

Elevating Speech-Language Pathology Through Research-Driven Marketing

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Introduction

- The field of Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) represents a critical and rapidly expanding segment of the healthcare workforce. Despite strong demand, the profession faces persistent challenges related to visibility, program differentiation, and strategic growth, particularly within the highly competitive New York tristate region.
- Labor market projections indicate a sustained demand for SLP professionals, with estimated growth rates of 25-40% and approximately 19,900 licensed practitioners in New York State alone.
- However, many graduate programs have not fully leveraged cohesive, data-driven digital marketing strategies to effectively attract and engage qualified applicants.

Aim

- This project addresses a critical gap within the Katz School’s M.S. in SLP program: the lack of systematic brand positioning and market analysis in an increasingly competitive educational landscape.
- Through analysis of regional program competition and digital search behavior, this study aims to develop evidence-based marketing strategies to enhance visibility, strengthen applicant pipelines, and support sustainable growth.
- More broadly, it highlights the need for strategic, data-driven recruitment practices to ensure SLP programs remain competitive and responsive to evolving workforce demands.

Strategy/Approach

This project utilizes a mixed-methods research design consisting of three phases.

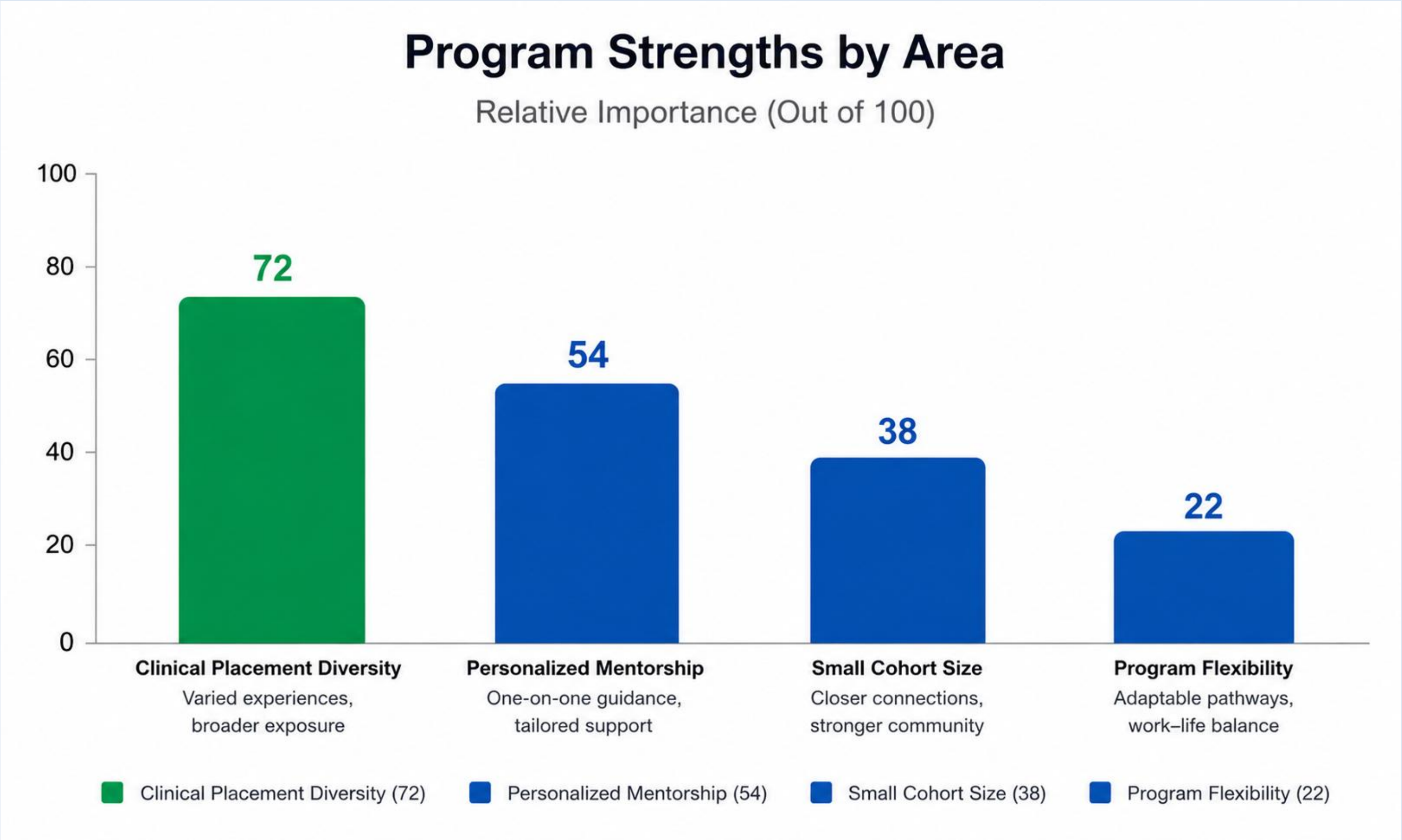
- **Phase 1 – Competitive Analysis:** A comprehensive mapping of 25+ ASHA CAA-accredited SLP programs across the NY tristate region was conducted, examining key variables including tuition costs, enrollment trends, program specializations, and digital presence.
- **Phase 2 – Digital Market Research:** Five-year search trend data were analyzed using Google Trends and SEMrush to identify high-intent keywords (e.g., “ASHA-accredited SLP programs,” CPC = \$11.01) and uncover underutilized opportunities (e.g., “speech therapy degree online,” 170 searches/month, CPC = \$0).
- **Phase 3 – Primary Research Findings:** Quantitative revealed that **Clinical Placement Diversity** and **Personalized Faculty Mentorship** are Katz’s primary value drivers. While student satisfaction 'Exceeds Expectations,' a visibility gap exists: 60% of respondents identified lower program awareness compared to legacy competitors like NYU or Columbia prior to discovery.



Findings/Outcomes

From our competitive and digital analyses, some preliminary findings highlight the following three market insights.

- **Market Size:** The NY Tristate SLP job market has approximately 19,000 job openings, on average paying \$119,000 in NYC, and has salaries up to \$165,000 for the top earners.
- **Digital Demand Surge:** Google Trends (2021-2026) indicates that the search volume for “SLP Programs” has increased from the 25-35 range to close to 100, and the search volume for “online SLP programs” has increased even more.
- **Keyword Opportunity:** SEMrush indicates that the top conversion keyword is “ASHA Accredited SLP Programs” (260 searches/month, \$11.01 CPC), and “Speech Therapy Degree Online” (170/month, \$0 CPC) is a completely untapped keyword. Our primary research is still in progress.



Conclusions

By bridging the gap between clinical excellence and digital visibility, Katz can capitalize on high-growth market trends. Moving forward, a strategy focused on niche medical specializations and relationship-based referrals will solidify Katz’s position as a premier SLP program in the Tri-State region.

Strategic Framework: Jobs-to-Be-Done (JTBD)

Our research identified two critical 'Jobs' stakeholders are hiring for:

1. **Students:** Seeking specialized medical clinical hours (e.g., Parkinson’s/Dysphagia) to secure hospital-based careers.
2. **Gatekeepers:** Seeking trusted, education-first resources for rural patient support. Positioning Katz as a **'Medical SLP Leader'** rather than a generalist program addresses these unmet needs."

Strategic Recommendations:

- **Digital Authority:** Create SEO/AIO - optimized content hubs for high-interest specialty tracks like **Gender Affirming Care** and **Neurogenic Disorders** to capture underserved search traffic.
- **Education-First Outreach:** Develop 'Referral Kits' for home health aides to reduce gatekeeper friction.
- **Trust Signaling:** Use data visualization (Tableau) to showcase clinical placement success rates on digital landing pages to build authority.

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