



# The Importance of the Environment as it Relates to Occupational Performance

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## Introduction

### Background

- Occupational performance is the result of dynamic interactions between the person, environment, and occupation (AOTA, 2020).
- Understanding these interactions is essential for providing effective, client-centered interventions in occupational therapy.

### Significance to OT Practice

- Holistic approaches that consider environmental and personal factors lead to improved client outcomes and satisfaction.
- Integrating theoretical models like PEO and MOHO into practice help address both individual and contextual challenges.

### Theoretical Frameworks

- Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model: Explains how the fit between a person, their environment, and their occupations affects performance and participation (Law et al., 1996).
- Model of Human Occupation (MOHO): Emphasizes understanding clients' motivation, habits, and performance capacity within their environments (Kielhofner, 1995).

Figure 1: Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO)

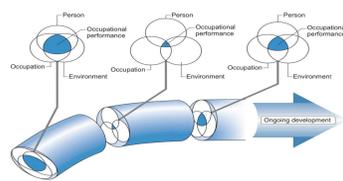
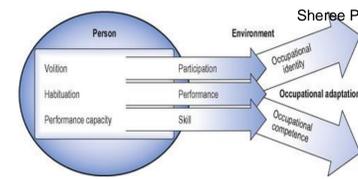


Figure 2: Model of Human Occupation (MOHO)

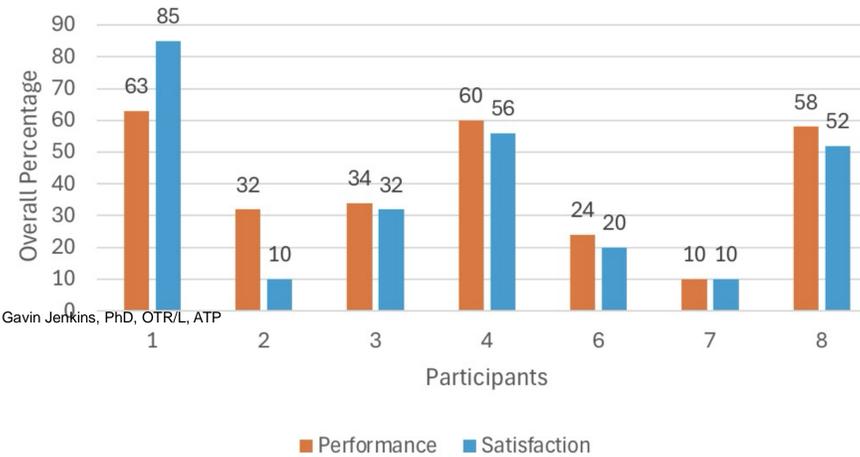


## Results

### Participants

- 43% live with a spouse
- 14% live with family members
- 14% live in an independent living facility
- 29% live alone
- 43% male
- 57% female
- Ages range from 52 to 78 years

Current Performance and Satisfaction



## Discussion continued

### Holistic Approach to Occupational Therapy

- Most participants reported supportive environments, although the potential impact of any changes could significantly affect their occupational performance and satisfaction reinforcing the need to consider the PEO & MOHO frameworks during intervention planning

### Study Limitations & Area of Improvements

- Small sample size (n=7)
- Poor recruitment with reliance on word-of-mouth
- Self-reported data
- Short duration of study

## Conclusion

### Implications

- Supports holistic approach that integrates environmental and personal factors impacting occupational performance
- Importance of evaluating environmental supports and barriers
- Reinforces need for customized alignment between person, their environment, and occupational demands through a PEO lens to optimize the fit and enable engagement in meaningful activities
- Underscores role of personal factors identified in MOHO such as motivation, physical ability, and psychological readiness

### Future Research

- Expand sample size to enhance generalizability
- Longitudinal studies conducted over extended periods to capture long term effects of environmental modifications on occupational performance
- Explore specific effects of assistive technologies or home modifications that enhance independence and satisfaction
- Compare use of PEO and MOHO models in practice to provide evidence for most effective framework

## Methods

### Participant Recruitment

- Clients from My Life OT Services were recruited over two weeks through direct invitations by therapists. Inclusion required active therapy engagement; non-English speakers and those unaffiliated with the clinic were excluded.

### Data Collection

- Participants completed the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) in a 20-45 minute session with to identify performance issues and satisfaction levels. Performance and satisfaction were rated on a 1-10 scale.
- Environmental factors were documented, including the natural/physical environment, products and technology, support and relationships, and services/systems/policies.

### Analysis

- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to identify patterns in performance and satisfaction scores across different diagnoses, focusing on how environmental factors influenced participants' occupational performance and satisfaction.

### Confidentiality

- Data were anonymized using unique codes, securely stored on a UAB-protected server, and physical copies were shredded, ensuring participant privacy and data security.

## Discussion

### Influence of Environmental Factors

- Environmental factors, such as physical space, assistive technology, and social support, played crucial roles in either supporting or inhibiting occupational performance and satisfaction
- Most participants described their living environments as supportive (n=5)
- Financial limitations related to paid assistance were noted as an inhibiting factor

### Alignment of Priorities and Environmental Context

- Participants' priorities (pain management, mobility improvement, & energy conservation) generally aligned with the environmental supports available to them
- However, three participants explicitly expressed the need for further modifications to their environment to better match their functional capabilities

### Trends in Performance and Satisfaction

- Most participants (n=6) displayed lower occupational performance and lower satisfaction suggesting decreased performance may reflect limited fit between person & their environment aligning with PEO.
- Personal factors significantly influenced satisfaction levels more so than external environmental challenges complementing MOHO

## References

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