Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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Exploring the Role of Trust, Social Learning, Trauma, Logotherapy, Empathy, and Asset-Based Approaches in Community Engagement and Social Change

Date: June 25, 2019
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Place: Monsanto Room in TLC

Abstract
Scholarly investigations into the motivations of community engagement provided limited insight into individual’s contributions. This paper chronicles a phenomenological exploration of perceptions and responses to trust, and the philosophical and psychological impact of social behavioral change. Trust is explored among lens of a pentamerous ideology of deploying concepts in logotherapy, empathy, trauma-informed practices, conceived in social learning settings that are transferred into community asset-based approach. The phenomenon of community empowerment is perceived as the byproduct of positive social behavior change that is influenced by trust at the individual, social, and leadership level. Exploratory methods were utilized in interviewing individuals leaders and social change agents in the Midwestern region identified through a purposive and snowball sampling technique. Interviewers explored existential exploration of trust and its role, if any, to the outcomes of community engagement activities, of well as any philosophical influences of trauma-informed practice, logotherapy, empathy, social learning, and framed by an asset-based community approach. The interviews presented overarching supporting themes in which community leaders: (1)foster trust by extending trust to leveraging assets to support community goals; (2) identify influences of trauma, logotherapy, and empathy for purposeful community life. (3) explore social learning opportunities and experiences in relation to an individual or group’s interpretation of community engagement; (4)define community as group of individuals in proximity that have a shared vision or common interest; (5) exploring character traits utilized in leadership as used to foster community engagement. Results support positive associations in trust utilized in community empowerment. Firstly, trust enhanced the individual’s ability to foster relationships for community growth. Secondly, trust facilitated the relationship of assets through extending understanding, self-awareness, rapport building among community individual, partners, and business. Finally, data revealed trust as a transformative agent in building, extending, and nurturing positive relationships in community engagement. Implications, limitations, and directions of future research are discussed.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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