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## **Title**

**‘Investigating gender-based visual representations on the websites of entry-level occupational therapy programmes in Ireland and the United Kingdom.’**

## **Abstract**

*Objectives* - The purpose of this research is to gain an insight into the online visual marketing of the occupational therapy undergraduate and graduate entry-level courses within Ireland and the United Kingdom. This study examines the specific characteristics of the current visual representations that exist across these university websites. As there are a small proportion of men within the occupational therapy profession, it has become imperative to explore the current practices presented in the recruitment process of online prospectus.

*Method* - The method of research consists of evaluating visual data from 30 university websites across Ireland and the United Kingdom. The data was then recorded onto a specifically designed chart, accounting for necessary information, and analysed using thematic analysis to elicit representative themes. A statistical formula was then constructed to validate the findings of particular themes identified, promoting clarity and reliability.

*Results* - There is sufficient evidence to suggest a significant number of these entry-level websites display components that could potentially inhibit men to enter the profession of occupational therapy. The themes that were categorised in this study were; ‘only women,’ ‘occupational representation’, ‘contextualising the profession’ and ‘painting a unique picture’.

*Conclusion* - A regenerative approach in the marketing of certain entry-level programmes is highlighted to enhance a potential achievement of a more gender-balanced profession. This study has identified positive procedures displayed throughout a small proportion of websites, which can facilitate recommendations towards other institutions to visually represent the profession effectively.

**Key words:** Occupational Therapy; Healthcare; Gender; Visual; Marketing

## **Introduction**

The rationale behind this study is to investigate to what extent are there gender-based visual representations evident throughout occupational therapy entry-level programmes across Ireland and the United Kingdom? Factually there is a significant gender imbalance across the occupational therapy profession and it is proposed that the online promotion of the profession is having adverse affects on the recruitment process of a non-gendered population. Visual images contribute to how we see and think about the world, others, and ourselves (Stevens & Spears 2009). There is a clear gap in the literature on the topic of visual marketing throughout healthcare professions. This study aims to highlight the current visual marketing systems set within online prospectus of occupational therapy programmes. Traditionally targeted advertisement provides clarity to the viewer its intended (Racine et al 2007). An establishment of whether these sites, potentially inadvertently, are geared towards a specific gender population is examined. The outcome of this study is to provide beneficial recommendations for the future administration of visual representations amongst entry-level websites.

## **Literature Review**

### **Occupational Therapy as a Gendered Profession**

Since its evident origin in the early 1900s, occupational therapy has remained dominantly female. Studies have been carried out that provide specific gender ratios within the profession. Male clinicians in the United Kingdom, from between 1992 and 2002, accounted for just 10.8% of the profession (Rugg and Drew 2004). Globally the trend continues. In 1998 male's clinicians that were members of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy accounted for around 5.8% of the profession (CAOT 1998). The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) estimates there are approximately 140,000 practitioners in the U.S.A, 92% being female. It is estimated that male practitioners have remained around 8% for the last 20 years (UAB 2012). Meanwhile in 2003 male therapists occupied just 6.8% of the profession in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003). In Australia the allied healthcare profession of Speech and Language therapy revealed a staggering 97% of therapists were women (Speech Pathology Australia 2012).

Although some men are moving into fields traditionally held by women, the percentage of men in occupational therapy has remained small (Brown 1995). The issue of gender has been consistently evident throughout the professions history. Christiansen (1970) conducted a study on the profession that found 65% of its respondents believed that the predominance of women was a deterrent to male recruitment. Sullivan (2000) noted how the allied profession of nursing was oblivious to the fact that the profession was powerfully feminized, stabilising a deterring factor for male counterparts. Often the attitude and stigmatization of gender roles have influenced the rights and responsibilities of both men and women (Fischer and Arnold 1994). The neutrality of gender roles has increasingly become accepted throughout western contemporary society, in turn, giving opportunity paving the way for a diverse professional workforce.

Personality traits have been seen to shape us as individuals and develop our gender characteristics. Often the personality traits of women have associations with nurturing, dependency and maternal instincts. Similarly these traits have been connected with roles of caring for the needs of others (Fine 2010). Historically healthcare professions, like that of nursing, were considered to be “a natural extension of a woman’s role in society” (Meatus 2000). In contemporary media, gender slants regarding roles in healthcare are still being depicted. In the U.S hit show ‘Glee’, a character stated, “a female football coach, like a male nurse, is a sin against nature” (Minority Nurses 2011). Feminist Florence Nightingale documented that every woman is a nurse in her notes on nursing practice (Porter O’Grady 1995). Barker (1995) argued that these stereotypes have been responsible for fueling the phenomenon of gendered professions. Suggestively men tend to focus on the potential threat to their masculinity resulting through the involvement within female dominant occupations (Morgan 1992). This could propose a cultural rationale for the continuous minimal numbers of men entering healthcare professions like that of occupational therapy.

### **The History of Men within the Profession**

Christiansen (1970) conducted one of the first major studies of men in occupational therapy. The aim of this study was to compile a background into the recruitment and attrition of male therapists. His study consisted of 251 male respondents whom were members of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Recruitment strategies were viewed as being poor in

primarily attracting the majority of respondents into the profession. 49% (123) respondents believed that a lack of informative knowledge regarding the roles of the profession was a key reason more men were not entering the field.

Watson (1983) reported that men's positive interpretations of the profession were evident throughout areas of: Peer relationships, direct contact with people, having the ability to help others help themselves, the variety of the work and personal satisfaction of the work. The greatest aspect of the profession expressed by its male members is the opportunity to build interpersonal rapport or simply to work with people (Brown 1998, Rider & Brasher 1988). In a more recent study, seven male therapists interviewed in Ireland, collectively expressed contentment and pride working within occupational therapy resulting in job satisfaction (Flynn 2011). This study has shown the gradual shift of men's experiences becoming more positive while working as occupational therapists. A focus on the positive experiences of men within the profession needs to be forwarded throughout the advertisement strategies as a means to encourage more men to enter the profession (Meadus 2000).

At the University of Limerick where this research originates, only 11% of the 2011 entry-level intake were men (University of Limerick 2011, unpublished statistic). This highlights a continued trend of healthcare professionals progressively remaining female-dominant.

### **Changing Professional Perspectives**

It is estimated that around 3% of UK school leavers have chosen to enter health care occupations (Davis 2001). The understanding of allied healthcare professions is often unclear (Brown 1998). A male occupational therapy student at the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB) states how he was amongst the majority of males who didn't know what the healthcare profession of occupational therapy entailed. It was only when he was determined to pursue a meaningful occupation, taking the time to consider potential careers, that he discovered occupational therapy (UAB 2012).

Like occupational therapy, other healthcare professions are experiencing similar challenges of male recruitment. In 2002 The Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) marketed nursing through a campaign titled "Are You Man Enough To Be a Nurse?" with the aim of increasing male nurses by

20% by 2020 (Minority Nurse 2011). Similarly Speech and Language advocates have recently associated subject areas to enhance the promotion of universal characteristics of its profession to target male recruitment (Speech Pathology Australia 2012). These various aspects of the profession portray wider opportunity for individuals (particularly men) to engage in the profession through implementing their own knowledge, skills and interests into their area of practice.

In a male marketing campaign at the University of Alabama, “Yo, bro...OT isn’t just for females”, the sheer importance of male practitioners was detailed; “Being a male working with kids can be an asset, kids tend to make connections with males just like a male teacher can have a positive influence over certain children” (UAB 2012). The initial stage of appropriate advertising that targets both sexes is vital to actively incorporate a diverse intake (Meadus 2000). Undoubtedly the profession can be more successful where a diverse workforce can accommodate the diverse client providing client-centred practice that occupational therapy endorses.

### **Visual Branding of the Profession**

Visual marketing is extensively regarded as being an important component of professional practice; however theoretical understanding of this phenomenon is limited (Wedel & Pieters 2008). Schroeder (2002) outlines how visual representations are connected with a process of identify. Bettany et al (2010, p.5) states that ‘advertising continues to present a picture of, and hence to reproduce, a world divided by cultural gender roles.’ Nassif and Gunter (2008) identified that within the United Kingdom domestic roles were advertised in correlation with women and represented accordingly (Bettany et al 2010). This suggests gender roles are continually being associated throughout visual signs.

Advertising is a powerful means of constructing, influencing and illustrating the observer’s interpretation, shaping identify, especially gendered identity (Koller 2008, Schroeder and Borgerson 1998). Meadus (2000) noted the vital importance to promote healthcare professions in a way that did not only portray sexist images and language, previously displayed throughout the advertisement of healthcare professions. He stated how the monitoring and elimination of such marketing aimed at one sex could change stereotypical presumptions society has adopted towards

what is the norm. In contemporary society attitudes towards biological sex, gender identity, and gender role implicate consumer behavior (Arnold and Bianchi 2001, Schroeder 2002).

## **Methodology**

The resources used for this study were sourced from the University of Limerick library and interrelated online database. The search terms included “Male Occupational Therapists”, “Gender in Healthcare”, “Marketing of Healthcare”, “Visual Marketing” and “Gender Marketing”. Textbooks and journals from the universities library were also sourced.

The data inclusive of this study was collected throughout 30 university sites that offer occupational therapy entry-level programmes. The inclusion criteria for this study was that each university had to be a registered Irish and British university, validated by an overarching body like that of the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT). 26 websites were sourced from British university websites and 4 (only universities to facilitate the course) were located from Irish sites. These were then examined via the individual university website.

The primary stage of this study was to measure the data by sourcing the images from these websites. This was prepared by taking snap shots of each identified website page that consisted of images and storing this information for latter analysis. This was done to account for the visual representations sourced at the time of the study in the event of change post analysis. Comparable images are exemplified in **image 1**, taken from the online prospectus of the University of Kansas (USA) and **image 2**, obtained from the University of Alberta’s occupational therapy site (Canada). A tool was developed to document the visual layout of these websites under the following categories; ‘University’, ‘Webpage’ (url), ‘Programme’ (i.e. MSc/BSc), ‘Main webpage’ with subthemes; ‘Colour’, ‘Number of images’, ‘Gender’, ‘Description of image’ and ‘Secondary webpages’ with the same subthemes.



**Image 1.**



**Image 2.**

The data from these university websites were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method has been shown to minimise the researchers personal biases and interpretations (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998). Thematic analysis provides an elicitation of themes that best describe the current data available to this study. Thematic analysis is responsible for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data, however frequently it goes further than this, interpreting various aspects of the research topic” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.79). The use of given themes captures significant features of the data relating to the research question, giving structure and meaning (Braun and Clarke 2006). This method is most appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to effectively gather the information and accurately interpret the visual information represented across these university websites. This allowed the researcher to interpret subjects and visual subthemes (i.e. colour usage) supportive of images (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998).

Statistics were constructed to support the results of identified themes. Implementing these strategies aim to increase the reliability and creditability of this study. Depending on the identified theme, formulas were developed to analyse the data. An example of one formula used to identify ‘gender’ is illustrated below:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \frac{\text{(Number of images relating to identified theme)}}{\text{(Overall number of images of)}} \times \frac{100}{1} \\
 \\
 \text{Example: } \frac{161 \text{ females (over all number of women)}}{192 \text{ (total number of images with both men and women)}} \times \frac{100}{1} = 83.6\%
 \end{array}$$



The nature of this research brought forth minimal ethical considerations, which were considered throughout the process of this study. Stake (1994) stated how researchers are guests in world of research therefore their behaviours should be appropriate and their code of ethics strict. To respect the anonymity of the universities' authors and contributors represented throughout the analysed sites, no specific information is detailed that may identify a specific university website. Although little formal accommodations had to be implemented, it is important to recognize the researcher of this study in relation to the nature of this topic. Being male it is proposed that an element of personal bias may have unintentional associations in the distinguishing of the outcomes, therefore reliability is theoretically questionable.

## **Results**

The results of this study were comprised through the analysis of approximately 100 images displayed across the identified 30 occupational therapy university websites. The methodology of thematic analysis provided information categories that devised specific themes, demonstrating the findings.

### ***Women Only?***

Throughout the images of these entry-level programmed it is estimated that approximately 84% of these images display women. Interestingly this figure somewhat reflects the current ratio of gender currently established within the profession. However its implications exceed what might be conceived. A lack of insight into the vision for a gender-neutral profession is apparent throughout the visual representations of the profession amongst current university websites.

These identified images suggest that there is an element of lenience towards the recruitment of women into the profession. Whether it was consciously or unconsciously decided that so few men were inclusive in the visual aids of these websites is inconclusive. The unobtainability of a male population within the occupational therapy student body could be explained, however the efforts to improvise have been evidently minimal throughout the majority of these online prospectuses. Where men are viewing images on a website that provide career opportunities, one can be over-whelmed by the extensive images of women that collectively

represent the profession. It suggests little diversity exists within the profession. The dominance of females within the educational and professional settings may be intimidating and undesirable to the male population.

A select amount of the educational institutes have provided student portals on their pages with the student's image attached. Notably this strategy is a valuable asset to create awareness and advocacy of any profession. Considering access to participants within a class size has been accounted but feasibly inconclusive. There was evidence of gender balance recognised throughout these visual representations of student profiles where out of 8% of the images, 5% were of women and 3% men. This sourcing a diversified response from both genders can benefit the reader with encouraging affects by providing relative insight through the representation of the storyteller. A proportion of the websites have gone on to included graduation images, representing future outcomes of studying the course of occupational therapy. Undoubtedly the viewer can perceive achievement and the marking of career commencement, but there is a lacking... graduating men! Although roughly 3% of the analysed images were of graduates, all of these were female where no men were deployed throughout these images. The issue resulting from this is the hesitancy of whether men are suitable and remain in the course to qualify, becoming occupational therapists.

### ***Occupational Representation***

In the purpose of separating gender as an individual factor, identifying gender-biased representations through the form of occupation was identified. Approximately 41% of the images account for specific occupations therapists' focus their work in. However only about 26% of these websites provided a more holistic view of the profession by incorporating more than one occupation in its visual form. Throughout many of these images the focus on specific and reoccurring occupations was unavoidable. An astonishing 35% of these websites demonstrated just one occupational component of the profession, for example splinting. Justifiably the portrayed occupations utilised were notably occupational therapy related.

This study aimed to examine deeper into these specific occupations. Many of the representing occupations consisted of the broader disciplines from biomechanical (e.g. seating) to psychosocial (e.g. vocational rehabilitation) roles. A proportion of the websites focused on one specific occupation throughout the visuals demonstrated on that particular website. Activities such

as craft making and gardening were a sole theme that represented the profession on various websites without displaying additional range and diversity available. However that is not to undermine the significant relevance that such occupations therapeutically provide for its client groups. The lacking of alternative occupation-based interventions created restrictions to professional clarity. Other institutions have considered a greater occupational balance where they have given images of varying disciplines inclusive of bio-medical, psychosocial, paediatric, rehabilitative and specialist areas (e.g. splinting). It is apparent that a significant amount of universities provide a poor outcome of visual perspective within occupational therapy courses.

### *Contextualising the profession*

The nature of the setting to which the images are located was a theme that reoccurred throughout the data analysis. Occupational therapists have the ability to work amongst a extensive range of environments. When analyzing these sites, 23% of the images were centred within the educational environments of classrooms and university campus grounds. Therefore the range of contexts this profession has to offer is not visually illustrated for the viewer. The images have been restricted to university settings like the classroom or within a wider educational context. Images of the university grounds, specific course buildings are notably relevant to a student's university experience. With almost half of the collective university images focusing on the educational environment, it demonstrates where the main purpose these specific course websites are overshadowed and not specific to promoting the profession distinctively, catering for the professional life to be gained after university.

Many of the images have demonstrated relevant occupational therapy settings but lacked in making them more specific to the profession of occupational therapy (e.g. community based, employment centres, schools). It is considered that visual images that represent one aspect, often throughout the same site, can suggest that occupational therapists are specialists in a certain discipline of healthcare. This can be off-putting to men and even women whom do not share these occupational interests. It can give misguide the viewer when images are specific and could be confused with other humanitarian disciplines, for example art therapists.

### *Painting a Unique Picture*

It is important to acknowledge the successful accomplishments these representing institutes have demonstrated. It is evident that there was consideration to include a justifiable balance of diversity amongst race and ethnicity that envisions the core beliefs of the profession. Uniqueness of the visual aids demonstrated on these websites is debatable. Evidently some institutions have gone through exceptional efforts to generate images that represent and distinguish the profession from others, recognisably valuable in promoting any profession. Unfortunately there was an evident deficiency in the distinctive representation of occupational therapy, aligning it as another generic site for individuals to uninterestingly scroll through.

Various subthemes emerged throughout this theme. Within the literature of marketing, visual components such as colour have been emphasized. It is estimated that 20% of these sites have conformed in displaying their course with themes of pink that have a suggestively stereotypically relationship with gender.

Interestingly the lack of visual images was displayed throughout approximately 9% of accounted websites. It was evident when a website included images and when there were none. They illustrated creativity on the courses behalf, brightened up the webpage and provide initial attention to encourage further inspection of the aligning information (textual). The websites opting out of visual marketing had a clear disadvantage when acquiring the viewer's attention and made the webpage somewhat generic and tasteless. These websites although comprehensive and informative often overindulged in the textual components and overlooked the benefits of visual aids to demonstrate universal uniqueness to the profession. Advancing the opportunity to introduce a picture rotating system, occupying the space of one image, was not detected to facilitate prioritised text.

### **Discussion**

It is renowned that an image speaks a thousand words and provides an element of identity. Approximately 100 images were analysed throughout this study with a median of 3 images per website. The themes elicited gave opportunity to acknowledge and critique the value these images signify.

The concept of gender was the initial theme elicited from this study. The results suggest that characteristics in the marketing process throughout some of the websites have overlooked this as being potentially one of the overarching barrier to gender imbalance within occupational therapy. Wedel and Pieters (2008) reiterate how visual contexts can affect the viewer's responses to them. Fine (2010) and Meadus (2000) identified stigmatization attached to healthcare professions, like that of occupational therapy. It was shown such professions projected feminine connotations towards a caring and nurturing role. Although attitudes are changing and becoming increasingly accepting of men working in healthcare, a prevalence of gender roles still permits.

Acceptance of gender equality can commence where the contemplation stage is targeted. Arnold and Bianchi (2001) suggest that people with feminine or masculine gender identities should be in accordance with the establishment of appropriate marketing representations. Sourcing gender partnership in the collection of suitable programme visuals can effectively minimise risk factors of gender inequity. It is found that visual representations impact on a person's perception therefore influencing behaviour (Wedel and Pieters 2008). Where male audiences observe the courses online imagery, consisting of a staggering 84% being women, one can comprehend a foundation of avoidance to further investigate the professions philosophy. It is a growing concern not only to the professionals within the body but by the service users themselves. It has been recognised that male clients have advocated for male therapists as a preference in intervening with sensitive aspects such as personal activities of daily living (UAB 2012).

Occupational therapy is fortunate to have a variety of subjects included in its course and throughout its role in practice. A number of university sites have minimally displayed the vastness of subjects occupational therapy included, potentially restricting the scope the profession can apply to seeking individuals. The majority of images demonstrated provide minimal ranges of occupations included in the role are posted which show a continuing trend throughout the majority of these sites. Yerxa (1998) explained how occupation is what differentiates occupational therapy from other professions, and needs to be at the core of occupational therapy curriculums. Rider & Brashear (1988), and Brown (1998) conducted studies of men's experiences being an occupational therapist. The common conclusion was that men entered the profession with a desire to help and

work with people. The demonstrations of the varying occupations in which therapists engage need further investment to account for its role. In a society where educational choice is premium, professional bodies should take measure to ensure a universal population has the opportunity to consider the occupation promoted.

The context in which a therapist can work is undoubtedly extensive within occupational therapy. As a spectator of such sites one may not comprehend the diverse environments the profession initiates ranging from peoples homes, their work environments, schools, hospitals and prisons (COT 2011). Many of these sites have portrayed the profession throughout its settings, whoever often the professions visual context was located within a singular domain, whether clinically based or community based. The need to include a variety of settings can provide inspiration to the potential therapist who may have a lenience or interest within a specific domain of healthcare. Sites where the environment has been consistent throughout its visual imagery can further limit the range the profession can offer.

Creek and Lougher (2008) outlined how occupational therapy examines how a person can actively engage in occupations of self-care, work, leisure, and the demands of the environment. Similarly the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2010) state that occupational therapists receive a extensive education in the areas of medicine, social behaviours, psychology, psychosocial and occupational sciences which allow them to work collaboratively with a range of people individually and/or in groups within a variety of settings. The visual representation of the profession should give insight into the diverse areas prospective therapists can enter. Research has shown that people observe desirable components prior to undesirable ones (Balcetis and Dunning 2006). Where a profession with such range is promoted, visual representations should account for the broader sense. This can achieve the spectator's attraction and attention (Wedel and Pieters 2008).

Uniqueness of the profession through visual supports was highlighted as being an influential factor in recruitment process. An aligning visual component of colour was identified throughout this study. Some of the sites presented webpages in colours such as pink, often not a university theme but directly course-related. Specific colours, for example pink, along with other pastel colours (e.g. light purple) have been shown to have stereotypical relationships. It is found that such

colours display associations with soft, delicateness and even weakness (Howard Bear 2012). In a study that focused specifically on the colour pink and its association to gender, 169 respondents, 76% related it with femininity (Koller 2008). As contradictory as this attribute may seem the relationship of attraction and detraction are realistically interlinked. Although such colours are becoming increasingly less gendered research shows that certain colours continually relate to forms of gender, sexuality and emotional responses (Koller 2008).

Occupational therapy, amongst other allied healthcare professions, is at risk of continually accommodating restrictive factors of gender imbalance where identified strategies are not implemented. This study aims to suggest recommendations for future visual practices amongst the marketing systems of the profession. These include;

- \* Implementing marketing policies that make occupational therapy applicable to the entire population regardless of gender, age, culture or ethnicity.
- \* For representative criterion to be inclusive of creative contexts that both broadly and specifically represent a distinct range of chosen occupations, environments and professional distinctiveness.
- \* For occupational therapy professionals to develop advertising guidelines (i.e. the demonstration of allied websites successfully displaying diverse visual representations throughout their online prospectuses).

## **Implications**

This study aims to advise changes in the construction of online visual data with the view of increasing the intake of men and reducing gender imbalance within the profession of occupational therapy. The long-term objective of this study is to encourage more men to join the profession therefore providing a more holistic approach to care.

## **Further Study**

Due to the small data size of this study it can be recognized as a pilot study for further research on the publication of the occupational therapy profession. Although the visual representations of current entry-level programmes across Ireland and the United Kingdom are represented, through this study, an extensive international study would be valuable. This extended

approach could include examining video representations that supported 23% of these particular websites would be proposed. In addition, investigating alternative marketing approaches, like that of the media, would establish a more diverse and comprehensive understanding of the marketing strategies that historically and currently evident.

## **Limitations**

As a male researcher a gendered approach can be recognized as potentially bias in this study. An independent researcher, unrelated to the profession, could have introduced an alternative interpretation of the data collection. Alternatively having a male and a female researcher cohesively analyzing the data to elicit an outcome of results can have benefited this study.

There was no communication initiated between the researcher and website developers or course directors, therefore no clarity on the current specific strategies was known. This was especially limiting in relation to the websites successfully portraying gender appropriate visual strategies, as the rationale behind its successful advocacy was undetermined.

## **Conclusion**

Following the review of the literature and the analytic representations of the findings, it is evident that significant marketing characteristics of entry-level occupational therapy programmes portray the profession to be diverging towards the female market. However it is unavoidable to ignore that females currently dominate this profession in throughout contemporary health systems. Little evidence in promoting the encouragement of men into the profession is clear. Wedel and Pieters (2008) reiterate how visual contexts can affect the viewer's individual responses. Managing the visual representations of these sites can create effective change. At the University of Alabama at Birmingham (2012) the occupational therapy department actively engaged in a visual awareness campaign in an attempt to recruit men into occupational therapy. Positive outcomes were established by effectively promoting the necessary of men producing national awareness.

Investigation into the online promotion of occupational therapy courses is suggestively in need of reevaluation. It is exclaimed that the internet is considered to be one of the most highly used source of information gathering resulting in one of the strongest forms of effective marketing



(Wedel and Pieters 2008, Racine et al 2007). Therefore it is hypothesized that a significant quantity of prospect students will access course information directly from university online prospectuses. This provides incentive to initiate change in publicising the profession with greater effectiveness. The late Steve Jobs exclaimed, “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. The only way to do great work is to love what you do” (Jobs 2005). This powerful statement outlines the utter importance for an individual to uncover the most appropriate career that encompasses meaning and suitability.

The main finding of this research is that an update in the representations of online occupational therapy websites is required to advocate for a greater gender-balanced profession. Health care professionals, along with service-users, have identified the need for more men to enter the profession (UAB 2012). As previously identified, only 26% of the analysed websites underwent extensive efforts to visually depict the profession as a unique, opportunistic, tangible and versatile occupation. The highlighted recommendations aim to facilitate reformative approaches in the administration of the visual representations established throughout academic occupational therapy websites.

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