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Huang-Tu Occupation Study: A study of occupational therapy theory written in Chinese for use in China

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Introduction: Misconception of occupational therapy in Mainland China due to barriers in linguistic and cultural translations of OT concepts has affected the quality of OT services and development of the profession. Culturally and linguistically appropriate theories are urgently needed.

Objectives: To develop a culturally relevant theoretical concept of occupational therapy written in Chinese for use in China.

Approach: A recontextualization approach was used by deconstructing the meaning of English terms and concepts, making sense of them within Chinese culture, and reconstructing the concepts in Chinese language and thinking. We invited over 50 practitioners to take part in workshops and interviews in 5 cities. They were encouraged to reflect on the recontextualized theory, co-construct alternatives and apply the newly learned professional reasoning in local practice. Local contexts were examined by interviewing over 50 clients in 15 hospitals/organizations. Qualitative interviews, analysis, and theorization were conducted using a reflexive and critical inquiry approach.

Results: A theoretical concept called Huang-Tu Occupation Study (OS) was developed. The Huang-Tu OS consists of three core concepts and three core skills. The core concepts are "benevolence", "everyday living", and "occupation". The core skills are "sensing", "connecting", and "engaging". The spirit of OT and traditional Chinese thinking has been integrated into each concept and skill. After learning and applying the Huang-Tu OS, practitioners have reported positive change in professional reasoning and competence.

Conclusion: The Huang-Tu OS in China has just begun. The implications of local and global OT practice, education and research will be discussed.