

# PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORY OF GRADUATES IN SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND HEARING SCIENCES

## *Trajetória profissional de egressos em fonoaudiologia*

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** to understand the aspects of the professional trajectory and continuity of academic studies by those who graduated on Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences (Ph). **Methods:** it was invited 250 graduates from the course at UFMG, and they were submitted a questionnaire with questions regarding professional situation, their study's continuity and academic background. Estatistical analysis: Epi software Info 6.04. (Chi-square and Fisher's Exact Tests). **Results:** most of the graduates were female, average age of 25,7 years old and time of graduation from 1,9 to almost 3 years. Most of them did not have in Ph the only source of income; the weekly working hours was higher for those who live exclusively of Ph work and they had professional achievement, but not financial. Most of those who do not have in Ph the source of income does not feel financially and professionally fulfilled ( $p < 0,05$ ). The evaluation of the academic background was mostly "very good to great" in the group of graduates who had Ph as exclusive source of income. Academic background was equally divided between "bad and good" as in "good and excellent" ( $p = 0,03$ ) in the group of graduates who does not have in Ph the only source of income. 50% of graduates reported great difficulty in entering in the labor market. **Conclusions:** the increased age, increased graduation time, working hours of over 20 hours, positive assessment of the academic background are aspects that contributed to the financial independence of the graduate in Ph. The students who reported fewer difficulties in entering in the labor market assessed the undergraduate program more positively.

**KEYWORDS:** Speech, Language and Hearing Science; Teaching; Education, Continuing; Professional Practice Location

### ■ INTRODUCTION

The profession of speech therapist dates of the 30s and was created due to the concern of the

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Source of research support: Special Graduation Program of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (PEG 056).

Conflict of interest: non-existent

medicine and education with the prevention and correction of language errors made by students<sup>1</sup>. In the 80s, the profession was legally recognized in Brazil by the Federal Law 6965/81 and states that the speech therapists are the professionals with full degree in speech therapy. They work in research, prevention, evaluation and speech and language therapies in the field of oral and written communication, voice and hearing, as well as improvement of speech and voice standards<sup>2</sup>.

According to data of 2011, in Brazil there are 35,369 professionals graduate in Speech Therapy, whereby of this total 5269 belong to the 6th Region of the Speech Therapy Regional Council (Conselho Regional de Fonoaudiologia – CRFA – 6<sup>th</sup> Region/2011), which brings together professionals from Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul<sup>12</sup>. In 2009, only in Minas

Gerais, there were 3,528 professionals, being 387 specialists<sup>1</sup>.

The graduation in speech therapy occurs in certified or acknowledged higher education institutions<sup>2</sup>. The graduation courses in Speech Therapy should foster the formation of a critical and reflective professional, able to work with technical competence, based on ethical principles, with a sense of social responsibility and commitment to citizenship.

The search for improvement of education and understanding of the evolution of knowledge and requirements of the labor market require from graduation courses, which care about the education of students, the challenge in building a quality education that follow these changes.

It is believed that the planning and development of systems to follow-up students who completed graduation courses are mechanisms that allow Higher Education Institutions to continuously improve all planning and operation of such organizations, especially of the education and learning process<sup>3</sup>.

Studies on graduates from other health areas address the working conditions and professional profile. A study on nutritionists graduated in the Federal University of Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, revealed the average age of graduates and that they have graduated in less than five years. Most graduates had completed some postgraduate degree course and were working as nutritionists. Regarding the connection of the professional with the work, it was observed that a higher percentage of them was working with clinical nutrition as freelancers, indicating the existence of a considerable number of nutritionists who work in private practices or with temporary employments (payment as freelance) in hospitals and medical clinics<sup>4</sup>.

In another study with graduates of the School of Nursing of the Federal University of Goiás (FEN/UFG), it was concluded that most of the graduates evaluated the training as good and then they attended postgraduate degree courses. Most of them work in public services. The authors of the research believe that the opinion of the graduates contributed with the professional background of future graduates and that the results should converge a little more to the reality of the labor market<sup>5</sup>.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to understand the aspects of the professional trajectory and continuity of academic studies by those who graduated in Speech Therapy. The students in this study were the graduates of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. The observation of the trajectory of the graduates is justified as a source of management information and enables decision making about

course planning, didactic teaching arrangements and/or program modalities<sup>3</sup>.

## ■ METHODS

It is a descriptive cross sectional study. Two hundred and fifty people, corresponding to the population of students who graduated in Speech Therapy in the Federal University of Minas Gerais from the first to the tenth class (Feb 2003 to Jan 2008) were invited to participate of this study.

Of the 250 graduates invited to participate in this study, 67 (26.8%) joined the study answering the form's questions and returning it to the researchers. For a sample calculation with estimated frequency of 90%, accuracy of  $\pm 5\%$  and a confidence level of 90%, 70 speech therapists would be necessary according to the program STATCALC of the software EPI-INFO 6.04. Therefore, the number of therapists that participated, whose participation was voluntary and random, is partially representative of the total population of graduates of UFMG of the ten first classes.

The data collection was performed through a form sent by mail and/or email to the participants. The emails and addresses of the graduates were acquired in the Collegiate Body of Speech Therapy of the Faculty of Medicine of the Federal University of Minas Gerais; the records of the graduates from the first to the tenth class were found after analysis of the documents in the archives. The graduates were invited to participate through the free and cleared term of consent, being instructed about the form that they should fill out. The form was developed by the researchers and was composed of objective questions on their professional situation. In this form, four main items guided the research: identification, employment situation, continuity of studies and academic background.

To participate of this research it was required that the participant was graduated in Speech Therapy in the Federal University of Minas Gerais, and part of one of the first to tenth classes.

The identification of the participant was performed by the investigation of gender, age, time from the completion of the graduation course and working time. The professional and financial fulfillment of the participant was investigated. Regarding the continuity of the studies, it was also investigated whether the participant continued the studies and if it was through specialization, master's or PhD courses. The academic background was evaluated as bad, good, very good or excellent. The average salary was investigated considering up to four minimum wages and above four minimum wages.

Regarding the place of work, it was investigated: if in hospitals, clinics, home care, college, school, theater, company, public service. With regard to the professional situation, it was asked to the participant if he was hired, freelancer, municipal or state public servant, contractor, freelancer and voluntary.

With regard to the insertion in the labour market, it was verified which aspects of the speech therapy course of UFMG helped or hindered this insertion: if theoretical or practical classes, research, extension, trainings, interconnection of the curriculum disciplines, possibilities of realization of community activities and also evaluations on the academic background.

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Minas Gerais under the opinion number ETIC 416/07. And, in order to substantiate the professional situation of the graduates of the Speech Therapy course at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, and meet the objectives proposed by the study, a quantitative approach was chosen. The data analysis was performed through the software EPI-INFO 6.04.

In the statistical analysis, the identification variables as professional situation, continuity of studies and evaluation of the academic background were associated with the variable: if the graduates lived solely from their professional work. It was also sought to relate the variable "degree of difficulty to enter the labour market" to the aspects of the course of UFMG. The Chi-square test, Fisher's exact test and Anova with  $p < 0.05$  were used in the study.

## ■ RESULTS

Regarding the characterization of the sample, most of the 63 (94%) participants of this study were female. Most of the participants (55%) do not live exclusively from their work as speech therapist (Table 1). The graduates have an average age of 25.7 years and standard deviation of 1.7 years. The time from the completion of the graduation course ranged from 1.9 to almost 3 years.

The weekly working time, above 20 hours, was higher for those who live exclusively from their work as speech therapist in relation to others. Regarding professional fulfillment, the majority of them was satisfied although without financial fulfillment. Among those who do not live exclusively from Speech Therapy, the majority does not feel financially (97.2%) nor professionally (69.4%) fulfilled. All these relationships were significant ( $p=0.002$  and  $p=0.0002$ ).

Most of the graduates continued to study, mainly through specialization, although not significant.

Among the graduates who reported living exclusively from their work, the evaluation of the academic background was mostly very good to excellent. Among the graduates who do not live exclusively from their work, 50% evaluated the university education negatively ( $p=0.03$ ).

Regarding the average monthly salary of graduates that work in the profession, there was a division between those who earn up to four minimum wages and those who earn above four minimum wages. Most of the graduates that do not live exclusively from Speech Therapy (90.3%) reported a monthly income of up to four minimum wages ( $p=0.0001$ ).

It is noteworthy that not all questions relating to Table 1 were answered by all participants of the survey.

**Table 1 – Characterization of speech therapists graduated in the UFMG**

Characteristics		Lives exclusively from his work as speech therapist		Statistical Test	P-value
		Yes (N=29)	No (N=36)		
Age in years <sup>X</sup>		26,2 (±1,9)	25,2 (±1,4)	5,1	0,02*
Working time: <sup>β</sup>	Up to 20 hours	2	21	18,30	0,00001*
	Above 20 hours	27	15		
Professional fulfillment <sup>β</sup>	Yes	20	11	9,35	0,002*
	Não	9	25		
Financial fulfillment <sup>β</sup>	Yes	11	1	13,56	0,0002*
	Não	17	35		
Continuity of studies <sup>β</sup>	Yes	27	29	2,09	0,14
	Não	2	7		
Specialization	Yes	14	15	0,05	0,82
	Não	15	18		
Master/ PhD	Yes	6	6	0,06	0,80
	Não	23	27		
Evaluation of the academic background	Poor and Good	7	18	4,47	0,03*
	Very Good and excellent	22	18		
Salary average <sup>β</sup>	Up to 4 minimum wages	13	28	14,09	0,0001*
	above 4 minimum wages	16	3		

Legend: Student's t-test<sup>(X)</sup>, Chi-square and Fisher's exact<sup>(β)</sup> tests; Level of significance of 95% (p < 0.05), N: number of graduates;

**Table 2 – Place of work\* of the graduates working with Speech Therapy**

Place of work*	Frequency	%
Hospital	12	17.91%
Multidisciplinary clinic	19	28.36%
Private practice	23	34.33%
Homecare	21	31.34%
Faculty (teaching)	3	4.48%
School	11	16.42%
Theater	2	2.99%
Companies	14	20.90%
Public servant	21	31.34%
Others	3	4.48%

\* There was a choice of multiple answers.

Most of the graduates working with Speech Therapy (44.78%) reported to work as freelancer. The others were: hired (26.87%), in the municipal public service(16.42%), service provider (14.93%),

volunteer work (4.48%) and in the state public service(2.99%), as it will be shown in Table 3 below. For this question, there was also a choice of multiple answers.

**Table 3 – Type\* of employment relationship of the graduates working with Speech Therapy**

Type* of employment relationship	Frequency	%
Contractor	18	26.87%
Freelancer	30	44.78%
Municipal public servant	11	16.42%
State public servant	2	2.99%
Service Provider	10	14.93%
Volunteer	3	4.48%

\* There was choice of multiple answers.

The questions related to Table 4 regarding the association between the insertion in the labor market and the characteristics of the undergraduate course at UFMG were not answered by all graduates that returned the questionnaire to the researchers.

With regard to the insertion in the labour market, 32 (50%) graduates reported little and/ or medium difficulty and 32 (50%) reported great difficulty, as can be seen in Table 4 below. Regarding the aspects that helped the insertion in the labour market it is highlighted: the theoretical and practical classes, interconnection of the curriculum disciplines and possibilities of realization of community activities were considered auxiliary factors in this process.

The research, university extension and trainings were not considered aspects that facilitated this insertion. The monitoring aspect was considered as a facilitating factor only by graduates who reported little and/or medium difficulty to enter the labour market. There were no significant relationships.

Most of the graduates that reported little and/ or medium difficulty (78%) evaluated the course as very good to excellent. In the group that reported great difficulty, the evaluation was divided: half of the graduates evaluated the course as bad and good and the other half good and excellent. There was a significant relationship.( $p= 0.037$ )

**Table 4 – Insertion of graduates in the labor market and characteristics of the graduation course of UFMG**

Aspects of the course of the UFMG that supported the insertion in the labour market according to the perception of the graduates		Difficulty of insertion in the labor market		Statistical Test	P-value
		Little and/or Medium (N=32)	Great (N=32)		
Theoretical classes	Yes	22	22	0.04	0.84
Practical classes	No	10	9	0.55	0.50
Research	Yes	28	25	2.09	0.14
University extension	No	4	6	0.85	0.35
Monitoring	Yes	15	9	0.78	0.37
Training	No	17	22	0.47	0.49
Interconnection of the curriculum disciplines	Yes	7	10	0.49	0.48
Possibilities of realization community activities	No	25	21	2.20	0.13
Evaluation of the academic background	Yes	17	13	5.41	0.037*
Theoretical classes	No	15	18	0.04	0.84
Practical classes	Yes	13	10	0.55	0.50
Research	No	19	21	2.09	0.14
University extension	Yes	27	24	0.85	0.35
Monitoring	No	5	7	0.78	0.37
Training	Yes	23	18	0.47	0.49
Interconnection of the curriculum disciplines	No	8	14	0.49	0.48
Possibilities of realization community activities	Good and bad	7	16	2.20	0.13
	Very good and excellent	25	16		

Legend: Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests; Level of significance of 95% ( $p < 0.05$ ), N: number of graduates.

## ■ DISCUSSION

In the study there was a low participation of graduates, as only 26.8% responded to the questionnaire and returned it to the researchers. However, the sample calculation indicates that 26.8% partially represent the population studied, considering a confidence level of 90% with a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$ . The low adherence is a negative and limiting factor, since educational evaluations are extremely important in the improvement of the educational process. Furthermore, in this process it is essential to consider the perception of graduates as an indicator for the evaluation<sup>6</sup>. In the researched literature, the rate of graduates that participated of the study was 25.3%<sup>4</sup>, 39.5%<sup>7</sup>, 42.0%<sup>8</sup> and 44.2%<sup>9</sup>, which shows that there was also a poor adherence of the participants in other studies.

Regarding the characterization of the sample (Table 1), the majority, i.e. 94% of the participants were female, which portrays the prevalent genre in the field of speech therapy in Brazil<sup>10</sup>, composed mainly by women. It was also expected that the graduates have completed their course not so long ago (between 6 months to 4 years) since the Speech Therapy graduation course of the Federal University of Minas Gerais was created a few years ago<sup>11</sup>.

Ninety one percent of the graduates of the Speech Therapy Course of UFMG that participated of this study work as Speech Therapist. A study realized with newly graduate speech therapists in 2005 and 2006 in Rio de Janeiro found that most participants of the sample were employed at the time of the research<sup>12</sup>, i.e., were inserted in the labour market. In studies conducted with graduates of nutrition courses, the rate of the employed ones

ranged from 79.8% to 98.0%<sup>4, 8, 9</sup>. Regarding the labor market, the professional class associations and professionals should undertake actions aimed at its expansion, as well as clarification to the speech therapy class about their roles in this market<sup>13</sup>.

In the present study, the weekly working time is related to exclusively live from speech therapy, whereby a working time above 20 hours per week was one of the aspects that contributed to the financial independence of graduate while working as speech therapist. In this study, most of graduates that work in this field (34.3%) work up to 20 hours per week, not corroborating with the study that revealed that the majority of participants (88.7%) worked 40 hours or more per week<sup>8</sup>.

Regarding the financial fulfillment, most graduates that work in the profession (53.7%) stated that they do not live solely from their work as speech therapists, what do not agree with the study realized with speech therapists of Minas Gerais, which revealed that most professionals (87%) reported to have speech therapy as their sole source of income<sup>10</sup>. It must be highlighted here that most of the participants in this study have completed their course recently and are still seeking their insertion in the labour market. Thus, due to the own reality of this increasingly competitive labor market, with higher number of speech therapists, to keep this work as the sole source of income can be a lengthy process. Researches are encouraged in order to get a current view of the labor market.

Regarding professional fulfillment, most graduates that live from this work are satisfied, although without financial fulfillment. As evidenced in the literature, the low pay in speech therapy is a demotivating factor for the professional practice and often that promotes dissatisfaction and frustrations<sup>14</sup>.

Of the graduates that participated of this research, most of them continue or continued their studies. In a study realized with new graduates in speech therapy, in 2005 and 2006 in Rio de Janeiro, it was found that to continue their studies is an almost unanimous decision, being the specialization in first place (70%), followed by master (61%), update (30%) and PhD (26%)<sup>12</sup>. A study realized with the speech therapists of Minas Gerais, regarding titles, 29.9% are specialists, 12% masters and 0.9% PhD<sup>10</sup>. A study realized with dental surgeons revealed that 66.3% do or did postgraduation courses in the level of update/specialization (52.3%), master (47.7%), and Ph.D. (7.7%)<sup>7</sup>.

Currently, most health professionals (69.4%) consider it essential to do postgraduation, since it is a market trend that leads to technical and scientific improvement, improves professional qualification and promotes an improvement in clinical care<sup>7</sup>, being

necessary to encourage continuous education. A study revealed that the main reasons given by those who did not attend any postgraduation was the lack of money and time<sup>13</sup>. With the challenges posed by the labor market, it is essential to the professionals to be aware about the work and learning opportunities, managing their knowledge and ensuring their employment<sup>5</sup>.

The evaluation on the academic background was very good for 48% of the graduates (32), good for 34% (23), excellent for 13% (9) and bad for 5% (3) of the speech therapists of the first ten classes of UFMG showing that, most of the graduates evaluate the structure of the course between very good followed by good and excellent. These data foster increasing efforts to the continuously search for the provision of excellence in education.

Regarding the average monthly salary of graduates that work in the profession, 34.3% reported to receive three to four times the minimum wage. This data does not corroborate with the study conducted in São José dos Campos, which revealed that, the speech therapists receive on average at most 10 times the minimum wage<sup>15</sup>.

By relating the variable of interest "Lives exclusively from his work as speech therapist" with other characteristics of the graduates, it was observed that there were significant associations showing that increased age, higher working hours, higher average salary and professional and financial fulfillment are factors associated with financial independence of the speech therapist (Table 1).

Among these factors, the increased age and increased time from the completion of the graduation course ( $p < 0.001$ ) are highlighted. These findings are encouraging for the professional scenario in the State of Minas Gerais and in the country and reflect that the maturation of the speech therapist is a strong support for the labor market.

To live exclusively from Speech Therapy is also connected to professional fulfillment. However it was not related to the financial situation of the graduates.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the promotion of more dialogue between the sectors of the educational institutions is necessary in order to discuss possible alternatives for improvement of the integration between scientific and professional background<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, it is important to follow up the graduates, being this activity recognized as a way to keep the labor market and the educational institution<sup>17</sup> in line.

The workplaces most frequently mentioned by the participants were (Table 2): Hospital, private practice and freelancer. A study with speech therapists in Rio de Janeiro found that most of these professionals want to work in clinic<sup>12</sup>, somewhat

similar to that found with the class of dental surgeons, who prefer private practices<sup>7</sup>. In a study with nursing graduates, it was concluded that 79.5% work in municipal public service in the Family Health Program, by appointment or public competitive examinations<sup>5</sup>. This data is inconsistent with the present study, probably because the speech therapists present a lower insertion into public health teams, a scenario that has been changing gradually. A study conducted in São José dos Campos, in 2002, revealed that the frequency of speech therapists by activity sector was: practice/private clinic, Hearing Aid Company and institution for disabled care, respectively. These results differ from those found in this study. Such differences may be justified by the work reality in different Brazilian states.

The association analysis of Table 4 shows that the better the evaluation of the student graduate at UFMG on his academic background, the lower was his difficulty to enter the labour market ( $p=0.03$ ). Other factors of the graduation courses as theory and practical classes, education extension, research, monitoring, trainings and realization of community activities, which were considered important by the students, were not associated in a statistically significant way with lower difficulty to enter the labour market. The contribution of the academy to the student and professional life is undeniable, but it is believed that the ease to enter the labour market extrapolates the “speech therapy” skills learned in the university and requires interpersonal and entrepreneur skills of the graduates, the establishment of a contact network and good personal and professional marketing<sup>7</sup>.

Another study reports that the main difficulties of the insertion of the speech therapist in the labour market is the devaluation of the Speech Therapy, essentially clinical background and growth of competitiveness in face of the increasing number of speech therapists in the labor market<sup>13</sup>. One of the major difficulties faced by dental surgeons in the job search is the high competitiveness and the saturation of the labor market, which hinders the establishment in the labor market, discouraging the odontology profession<sup>7</sup>. Differently from what is observed in the literature, for most of the graduates (69.0%) in nutrition, there was no difficulty in getting the first job<sup>9</sup>.

The academic background of the speech therapists favors their insertion in the labour market in terms of specific knowledge of the Speech Therapy. However, the absence of discussions and disciplines that address the labor market and administrative aspects makes the insertion of this professional more difficult<sup>13</sup>.

When asking if the participant of this study feels prepared for the job market, 73.1% said yes. In a survey with nursing graduates regarding preparation for the labor market, it was concluded that: 80.5% felt prepared due to the academic background and opportunities of continued education and 19.5% felt unprepared, attributing to the clash of realities between the school world and the work, and the lack of update in specific nursing areas<sup>5</sup>. It is up to the educational institution to enable opportunities for the development of knowledge, skills and basic attitudes for the graduates for their successful insertion in the labour market<sup>5</sup>.

The various changes in the labor market require qualified and updated professionals, being continuous the concern with education of critical, conscientious, ethical workers, technically supported by a professionalization<sup>17</sup>.

Aiming at education improvement, a course in speech therapy (Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo) is in process of implementation with a new curriculum that includes new pedagogical activities such as interdisciplinary seminars, writing and culture technical workshops, mentoring and formation experiences<sup>18</sup> important for the proper education of its graduates.

The professional training of the speech therapist requires various skills, being necessary to contemplate the adversity of a population that requires adequate care and essential update before the technological advances in the Health care<sup>12</sup>.

Further research with more representative samples is encouraged. In the researched literature it was not found any study related to the professional situation of the graduates of speech therapy similar to the performed one, which limited us to make a more refined data comparison. The characterization and understanding of the professional situation of graduates in Speech Therapy allow knowing the real possibilities of employment of this professional, which trends are continuously changing. The results require the continuous search for new pedagogical actions in order to improve the education of the student, what can already be seen with the Curriculum Reform of the Speech Therapy Course at UFMG implemented in 2010.

It is also suggested to conduct further research on the subject, after the completion of the new version of the curriculum of the Speech Therapy Course at UFMG, following up new possibilities for the insertion of this professional in the labour market and it is encouraged that other Speech Therapy courses in Brazil worry about the walk of future speech therapists in the educational institutions in Brazil.



## ■ CONCLUSIONS

As the professional trajectory of the graduate in Speech Therapy is known, it is observed that increased age, increased time from the completion of the graduation course, working hours above 20 hours per week and positive assessment of the academic background were aspects that contributed for the financial independence of the graduate in Speech Therapy. This independence was related to a higher average salary and interfered directly in job satisfaction.

The students who reported fewer difficulties to enter the labour market assessed the graduation

course more positively (very good/excellent). The aspects of the graduation course investigated in this study (theoretical, practical classes, research, education extension, monitoring, trainings, interconnection of the curriculum disciplines, possibilities of realization of community activities) did not achieve a statistically significant relationship with the difficulty to enter the labour market.

## ■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the graduates who responded to the questionnaire and enabled this research.

## RESUMO

**Objetivos:** compreender aspectos da trajetória profissional e continuidade acadêmica dada aos estudos pelos egressos de Fonoaudiologia. **Métodos:** foram convidados 250 egressos do curso de Fonoaudiologia/UFMG da instituição de origem (Primeira a décima turma), submetidos a um questionário de questões objetivas relativas à situação profissional, continuidade de estudos e formação acadêmica. Análise estatística: software Epi Info 6.04 (Testes Qui-quadrado e Exato de Fisher). **Resultados:** a maioria dos egressos era do sexo feminino, média de idade de 25,7 anos ( $\pm 1,7$ ) e tempo de graduação entre 1,9 a quase 3 anos. A maior parte (55%) não tem na Fonoaudiologia a única fonte de renda; a jornada de trabalho semanal foi maior para quem vive exclusivamente do trabalho fonoaudiológico tendo realização profissional, mas não financeira. A maioria dos que não vivem da Fonoaudiologia não se sente nem financeiramente (97,2%) nem profissionalmente (69,4%) realizados ( $p < 0,05$ ). No grupo de egressos que vivem exclusivamente do trabalho, a avaliação sobre a formação acadêmica foi em sua maioria de muito boa a ótima. Dos que não vivem exclusivamente do trabalho, a formação mostrou-se igualmente dividida entre ruim e bom quanto em muito bom e ótimo ( $p = 0,03$ ). 50% dos egressos relataram grande dificuldade para inserção no mercado de trabalho. **Conclusões:** o aumento da idade, maior tempo de graduação, jornada de trabalho acima de 20 horas, avaliação positiva sobre a formação acadêmica são aspectos que contribuíram para independência financeira do egresso fonoaudiólogo. Os alunos que relatam menores dificuldades na inserção do mercado de trabalho avaliaram o curso de graduação mais positivamente (muito bom /ótimo).

**DESCRIPTORIOS:** Fonoaudiologia; Ensino; Educação Continuada; Área de Atuação Profissional

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Received on: March 13, 2012

Accepted on: June 7, 2012

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