

Chapter 8 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

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What is “Theory”?

- An **abstract** generalization that explains **how phenomena are interrelated**
- Used less restrictively to refer to a broad characterization of a phenomenon
- Theories consist of **two or more concepts** and a **set of propositions** that form a logically interrelated system, providing a mechanism for deducing hypotheses.
- **Example:** My theory is: “women treating for breast cancer will adhere to the treatment if they have social support”

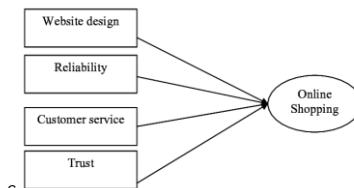
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Types of Theories

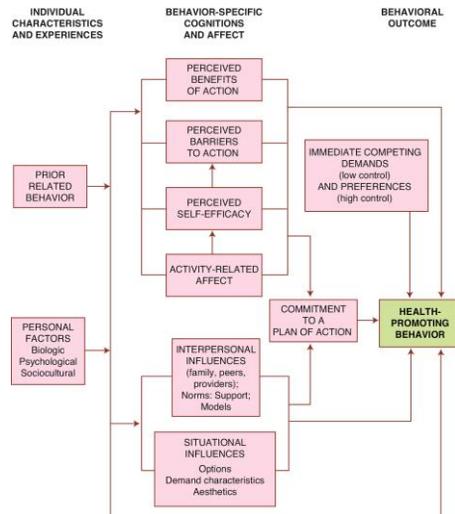
- **Classical theory**—an abstract generalization that systematically explains relationships among phenomena
- **Descriptive theory**—a theory that thoroughly **describes a phenomenon**, based on rich observations of it
- **Grand theory**—a theory that attempts to explain **large aspects** of human experiences
- **Middle-range theory**—a theory that **focuses on a specific aspect** of human experience (e.g., stress); more specific and more amenable to empirical testing
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What are “Models”?

- **Conceptual model**: deals with **abstractions**, assembled in a coherent scheme (representation of a system that uses concepts)
 - Represents a more loosely structured attempt to explain phenomena than theories; can serve as springboards for generating hypotheses
- **Schematic model (using diagrams)**
 - Visually represents relationships among phenomena and is used in both quantitative and qualitative research



The Health Promotion Model



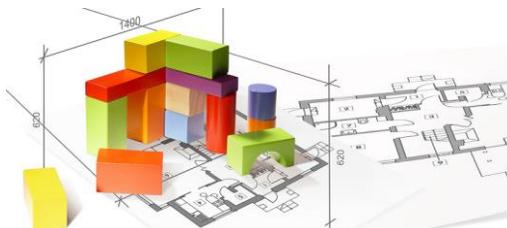
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What is "Framework"?

- The overall conceptual underpinnings of a study
 - **Theoretical framework** (based on theory)
 - **Conceptual framework** (based on a conceptual model)
 - A study's framework is often implicit.
 - Quantitative researchers are less likely to identify their frameworks than qualitative researchers.



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Question

Which type of theory systematically explains relationships among phenomena?

- a. Classical
- b. Descriptive
- c. Grand
- d. Middle-range

Answer

- a. Classical

Rationale: Classical theory is an abstract generalization that systematically explains relationships among phenomena. Descriptive theory thoroughly describes a phenomenon based on rich observations of it. Grand theory attempts to explain large aspects of human experiences. Middle-range theory focuses on a specific aspect of human experience (e.g., stress).

Commonalities—Theories and Conceptual Models

- Both use concepts as building blocks
- Require conceptual definitions of key concepts
- Can be represented in a schematic model
- Are created by humans
- Are developed inductively

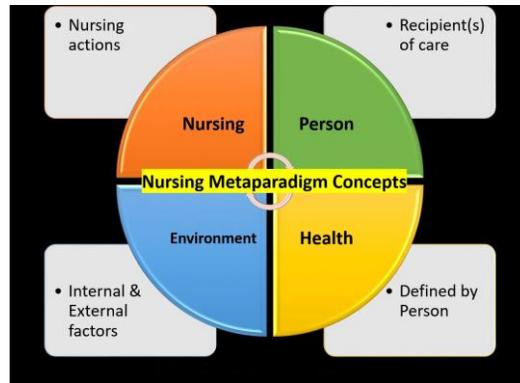


Commonalities —Theories and Conceptual Models—(cont.)

- **Cannot be proven**—they are supported to greater or lesser degrees
- Can be used to generate hypotheses
- Can serve as a stimulus to research

Conceptual Models of Nursing

- Formal explanations of what nursing practice is
- Four concepts central to models of nursing
 - Human beings
 - Environment
 - Health
 - Nursing



Conceptual Models of Nursing— (cont.)

- Conceptual models of nursing that have been used in nursing research include:
 - Roy's Adaptation Model
 - **Middle-range theories** focus on more **specific phenomena**.
 - Beck's Theory of Postpartum Depression (2012)
 - Mishel's Uncertainty in Illness Theory (Mishel, 1990)
 - Pender's Health Promotion Model (2015)

Question

Tell whether the following statement is True or False.

Conceptual models and theories are similar in that both can be represented by a schematic model.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer

- a. True

Rationale: A conceptual model and a theory can be depicted or represented by a graphic representation or schematic model.

Other Models Used by Nurse Researchers

- **Shared theories (from other disciplines)**
 - Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory
 - Prochaska's Transtheoretical Model
 - Becker's Health Belief Model (HBM)
 - Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Examples of Key Constructs From Shared Theories

- **Self-efficacy** (Social Cognitive Theory)
- **Stages of change** (Transtheoretical Model)
- **Behavioral intentions** (Theory of Planned Behavior)

Theories in Qualitative Research

- **Substantive theory**—conceptualizations of the target phenomena
- Theory embedded in a research tradition
 - **Grounded theory** (e.g., **symbolic interactionism**)
 - **Ethnography** (cultural theories: ideational and materialistic)
 - **Phenomenology** (the phenomenological philosophy of human experience)

Theoretical Underpinning of Grounded Theory

- Humans act toward things based on the meanings that the things have for them.
- The meaning of things is derived from the human interactions.
- Meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process.

Question

Tell whether the following statement is True or False.
Parse's Humanbecoming Paradigm is an example of a nonnursing model used by nurse researchers.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer

- b. False

Rationale: Parse's Humanbecoming Paradigm is an example of a grand theory developed by nurses.

The Use of Theories or Models in Quantitative Research

- Testing a theory through deducing hypothesis to be tested
- Testing a theory-based intervention
- Using a theory/model as an organizing or interpretive structure
- Fitting a problem into theory, after the fact (not recommended)