

**STUDYING THE DEVELOPMENT LEVEL OF METHODOLOGICAL
COMPETENCIES OF FUTURE SPEECH THERAPISTS**

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Annotation: the article presents the results of research conducted to assess the methodological competencies of future speech therapists. During the research process, the development level of speech therapists' methodological knowledge and skills was studied through educational programs, teaching methods, and practical exercises. Additionally, the article provides recommendations for enhancing the methodological competencies of speech therapists, which will help them carry out their professional activities more effectively.

Keywords: speech therapy, methodological competencies, future speech therapists, educational process, speech development, language development, teaching methods, practical exercises, professional activity, educational programs, competency assessment, scientific research, educational improvement, speech and language issues, pedagogical approaches.

Introduction

In recent years, the field of speech therapy has gained significant attention due to the increasing awareness of the importance of communication skills in personal and academic development. Speech therapists play a vital role in diagnosing and treating speech and language disorders, which can have profound effects on an individual's social interactions, educational achievements, and overall quality of life. As such, the training and preparation of future speech therapists are critical to ensuring that they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support their clients.

Methodological competencies refer to the ability to apply various teaching methods, strategies, and techniques in a practical context. For speech therapists, these competencies are essential not only for delivering effective therapy but also for adapting to the diverse needs of their clients. The development of these competencies is influenced by several factors, including educational programs, practical training, and ongoing professional development. Therefore, it is crucial to assess the current level of methodological competencies among future speech therapists to identify areas for improvement and to enhance the quality of education in this field.

This article aims to explore the development level of methodological competencies among future speech therapists. It will examine the existing educational frameworks, the effectiveness of teaching methods employed in training programs, and the practical experiences that contribute to the development of these competencies. By conducting a comprehensive analysis, this study seeks to provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current training practices and to propose recommendations for enhancing the methodological competencies of future professionals in the field of speech therapy.

Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving educational practices in speech therapy. By identifying key areas for development, this study aims to support educators, policymakers, and training institutions in their efforts to produce highly competent speech therapists who can meet the challenges of their profession and provide high-quality services to their clients.

Literature review

The development of methodological competencies in speech therapy education is a critical area of research, as these competencies directly influence the effectiveness of future practitioners. This literature review synthesizes existing research on the importance of methodological competencies, the current state of speech therapy education, and the factors influencing the development of these competencies.

1. Importance of methodological competencies

Methodological competencies encompass a range of skills, including the ability to select and apply appropriate therapeutic techniques, adapt interventions to meet individual client needs, and evaluate the effectiveness of treatment plans (Harris & McGowan, 2018). Research indicates that strong methodological competencies are linked to improved client outcomes, as therapists who are well-versed in various approaches can tailor their interventions more effectively (Baker et al., 2020). Furthermore, methodological competencies contribute to the professional identity of speech therapists, enabling them to navigate complex clinical situations with confidence (Smith & Jones, 2019).

2. Current state of speech therapy education

The educational landscape for speech therapy has evolved significantly over the past few decades. Many programs now emphasize a competency-based approach, focusing on the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], 2021). However, studies have shown that there are still gaps in the training provided to future speech therapists, particularly in the area of methodological competencies. For instance, a study by Thompson et al. (2020) found that while students reported feeling confident in their theoretical knowledge, they often lacked practical experience in applying this knowledge in real-world settings.

3. Factors influencing the development of methodological competencies

Several factors influence the development of methodological competencies among speech therapy students. One significant factor is the quality of mentorship and supervision during clinical placements. Research by Lee and Kim (2019) highlights the importance of having experienced supervisors who can provide guidance and feedback, which is essential for the development of practical skills. Additionally, the curriculum design plays a crucial role; programs that incorporate hands-on learning opportunities, such as simulations and role-playing, have been shown to enhance students' confidence and competence (Miller et al., 2021).

Another critical aspect is the integration of evidence-based practice (EBP) into the training curriculum. EBP encourages students to critically evaluate research and apply it to their clinical practice, thereby enhancing their methodological competencies (Graham et al., 2018). However, a survey conducted by Johnson et al. (2022) revealed that many students feel unprepared to implement EBP in their future practice, indicating a need for improved training in this area.

4. Gaps in the literature

Despite the growing body of research on methodological competencies in speech therapy education, there remain significant gaps. Much of the existing literature focuses on theoretical frameworks rather than empirical studies assessing the actual competencies of students. Additionally, there is limited research on the long-term impact of educational interventions on the development of these competencies. This study aims to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive assessment of the current level of methodological competencies among future speech therapists and identifying areas for improvement in training programs.

Results

1. Quantitative findings

A total of 150 students completed the survey, resulting in a 95% response rate. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

a. Descriptive statistics

The following table presents the mean scores and standard deviations for methodological competencies:

Competency area	Mean score	Standard deviation (SD)
Knowledge of therapeutic techniques	4.10	0.58

Application of techniques in practical settings	3.60	0.70
Confidence in delivering therapy	3.80	0.65
Evaluation of treatment effectiveness	3.50	0.75
Overall Methodological Competencies	3.75	0.65

Note: This table reflects the average scores of students' methodological competencies. The highest score was in "Knowledge of therapeutic techniques," while the lowest was in "Evaluation of treatment effectiveness."

b. Inferential statistics

The following table presents the results of methodological competencies based on demographic factors:

Demographic Factor	Group	Mean score	Standard deviation (SD)	Statistical Significance (p-value)
Academic Year	First-year	3.30	0.80	<0.001
	Second-year	3.60	0.75	
	Third-year	3.70	0.65	
	Fourth-year	3.90	0.60	

Note: This table shows the differences in methodological competencies based on academic year. Fourth-year students scored significantly higher than first-year students.

2. Qualitative Insights

During the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants. The thematic analysis revealed the following key themes:

a. Importance of Practical Experience

Theme	Participant Quotes
Hands-on Training Importance	"The more I practiced in real settings, the more comfortable I felt applying different techniques."

b. Role of Mentorship

Theme	Participant Quotes
Positive Impact of Mentorship	"Having a mentor who was supportive made a huge difference in my learning process."

c. Need for Improved Curriculum

Theme	Participant Quotes
Desire for More Training	"I wish we had more sessions on how to apply research in our therapy sessions."

Note: These tables summarize participants' insights regarding the importance of practical experience, the role of mentorship, and the need for curriculum improvements.

3. Observational Findings

The following table presents findings related to teaching methods and student engagement during the classes:

Observation Aspect	Findings
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Observation Aspect	Findings
Teaching Methods	Instructors utilized a variety of methods: lectures, group discussions, role-playing exercises.
Student Engagement	Students actively participated in practical exercises; some hesitated in role-playing activities.

Note: This table provides insights into the teaching methods employed by instructors and the level of student engagement observed during the sessions.

Summary of findings

Key findings
Solid theoretical knowledge but gaps in practical application.
Importance of mentorship and hands-on experience highlighted.
Need for curriculum improvements to better prepare students for evidence-based practice.

Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the methodological competencies of students in therapeutic practices. The results indicate that while students demonstrate a strong understanding of theoretical concepts, there are notable challenges when it comes to applying this knowledge in real-world situations. The highest scores were associated with their knowledge of therapeutic techniques, suggesting that students are well-prepared in theory but may lack confidence in practical application.

A significant theme that emerged from the qualitative data was the importance of practical experience. Many students expressed that hands-on training was crucial for building their confidence and competence in using various therapeutic techniques. This finding highlights the necessity for educational programs to integrate more practical training opportunities into their curricula, allowing students to gain the experience they need to feel prepared for their future roles. Additionally, the role of mentorship was underscored as a vital component of the learning process. Students who had access to supportive mentors reported a more enriching educational experience and greater self-assurance in their skills. This suggests that fostering strong mentorship relationships within educational settings could greatly enhance student development and learning outcomes.

Moreover, participants voiced a desire for improvements in the curriculum, particularly regarding the application of research in therapeutic practices. This feedback indicates that educational institutions should consider revising their curricula to better equip students with the skills necessary for evidence-based practice.

Observational findings also revealed that while students were generally engaged in practical exercises, some hesitated during role-playing activities. This points to the need for creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment that fosters full participation and reduces anxiety during practical training.

In summary, the study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive educational approach that balances theoretical knowledge with practical experience, strong mentorship, and curriculum enhancements. By addressing these areas, educational programs can better prepare students for

successful careers in therapeutic practices, ultimately benefiting the clients they serve. Future research should continue to explore these themes and evaluate the long-term effects of educational interventions on student competencies.

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INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

SJIF 2019: 5.222 2020: 5.552 2021: 5.637 2022:5.479 2023:6.563 2024: 7,805

eISSN :2394-6334 <https://www.ijmrd.in/index.php/imjrd> Volume 11, issue 11 (2024)

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