

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CREATIVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE LIVING IN AN INNER CITY

by

Rolyn du Plessis

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

poverty, environmental / contextual factors / barriers, creative ability, creative participation, inner city, autoethnography

Numerous occupation-based models and several authors have mentioned the importance for occupational therapists of taking into account the effect of, in particular, the individual environment on people's participation in occupations, during their assessments and treatment. Recent developments within the profession, relating to the terms 'occupational deprivation,' 'occupational justice,' and 'occupational apartheid' have further urged therapists to also consider the structural environment, its effects and ways of countering those effects; not only for individuals, but for entire communities, and not only for people living with disabilities, but for *all* people. In addition, the development of the World Health Organisation's international classification of functioning, disability and health has given health care providers a useful tool for considering various aspects of the environment and their possible health consequences; though the interaction between the various factors and their effect on participation isn't clearly described.

Several experiences in communities of people living in poverty, both during my under-graduate studies and during my community service year, led me to consider the effect of environmental factors on the creative participation of people. Though the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability did acknowledge the possible effect of the environment on individuals' creative capacity, it failed in providing an explanation for what I was seeing. Du Toit had suggested that the effects of the environment on people should be thoroughly tested and other authors seemed to agree. Thus, this autoethnographic research study aimed to explore how internal and external factors impacted on the creative participation of people living in an inner city slum. Drawing from the experiences of a purposive, illustrative and opportunistic sample, and through passive- and participant

observations, I took a glimpse into the sub-culture within, and the perceived impact of the environment on people's creative participation, making no claims on generalisation.

The results of this study indicate that occupational therapists have underestimated the effect of the environment in terms of the range of factors that have an effect on people's creative participation, the complexity of the interplay between the structural- and individual environment and the importance of the perceived environment.