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Appositeness of a Social and Educational Psychologist- Kurt Lewin

Abstract

Appositeness of Kurt Lewin as an educational and social psychologist is unchallenged. His aptness and relevance are reflected through his work like cognitive field theory, models of change, group dynamics, conflict, force field analysis, action research, leadership climates, and his equation saying behaviour is the function of the person and his/her environment. His distinction between psychological environment and biological environment is unique and important. Kurt Lewin as a field theorist is being considered the father or founder of cognitive field psychology. His vector psychology, topological psychology and group dynamics are the great contributions to education and psychology. His concept of learning as a cognitive structure provides a bridge to correlate cognitive and constructivist approaches of learning. The concept of life space, communication & locomotion, energy, tension, need, valence, etc. provide meaning to educational and psychological understanding of the day. Kurt Lewin's learning theory is still meaningful and employable in decision making, and no one can say that the effect of Kurt Lewin in education and psychology has diminished even after his demise of 78 years. His learning approach is useful in the understanding of learning's role in making cognitive structure, use of repetition, reward and punishment, motivation, success and failure, level of aspiration, memory, etc. He has been criticized on certain ground, but despite forwarded many criticisms Lewin has great heuristic value because his work has generated a tremendous amount of research and experimentations in many educational and psychological areas.

Key Words

Field Theory, Vector Psychology, Topological Psychology, Life Space, Cognitive Structure, Group Dynamics, Change Model.

Kurt Lewin- Life and Work

Kurt Lewin was born on 9th September 1890, and he passed away on 12th February 1947. He was a German American Psychologist. He started his career in Germany, as he was a German, who spent his last year teaching in USA. Kurt Lewin was born in Mogilno, Germany (now in Poland). Out of four sibling he was second. At 15 years of his age, he moved with his family to Berlin. He joined Berlin university by completing his secondary education. He studied psychology under Karl Stumpf, who was a famous experimental psychologist. He got Ph.D. in psychology in 1914 from Berlin University. He served German Army during World War I. After returning to Berlin from the German Army, he joined as the faculty of the Psychological Institute and remained there for several years. In early 1930s Lewin became Visiting Professor at Standford University of USA. He later decided to settle in America. He joined Cornell University in 1933 and stayed there till 1935. He, then shifted to the university of Iowa. In 1945 he moved to Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he founded Research Centre for Group Dynamics. He remained the director of the center there till his death in 1947 at the age of 56 only. He is being known as one of the modern pioneers of Social, Organizational, and Applied Psychology. During his professional career, Lewin's academic research and writings focused on applied research, action research, and group communication. Lewin is often recognized as the Founder of Social

Psychology. Wikipedia (2025) states, “Lewin is often recognized as the ‘founder of social psychology’ and was one of the first to study group dynamics and organizational development.” He was one of the first to study Group Dynamics and Organizational Development. A review of General Psychology Survey, published in 2002, ranked Lewin as the 18th-most cited psychologist of the 20th century. Kendra Cherry (2023) states, “Lewin is known as the father of modern social psychology because of his pioneering work that utilized scientific methods and experimentation to look at social behaviour. Lewin was a seminal theorist whose enduring impact on psychology makes him one of the preeminent psychologists of the 20th century.” Lewin's key concept include Field Theory, Force Field Analysis, and the Unfreeze-Change-Freeze Model for Organizational Change. Lewin’s important works are as:

- Lewin's Field Theory can be summarized by the equation B = f(PE) which emphasizes that behavior is a function of the person and their environment. This perspective highlights the importance of the immediate situation in understanding behavior, and not relying solely on past experiences.
- Lewin's Force Field Analysis is about the analysis of the forces driving and restraining change related initiatives. It helps in identifying developmental strategies to overcome resistance.
- Lewin's Change Management is known as Unfreeze-Change-Freeze Model which provides a structured approach to manage organizational change. It emphasizes the need to prepare for change, implement it and then stabilize it.
- Lewin's Group Dynamics explores how individuals behave within groups and how group behavior differs from the sum of individual behaviours. He is being considered as a pioneer in the study of group dynamics.
- Lewin's Action Research is the research in which researchers actively participate in addressing social issues. It has its lasting impact on the fields like education and community development.
- Lewin's Leadership Styles is about research on leadership climates- Autocratic, Democratic, and Laisser-faire. It has its influential impact in understanding the influence of leadership styles on group performance and morale.
- Lewin's Applied Psychology focuses on applying psychological principles to real-world problems, particularly in organizational settings. It has shaped the field of applied psychology.

Lewin work area is even broader. He has work on associationism in his early days of working. Singh, AK (2002) asserts, “Some psychologists have considered him as one of the Gestalt Psychologists. But this idea is not universally shared. Lewin had started his early studies on association, and this marked a significant departure from the Gestaltistic ideas.” During his early career, Lewin worked on association as a concept, and in his doctoral research he conducted experiments on Will and Intension. He found a role of association in motivating behaviour; however, his findings stimulated him to challenge the fundamental principle of association. Eder, A B and Dignath (2022) aptly concludes Lewin’s journey on the concept of education and its junctures. “Lewin distinguished learning, which should result in association formation according to associationism, from practice of a learned behaviour, which consolidates or strengthens the newly established associations. Lewin proposed an alternative account of learning and practice effects. In line with principles of Gestalt psychology (Kaffka, 1935), learning consists for him in the organization of activities that are appropriate for bringing success. Practice effects are produced by increasing the efficiency of action planning programmes.”

Lewin's Field Theory

Lewin considered his field theory to be a Topological Psychology and a Vector Psychology. His two books 1. Principles of Topological Psychology (1936), and 2. Measurement of Psychological Forces (1938) explain his system. During early years he was closely associated with the Gestalt Psychologists like Koffka, Wertheimer and Kohler. Kurt Lewin, working in tune with the spirit of Gestalt Psychology added several new concepts and coined new terminology mostly borrowed from Physics and Mathematics. In his Topological Psychology and Vector Psychology he used vector that denotes direction, and topology that is a form of geometry which investigates spatial properties of figures.

Lewin's field system may be explained in terms of the following three major concepts:

A. Lewin's Topological Psychology,

B. Lewin's Vector Psychology, and

C. Group Dynamics.

A. Topological Psychology as a Concept

Lewin's Topological Psychology contains discussion related to the Person, the Psychological Environment, the Differentiation of the Person as well as the Psychological Environment, the Life Space, and its various Dimensions, etc. However, his major concepts of Topological Psychology can be explained in terms of following headings:

(a_1) Life Space, and (a_2) Level of Reality.

(a_1) Life Space

The life space (L) consists of the Person (P) and the Psychological Environment (E). Person is such entity which is differentiated from everything else in the world and yet included within the world. Person is included within the life space, but at the same time differentiated from the environment. Lewin has not separated the person from the environment but has held that the person is differentiated from within. He has divided person into two major region – 1. The Perceptual- Motor Region, and 2. The Inner-Personal Region. The Perceptual- motor region lies on the periphery of circle; enclosing P and the inner-personal region is represented by central part of the circle. The inner-personal region is surrounded by perceptual-motor-region, and subsequently, it has no direct contact with the outside environment. The Perceptual motor region controls perceptual and motoric functions of the person. The inner-personal region controls the motivational functions. Therefore, according to Lewin, the Person is heterogeneous and not homogeneous.

Psychological Environment (E) is another important aspect of Life Space. The psychological environment surrounds the person but is outside the person. Like person, the Lewin divided the psychological environment into different regions. Some regions have permeable boundaries, and some regions have impermeable boundaries. Individuals can influence the others through permeable boundaries, and through these permeable boundaries' individuals can be influenced by others. Lewin explains that human behaviour is a function of both the person and the psychological environment or taken together the life space. In equation form he wrote B=f (P.E) or B=f(L). The external environment lying outside the Person's life space is called Foreign Hull. The boundary between the Foreign Hull and the Psychological Environment is permeable, and so there is a two-way communication between the External World (Foreign Hull) and the Psychological Environment. It indicates that facts in the psychological environment can produce changes in the physical world and the events in the physical world can also influence the facts of psychological environment. In nutshell, it can be said that the life space of a person includes himself and other people or objects as perceived by the person. IGNOU

(2008) concludes, “The cognitive field psychology of Lewin deals with the problem of how people gain an understanding of themselves and their environment. The theory centres around the idea that all psychological activities of a person at a given point of time, are a function of a totality of coexisting psychological factors that are mutually independent. Lewin’s basic contribution was the concept of ‘life space’ which includes everything one needs to know about a person’s psychological environment.” It also influences ideas. Life space, as maintained by Lewis, may be divided into regions which are separated by boundaries. Each regions contains psychological facts which may be social event or intellectual event.

The boundaries of the region of the life space have two dimensions as Nearness-Remoteness and Firmness- Weakness. A student wants to be a teacher in Secondary Schools of Bihar. For the same he/ she has to obtain a bachelor’s degree in a School Subject, and a bachelor’s degree in education and then he/she has to Qualify TET (Central/State), he/she has to Apply for the Post, has to Participate in the Counseling for the Final Selection. In the present example there are four regions in between two extremes- To Obtain Bachelor’s Degree in School Subject & Education, Qualify TET, Apply, and Participate in Counselling.

Participation in counseling is the near region whereas obtaining bachelor’s degrees is a remote region. Qualifying TET may be difficult task and therefore, this region may be said to have firm boundary. However, applying against the advertisement may be comparatively easier and hence this region may be said to have a weak boundary. In fact, it depends upon the number of facts that exist at any time. How many regions can be in the life space depends on the number of facts that exists at any time.

Two facts of life space interact with each other, this produces an event. The various regions influence each other through what is called communication and locomotion. Communication is an event through which one cell or region of the life space communicates with the other. Locomotion refers to the Physical or the Psychological movement of the person from one region of the life space to another region. The locomotion from one region to another takes place through a fixed pathway or space. This is called as Hodological Space. Lewin has pointed out that there are three principles that govern communication and locomotion’s of events. They are:

1. The Principle of Relatedness 2.The Principle of Concreteness 3.The Principle of Contemporaneity.

The Principles of Relatedness states that any event is caused by interaction of two or more related facts. The principle of concreteness tells that only those facts that exist in the life space have some effects upon the organism. The principle of contemporaneity emphasizes that only the present facts can produce present behavior. It means the facts those relate to early childhood cannot influence the present behavior unless or until they have been in existence at present. In this way, Lewin also perceived that there is the possibility of the impact of time dimension upon the life space. Though, the actual events of the past or the potential events of the time to come cannot influence our present behavior. He emphasized that our present attitudes, thoughts, and feelings about past and future, which are part of the present life space, may have considerable impact upon persons present conduct. It means there is impact of psychological past and a psychological future if present life space contains them.

One of the most important contributions of Lewin's life space system is his conceptualization regarding conflict. He recognized three types of conflict that produces frustration. They are (1) Approach – Approach Conflict; (2) Avoidance – Avoidance Conflict; and (3) Approach – Avoidance Conflict. In Approach – Approach Conflict (Two Positive Valence) the person wants to get both the positive goals, but only one of which can be achieved. As for example to attend two birthday parties at the same time. In Avoidance – Avoidance Conflict (Two Negative Valence) the person wants to avoid both the

situations and opportunities, but he/she has to choose at least one. As for example a student has to choose between two available job which he/she equally dislikes. In Approach- Avoidance Conflict (Positive and Negative Valence) the person is attracted as well as repelled against an available goal. As for example a person is offered a better institution for admission, but in a poor backward locality.

There are some misconceptions about the life space. It is understood that the life space is identical with the phenomenal world of the person. This is not true. The life space only includes those factors which influence our behaviour and perception. Some factors may influence by being in unconscious as well. This phenomenal world may be close or may lie at distant from life space.

(a_2) Levels of Reality

According to Lewin there are levels of reality and unreality that applies to both the Person and the Psychological Environment. Reality comprises actual locomotions and unreality comprises imaginary locomotions. A person may change his/her work or may join a new party. This illustrates Lewin's concept of reality. In the same way, a person may daydream to become the president of a political party or a nation. This illustrates Lewin's concept of unreality. There are various degrees or levels between these two extremes (Reality-Unreality). Planning or thinking lies somewhere at intermediate level between these two extremes. Lewin emphasized that as one moves from reality to unreality side, locomotion becomes easier. With growing maturation, the reality-unreality dimension also broadens and becomes sharper and more differentiated.

B. Vector Psychology as a Concept

Lewin's Vector Psychology is dynamic in nature which contains motivational aspects of human behaviour. These related concepts are different from the topological concepts or structural concepts. These dynamic concepts are about how a person is going to behave in situation. Lewins' major dynamic concepts are (1) Energy, (2) Tension, (3) Need, (4) Valence, and (5) Vector.

Energy: Lewin considered person as a complex energy system. The energy which performs psychological work is called Psychical Energy. Psychical Energy is created when the Psychic System (or the person) wants to return to equilibrium after it has been thrown into the state of disequilibrium due to increase in tension in one part of the system relative to other part. When the system becomes successful in equalizing tension throughout the system, the output of the energy halts and the system returns to rest.

Tension : Tension is a state of person and refers to a state of disequilibrium or lack of balance between the forces of one inner-personal region or system and the other inner-personal region or system. It has two properties. The first property is that tension tends to become equalized. If there is high tension in system x and low tension in system y and z, tension will flow from x to y and z till the tension in all the three systems become equalized. The psychological means by which tension tends to be equalized is known as process. Thinking, Remembering, Perceiving, etc. are some of the examples of the process.

The second property of tension is that it tends to exert pressure on the boundary system in which it is contained. If the boundary is weak and permeable, tension will easily flow to other systems. But if the boundary is firm and impermeable, the diffusion of tension will be hindered.

Need: Need is either a psychological condition such as hunger or a psychological condition such a desire to become a wealthy person. It is this need that causes increase or decrease in tension of a system or region. Lewin made it clear that only those needs that exist currently are important. Quaisi-needs are different from needs as these are shaped by social factors. To eat in a particular hotel is an example of quaisi-need, whereas to eat meal is an example of need.

Valence: Valence in the Lewin's system is associated with value. Out of various regions of the psychological environment, some regions have negative and some regions positive value. This value is the valence for the person. A region having positive valence contains such goal object that will reduce tension. As for example, for a thirsty person a region that has water, will have positive valence. A region with negative valence contains a goal object that will increase tension. As for example a girl who fears from spider, the region having spider has negative valence. Lewin has considered valances in quantitative forms, i.e., they can be strong, moderate, or weak.

Valences are related to needs of the persons. If a person is not hungry, food will no longer have positive valence for him. Lewin has pointed out that the life space of a person may contain several regions having several valences at the same time. Because of this, conflict arises. The approach-approach conflict, the avoidance- avoidance conflict, and the approach-avoidance conflict can be explained by arousal of several valences at the same time. Lewin forwarded two hypotheses related to valences:

1. The distance between a person and a goal object increases the attractiveness of the valence or the effect of positive valence decreases.
2. A goal is obstructed or towards which a person is not allowed to go develops a stronger positive valence.

Vector

Vector refers to those psychological forces that influence the person to the extent that he/she moves in a particular direction. The vectors have three properties – direction, strength, and a point of contact. A vector has a direction, that it may be towards or away the goal object. A vector has strength as it is correlated with the valence of the object, that it is correlated with attraction or repulsion of a valence. The longer the line of arrow, the greater is the strength of the vector. A vector has also a point of contact.

C. Group Dynamics as a Concept

In his later years of life Lewin paid attention towards the problem of social psychology. He enunciated the concept of group dynamics which refers to the collective interactions such as power shifts, leadership, group formation, cohesiveness, disruptiveness, decision making, etc. taking place within a group. In other words, it is a social process by which people interact face-to-face in group. He was of the view that the group of the person and its environment constituted the social field. The major characteristic of social field is the relative position of the members of the group. Group behaviour is solely characterized by the dynamic interdependence of its members. The activities of each member of a group are the function of activities of other members. The group is influenced by both cohesive as well as disruptive forces. When the relations among members of a group are satisfying, cohesive forces result. But when relation among members of a group remains conflicting and when members have frequently hampered communications, the disruptive force emerge. Group dynamics was one of the key areas of Kurt Lewin work area. IGNOU (2019) reflects his seriousness and concerns in the study of group dynamics and group behaviour, “In 1944, Kurt Lewin, set up the Research Centre for Group Dynamics to meet the need of a scientific approach to the understanding of the dynamics of group.”

Cognitive Field Theory and Group Dynamics

Cognitive field theory does not directly guide the group dynamics, but group dynamics is significantly influenced by Kurt Lewin's field theory. Field theory is closely related to cognitive perspectives on learning. Lewin's field theory posits that an individual's behaviour is determined by the current field of forces acting upon individual along with his/her social and environmental factors.

In fact, Group Dynamics explores the forces within a group that influence individual behaviours and interactions, on the other hand field theory provides a framework for understanding how these forces operate. Lewin's field theory provides a framework for understanding how group dynamics works by highlighting the impact of the social and environmental field on individual behaviour within the group. While not directly cognitive learning offers insights into group dynamics function, such as the social context and interactions, but group dynamics can shape cognitive processes and learning within a group.

Group dynamics and field psychology are closely related fields, with field psychology providing a theoretical framework for understanding group dynamics. Kurt Lewin, a pioneer in both these areas viewed group behaviour as a function of the psychological field in which the group exists, emphasizing the interplay of influencing individuals within the group.

Field Psychology of Kurt Lewin provides a theoretical lens for analyzing group behaviour. Lewin's field theory believes that an individual's behaviour is determined by the totality of forces in their life space at a given moment. Life space contains both Personal (like motivation, attitude, belief) and Environmental factors (like social environment, group dynamics). Lewin has applied field theory to groups, suggesting that group behaviour is influenced by the dynamic interplay of forces within the group's psychological field. Lewin emphasized that groups are more than just the sum of their individual members; the interactions and forces within the group create a unique dynamic. Field theory helps researchers and practitioners to analyze the forces that contribute to a group's behaviour, identity, potential problems, and develop strategies for improving group functioning. Lewin's concept of Life Space helps explain how individual member's perceptions, motivations, and interactions are influenced by the group's environment and the forces at play. In essence, field Psychology offers a framework for understanding the psychological forces at play in group dynamics, while the study of groups dynamics provides a practical application of field theory in real world settings.

Learning Approach of Kurt Lewin

Lewin's approach regards learning a relativistic process by which a learner develops new insight or changes old ones. According to the theory, learning is not a mechanistic process of connecting stimuli and responses within a biological organism. Field Psychology explains development of insight as a change in cognitive structure of life space. Kurt Lewin, unlike Pavlov, Skinner, and Gestaltian Psychologists, conducted experiments on the study of behaviour of children. He utilized an elaborate experimental set-up with a view to control the child's total environment during the investigation for getting detailed information. Lewin emphasized the study of behaviour as a function of the total physical and social situation. Lewin holds that psychological laws need not be formulated solely based on statistical averages. Rather the individual case is equally important. In Lewin's theory threat, goal and barrier are the three main factors. The barriers may be physical or psychological forces preventing him from reaching the goal. Lewin has not forwarded a learning theory like other psychologists. Later what Tolman could express through his Sign Learning Theory may be considered the reflection of Kurt Lewin’s Learning Approach. DUTT, NK (1974) clearly summarizes Kurt Lewin’s status on his learning approach as, “Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) worked with Koffka, Kohler and Wertheimer in Berlin. Like his other colleagues he also settled in USA. He was not interested in perception, learning, and thinking as gestalt psychologists were, but studied motivation, personality, and social psychology. Gestalt psychologists stressed upon the law of pragnanz whereas Lewin studied desires and goals in relation to personality. Frankly speaking, Lewin could not develop a theory of learning but could give a system of description known as field theory or topological psychology or vector psychology.” Lewin has classified learning into the following categories:

1. Learning is a change in cognitive structure.
2. Learning is a change in motivation, i.e., in valences and values.
3. Learning is acquisition of skills.
4. Learning is a change in group belonging.

Learning of all types involves change in perception. Change in cognitive structure are caused by the forces in the psychological field like needs, aspirations and valences. Chahan, S.S (1998) concludes, "Learning is behaviour, a locomotion from one region of life space to another when a person moves from one region to another, the structure of life space undergoes a change. Learning and insight can always be viewed as a change in the cognitive structure of the situation. It frequently includes differentiating and restructuring in the sense of separating certain regions which have been connected and connecting regions which have been separated."

Lewin thinks that level of aspiration depends upon the potentialities of an individual and on the influences of the group to which he/she belongs. Too higher or too lower level of aspiration discourages learning. The field theory suggests that the teacher, other teachers, the school, and the peer group all are parts of the total educational situation. The need for seeing the whole and details of situation is very necessary. The teacher needs to assist the students to perceive the goal and the barriers. The goal must be presented in an easier and simplified way.

Educational Implications of Kurt Lewin Work

- Understanding the Learner's Life Space
- Creating Engaging Learning Environment
- Utilizing Motivational Strategies
- Facilitating Change
- Recognizing the Importance of Group Dynamics

Wildgen, Wolfgang (2021) asserts, "Lewin made defining contributions to a number of fields. He had a major impact on our appreciation of groups and how to work with them; he pioneered action research; he demonstrated that complex social phenomenon could be explored using controlled experiment; and he helped to move social psychology into a more rounded understanding of behaviour (being a function of people and the way they perceive the environment). This is formidable achievement. Sixty years on, he still excites discussion and argument, and while we may want to qualify or rework various aspect of his work (and that of his associates). We are deeply indebted to him both for his insights and the way he tried to bring a commitment to democracy and justice to his work."

Educational Implications of Lewin Learning Approach

Following are the educational implications of Kurt Lewin's Learning Theory or Learning Approach:

- Change in Cognitive Structure: According to Kurt Lewin, learning means a change in one's cognitive structure. In the beginning the life space of child is less differentiated but as the child grows up and learns more, his field of perception becomes more and differentiated. The life space of a child becomes gradually more structured. An

unstructured region of life space indicates problem. When the problem is solved through learning, the life space become structured.

- Learning and Repetition: Learning is a required change in one's cognitive structure. This change may be brought about with repetition. Too much repetition as advocated by Thorndike does not help learning. Instead of excessive repetition, the structure may get changed with better organization and arrangements.
- Reward and Punishment: Lewin highlighted the role of both punishment and reward in teaching-learning process. The purpose of punishment is to keep the learner engaged in task which he/she dislikes. Activities controlled by the threat of punishment give rise to mental conflicts in the learner, and so excessive punishment should be avoided. Rewarded activities undoubtedly become interesting and liked by the learner, but tempted by the reward, the learner may take recourse to improper means of cheating without doing the demanded task. In fact, Lewin advocates for judicious use of punishment and reward.
- Success and Failure: According to Lewin, success or failure depends upon one's ego involvement and level of aspiration. The success experience on the part of a learner shows the following possibilities:

— Reaching a goal constitutes a success.

— Getting within the region of the goal may be a success experience.

— Making noticeable progress toward a goal may constitute a success experience.

— Selecting a socially approved goal may in itself provide a success experience although no efforts are made to reach the goal.

Success in easy task is not a success experience, since it does not involve the ego of the person. Similarly, failure in a very difficult task is no failure experience.

- Level of Aspiration: The level of aspiration according to Lewin, is an important factor in teaching-learning process. It is a set according to the learner's interpretation of his/her own achievement. There are individual differences in setting level of aspiration or setting of goal. Learners who are realistic set their goals according to their capacity, but unrealistic learners may set goals too high to achieve. To avoid the possibility of failure, some learners may set goals too low. In fact, too high or low level of aspirations discourage learning.
- Motivation: Motivation is attraction towards a goal. It has very important place in learning process. Lewin introduced the concepts of ego involvement, the role of valences and the level of aspiration to interpret motivated learning. Attractive goals may lose their attraction if the activity related to them is repeated to the point of satiation. An originally unattractive goal may become attractive through a change in the meaning of the goal related activity. Above two principles may be utilized in many teaching methods to induce motivation in learners. By listening the story of his/her hero, etc. the learners may attract for the learning of a concept (Hero may be Ramanujan, Nirala, Freud or some other).

- Memory: According to field theory, tasks which do not serve any worthwhile purpose in life are forgotten. Because of Psychological tensions unfinished tasks are remembered better than the finished tasks due to psychological tension. Tasks which satisfy our many needs are remembered better than the tasks which lead to the satisfaction of only one need.

Criticism of Lewin System

Lewin's system has been criticized on the following grounds:

— Lewin's system is full of imaginary, untestable and unverifiable hypothetical constructs like vectors, tensions, energy systems, etc. They have never been experimentally tested.

— Lewin has misused the mathematical concepts. Various terms like force, valence, path, boundaries were taken from the context of physics, chemistry and mathematics and were wrongly applied to Psychology.

— Lewin has failed to specify a clear-cut relation of the life space to the external environment. According to the critic Psychologists, nowhere Lewin has explained how the external environment produces change in the life space or how the life space produces change in the external environment. Due to this reason, his system runs the risk of being trapped into the subjectivism.

— Lewin did not consider the history of the individual. In fact, he stressed that the knowledge of history is important in inferring about the present life space.

Despite above criticisms Lewin's system has great heuristic value because it generated a tremendous amount of research and experimentations in many areas of Psychology. His viewpoints have very clearly shown that for understanding the vital aspects of human behaviour a system has to be multi-dimensional in scope.

Critics argue it oversimplifies the change process, neglecting the emotional and psychological aspects of change and the complexities of organizational dynamics. It also neglects the nature of change by considering it linear and sequential as change is often non-linear and iterative. Critics point out that Lewin's work has limitations on certain grounds like:

— Oversimplification and Linear Nature (Linear Assumption, Lack of detail).

— Neglecting Emotional and Psychological Aspects (Ignoring Emotional Responses, Individual Differences).

— Ignoring Organizational Dynamics (Employee Involvement and Top down).

— Overlooking Leadership Approach (Management Driven Approach).

— Lack of Reflection for Complex Modern Organization. (Limited Applicability).

Appositeness of Kurt Lewin

Appositeness of Kurt Lewin is manifested through the fact that he is being considered the father of modern social psychology. Kurt Lewin’s appositeness and relevance is self-evident due to his foundational contributions in the field of modern social psychology, more particularly in group dynamics, experiential learning, and action research. Wikipedia (2025) informs, “The approach, developed by Kurt Lewin, is a significant contribution to the fields of social science, psychology, social psychology, organizational development, process management, and change management.” His concept of behaviour as the function of a person and his/her environment has paramount importance to conclude that individual growth is based on the person’s biological as well as environmental factors. His three-step model for managing change – unfreezes, changes, refreeze, is a major concept in revolutionizing modern management and organisational development. Unfreeze is about creating the motivation for change by highlighting the need for it. Change is bout implementing the change through new structures, processes, or behaviours. Refreeze is about stabilizing the organization in the new state by adopting and

accepting the changes to be permanent. Group dynamics reflects how groups function, and this area is very pertinent in education, psychology, management, and research today too. His concept of action research is useful in solving practical, social, and educational problems. Good number of research is being conducted in different study areas through this approach. Social and educational areas' research are particularly dependent on this approach. How important is the concept of experiential learning that is since learning is most effective when involves direct experience and reflection, one can easily understand what he/she experiences. His formula B=f (P, E) has universal appositeness as behaviour is the function of person and his/her environment is true today and it will remain true in every age. This is a powerful and simple way to analyse human action. His concept of conflict is also pertinent in social and behavioural studies and research. His appositeness is unchallenged in any age due to his concepts like field theory, topological psychology, vector psychology, and group dynamics. Kumar, L (2025) while discussing the relevance of cognitive field theory and declaring Lewin' s work useful in educational, psychological, and social fields appropriately asserts, "His concept of life space and ever-changing nature of psychological environment has its bearing on the understanding of individual and his/her learning environment understanding. He categorically states that the behaviour of the individual is the function of his/herself and that of his psychological environment which is quite different from his/her biological environment. Lewin has particularly focused on motivational concepts like energy, tension, need, valence, and vector those are very relevant in the process of understanding the person and his/her learning process." His concepts are useful in understanding human behaviour. He has invented and created many concepts to understand and discuss human behaviour. Perceptual-Motor Region, Inner-Personal Region, Psychological Environment, Boundaries of Life Space Region, Communication and Locomotion, Types of Conflict, Levels of Reality, Energy, Tension, Need, Valance, etc. are some of the concepts he has coined. These concepts are useful. No doubt, critics reject many of these concepts, but this cannot challenge his excellence and relevance. Learning as cognitive structure is accepted by all and is applicable in education and neurology more particularly and pertinently. The work and concept of Kurt Lewin is praiseworthy, and this is the reason he is being considered one of the greatest psychologists of his era and of 20th century. Without doubt he, as a social and educational psychologist, is relevant and pertinent. His aptness and appositeness are accepted by psychologists and academicians, and his work and thought are useful in every age. We can recognize Kurt Lewin as an educationist besides a versatile psychologist. He views learning as a function of the person (P) and his/her psychological environment (E). This approach or formula B=f(PE) emphasizes that the behaviour of a learner is the result of his/her total life space. The life space of an individual learner includes his/her needs, perceptions, attitude, and external forces. NCFSE (2000) in its deliberations has mentioned temporal, spatial and life space concepts categorically in educational context and environment, "Education is a lifelong process with essentially two major dimensions- the temporal and the spatial. While it must continue through the whole life span of an individual since there are particular developmental tasks to be performed and problems to be solved, it, at the same time, takes place among different life spaces. These life spaces are the home, the school, the community, and media each playing by itself a very important role in the total development of an individual." His work has led to an understanding of how learners can be motivated and how his/her conflict can be managed. Life space is the by-product of learners' internal factors like needs and drives; and that of their external factors like physical and social environment. This theory yields that the education system needs to consider the entire leaner's situation while planning for the learner's education. The theory also reveals that the strategies of motivating learners be adopted based upon the life space of the learners. He suggested that learning is guided by tension caused by conflicting forces; and this is also a guideline for education system. Change in cognitive structure is learning guides the education system in many ways. His change model is useful in social and educational changes which leads modernization. Lewin's work has also influenced the development of cooperative learning techniques. His focus on the social

forces surrounding students guide educators in understanding how effective and inclusive classroom can be created and managed. His work and theory are reflected in our educational policies and curriculum frameworks, but without mentioning the name. NEP (2020) states, "A good education institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students." Learning environment and an individual in the process of learning are categorically placed. No one can conclude that this policy verdict is influenced by Lewin, but Lewin's reflections on learning can be found in policy this statement. This refection is also there in NCF (2005) where the document asserts, "Teachers should also nurture their classroom spaces as places where children can ask questions freely, engaging in a dialogue with the teacher as well as their peers, during an ongoing lesson. Unless they can share their related experiences, clarify their doubts, and ask questions, they will not engage with learning." Our most recent national document on education based on school education NCFSE (2023) also mentions Kurt Lewin' social, psychological, and educational approaches in educational planning, "School must be welcoming space that attracts students. These must be safe and secure. They must also be supportive of and address the needs of the teachers." In fact, his work is so comprehensive and meaningful in education and psychology that his appositeness is justified today as well as an educationist and as a psychologist.

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