

Compose a clear,
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and comprehensive
summary of the term
theor...

[Sociology](#)



When one is introduced in sociology he or she is bombarded with some major terms such as; ecological theory, interaction theory, containment theory, anomie and alienation theory, normative behaviour theory, differential identification theory, differential association-reinforcement theory, disengagement theory, Hirschi's theory, trade imitation theory, Sutherland's differential association theory, and many others, some of which one may never get to learn about them (Harrington 2005). If you think this is only in sociology, you will be surprised to meet more theories in other disciplines. The questions remain; what is the meaning of the tail word 'theory', and what makes it qualify to cut across all disciplines. This paper gives a clear, concise, descriptive and comprehensive summary of the term 'theory'.

The term theory is derived from a philosophical Greek word *theoria*, which means to look at, behold or view and contemplate or speculate on the action presented for understanding its meaning (Reynolds 1971). For instance, theory in any empirical research needs to be built on one or several hypotheses that are supported well with evidence. There must be proper reasoning based on hypotheses and evidence as well as connections that are logical to suggest the effectiveness of the research. Therefore, theory in any empirical research can be understood as a group of propositions, assertions, assumptions or factors considered acceptable that are meant for prediction, or cause and effect relationship in a set of observed phenomena and the relationship must be plausible (Berger and Luckmann 1966). This is contrary to theory in social sciences where, for example, ecologists theorize that man evolved from the monkey species. Christians believe that a supernatural

power by name ' God' created man, and the theory about the origin of man is an open-ended-scheme (Berberoglu 2005). All these theories are considered to be true explanations with provision of enough evidence or explanation from the point of view of the followers.

Theories in social sciences and particularly in sociology, for instance, are developed by focusing on the kind of research methods used in the study as well as the formal methods displayed. All these aspects are complimentary to each other rather than competitive. If the aspects are well used in a research, the results arrived at would be so useful to policy makers, graduate students and scholars of sociology. The main reason why sociologists develop theories is to explain or make an assertion regarding social phenomena (Berger and Luckmann 1966). There are also complex theoretical methodological frameworks that are used for explanation and analysis of objects in sociological studies. They assist in the organization of sociological knowledge, and they keep on evolving from time to time hence they are never complete. Theories are believed to be the most reliable and valid tools in sociological research methods (Bell 2008). Theories are very crucial in sociology as they provide a coherent framework used to create a sense out of the observations made in the society. Theories are believed to work hand in hand with practice as they only determine the context necessary for predictable results, and supporting the remaining part of the study (Baert and Silva 2010).

Any new theory must be in a position to displace the old one, and this is only possible by providing enough evidence to prove its dissent. It is important to know that every fact assumption is a theory, and nothing is an absolute fact

(Baert and Silva 2010). Observations in the world can be used to support theories. Therefore, no one will dismiss the standing theory without providing a satisfying reason, and since new ideas are being discovered each day, theories are put forward to replace the old theories. Whether philosophical, political, scientific, economical or any other, the term theory is known as a rigorously tentative phenomena, which can be true today and false tomorrow.

References

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