

Development of a conceptual framework for post graduate study

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I am neither especially clever nor especially
gifted. I am very , very curious. - Albert Einstein

Introduction

- Visit current issues in terms of supervisors, students and skill sets.
- Describe conceptual framework
- Develop a conceptual framework for postgraduate studies.

Challenges - Supervisor

- Is it useful? – Mode 2 research
- Conceptual skills of students
- Lack of reading
- Do not have a topic/unclear topic
- Writing skills
- Referencing/Plagiarism
- Low motivation
- **Research methodology**
- **Development of objectives**
- **Alignment of objectives with the research questions**
- Checking of work prior to submission
- Drop-out

Stakeholder Management - Student

- Institution
- Supervisor (examiner)
- Family, friends
- Respondents
- Subject experts
- Practitioners
- Professionals – statistician, editor
- Employers
- Gatekeepers
- **Your team**

Skills Set Ratings(1-10)

- Written communication
- Presentation of work
- Computer skills
- Referencing
- Team player
- Reflection
- Meeting deadlines
- Motivation
- Subject knowledge
- Research skills
- Working under pressure
- Administration
- Trust/integrity
- Supervisor interventions

Conceptual Framework - Definition

- Is the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that supports and informs your research and the relationships among them(Miles and Huberman1994: Robson 2002).
- What is out there that you plan to study, what is the current status of the information and what has caused this situation?

Conceptual Framework contd

- What are the key concepts in the study?
- What is going on in the literature with regards to the concepts and related issues?
- Which theories/models inform current understanding of these concepts?
- How are the concepts and theories related to each other?(Rhodes University)

Importance of Conceptual Framework

- Sets **boundaries** for the study
- Provides explanations of “why” and “how”
- Acts as a filtering tool for research questions and data collection methods.
- Limitation – individual bias

Concept maps

- **Mind mapping**
- Flow charts
- Tree diagrams
- Shape based diagrams

Constructing a conceptual Framework

- Experience of researcher
- Theories – old and current
- Research (past and current about the subject)
- Thought experimentation(Maxwell: 2004)
- **Need to indicate relevance, relationships, advantages and limitations.**

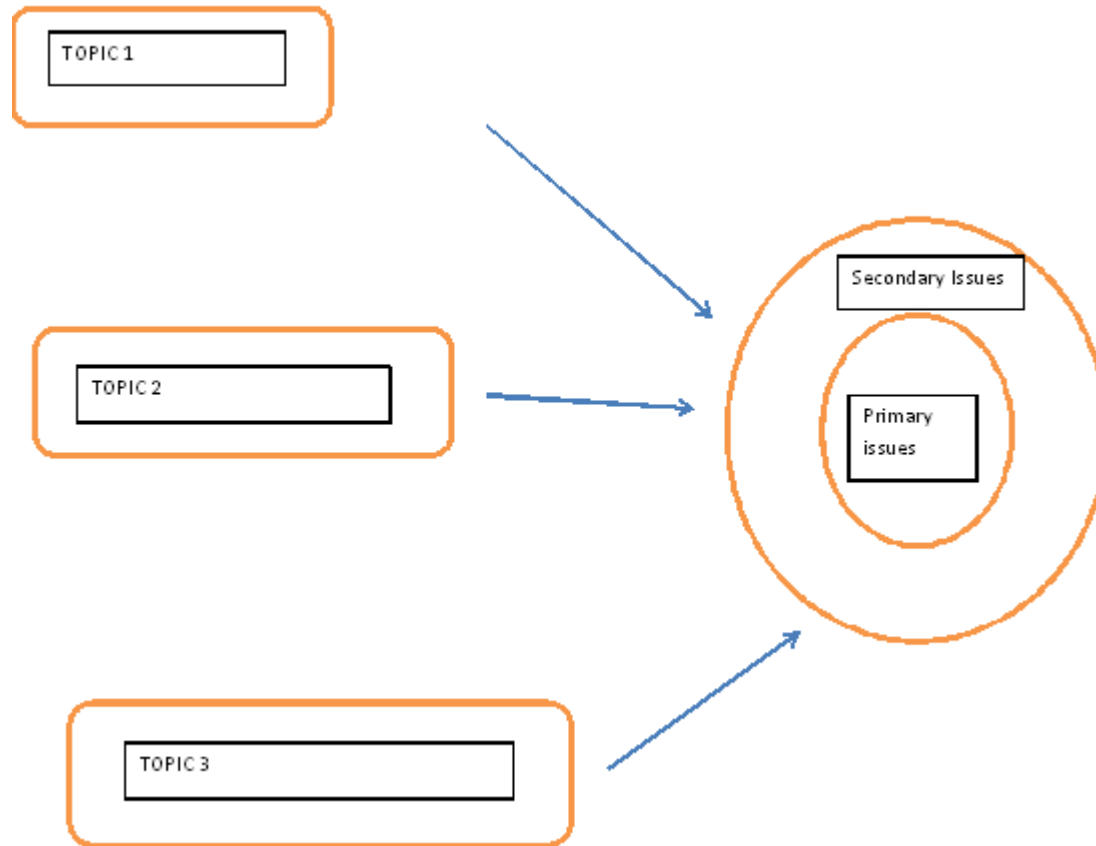
Research Paradigms

- Refers to a set of philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world(ontology) and how we can understand it(epistemology).
- Paradigms are important since it includes specific research methodologies.
- Qualitative research – interpretivism, critical theory, feminism, postmodernism, phenomenology.
- Quantitative research - positivist

Idea/Problem

- Is it current?
- Would it attract attention?
- Is it useful – Mode 2?
- Is it “appropriate” for your qualification?
- What evidence is available that it is a “real/significant” problem?
- Is adequate information available?
- Can it be narrowed to obtain greater depth rather than breadth?

Building a Topic



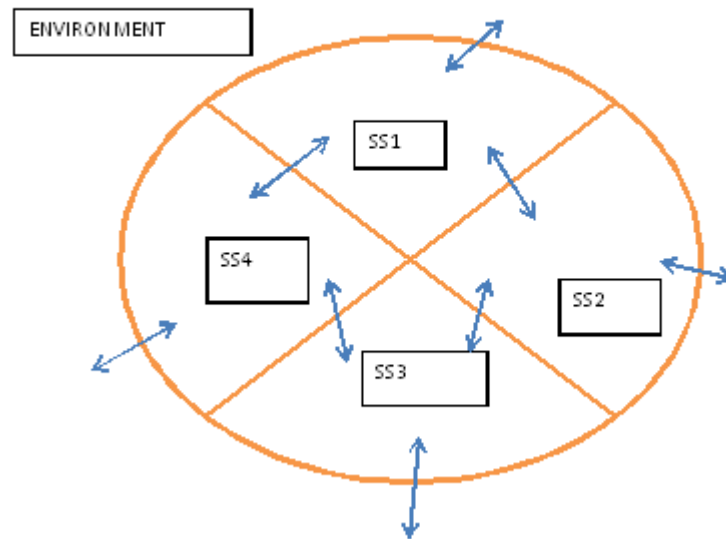
Systems Theory

- A system has a boundary and sub-systems that are interdependent and interrelated.
- In an **open system** the system and its components interact with the environment.
- The **complexity** of a system is determined by the number of sub-systems, interactions among the sub-systems , attributes of the sub-system and the degree of organisation in the sub-system (Schoderbek et al(1985)).

Systems approaches

- **Functionalist** – Systems appear as objective aspects of reality independent of the observers.
- **Interpretive** – focus on behaviour and gives attention to perceptions, beliefs, interests and values
- **Emancipatory** – are suspicious of the current social order and seek to radically change it.
- **Post modern** – seeks to reclaim conflict, and to ensure the marginalised voices are recognised and heard (Jackson:2000)

Open System

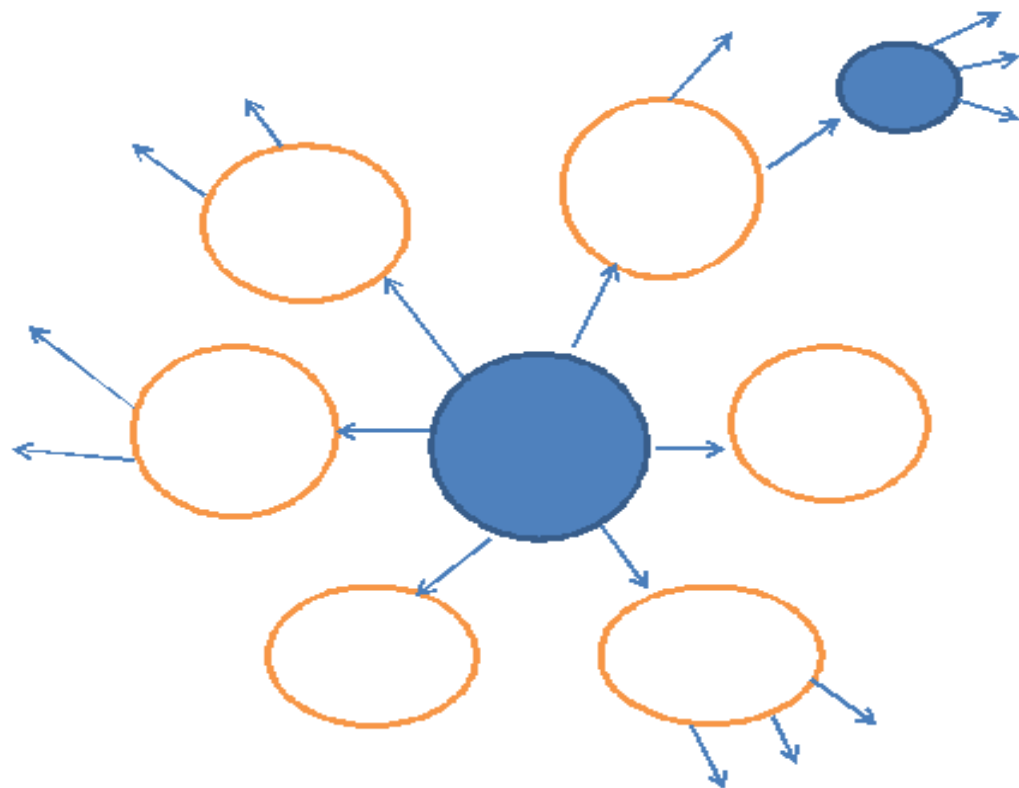


Mind Mapping

- A mind map is a type of (radial) diagram that contains words, ideas or tasks that are linked around a central idea or keyword.
- **Benefits**
 - Gives you a good overview of important factors, subsystems, concepts, points and keywords
 - Organizes your topic
 - Encourages better understanding
- **Think in terms of key words or symbols**

Mind Mapping(contd)

- **Write down the most important word or short phrase or symbol for the centre.**
- **Post other important concepts and their words outside the circle**
- **Edit this first phase**
Think about the relation of outside items to the centre item
- **Continue working outward**
Think weird: combine concepts to expand your map. As you expand your map, tend to become more specific or detailed
- **Set the map aside - reflect**
- **Later, continue development and revision**
Stop and think about relationships you are developing
Expand the map over time to complete the “picture”

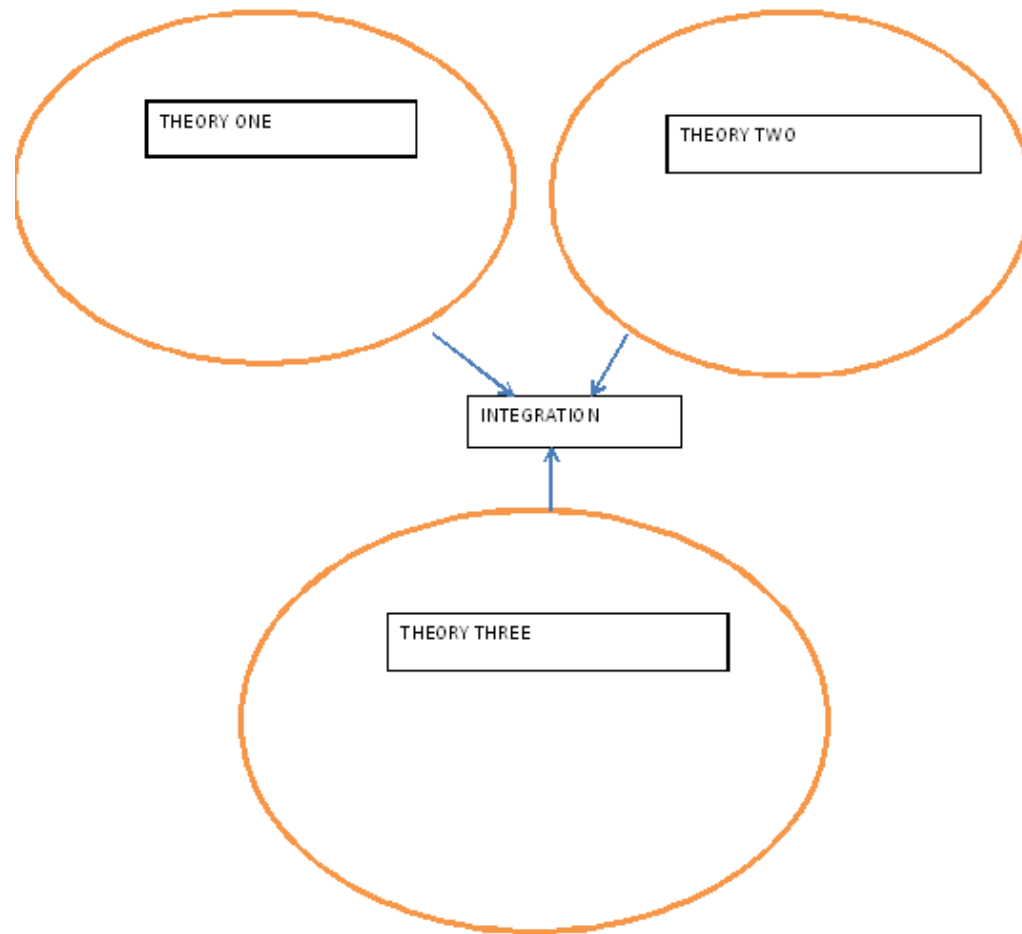


SPECIAL TOPICS

Identify Theories

- Evolution of the theories
- Current standing in the field
- Contentious issues of each theory
- Relationships with other selected theories.
- **Relevance to the aim, objectives and research questions.**
- How can the selected theories be integrated into the study?

Theories contd



Objectives

- Must support the aim/topic.
- Provide depth of the subject matter
- Limited to a few
- Must be used to develop the research questions.

Research Questions

- Must flow from the objectives.
- Must be well constructed
- Questions must be relevant/appropriate for the different respondent groups
- Should add value to the study.

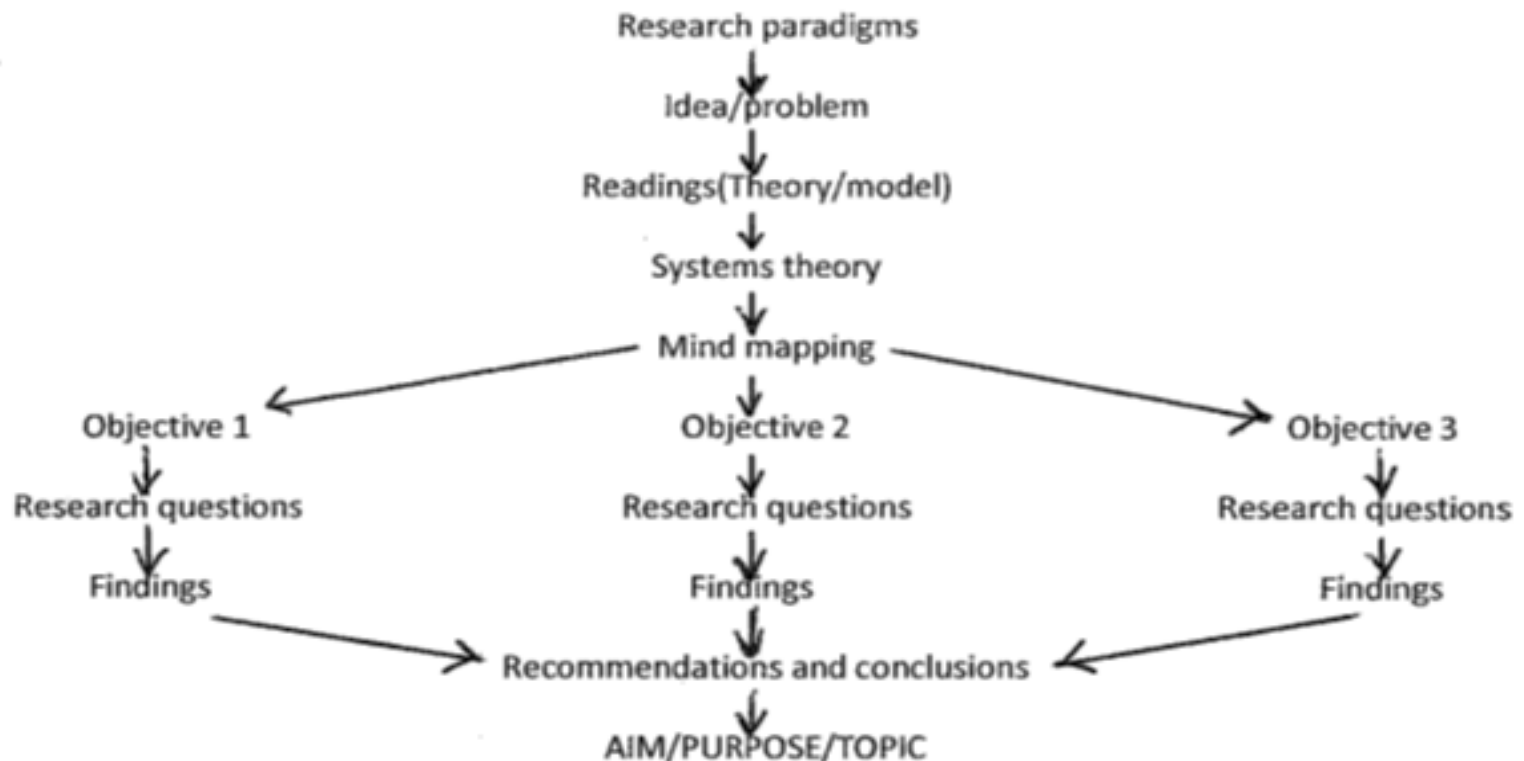
Recommendations/Conclusions

- Findings should be used to make recommendations for each objective
- The conclusions should integrate and align the recommendations with the topic.

ALIGNMENT

FINAL FLOW CHART

FLOW DIAGRAM



Conclusions

- Conceptual framework is critical for post graduate studies.
- The researcher develops a better understanding of the research process.
- The quality of research is improved due to a better understanding of the factors or sub-systems in the field of study.

THANK YOU