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Reviewer A

Comment 1: Cano et al. have provided an analysis of factors driving job satisfaction amongst Filipino medical technologists working within private hospitals in the metro, Manila area. While they provide interesting findings, there remain certain gaps that need to be addressed prior to publication. Chiefly, a stronger justification of the sample size is required, stronger theoretical backing is required for the data analyses provided, and other minor points need to be addressed.

Reply 1: Thank you for this general insight. We already revised the contents of the manuscript to further elaborate the used sample size, interview materials used, and most importantly, a comprehensive discussion of the findings of the study.

Changes 1: Please see and review the tracked changes in the submitted revision paper.

Comment 2: Lines 129 to 131 require more extensive explanation. Specifically, the authors need to highlight how Creswell's recommendation apply to their particular study and the exact process through which the sample size was generated. When and how did they achieve saturation? Finally, please provide the section of Urquhart 2022 that was used to calculate the sample size as part of reference 20.

Reply 2: Creswell's recommendation pertains to the utilization of 10 or more participants in conducting interviews. In generating the sample size, we followed the Creswell and Clark's as supported by Clarke and Braun's sample size estimation in doing a qualitative study for thematic analyses. Sample saturation was primarily considered to prevent any loss of important points and for easier data management (See Hennik and Kaiser (2022); Urquhart (2022)). There were no calculations made in the study since sample size were estimated based on the findings of the cited references.

Changes 2: An addition of references were added to justify the sample size estimation and data saturation. Please see lines 151 - 160 for the changes made.

Comment 3: Lines 158 to 169 requires further explanation and theoretical justification for the use of Colaizzi's 7-step method. Specifically, indicate why this method was chosen and how it is connected to theories of phenomenology. Explicitly highlight the 7th step of analysis. It would be helpful although not necessary to demonstrate their analysis using some of the data collected.

Reply 3: Colaizzi's method was chosen because it has a data validation at the end of its process. In addition, it follows the two phenomenological philosophies which is being applied in the study.

Changes 3: We have added the philosophical background in the research design as the basis of this study (See the lines 137-146 in the Research Design part). As per the data analysis, we elaborated the reason for choosing Colaizzi's in the lines 192-195.

Comment 4: In lines 169 -174 please provide additional details on the participant validation methodology. Please also clarify why this method increases the trustworthiness of the data and why participant validation was deemed necessary in this case?

Reply 4: The 7th step adds a validation procedure in the course of the study. This is essential in establishing trust with the respondents and a way of authenticating the gathered data. Any discrepancies seen by the respondents will be modified and corrected in accordance with the respondent's statement. More importantly, it also ensures that all of the formulated meanings will be

true and valid with the respondent's confirmation of the preliminary data.

Changes 4: We have added additional information regarding data validation. Appendix II is added as reference for the data validation process. The aforementioned document contains the preliminary data that was gathered in the study. (Please see line 208-213 of the Data Analysis of the revised paper)

Comment 5: 199 onwards: This paper requires an analytical concepts section specifically highlighting the origin of the fire triangle of job satisfaction. Is this concept derived from prior studies using this analytical concept or was it specially developed for this particular study? Was the interview design informed by the Fire Triangle of job satisfaction? Or did a preliminary analysis of the interview data lead to the construction of the Fire Triangle of Job Satisfaction.

Reply 5: The triangle of fire is a simulacrum used to depict the emerged themes in the study. It was specifically developed for the study, and it metaphorically signifies the job satisfaction of the Filipino medical technology respondents. This is part of the 6th step in the Colaizzi's method of analysis which allows the researchers to establish fundamental structures and generate a representative figure elucidating the relationship between the emerged themes and the phenomenon.

Changes 5: We added some lines to briefly elaborate the simulacrum (See lines 242-244).

Comment 6: Every table that has an unspecified section please indicate what that signifies.

Reply 6: The unspecified sections were dedicated for missing data that were refused to answer or not declared by the respondents. They were allowed to exercise their right to refuse and autonomy in answering questions during the interview.

Change 6: We have placed a legend to clarify this section. (See tables 1 and 2; Lines 224-226)

Comment 7: Please provide a representative semi-structured questionnaire as an appendix to this paper to fulfil this research tool quality assessment criteria.

Reply 7: We have included the informed consent, questionnaire and even the validation document in the appendices.

Change 7: Please see the appendix I and II.

Comment 8: Please clarify the term transcendental approach in lines 122/123.

Reply 8: Transcendental approach or the critical approach is a philosophical approach following the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger. It aims at describing the lived experiences of the respondents and find patterns or meaning without compromising its essence. It gives the researchers a standard approach in conducting phenomenological studies and hence, it is being applied in this study.

Change 8: We have added lines 137-146 to elaborate the transcendental approach and its aligned philosophies.

Comment 9: Please clarify the meaning of deliberately translated in line 154.

Reply 9: We apologize for the confusion. We only meant for the direct translation of the Filipino responses to English language to have a uniform set of responses.

Change 9: We made changes in the line 187 to clarify this confusion.

Comment 10: My intuitive understanding is that salary should be part of both the force of purpose and the force of pursuit. Please indicate why salary has not been considered as part of the force of purpose?

Reply 10: Salary was not included in the force of purpose since we thought that it would be more

appropriate to be associated with the force of pursuit. Based on the findings of the study, the respondents made it clear that non-monetary rewards inspire them to continue the practice of medical technology in the Philippines – ignites their sense of purpose. They are aware that the current situation of the medical technology practice in the Philippines is depressing and underappreciated but having the testimonies such as “we are helping in the diagnosis”, “it is rewarding to help a person”, etc. makes the salary more of a force of pursuit than purpose.

Change 10: No changes were made by the researchers nor any additional information.

Comment 11: While the title of the paper calls it a phenomenological study, the authors have not indicated how theories of phenomenology were specially applied to the design of the study. Please provide an explanation theory of phenomenology and how it applies to the study.

Reply 11: The study follows the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger where both descriptive and interpretative approach can be used in analyzing data. These philosophies aid in keeping the study from any biases while searching for any patterns or themes in the responses without compromising its essence or value.

Change 11: We have expounded the transcendental approach in the lines 137-139. The philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger were explained in the lines 139-142 as well as their importance in the study (See the lines 142-145).

Comment 12: Respondent's profile needs to highlight the medical practice area they are coming from. More specifically, it would be helpful to have an idea of the kinds of skilled services that the medical technologists are providing, e.g. Phlebotomy, X-ray, MRI, or respiratory technicians. If they are different technicians, then what are their salary structures and ranges. Also, if there are significant differences in salary across these various medical technology services, then the monetary compensations (force of pursuit) factor contributing to job satisfactions will have to be reassessed to accommodate these differences in salary structure.

Reply 12: The practice of medical technologist in the Philippines is considered broad unlike the other countries where phlebotomists, lab technicians, molecular biologists, and quality assurance officers are separate career fields. Medical technologists perform tasks in phlebotomy, analytical testing, quality assurance, etc. without any particular specialty. Hence, this would also mean that the medical technology profession in the Philippines is a general profession and thereby, no discrepancies in the salary is expected.

Change 12: No changes were made by the researchers nor any additional information.

Comment 13: Were data on respondent's salary collected? If so, please provide the salary data and appropriate contextualization e.g. how do these salaries compare with median salaries in the Philippines.

Reply 13: No, we did not collect any data pertaining to salary. In general, the salary of healthcare workers in the Philippines is relatively lower as compared to other countries in Southeast Asia. Laws and other legislatures were not yet established to increase the salary matrix of the healthcare workers employed in the Philippines.

Change 13: No changes were made by the researchers nor any additional information

Comment 14: The paper needs to have a short, concise explanation of the medical care system in the Philippines so that readers may appropriately situate the lived experiences of the respondents.

Reply 14: Please see the rationale and knowledge gap. The researchers acknowledge the fact that not only medical technologist but also almost all of the medical/allied-health professionals were underpaid and underappreciated in the country. We have mentioned brain-drain phenomenon in

order to locate where to start in finding key opportunities in improving the job environment quality in the Philippines.

Change 14: We have provided a general background of the healthcare practice in the Philippines especially amidst pandemic where issue in terms of salary, workload, and safety were visible. We added the lines 100-118 to elucidate the rationale of this study.

Reviewer B

This manuscript describes a qualitative study regarding job satisfaction in Philippine Medical Technician workers- finding three major themes with supporting reasons for each theme.

Comment 1: Abstract

- Appropriate, succinct. Clear what the manuscript will be about.

Reply 1: Thank you for this comment.

Changes 1: We made some revisions in the results section of the abstract to simplify the findings of the study.

Comment 2: Introduction

- The background feels a bit “over-explained” and the rationale/gap feels a bit “under-explained”. Would suggest condensing the first part and expanding on the reason for this study a bit more. Can statistics be provided such as increased hours, number of workers leaving, empty jobs/jobs needed, etc.?

Reply 2: Thank you for this comment. We have followed your recommendation and we added some literature in the rationale to provide a short background of the allied health practice in the Philippines.

Changes 2: We have added lines 103-119 to give more information about the healthcare practice in the Philippines.

Comment 3: Methods

- Inclusion and exclusion criteria were stated.

- No reference to the actual questions asked- would like to see # of questions, types of questions, and approximately how long interviews took. An appendix for this would be helpful.

- **Methods for categorizing responses is appropriate.**

Reply 3: Thank you for this comment. We have incorporated the utilized interview questionnaire and informed consent in the Appendix I.

Changes 3: Please see the appendix I for the additional information regarding the question reference. We added the lines 184-185 to state the approximate duration of the conducted interviews.

Comment 4: Results

- Themes appropriately described.

- Supporting phrases accurately reflect each theme.

Reply 4: Thank you for this comment.

Changes 4: We added the lines 290 – 296 as additional data in supporting the force of purpose in the results part.

Comment 5: Discussion

- Line 421- Would not use the word “proves”- This over-states the results from a single study.
- Overall the discussion is very detailed and expands each of the 3 P’s greatly. See comments for conclusion, but would like to see how the study’s findings impact Health care workers or healthcare in general- rather than as much explanation of what each of the supporting items are for each “P”.

Reply 5: Thank you for this comment. We have followed your recommendation to restructure and reorganize the literature in the discussion part. Additional references were added to further support the explanations made in the discussion.

Changes 5: The revised version of the discussion is seen in the lines 451-536. We have discussed the importance of these findings in relation to job satisfaction, improving the quality of medical technology practice in the Philippines, and possible steps in combatting brain drain phenomenon in the country. A more comprehensive text was constructed instead of the previous discussion of the subthemes and we thought that the revised structure is more appropriate than the former.

Comment 6: Conclusion

- Summarizes the results well.
- Would like to see any limitations discussed.
- Other than the very last line- would like to see why these findings are so important.

Reply 6: Thank you for this comment. Recommendations instead of limitations of the study were added in the conclusion part to give a more positive approach in expounding the limitations of the study.

Changes 6: We have added line 568-574 to expound the importance of the findings and recommendations of the study.

Comment 7: Tables and Figures

- Table 1- the “n” should be specified at the top of the table such as you have for table 2. It appears as such on the table below the text, but not on the table within the text.
- Table 2- Less about the table- more about why the unemployed person was included- per the inclusion criteria I believe they needed to be working? This may need to be explained in the methods section

Reply 7: Thank you for this comment. The inclusion criteria made it clear that any Filipino medical technologist with 3-years of experience working in a DOH-accredited private hospital are accepted in the study. There were no criteria set whether they are currently employed or unemployed. We are after their 3 or more years of experience to sufficiently give an insight about their lived experience working as medical technologist amidst pandemic. For the “n” legend in the first table, we already fixed that part.

Changes 7: We changed that part into frequency and percentages to avoid confusion.

Comment 8: References

- 1/3 of the references are 10 years old or greater- given the prevalence of this issue, are there any sources that can be updated?

Reply 8: Thank you for this comment. We have updated the references and removed any references older than 2012.

Changes 8: Please see the reference part (Lines 605 – 776)