

Approaches to a culturally appropriate practice: The Kawa Model in the South of Chile context

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The Kawa Model, propounded Michael Iwama, started as a criticism to the current prevailing models in the Occupational Therapy field. This model included the concept of culture as the core of the practice. Then, from the oriental point of view, this theory conceptualizes the human being joining and interacting with nature and deities.

The following hypothesis was proposed in this study, Is it possible to apply this model appropriately to the south of Chile context?

The main objective of this research was to observe the applicability of the Kawa Model in Panguipulli town, Los Ríos fourteenth Region, Chile. An exploratory research was developed during the year 2008, including research strategies such as multiple case study, ethnographic techniques, in-depth interviews, participant observation and discussion groups.

The specific objectives were oriented to the understanding of the basic concepts and the practice of the model and the observation of the application context, with the aim of finding the cultural aspects included in the users' cosmovision. Finally, an interpretation of the Kawa model was developed.

The analysis revealed different categories related to the cultural aspects included in the health agents' cosmovision interviewed during the research as well as the categories related to the model application. Due to the analysis, a connection between the concepts propounded by Iwama and the cultural aspects included in the application context was possible.

The research showed that the Kawa model is applicable in Panguipulli town due to that the basic concepts and the practice of the model are coherent with the cultural elements of the inhabitants' cosmovision.

The cultural approximation developed through the Kawa model is highly significant in the Occupational Therapy field since it increases knowlegde in an approach called Culturally Appropriate Practice, which does not force individuals paradigmatically to intervention.