Productivity and Affective Responses to Work Tasks and Leisure Activities in Type A and Type B Individuals

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PRODUCTIVITY AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO WORK TASKS AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN TYPE A AND TYPE B INDIVIDUALS

by

Susan Jean Paske

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science Department of Occupational Therapy

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan December 1988
This study was designed to determine if different personality types respond differently to an activity presented as either work or leisure. A Short Measure of the Type A Personality (Vickers, 1980), a measure of whether an individual tends to be Type A or Type B personality, was given to 30 male and 30 female college students who then participated in a planting activity, presented as either a work task or a leisure activity. Productivity was measured by number of pottings, and affective responses in the areas of evaluation, power, and action were determined by Osgood's Short Form Semantic Differential (OSD) (Osgood, May, & Miron, 1975). No significant correlations were found between personality type and productivity or OSD scores in either the work or leisure conditions. The work group produced significantly more pottings than the leisure group. This topic is theoretically significant to occupational therapy in that such information can help in the structuring of therapeutic activities.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express appreciation to the following people for their contributions to this research project: David Nelson, Doris Smith, and Shirley Lukens, my research advisors; and Beth L. Frank, Maria McCarty, Heather M. McKenzie, Julie N. Schmitt, and Sarah VanHoooser, my research assistants.

Susan Jean Paske
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INTRODUCTION

Work and leisure are key elements of concern to occupational therapy theory and practice. Work was defined by Mosey (1986) as "an instrumental activity" involving "compelling material reasons"; it is a "formal activity" that is "limited by time, place, and structural organization" (p. 71). By contrast, through leisure, according to Mosey, a person "seeks meaning in life," "ideals for which to strive," "physical and emotional health," "freedom," "self-knowledge," and feeling "wanted by" others (p. 85). Mosey went on to say that leisure is "a time when one is free from family and other social responsibilities, activities of daily living, and work" (p. 85). She also stated that "choice and involvement in leisure activities are motivated by enjoyment and personal satisfaction" (p. 85). Together with self-care, work and leisure are components of occupational performance as reported by Reed and Sanderson (1983).

It is a fundamental element of occupational therapy that people with different personalities respond differently to different activities. For example, Mosey (1976) discussed "the private self" (p. 10) as one facet of man's "complicated nature" (p. 7). This "private self," in part, determines the value or importance each individual
places on different activities. Each person has his or her own unique "private self" which is "located within the individual" (p. 10). Though each individual is unique, different individuals may be grouped together in terms of temperament or personality. A person with a particular personality type may have a tendency to react to a given activity in a somewhat predictable way.

One personality type can be labeled "Type A." This has been described as a behavioral syndrome with a particular constellation of behaviors and attitudes including "extremes of competitiveness, striving for achievement, aggressiveness (although sometimes stringently repressed), haste, impatience, restlessness, hyperalertness, explosiveness of speech, tenseness of facial musculature, and feelings of being under the pressure of time and challenge of responsibility" (Zyzanski & Jenkins, 1970, p. 781). Glass (1977) further described the Type A person as craving power and recognition, having few sources of gratification other than job-related ones, showing compulsiveness about getting things accomplished, being easily aroused to anger by people and things, and believing that one can overcome any obstacle with sufficient effort. Burnam, Pennebaker, and Glass (1975) found that Type A's performed at near maximum capacity both with and without time deadlines.

Another personality type, labeled "Type B," lacks the
Type A pattern (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Jenkins, Rosenman, & Zyzanski, 1974). These individuals are more relaxed, easygoing, satisfied, and unhurried (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1984) than Type A individuals. Glass (1977) further described the Type B person as having little evidence of chronic time urgency, having a relaxed pattern of gestures, having unhurried movements, being not easily angered, and not showing an intense desire to compete. It must also be mentioned that Type B individuals in many instances exhibit some behavior traits characterized as Type A, and vice versa (Pelletier, 1977). However, authors such as Pelletier (1977) have maintained that people tend to fall into categories of Type A, Intermediate, or Type B patterns.

In studies conducted comparing Type A and Type B individuals, it has been found that: (1) Type A's signaled the lapse of one minute sooner than Type B's, thus showing impatience (Burnam et al., 1975); (2) fatigue ratings of Type A's were lower than those of Type B's, suggesting that Type A's suppress their perception of fatigue in order to be more likely to gain mastery over the environment (Carver, Coleman, & Glass, 1976); (3) Type A's showed higher pulse rates and blood pressure in response to threat to self-esteem than Type B's (Pittner & Houston, 1980); and (4) Type A students reported desiring and achieving higher GPAs than Type B's (Rainey, 1985).
Type A individuals "clearly value working or doing something useful over relaxation, leisure, or cultural activities" (Burke & Weir, 1980, p. 171). Tang and Baumeister (1984) completed a study of the effect of task labels on task preference and found that subjects chose to perform the task most when the label of that task led them to perceive the task in a way that corresponded to something that they valued. In this same study, people who endorsed the work ethic spent more time on the task when it was labeled as work, as opposed to leisure. According to a study conducted by Burke and Weir (1980), Type A individuals prefer keeping active and busy on the job. Type A's tend to work more hours per week, and travel more days per year than Type B's. Type A's are also more persistent and enduring than Type B's (Carver et al., 1976; Matthews & Brunson, 1979). They show upward striving and pride in work (Burke & Weir, 1980).

Friedman and Rosenman (1974) stated that Type A's are unwilling to spend time leisurely pondering over something. Burke and Deszca (1984) stated that Type A's cannot enjoy the tranquility associated with leisure and relaxation as can Type B's. Becker and Byrne (1984) found that Type A's spend less time in leisure activities than Type B's, and that Type A's describe their time away from work as less enjoyable than Type B's. In a study by Tang and Baumeister (1984), subjects who agreed with the work
ethic, as Type A's do according to Burke and Weir (1980), did not seem to be as motivated to perform an activity labeled as leisure as subjects who had low agreement with the work ethic; however, it is important to recognize that the difference between the means was not statistically significant. Jenkins (1979) stated that Type A's are not as likely as Type B's to derive gratification from sources such as hobbies, artistic activities, and cultural activities. Hurry sickness, or being impatient and always in a race against the clock, many times "pervades the whole life style of the Type A individual and extends even into his leisure time . . . his competition with the clock is unrelieved" (Pelletier, 1977, p. 126). Pelletier (1977) also states that for Type A individuals, "there is no time for genuine leisure" (p. 127).

In a study conducted by Tang (1986), Type B's chose to participate in an activity labeled as leisure more often than they chose to participate in that same activity labeled as work. Tang also found that Type B's spent less time on a work activity than did Type A's.

Since the Type B person tends to be relaxed, easy-going, and unhurried, it can be predicted in our culture that a Type B individual will relax and enjoy most leisure time. Pelletier (1977) stated, "The Type B generally values his leisure for being just that--a time when he can relax without guilt" (p. 130).
Although Type A's can be predicted to work harder than Type B's, it is hard to predict how the two will compare when the same activity is labeled leisure instead of work. Assessing productivity of persons involved in an activity or task will help to determine how extensively each participated in the activity, and measuring affective responses will help determine how each felt about the activity.

The occupational therapist can use such data to assist in the structuring of activities to make them more therapeutic and appropriate for the personality type of the client who is being treated. The data will also help the therapist to determine whether or not modifications of the activity may be useful. For instance in a clinical setting, the same activity could possibly be presented as a work task or as a leisure activity, depending on the affective response and productivity of the person in these types of activities.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were differences between Type A individuals and Type B individuals for work tasks and for leisure activities. The relationship between level of productivity and affective responses as measured by OSD was assessed.

It was hypothesized that personality type would be a positive predictor of productivity in the work condition (high scores in the direction of Type A would predict high
work productivity). It was also hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between personality type and the evaluation of leisure (Type B people would evaluate leisure highly). Nondirectional hypotheses were used to test for the main effects between leisure and work.
METHOD

Subjects

The 60 subjects in this study were non-occupational therapy undergraduate students who were recruited by the researcher on the campus of Western Michigan University (WMU) in Kalamazoo, Michigan. A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to gather data on age, sex, year in school, and major for all subjects. Thirty males and 30 females participated in the study, with an age range of 18 to 28 and a mean of 20.6 years old. The subjects included 15 freshmen, 17 sophomores, 12 juniors, and 16 seniors. Areas of study as designated by the student included: Administrative Systems, Agriculture, Art Education, Aviation Technology (4), Biology, Biomedical Sciences, Business (3), Communications (3), Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Electrical Engineering, Elementary Education (5), English (2), Exercise Physiology, Geography, History, Industrial Design, Manufacturing Engineering, Marketing, Math Education, Physicians Assistant, Political Science, Pre-OT, Professional Pilot, Psychology (11), Secondary Education Curriculum (2), Social Work, Spanish, Special Education, and Tourism and Travel (2).

From the original sample (of 62 subjects), two subjects' data were discarded because one subject remained in
the room longer than the 10 minutes called for by the
design and one subject left the room before the 10 minute
time period had elapsed.

Instruments

A Short Measure of the Type A Personality, developed
by Vickers (1980), was used in this study based on its
previous use to determine Type A personalities (Caplan,
Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1980). The index is a
brief, self-completed, 9-item scale which has responses in
the form of a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "very
true of me" to "not at all true of me." It contains items
such as this one: "I guess there are people who can be
nonchalant or easy going about their work, but I am not
one of them" (Vickers, 1980, p. 219). The possible range
of scores is 9 to 63. A review of the literature using
this scale shows that some studies assign a score of 7 to
"very true of me" and a score of 1 to "not at all true of
me" (Caplan, Cobb, & French, 1975; Caplan & Jones, 1975;
Tang, 1986) suggesting that high scores indicate Type A
behavior traits. Other studies, however, state that low
scores indicate Type A behavior traits (Byrne, 1981;
Pittner & Houston, 1980). In the present study, the
numbers were set up as shown in Appendix B. The numbers
actually circled by subjects were then transposed so that,
instead of the low numbers indicating Type A behavior,
they indicated Type B traits in order to compare the resulting means with those that Tang (1986) found. In this way, a continuous measurement of whether an individual tends to be a Type A or a Type B personality was obtained. This scale has an internal consistency (estimated alpha coefficient) of approximately .80 and has a high correlation (.90) with the longer scale (Vickers, 1980). Tang (1986) completed a test-retest reliability on this short form using 50 undergraduate college students, which resulted in a test-retest reliability rate of .87. In terms of concurrent validity, it correlates significantly with the Jenkins Activity Survey (JAS), (r = .80) (French & Caplan, 1969), another measure of Type A behavior.

Affective responses were measured by Osgood's Short Form Semantic Differential (OSD) (Osgood, May, & Miron, 1975), and used here just as Nelson, Thompson, and Moore (1982) used it in their study. This instrument was used in previous occupational therapy research studies to measure affective responses to different activities in a quantitative way, producing scores for three factors: evaluation, power, and action (Carter, Nelson, & Duncombe, 1983; Kremer, Nelson, & Duncombe, 1984; Nelson et al., 1982). Evaluation is a measure of the subjects' positive or negative feelings toward the activity. Power is a measure of the subjects' feelings about the forcefulness of the
activity. Action is a measure of the sense of speed or movement the subject assigns to the activity (Carter et al., 1983; Kremer et al., 1984; Nelson et al., 1982). Subjects rated their responses to the activity on a 7-point scale between paired adjectives such as nice-awful; powerless-powerful; alive-dead. See Appendix C for a copy of this scale.

Procedure

The researcher recruited volunteers, one at a time, from the campus of Western Michigan University (WMU). After agreeing to participate in the study, the subjects entered a room on campus with the research assistant, signed a consent form (see Appendix D for a copy of this form), filled out a questionnaire, and completed A Short Measure of the Type A Personality. He or she was then told to read instructions for the planting activity which had been previously set up as either a work task or a leisure activity.

The research assistant remained in the room until the subject was finished reading the planting instructions, and then answered any questions that the subject had. When all questions were answered, the assistant left the room. After 10 minutes had elapsed, the research assistant re-entered the room and gave the subject the OSD, with an instruction sheet, and answered any questions that
the subject had about this scale.

After the subject was finished with the OSD, the research assistant informed him or her that he or she could keep one of the pots, and asked the subject not to discuss this study with anyone. The assistant then counted and recorded the number of pots in which seeds had been planted, including the one taken home if the subject chose to keep one.

**Manipulation of Variables**

The work or leisure condition for the first subject was determined by means of the research assistant flipping a coin. The next individual was assigned the opposite condition as the preceding subject. For the third subject a coin again was used, and the fourth subject was assigned to the opposite condition, etc. This pattern was used for all individuals. Both the subjects in the work and leisure conditions used identical materials and supplies in order to complete the planting project, thus keeping both conditions comparable.

In the planting activity, the independent variables of work and leisure were manipulated in three ways: instructions, aprons, and bulletin boards. This is similar to the way in which Tang (1986) manipulated these variables in his study. Tang labeled an identical activity as either a work related task or a leisure oriented
activity in order to manipulate the subjects' perception of the activity as work or leisure.

For the work condition, a typed set of instructions for the subject was on the table. After being referred to these instructions, subjects were urged to feel free to ask any questions they may have. The instructions read as follows:

Imagine that you are working in a horticultural setting on a work task for the next 10 minutes. Your task is to plant pea seeds.

First, you have been told to place soil in the pot up to the first indentation on the pot (as shown by sample pot). Then, you need to place one, and only one seed approximately 1/2 inch below the soil. Then, you must water the plant with two squirts of water. Afterwards, write the date on a white plastic marker, and place it in the soil. Your job description states that you are to complete the procedure with one pot before proceeding to the next pot. If the work area gets messy, don't clean it up during this 10 minute period.

You are to do this work the same as a greenhouse employee would do it. You should plant a pea seed in as many pots as you can. Work hard!

For the work condition also, subjects were asked to wear an apron which was identical to a garment worn in a horticultural setting to protect clothing. It was a solid green color. For this condition, also, a bulletin board containing eight pictures depicting people working in a greenhouse/horticultural setting was put up in front of the work area. A saying at the top of this board read "Safety comes first in the workplace."
For the leisure condition, a typed set of instructions for the subject was on the table. After being referred to these instructions, subjects were urged to feel free to ask any questions they may have. The instructions read as follows:

Imagine that you are enjoying yourself in a home setting in a leisure activity for the next 10 minutes. You have chosen to plant pea seeds.

First, you place soil in the pot up to the first indentation on the pot (as shown by sample pot). Then you place one, and only one seed approximately 1/2 inch below the soil. Next you water the plant with two squirts of water. Afterwards, you write the date on a white plastic marker, and place it in the soil. You have decided to complete the procedure with one pot before proceeding to the next pot. If your leisure area gets messy, there is no need to clean it up during this 10 minute period.

Imagine that you are a person who enjoys gardening. Enjoy yourself as you plant a pea seed in as many pots as you like.

For the leisure condition subjects were also asked to wear a home-made apron similar to one that would be worn in a setting at home to protect clothing. It was black and white and contained flowers. It was identical in size to the one worn in the work condition. In addition, a bulletin board containing eight pictures depicting people planting plants in a home/leisure setting was put up in front of the activity area. These pictures were identical to the work pictures in terms of both size and location on the board. A saying at the top of the board read "Happiness is an enjoyable leisure activity."
RESULTS

Contrary to expectations, there was no significant correlation between productivity (number of pots prepared) and personality type in either the leisure condition $r(28) = .13, p > .05$ or the work condition $r(28) = -.19, p > .05$, as shown by Pearson correlation tests. Also there were no significant correlations between personality type and affective meanings of the activity (see Table 1).

Table 1

Personality Type Correlated to Productivity, Evaluation, Power, and Action under Work and Leisure Conditions

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<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.15</td>
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The mean number of pots produced in the leisure condition was 13.0 (SD = 7.0), and the mean for the work condition was 20.7 (SD = 4.6). This difference was statistically significant, $t(58) = 4.99, p < .001$. There were no significant differences in evaluation, power, and action between work and leisure conditions (see Table 2).
Table 2

Productivity (Number of Pots Planted) and Affective Meanings in the Work and Leisure Conditions

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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leisure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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</table>
DISCUSSION

Type of personality (Type A or Type B) was not a statistically significant predictor of the number of pots planted in either the work or leisure conditions. The implications of and reasons for this are discussed in the following paragraphs.

One possible reason that no significance was found may have been that Type A personalities do not see gardening as work if this task is not presently a part of their vocational pursuits. These individuals may only work hard on tasks that they perceive to be close to those that they actually perform on the job, or ones for which an external reward is earned for accurate and efficient completion of the task.

Another possible reason is that Type A or Type B characteristics may not be exhibited in an activity that is only 10 minutes long. It may take longer for these traits to have a significant impact on the task at hand. Thus, a longer activity may have shown different results.

Also, possible limitations may exist in the Short Measure of the Type A Personality (Vickers, 1980). Many other studies using this instrument (Byrne, 1981; Caplan et al., 1975; Caplan & Jones, 1975) followed it with a questionnaire or another self-reported scale instead of an
activity. In the present study, this instrument did not accurately predict how subjects responded to a subsequent planting activity. It is possible that this index may not accurately predict real life situations. It may not measure "true" differences between people. Or it could be that college students using this scale may not self-report their actual personality, but rather the personality that they would like to be, or would like to be seen as having.

No significant correlations existed between Type A and Type B individuals in terms of the OSD (Osgood et al., 1975) measurements of evaluation, power, and action for the work and leisure conditions. Reasons why correlations were not found here include the same ones as those presented for lack of significant correlations between productivity and personality type.

Although it makes sense theoretically to predict that individuals with different personality types will respond differently to different activities, this has not been shown in several research studies designed to detect these differences. For example, Macijunas (1986), in an unpublished manuscript, studied the relationship between introversion and extraversion on individual versus group activity. Although differences in the results of the score for the factor of action using the OSD (Osgood et al., 1975) were significant, expected interactions between personality type and experimental condition were not
significant.

Also Riffel (1986), in an unpublished thesis, studied the effect of internal versus external locus of control on a stenciling activity, presented as either creative or copied. Contrary to prior expectations for this study, no significant interactions between the two types of stenciling activities and the personality factors were found.

In the present study, a significant difference was found between productivity and the conditions of work and leisure. That is, overall, subjects prepared more pots when the planting activity was called work as opposed to being called leisure. It is an important finding that otherwise identical activities, different only in being labeled work or leisure elicit different responses from subjects in terms of productivity. Occupational therapists can use this information to structure or modify activities accordingly.

It was also found that subjects in the leisure condition overall scored the activity higher on all three areas of evaluation, power, and action than individuals in the work condition, although the means were not significantly different. This shows that attaching a label, such as work or leisure, to an activity may elicit somewhat different affective responses in individuals. Occupational therapists can use this information, also, to structure or modify activities accordingly.
Two possible limitations of this study exist. These include the duration of the activity, as well as the possibility that subjects may not have followed exact directions. Type B individuals working on a 10-minute work task may have found the task novel enough to keep their interest. This novelty might have prevented them from exhibiting their Type B traits. A task lasting for a longer period of time, such as a few hours or a few weeks, could possibly become routine enough to these individuals to allow them to exhibit their Type B traits.

Future related research could be done in which an activity such as stenciling or food preparation is involved. These activities would be appropriate because in real life, both of them are routinely done by individuals both in a work and in a leisure setting, and therefore they could easily be set up as either work tasks or leisure activities in such a way as to make these conditions realistic and believable to subjects. A different population, such as amputees or stroke victims, could be used in order to test the hypotheses on individuals more closely resembling those seen in occupational therapy treatment settings. Research studies showing how different personality types respond differently to different activities would contribute significantly to the theoretical base of occupational therapy.
CONCLUSION

Significant correlations between personality type, level of productivity, and affective responses were not found in a leisure activity or a work task. It could be that Type A and B individuals do not behave as hypothesized, or that college students do not accurately report their own personalities, or that the activities were not perceived as they were meant to be, or that Type A and B personality traits take longer than 10 minutes to exhibit themselves. Although it makes sense theoretically to predict that individuals with different personality types will respond differently to different activities, this has not been shown in several activity-oriented research studies designed to detect these differences.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Questionnaire
QUESTIONNAIRE

The information on this questionnaire will be kept confidential.

Age:

Year in school:

Sex:

WMU major:
Appendix B

Short Measure of the Type A Personality
(Adapted from Vickers, 1980)
Instructions: Circle the number that you think most closely corresponds to your personality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very true of me.</th>
<th>Not at all true of me.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: In data analysis, the numbers were transposed, so that high scores reflected Type A behavior, and low scores indicated Type B traits. (This note did not appear on the scale while data was collected.)
Appendix C

Osgood’s Short Form Semantic Differential
With Instructions
INSTRUCTIONS

Please fill out the attached page. On this page are twelve pairs of words. Between each pair are seven spaces. Mark an "X" in one of the seven spaces (make twelve "X" marks on the page). Choose the space to be marked with an "X" depending on how well the word on the left compares to the word on the right in describing the activity you have just completed.

This is a correct way of marking:

```
: : : X : : :
```

This is an incorrect way of marking:

```
: : : X : : :
```

Please make sure to mark between the dots.

There are no right or wrong answers.
Appendix D

Informed Consent Form
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Fellow Student,

I am a second year graduate student in Occupational Therapy at WMU. I am involved in research for my master's degree and am seeking volunteers. My interest is in finding out information on how different types of people feel about different types of activities.

You will be asked to fill out two survey forms. Afterwards, you will be involved in a planting activity. A questionnaire will be given to you to fill out afterwards. All information that I collect will be numerically coded and confidential so that no one will be able to identify you in any way.

There is no risk in participating in this study. You will be assisting with research and will contribute to a more precise understanding of activities used by occupational therapists. You are free to stop participating in this research if you choose at any time, without penalty to you. If you have any questions about this study, feel free to call me at 388-2005.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Susan Paske

I have read and understood all the above information. All of my questions have been answered, and I agree to participate in the study.

--------signature--------  ---------date---------
BIBLIOGRAPHY


and Social Psychology, 33, 460-466.


