here. I actually just got an email. Apparently they nominate two people from the speech department [for a scholarship] every year and I was one of them.” Imani explained how multiple professors disclosed “that minority students are favored, because the field is majority [of] White women.” She recollected, “[African American professor] talked about more how minorities are needed in the field...when I see pictures of graduate schools, the cohorts are mostly White women so she shows me that and says, ‘We need more of our color in our field.’” The strong relationships that Aamaira and Imani have built with their university professors have led them to receive letters of recommendations. Aamaira confessed, “And I think every single teacher I have had so far has offered to write me letters of recommendation for scholarships and for graduate school.” Similarly, Imani concurred, “I have connections with them. If I wanted to reach out to them, I can.”

After switching majors, Sarah expressed how her classmates have shared a sense of unity

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with each other: “The community here, everybody works together. So that made me feel good too. I wasn’t worried so much about whether I was going to be able to do this because I felt like I was going to have a strong support system.” She continued, “We have been in class together now for a little while with the same people so we work together I would say. We all want each other to succeed. It is not competitive.” Sarah brought up graduate school in the future and maintaining strong peer relationships and hoped,

So even if we don’t go to the same grad school, we are still going through the same programs, kind of, so hopefully we can keep those relationships strong. I hope that I could because I know I am going to need to lean on them and they will need to lean on me as well.

Imani discussed how her friends, consisting mainly of individuals of color, are more relatable and understand her better. She disclosed, “I just cling more to them because we look alike so I guess we have more to talk about than any other race I believe.” Imani also connected with another older undergraduate African American student in the major, who eventually became her mentor in the field. Imani expressed, “And then she took me under her wing and advised me on certain classes. I would always go to her to ask about certain professors.”

Aamaira’s manager at the hospital has encouraged her to pursue her career goal. Aamaira revealed, “The manager of the speech department...literally on my first day there, she sees me in the hallway and said, ‘If you need a job or you need somewhere to go for your clinical fellowship, we are here.’” Her respiratory therapy boss also agreed and has supported Aamaira getting a higher education as well.

Sarah and Imani reflected on how diversity can be increased in the field and how that could better support students of color. Sarah pondered what would have occurred if her sibling

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had a speech-language pathologist of color:

Maybe initially he would have been more open to it with someone who looked like him because I am sure at first, he was like, “I don’t like this lady and why is she making me do all these exercises.” And maybe if she looked more like my mom, maybe he would have been more comfortable.

She continued, “If you never see a Black SLP, maybe you think that is not something you can do. Or if you haven’t seen a Hispanic SLP, it is not something you are supposed to do.” Imani mused, “It is important to see that people from our own race are encouraging us but it will be...good to see just all races helping everybody.”

Theme: Sense of Self

All of the participants spoke of struggles with identity, often related to their cultural and linguistic differences. These struggles created obstacles in accomplishing their goals of a degree and career in speech-language pathology. Yet, each one of the participants persisted and developed a greater sense of self as a result.

The participants displayed self-confidence, which helped them to face difficult situations related to their schooling. Aamaira remembered the transition from home school to public school and stated, “It actually wasn’t hard at all. I feel like I have always had a confident personality so it wasn’t really difficult at all whatsoever.” Sarah described that she started to feel confident late in middle school and her perspective on life changed. She was happy developing solid relationships. She shared, “I started having more self-confidence so that helped with my just overall attitude with life and being at school. I felt more, less conflicted within myself.” Similar to Aamaira, Sarah noted the differences between school and home life: “I think I just kind of put in my own that this is the way I act at school and this is how I am at home. They are

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different, I don't think it was that challenging for me to go back and forth."

All of the participants were exposed to a variety of microaggressions. In school, Aamaira mentioned remarks from other students about the hijabs that she and her sister wore when moving to a new high school. The comments did not affect her much, as she was satisfied with her supportive circle of friends. She shrugged, "I just kind of brush everything off; I think you have to at some point." Sarah revealed how her African American peers called her, "Oreo" referring to an individual who is African American but speaks like a "White" individual. Even with this slur, Sarah remained confident and mature. Instead of calling names back, she retorted, "No, I'm not going to do that...Can we just sit down and talk?" After multiple attacks, Sarah declared:

"No, I am just talking like myself. You need to stop calling me that. It is rude and annoying. No! I have Black skin so I talk like a Black woman; don't tell me I talk like a White person. You can't talk like a White person." At that point, I kind of was like I can stand up for myself a little bit more. I had more reason to I guess---to stand up for myself.

Likewise, Imani admitted that her Black American classmates labeled her an "African booty scratcher," since they did "not really connect to Africa because of the slave trade." Imani articulated, "So all they know is America; they don't know exactly where [they] came from in Africa." Nonetheless, Imani always felt comfortable with her own culture and background. In the classroom, peers ridiculed her unique name. She voiced, "I don't want to be close to people that make fun of me or make fun of my culture." She clarified how often other individuals have not had interaction with people of different cultures. Now, since the change in media and pop culture, more individuals are embracing African culture. Imani mocked, "I thought you didn't

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like my culture, so why are you embracing it these days?” Similarly, Sarah also spoke about the differences among her and some of her African American peers:

So I had to learn that I don't bring that up right away that I live in a predominantly White neighborhood; that both my parents work. Both my parents went to college, and I just don't bring that up right away. It is nothing that I have against because I don't care where you come from. It is based on how you treat me, for me. So I just wanted them to realize that about me. I am not going to judge you because you come from this; that is not necessarily your fault. I don't care if that is where you came from.

Aamaira shared that she was often stared at for her outward appearance, but as she transitioned to college, she stated how she became more outspoken. She went on,

I guess I have become a lot more confident in my abilities. I remember when I graduated as a respiratory therapist, I was confident then but not really. Because a lot of times, you are involved in treatment plans and doing rounds with the doctors and all the residents and stuff...which at that time I felt confident, but now I feel so much more confident. Like for some reason, the first-year residents call me and their voices are shaking...they are just super nervous and I don't remember being that nervous but I have definitely gotten a lot more confident in my abilities.

Imani started requiring people to say her full name once college began. She stated, “This is my name and just learn it! You have to learn it! Because my parents didn't like the way I said it short. Why are you saying your name like that?” Sarah acknowledged that she experiences microaggressions often. She recalled a microaggression act of being watched while shopping in a store because she is Black. She stated,

It is kind of something I am just used to at this point. I don't really let it bother me

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anymore. I mean, it is annoying, but it is not something I let ruin my day or negatively impact. Like I will still go in a store, but if it were to happen repeatedly with the same person, I might mention it to the manager. Something like, I feel uncomfortable coming into your store with this person monitoring me. It makes my experience in your store unenjoyable. I just want you to relay that message and do something about it. If they want to monitor me, they can go do it in the back with the cameras or something. Don't do it where I can see you doing it.

Role models helped Sarah and Imani discover their sense of self. Sarah stated that her grandmother was one role model in her life. Her grandmother was strong and always stood her ground. Sarah recalled when a White neighbor asked her grandmother to sell her house to him only, since he did not want additional African Americans living in the neighborhood. She shared her grandmother's response and smirked, "And so my grandma said, you can pay three times as much as I did, and then he just let them stay there because my grandpa wasn't going to move just to please him." Imani had an academic role model who assisted her through her collegiate career. Imani became involved and participated as a member of the African Student Association. From this organization, she became connected to a mentor, who she asked for advice with anything related to the field of speech-language pathology

Despite all the obstacles, the participants were motivated to obtain their degree in speech-language pathology. Sarah voiced,

I knew that I wanted to work with kids and I knew I wanted to work in the medical field.

I always felt that was something I wanted to do. I wanted to help people. I wanted to be beneficial in their lives and have a long-standing [effect and impact].

Aamaira expressed,

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I feel like when you are not White you have to work harder in the world just to make a name for yourself and then when you have a degree...as a non-White person, they never take you seriously unless you have a degree is what I take of the world. So I have always felt like my achievements say a lot more than anything else so they can say whatever they want--- even with my teachers. My accomplishments will always speak for themselves.

Imani commented on her own desire to succeed in school, “I just wanted to be in the classes just to challenge myself a little bit. I took an AP class. And then I took chemistry in 10th or 11th grade.” She added, “I just wanted to be in honors classes and just for the sake of it and because of the people I was around.” Aamaira placed pressure on herself after teachers complimented her on her work ethic. Aamaira knew that receiving an undergraduate degree would be a stepping stone to a higher goal. She commented, “You can’t really get anywhere in today’s world if you don’t have a bachelor’s degree because that is like a high school diploma, basically.”

When asked how it feels that diversity in speech-language pathology is limited, Imani optimistically responded,

I feel like it is a plus for me, just like having to say where a lot of people have education on- like diversity. Some people might not think that is not a problem. Some people don’t know how to grasp the situation and help other people of color. I guess it is a chance for me to put the foot forward and help diverse students in the field.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Financial Stability

The theme of financial stability was prevalent among all three participants. With the financial assistance of parents, scholarships, and jobs, the participants were able to afford the university education needed to reach their professional goals. Financial resources are an important component that students consider when choosing a college or university to attend. The findings of a Paulsen and John (2002) study indicated that low- and high-income students engage in opposite behavioral patterns. It was reported that upper middle-class students often chose universities due to the availability of lower tuition and access to financial aid while lower-class students experienced less options of universities with lower tuition and financial aid (Paulsen & John, 2002). The participants in this study exhibited the oppositional behavioral patterns reported by Paulsen and John (2002). All of the participants self-identified as being a part of the middle class and chose to attend universities with low-cost tuition and financial aid options.

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that approximately 80% of traditional-age undergraduates attending college worked part-time (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2015). This was the case in this study as all of the participants worked part-time while completing their degrees. Sarah worked 16 hours a week as a patient attendant. Aamaira worked 12–24 hours a week as a respiratory therapist. Imani worked 15–20 hours as an assisted living assistant.

Kin (1999) reported that students of color rely more on loans because they receive minimal financial assistance from family members (King, 1999). This was not true of the participants in this study. All of the participants received financial assistance from their parents. In addition, all participants reported they received monetary scholarships of varying amounts

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during their time in college. The literature supports the idea that students are more likely to attend and graduate from a university when they receive financial scholarships (Bozick, Gonzalez, & Engber, 2015). Hu (2010) discovered that receiving scholarships positively impacts students of color attending four-year undergraduate universities and decreases the likelihood of attending two-year undergraduate universities. Receiving scholarships affected students' likelihood of participating in academic and social activities in their institutions. All participants in this study attended four-year colleges. The participants all felt that the financial support received from scholarships was a key factor in their success. Aamaira shared, "I was a senior in high school at that time, so I was applying for scholarships to wherever I could...then I got a full ride at [university]."

Each participant completed honors and advanced placement courses in high school. Aamaira stated that she enrolled in Honors/college credit courses in ninth grade and then attended college credit courses for the remainder of her high school year. A study found that enrolling in advanced high school courses, receiving a high school diploma, and applying for college impacted early commitment to college for low-income students. Furthermore, receiving financial aid increased enrollment rate in 4-year institutions (Heller & Martin, 2004). Aamaira received a full ride scholarship which allowed her to attend her undergraduate university.

Support

Support was provided to the participants from family members, classmates, and professionals. These three types of support are known as social support (Hombroados-Mendieta, Gomez-Jacinto, Dominguez-Fuentes, Garcia-Leiva, & Castro- Travé, 2012). Family members, especially parents, offer emotional and instrumental support, classmates provide informational and emotional support, and teachers give informational support (Hombroados-Mendieta et al.,

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2012). All participants experienced the social support needed to succeed. They could return to the family for solace if needed. Imani's parents decided to move to a safer state for their children. Aamaira's classmates encouraged her as she won the mock presidential election in her class. Sarah's teachers allowed her to feel accepted at school.

However, even with this social support, all of the participants talked about how it would have been helpful to have teachers of color to serve as role-models. Zirkel (2002) stated that role models of color are important for students of color because these students perform better academically, achieve more goals, and visualize their future. Torsheim et al. (2012) also showed stronger associations with school satisfaction for teacher support than classmate support. The participants valued caring teachers, regardless of their race, who encouraged them to feel that goals were achievable, and all students were accepted.

The participants discussed the importance of parental support throughout their education. Their parents valued their children's education. Chapman and Bhopal (2013) reported that mothers of students of color must be involved in their education and actively prepare them to face potential racism in schools. Sarah's parents explained to her why she might face racial attacks at school. Aamaira related how her home environment was relaxed and comfortable and returning to that safe place with a supporting family was reassuring. Posey (2017) revealed how Black parents faced racial comments by their White suburban community and school district and the education they provided to their children to overcome these barriers. Similarly, Imani's father advocated for his children. She revealed, "There was one time that my sister told my dad that she was getting called, 'African booty scratcher' by one of her classmates. My dad went up to the school and yelled at the little boy. The boy then apologized to my sister." The participants spoke of their close friends who were classmates as someone they could share cultural commonalities

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with. A study revealed the development of friendship is crucial between classmates since a large amount of time is spent at school (Hombroados-Mendieta et al., 2012). Aamaira emphasized, “I definitely chose friends who have similar values and help make me more open-minded.”

Sense of Self

All participants in this study expressed how they overcame obstacles to reach their dream of receiving an undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology. Throughout this journey, they developed a greater sense of self. Often, the participants had an internal desire to succeed, without necessarily receiving any external benefits.

All of the participants were involved in their university’s National Student Speech Language Hearing Association chapter, specifically Imani and Aamaira as board members. Espinosa (2011) concluded that joining a field-related organization will increase the likelihood of undergraduates persisting with the profession. Furthermore, participating in undergraduate research also predicted persistence in continuing with the field. Imani and Aamaira both conducted undergraduate research. Aamaira was required for a scholarship, and Imani was inspired by her peer-mentor, who presented research with a professor. The participants completed research and participated in organizations to strengthen their sense of self to reach their higher goal of graduating with a undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology.

The participants all agreed on feeling accepted at their undergraduate institutions, due to faculty and peer support. Sarah recalled, “I felt accepted at [university], because I saw more faces that looked like mine and the ones that didn’t were friendly.” Imani agreed, “There’s a good amount of African students here that I strongly connect to. I feel welcomed at [university]. Aamaira beamed, “I would definitely say I belonged at [university]. I had awesome professors who made me feel more than welcome, and I made really great friends here....You can choose

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from a wide variety of people to be friends with.” Maramba and Museus (2013) revealed that success is higher if the students feel belonging at their institution.

Participants in a study completed by Samura (2016) explained that their experiences in higher education lead to a stronger sense of self. The literature explained, “it was a process that involved remaking themselves, repositioning themselves, or remaking space to increase belonging.” Furthermore, it specified that participants in this study belonged socially, as they shared ethnic or racial identification. This is seen from all three participants, who have chosen to develop bonds with individuals who are racially similar to themselves. Similarly, a study implied how ethnic group cohesion affects a sense of belonging with students on campus (Maramba & Museus, 2013).

All of the participants changed majors earlier in college. Sarah was pursuing a sociology degree, Aamaira was a health administration major, and Imani was in nursing. A study pointed that students of color remade themselves academically as part of the process to develop a greater sense of self as they had to change their first major (Samura, 2016).

All participants dealt with microaggressions, often from peers of their same race. Casanova, McGuire, and Martin (2018) found that students respond in different ways when microaggressions take place. Some students ignore the comment or are silent, while others display discomfort or respond with a joke. It was less common for students to respond or question the culprit. The participants in this study all responded in different ways to microaggressions. Aamaira chose to ignore or stay quiet when faced with a microaggression, while Sarah and Imani refuted the comments. Sarah and Imani encountered internalized racism, as members of their own race made sly comments about them. Hipolito-Delgado (2016) indicated that there was a significant relationship between internalized racism and ethnic

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identity. Sarah and Imani became internally stronger as they realized they were proud of their culture and background.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications for Future Research

This study shares the experiences of undergraduate students of color on their journey to receiving a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology. The themes discovered in this study were financial stability, support, and sense of self.

The theme of financial stability was prevalent during the interviews with the participants. The participants spoke about the impact that family members, scholarships, and jobs had on their ability to receive money; they expressed how these three factors led them to finance their college tuition. There is a connection between access to financial resources and retention in college (Carter, 2006). An increase in knowledge of financial means can increase in persistence of higher education as well.

The results also revealed the theme of support as a commonality across the participants. Family members, professionals, and classmates all provided encouragement throughout their education. These individuals offered advice and praise to continue with strives to reach the goal of graduation. Supportive interactions, especially during college, increase retention for students of color. Relationships between influential role models of color, peers of similar ethnic groups, and staff of color lead to a positive and support educational environment during college (Palmer, Maramba, & Dancy, 2011).

Lastly, the struggles and obstacles that the participants overcame led them to develop a greater sense of self. The participants faced microaggressions and dealt with difficult transitions in school. Luckily, these participants learned from inspirational role models who taught them to navigate during difficult moments in life. It was observed that a greater sense of self "predicted better psychological adjustment, social problem-solving skills, and greater ethnic group" among individuals of color (Skowron, 2004).

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Potential Clinical Implications

The findings in this study from the participants as they voiced their experience while receiving an undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology can impact the entire field of speech-language pathology. There needs to be more ways to increase recruitment and retention in speech-language pathology. All of the participants switched their college majors from health related fields, such as nursing and pre-medicine, to speech-language pathology. These participants did not consider the field of speech-language pathology due to a lack of representation of role models who looked similar to them. Furthermore, it is a field that is often not discovered until a change in major is necessary, potentially due to a lack of interaction with a speech-language pathologist earlier on in school. Support from family, professionals, and classmates are crucial for success of all students, but particularly for students of color. As such, mentoring programs should be a component of every undergraduate speech-language pathology program. Speech-language pathologists are interacting with an increasingly diverse caseload. It is crucial to understand the experiences of the clients and how it might impact their communication style. Increasing diversity in the field will better help support the needs of clients with speech and language barriers as they may be more comfortable and open to working with speech-language pathologists of color.

Limitations/Delimitations of the Study

All participants were from the same Midwestern state in the United States. The findings of this study would be more impactful if there were students from different locations. Moreover, it would be beneficial if there were more participants and more cultural and linguistic backgrounds were represented. It would be ideal if the participants could be more representative of population of the United States.

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Directions for Future Study

There is a need for more research on how cultural and linguistic diversity can be increased in the field of speech-language pathology. In particular, more research needs to be completed on what factors can contribute to the recruitment and retention of students of color in the field. However, the research cannot stop there. There needs to be more information on the experiences of students of color as they pursue degrees in speech-language pathology so that they can be better supported.

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APPENDICES

RESEARCH @ EMU

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The person in charge of this study is Charu Dwivedi. Charu is a graduate student at Eastern Michigan University. Her faculty adviser is Dr. Audrey Farrugia-Bernard. Throughout this form, Charu will be referred to as the “investigator.”

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study is to understand how the past educational experiences of undergraduate students of color have led them to pursue the field of speech-language pathology.

What will happen if I participate in this study?

Participation in this study involves

- One audio-taped face-to-face interview, 1-2 hours in length in which the investigator will ask questions about experiences that led students of color to pursue the speech-language pathology field. The interview will take place in a private, mutually agreed upon space and time.
- Additional interviews may be requested, lasting 15-30 minutes in length for further questions and clarification on experiences. These interview(s) will also take place in a private, mutually agreed space and time.

I would like to audio record you for this study. If you agree to be audio recorded, sign the appropriate line at the bottom of this form.

What are the anticipated risks for participation?

You may experience concerns when thinking about obstacles throughout your education that you have overcome. You may contact the investigator’s mentor, Dr. Audrey Farrugia-Bernard, regarding any concerns.

Are there any benefits to participating?

While you will not directly benefit from participating in this study, this experience may present an opportunity to reflect on your own perceptions and educational experiences.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The interview audio recordings will be kept locked in a filing cabinet in a key-locked office. The interviews will be audio recorded using two dedicated audio recorders (one for back up purposes). The audio recordings will be labeled with pseudonyms. Only the investigator will have access to the pseudonym/real identity key. Transcription will be completed, with pseudonyms and fictitious demographic information in place, from a reputable, professional

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transcription service. The transcriptionist is knowledgeable of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Institutional Review Board practices for protecting patient identity. The transcriptions will be locked on a password-protected file on a password-protected computer. If printed, they will be placed in a locked filing cabinet in a key-locked office.

Dissemination of Results

The results of this study may be disseminated at professional conferences, conventions, or meetings as well as via professional journals, book chapters, books, or similar venues. Fictitious names will be assigned in any report to all participants, their place(s) or employment, and any other identifying information. I can elect to be notified when the study is published by signing the appropriate line at the bottom of this form.

Study contact information

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Charu Dwivedi, at cdwivedi@emich.edu or by phone at 317.435.1761. You can also contact Charu's advisor, Dr. Audrey Farrugia-Bernard, at abernar5@emich.edu or by phone at 734.487.3300. For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734.487.3090.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is your choice. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you leave the study, the information you will provided will be kept confidential. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, the investigator cannot destroy any information that has been published.

Statement of Consent

I have read this form. I have had any opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

Signatures

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

I agree to be audio recorded for this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

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I would like to be notified when the study is published.

Signature of Participant

Date

Participant email address

I have explained the research to the subject and answered all his/her questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject.

Name of Investigator

Signature of Investigator

Date

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Appendix B: IRB Approval

Feb 12, 2018 8:55 PM EST

Charu Dwivedi

Special Education, Users loaded with unmatched Organization affiliation.

Re: Exempt - Initial - UHSRC-FY17-18-263 The Experiences of Undergraduate Students of Color in the Field of Speech-Language Pathology

Dear Dr. Charu Dwivedi:

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee has rendered the decision below for The Experiences of Undergraduate Students of Color in the Field of Speech-Language Pathology. You may begin your research.

Decision: Exempt

Selected Category: Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Renewals: Exempt studies do not need to be renewed. When the project is completed, please contact human.subjects@emich.edu.

Modifications: Any plan to alter the study design or any study documents must be reviewed to determine if the Exempt decision changes. You must submit a modification request application in Cayuse IRB and await a decision prior to implementation.

Problems: Any deviations from the study protocol, unanticipated problems, adverse events, subject complaints, or other problems that may affect the risk to human subjects must be reported to the UHSRC. Complete an incident report in Cayuse IRB.

Follow-up: Please contact the UHSRC when your project is complete.

Please contact human.subjects@emich.edu with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee