Collectivism and Individualism
Implications for practice based on a qualitative inquiry with Albanians in Switzerland
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Overview
• Introduction
• Relevant information about the study:
  I think of my family, therefore I am: perceptions of daily occupations of some Albanians in Switzerland
  Franziska Heigl, Astrid Kinébanian, Staffan Josephsson
• Findings
• Collectivism versus individualism
• Discussion with YOU

Introduction
• Culture influences the choice and performance of occupations (Dillard et al, 1992; Black & Wells, 2007).
• Understanding of the close interaction and relationship between culture and occupation is a prerequisite for occupational therapists’ demanded cultural competence (Dillard et al, 1992).
• Reflection on one’s own culture is the first step in understanding culture (Kinébanian & Stomph, 2009).

Need for…
• …more knowledge about the relation between culture and occupation

Purpose of study
• To increase the understanding of the interrelationship between culture and occupation by exploring the perceptions of current daily occupations of some male ethnic Albanians living in Switzerland.
• In order to attune interventions better to the needs of immigrated individuals.

Study Question
How do immigrant male Albanians doing blue-collar work in Switzerland perceive their current daily occupations?
Methods

• Semi-structured interviews with 8 healthy Muslim men of first generation Albanian immigrants living in Switzerland

• Analysis in a comparative manner followed by an interpretation

Discussion

• Collectivism (Hofstede, 2003/1991)

• Collectivist attitudes and their influence on daily occupations? (Iwama, 2003, 2004; Lim, 2004)

Collectivism versus Individualism

Collectivism

• Core unit = the group
• Individuals must fit into society.
• Individuals are fundamentally connected.
• Interdependence
• Communalism
• “Eastern”

Individualism

• Core unit = the individual
• Society promotes the well-being of individuals.
• Individuals are separate from one another.
• Independence
• Autonomy
• “Western”

Collectivism versus Individualism?

• Individualism-collectivism at the level of nations is not the same as individualism-collectivism at the levels of individuals.

• At the individual level these constructs may be conceptualized and measured as separate, not necessarily bipolar, constructs. (Bond, 2002)

• There is no support for treating individualism and collectivism as opposite types of cultures or contrasting poles on a continuum. (Fiske, 2002)

Implications for OT (1)

• Keep the collectivist attitude in one’s mind
  ➢ Reflect on your own beliefs and values
  ➢ Reflect on the experiences of your clients

Oyserman et al, 2002; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Iwama, 2005

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563

The Tower of Babel
Implications for OT (2)

- Family as a resource
  - Consider the client's well-being in his collectivist society
  - Give a "voice" to the clients, listen carefully to their thoughts and ideas about life (Black & Wells, 2007)

- Enabling clients to work and earn money

References


We have meals together so that harmony appears, and then it’s just fine. (Mr. Nexhat)
You know, I try..., everything I have ever done, I have done for my family. (Mr. Nexhet)

What are your ideas to encounter the concepts of collectivism and individualism in your daily practice?

References