

## OCCUPATIONAL MEANING OF FILIPINO EATING EXPERIENCES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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**Introduction/Rationale:** Eating is one of the daily occupations that are essential to all individuals as a means of survival. However, eating has extended beyond not only as a need for sustenance but as a meaningful and unique experience particularly for Filipinos. This is an indicative that people create meaning from experiences which in turn motivates them to engage as a meaningful occupation.

**Objectives:** The study aimed to explore the occupational meaning of Filipino eating experiences among selected college students. The researchers wanted to determine the common themes associated with the meaning of eating as an occupation among Filipinos.

**Approach:** This study utilized a phenomenological approach as a method in gathering the nature of the experience of the respondents in eating. Individual in-depth semi-structured voice-recorded face-to-face interviews with questions focus on the unique eating experiences of the respondents were used. An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to identify levels of patterned responses within the data collected.

**Results:** Eleven (11) respondents who were students coming from different regions of the country participated in the study and four (4) major themes emerged: the physiological meaning, social meaning, emotional meaning and traditional or cultural meaning of eating experiences.

**Conclusion:** Given the integration of the themes that emerged from the data, the study illustrated the essence of the respondents' individual experiences of eating as an occupation and its importance as a basis for establishing client-centered goals and interventions especially in a variety of settings.