

BRIDGING TRANSITION: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY ONLINE PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS IN SINGAPORE

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ABSTRACT

Occupational therapy (OT) is a vital component of Singapore's healthcare system, enhancing the quality of life for individuals across all age groups. This study tackled the integration challenges and perception of available transition support experienced by internationally educated occupational therapists (IEOTs) in Singapore. While the number of registered OTs has been on the rise, the number of non-citizen OTs has declined over the years. This posed questions regarding the adaptation of the IEOTs to Singapore's healthcare landscape. To address such concerns, a transition online platform for IEOTs was developed. This study employed a descriptive-developmental research design using mixed methodology. Two phases of an online survey were administered. The first phase, a survey questionnaire, assessed the challenges and perceptions of IEOTs regarding existing support mechanisms using a 4-point Likert scale. Results indicated that IEOTs raised major challenges relating to social-cultural integration, emotional stress, and access to resources, recording a mean challenge rating of $M=2.28$. It was also found that IEOTs felt improvement should be made in the area of support for local OT resources ($M=2.45$), access to adequate support and resources for qualifying examinations (2.21), and networking ($M=2.30$). In the second phase, an online platform was assessed for compliance with the ISO/IEC 25010:2011 standard. The platform scored high on the criteria for security and maintainability with average scores corresponding to 4.5; further, the overall estimate was 4.42. The findings suggest that the proposed transition support program could facilitate integration into the healthcare system for IEOT in Singapore, resulting in improved patient care and a more welcoming environment for both residents and expatriates.

Keywords: Descriptive-Developmental Study, Internationally Educated Occupational Therapists, Transition support, Community Online platform.