

Good essay on empowerment theory and field theory

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Introduction

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory is a process by which individuals and groups access their resources in order to control their lives better. It is based on the concept that, a person or a group of people gains a voice after making decisions that affect them, and the social structure that either discourages or encourages that development. Empowerment theory is used in research as a way to explain and predict the character and behavior of a group or an individual within social constraints in decision outcomes. After gaining accessing to their resources, people gain the ability to attain full potential. This theory originated from the works of Friere and Solomon. The concept of this theory is that, individuals affect their own social well being. It believes that humans strive and work for the basics in life, and other issues fall into play. The empowerment approach has been proven to be effective to groups and individuals (Carl, 2009, p. 214).

Field Theory

Field theory was developed by Kurt Lewin in 1951. According to this theory, a group should be viewed as a body that moves through its immediate environment to pursue its goals. It stresses the significance of probing the relationship of the group to its environs. Application of the field theory for consulting and organizational change requires necessary acceptance of its central point. People, their conditions and surroundings entirely depend on each other. Field theory puts emphasis on ways in which groups should function in order to attain goals. It states that groups progress or fail due to

positive and negative forces that act upon them externally and internally. These forces may help groups to progress or hinder them from advancing. Cohesion is an important concept in field theory. The way in which group members value and respect one another is the determinant of progress or retreat of the group (Smith, 2003, p. 99).

Empowerment Theory and Field Theory Contributions to Understanding Groups

Field theory puts emphasis on how groups function in order to attain designated goals. It suggests that groups experiencing various rewards, positive changes and encouragements, have a likelihood of progressing. However, groups facing negative forces have a high possibility of failing if they do not counterbalance the negative. Valences are the forces that pull or push groups away or toward participation and involvement (Kirst, 2013, p. 45). These forces are the determinants of success or failure of the groups. Cohesion is an important concept in field theory. It is a concept composed of forces that affect and encourage individuals to stick to their groups. Some of the positive forces affecting groups include; how group members enjoy the commitment of members, and how members like each other's company. There are also negative forces that could affect membership of groups such as, pressures on members and inconvenient meeting times. Ideally, every group has a leader, field theory views leadership as being laissez-faire, authoritarian or democratic. Arguably, group members can resent to an authoritarian leader who takes control of group. Issues such as these can hinder the group from achieving its goals and they could cause some members to quit the group. Subsequently, unlike an authoritarian, a

democratic leader maximizes the potential of every member in the group. Democratic leaders dwell on positive issues that benefit the group such as; emphasizing on open discussions and sharing of ideas. Field theory stresses the functions of every unit in the group. This theory suggests that, the manner in which a group functions is the main focus.

Empowerment theory has a different view on the functions of a group all together. It suggests that, once groups have access to their resources, they gain the ability to attain full potential. Every group has its goals and visions to fulfill. As a process of increasing political, interpersonal or personal power, empowerment theory creates a platform to enable groups take action and improve their situation. It assesses how members of a group can empower and help each other by providing support, mutual aid, giving feedback and information within a group context. It lays a platform where members of a group can express themselves; seek clarification and identification and also create bonds. In addition, empowerment in a group involves socialization and multicultural understanding. Empowerment theory backs the idea of civility and a common understanding.

Empowerment theory gives mutual and authoritative support to groups. It states that members of a group, and its leader should strive to be sensitive, recognize and appreciate any differences among members of a group. For instance, heterogeneous groups can identify and empower different approaches to resolve issues in the group, sources of diversity within the group, and the potential for multicultural and bicultural socialization of group members. Use of stereotypes and assumptions can disrupt empowerment and cohesion in the group. Empowerment theory is used to address

empowerment issues in groups in order to create conducive environment for mutual understanding.

Field and Empowerment Theory Strengths and Weaknesses for Assessing Groups

Strengths of empowerment theory are wide ranging. Its major strength is its ability to assess the situation in a group such as, progress and regress. It has the capability of evaluating the potential of the group, powers and rights of every group member. It is used on programs to foster self determination and improvement. Its ability to employ both quantitative and qualitative methodologies empowers evaluation in various capacities. Empowerment theory enables individuals and groups to help themselves and improve their programs using reflection and some form of self-evaluation. Several realistic steps are required to assess programs. These steps enable individuals and groups to take stock, and determine the stand of the program, focus on establishing goals and the direction of the program. In addition, helps people to develop good strategies to accomplish program goals and objectives. Lastly, empowerment theory helps program participants to choose the type of evidence that is required to document credibility of the progress

(Raymaker, 2013, p. 412).

Empowerment theory has weakness too. Its major weakness is its inability to spot and determine the actual hitches in groups. Mutual exclusivity in groups is very common, consequently, empowerment theory is destined to enhance the empowerment of evaluation process, but in most cases it fails to identify these hindrances. Secondly, there are not measures to determine the progress and growth of a group. It appears an uphill task to determine the

best method of assessing success and growth of an individual or group. Field theory is ideal in identifying mutual being of members of a group. It puts emphasis on ways in which groups should function in order to attain goals. It states that groups progress or fail due to positive and negative forces that act upon them externally and internally. Since people and their surrounding depend closely on each other, applying field theory for consulting and organizational change is ideal in developing acceptance of the central premises. In addition, it leads groups to conclude that the pull to recreate unsuccessful programs comes from forces within the field. However, there are a number of weaknesses in this theory. There are no criteria for assessing program progress. Similarly, it does not give recommendations and procedures of eliminating unnecessary programs in groups.

Compatibility of Field and Empowerment Theories with Social Work Values and Ethics, With Regard to Diversity and Social Justice

People come from different backgrounds, religions and ethnicities. An individual is different from another. Every individual is characterized by his/her abilities to conform to stipulated guidelines. A person or a group of people gains a voice after making decisions that affects them, and the social structure that either discourages or encourages that development. Following these guidelines, empowerment theory demands that social work values and ethnicity are considered in setting guidelines of a group. As a social theory, empowerment theory creates principles that have to be followed in order to achieve objectives and goals.

Field theory states that a group should be viewed as a body that moves

through its immediate environment to pursue its goals. Consequently, in order to attain success, every group member is expected to comply with the guidelines and rules in the group. Additionally, respecting values and desires of every member of the group is of the essence. Without mutual understanding, efforts to attain a set goal are worthless. The first step to be made by every individual in a group is complying to rules and regulations, and to respect every member regardless of his/her identity whether ethnic or religious (Kirst, 2011, p. 221).

In my place of work, I have a social group that empowers members of staff. We work together to bring about influence, positive change and increased quality of life. Our collaborative relationship is our strength, and the structure we look up. Use of professional self-disclosure is the most divisive strategies that bring the core of what makes us a team. As a social group, I suggest that field theory would best describe our group. It states that a group should be viewed as a body that moves through its immediate environment to pursue its goals. Field theory also stresses the significance of probing the relationship of the group to its environs.

Conclusion

Field and Empowerment theories are social theories that are used today to guide individuals and groups. They are ideal in enabling individuals and groups to progress. Empowerment theory is based on the concept that, a person or a group of people gains a voice after making decisions that affect them, and the social structure that either discourages or encourages that development. Individuals affect their well being. Empowerment theory states

that humans strive, and work for the basics in life, and other issues fall into play.

The empowerment approach has been proven to be effective to groups and individuals. It puts emphasis on how groups function in order to attain designated goals. It suggests that groups experiencing various rewards, positive changes, and encouragements have a likelihood of progressing. Field theory on the other hand, is significant to individuals and groups. It stresses the significance of probing the relationship of the group to its environs. Application of the field theory for consulting and organizational change requires necessary acceptance of its central point. Peoples' conditions and surroundings entirely depend on each other. Cohesion is an important concept in field theory. Field theory is a concept composed of forces that affect and encourage individuals to stick to their groups. Some of the positive forces affecting groups include; how group members enjoy the commitment of members and how members like each other's company. Use of the empowerment and field theories among individuals and groups is a symbol of progress, and determination. They reflect on the output of each individual or members of a group.

References

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