Research Problem, Purpose, & Questions

The Grounded Theory Design

MARK MCCASLIN

Grounded Theory

A method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data. Hence, the analytic categories are directly 'grounded' in the data. The method favors analysis over description, fresh categories over preconceived ideas and extant theories, and systematically focused sequential data collection over large initial samples.

Two Camps

▶ **Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz)**
▶ A constructivist grounded theory recognizes that the viewer creates the data and ensuing analysis through interaction with the viewed. Data do not provide a window into reality. Rather, the 'discovered' reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts.

　　▶ Reference: groundedtheoryreview

▶ **Objectivist Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss; Glaser)**
▶ Objectivist grounded theory assumes the reality of an external world, takes for granted a neutral observer, views categories as derived from data, and sees the representation of data and subjects as non-problematic.

　　▶ Reference: www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/grounded-theory

Grounded Theory

▶ Grounded theory is a form of qualitative research developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for the purpose of discovering theory grounded in the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p. 6).

▶ Grounded theory is a method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on constructing conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data. Hence, the analytic categories are directly 'grounded' in the data. The method favors analysis over description, fresh categories over preconceived ideas and extant theories, and systematically focused sequential data collection over large initial samples (Charmaz, 2006).

Grounded Theory

▶ **Focus** - developing a theory grounded in the data from the field

▶ **Discipline of origin** - Sociology

▶ **Data collection** - interviews with up to 20-30 individuals to "saturate" categories and detail a theory

▶ **Narrative form** - Theory or theoretical model

Grounded Theory Data Analysis

Constructivist

- Initial Coding
- Focused Coding
- Theoretical Coding
- Axial Coding
- Theory Generation

Objectivists

- Opening Coding
- Axial Coding
- Selective Coding
- Conditional Matrix
- Theory Generation

Research Alignment

▶ When we speak about alignment in your dissertation research, there are five elements involved:

- ▶ The Problem Statement
- ▶ The Purpose Statement
- ▶ The Overarching (Grand Tour) Research Question
- ▶ The Philosophical/Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
- ▶ The Research Design

An Early Question

- Why are organizational leaders often seen as exhausted, overwhelmed, and/or burned out?

The Problem Statement

- The problem is that organizational leaders have demanding and exhaustive roles that often result in unhealthy leadership practices (McCaslin, 2023).

The Purpose Statement

► The purpose of the constructivist grounded theory study will be to construct a theoretical framework that reveals the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders.

► The purpose of this objectivists grounded theory study will be to discover the theory the explains the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders.

The Overarching Research Question

- The research question comes next in terms of the linear flow of the proposal, but in reality, it is formed at the same level as the purpose statement.

- **The why behind this concept is held by the selection of the research design.**

- The research design is selected precisely for its ability to address the research question.

- **We do not pick a design and then ask a question – we ask the question and then select the proper tool.**

- That the tool selected is revealed in the purpose statement speaks to the corresponding nature of the problem/purpose/question complex.

The Overarching Research Question

▶ What is the theoretical framework that reveals the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders?

▶ What is the theory that explains the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders?

▶ Note: grounded theory is an excellent tool for theorizing processes as well.

   ▶ What is the theory that explains the process for…?

Alignment…AGAIN!

- The three statement are coming into alignment. However, look again at the problem:

- The problem is that organizational leaders have demanding and exhaustive roles that often result in unhealthy leadership practices (McCaslin, 2023).
  - What is now missing is the design element. To address this add a second sentence.

- A theoretical understanding of how to promote and practice healthy leadership for individuals in leader roles is an evident gap in the theoretical and practical literature.

The Research Triad

- The problem is that organizational leaders have demanding and exhaustive roles that often result in unhealthy leadership practices (McCaslin, 2023). A theoretical understanding of how to promote and practice healthy leadership for individuals in leader roles is an evident gap in the theoretical and practical literature.

- **The purpose of the constructivist grounded theory study will be to construct a theoretical framework that reveals the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders.**

- The purpose of this objectivists grounded theory study will be to discover the theory the explains the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders.

- **What is the theoretical framework that reveals the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders?**

- What is the theory that explains the nature of healthy leadership in promoting healthy organizational leaders?

Alignment…AGAIN and AGAIN!

- The Philosophical/Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

- The framework is the backbone of the study, and therefore I do not see it being emergent but intentional. Merriam (1998) called the theoretical framework the structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study.

Types of Frameworks

▶ A *philosophical framework* is a statement concerning how your study is *grounded* by philosophical believes and underpinnings.

▶ A *theoretical framework* provides the theoretical foundation that *informs* the study.

▶ A *conceptual framework* speaks to the aspects of the literature, theoretical and practical, that are *related* to the study.

Philosophical Frameworks

- ▶ *Philosophical frameworks* are a statement concerning how your study is *grounded* by philosophical believes and underpinnings.

- ▶ In that regard they are often a reflection of what is beautiful, good, and true. You may see them clearer as they are axiology, ontology and epistemology working together.

- ▶ **…isms**

  - ▶ Denoting a system, principle, or ideological movement. For example:

    - ▶ **Constructivism**

    - ▶ **Pragmatism**

Conceptual Frameworks

▶ A **conceptual framework** speaks to the aspects of the literature, theoretical and practical, that are **related** to the study.

▶ These are often multiple theories and aid in uncovering the intersections of knowledge and disciplines that help focus the study and address the problem and/or opportunity at hand.

> Disciplines, like nations, are a necessary evil that enable human beings of bounded rationality to simplify the structure of their goals. But parochialism is everywhere, and the world sorely needs international and interdisciplinary travelers who will carry new knowledge from one enclave to another.
>
> ~Herbert Simon (Nobel Laureate, 1992)
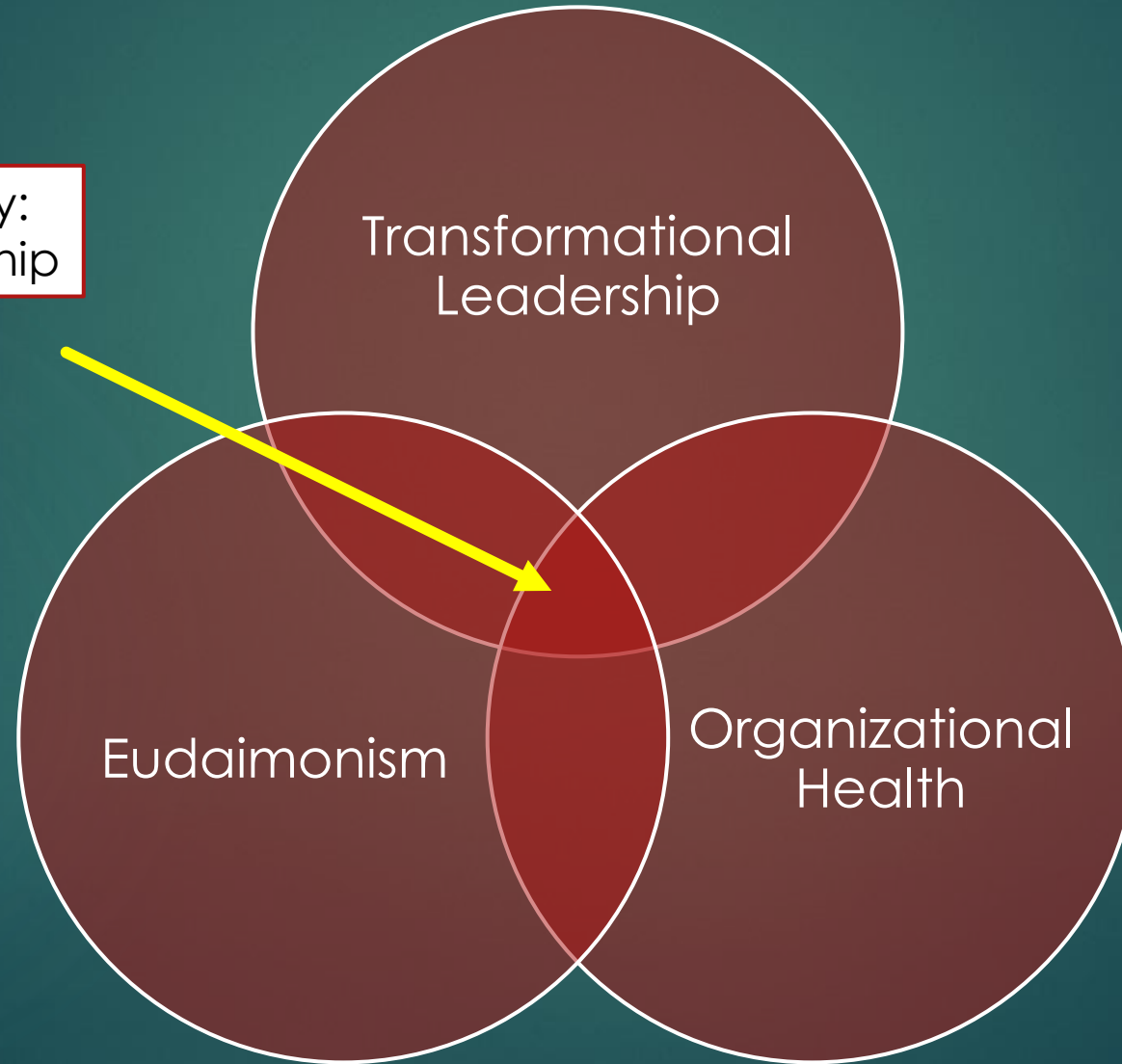
Transdisciplinarity

Transdisciplinarity concerns itself with the transgression of artificially constructed discipline-based boundaries allowing our collective intelligences to approach and solve the big problems we face thereby granting an address to the real issues of concern

"Transdisciplinary research practices are issues – or problem-centered and prioritize the problem at the center of research over discipline-specific concerns, theories or methods". (Leavy, 2011, p.9)

Conceptual Frameworks

The current Study:
Healthy Leadership

Transformational
Leadership

Eudaimonism

Organizational
Health

Theoretical Frameworks

▶ A **theoretical framework** provides the theoretical foundation that **informs** the study.

▶ "A theoretical framework can be defined as any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes, at a variety of levels that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena". (Anfara, V. A. & Mertz, N. T., 2006, p. xxvii) Such theories are at the center of epistemology – what do we know.

Theoretical Frameworks

- ▶ For example:
- transformative learning theory (Mezirow)
- transformational leadership theory (Burns)
- social learning theory (Bandura)
- metamotivation (Maslow)
- social development theory (Vygotsky)
- attribution theory (Heider)
- cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger)
- psychosocial stages of development (Erikson)
- theory of cognitive development (Piaget)
- privacy regulation theory (Irwin Altman)
- moral foundations theory (Jonathan Haidt, Kohlberg