

# Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Chapter Guide

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## 3.1 Introduction

Recap chapter 2 with one sentence for the golden thread. Refer to the definition of theoretical or conceptual framework in chapter 1/proposal and expand on it with new sources. Reiterate the reasons for using your study's theoretical or conceptual framework by cross-referencing the information in chapter 1.

Remind the reader about the theories or concepts that form part of your theoretical or conceptual framework, as mentioned in chapter 1. Expand on the reasons for choosing these theory/theories or concepts using new sources and avoiding repeating what you wrote in chapter 1. Have a linking sentence to the next section.

As a reminder of the reasons for choosing your framework, figure 1 presents the role of frameworks in your research and table 2 summarises the differences between theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

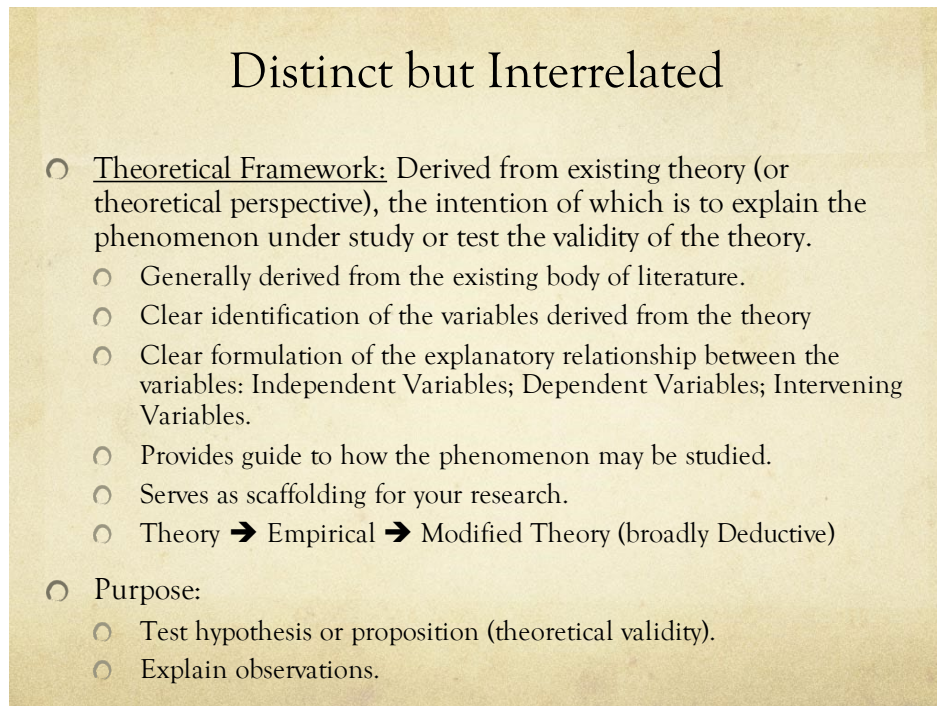


Figure 1: The Role of Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks in your Research (source: Adesina, J.O. (nd))

Table 1: Main differences between theoretical and conceptual frameworks

Theoretical framework	Conceptual framework
Make research results generalizable	Consists of concepts that are placed within a sequential design
To establish connections between observations and facts	A less formal structure and used when there is no theory which is appropriate for the study
To predict and control situation	Based on concepts, propositions derived from empirical observation and intuition
To stimulate research through the extension of knowledge by providing direction and impetus	May lead to theory development
A model is a symbolic representation to express abstract concepts and relationships	

### **3.2. The first theory (if you have more than one theory)**

Cross-reference the description and background of this theory from chapter 1 and add further information from new sources to strengthen your comprehension.

Identify this theory's concepts/dimensions/features/properties and indicate if you will include them all or if you will select some. If you will select some, give reasons for your selection. Describe each concept/dimension/feature/property and show its relevance to your study.

Review the literature related to this theory to summarise and synthesise the arguments and ideas of its current existing knowledge.

From the literature reviewed about this theory, highlight the key points that link this theory with your study. Include a sentence that will link this section with the next.

### **3.2. The second theory (if you have more than one theory)**

Cross-reference the description and background of this theory from chapter 1 and add further information from new sources to strengthen your comprehension.

Identify this theory's concepts/dimensions/features/properties and indicate if you will include them all or select some. If you will select some, give reasons for your selection. Describe each concept/dimension/feature/property and show its relevance to your study.

Review the literature related to this theory to summarise and synthesise the arguments and ideas of its current existing knowledge.

From the literature reviewed about this theory, highlight the key points that link this theory with your study. Include a sentence that will link this section with the next

N.B: If you have more than two theories, you do the same with the rest.

### 3.3 Using a Conceptual Framework to Guide your Research Methodology

#### The Conceptual Framework

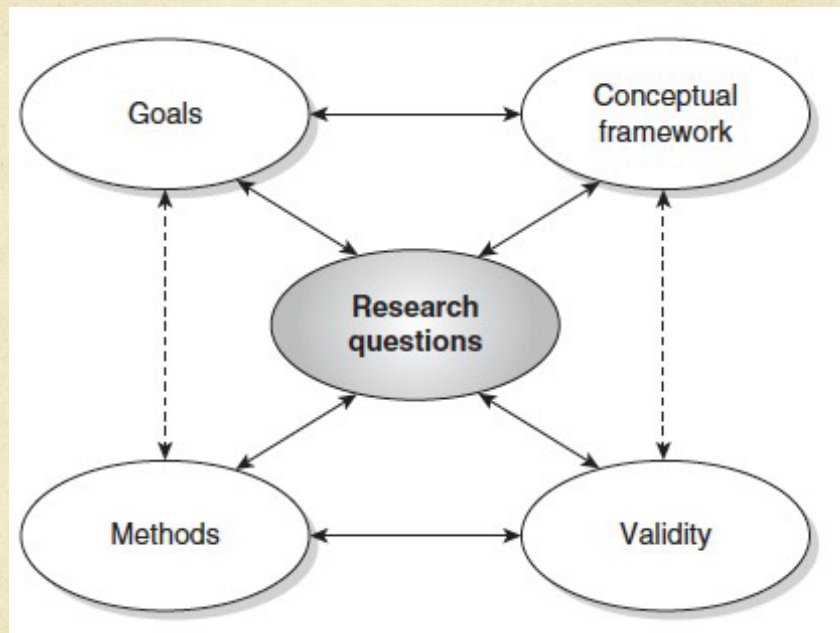


The **conceptual framework** definition focuses on how the problem under research will have to be explored in a specific direction undertaken by the researcher. It describes the relationship between specific variables identified in the study and outlines the process of the whole investigation. Thus, in a conceptual framework, you develop conclusions or hypotheses based on your own theory instead of using the work of others.

Figure 2: The Conceptual Framework

Remember your conceptual framework is influenced by your research goals and research questions and gives credence to the trustworthiness of your research.

## Maxwell's Research Design Map\*



Note: Maxwell's focus was on qualitative research

\*Maxwell, J.A. 2013 *Qualitative Research Design: an interactive approach* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Sage Publications.

### 3.4. Positioning the theoretical framework to guide the research methodology

Draw the common features from the theories that relate to your study. I am giving an example of two animals (a cat and a dog), they are different animals and can provide different services to the house owner, but they both share the characteristics of being pets and companions to house owners.

### 3.5. Conclusion

Conclude this chapter by summarising what you discussed and linking it with the next chapter.