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PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS – THE SYNERGY OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND VALUES*

Introduction: Professional competences play a key role in the development of specialists working in the fields of education, social assistance, healthcare, including occupational therapists. The study of occupational therapists' professional competences provides important insights into the specifics of this profession and the developmental needs of its representatives.

Research Aim: The aim of the study was to explore the subjective perception of occupational therapists' professional competences from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship in three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and values.

Research Method: The study was quantitative and based on a diagnostic survey. The research sample consisted of 205 individuals, selected through a random quota sampling method. The study is representative of the population of occupational therapists from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. In addition, Donald E. Super's Questionnaire of Preferred General Values was employed. To examine dependencies, Pearson's chi-square test was applied.

Results: The results indicate that occupational therapists place great importance on specialized knowledge related to the planning and organization of occupational therapy, as well as knowledge in the fields of psychology and pedagogy. In terms of skills, the highest value is attributed to establishing and maintaining therapeutic contact and recognizing and diagnosing patients' needs. Analyzing values, the study reveals the dominance of values such as altruism, social relations, and the achievement.

Conclusions: The conclusions of the study can serve as a basis for developing educational programs and continuing education that more fully address the specific developmental needs of occupational therapists.

Keywords: professional competences, occupational therapist, competence-based education, professional development, diagnostic survey

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INTRODUCTION

Professional competences play a key role in the development of professionals working in the fields of education, social work, health care and physical therapy, including occupational therapists. In scientific literature, the term “professional competence” is defined as a set of integrated elements, such as knowledge, skills and values, that enable the effective performance of professional tasks in a given work context (Eraut, 1994; Tennant, 2019). Professional competence is often regarded as a dynamic, evolving set of qualities and aptitudes that need to be adapted to ever-changing professional and social demands.

The profession of occupational therapy is subject to continuous changes resulting from scientific progress and the evolving needs of patients. The development of occupational therapy is influenced by advances in medical sciences, psychology, and pedagogy, which shape the expectations and demands placed on occupational therapists (Janus, 2018). In Poland, the requirements for the professional performance of the profession of occupational therapist are specified in the Act of 17 August 2023 on certain medical professions. According to the above document, the condition that must be met in order to professionally practice the profession of an occupational therapist is to complete studies in the field of occupational therapy and obtain a professional title of at least a bachelor's or engineer's degree or a public or non-public post-secondary school and obtain a professional diploma in the profession of an occupational therapist.

For occupational therapists, professional competences encompass a wide range of knowledge and skills necessary for the effective delivery of therapy. Following the guidelines of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) (2020, 2021a, 2021b), not only must occupational therapists master the technical aspects of therapy, but they also need to develop their interpersonal skills, clinical reasoning, and professional ethics and keep up to date with the latest standards and research findings. It has been increasingly emphasised by researchers that developing these skills ought to be supported by pedagogical methods that shape self-reflective and competent professionals (Souto-Gomez et al., 2023).

The iceberg metaphor is universally used to illustrate the structure of professional competences. Much like an iceberg, which has a visible part above the surface of the water and a much larger, hidden part below it, professional competences can be divided into those that are easily visible (above the surface) and those that are less visible (below the surface). The visible part of the competences includes those elements that are directly observable and measurable. These include specialised skills and expertise. As far as occupational therapists are concerned, these may be specific skills related to assessing patients, planning therapeutic interventions and implementing treatment techniques and methods. These elements are easy to evaluate through professional performance, examinations or certificates (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Beneath the surface lie soft competences such as attitudes, values, motivations, and interpersonal skills. These aspects are crucial to the occupational therapist's efficiency, yet more difficult to measure directly. They include empathy, professional ethics, the ability to collaborate with other professionals and the ability to deal with emotional challenges. Even though these competences are less visible, they are fundamental to the effective practice of the profession because they influence the way in which the therapist refers to patients and collaborates within the therapeutic team (Goleman, 1995; McClelland, 1973).

Current studies in the area of professional competence are shifting toward the Competency-Based Education (CBE) model. CBE, which has become particularly popular in the United States, seeks to standardise competency standards while maintaining flexibility in the educational process. This model allows future therapists to develop their skills in a way that is tailored to their individual needs and abilities while ensuring that all graduates meet minimum competency standards before starting their careers (AOTA, 2023; Tennant, 2019). This approach ensures educational consistency and prepares graduates to meet the demands of modern occupational therapy.

By considering these evolving aspects of occupational therapy, this study aims to explore how therapists in Poland perceive their professional competences. The findings contribute to the broader discussion on competency-based education, professional identity formation, and interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of occupational therapy.

RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

All research, including pedagogical studies, concentrates on certain subjects and the aspects affecting their conduct. Occupational therapists' professional competences became the focus of the study, and the occupational therapists from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship were chosen to be participants of the study. The aim of the study was to explore the subjective perception of occupational therapists' professional competences from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship in three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and values.

The following research problem was formulated: Which competences do occupational therapists identify as significant in the context of professional activity/work?

The research problem was analysed in the following scopes:

- assessment of individual areas of knowledge in the work of an occupational therapist;
- assessment of individual skills in the work of an occupational therapist;
- identification of values of particular importance in the work of an occupational therapist.

This study constitutes part of an effort dedicated to exploring and improving the occupational situation of occupational therapists (Godlewska-Zaorska, 2021, 2023). The topic of occupational therapists' professional competence is an area of growing prominence both in academic literature and research of an international nature, requiring further investigation in order to identify the best educational and clinical practice.

RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The study under consideration is survey-based, which predetermined the use of the survey review approach. This approach was found to be essential in identifying occupational therapists' opinions on the competences that are meaningful in the context of their professional activity/work, especially since, in the case of the present research issue, it should be stated that this area has not been explored sufficiently and its exploration requires studies of a diagnostic character.

Data for the analysis was collected using a survey questionnaire. The printed questionnaire was delivered personally to each respondent. In addition, the occupational therapists completed it in a secluded room (no interviewer, no colleagues, no management). Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents were provided with information about the purpose of the study.

The survey questionnaire included a closed-ended question regarding the importance of scopes of knowledge in the work of an occupational therapist. The significance of these areas was assessed on a scale from 1 (*not needed*) to 5 (*very much needed*). A similar format was used for the question regarding the importance of skills in the work of an occupational therapist. Respondents rated the listed skills in the questionnaire using a five-point scale. The closed-ended response options were developed based on the core curriculum for vocational education in health-care-related professions (MED), specifically in the field of occupational therapy services (MED.13) (2019).

The question concerning values was open-ended. Respondents were asked to list three values that they considered particularly important in the work of an occupational therapist. During data analysis, a high diversity of responses was observed. As a result, the process of grouping them turned out to be a significant aspect of the study. In identifying a common tone and theme within the responses, it was deemed appropriate to refer to the values assessed using Super's Work Values Inventory (1996). It turned out that respondents' answers could be categorized according to a classification that aligns with the values identified through this tool.

The identified values included:

- Ability utilization – an opportunity to use and develop abilities, skills and interests;

- Achievement – a sense of satisfaction from work performed, task-oriented approach, willingness to meet challenges, sustainability of achievements;
- Altruism – helping others, a sense of being useful to others, focus on social values;
- Authority – having influence over others, leading others based on respect for position, power, competence and experience, as well as the resulting responsibility for others;
- Autonomy – an independence in decision-making, planning and execution of actions, self-reliance, responsibility for oneself, acting in accordance with one's beliefs;
- Creativity – creating something unique, originality, innovation;
- Personal Development – an opportunity to learn, explore new theories and ideas, interest in the development of one's individuality;
- Social Interactions – an orientation towards group interactions, sociability, communication skills, sense of community with others;
- Social Relations – an interest in receiving emotional support, friendliness, warmth, maintaining friendly relations;
- Variety – a diversity, variation in tasks and environment, seeking change;
- Working Conditions – a positive workplace atmosphere.

With a view to reproducing the structure of the surveyed population, quota-random sampling was applied, ensuring proportional participation of individual members of the population in the surveyed sample. The stratifying variable was the location of the place of employment of occupational therapists within three sub-regions of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship connected to the cities of Elbląg, Olsztyn and Ełk. The division into sub-regions according to the Classification of Territorial Units for Statistics introduced by the European Commission was used. Each of the sub-regions comprises specific districts: (1) Elbląg: braniewski, działdowski, elbląski, iławski, nowomiejski, ostródzki, elbląski grodzki; (2) Olsztyn: bartoszycki, kętrzyński, lidzbarski, mrągowski, nidzicki, olsztyński, szczycieński, olsztyński grodzki; (3) Ełk: ełcki, giżycki, olecki, piski, gołdapski, węgorzewski. In each of the sub-regions, a random selection of the units was made for the study. From the Elbląg sub-region two districts (iławski, ostródzki), from the Olsztyn sub-region three districts (szczyeński, nidzicki, olsztyński grodzki), from the Ełk sub-region two districts (ełcki, giżycki). The number of districts randomly picked in each of the sub-regions corresponded to one-third of the total number of districts in each sub-region. Subsequently, through the use of information from the Database of facilities, institutions and support centres enabling physical therapy of persons with disabilities in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, all institutions employing occupational therapists in the area of the selected districts within the three sub-regions mentioned above were contacted.

It is worth noting that the core curriculum for the profession of occupational therapist specifies places where a graduate can take up employment, including hospital wards, psychiatric day wards, sanatoria, occupational therapy workshops, social welfare centres, day care centres, seniors' clubs, community self-help centres, therapeutic day care centres, hospices, care and educational institutions, nursing homes and special schools. Therefore, the institutions where occupational therapists can find employment were selected using the above-mentioned list, and then, following telephone interviews with the directors/managers of these institutions, the ones that actually employ occupational therapists were personally contacted (Table 1).

Table 1.
Sample selection

ELBLĄG SUB-REGION				
District name	Number of institutions employing therapists	Number of institutions that have agreed to participate	Number of survey questionnaires distributed	Number of survey questionnaires returned
Iławski	7	7	35	31
Ostródzki	9	9	44	38
Total	16	16	79	69
OLSZTYN SUB-REGION				
Szczycieński	4	4	18	16
Nidzicki	5	5	19	14
Olsztyn	24	18	75	64
Total	33	27	112	94
EŁK SUB-REGION				
Ełcki	6	5	20	19
Giżycki	5	5	25	23
Total	11	10	45	42
TOTAL	60	53	236	205

Source: Author's own study.

The size of the sample prepared for the survey reached two hundred and five people (86.86% of the survey sample). Finally, caution is needed to avoid generalising the results across the entire population of occupational therapists and to limit it only to the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.

STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The data acquired in the earlier stages of the study were subject to complex processing, which involved processes such as:

- control of the collected statistical data (verification and selection);
- processing of the data obtained in the course of the study (grouping and counting);

- presentation of the findings (tables, graphs);
- statistical description.

The quantitative data obtained using the survey questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis using the IBM SPSS Statistics software. Since descriptive statistics (distribution of numbers, central tendency and variation) was deemed insufficient, a requirement was imposed to use statistical inference. Pearson's chi-squared test was applied to explore the relationship between individual independent and dependent characteristics. The typical cut-off value for the significance level was $p < 0.05$. The independent variables in the study were of a socio-demographic nature: gender, age, marital status, size of the place of residence, education, place of employment as an occupational therapist, years of work as an occupational therapist and the subregion of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, related to the location of the place of employment of the surveyed occupational therapists.

RESULTS

The presentation of the results begins with basic socio-demographic data of the occupational therapists participating in the study. Some of the metric data do not differentiate the studied population. It does, however, indicate the dominant characteristics and defines the studied occupational therapists as a professional group. From a statistical point of view, the variables that differentiate the studied population deserve special attention, and these are the ones that will be taken into account when analysing and interpreting the findings of the study. These variables are: age, years of work as an occupational therapist and subregion of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (Table 2).

Table 2.
Socio-demographic background of respondents

Variables	N = 205	%
Gender		
Female	164	80
Male	41	20
Age		
Up to 30 years old	43	21
Over 30 to 35 years old	53	25.9
Over 35 to 40 years old	43	21
Over 40 to 50 years old	39	19
Over 50 years old	27	13.2

Marital status		
Married	127	62
Single	51	24.9
Divorced	23	11.2
Widowed	4	2
Size of place of residence		
Village	37	18
Town with up to 10,000 inhabitants	27	13.2
City with 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants	62	30.2
City with 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants	30	14.6
City with more than 100,000 inhabitants	49	23.9
Education		
General secondary education	12	5.9
Secondary vocational/post-secondary school	24	11.7
Bachelor's degree/engineering degree	43	21
Master's degree	126	61.5
Place of employment as an occupational therapist		
Occupational therapy workshops	69	33.7
Hospital ward	1	0.5
Hospice	1	0.5
Healthcare facility	1	0.5
Social welfare centre	28	13.7
Day care centre	7	3.4
Community self-help centre	94	45.9
Rehabilitation, education and care centre	4	2.0
Years worked as an occupational therapist		
Up to 2 years	49	23.9
Between 2 and 5 years	40	19.5
Between 5 and 10 years	68	33.2
Between 10 and 15 years	26	12.7
Over 15 years	22	10.7

Source: Author's own study.

Knowledge

Occupational therapists' knowledge consists of its objective scope and their understanding of it. Occupational self-awareness, which consists of being aware of one's own assumptions underlying the assistance provided to another person, is an important characteristic of a professional. Therefore, the occupational therapists

surveyed were asked to answer the following question: “What do you think is the importance of the listed areas of knowledge in the work of an occupational therapist?”. Mean values were used for data legibility (Table 3).

Table 3.

Importance of scopes of knowledge in occupational therapist's work in the opinion of respondents

Knowledge of	Mean
Fundamentals of anatomy, physiology and pathology	3.62
Fundamentals of rehabilitation	3.79
Fundamentals of psychology	4.39
Fundamentals of sociology	3.81
Fundamentals of pedagogy	4.29
Fundamentals of law and economics	3.00
Fundamentals of occupational therapy	4.61
Planning and organisation of occupational therapy	4.44
Conducting and evaluating occupational therapy	4.31

Mean values min 1, max 5; 1 – *not needed*, 5 – *very much needed*.

Source: Author's own study.

The occupational therapists surveyed give specialist knowledge the highest importance on the scale of acceptance. Thereby, they indicate the importance of knowledge in the areas of “fundamentals of occupational therapy” (4.61), “planning and organisation of occupational therapy” (4.44), and “conducting and evaluating occupational therapy” (4.31). At the same time, the respondents emphasise how important it is to have knowledge of “fundamentals of psychology” (4.39) and “fundamentals of pedagogy” (4.29). The lowest position on the scale was awarded to the knowledge of “fundamentals of law and economics” (3.0). It is possible to identify variables that significantly influence the assessment of the importance of certain knowledge areas in the work of an occupational therapist, these are the years of work as an occupational therapist and age. The remaining variables do not differentiate the respondents in terms of the assessment of the importance of knowledge areas in the work of an occupational therapist.

Statistically significant opinions ($p = 0.004$) on the importance of knowledge of “the fundamentals of anatomy, physiology and pathology” correlate with the variable: years of work as an occupational therapist. Respondents with up to five years of seniority indicated the answer “needed” most often ($N = 45$; 50.6%). In contrast, respondents with more years of experience were more likely to select the answer “useful”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the less seniority, the higher the rating of the importance of the knowledge of “the fundamentals of anatomy, physiology and pathology”.

Statistically significant opinions ($p = 0.004$) on the importance of knowledge of “psychology” depend on the age variable. Respondents under 30 years of age selected the answer “needed” most frequently ($N = 28$; 65.1%). On the other hand, respondents between 30 and 40 years of age chose the answer “very much needed” most often ($N = 52$; 54.2%), as did respondents over 40 years of age ($N = 37$; 56.1%). Consequently, it can be concluded that the older the person, the higher the assessment of the importance of the knowledge of “psychology”.

Skills

Understanding the importance of specialised skills in occupational therapy is a crucial aspect of professionalism in this field. However, what skills are particularly significant in such a career? In order to address this issue, the occupational therapists surveyed were asked to answer the following question: “In your opinion, what is the importance of the listed skills in the work of an occupational therapist?”. Mean values were used for data legibility (Table 4).

Table 4.
Respondents’ perception of the importance of skills in the work of an occupational therapist

Skills	Mean
Establishing and maintaining therapeutic contact	4.74
Recognising and diagnosing the bio-psycho-social needs	4.51
Planning both individual and group therapeutic activities	4.41
Organising occupational therapy activities	4.50
Keeping records, monitoring and evaluating the therapeutic process	4.17

Mean values min 1, max 5; 1 – *not needed*, 5 – *very much needed*.

Source: Author’s own study.

Overall, respondents rated the importance of all skills very highly. The top position on the acceptance scale belongs to the significance that occupational therapists surveyed attribute to skills related to contact with others. In doing so, they indicate the importance of the skill of “establishing and maintaining therapeutic contact” (4.74). At the same time, respondents emphasise the highly important skills of “recognising and diagnosing the bio-psycho-social needs” (4.51) and “organising occupational therapy activities” (4.50). The ability to “keep records, monitor and evaluate the therapeutic process” ranked lowest on the scale (4.17). Thus, it can be concluded that skills relating to direct action are of greatest importance, followed by those that document and evaluate this activity. Variables that significantly influence the assessment of the importance of certain skill areas in the work of an occupational therapist are age and the seniority.

Statistically significant opinions ($p = 0.003$) on the importance of the ability to “plan both individual and group therapeutic activities” depend on the age variable. Respondents up to 30 years of age most frequently ($N = 22$; 51.2%) ticked the answer “very much needed”, as did the respondents over 40 years of age ($N = 46$; 69.7%). In turn, respondents aged between 30 and 40 most often ($N = 45$; 46.9%) opted for the answer “needed”. It can, therefore, be concluded that those in the middle age group rated the importance of planning skills the lowest.

Statistically significant opinions ($p = 0.014$) on the importance of the skill to “plan both individual and group therapeutic activities” also depend on the variable “years of work as an occupational therapist”. Although the answer “very much needed” appeared most frequently in respondent’s answers, irrespective of seniority, a trend can be observed towards a higher rating of the importance of planning skills (4.54) among the researchers with the highest seniority.

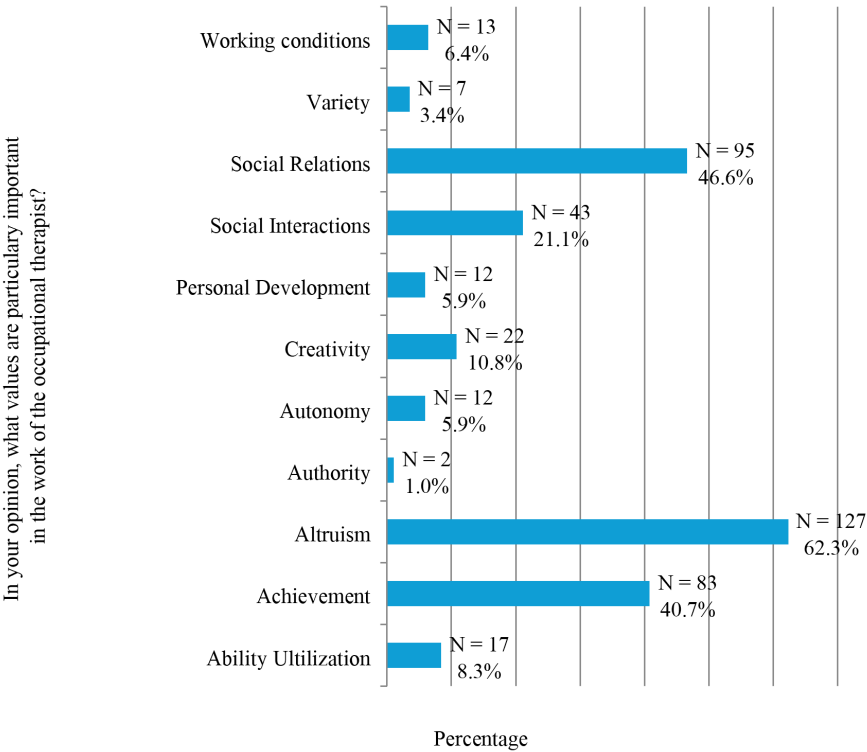
Values

The ethical dimension of the implementation of professional activity is of utmost importance. Due to the multitude of roles they play and activities they undertake, occupational therapists constitute an internally diverse professional group. Integration within the same profession is possible by sharing common values. The respondents were, therefore, asked which values they considered to be of particular importance in their daily work as occupational therapists. In analysing the responses, it became important to identify a common tone and vibe. To do this, the values diagnosed with Super’s Work Values Inventory were used as a reference. This inventory helped categorise the respondents’ feedback in a way that aligned with the values outlined by this tool (Figure 1).

The three most important values, according to the respondents, are: “altruism” ($N = 127$; 62.3%), “social relations” ($N = 95$; 46.6%) and “achievement” ($N = 83$; 40.7%). The least relevant are: “authority” ($N = 2$; 1.0%) and “variety” ($N = 7$; 3.4%). It is worth noting that the values considered to be most crucial in occupational therapy practice by the respondents also ranked highest among the theorists. The study also revealed that occupational therapists value “achievement” due to fulfilling occupational tasks. The only variable that statistically significantly differentiates responses to the question about the importance of values in the work of an occupational therapist is the length of time worked as an occupational therapist.

Statistically significant opinions ($p = 0.006$) on the importance of the value of a “working conditions” depend on the variable years of work as an occupational therapist. Although the answer “no” appeared most frequently in respondents’ answers regardless of seniority, a trend towards the lowest rating of the importance of a good working environment can be observed among respondents with the most seniority.

Figure 1.
Importance of values in the work of the occupational therapist as perceived by the respondents



The figures do not add up to 100, as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
Source: Author’s own study.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of occupational therapists’ professional competences, substantial findings can be pointed out regarding the importance of knowledge, skills and values in this profession. The results demonstrate that occupational therapists attribute high importance to specialised knowledge related to the planning and organisation of occupational therapy, as well as knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, confirming the need for a deeper understanding of theory in order to effectively support patients. Furthermore, the findings suggest that professional experience influences perceptions of the importance of particular areas of knowledge; junior therapists are more likely to emphasise the need for knowledge of anatomy, while senior therapists are more likely to value psychological knowledge.

The results are consistent with previous findings on the professional competences of occupational therapists, which emphasize the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in this profession (Ikiugu & Smallfield, 2015; Turpin & Iwama, 2011). These studies have shown that effective occupational therapy requires the integration of knowledge from medicine, psychology, pedagogy, and therapeutic methods.

In the area of skills, the greatest value is attributed to establishing and maintaining therapeutic contact and recognising and diagnosing patients' needs, reflecting the fundamental role of interpersonal interaction in this profession. The results also demonstrate that seniority and age differentiate the assessment of the importance of planning skills, which may suggest that these competences evolve with work experience and are adapted to the changing needs of patients.

In the context of skills, the results are consistent with the studies by Haglund et al. (2016), who demonstrated that the ability to build relationships with patients is crucial for the effectiveness of therapy. Similarly, Fortune et al. (2013) observed that occupational therapists with strong communication skills are better at engaging patients in the therapeutic process, leading to greater intervention effectiveness.

Following the analysis of values, the findings of the study reveal the dominance of values such as altruism, social relations and the pursuit of mastery, which is indicative of the strong ethical and social foundation of the profession. This is consistent with Super's (1996) classification of professional values, which emphasizes that these values are crucial in professions requiring intensive social interactions and an ethical approach to work. Interestingly, in this study, relatively low importance was assigned to values such as authority or variability, which aligns with the findings of Humbert et al. (2012). They observed that occupational therapists often perceive their role as more supportive and relational rather than managerial or authoritarian.

The results of this study may also be useful in the context of the growing interest in the concept of reflective professional practice (Schon, 1983), which assumes that occupational therapists should continuously analyze their actions and develop the ability to adapt their work methods to the individual needs of patients. Research by Taylor et al. (2020) indicates that reflective professional practice is a key element of effective occupational therapy, and its development can lead to greater efficiency in a therapist's work.

The findings provide new insights into the specificity of occupational therapists' professional competences in Poland, particularly in the context of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. Unlike many international studies that focus on educational and competency standards in Anglo-Saxon countries, this analysis illustrates how occupational therapists in Poland perceive their knowledge, skills, and values. The results may serve as a reference point for further research on shaping educational programs for occupational therapists, with particular emphasis on developing soft skills and ethical competencies.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of professional competences of occupational therapists in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship leads to vital conclusions about the specificity of this profession and the needs for development among its representatives. These competences include broad substantive knowledge and specialist skills that support professional efficiency. The results of the study also highlight the importance of ethical values, which are crucial when working with patients requiring support in various areas of life.

The findings of the study can serve as the basis for the development of educational programmes as well as continuing education, which will pay more attention to the specific needs of the occupational therapist, especially in terms of soft skills.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although the study provided valuable insights, certain limitations must be considered that may impact the generalizability of the results. The study is representative of the population of occupational therapists from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, which limits its representativeness in the context of the entire country. Future research should include a more diverse sample.

Ultimately, the results also point to the need for further research to develop comprehensive competency models and professional development strategies that will support occupational therapists in more effective work and provide patients with better therapeutic support. Future research could employ qualitative research strategies (observational methods, interview methods) or longitudinal studies to obtain more detailed data on the professional competences of occupational therapists.

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KOMPETENCJE ZAWODOWE TERAPEUTÓW ZAJĘCIOWYCH – SYNERGIA WIEDZY, UMIEJĘTNOŚCI I WARTOŚCI

Wprowadzenie: Kompetencje zawodowe odgrywają kluczową rolę w rozwoju specjalistów pracujących w obszarze edukacji, pomocy społecznej, ochrony zdrowia, w tym terapeutów zajęciowych. Badanie kompetencji zawodowych terapeutów zajęciowych dostarcza istotnych wniosków na temat specyfiki tej profesji i potrzeb rozwojowych jej przedstawicieli.

Cel badań: Celem prowadzonych badań było poznanie subiektywnego obrazu kompetencji zawodowych terapeutów zajęciowych z województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego w trzech wymiarach: wiedzy, umiejętności i wartości.

Metoda badań: Badanie miało charakter ilościowy i opierało się na sondażu diagnostycznym. Próba badawcza liczyła 205 osób wyłonionych metodą losowego doboru kwotowego. Badanie jest reprezentatywne dla populacji terapeutów zajęciowych z województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego. Do zbierania danych wykorzystano kwestionariusz ankiety. Ponadto skorzystano z Kwestionariusza Preferowanych Wartości Ogólnych Donalda E. Supera. Dla zbadania zależności zastosowano test chi-kwadrat Pearsona.

Wyniki: Wyniki wskazują, że terapeuci zajęciowi przywiązują dużą wagę do specjalistycznej wiedzy związanej z planowaniem i organizacją terapii zajęciowej oraz wiedzy z zakresu psychologii i pedagogiki. W obszarze umiejętności największą wartość przypisują nawiązywaniu i podtrzymywaniu kontaktu terapeutycznego oraz rozpoznawaniu i diagnozowaniu potrzeb pacjentów. Analizując wartości, wyniki badania ujawniają dominację takich wartości, jak altruizm, stosunki społeczne oraz dążenie do mistrzostwa.

Wnioski: Wnioski z badań mogą posłużyć jako podstawa do rozwijania programów edukacyjnych i kształcenia ustawicznego, które w większym stopniu uwzględnią specyficzne potrzeby rozwojowe terapeutów zajęciowych.

Słowa kluczowe: kompetencje zawodowe, terapeuta zajęciowy, edukacja oparta na kompetencjach, rozwój zawodowy, sondaż diagnostyczny