

# Deciding Factors in Selecting a Career Path in Educational Audiology: A Survey of Audiologists and Audiology Externs

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## BACKGROUND

Listening to speech in noise is a difficult task for those with hearing loss. For d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children, this can negatively impact their spoken language development and academic learning.<sup>1,2</sup> Educational audiologists (EdAuds) provide assistance in the school setting to help children with hearing loss overcome obstacles that impact their ability to access the curriculum.

EdAuds specialize in the prevention, identification, and management of hearing loss among students in the K-12 school system.<sup>3,4</sup> The EdAuds' scope of practice *exclusively covers* the selection of, fitting, and verifying hearing devices and hearing assistive technology in the schools.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, they play a crucial role in working with students, families, and schools to develop and implement plans to help support children with hearing loss.

One EdAud per 10,000 school children is recommended<sup>6,7</sup>; however, no state meets that recommendation. Overall, the national average is one EdAud per 40,000 school children.<sup>1</sup> To address the current shortage, a survey was designed to answer, "What are the factors that may lead audiologists to pursue, or deter one from, a career as an educational audiologist?"

## METHODS

### Participants (n = 526 analyzed)

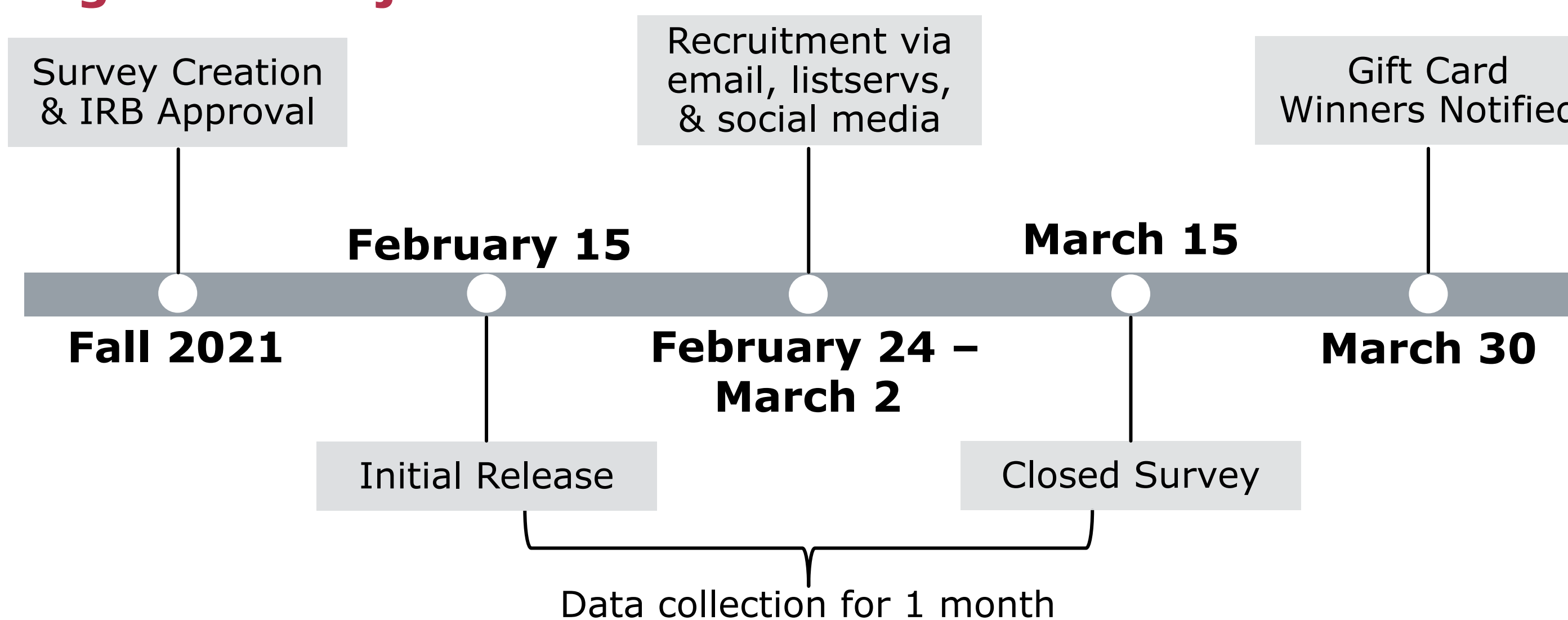
- Total responses obtained: n = 606
- Audiologists: Obtained their degree **and** practice(d) in the U.S.
- Externs: Completing their degree **and** externship in the U.S.

### Question Design: COM-B Model<sup>8</sup>

- The COM-B Model was designed to evaluate and assess the many influences on how people think and act to make behavior change.

(C)apability	(O)ppportunity	(M)otivation	(B)ehavior
Can the change be done in principle?	Are there sufficient opportunities?	Is there sufficient motivation?	To be or not to be an EdAud
- Knowledge - Skills - Training	- Job availability - Experience	- Wants to work with DHH kids - Wants flexibility	

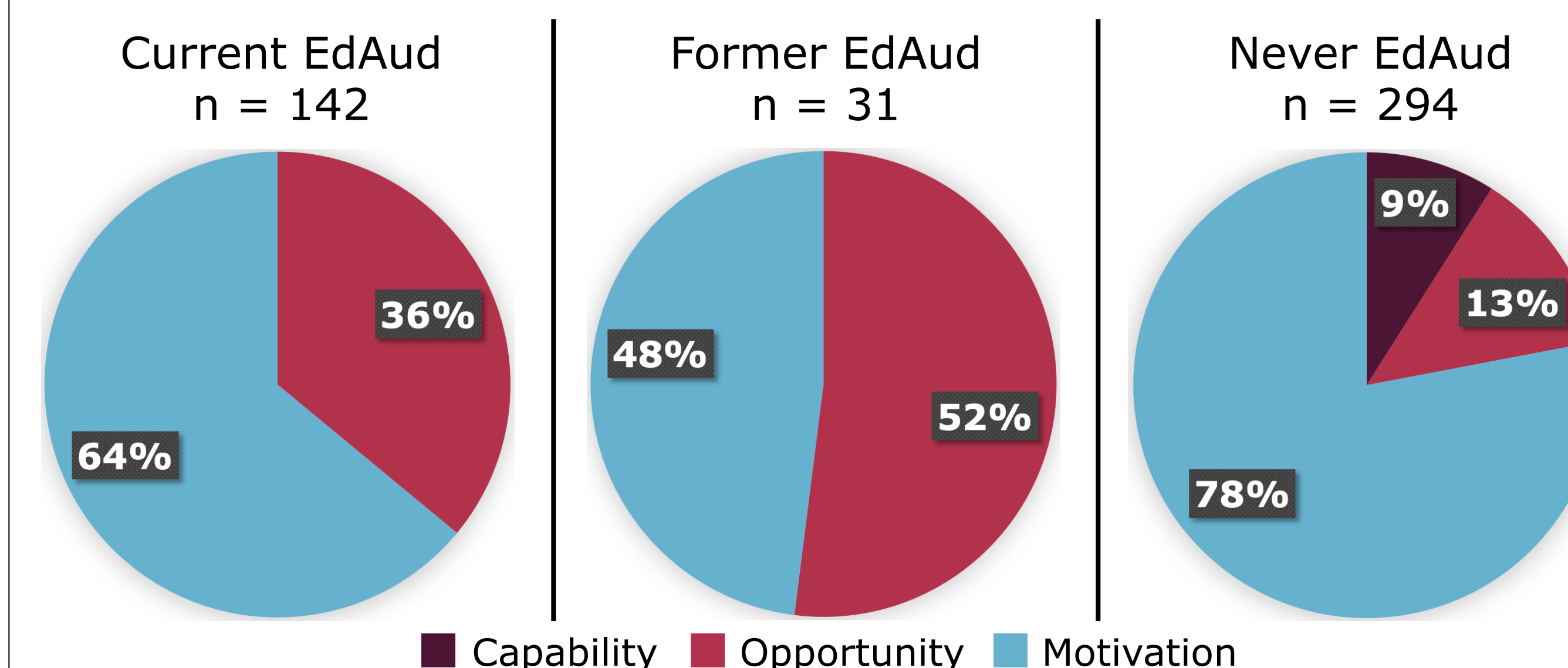
### Figure 1. Project Timeline



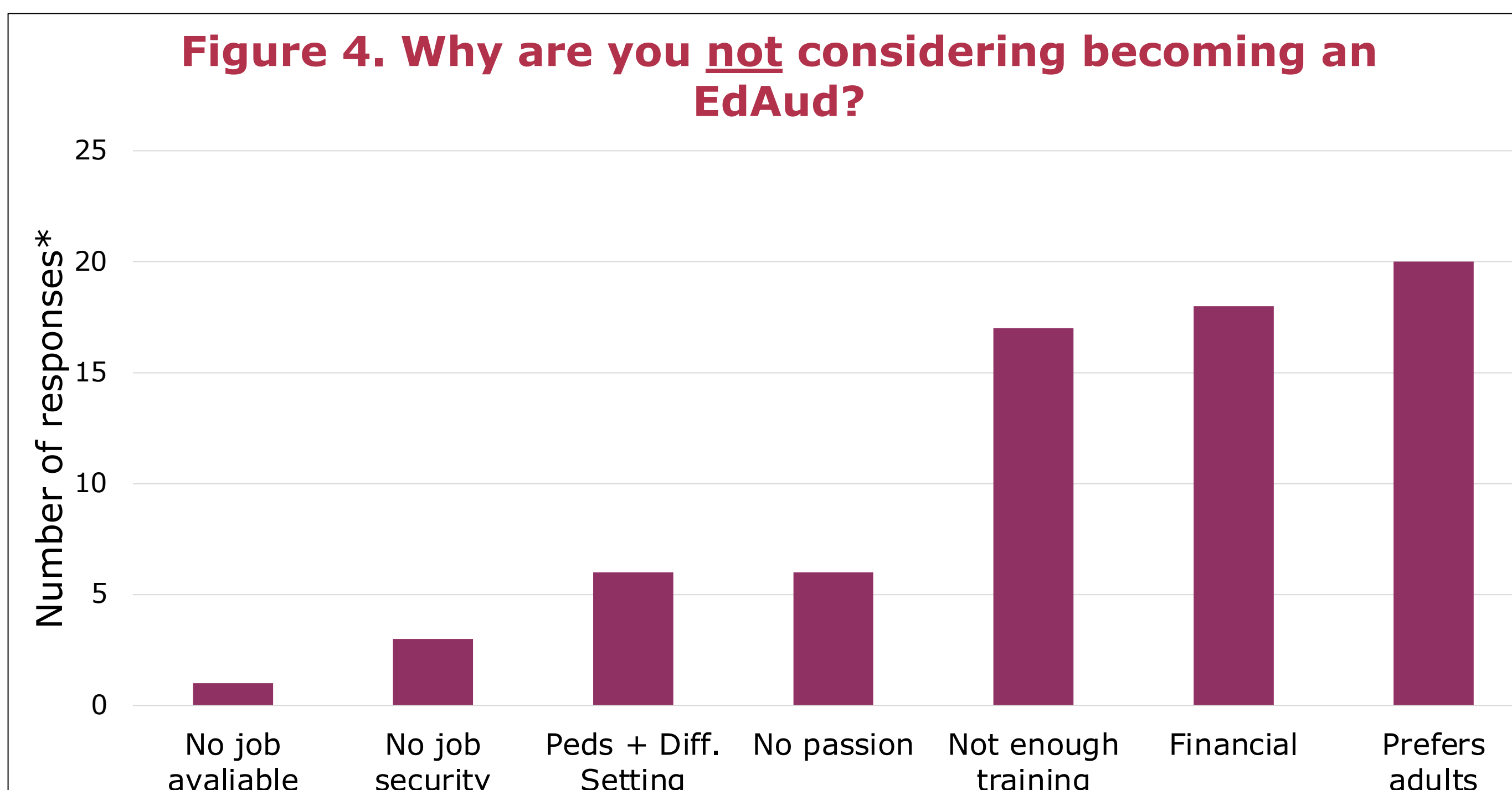
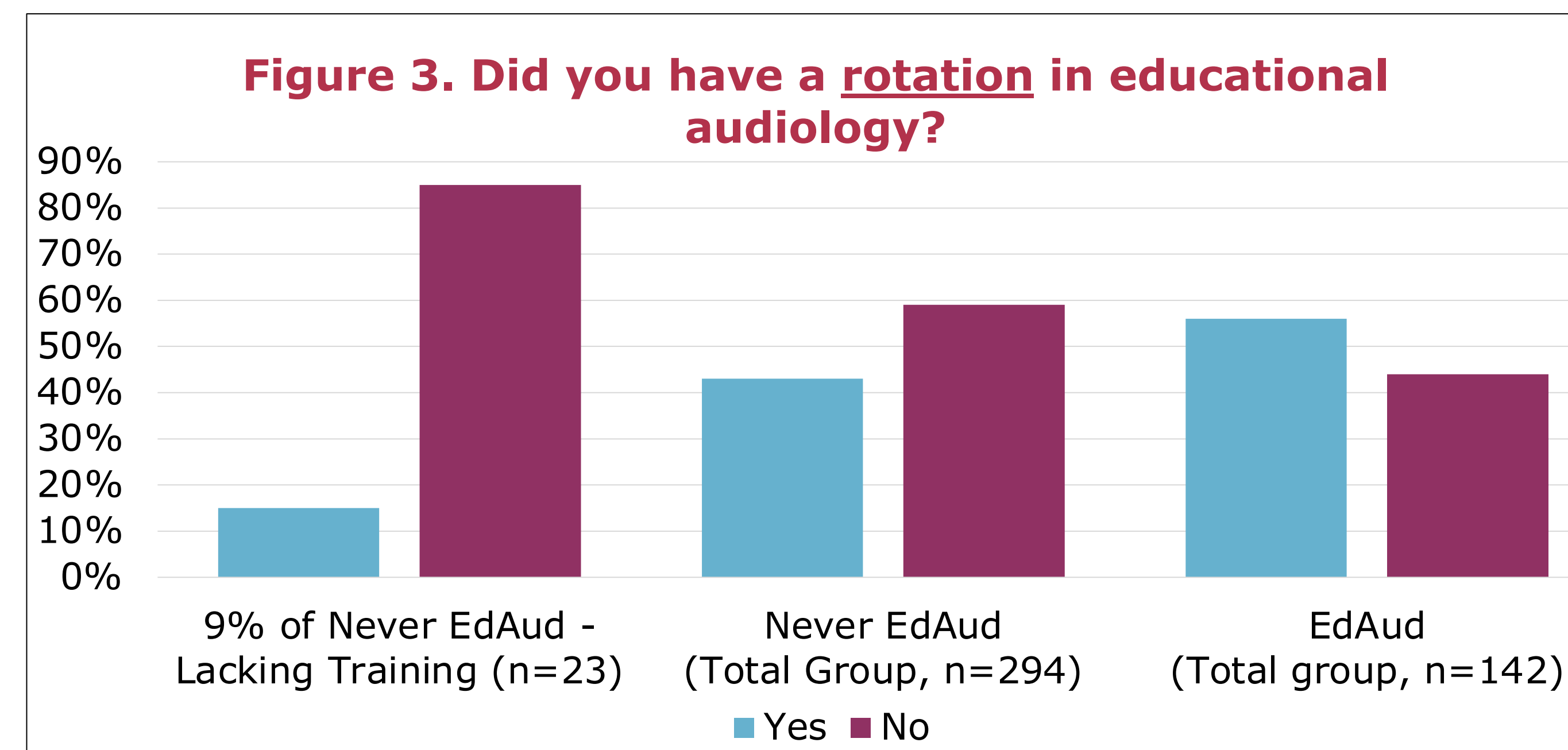
- References**
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  8. Michie, S., van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1745-2875-6-42>

## RESULTS

Figure 2. Why did you decide to become/not to become an educational audiologist (EdAud)?



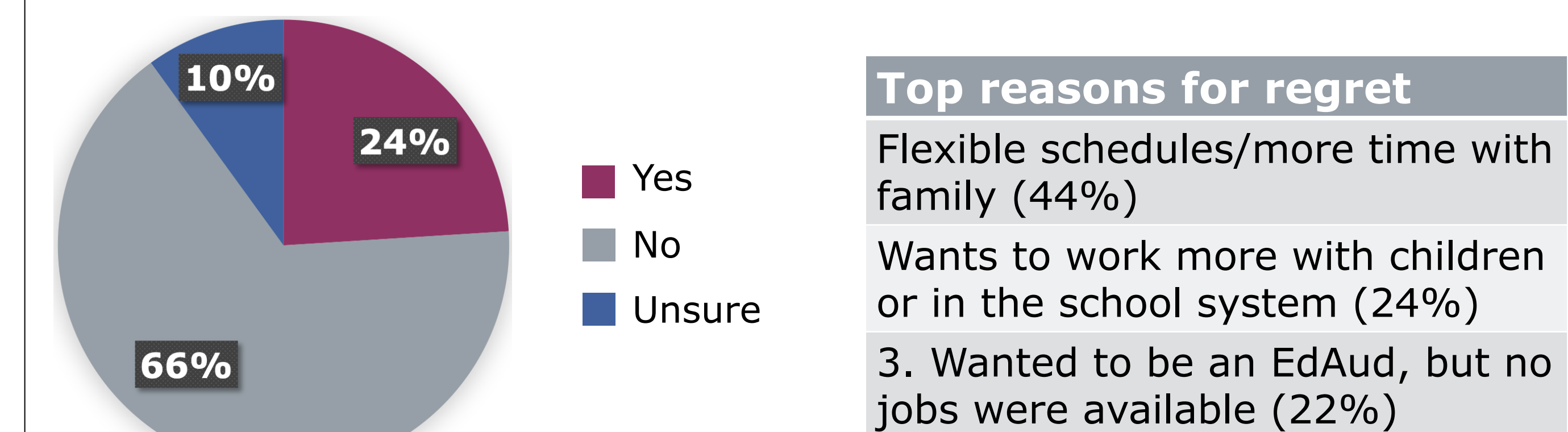
Top Reasons for being an EdAud	Top Reasons for being an EdAud	Top Reasons for not being an EdAud
1. Wanted to help DHH children succeed (39.6%)	1. Wanted to help DHH children succeed (32.3%)	1. Wanted to work with adults (25.9%)
2. Had an EdAud rotation in grad school (14.8%)	2. Only Aud position available (16.1%)	2. Wanted to work in a medical setting with kids (18.9%)
3. Flexible schedule (9.8%)	3. Had an EdAud rotation in grad school (12.9%)	3. Financial Concerns (16.8%)
4. Only Aud position available (5.6%)		4. No EdAud jobs (11.9%)



\*Note: Externs could select up to *three* reasons.

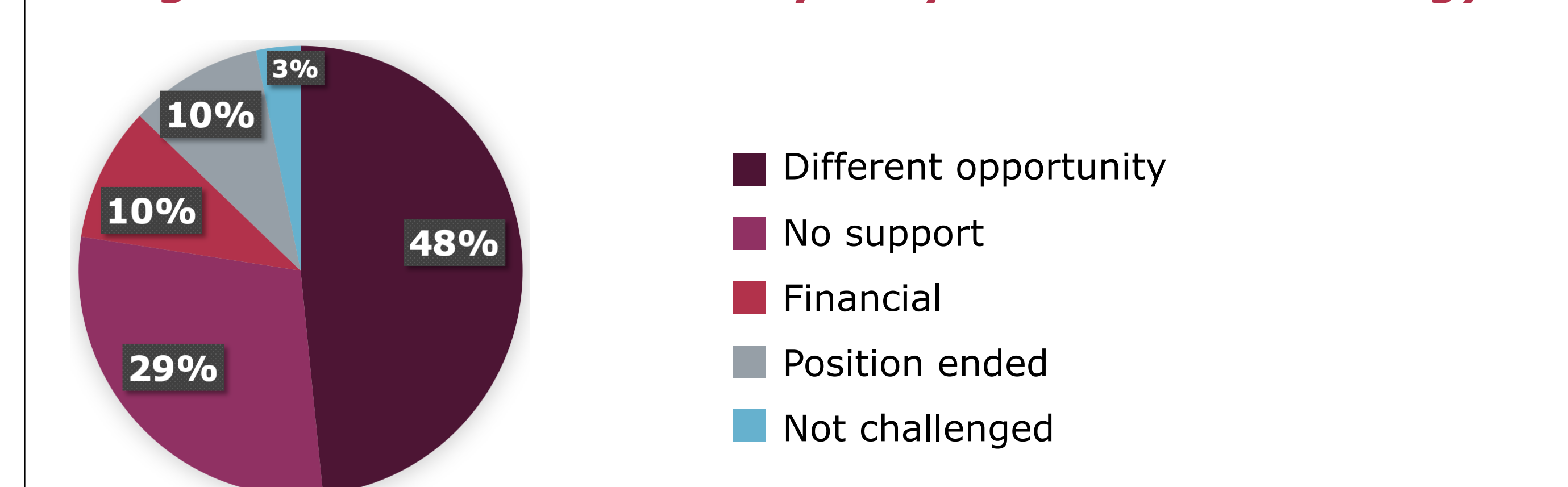
## RESULTS

Figure 5. Never EdAud: Do you regret not becoming an EdAud?



- Top reasons for regret**
- Flexible schedules/more time with family (44%)
  - Wants to work more with children or in the school system (24%)
  - 3. Wanted to be an EdAud, but no jobs were available (22%)

Figure 6. Former EdAud: Why did you leave ed. audiology?



## DISCUSSION

### 1. Do not underestimate motivation!

Those that want to work with adults will not be EdAuds. How can clinical pediatric audiologists become more interested in audiology?

### 2. Perceived notions of wages

Individuals are less likely to become educational audiologists due to the perception that educational audiologists make less money.

### 3. Job availability

The availability, or lack thereof, educational audiology jobs were cited as reasons for becoming or being dissuaded from becoming an educational audiologist.

## NEXT STEPS

### Individuals

- Graduate students who want to work with the pediatric population: Request a clinical rotation in educational audiology.
- Pediatric audiologists should connect with and join national organizations such as the EAA, ASHA, AAA, to network/collaborate.

### Universities

- Incorporate educational audiology coursework and clinical rotations for all students interested in working with children.

### Further Research Questions

- Why do audiologists want to work in a medical setting?
- Is there a wage gap (real or perceived) between pediatric and educational audiologists?
- What is the supply and demand for EdAuds in different geographical areas?
- How can current organizations, such as AAA, ASHA, and EAA better support those working in educational audiology?