Theoretical Framework-Conceptual Framework: Exploring, Learning and Identifying

Marco Teórico & Marco Conceptual: Explorando, Aprendiendo e Identificando
Agenda – Programa – Workshop – Taller

I. The Need – Justification
II. Theoretical Framework – The Basics
III. The Blueprint – The Analogy – A House
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks – The Differences
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework
I. The Need - Justification

The Dissertation:
- A labor of love, passion and commitment
- A labor of work, sweat and tears
- A labor of time and much sacrifice
- A labor requiring organization and research (writing and reading skills)
- A labor of deep critical thinking, analysis, and reflection
- A labor consisting of a process and an outcome
- A labor likened to the task of building your own home
I. The Need - Justification

An important aspect and critical component of the dissertation is the ....

Theoretical Framework
I. The Need - Justification

The Theoretical Framework:

- Minimally covered in doctoral coursework
- Often the most difficult but not impossible part of the proposal
- A source of confusion, lack of knowledge and frustration
- Difficult to choose and apply a theoretical framework
- Initially mentioned and then ignored or omitted altogether
I. The Need - Justification

The Importance of The Theoretical Framework:

- Foundation from which all knowledge is constructed
- Serves as the structure and support for the components of the dissertation (rationale, problem statement, purpose, significance and research questions)
- Serves as the grounding base, the anchor for the literature review and the methods and analysis
I. The Need - Justification

The Choice of The Theoretical Framework is not arbitrary but reflects:

- important personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge
- how it (knowledge) exists (in the metaphysical sense) in relation to the observer
- the possible roles to be adopted and tools to be employed consequently by the researcher in his/her work

(Lysaght, 2011, p. 572)
Without a theoretical framework:

- Structure and vision of the study is unclear (as a house cannot be constructed without a blueprint)
- Study has no organized flow from one chapter to the next
- Study remains a theoretical (having no theory)
II. Theoretical Framework - The Basics

Theoretical Framework is a ‘blueprint’ for the entire dissertation inquiry.
II. Theoretical Framework - The Basics

As a blueprint, a theoretical framework:

- Is a guide to build and support your study
- Provides the structure to define the dissertation from the following vantage points:
  - Philosophically
  - Epistemologically
  - Methodologically
  - Analytically
A Theoretical Framework is defined as:

A structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory ... constructed by using a
established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships.

(Eisehhart, 1991, p. 205)
II. Theoretical Framework - The Basics

A Theoretical Framework consists of:

- Selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking with regards to how you understand and plan to research your topic
- Concepts and definitions from that selected theory that are relevant to your topic
II. Theoretical Framework - The Basics

A theory selected to be applied to the dissertation must meet the following criteria:

- Appropriate
- Logically interpreted
- Well understood
- Aligned with the research question at hand
III. The Blueprint - The Analogy - A House

Theoretical Framework as …

The Blueprint for a House

(student/researcher – architect)
III. The Blueprint - The Analogy - A House

- Elevation Drawing – Displays the Exterior of the House
- Floor Plan – Details the Interior of the Home
III. The Blueprint – The Analogy – A House

Elevation Drawing – Displays the Exterior of the House:

1. An architect creates an elevation drawing to display the exterior of the home. Here is an outside view of the style and structure of the house.

2. There are many types of houses (ranch, bungalow, an American Four Square, adobe style, Craftsman, split-level etc).

3. No type is perfect or right style of the house. They all provide shelter and residency.

4. There is no one perfect or right theory for a dissertation but some are more popular than others in certain disciplines.

5. As an architect must select the type of house to build, the researcher must choose a theory to structure the dissertation.
Theories come from a multitude of sources in particular disciplines. Some of these include:

- Transformational/relational theories
- Transactional/management theories
- Servant leadership
- Trait theories
- Situational theories
- Behavioral theories
- Systems theories
III. The Blueprint - The Analogy - A House

Theories (cont.):
- Developmental theory
- Cognitive theory
- Sense of community theory
- Behavioral theory
- Queer theory
- Feminist theory
- Critical race theory
- Self-efficacy theory

Theories (cont.):
- Functionalist theory
- Relational theory
- Marxist theory
- Intersubjectivity theory
- Gender theory
- Change theory
- Identity formation
- Community of inquiry
Why theory?

- It provides structure to the entire dissertation
- It provides a common world view or lens from which to support one’s thinking on the problem and analysis of data
III. The Blueprint – The Analogy – A House

Floor Plan – Details the Interior of the Home

1. Allows the viewer to see the floor plan as if you were looking down from above into the home itself.
2. All homes contain common elements: rooms, doors, toilets, a kitchen, electrical outlets etc.
3. Each home is organized or laid out in accordance with the design choice used in the elevation drawing
III. The Blueprint - The Analogy - A House

On The Floor Plan

1. Floor plan of the dissertation blueprint contains the theoretical principles, constructs, concepts, and tenants of a theory.

2. Specific conceptual elements of a theory (the interior of a home) must align with the researcher’s theoretical framework.

3. When selecting transformational leadership as a theoretical framework, the researcher must ensure that each chapter connect to theorists who have written about leadership and concepts drawn from this framework.

4. Principles and constructs (the interior blueprint) must derive from theoretical worldview of the study (the exterior blueprint).
Before committing to a research design:

1. Consider the guiding principles for your inquiry
2. Consider that theory selected for your study provides a conceptual basis for understanding, analyzing, and designing ways to investigate a problem.
3. Consider knowing how to define and approach research problem
4. Consider providing a rationale for how and why you are conducting your study in order for the reader to get a sense for where you stand on the problem itself
III. The Blueprint - The Analogy - A House

The function of theory is:
- to inform the rest of your design
- to help you assess and refine your goals
- to develop realistic, and relevant research questions
- to select appropriate methods
- to identify potential validity threats to your conclusions
- to justify your research

(Maxwell, 2004, pp. 33-34)
Sometimes theoretical frameworks are referred to as conceptual frameworks. These terms are not synonymous or interchangeable.
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

A theoretical framework...
- is derived from an existing theory (or theories) in the literature
- has been tested and validated by others
- is considered a generally acceptable theory in the scholarly literature
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

Theoretical Framework ... is the researcher’s lens with which to view the world.
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

A Conceptual Framework...

- is the researcher's understanding of
  - how the research problem will best be explored
  - the specific direction the research will have to take
  - the relationship between the different variables in the study
The Conceptual Framework …

system of concepts, assumptions, and beliefs that support and guide the research plan.

(Miles & Huberman, 1994)
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

The Conceptual Framework ... lays out the key factors, constructs, variables, and presumes relationships among them.

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 440)
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

**The Conceptual Framework**

... a structure of what has been learned to best explain the natural progression of a phenomenon that is being studied.

(Camp, 2001)
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

The Conceptual Framework:
- offers a logical structure of connected concepts that help provide a picture or visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another within the theoretical framework.
- is a way to identify and construct for the reader the epistemological and ontological worldview and approach of the topic of study.
- provides an opportunity to specify and define concepts within the problem.
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

**Theoretical Framework**

Theory selected: Educational Equity Theory

- Theorists
  - Marx (1975)
  - Brookover & Lezotte (1981)

**Conceptual Framework**

Response to Intervention Best Practices

- Core Concepts:
  - screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring (as defined by NCLB)

- Ley theoretical principles:
  - equality, justified inequality, fair process, social justice, participation
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks - The Differences

Using our previously mentioned analogy ....

- Theoretical framework – traditional style elevation blueprint drawing
- Conceptual framework – the floor plan blueprint of how information flows throughout the dissertation
# Examples of Theoretical Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: <a href="http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/educationtheory">http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/educationtheory</a></th>
<th>Theories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Examples of Theoretical Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publication Details</th>
<th>Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## Examples of Theoretical Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Examples of Theoretical Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title and Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Parental Involvement**

**Adult Education**

**Moral Development**

**Experiential Learning**

**Critical Race Theory**
## Examples of Theoretical Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher &amp; Year</th>
<th>Framework(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ray, M. A.</td>
<td>The theory of bureaucratic caring for nursing practice in the organizational culture</td>
<td>Nursing Administration Quarterly, 13, 31-42</td>
<td>Bureaucratic Caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers, E. M.</td>
<td>Diffusion of innovations</td>
<td>Free Press, 1962</td>
<td>Diffusion of Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siemens, G.</td>
<td>Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age</td>
<td>Instructional Technology &amp; Distance Learning, 2(1)</td>
<td>Connectivism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Examples of Theoretical Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title and Publication Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviorism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Conceptual Frameworks

**Cognitivism**
- Jerome Bruner
- David Ausubel
- Jean Piaget
- Lev Vygotsky

**Constructivism**
- John Dewey
- Albert Bandura
- Seymour Papert
Examples of Conceptual Frameworks

**Behaviorism**

*Theorists:*
- Ivan Pavlov
- John B. Watson
- Edward Thorndike
- B.F. Skinner

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

*Theories:*
- Equity theory
- Learning theory
- Teaching theory
- Caring theory
- Relationship theory
- Identity theory
- Critical race theory
- Home-school-community theory
Selection of a theoretical framework requires understanding of the following 4 constructs:

1. Problem
2. Purpose
3. Significance
4. Research questions
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework

**Electrical System**
All rooms of a house require electricity

**Dissertation Research**
All aspects of the dissertation research should connect to the theoretical framework.
Problem, purpose, significance, research questions, methodology and data analysis must be aligned and connected to the theoretical framework.
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework

Aligning theoretical framework with the problem … its essence:

- Establishes an interaction by 2 or more factors that produce a dilemma or quandary that can cause for further examination
- Defines the root problems and other variables and constructs inherent to the problem itself
- Identifies an area that needs further research or helps to resolve/address an existing problem in the field
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework

Aligning theoretical framework with the problem ... its essence:

- What are the aims/outcomes for the problem you have generated?
- The aim of the study is ... The purpose of this study is ...
- What do you hope that this study will add to, critique, or revise current knowledge in the field?
Aligning theoretical framework with the problem ... its essence:

- The ‘so what’ of the problem
- Why is this topic important? Why should readers in your particular field care about this issue?
- What is the potential value of this study and how can it add to the body of existing work and knowledge in this field?
Aligning theoretical framework with the research questions ... its essence:

- Relationship between research questions and theoretical framework is complementary
- Research questions should embody recognizable aspects of the theoretical framework and articulate the theoretical framework in a manner by which it can be further explored in the dissertation research
- Research questions act as a liaison between existing knowledge and the problem to be resolved
- To illustrate, if the ‘lens with which you view the world’ is critical of systems and institutions, then research questions could be framed around the ideas of equality, justice, access etc.
Before selecting a theoretical framework, it is critical to examine your own epistemological beliefs...

- Our beliefs are influenced by assumptions, values, ethics, which are personal postulates.
- We all have preconceived notions.
- Our fundamental beliefs affect how we will examine and explore research.
- We need to reflect on our worldview and way of conceptualizing problems.

To illustrate, a person with a worldview that is heavily pragmatic (lens) would hardly benefit by using a critical race theory. A pragmatic worldview would be benefited by the adoption of a social network theory.
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework

Guidelines for selecting the most appropriate and best-suited theoretical framework for your dissertation research:

1. Begin by identifying your beliefs
2. Consider several theories that intersect nicely with your epistemological values and broaden your way of thinking about the concepts in your study
3. Develop a working knowledge of the theories and understand why each theory is important to you
4. Conduct a brief literature review to find support for your theories
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework

Guidelines for selecting the most appropriate and best-suited theoretical framework for your dissertation research:

5. Consult the ProQuest Dissertations and These Database to review how others have applied the specific theories you are considering

6. Consider arguments that oppose your beliefs and theories

7. Apply answers to ‘how’ the theory connects to your problem, the study’s purpose, significance, and design

8. Select one theoretical framework that provides a solid, descriptive ‘blueprint’ for your reader
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Integrating a theoretical framework to the literature review using concept mapping:

1. A brief statement of your topic
2. An introduction to the organization of the literature review
3. Identification of your chosen theoretical framework (defines the theory, identify key theorists, history of theory)
4. Specification of key theoretical principles to be applied to your topic, organized around conceptual subheadings
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Integrating a theoretical framework to the literature review using concept mapping:

5. Identification of conflicts and controversies in the literature
6. Identification of gaps in the existing literature
7. In the last paragraph only, an explanation of how your proposed study connects to existing literature
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Integrating a theoretical framework to the research methods:

- The theoretical framework will often dictate the data collection plan that is developed and will illuminate information within the data.
- In a quantitative research study constricts or theoretical notions can be used to structure the data collection and data analysis plan.
- There is no data without a framework to make sense of those data. Research findings can be used to support, extend, or modify a borrowed theory presented and applied in the dissertation.

(Lester, 2005, pp. 458-459)
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Example of Integrating a theoretical framework to the research methods in a quantitative study:

Theoretical framework relates to Greenleaf’s servant leadership theory (1977) …

- Quantitative measures like a survey instrument or an observational protocol is selected
- Survey or observational protocol is based on the 10 principles of servant leadership
- Data analysis and testing of relationships among variables follow Greenleaf’s theoretical principles.
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Example of Integrating a theoretical framework to the research methods in a qualitative (a posteriori):

Theoretical framework relates to understanding workplace bullying

- Discover themes in interview data that establish an emerging framework for understanding the phenomenon.
- Allowing theory to arise from qualitative methods may lead to a new conceptualization of the topic, or to the alignment of findings with an existing theory that can be compared and contrasted in the analysis.
- A revised supposition of workplace bullying rooted in employee emotional intelligence may emerge from the data, which would allow you as the researcher to identify, expand, or critique a new theoretical approach to the topic of inquiry.
Using our house analogy ...

Both an **elevation blueprint** and a **floor plan blueprint** must be supplied in order for a contractor to build a house. Similarly, a **theoretical framework** and its **associated concepts** is needed to structure the methodology and analysis of a dissertation.
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Let us practice applying our house analogy ...

VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Applying the house analogy consists of the following 5 steps:
1. Describing the epistemological beliefs of the dissertation student
2. Identifying and describing the problem, purpose, significance and research questions
3. Highlighting key components of the literature review
4. Providing theoretical framework that is aligned with components (mentioned above)
5. Providing an example of a methodological plan for the proposed study
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Epistemological beliefs of the dissertation student:

1. Who is this student? Identity?
2. What are his/her professional experiences?
3. What are his/her lens? What is his/her worldview?
4. What issues remained unsolved or need further attention?
5. How does he or she approach community, societal and world problems?
6. What is his or her position?
Example - Epistemological Beliefs

NSU Doctoral student X was a former elementary school teacher and now a professional development teacher trainer for many years. Doctoral student X has successfully led and collaborated in the implementation of short- as well as long-term classroom reading comprehension initiatives in grades 1-3.
Identifying and describing:

1. Problem – At Sunshine Elementary School, NSU Doctoral student X has been observing that Grades 1-3 teachers have had difficulty implementing in their classroom a certain reading comprehension program for particular reasons.

2. Purpose – The Purpose here is two-fold. First, the purpose of the study is to understand what leads to the lack of implementation with fidelity. Second, the purpose of the study is to provide strategies that will facilitate the implementation of certain reading comprehension program.
Identifying and describing:

3. Significance – This study is important because it will potentially help teachers implement and sustain educational initiatives. Moreover, the rapid and multiple implementation of future reform initiatives requires teachers to be cognizant of effective strategies for implementation. Finally, schools will be required to implement initiatives because it is a matter of equity and justice in schools that are heavily represented by status who come from certain conditions.

4. Research Questions – Some of these could be: What are the reasons or factors for the lack of implementation? What lessons have we learned from previous successful implementation of initiatives? What resources are assumed or needed to facilitate successful implementation of initiatives? How can teachers work to improve the implementation process?
Example - The Literature Review

The Literature Review:

- Key Topics/Themes - Sources
Example -

The Theoretical Framework:
- Theories - Theoretical principles

The Conceptual Framework:
- The field-discipline
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Methods:
- Type and Data Sources
- Data Analysis Plan
- How?
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Integrating a Theoretical Framework:
1. Which discipline will the theory be applied to?
2. Is the theory an appropriate fit with the methodological plan?
3. Does the study’s methodology draw from the principles and concepts of the theoretical framework?
4. Is the theory well developed? Is it too big or too small?
5. Do the problem, purpose, and significance of your study align well with the theoretical framework?
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Integrating a Theoretical Framework:
6. Can the theory be used in conjunction with the research questions being developed?
7. How does the theoretical framework inform your literature review?
8. Does the data analysis plan utilize codes determined a priori based on the theoretical framework or does the data analysis allow for the development of grounded, a posteriori codes that can lead to a new theoretical framework?
9. Does your theoretical framework undergird your conclusions, implications, and recommendations based on data analysis?
We will be presented with a case study as to which is the most appropriate and effective leadership type for a particular program implementation. But first let us look at this conceptual framework.

Bolman and Deal’s Four Framework Approach to Leadership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Central Concept</th>
<th>Image of Leadership</th>
<th>Leadership Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Factory/Machine</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Social Architecture</td>
<td>Attune structure to task, tech, environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Needs, Skills, Relationships</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Align organizational and human needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Jungle</td>
<td>Power, Competition</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Develop agenda &amp; power base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Carnival/Temple/Theater</td>
<td>Culture, Meaning</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Create faith, beauty, meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The structural frame highlights the structural aspects of organizations. It assumes:

- organizations exist to achieve goals and objectives;
- things work best when rationality prevails over human needs;
- it is most effective and efficient to assign roles using specialization and division of labor;
- effective coordination and control is needed for individuals to work together to meet the organization’s goals;
- problems are a result of poor structure.
Bolman and Deal’s Four Framework Approach to Leadership -
The Human Resource Frame

The Human Resource Frame “regards people’s skills, attitudes, energy, and commitment as vital resources capable of either making or breaking an enterprise” (p. 101). It assumes:

- organizations exist to serve human needs, rather than humans existing to serve the organization’s needs;
- people and organizations need each other: organizations need ideas, talent, and energy and people need jobs, salaries, and opportunities;
- when the fit between the individual and the organization is poor, both suffer and become victims; and a good fit benefits both.
Bolman and Deal’s Four Framework Approach to Leadership - The Political Frame

The Political Frame focuses heavily on what it views as the reality of conflict and power in organizations and views organizations “as alive and screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests” (p. 163). It assumes:

- organizations are coalitions of individuals and interest groups;
- there are lasting differences among coalition members’ values, beliefs, information, interests and perceptions of reality;
- important decisions involve the allocation of scarce resources; scarce resources make conflict a central role in the organization, power then becoming the most important and coveted resource;
- goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among different stakeholders.
Bolman and Deal’s Four Framework Approach to Leadership - The Symbolic Frame

The Symbolic Frame “seeks to interpret and illuminate basic issues of meaning and belief that make symbols so powerful” (p. 216) and sees life as being fluid rather than linear in fashion. It assumes:

- what is most important about any event is not what happened, but what it means;
- events have multiple meanings because everyone interprets experiences differently;
- most of life is ambiguous or uncertain and high levels of uncertainty undercut rational analysis, problem solving, and decision making;
- in the face of uncertainty, people create symbols to resolve confusion and provide direction and anchor hope and faith;
- many events are more important for what is expressed than what is produced (rituals, myths, or ceremonies that help people find meaning, purpose, and passion).
Let us do this exercise.

Distribute 2 sheets: one with definitions and features of frameworks and another for audience to write as investigators steps and responses to frames. These 2 sheets will be in Spanish and English.

You are the principal investigator at a secondary school which is about to implement a school-wide behavior management and monitoring program. You are going to interview several teachers. You want to understand and know teachers perceived the way the leadership of the school (principals) implemented this school-wide behavior program.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please read sheet titled: Bolman and Deal’s Four Framework Approach to Leadership. Respond to the following 2 parts of the second sheet.
Let us do this exercise.

Distribute 2 sheets: one with definitions and features of frameworks and another for audience to write as investigators steps and responses to frames. These 2 sheets will be in Spanish and English.

Sheet #1 – Integrating the Theoretical Framework

Try to write a sentence for each of the following:

1. Your epistemological beliefs
2. Problem, Purpose, Significance, Research Question(s)
3. Key Topics – The Literature Review
4. Theoretical (theories) and Conceptual (field) Framework
5. Methods and Data Analysis Plan

Sheet #2 – Responding to & using the Theoretical Framework

Comment on how leaders were perceived under these four frames:

- **Structural**
- **Human Resource**
- **Political**
- **Symbolic**

Some questions (2) can be: Which frame was more effective? Which frame was more dominant? Which frame was most needed? Which frame was not used?
Let us share (1 or 2) & Let’s Conclude by Reviewing and Challenging Each Other

I. The Need – Justification
II. Theoretical Framework – The Basics
III. The Blueprint – The Analogy – A House
IV. Theoretical vs. Conceptual Frameworks – The Differences
V. Selecting a Theoretical Framework
VI. Integrating a Theoretical Framework

Your task as doctoral student is to ...
References


