

# **The role of theoretical framework and methods in research**

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Research is a process by which new knowledge is discovered. High-quality research is characterized by different attributes, many of which tend to be related to each other (Salkind, 2012). In research, the interest for interpreting and describing how theory is built and how to call for explanations based on collected facts, measurements, and observations are of importance in understanding knowledge production (P. Saravanavel, 1987; Philipsen, 2018). These two parts of conducting research are theoretical frameworks and methods, respectively.

The first part of this paper will mention the definition and the role of the theoretical framework. Zube (1984) pointed out that "theory" can have many different meanings, depending on the context. A theoretical framework is the use of a theory (or theories) in a study that simultaneously conveys the deepest values of the researcher(s) and provides an articulated signpost or lens for how the study will process new knowledge. There are four levels of theory, and the framework belongs to the second level. It represents relationships between existing findings that provide a conceptual and systematic organization for data about phenomena (Moore, 1982). The use of theoretical frameworks should seek to provide opportunities for scholars to "discover their voice, along with intellectual resources, to build theories that seek to liberate, rather than control." (Georges, 2005)

The theoretical framework serves as the structure and support for the rationale of the research, problem statement, purpose, meaning, and research questions (Sontag, 1996; Rudasill et al., 2017). The theoretical framework provides a foundational basis, or an anchor point for literature review, and most importantly, methodology and analysis (Grant, 2014). Highlighting the necessity and application of a theoretical framework, Sarter (2005) contends that a study without a justifiable theoretical base is of "limited usefulness of findings and conclusions."

High-quality research depends not only on structuring a 'network' of theories under investigation but also on developing, examining, verifying, and

refining research methods (Kumar, 2011; Müller, 2012). Research methods are the techniques used to do research. Each type of research design has a variety of research methods commonly used to collect and analyze the type of data generated by the investigations (Walliman, 2018). Research methods identify the systematic steps used by academics to collect data, analyze data, and obtain the findings and conclusions used to answer a research question (Rachel et al., 2018).

In addition to understanding what the research method is, it is essential to understand why the research method is important (Chappell, 2000; Muylaert et al., 2014). The answer is that understanding research methods affects what you know by providing you with a systematic way to assess and gather knowledge. Understanding research methods gives you practical skills that allow you to produce and consume findings, facts, and information with the assurance that it has been systematically delivered (Rachel et al., 2018; Vuong, 2020).

The general theoretical framework fundamentally shapes the types of things the study focuses on and thus also fundamentally shapes the methods required for the study (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). There are links between theoretical frameworks and methods, and they tend to reinforce each other. As a matter of fact, they are two sides of the same coin that cannot be separated.

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