

Challenging Stereotypes: Workplace Experiences of Male Occupational Therapists in South Luzon, Philippines

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Abstract

Occupational therapy (OT) is a female-dominated profession where male counterparts are part of the minority. As such, there may be unique encounters and various workplace experiences that might be present and limited to cis-male occupational therapists that need to be explored. This may present a possibility of experiences unique only to male OTs as a minority group not experienced by female OTs. Hence, the study focuses on the workplace experiences of male occupational therapists in South Luzon and aims to explore various narratives of cis-male therapists in the workplace. Utilized in this study is the descriptive phenomenological design with seven cis-male occupational therapists recruited for in-depth interviews to gather the necessary qualitative data through purposive sampling. Three main themes were generated: OT workplace environment, gender in the OT workplace, demands of the OT profession, and interest in the OT field, with further understanding of the concepts of post-structuralism in gender equality. The study has led to the conclusion that although gender does play a part in being an occupational therapist in the workplace, it does not entirely affect the way that they perform despite being part of the considered minority in occupational therapy.

Keywords: *gender, diversity, Filipino occupational therapists, qualitative study*

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Introduction

Gender can be seen through different lenses. The nature of gender may pertain to the sex of one's body or the established masculine/feminine traits (Clark, 2009). In a societal aspect, it encompasses the expected attitudes and roles that are associated with their given gender. Social elements are affected by culture and stereotypes enforced by society (Butler, 1990). In physiological factors, Szadvári (2023) shared that the differences in the human brain show how cognitive skills differ between genders when processing and interacting. These result in the formation of gender norms which set the standards for social etiquette. Hentschel (2019) investigated the

self-characterization of men and women about the opposite gender and themselves. In their study, men described women as less likely to engage in leadership roles and demonstrate assertiveness. Similarly, women also agreed that they are less assertive and are not as competent with leadership compared to men. Both genders have rated women to be more emotionally sensitive and are most likely to demonstrate concern for others. These showcase that traditional roles for the opposite gender are mirrored by one's perception of their own. Gender roles are ingrained as a result of societal values. This may be an advantage or disadvantage for each part. These roles are social constructs developed over time and are not based on natural human behavior since they are to

comply with the changing of times. The integration of this concept into various cultures and beliefs creates both tension and pressure on parties to keep up with these views (More, 2023).

Gender can cause barriers within the professional field. The effects of such inequalities may result in stunted professional advancement, pay gaps, reduced performances, and discrimination. A study conducted by Hanna (2023), with a sample size of 1022, has concluded that more than 7 out of 10 believe that gender matters when choosing a career path. Although both men and women show willingness to work in the opposing gender's dominated area, challenges arise. Women in male-dominated jobs may experience problems in terms of physical strength, harassment, leadership stereotypes, isolation, and lack of opportunity advancements. The challenges of Men in female-dominated jobs include misunderstanding, social stigma, lack of trust and prestige, comments about their sexual orientation, and the lack of developmental opportunities. Nevertheless, 76% believe that such gender imbalances will be improved as time goes by. A patriarchal system is seen as the default standard within workplaces around the globe. According to the Women, Business, and the Law Report of the World Bank (2022), women face types of job restrictions in 86 countries while in 95 countries, they have unequal pay for equal work. Contrary to the trend, the opposite is present for a few. Majority of the workforce is inclined to men however some fields experience shortages with the said gender. The International Labor Organization (2020) showcased that there are 88% of female workers in the personal health field while the health associate profession makes up 76% of them. Similarly, a 2019 analysis by WHO (2019) of gender equity in the health workforce of 104 presented that over 70% of women in the field form the health and social sector. Additionally, approximately 5 billion people are being catered to by women in providing healthcare worldwide. Comparing the two, an increase of almost 10% in the population of females in the medical field is seen. This surge shows the slow domination of women in taking over health-related roles compared to men. Correspondingly, this dynamic is prominent in occupational therapy which accounts for most of its demographics with women.

Occupational therapy (OT) is a profession with growing numbers internationally. According to WFOT (2023), there are an estimated 633,000 practicing therapists worldwide. As part of the allied medical services, occupational therapy has become increasingly diverse especially with its existing relationship with both culture and diversity which affects both the practices and services within

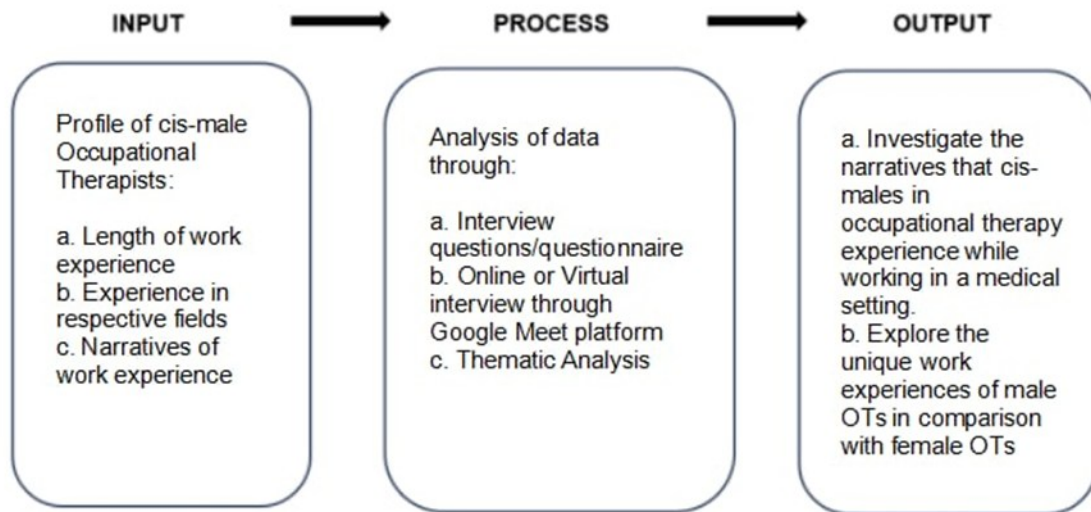
the said profession. (Kirsh, B. et. al, 2006) Occupational therapists work in a variety of fields to provide healthcare more holistically (Pattinson, 2010). OT is commonly associated with women, with 74.72% of the population being women in the Philippines (PAOT, 2017). The remaining percentage represents the male population, which is the minority and may possess significantly different perspectives and experiences compared to their female counterparts.

Typically, in the Philippines, an OT works five times a week on a part-time status with affiliations in two facilities. An OT's working condition is heavily affected by a shortage in the workforce and the lack of general promotion within the profession itself. As mentioned by Macabagdal et.al (2023) despite the recent popularity of the profession, the under-representation of male occupational therapists in the Philippines is visibly present which raises concerns about how their experiences may affect the profession and its social context. Due to stereotypes and norms, heavy work and manual labor mostly fall on male therapists. (Arkotski & Saarnio, 2012)

As these issues highlight the need for greater diversity in the occupational therapy workforce, the study aims to investigate the workplace experiences of chosen male occupational therapists to promote the profession. In this study, the researchers analyzed the narratives that cis-males in occupational therapy experience while working in a medical setting.

Alongside the presented concepts, the study utilized the ideas in the Post-structuralism Theory. Alberchtsen, (2019) has established that the mentioned theory paves way to segregate uniform experiences, feelings, or situations that are correlated with social and embodied encounters of various individuals based on two interpretations that being of inter-textual and inter-contextual kind which in turn provides a binary understanding. Gender in the lenses of post-structuralism is determined by the concept of representation as it significantly interchanges the idea of presence being an effect of representation rather than representation as the aftermath of presence (Thomassen, 2017). Parallel to these set ideas are introduced concepts of discourse that are deeply rooted in the cause of gender roles and identities to be social performances. Thus, paving the way for overruling the experiences of women in the workplace.

The study's working definition of being a male or a female is mostly derived from the biological sex of a person. Cisgender refers to the gender identity of oneself based on their assigned sex at birth (Kuehnle, 2021). If a male identifies himself based on his assigned sex at birth, they

Figure 1*The Conceptual framework for the study*

may be called a cis-male. People who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth may be referred to as transgender. The research mainly focused on having cis-male participants to determine their workplace experiences within the occupational therapy field despite being a minority. Additionally, the study also employed the Post-Structuralism Theory on Gender Equality to investigate any possible gender segregation in the OT workplace that would highlight the unique experience of cis-male OTs.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is presented in the form of input, process, and output. The outcome of this research is to learn about the various workplace experiences of male occupational therapists in South Luzon Philippines. The variables of the research that will affect the researchers' outcome are presented in the input.

The input includes the profile of male occupational therapists, their length of work experience, experience in respective fields, and narratives of their work experience. The researchers have carried out virtual/online interviews to learn about the narratives of each participant. Moving forward, the researchers utilized a thematic analysis based on the research design of the study to summarize the relevant data that would make predictions and test hypotheses to describe the information that has been collected. The expected output is an in-depth investigation of the narratives of male OTs and their unique work experiences compared to female OTs.

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Figure 2*Theoretical framework for the study*

various individuals based on two interpretations that being of inter-textual and inter-contextual kind which in turn provides a binary understanding. Figure 2 shows how this theory is implemented within the study.

Furthermore, the theory provides ample footing as it solidifies the possibility of gender segregation that is traced back to the presence of discourse of systems such as capitalism and patriarchy in the corporate world that may also be applied to the Occupational therapy profession as well. Moreover, the framework introduced key facets that support and restrict the outcome of possible existing gender segregation based on the conceptual factors that apply to male Occupational therapists.

In general, the main purpose of this structure is to provide insight into the possible experienced social concerns that are reflected through the participation and involvement of the said population within the profession and the prevalence of the said concepts which are the dominant gender representation and inclusion and exclusion from employment.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study aimed to explore the workplace experiences of cis-male occupational therapists in South Luzon in their current setting. Descriptive phenomenology was utilized to allow in-depth explanations through discussions. With this method being widely used in social and health sciences, it allowed the researchers to set aside preconceived notions about the variables being investigated in the study. Furthermore, it helped in creating an analysis that aligns with the objectives of the study without biases (Deakin University, 2024). With the addition of a deductive approach, the discussions started from general to specific which addressed the idea of the male therapist being more significant than their counterparts.

Participants of the Study

The study focused on cis-male OTs in South Luzon. Based on the study of Bartholomew et al. (2021), there is no specific number of participants required for phenomenology; what is more important is that samples can be understood and analyzed with greater precision. With that, the researchers selected seven respondents from the intended population. This is to be able to gather necessary data and to allow data saturation during the process of gathering data. In a study by Braun et. al. (2019), the concept of data saturation is considered to be the golden standard especially when determining and estimating the sample size

of the study. Additionally, data saturation can be achieved through small sample sizes through the utilization of interviews and focus groups. As mentioned in the said study as well, possible themes were generated for seven respondents already. To relate this to the study, to attain data saturation successfully, the researchers established that when no new themes and patterns emerge and are enough to solidify the study itself, data gathering will be discontinued. Seven respondents were chosen through contact tracing and recommendations from other professionals. Due to this, most of the participants were from Region-4A, specifically from Batangas, Cavite, and Laguna. To qualify as a respondent, the individual must meet the inclusion criteria set that the gender identity of the male OT must be cis male. They should be a PRC (Professional Regulation Commission)-licensed Filipino OT with work experience of at least six months in the Philippines. Schmitt. (1995), says that the purpose of licensure is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, not the profession. This means that occupational therapists must have a license before they can work to ensure that they provide accurate treatment to patients.

As for the timeframe of 6-months, this ensures that the participants have accumulated enough experience to share for the data gathering. Gomez et al (2023) conducted a study that explored the role of duration when designing internship programs. Despite not having the necessary credentials yet for the professional field, the duration of the internship up to six months indicated better acquisition of professional experiences and skills. Another study that employed the 6-month timeframe requirement was a qualitative study by Najafi (2023) that investigated the novice nurses' experience of weak professional confidence. These studies are examples of the application of the said duration set by the researchers for their inclusion criteria.

Lastly, they must have three months of experience with their respective fields of focus (pediatrics, orthopedics, or psychiatric) within South Luzon. These areas are the main areas of practice for occupational therapy professionals. According to a 2022 study by Dymmott et al., allied health professionals and physicians experience supervision and support at work, leading to enhanced skills and confidence as a result of the clinical setting.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling is used in selecting male occupational therapists. Nikolopoulou (2023) defined this method as selecting units on purpose, as long as they fit the research's target. To yield valuable and appropriate data, this sampling

method was used as it allowed the researchers to carry out an in-depth analysis of the study that involved a small sample of the intended population that shares similar characteristics (Palinkas, 2015). Based on the inclusion criteria of the study seven participants were selected. These participants were selected based on their availability to participate in the study.

Instrument

In gathering the relevant data for the study, the researchers used virtual interviews to collect the experiences of male occupational therapists in a clinical setting. Specifically, the utilization of virtual interviews prioritizes any cases wherein there is a conflict between the schedule and the availability of the interviewer and the interviewee. A semi-structured questionnaire was also used to gather information about therapists' daily activities and challenges. According to Adams (2015), semi-structured questionnaires are a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions with follow-up questions such as why or how. In preparation for the instruments, the gathering of data consists of a semi-structured questionnaire that is designed to capture specific information about the therapist's daily activities and challenges faced in their workplace.

Each question is based on the found literature of the researchers that discusses a similar premise to the study and is also designed in a Phenomenological sense. Mashuri (2022) discussed that a topic-centered or narrative approach allows fluidity which generates unpredictable themes. As such, the research questionnaire is patterned with the study of Bohn (2019) wherein 11 questions were used to come up with varying themes in their study.

In the initial draft of the questionnaire, less than 15 questions were created under three themes, OT workplace experience, population in the OT workplace, and Gender in the OT workplace. During this phase, revisions were done to ensure the validity and accuracy of the questionnaire as checked by the research adviser. Within the final draft, 9 questions were finalized with similar themes but with additional follow-up questions. The questionnaire was then validated and revised by a professional licensed cis-male OT working in South Luzon. Moreover, the researchers ensured that the questionnaire that would be provided was checked and reviewed by the ethical board. The researchers made sure that all the information about the profile of occupational therapists would be confidential and credible for use.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Valid results were reached by researchers

using reliable research methodologies. This indicates that there is less probability of making unreliable or deceptive inferences because the findings obtained are well supported by the data and the methodologies employed.

To further validate the accuracy and authenticity of the gathered data, the researchers provided a copy of the transcribed virtual interview to the participants to verify the information that had been collected during the virtual interviews. No misinterpretations or errors were mentioned by the participants, therefore increasing the reliability of the findings in the study.

Additionally, the researchers considered the study's subject to ensure its transferability. The subjects of the study are required to have Professional Regulation Commission accreditation, and to have served and worked in the Philippines for at least six months before the study. Researchers can guarantee that participant data and privacy are secured and that the research is carried out ethically by adhering to strict and trustworthy procedures. Thus, ensuring dependability.

Data Gathering Procedure

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Data Analysis

In interpreting and analyzing significant data gathered, several procedures were done. One member within the group and a qualified individual outside said the group were both tasked to transcribe important text. In consideration of the research's design of descriptive phenomenology, thematic analysis was used. Kiger (2020) explained that this method is utilized as it would be most suitable for acquiring, organizing, and interpreting the transcribed text. Thematic analysis is a flexible and appropriate method for analyzing qualitative data when seeking to understand experiences, thoughts, or behaviors across a data set.

The research study aimed to investigate the workplace experiences of male occupational therapists in South Luzon. The data is presented in a narrative format to address this objective.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Department of Occupational Therapy of the

Table 1

Demographic profile of respondents.

Participant number	Age	Years of Practice	Area of Specialization
1	28	4 years	Pediatrics
2	23	1 year	Pediatrics
3	23	1 year	Pediatrics and Psychosocial
4	25	2 years	Pediatrics
5	25	1 year	Pediatrics
6	26	3 years	Pediatrics
7	23	1 year	Pediatrics

College of Allied Medical Sciences through its Program Chair and the Dean's Office. The Declaration of Helsinki was followed with a focus on confidentiality and anonymity with the participants. Each participant signed and agreed to a prepared informed consent form. All data from the study were accessible only to the whole research team.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of each participant who were interviewed.

Their told experiences were analyzed through the use of post-structuralism theory in Gender equality to discuss representation in workplace gender segregation. Inclusion and exclusion from employment and societal concepts based on the idea of gender dominance in the field were also examined. The text highlights how this theory is relevant to understanding the male experience in a work field that is dominated by females. Four themes were recognized in the study, OT Workplace Environment, Gender in the OT Workplace, Demands of the OT profession, and Interest in the OT field. Table 2 shows the

Table 2

Summarized table of data found within the study's themes

Themes found in the study:	Related studies:
OT Workplace Environment - Interaction within the workplace was kept at a professional level	There is an existing relationship between work-related quality of life and job satisfaction in relation to OTs satisfaction with their job (Rostanni, 2021)
Gender in the OT Workplace - Gender was not an issue, but representation of the population would benefit the profession	The gap between male and female therapists may be present due to the different approaches of both genders. (Bäckström, 2023)
Demands of the OT Profession - The demands are tied with the shortage in manpower and affects the service deliveries of OT by having preconceived notions about the OT practitioners and clients	An imbalance between female and male OTs exists which may cause re-segregation in males in OT (Backstrom, 2023) while misunderstandings most commonly arise to males due to the gender differences (Bohn, 2019).
Interest in the OT Field - Many have expressed their desire to stay and further explore the profession, however some would like to try out different specialties based on their personal preferences (ex: OT not being their first choice of profession and pursuing a medical degree)	Privileges such as job offers, access to professional activities, and overvaluation of professional capacities may be present due to the rarity of men within the workplace (Ferreira, 2022).

summarized data of each theme with their corresponding citations to give a glimpse of the main ideas for each.

OT Workplace Environment

This theme discusses the varying experiences of the cis-male OTs such as caseloads, satisfactions, and dissatisfactions within the workplace. All respondents agreed that being an OT is both physically and mentally exhausting, but they find satisfaction in seeing their clients' progress over time. "It can get tiring. There are times when it can be exhausting but it's okay. It's fun and I think it's also quite fruitful", said Participant 3.

Interaction within the workplace is kept at a professional level. They also feel welcome and get along with each other pretty well. As summed up by Participant 7, "One thing that I will say that will keep you going and moving forward as an occupational therapist is if you really have a positive workplace. The social environment is very supportive of your growth, they understand where you are coming from, what kind of learning experience you had during your college, and the mentorship that they give you. And as an OT, you become more open to their suggestions and insights and experiences, leveraging on those opportunities, and it really makes your relationship with them worthwhile." Due to the profession's small population locally, some of the participants' workmates were also their schoolmates, which made connection easier. In the study conducted by Rostami, H. (2021), the relationship between work-related quality of life and job satisfaction was explored within the OT field. The results mentioned that the participants in the study are only moderately satisfied with their jobs and have moderate work-related quality of life. Furthermore, it was also highlighted that OTs who have only 1-4 years of experience are more prone to be least satisfied with their jobs and that female OTs are much more satisfied with their occupation compared to their male counterparts. Thus, debunking the idea that there is no difference between the job satisfaction of females and males.

Given this idea, the OT workplace experiences may be both similar and dissimilar. To expound on this idea, in a systematic review by Mertala et.al (2021), the idea of job satisfaction among occupational therapists is explored. Additionally, it is stated that their job satisfaction may be rooted in inter, intra, and extra-personal factors and is said to be complex in nature and may possibly present contradictory results.

Gender in the OT Workplace

This theme discusses the point of view of

cis-male OTs regarding gender roles and gender stereotypes within the workplace. When asked about their thoughts about the profession being predominantly female, most of them did not mind. However, they expressed a desire for more male representation. Working in a pediatric setting, it was stated that some parents preferred a firmer approach from male therapists. Participant 2 expressed that females tend to be more structured and book-based while males have made it easier for them to learn and grasp things at work. On the other hand, participant 4 explicitly stated his preference. "I favor that the population is predominantly female since, for example, in terms of using our therapeutic use of self. I can see that active-friendliness suits females more than myself."

OT offers opportunities regardless of gender. Participant 5 believes being male can be an advantage when applying for OT jobs due to their shortage. Male occupational therapists commonly face similar challenges with caseloads. Participant 2 mentioned communication struggles with guardians. Another issue related to physical strength may cause misunderstandings about the therapist's ability to care for the child. Additionally, caregivers may react differently to OT techniques performed by a male therapist compared to a female therapist.

Some mentioned that gender bias and preconceived notions are prevalent when handling clients. It may be seen as a negative or a positive factor for a male OT. One mentioned "Let's say we've male clients who are going through, let's say male puberty. Of course, as a male therapist, it's easier for us to be able to empathize and provide insights regarding what they're going through as well as they're experience." Along these ideas, some also shared that they find the physically strenuous work to be a positive aspect of the OT male experience. Compliments are received from the guardians of their respective clients.

These findings show that various intersecting themes contribute to these experiences of the target population. These gave an elaborate summary of the study's findings. Gender was ruled out as a main concept in influencing the environment as it has almost little to no effect in accomplishing the job. In collaborating and interacting with their colleagues within the workplace, there was a strong emphasis on professionalism. A study by Bäckström (2023) has found a similar conclusion that the imbalance of both genders is a pressing concern. The study also stated the emphasis on broadening the professional scope and the core values of occupational therapy. On the contrary, the study also gathered that a gap between male and female occupational therapists

may be present due to the differences in approaches.

One thing found during the gathering of data about the study is the lack of gender-related studies focusing on the male demographic. With that, the study can be useful to future researchers who would like to research gender-related topics within the medical field. In terms of incorporating gender into medicine and healthcare, education on these topics should not only be regarded as a mere perspective or an issue that is up for debate, but rather it should be seen as a professional discipline that is based on theory (Yang, 2020).

On the other hand, some guardians may prefer a more direct and firm type of approach since it is usually seen as authoritative. Physically demanding tasks, such as manual labor, tend to go to male occupational therapists due to their gender and preconceived notions. Bohn (2018) stated other advantages that males possess which highlight their physical strength, connection with other male practitioners and clients, and adding diversity to the workforce.

Demands of the OT Profession

This theme discusses the demand for OT professionals within the workplace regardless of gender. Male occupational therapists adapt to their work through familiarity and years of experience. Empathy with colleagues and clients helps in understanding the nature of the profession. Additionally, a few mentioned that their personalities contribute to their way of adapting. "That is one of the traits that, as males, we're confident enough to socialize with other genders." It provides a sense of openness to learn and unlearn new things to integrate into their practice.

Respondents found that interaction with clients is most affected when Filipino culture is involved. Males are viewed as authority figures in the Philippines and are preferred by parents with "difficult" children. There is also a preference for contrasting genders. The "Filipino-like dilemma" was mentioned, where other guardians tend to override parental authority, especially when dealing with children who have disabilities. As mentioned by one participant, "First, is on how parents look at their children, especially when they have a certain disability. We still have that kind of stereotype, I think not just in the Philippines, but predominantly in the Philippines." It introduces further stereotypes and stigmas correlated with profession and culture. Participants stated that the lack of understanding about OT hinders the progression of the clients.

Demands of the profession are tied to the shortage in manpower. Although gender does not affect the interaction within the workplace, it may

affect the delivery of services. When carrying out OT services to both clients and guardians, gender is a contributing factor. In findings highlighted by Backstrom (2023), the existing imbalance between female and male OTs is a pressing issue. As the occupation is considered to be feminine by nature, re-segregation in males in the said profession may be possible due to the perceived notion of a 'job' being masculine. This shows the reinforced societal views and norms in carrying out services. For the case of male OTs, they are more involved with more challenging and physically demanding patients that require methods that would be deemed intimidating for some individuals, as well as their caregivers. An example of such includes utilizing a firm tone or an unfamiliar approach to prompt patients. These responses present the idea that some of the clients are driven by concerns about uncommon techniques which can lead to misinterpretations, especially with the client's caregivers and the client's temperament on handling the given interventions. Misunderstandings may also arise due to gender differences, which may lead to male OTs being dismissed (Bohn, 2019).

Interest in the OT Field

This theme discusses the cismale OTs' interest in the field such as their desire to explore the OT field. Many have expressed a desire to explore different settings, and to branch out into different practices. Participant 1 stated that although he does not see himself working in the setting until retirement age, he would like to transition to the physical dysfunction setting. He also added that as he grows old, being able to handle and run around when dealing with children may get exhausting as he ages. On the other hand, participant 4 would like to establish their career and self before moving settings. According to him, he would first like to rack up certificates while working in the pediatric setting since it is the most demanded setting within the field in the country. In short, it is where he can earn more money before setting off to others. After 5 years, he would like to go to either a hospital-based or physical dysfunction setting. At around age 30 and above, he would also like to try to go to the academic setting. Participants 3, 5, and 6 have all had the same answer of still staying in the field and branching out to try other settings. They currently do not have a specific one in mind as of the moment but that is their plan for the following years. Participant 7 stated his plans to become a doctor in the future. This is mainly influenced by his own perspectives and passion when it comes to being able to advocate. Lastly, participant 2 explained that since being an OT was not really his first choice, he does

not see himself within the field after 5 years. It was mainly influenced by his family's push for him to take up Occupational Therapy despite wanting to take a field unrelated to the medical field.

Most respondents have expressed that it would be ideal to have more individuals be in the workforce due to the country's lack of OT practitioners. This correlates with the drive and interest regarding the profession, along with staying in the job for the long run. Divided responses were given about it. Some say that they would like to stay and grow within the field. Most of the answers have been heavily tied to professional growth and income. A study in Brazil by Ferreira (2022) found that privileges such as job offers, access to professional activities, and overvaluation of professional capacities may also be present due to the rarity of men within the workplace. Trying out different settings may be rooted in the shortage of therapists in other settings as well. The other spectrum of the demographic stated that they would like to explore a different field of work shortly. It may either be connected to the medical field or an entirely different one. Passion and interest play a huge role in being able to decide where one will go in the future, as well as determining the length of their stay in the field.

Tracing back to the themes found, they can serve as the baseline for further improvements within the profession in the country. Not much data is available about the gender gap between the male and female OTs which is why this study may be used for several reasons. By highlighting their experiences, the findings may be able to provide workplaces that offer OT services, policymakers, and institutions with suggestions for implementing rules and regulations. This can be used as an opportunity to further promote OT since the profession is not well-known to others. Institutions such as schools may use the study to strategize more ways to recruit students to study and potentially join the workforce. It may not only increase the number of OTs locally, but it may also elevate the male OT population. This study may serve as a cornerstone to giving transparent insights about how the field is to male OTs.

Conclusion

The study found the existing workplace experiences of the chosen Filipino cis-male occupational therapists through narratives. Contrary to the presented idea that gender may be a factor in the possible representation within the said profession, the results of the study indicated the opposite. The lack of dissatisfaction is attributed to fulfillment and professionalism in the workplace where gender is not a factor in achieving common

goals and maintaining work quality. However, the experiences of male occupational therapists may differ from their female counterparts in the same profession due to the existing gender gap in the said profession.

The study conducted provides key information and acknowledgement of the contemporary issues that the profession is currently facing. The results of the study found four main themes. The OT Workplace Environment describes the dynamics between co-workers in the professional field. In this aspect, all participants noted a healthy work environment and a good relationship with other co-workers. Job satisfaction was also noted despite being tiring and draining at times. Gender in the OT Workplace explored the interactions between both genders. Due to the gender gap, some participants have expressed the desire to have more males within the workplace to have more male company. Views about the therapist are affected by preconceived notions by the caregivers of clients. This relates to the Demands of the OT Profession wherein interaction between OTs and clients is influenced by how the therapists are viewed and treated. It goes hand in hand with the idea that OT is a feminine field of work to even have a large male population. The last factor is the Interest in the OT Field. This part mostly determines how long they will stay within the OT Field. Alongside these, the lack of knowledge about occupational therapy as a part of the allied medical sciences may also be considered a factor that could be addressed further through future investigations with a similar premise.

Author's Contribution

The researchers have all contributed significantly to making this study possible. Every member has given their efforts from the formulation of this topic to the data collection phase, and up to the final paper. K. Matienzo is the group leader for this study. She has been supervising the process and has continuously shown hands-on experience in making the paper. Y. Chavez, alongside K. Matienzo, has been consistent with proofreading the paper. V. Dela Cruz and Z. Napiza have played a huge role in the data collection phase as they were tasked with managing the interview recordings. Mr. R. Delos Reyes and Ms. Z. Rivera, the research advisors, have given the researchers valuable feedback for the manuscript and have additional assistance with finding respondents.

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