

“Increasing effectiveness of interventions....There’s technology for that”

Technological based emotional regulation strategies: Exploring paediatric occupational therapists utilisation in practice



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1. Introduction

Emotional Regulation is defined as the process by which individuals manage their emotions in order to achieve a goal (Vasilopoulos & Ellefson, 2021).

Every year, the **technological world expands** which has seen **occupational therapists utilising technology such as apps in practice** (Seifert et al., 2017).

Despite research indicating apps are utilised in paediatric practice, **published literature** on the use of technological based emotional regulation strategies such as apps utilised within paediatric practice **is limited**.

2. Research Question and Aims

Q. From paediatric occupational therapists (OTs) perspectives, are technological based emotional regulation strategies being utilised in practice?

- ➔ To explore paediatric OTs understanding of emotional regulation and the role they play.
- ➔ To identify the relationship between technology and emotional regulation and its use in practice as an intervention.
- ➔ To gain a better understanding of paediatric OTs perceptions of technology as a form of intervention, the benefits and barriers they have experienced.

3. Research Design

Methodology & Methods

- Qualitative exploratory study informed by phenomenological approaches

Recruitment

- Purposive sampling via gatekeepers & snowball sampling
- 8 paediatric occupational therapists working within the Leinster and Munster regions

Data Collection

- 8 online semi-structured interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams

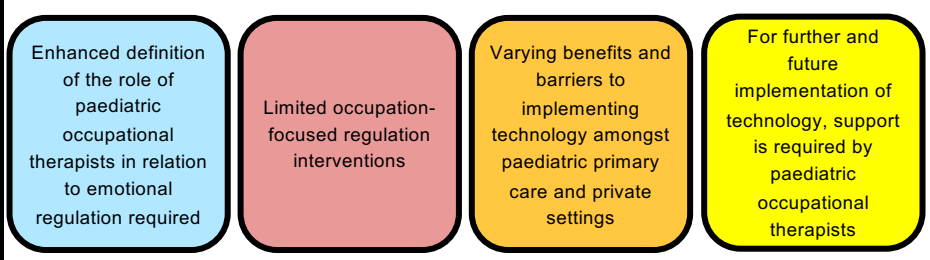
Data Analysis

- Thematic Analysis: 4 themes and 5 subthemes

Trustworthiness/ Ethics

- Transferability: Thick descriptions
- Credibility: Member checking
- Dependability: Analysed transcripts approved by supervisor
- Confirmability: Field notes & reflective journaling
- Informed consent and ethical approval obtained

4. Findings



- 12.00pm
- “It’s not totally within my scope” (P1)
“Within our own service we would more focus on sensory regulation” (P5) ✓✓
 - “Depending on the scenario we’d work to like if it’s social or if it’s school challenging” (P8) ✓✓
 - “Funding and training” (P2)
“I don’t have a necessary limitation” (P8) ✓✓
 - “I would say training and an OT assistant in an ideal world” (P2)
 - “Knowing...what we can and cannot download from a cyber security point of view” (P4) ✓✓

5. Discussion

- As a concept, the role of paediatric occupational therapists (OTs) in relation to emotional regulation remains inconsistent.
- Many of the interventions being employed by paediatric OTs for emotional regulation are situation focused as opposed to occupation-focused and are mostly physical based as opposed to technological based.
- Across both settings, technological based regulation strategies were utilised by some paediatric OTs as an indirect modality of emotional regulation, with most paediatric OTs utilising technology to deliver parent coaching/demonstration videos to assist with clients regulation needs.
- Across settings, implementation of technology is restricted by barriers such as cost of technology for paediatric OTs and parents, the capacity of children and parents and limited knowledge on reliable evidence based apps amongst paediatric OTs.

6. Implications for Practice

- The results of this research study highlight....
- Technology as an accessible means to reach a wider range of clients, as a means of communication with clients and as a means to motivate children.
- Consideration of potential barriers to implementing technology and its appropriateness as a form of intervention must be clinically reasoned by paediatric occupational therapists (OTs) prior to use.
- Education provision to paediatric OTs on their role in relation to emotional regulation is important.
- Provision of support could see technology being further implemented into practice by paediatric OTs.