

Research theories and philosophical constructs

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The paper "Research Theories and Philosophical Constructs" is an outstanding example of a literature review on education. Both research theories and philosophical constructs are used in mainstream contexts to assist us to explain how the world works. However, the former engages with some theoretical perspectives and empirical research, while the latter uses learned beliefs which an individual applies to make meaning of available information (Northouse, 2010). The aim of this paper is to shed light on these two important concepts. The pros of empirical research are that it uses actual field data to make deductions and proof or disapprove set hypotheses and that findings and associations between variables can be tested using known statistical means. A major disadvantage, though, is that it is always challenging for researchers to come up with a testable proposition about the relationship between two or more variables (Northouse, 2010). Issues of construct validity also serve as a disadvantage. The advantage of philosophical constructs is nested on the fact that it enables individuals to realize their own construction of knowledge and social reality; however, a major disadvantage is that such construction of knowledge can be quite loose and chaotic due to lack of a guiding theory. Both approaches, in my view, can be used to expand our knowledge. Research theories can be used to expand our knowledge through deductive or inductive means, while philosophical constructs are a good source of knowledge in terms of identifying and internalizing critical paradigm assumptions as well as ontological assumptions (one's view of reality). The articles titled "Incremental Validity of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in Predicting Academic Major Selection of Undecided University Students" (Pulver & Kelly, 2008) and "The Construct Validity of the Subscales of the Myers-Briggs Type

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Indicator” (Zumbo & Taylor, 1993) have strong evidence for empirical research in terms of citations, methodology, data analysis, findings and discussion, as well as target audience. Both articles assume a scholarly approach and cite previous studies on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Quantitative analysis has been done on the two articles to prove or disapprove the studies’ hypotheses and/or research aims and objectives. The studies appear to target specific groups of the population; with one of the studies targeting undecided university students and the other targeting users of MBTI. Knowledge and theory development in both studies are generated through empirical data. The articles titled “ Employers Love Personality Tests. But what do they Really Reveal?” (Gladwell, 2004) and “ Goodbye to MBTI, the Fad that Won’t Die” (Grant, 2013), on the other hand, employ philosophical constructs to bring the message and meaning across. It is evident that the authors of these articles use their learned beliefs and biases to make meaning of the subject matter, and that no citations have been relied upon to ground the works on scholarly discourse. Additionally, the works appear destined for general consumption and the tone of language is not scholarly. The articles by Pulver and Kelly (2008) and Zumbo and Taylor (1993) generate an intellectual impression due to the tone of the language used, arrangement, and citations. Methodologically, the empirical data used in both articles are objective and findings reflect the statistical neutrality of the analyses. The articles by Gladwell (2004) and Grant (2013) generate both emotional and intellectual impressions due to the employment of the author’s personal belief or view of reality. Lastly, it is only the research-based articles (Pulver & Kelly, 2008; Zumbo & Taylor, 1993) that are supported by empirical research and actual quantitative data collected

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from the field. These data have been analyzed and synthesized to support findings. The other two articles are based on the authors' keen insights on the topics of interest and hence could be explained as arising from the writers' learned beliefs as they attempt to make meaning of the subject matter.