Awakening self-motivation in social service workers: The interconnectedness of seeking and receiving feedback

by

Mark S. Preston, PhD
Columbia University
School of Social Work

CPC Learning Network and Global Social Service
Workforce Alliance Symposium
New York, NY
February 19, 2014
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Goal-related Feedback
- Self-Regulation
- Hypotheses / Method
- Results / Discussion
- Limitations
- Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

- Social work literature\textsuperscript{1,2}

  - Focuses on negative work outcomes (e.g., job strain) and workplace characteristics (e.g., social support, org. culture/climate)

  - Primarily deficit-based, rather than strength-based; “person” in the P-E equation is passive

  - Overlooks proactive worker behaviors (e.g., seeking feedback) and positive worker outcomes (e.g., motivation)
- Proactive behaviors

- Anticipatory actions that impact oneself or environment\(^3\):
  - personal initiative
  - preventative problem solving
  - taking charge

- Demanding and uncertain environments require proactive behaviors for successful\(^4\):
  - adaptation
  - innovation
  - planning
SEEKING FEEDBACK
Seeking feedback

-Conscious effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors

-Motives:
  - ego-based: protects self-esteem
  - image-based: protects reputation
  - goal-related: achieve desired goal (instrumental)

-SGF is absent from social work literature
GOAL-RELATED FEEDBACK
Goal-related (or instrumental) feedback

- Information that helps one to attain a desired outcome

- Multi-dimensional construct
  
  process feedback  (correct methods/strategies)
  outcome feedback  (progress toward desired results)

- Not “positive” or “negative” feedback
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Self-regulation

Diagram:
- Goal-Establishment
- Goal-Striving
- Goal-Evaluation

Steps:
- Seeking Feedback
- Receiving Feedback
HYPOTHESES

- $H_1$ - Goal striving: RGF mediates SGF’s relationship with WM

-SGF / RGF:

- enhances knowledge gains / skill development;
- heightens competency beliefs/ outcome expectancies;
- strengthens job mastery;
- increase internal motivation

-Theories: social cognitive$^9$, action regulation$^{10}$
H₂ - Goal evaluation: SGF moderates RGF’s relationship with WM

-SGF / RGF allows one to obtain precise information on adequacy of goal progress; effective adjustments of effort / strategies; furthers goal attainment; increases internal motivation

-Theories: social cognitive\textsuperscript{11}, action regulation\textsuperscript{12}
METHOD

- **Survey:** Dillman’s survey method\(^{13}\)

- **Samples:**
  
  349-child welfare case managers, NYS (83%)
  457-public assistance case managers, NYS (70%)
  503-non-profit managers / direct service, NYC (77%)
  320-child care / juvenile detention, Jordan (96%)
- Measures
  - High work arousal (3-, 4-items)\textsuperscript{14}
  - Seeking goal-related feedback (4-items)\textsuperscript{15}
  - Receiving goal-related feedback (4-, 6-, 8-items)\textsuperscript{16}

- Statistical Analyses
  - Hypothesis 1: mediation analyses in AMOS 18.0\textsuperscript{17}
  - Hypothesis 2: hierarchal moderated multiple regression in SPSS 18.0\textsuperscript{18}
RESULTS

- $H_1$: Complete mediation

  - Two conditions required

  condition 1: WM and RGF ($r < .05$)
  WM and SGF ($r < .05$)

  condition 2: “*” direct path for RGF
  “n.s.” direct path for SGF
Condition 1

\[ \text{RGF} \quad 0.22^*; 0.36^*; 0.35^*; 0.32^* \]

\[ \text{SGF} \quad 0.11^*; 0.24^*; 0.17^*; 0.30^* \]

\[ \text{CW} \quad \text{PA} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{JD} \]

* \( p < .05 \)
Condition 2

SGF

RGF

WM

\* p < .05
SGF $\rightarrow$ RGF

$\rightarrow$ WM

$\cdot11; .10; .13; .05\ (n.s.)$

$\cdot19\ast; .34\ast; .50\ast; .07\ast$

* $p < .05$
H₂: Moderation

-Significant two-way interaction
  Public assistance: $\beta = .13^*; \ R^2 = 13\%$
  Not-for-profit: $\beta = .10^*; \ R^2 = 12\%$

-Nonsignificant two-way interaction
  Child welfare: $\beta = .05$
  Jordan: $\beta = -.01$
DISCUSSION

- First studies to demonstrate that SGF’s relationship with WM is *mediated* by RGF

- First two studies to provide evidence that RGF relationship is *moderated* by SGF
  - PA and NP samples (support)
  - CW and Jordan samples (no support)
Why a nonsignificant two-way interaction for:

Child welfare sample?
Uncertainty, Responsibility, & Life-threatening Consequences
Why a nonsignificant two-way interaction for:

Jordan sample?
Great Need & Scarce Resources

24
Maslow’s Need Hierarchy

- Self-Actualization
- Esteem Needs
- Social Needs
- Safety Needs
- Basic Needs
IMPLICATIONS

- SGF/RGF cost effective strategies for enhancing WM motivation via job mastery
  motivation via goal attainment (contextual factors)

- Institutionalize channels for effective SGF and RGF\(^{26}\)

- Train managers and direct service workers on seeking and giving GF within a self-regulation framework\(^{27}\)
CONCLUSION

- Social work researchers have overlooked positive worker outcomes and proactive work behaviors\(^2^8\)

- Social service workers need to be viewed as proactive goal-directed beings

- Coupling SGF / RGF within a self-regulatory framework is a cost effective strategy for facilitating WM
Mark S. Preston, PhD
School of Social Work
Columbia University

e-mail: mp2557@columbia.edu

(Please, NO feedback on this presentation…Thank you!)