

Example of essay on grand theory vs. middle-range theory

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



A theory collectively organizes a series of evidences, observations, generalizations from a series of hypotheses under a specific assumptions and limitations to describe and predict phenomena. The validity of a theory depends on its strength to withstand falsifiability and its application to the real world. Theories could be classified based on their scope and level of generalization within the hierarchy of knowledge (Elo et al., 2013). In social sciences, there is a distinction in the characteristics of a grand theory and middle-range theory.

Grand theories consist of a very broad scope of general framework that focuses on the natures and goals of a discipline. This type of theory is often perceived as inclusive and comprehensive. A grand theory is less specific unlike middle-range theory and is composed of an abstraction that has no operational definition because it does not contain the required detail to understand relationship between variables in a particular phenomenon. Further, grand theories are developed from insights of existing knowledge (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010). Some examples of grand theories in the social sciences include materialism, structuralism, functionalism symbolic interactionism and evolutionary perspectives.

On another note, some theorists formulate middle-range theories from grand theories. Middle-range theories cover a limited scope involving specific situations and events. The purpose of middle-range theories is to direct empirical question, actions and practices. While mid-range theories are less abstract than grand theories, these theories are more abstract than micro theories or practical theories. In nursing, middle-range theories may be predictive or explanatory. This type of theory is concrete, operationally

defined into a measurable type, and testable. A middle-range theory can be developed using the inductive or deductive approach (Elo et al., 2013).

References

Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Isola, A. and Kyngäs, H. (2013). Developing and Testing a Middle-Range Theory of the Well-Being Supportive Physical Environment of Home-Dwelling Elderly. *The Scientific World Journal*, 2013: Article ID 945635.

Jaccard, J. and Jacoby, J. (2010). *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.