



Conceptualization and development of frameworks in literature review: methodological analysis and its implications in scientific research

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ABSTRACT

The use of frameworks in research is important, because with it the research to be carried out gets the right direction and a clear position. However, many studies do not use the framework in their implementation or use it but not in depth. This article aims to analyze the role, relevance, and development of frameworks in the cross-disciplinary scientific literature. The framework is understood as a conceptual foundation that connects theories, methodologies, and findings so as to maintain research coherence. This study uses a literature study design by examining articles from accredited national and international journals. Data were collected through the search of various academic databases and analyzed using a thematic approach to identify patterns of conceptualization, relevance, and forms of adaptation of frameworks in various disciplines. The results of the study show that the framework functions strategically in strengthening theoretical foundations, sharpening the identification of research gaps, and guiding the design of contextual and innovative research models. This study confirms that the development of a framework that is adaptive to social, cultural, and disciplinary contexts is key to maintaining relevance and increasing scientific contribution in the midst of the dynamics of knowledge development.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and faster digitalization, the use of theoretical frameworks or models in the review of scientific research literature has become very important. Theoretically, a framework helps researchers structure relevant concepts and variables and explain the relationships between them (Jarvik, 2001; Mensah et al., 2020; Vinz, 2022). Theories and models also provide a systematic basis for linking empirical phenomena to broader abstract concepts (Nyfoudi et al., 2024). In this context, the selection and use of the right model or framework has been shown to improve the quality of research and allow for sharper analysis. For example,

theoretical frameworks are often used in social research with the aim of connecting the constructs of variables and explaining the "why" or "how" a phenomenon occurs (Kivunja, 2018; Motitswe, 2025; Van der Walddt, 2024).

Field-wise, many empirical studies show that although models have been extensively developed, contextual implementation and adaptation in many domains are still not optimal. For example, in academic education, studies have found that the application of frameworks in research is often done on the surface and is not always deeply integrated into research design or data analysis (Kokkonniemi & Isomöttönen, 2025). This shows that in the real world (field) there are still challenges in operationalizing models or frameworks effectively and relevant to the context. A similar phenomenon also arises in technology adoption studies, which show that although models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) are widely used, there are still contextual variables that have not been fully accounted for (Alyoussef, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2019; Lee, 2024).

In previous studies, a number of studies have explored the use of models and frameworks in scientific research. For example, a study that discussed the comparison of TAM and UTAUT in the health sector identified that while these frameworks are robust, there are limitations in terms of domain-specific adaptation (Lee, 2024). Other studies propose a theoretical framework selection model that takes into account the research paradigm as well as the researcher's epistemological position (Omodan, 2022). Then, a systematic review in the literature confirms that the transparency of the use of frameworks in the field of library and information science still needs to be improved (Ngulube & Mosha, 2023). Furthermore, research on the use of frameworks in social research emphasizes that a mature theoretical framework can strengthen the reliability and relevance of research (Evans et al., 2011; Van der Walddt, 2024). , there is a strong empirical basis to show that frameworks and models play a major role in scientific research.

A critical synthesis of these findings reveals an important gap in the form of a lack of exploration of the process of adaptation and the development of a framework that is responsive to social, cultural, and disciplinary dynamics. Thus, this research is here to fill this gap through a comprehensive analysis of conceptualization, relevance, adaptation, and framework development, as well as showing how these models can be transformed to be more contextual, innovative, and applicable in various fields of modern research.

The contribution of this research to scientific development is as follows. First, theoretically, this article enriches the literature on research methods by presenting a model/framework that has been adapted to the context and developed based on empirical results. Second, in practical terms, this research offers guidance for researchers and practitioners in applying a more precise and contextual framework – one that not only adopts the existing model rawly, but also modifies or builds it according to the needs of the field. Third, this research can be a foundation for further studies in various fields to develop or adapt models that are more relevant to changing social, technological, or economic conditions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher applied a library research design by analyzing scientific articles obtained through searching the Scopus database, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and nationally reputable journals as many as 17 articles. The articles were selected through strict selection criteria, namely: (1) published in the period 2015–2025, (2) peer-reviewed publications, (3) available in full text, and (4) explicitly discussing the use, analysis, or development of the framework in scientific research. The characteristics of the sources analyzed include the disciplines (education, social sciences, management, technology, and health), the type of framework used (theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and implementive model), and the methodological approach of each research.

The analysis process was carried out using the thematic analysis method, which produced four main thematic categories, namely: (1) framework conceptualization patterns, (2) framework relevance in research structures, (3) adaptation and contextualization of cross-domain frameworks, and (4) development of new models or frameworks. The presentation of this thematic category strengthens the transparency of the analysis process and provides a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of the use of frameworks in the scientific literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Conceptualization of Framework in Literature Review

The conceptualization of the framework in the literature review has a strategic position in building the theoretical and conceptual basis of a scientific research. The framework serves as an "intellectual map" that

helps researchers understand the relationship between the theories, variables, and phenomena being studied. According to Vinz (2022), The theoretical framework provides direction for researchers to connect research arguments with pre-existing theories, while conceptual frameworks focus on how key concepts interact with each other and are tested in a particular research context. Thus, a framework is not just a complementary element, but a structure that determines the logical strength and overall coherence of research.

Furthermore, (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017) explained that the framework conceptualization process involves several important steps, namely: (1) identification of the source theory that is the conceptual foundation, (2) the definition and limitations of each main construct, and (3) mapping the relationships between constructs to be tested or described. This process determines the direction of development of independent, dependent, and moderator or mediation variables relevant to the research objectives. A well-designed framework is not only descriptive, but also predictive – that is, it is able to explain why and how relationships between variables occur based on a strong theoretical foundation (Wang et al., 2020).

Atlasi added that one of the mistakes that often occurs is the overlap between literature review, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework. Many researchers combine all three without a clear separation of functions, even though each has a different role. Literature review serves to review past findings, the theoretical framework highlights the major theories underlying the research, while the conceptual framework describes how the theory is operationalized in a specific context. If this separation is not done appropriately, then the research structure will lose methodological coherence and potentially produce biased findings (Kivunja, 2018).

In the last decade, several researchers have developed new approaches to conceptualizing frameworks to be more dynamic and relevant to social contexts and technological developments. For example Nyfoudi et al. (2024) developed an adaptive conceptual framework that emphasizes the importance of flexibility in connecting theories with new phenomena that emerge in the digital age. This adaptive approach requires researchers to not only adopt existing theories, but also adapt them to relevant new contexts and variables. Thus, the framework is a reflective tool that continues to evolve along with the dynamics of science.

Meanwhile, Sarmiento et al. (2019) highlight a classic problem in social research, namely the use of frameworks that are too rigid and not tailored to the characteristics of a particular population or culture. Many studies, especially in the fields of education and health, still use theoretical models developed in the West without adapting them to local contexts. Even Masters (2015) found that in the field of nursing, many researchers continue to use the Roy Adaptation Model without updating its construct to fit the development of modern health paradigms. This phenomenon shows the importance of re-conceptualizing the framework to remain relevant, contextual, and sensitive to socio-cultural changes.

In a methodological context, the conceptualization of the framework is also closely related to the research paradigm. Omodan (2022) asserts that each paradigm (positivistic, interpretive, or critical) has different implications for how the framework is built and used. For example, in qualitative research, the framework functions more as a flexible guide to understand the meaning of phenomena in depth, while in quantitative research the framework acts as a structural map to test the relationships between variables empirically. By understanding this epistemological position, the researcher can choose and develop a framework that is consistent with his research goals and approaches.

In addition, the development of modern frameworks is now heavily influenced by evidence-based research and multidisciplinary approaches. Nilsen (2015) suggests that frameworks can function to explain, predict, and evaluate the implementation of concepts in various scientific contexts. This is supported by a study (Mnguni (2021) which confirms that a strong framework will produce a middle-range theory that is applicable and can be tested in various practical contexts. This approach is particularly useful in educational, psychology, and counseling research that demands a close relationship between theory and field practice.

In practice, the conceptualization of the framework can begin by answering four key questions: (1) what is to be researched, (2) why it is important, (3) how the research is conducted, and (4) what does it mean for existing theories. This question serves as a reflective guide for the framework to be not only conceptual, but also rooted in empirical reality. A good framework must integrate theories, concepts, and research variables in a logical, argumentative, and empirically verifiable structure (Gogus, 2023).

For example, in guidance and counseling research, frameworks can combine developmental theory, social-emotional learning theory, and humanistic counseling approaches to form a comprehensive model. Such an approach allows researchers to interpret the relationship between psychological variables (such as motivation and mental well-being) and the educational and social context more fully. Adaptation and integration across theories such as this shows that the framework is not static, but a living and continuously evolving system according to scientific and practical needs (Kokkonen & Isomöttönen, 2025).

Thus, the conceptualization of the framework in the literature review not only serves to strengthen the theoretical validity of the research, but also to enrich the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. A systematic, contextual, and adaptive framework will help researchers bridge the gap between theory and practice, as well as ensure that research has a significant scientific and applicative contribution. In this context, this article asserts that the success of scientific research is determined not only by the accuracy of the methodology, but also by the depth and precision of the conceptualization of the framework used.

Relevance and Role of Frameworks in Literature Review

The framework has a very important relevance in ensuring that a research has a strong and consistent scientific basis. In the modern scientific context, frameworks serve as "conceptual maps" that lead researchers to trace the logical relationship between theories, methods, and empirical data. According to Kivunja (2018), the framework helps researchers structure ideas and theories so that research is not trapped in purely descriptive exposure. With the framework, researchers can build a systematic flow of thinking from theoretical conceptualization to data analysis. This makes the framework not only a formal complement to the academic structure, but an integral part of the reasoning logic of scientific research.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework plays a role in providing scientific justification for each research decision, including in the selection of variables, methods, and interpretation of results. A strong framework will clarify the epistemological basis of a study, as it shows a clear relationship between theory and observed empirical reality. In contrast, research without a mature framework tends to lose conceptual direction and produce interpretations that are fragmentary (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). In this context, the framework serves as a "scientific navigation map" that ensures that all components of research move in a logical and methodological direction.

According to (Nilsen, 2015), the framework can be used for three main purposes: (1) explaining the research process, (2) understanding the determinants of a phenomenon, and (3) evaluating the implementation or implementation of a particular concept. These three functions show that the framework plays a role not only in the early stages of research, but also in the interpretation and validation stages of results. In social research, for example, frameworks can be used to explain the relationship between social variables such as motivation, interaction, and behavior, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of theoretical models in answering observed phenomena. In this way, the framework becomes not only a conceptual tool, but also an analytical tool that helps researchers assess the accuracy of their theories.

The relevance of the framework is also evident in its ability to connect three main elements of research: theory, method, and empirical findings. The framework acts as an "epistemological bridge" between abstract ideas and concrete data (Van der Waladt, 2024). In this approach, theories are not treated as static entities, but as open systems that can be tested, modified, or extended through interaction with empirical data. Thus, the framework encourages the creation of constructive dialogue between theory and practice, which ultimately strengthens the credibility of scientific research.

In the literature review, the framework plays a strategic role in helping researchers identify research gaps or conceptual gaps that have not been explored much. Sarmiento et al. (2019) assert that a well-designed theoretical framework will highlight theoretical gaps and guide researchers to develop new concepts relevant to the development of science. For example, in educational research and counseling guidance, frameworks can help find areas that have not been touched, such as the integration of digital technologies in the counseling process or culture-based intervention strategies. Thus, the framework not only explains the position of research in the broader scientific landscape, but also opens up opportunities for conceptual innovation.

In addition to playing a role in building the theoretical foundation, frameworks also have practical relevance in the application of research results in the real world. Amanda J. Rockinson et al. (2012) stated that a robust framework can facilitate the transfer of knowledge from theory to practice, as the relationships between variables are clearly defined. For example, in education, a framework that links learning theory to teaching strategies can help teachers or counselors implement research findings into real learning programs or interventions. This shows that the framework serves as a "translational bridge" between academic results and field practice.

In the modern research era, frameworks also play a role in ensuring credible evidence-based research and consistent replication. Gogu, (2023) emphasizes that explicit frameworks allow other researchers to replicate or adapt studies while maintaining their conceptual integrity. This is important in building the accumulation of scientific knowledge across disciplines. On the other hand, research without a clear theoretical framework has the potential to produce findings that are difficult to compare or verify, as they do not have a stable theoretical orientation (Ngulube & Mosha, 2023).

Contemporary studies show that an effective framework is not only relevant for explanatory research, but also for applied and interdisciplinary research. Nyfoudi et al. (2024), for example, use a conceptual framework to explain the relationship between human resource practices and employee responses to organizational crises. This framework helps explain complex phenomena by combining organizational psychology and strategic management approaches. This example shows how the framework can broaden cross-field insights while enriching scientific analysis.

From a methodological perspective, the framework also helps in the development of valid and reliable research instruments. Wang et al. (2020) emphasized that a robust framework is able to explicitly describe the theoretical relationships between variables, so that researchers can develop appropriate measurement indicators. For example, in quantitative research, frameworks help formulate hypotheses and determine operational variables. Whereas in qualitative research, the framework serves as a conceptual lens that guides the interpretation of data and field findings (Egodawe et al., 2022).

Overall, the relevance of the framework in the review of literature lies not only in its function as a conceptual tool for building scientific arguments, but also in its ability to connect theory with practical reality. A good framework ensures that each step of the research has an epistemological basis, methodological logic, and clear theoretical meaning. Thus, the framework is not just a supporting structure, but the core of scientific activities that guarantees the validity, credibility, and relevance of research. In this view, the framework serves as a "common thread" that establishes consistency between theories, methods, and findings, as well as a catalyst for sustainable scientific innovation in various fields of study.

Adaptation and Contextualization of the Framework

Adaptation and contextualization of the framework is a fundamental need in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural research. Frameworks built on one social or scientific context cannot be crudely adopted to another without taking into account differences in values, norms, and environmental characteristics. According to Gogus (2023), frameworks developed in one particular cultural or technological context must be adapted to social, cultural, economic, and even political conditions in other contexts so that research results remain relevant and representative. In online education research, for example, constructs such as cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence need to be modified to match the characteristics of digital interaction. This shows that an adaptive framework is the main key for research to be able to reflect complex and dynamic empirical realities in various contexts of modern life.

Conceptually, framework adaptation means modifying the main components of a theoretical model – either in the form of variable redefinition, indicator changes, or reconstruction of the relationships between constructs – without losing its theoretical core. In this context, the framework is seen as an open system that can evolve with changing times and research needs. This view is in line with Egodawe et al. (2022) which emphasizes that frameworks related to digital transformation must be contextualized according to the characteristics of the industry, organizational culture, and the level of technological maturity in each institution. Without this kind of adjustment, the theories used will become rigid and lose the ability to explain new phenomena that arise in the field.

Contextualizing the framework also requires a multidisciplinary approach. As stated by Wang et al. (2020), the adaptation of the framework allows for the integration between classical theory and cutting-edge research results, resulting in a more comprehensive and relevant model to contemporary challenges. For example, the combination of psychological theory with technological theory in the field of education can give birth to a new conceptual framework that is able to explain digital learning behavior. Thus, adaptation is not just an act of technical revision, but a conceptual process that aims to expand the scope of a theory so that it remains functional in various scientific contexts.

According to van Assche (2023), the framework adaptation process demands methodological flexibility, because variables that are relevant in one context are not necessarily significant in another. Researchers must dare to review the basic assumptions of their theory, adjust the variables used, and reinterpret the relationships between concepts to be in harmony with the characteristics of the research field. For example, variables such as "participatory leadership" may be highly relevant in the context of egalitarian Western organizations, but they are less appropriate if applied without modification in the context of more hierarchical Asian organizations. Therefore, the adaptation framework must consider cultural sensitivity and social context as part of scientific validity (Mnguni, 2021).

The adaptation process also cannot be separated from the results of empirical research. A good framework should not only adapt the theory conceptually, but also pay attention to field findings that show real needs in society. Mnguni (2021) asserts that the adaptation of an empirically-based framework helps

maintain a balance between theoretical validity and practical relevance. In this case, contextualization of the framework becomes a form of dialogue between universal theory and local practice, where theory provides direction for data interpretation, while field data provides feedback to enrich or revise theory. With this reflective approach, the framework can evolve into a more adaptive, contextual, and applicative model.

Recent developments also show that framework adaptation is not only cross-field, but also cross-level (multilevel). For example, in public policy research, the framework used to analyze national policies is often not entirely relevant when applied to regional contexts. Therefore, a process of conceptual adjustment is needed so that the framework is able to describe local dynamics, community participation, and the capacity of local institutions. In the field of education and counseling, the adaptation of the framework is even more complex because it must take into account psychological variables, school culture, and student characteristics. Frameworks that do not consider these factors have the potential to result in biased and non-applicable conclusions.

On the other hand, framework adaptation also plays an important role in bridging the gap between global knowledge and local wisdom. This is in line with the views of Alsubaie (2024), who emphasizes the importance of "glocalization" theory, which is an effort to combine universal scientific principles with local wisdom so that research results are more acceptable and beneficial to the local community. In the Indonesian context, for example, the adaptation of Western theories of education and psychology needs to pay attention to religious values, social ethics, and mutual cooperation culture that are characteristic of the nation. Thus, the adaptation of the framework is not only a methodological issue, but also part of the moral and social responsibility of the researcher to his society.

Practically, the process of adaptation and contextualization of the framework can be carried out through several stages: (1) analysis of the social and cultural context in which the research was conducted; (2) identification of variables or constructs that require adjustment; (3) validation of concepts through expert discussion; and (4) empirical tests to ensure consistency of relationships between variables. This process not only strengthens the relevance of the theory, but also increases the external validity of the research results. As emphasized by Nilsen (2015), an adaptive framework not only serves to explain existing phenomena, but is also able to predict changes that may occur in the future.

Thus, the adaptation and contextualization of the framework is not just a technical strategy, but a scientific approach that emphasizes the dynamic nature of science. An adaptive framework ensures that research remains relevant to social, cultural, and technological changes, while bridging the gap between universal theory and local practice. Ultimately, the success of a research is not only measured by how strong the theory is, but also by the extent to which it is able to interact with the real context to produce meaningful, applicative, and sustainable knowledge.

Framework Development

Based on the results of conceptualization and adaptation described in the previous section, this study places the development of a model or framework as a strategic stage in strengthening the integration between theory and empirical context. The framework development process is not only to construct relationships between variables, but also to create new conceptual structures that are able to answer research problems in a contextual and comprehensive manner. According to Ravitch & Riggan (2017), the development of a research model should include three main dimensions: relevant theory, valid empirical data, and specific research context. All three must be harmoniously integrated so that the resulting framework has high scientific strength and applicability.

In this study, the developed model combines the main variables identified from the previous literature with new constructs that emerge from empirical findings in the field. This approach reflects the paradigm of constructive synthesis, where theory is not only used as a basis for thinking but is also redeveloped based on the results of empirical analysis. In line with the view Egodawe et al. (2022), the process of developing this kind of model is very important to strengthen the conceptual foundation and enrich the novelty value of research. A good framework not only confirms existing theories, but also opens up opportunities for the formation of new theories that are relevant to the social and technological changes that are taking place in society.

Theoretically, the development of the framework serves as a means to expand the scope of established theories. Nilsen (2015) explained that the modification of the framework can be done through the addition of moderation or mediation variables that play a role in clarifying the relationship between constructs. For example, in organizational research, the relationship between leadership and employee performance can be mediated by motivational factors or work culture. The addition of this kind of element allows the theory to be

more in-depth and contextual. A similar approach is also supported by Mnguni (2021), who emphasizes that contextually developed frameworks are able to produce middle-range theories – that is, theories that are not as abstract as big theories, but concrete enough to be applied in certain social or educational phenomena.

Model development in modern research also demands the use of multidisciplinary approaches. According to Nyfoudi et al. (2024), integration between scientific fields is the key to designing a framework that is able to explain complex phenomena in the global era. For example, in counseling guidance research, humanistic psychology theories can be integrated with interpersonal communication theories or even digital systems theory if the research context involves online interaction. Thus, the new framework is not only the result of theoretical synthesis, but also a reflection on rapidly evolving social and technological dynamics.

Furthermore, the framework development process must also be supported by rigorous empirical validation. Gogus (2023) affirms that a good framework is not only built on theory, but also verified through empirical testing using field data. This validation serves to ensure that the relationships between the proposed variables truly reflect reality. Therefore, research that develops a new framework needs to go through a process of data triangulation, construct validity tests, and confirmation through expert discussions (expert validation). This process makes the framework not only a theoretical construct, but also a scientifically operationalized model.

In addition to the theoretical contribution, the development of the framework also has significant practical implications. The new framework can be used as a guide for practitioners, policymakers, or other researchers in developing evidence-based strategies. In the context of education, for example, frameworks developed from a combination of learning theory and motivation theory can help teachers in designing more effective learning methods. Amanda J. Rockinson et al. (2012) emphasizing that the success of research is determined by the ability of researchers to integrate theory and practice into one model that is complete, coherent, and easy to implement.

In an increasingly complex global context, the development of frameworks also needs to consider the sustainability and flexibility of the model (Van der Walddt, 2024). An effective framework must be able to adapt to changes in external variables such as policies, technology, or social dynamics. Therefore, modern research models should not be static, but rather flexible and open to revision as the research context changes. This approach encourages the development of a scientific paradigm that is more reflective, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of society.

Finally, this research makes a theoretical and practical contribution through the development of new adaptive and contextual frameworks. The resulting model not only replicates old theories, but also modifies and expands on them based on empirical data. With an open framework, this research is expected to be a reference for other researchers in developing relevant models in their respective fields. In line with Ravitch & Riggan (2017), the success of the development of the framework is not only measured by the integrity of its theoretical structure, but also by its ability to answer real problems and provide a new direction for the development of science. Thus, the framework developed in this study is expected to be a real contribution to strengthening an integrative, adaptive, and applicable scientific paradigm in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that conceptual frameworks or models have an essential role in strengthening the theoretical foundation and methodological direction of a scientific research. The framework functions as a bridge between theories, methods, and findings so that research can be structured systematically, coherently, and relevant to the context of the study. The results of the study show that the right conceptualization of the framework helps researchers formulate variables, identify relationships between concepts, and find research gaps that are the basis for research novelty. In addition, adaptation and contextualization of the framework are important findings because models developed in one context cannot always be applied directly to different contexts. Through the adjustment of concepts, indicators, and variables according to social, cultural, discipline, and technological conditions, the framework can become more applicable and make significant theoretical and practical contributions. This research emphasizes that the development of an adaptive and contextual framework is the key to producing research that is relevant, useful, and able to answer the dynamics of contemporary knowledge. In line with these findings, further research is recommended to develop a framework that is more specific to the local context, both in the form of modification of existing models and the creation of new models that meet the needs of the field of science. Future research also needs to integrate empirical data more deeply so that the resulting framework is not only theoretically robust, but also practically valid. In addition, cross-disciplinary comparisons and cross-cultural studies are needed to understand the extent to

which frameworks can be adapted or combined in different contexts. Research also needs to pay attention to technological developments and social changes so that the models developed remain relevant to the dynamics of the digital era. Finally, an applicative study is needed that tests the effectiveness of the new framework in practice, so that the model can have a real impact on the development of science and the implementation of evidence-based policies.

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