

Title: Experiences of occupational balance following retirement: An interpretative phenomenological analysis [Expériences d'équilibre occupationnel après la retraite : une analyse phénoménologique interprétative]

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Abstract: Achieving occupational balance is crucial for promoting retirees' health and well-being, but little is known about how retirees in Malaysia experience occupational balance after retirement. This study explored the experiences of occupational balance among 12 retirees in Malaysia, aged 60 years and above, using interpretative phenomenological analysis of online one-to-one in-depth interviews. The essence of occupational balance experiences was described in four superordinate themes: satisfaction through occupation, occupational proportion, achieving occupational balance, and challenges towards occupational balance. Retirees reported experiencing occupational balance through engaging in satisfying occupations and balancing the proportions of their occupations. To achieve occupational balance, they desired to socialise with friends and family members and remained active, but faced challenges related to health, finances, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the current study have implications for retirees, their families, and policymakers seeking to promote successful ageing and quality of life. By focusing on Malaysian retirees, the study contributes to the understanding of occupational balance in a non-Western context, thereby enriching the cultural diversity of research within occupational science. However, it also highlights the need for future occupational science research on how occupational satisfaction, proportions, participation, health status, financial status, and COVID-19 impact occupational balance in the retiree population.

Keywords: Occupational science, Occupational balance, Phenomenology, Retirement, Well-being

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