

# The SpiCHO Complex

A Theoretical Framework for Spirito-Cultural Human Occupation

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# A web of interdependence.

The **SpiCHO** framework captures the interconnected relationship between Spirituality, Culture, and Occupation.

It is theorized on the premise that these three elements do not exist in isolation. They form a complex web of relationships that influence one another in multiple ways.

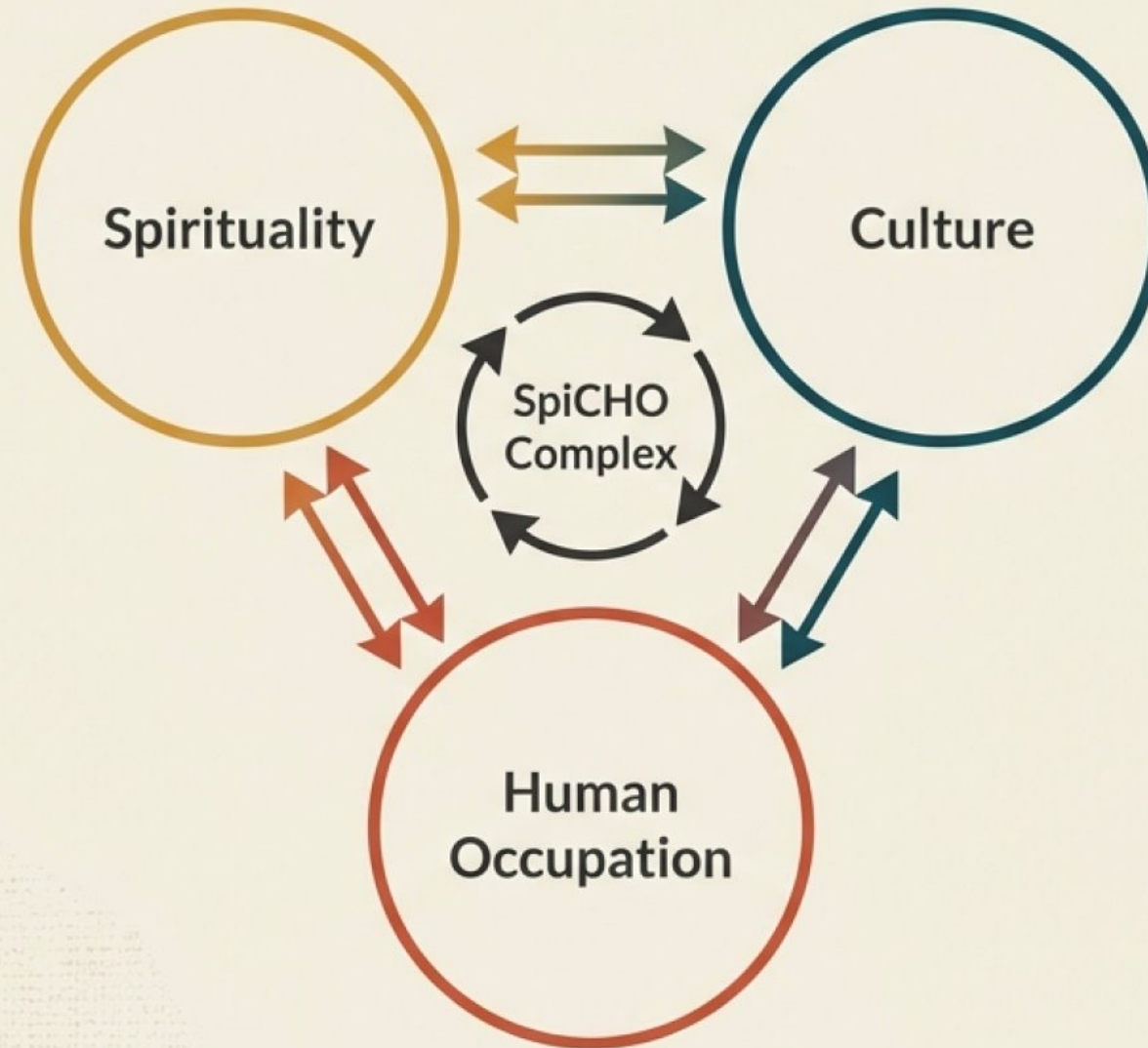


# **Rooted in the Ghanaian perspective.**

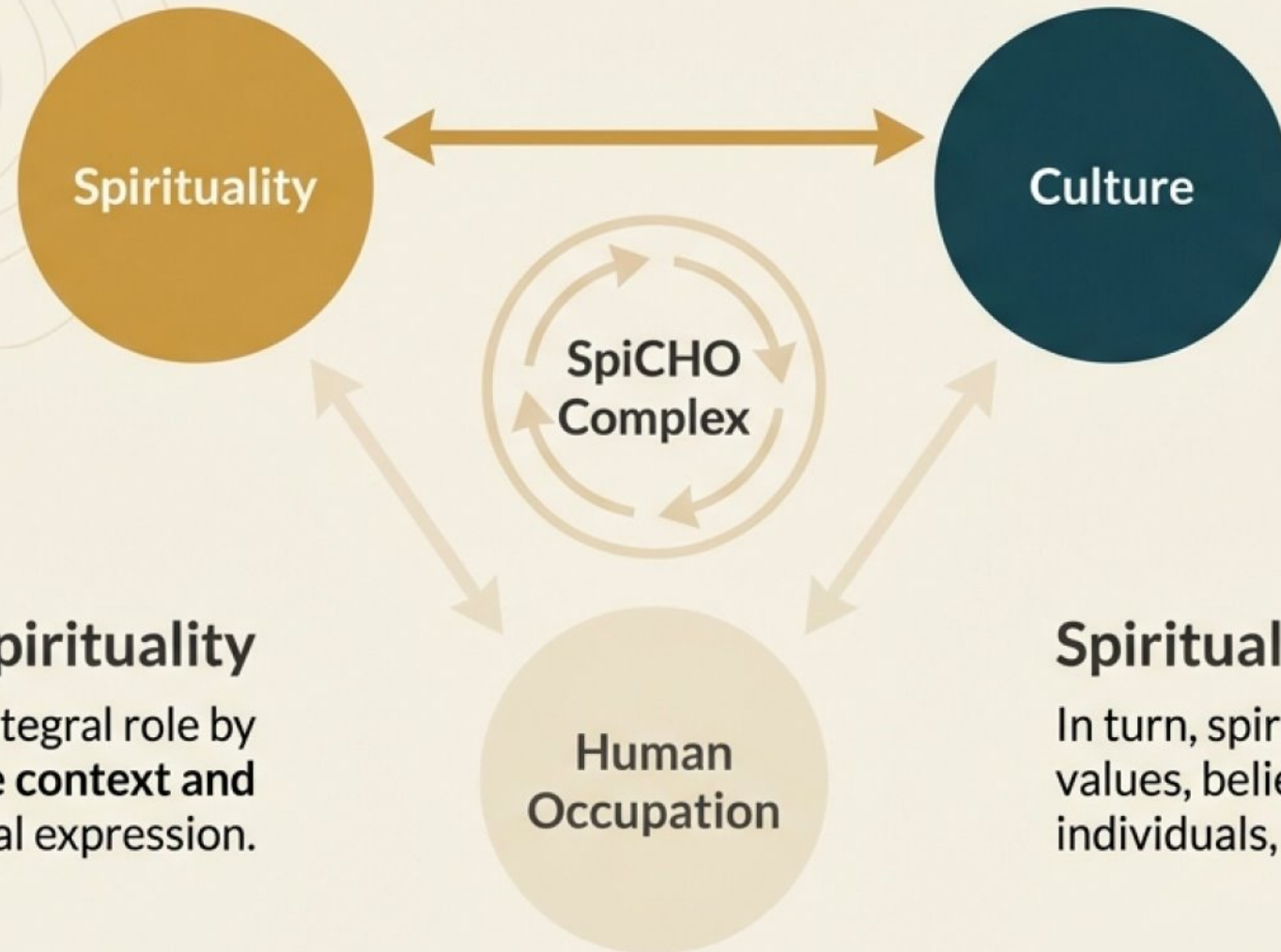
This framework was conceptualized by developers drawing from their lived experiences as individuals who 'do' in Ghana.

The developers adopted 'embodied (self) reflexivity' (Katzman, 2015) to craft the framework, blending their personal experience with their scholarly activities in occupational therapy.

# The Triad of Experience.



# Culture provides the context; Spirituality shapes the values.



## Culture → Spirituality

Culture plays an integral role by providing **the context and language** for spiritual expression.

## Spirituality → Culture

In turn, spirituality shapes the values, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals, groups, and societies.

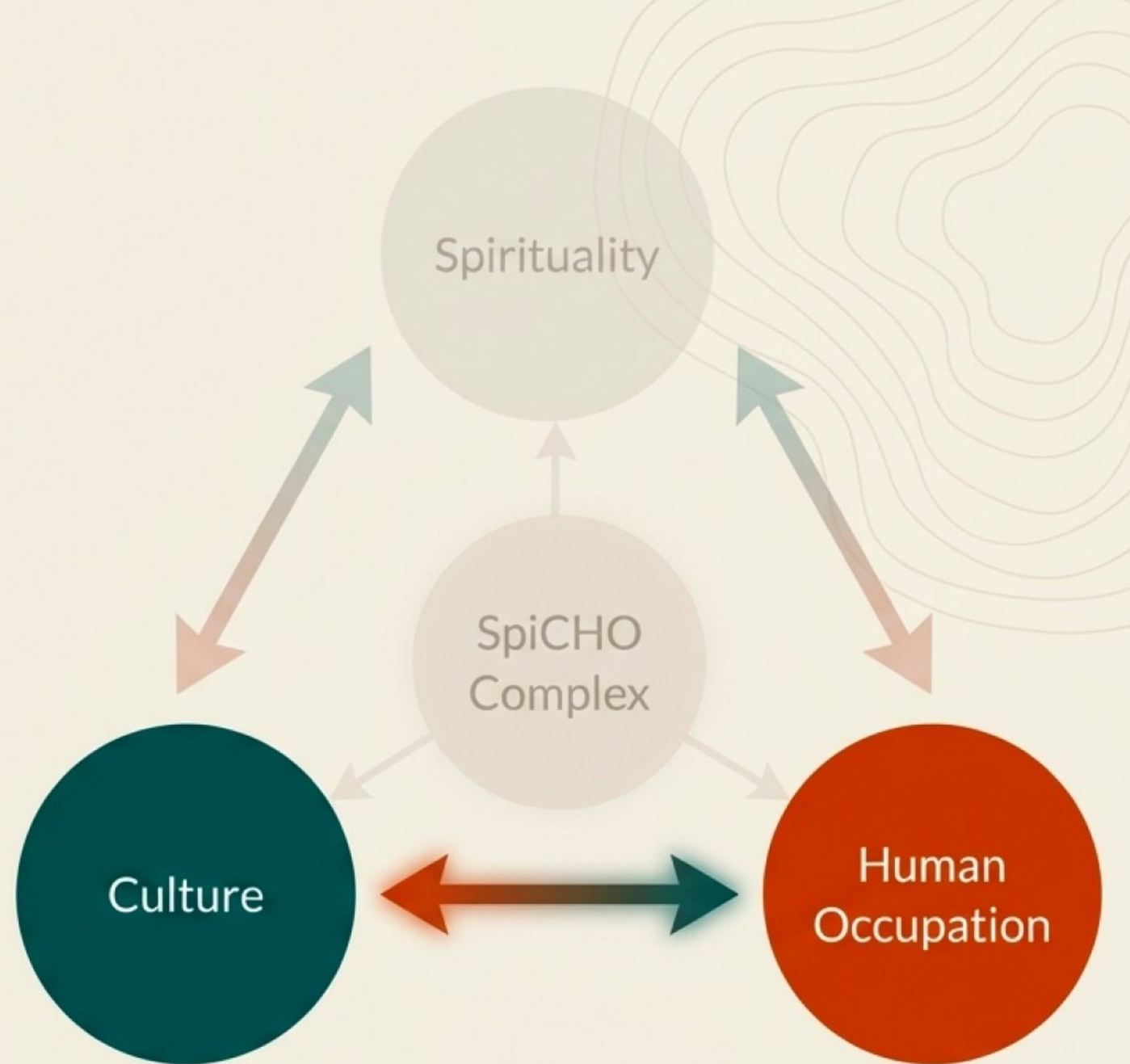


## Meaning, purpose, and the medium of expression.

- **Spirituality → Occupation:** Spirituality provides a framework for understanding the meaning and purpose of an occupation.
- **Occupation → Spirituality:** In turn, occupation serves as a medium for spiritual expression.

# Reinforcing and challenging norms through action.

- **Culture → Occupation:** Our occupations are shaped by cultural beliefs, values, and practices.
- **Occupation → Culture:** Action is not passive; occupation can shape cultural beliefs by either reinforcing or challenging established cultural norms.





The Whole is greater than the sum of its parts

The SpiCHO Complex is essential for a holistic understanding of ourselves and our place in the world.

**Promoting health and wellbeing through occupation requires an understanding of this specific complex within the patient's specific context.**



# The Case of Kwaku

**Subject:** A middle-aged Ghanaian man and stroke survivor.

**The Conflict:** Kwaku cannot perform essential self-care tasks (bathing, dressing, grooming) independently.

**The Priority:** Despite these deficits, he prioritizes ironing his 20-year-old daughter's clothing in his occupational therapy regimen.



**The Past:** Kwaku makes a promise to his mother to iron her clothes until old age.



**2 Years Ago:** Kwaku's mother passes away.



**Present:** Kwaku irons his daughter's clothes.

# The Promise

Kwaku named his daughter after his deceased mother.

He views actions toward his daughter as fulfilling his commitment to the matriarch.

He has been ironing the daughter's clothes since the mother's death to honor this vow.

# Deconstructing the occupation of ironing

## Spirituality

Kwaku believes naming his daughter after his mother maintains a spiritual connection. The daughter is a vessel to honor the mother's spirit.

## Culture

The act of naming (paying tribute to memory) and the preservation of family tradition.

## Occupation

The physical act of ironing is connected to his understanding of fulfilling a promise.



## **A symbolic and meaningful occupation.**

Kwaku sees ironing not as a household chore, but as a form of ongoing service to his deceased mother.

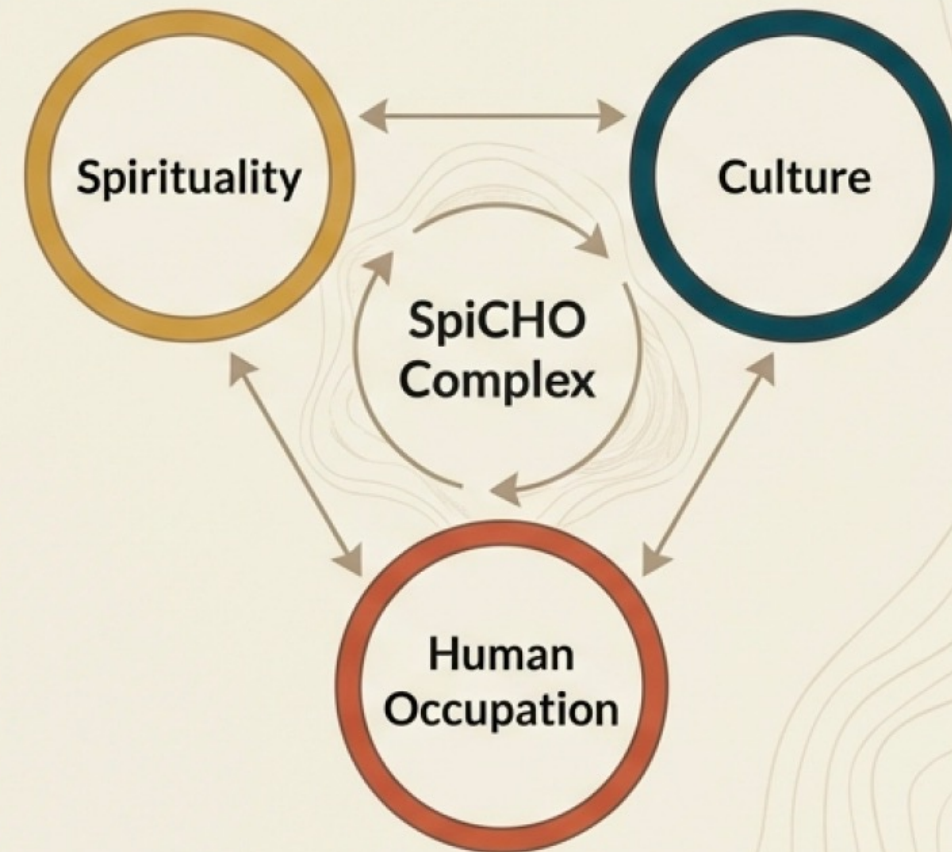
**The act goes beyond practical purpose. It is deeply interconnected with his spirituality and culture. To treat Kwaku effectively, the therapist must view the iron as a tool for spiritual fulfillment, not just a domestic appliance.**

# Expanding the collective understanding

The SpiCHO complex offers a non-Western perspective on the nature of “doing.” It broadens Occupational Science by proving that health promotion cannot succeed without navigating the patient’s specific Spirito-Cultural web.

# Summary of the SpiCHO Framework

1. **Interdependence:** Spirituality, Culture, and Occupation are inseparable.
2. **Reciprocity:** Each element shapes and is shaped by the others (Context, Meaning, Norms).
3. **Application:** Effective therapy requires “embodied reflexivity” to understand these connections in the patient’s life.



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