



2-1 Discussion: Power Theories

What power theories have you seen in action in your current or prior organizations? Were they need driven or ego driven? Discuss, giving examples. Respond to your classmates' posts and answer questions posed to you by others.

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Power Theories

Christine Tetreault posted Jul 7, 2020 12:06 PM  [Subscribe](#)

Hi all,

Using my previous place of employment, I believe the power theory used was the Reward method. "This results from one person's ability to compensate another for compliance" (French & Raven, 1959). My immediate supervisor wanted to be everyone's friend and that made her an inefficient leader. She had "favorites" and they could goof off while others worked hard. If confronted, she would apologize and offer a special treat, whether it be a different day off or a change in shift preference; move to another shift 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.

I think it was also ego-driven, given the way she wanted to be a friend instead of a boss. She didn't want people to dislike her or get upset with her.

It was stated best in the article by Choi (2006) “In contrast, Meindl (1990) explained charismatic leadership in view of an inter-follower social contagion process, according to which followers' attributions of charisma are more strongly influenced by the interactions with other followers than by their direct experiences with the leader.”

I believe we worked well on the shifts where our supervisor was not present; 2nd and 3rd. We had less drama on those shifts, worked better as a team, and provided better interactions with the residents.

Chris

Choi, J. (2006). A motivational theory of charismatic leadership: Envisioning, empathy, and empowerment. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 13(1), 24-43. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F203171757%3Faccountid%3D3783>

French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). *The bases of social power*. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (p. 150–167). Univer. Michigan.

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2-1 Discussion

Alexis Thomas posted Jul 8, 2020 2:24 PM  [Subscribe](#)

I previously worked for a family owned Chevrolet dealership, Smart Chevrolet, as a Business Development Representative. This job was an hourly plus commission-based position which exhibited a rewards power theory. “Reward Power is where a person motivates others by offering raises, promotions, and awards,” (Giang, 2013) It always seemed like every week, management would have a

new bonus or incentive for the employees to keep them coming back to work each day. It even got to the point they were doing a \$500 attendance bonus for every employee who showed up to work everyday for each month. It always seemed to be a rewards system from management to motivate us and keep us with the company. Due to the frequent bonuses, this was both need driven to keep the employees they had to reduce turnover rate, and ego driven because managers always wanted to be the favorite of employees. The other power theories were never as prominent in this job because it was all about keeping the employees at work everyday to sell as many cars as we could.

Giang, V. (2013, July 31). The 7 Types of Power That Shape the Workplace. Retrieved July 08, 2020, from <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-7-types-of-power-that-shape-the-workplace-2013-7>

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Week Two Discussion

Christen Moore posted Jul 7, 2020 1:36 PM [★ Subscribe](#)

In my current job, where there are only two people- myself and my boss, power is pretty obvious. My boss holds Legitimate Power and me being the office manager, hold Expert Power. When I work with my husband he holds all of the powers depending on the situation. I have seen him use all five on one job at one time or another. In most of the previous jobs I have had, the biggest type of power I have seen in my managers is Reward Power. I think that reward power has the most positive effect but I agree with the definitions positive downfalls. Managers may not necessarily have the higher power or the higher support to provide the necessary rewards to positively effect this type of powers outcome. In the military, Coercive Power is used quite a bit. But soldiers are taught how to handle it and what to do to avoid having this happen. I saw this when my Ex was in the Army.

The Five Bases- Power Theories

- Legitimate Power derives from the leader's relative position and duties within the organization or society. People have legitimate power when they have been delegated some type of formal authority.
- Referent Power is the capacity of certain individuals to persuade or influence others. It derives from the person's charisma and interpersonal abilities. The oppressed person views the power-bearer as a role model and tries to act like them.

- Expert Power derives from the person's abilities or expertise and how much the organization or society needs them. Unlike the other types, expert power is usually very specific and limited to the area of expertise.
- Reward Power derives from the leaders ability to grant material rewards. It refers to how readily the individual can give people some type of benefit. It could be time off, gifts, promotions, or more responsibility.
- Coercive Power comes from the power-holders capacity to impose sanctions. Essentially, its the ability to give and take away rewards and execute punishment. The oppressed person's desire to get valuable rewards, and their fear of losing them, is ultimately the source of power.

Reference

Social Power: Definitions and Types. (2018, April 17). Retrieved July 07, 2020, from <https://exploringyourmind.com/social-power-definitions-types/>

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David Weaver posted Jul 8, 2020 9:30 AM  [Subscribe](#)

In my prior organization, I have seen many of the power theories in action. However, the two most used power theories in actions is legitimate and coercive power. I have first hand experienced certain newly promoted sergeants, who abuse their use of coercive power. The way I see it these sergeants have never had such power or responsibility before to be in charge or guide others, so the way they think leadership is handle means to them that they become strict, controlling, and unsympathetic to those under them. I do believe there are some

situations that may need a more stricter approach depending on the situation. My belief as far as becoming a leader is to sympathize and understand the people that you are in charge of. Guide them and figure out what your employees lack of strengths are so that way they are knowledgeable and understand what you need from them. Being a leader is not abusing your power its about how your able to handle your power. You don't gain respect from your followers by ridiculing them but by guiding them and showing them that whatever they need assistance with your there for them.

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Last post **8 hours ago** by Alexis Thomas

Discussion 2-1

Danielle Hage posted Jul 8, 2020 3:54 PM

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Hello class, there have been various organizations that I have worked for that have very different power dynamics. In the last job I had expert power seemed to be very common. There was one lead supervisor that was in charge or twenty employees this was the person that worked closely with other supervisors and managers. But if there was any employee who had a question he was not the person that would really know the answer it was a different employee who had been in the company for decades. If i had any questions I usually did not go to the supervisor, I went to the employee who I knew would know how to solve the problem I was having.

In my current position I believe that coercive power is the most prominent. As a manager I am the manager that follows the rules and the guidelines that are in our company manual and are taught to all employees. I do this to avoid confusion on what is and what isn't allowed and this also helps stop behaviors that are negatively impacting the company and the work dynamic. At times it is difficult to follow the regulations when there are many others who choose not to, especially when these employees are above me. The employees who help create and implement new regulations are also the ones who do not follow them, sending a bad message to other employees who have to follow regulations and does not create a positive work environment. Also as leaders this does not show that they are willing to lead by example.

Judge, W. (11/2013). *FOCUSING ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE*. [MBS Direct]. Retrieved from <https://mbsdirect.vitalsource.com/#/books/MBS1549164/>

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2-1 Discussion-Power Theories

Celia Moodenbaugh posted Jul 8, 2020 3:58 PM [★ Subscribe](#)

Hi all,

Throughout my career I think I have seen all 5 power theories in use at one time or another. In my current position, the power theory that I can see that is most utilized is the 'Expert' theory. "Expert Power is one of [The 5 Types of Power](#) identified by psychologists John R. P. French and Bertram Raven in 1959. Expert power is defined as the use of (the perception of) expert knowledge to get a subordinate to follow an instruction or order. Here, power comes from the subordinate's *belief* that their manager or leader possesses expert skills or knowledge that they do not themselves possess." (Expert Program Management, 2020)

Our organization utilizes a pretty standard organizational hierarchy and you can see that the perception is if you are in a leadership position, staff will automatically assume you have all of the answers! I believe that the Expert theory in this instance is directly related to a need drive, specifically safety. (Interaction-design.org, 2018) For example, it can even be the comfort of a staff member just running scenarios by their supervisor to verify that is what they would have done-even though they already truly know the answer. They want to ensure that someone who has been deemed in a position of knowledge agrees. Even in uncharted times when there is not information (such as now with the COVID-19 virus), when leadership doesn't have all of the answers, the team still relies on them to guide them through with the assumption that our leaders have more information.

References:

Expert Program Management. 2020. *Expert Program Management*. [online] Available at: <<https://expertprogrammanagement.com/2017/07/expert-power-in-the-workplace/#:~:text=Expert%20power%20is%20defined%20as%20the%20use%20of,or%20knowledge%20that%20they%20do%20not%20themselves%20possess.>> [Accessed 8 July 2020].

The Interaction Design Foundation. 2020. *Safety: Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/safety-maslow-s-hierarchy-of-needs#:~:text=%20Safety%3A%20Maslow%27s%20Hierarchy%20of%20Needs%20%201,Most%20of%20our%20decisions%20and%20actions...%20More%20>> [Accessed 8 July 2020].

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2-1 Discussion – Power Theories - Reply

Beverley Mesquita posted Jul 8, 2020 8:26 PM [☆ Subscribe](#)

In this week's discussion, we are talking about power theories. The theories of power include:

“In 1959, French and Raven described five **bases of power**:

- Legitimate – This comes from the belief that a person has the formal right to make demands, and to expect others to be compliant and obedient.
- Reward – This results from one person's ability to compensate another for compliance.
- Expert – This is based on a person's high levels of skill and knowledge.
- Referent – This is the result of a person's perceived attractiveness, worthiness, and right to others' respect.

- Coercive – This comes from the belief that a person can punish others for noncompliance.

Six years later, Raven added an extra power base:

- Informational – This results from a person's ability to control the information that others need to accomplish something.”

(Mind Tools, 2020)

I would of course have to use my current supervisor as an example of these powers as she demonstrates many of them. I will go through the powers in order and describe how she demonstrates. 1.

Legitimate, her title in the company is Vice President of Operations so she definitely has the right to make demands and she expects her team to comply with the procedures in place. This is considered need driven. 2. Reward, she really does not need to reward us for doing our job; however, she and the owner are constantly thanking us for going above and beyond by extra treats with things like lunches, get together, having the smoothie bus, ice cream truck visit our office and we also receive quarterly bonuses. This is not need driven but also would not call it ego-driven as these things are done to show appreciation. 3. Expert, she has shown me numerous times she has the skill and knowledge to every day make important business decisions to keep the staff and clients business dealing go smoothly. This need-driven. 4. Referent, she gets everyone’s respect as she gives everyone respect. This is something she does expect as it is what she gives to others. This would be need driven. 5. Coercive, my supervisor can certainly punish someone for being non-compliant, but she chooses to work with everyone and get them to do what is needed by training or seeing what the issue could be. 6. Informational, my supervisor does not control information as in my line of work she will offer whatever we need to get our job done. We can find information from clients or anyone that is skilled or knowledgeable to give it. So, I do not believe she holds control of information.

French and Raven's Five Forms of Power Understanding Where Power Comes from in the Workplace.

(2020). In *Mind Tools*. Retrieved from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_56.htm

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Assessment



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