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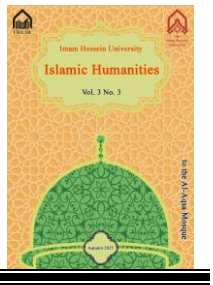

The Onion of Theorizing: Exploring Conceptual and Structural Layers of Knowledge in Scientific Understanding and Production

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ABSTRACT

Theorization, as a complex and multilayered process, requires a profound understanding of its constitutive elements and layers. Drawing on the metaphor of the onion—and inspired by a scientific journey into the world of onions—this paper delves into the very heart of the theorization process. Instead of relying on traditional approaches, the study utilizes the onion metaphor to examine the structure and various layers of the scientific process through which theories are formed and evolved, offering a more coherent and comprehensible framework. Each layer represents a fundamental aspect of theorization that contributes to the production of knowledge and theory-building, ultimately converging toward the central core—the theory itself. These layers include the school of thought, paradigm, philosophical foundations, principles, policies, guidelines, methodology, research methods, general outlook or orientation, and the theorist's personal approach or perspective.

The purpose of this paper is to present a comprehensive framework for better understanding the theorization process and to facilitate knowledge production across diverse scientific and social domains. Through a descriptive–analytical–ijtihadic method, this study explores the remarkable similarities between the multilayered peeling process of an onion and the complex, multistage nature of theorization, aiming to propose the "Onion of Theorization" as a model for evaluating and assessing theories.

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Introduction and Statement of the Problem

2. Introduction

Theory and theorization play a crucial role in scientific authority—a notion expressed in the statement attributed to Imam Ali (peace be upon him): "al-ʿilmu sulṭān" (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1403 AH, vol. 20, p. 319). Sulṭān signifies power; thus, knowledge itself is power (Imam Khamenei, 2017/10/18). Such empowered knowledge, according to the Qur'anic expression, must generate reverent awe—"innamā yakhsha Allāha min ʿibādihi al-ʿulamāʾ" (Fāṭir: 28)—and nurture humility (Isrāʾ: 107, 109).

Despite the abundance of scientific data and information, this domain remains both simple and intricate—sahl wa mumtaniʿ. A deeper look into the structure of theory becomes essential. Theorization, much like an onion, consists of multiple layers, each with its own characteristics. The outer layers, like the onion's skin, are easily visible—akin to raw data, statistical information, and initial empirical observations that are easily collected at the outset of any theorization process. These form the first step toward constructing theories and moving toward deeper layers of thought and truth.

As we move toward the core of the onion of theorization, the layers become thinner and more complex. Understanding the interrelations between these layers, uncovering hidden patterns, and inferring implicit concepts require more sophisticated analytical tools. This stage represents the heart of theorization, where information is synthesized, data are interpreted, and hypotheses are formulated—transforming raw observations into abstract concepts.

For instance, in constructing a theory about climate change, the outer layers of the onion represent data such as temperature, rainfall, and sea levels. Yet, to reach the core of the theory, these data must be connected through complex climate models, simulations, and causal relationships among various factors—similar to reaching the inner layers of an onion. The innermost layer, the central core, contains the most concentrated essence: in theorization, this corresponds to a comprehensive and coherent explanation of the studied phenomenon. A theory that not only explains but also predicts phenomena in a testable manner.

However, theorization—like peeling an onion—is not an easy task. Each layer removed presents new challenges. Contradictions may arise; hypotheses must be revisited; and at times, apparent dead ends appear. Yet each challenge offers an opportunity for learning and progress. When the onion is fully peeled, its core is revealed. Likewise, theorization leads to a deeper, more holistic understanding of the subject. It is a dynamic and continuous process: new layers may always emerge for examination, and existing theories can always be refined or expanded.

In this context, the onion serves as a symbol—a symbol of complexity, precision, and persistent effort in the pursuit of truth, reminding us that genuine understanding requires layered exploration, analysis, and interpretation. This is precisely what we engage in within the realm of theorization.

3. Statement of the Problem and the Significance of Theorization

Theorization, as one of the main pillars of knowledge production, plays a vital role in advancing the natural, social, and human sciences. It not only helps in understanding and explaining complex phenomena but also provides a framework for prediction and problem-solving. However, theorization is neither simple nor linear; it consists of multiple layers that, both individually and interactively, enable the formation and development of theories (Kuhn, 1962; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Hassanzadeh, 2013).

The metaphor of the "Onion of Theorization" serves as a conceptual model that aids in understanding these layers and their interrelations. This metaphor demonstrates that

theorization is a multidimensional process, encompassing deeper layers such as the school of thought and paradigm, and extending to more surface levels such as research methodology and the theorist's personal approach (Giddens, 1984; Sarmad et al., 2017). Each layer is significant in itself, but comprehending the interactions among them is the key to producing comprehensive and effective theories.

This paper aims to provide a systematic framework for understanding the theorization process by examining the various layers of the "Onion of Theorization." Accordingly, each layer is defined and analyzed separately, followed by an exploration of the relationships among layers and their influence on the process of knowledge production. The study seeks to offer an integrated model that assists researchers, scientists, and policymakers in designing and conducting scientific research and theorization, while also providing a structured criterion for evaluating and judging theories.

4. Research Questions

To develop a systematic framework for understanding the process of theorization through the metaphor of the "Onion of Theorization," the main research questions of this paper are as follows:

1. What are the main layers of the Onion of Theorization?
2. How do these layers interact with one another?
3. How can this model be utilized to facilitate the production of knowledge?

5. Research Methodology

Given the conceptual and theoretical nature of this paper, it adopts a descriptive–analytical approach, incorporating elements of the ijtihadic (interpretive–deductive) method. Through this descriptive–analytical framework enriched by reasoned inference, the study seeks to address the proposed research questions. The stages of the research process are as follows:

- ✓ Data Collection:

  Data are collected through library-based sources, including books and scholarly publications, to review previous studies related to theorization.

- ✓ Data Analysis:

  A qualitative content analysis is employed to extract the core concepts and layers of the Onion of Theorization. Additionally, comparative methods are used to examine the interactions among the layers.

- ✓ Model Development:

  A conceptual model is designed based on the analytical findings. Model validation will be pursued through a comparative review of well-known theories, which will be addressed in subsequent, more targeted studies.

- ✓ Conclusion:
  The paper concludes with key findings and suggestions for future research.

Overall, through a descriptive–analytical–ijtihadic approach, this study unveils the Onion of Theorization and the dynamic interactions among its layers.

6. Theoretical Foundations

Five key terms—research, hypothesis, theory, theory construction, and theorization—are all used within the domain of knowledge and science. However, there are significant differences among them, and each of these five concepts can be identified and distinguished through its own specific indicators.

7. The Concept of Research

Research is a systematic and organized process of inquiry and data collection aimed at answering a question or solving a problem. It may employ

qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, and typically involves several stages — including formulating a research question, designing the study, collecting data, analyzing data, and interpreting the results. Research can be conducted to test hypotheses, develop theories, or address practical issues. Examples: A study examining the impact of sugar consumption on human health, or a survey-based research project analyzing the semantic framework of public participation in political, social, and cultural activities.

The main indicators of research are as follows:

- ✓ Systematic Process: Research follows an organized and structured sequence of stages, including formulating a research question, designing the study, collecting data, analyzing data, and interpreting results.
- ✓ Purposefulness: Research is carried out with a specific goal, such as testing a hypothesis, developing a theory, or solving a practical problem.
- ✓ Defined Methodology: Research employs well-defined and valid methods for data collection and analysis. These methods may be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed in nature.
- ✓ Replicability: Research must be designed in a way that allows its results to be replicated, enabling other researchers to reproduce the study and verify its findings.

8. The Concept of Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a precise and testable statement that predicts the relationship between two or more variables. In essence, it is an informed and provisional assumption or an initial scientific proposition formulated on the basis of limited observations and subject to empirical testing. Therefore, it must be examined through observable and measurable evidence. Hypotheses are often expressed in an "if … then …" format and must be falsifiable—that is, it must be possible to determine their validity through empirical evidence.

Example: "If the amount of sunlight increases, then the growth rate of plants will also increase."

The main indicators of a hypothesis are as follows:

- ✓ Conditional Structure: Hypotheses are often formulated using an "if … then …" structure or a similar format that expresses a potential causal relationship between variables. Example: "If rainfall increases, then agricultural yield will increase."
- ✓ Testability: A hypothesis must be stated in such a way that it can be empirically tested or rejected. Clear methods must exist for collecting data and evaluating its validity or falsity.
- ✓ Provisional Nature: A hypothesis represents a temporary statement that is subject to confirmation or rejection through systematic research. It is not declared absolutely true or false but rather supported or unsupported by evidence.
- ✓ Defined Variables: The independent and dependent variables in a hypothesis must be clearly specified. For example: in the statement above, rainfall is the independent variable, and agricultural growth is the dependent variable.

8-1-1. The Concept of Theory

Theory refers to a coherent set of ideas, concepts, and propositions that are used to explain and predict phenomena. Theorization is the process of constructing and developing these ideas (Cresbaugh, 2003; Delavar,

2016). Accordingly, theory refers to a coherent and systematic set of ideas, concepts, definitions, and propositions that are presented to explain, predict, or understand natural, social, or human phenomena. Theories are based on evidence, observations, and experiments, and act as a framework for analyzing and interpreting realities. A good theory should have the ability to explain phenomena, predict results, and be testable.

For example, Darwin's theory of evolution explains how biological species evolve through natural selection. Einstein's theory of relativity explains how time and space change under the influence of gravity and speed. Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action, the last legacy of the Frankfurt critical school, analyzes social interactions and human communications.

Theory is a comprehensive and proven framework based on extensive evidence and repeated experiments. It is a comprehensive, coherent, and well-supported explanation of a phenomenon or a set of phenomena. Unlike a hypothesis, theory is built on considerable empirical evidence and has been able to withstand various tests and examinations. Theories include a set of related and verified hypotheses and attempt to explain why phenomena occur. A theory cannot be an absolute fact but is considered the best current explanation for a phenomenon that may change or be revised with new findings. Example: Darwin's theory of evolution, regardless of its correctness or incorrectness, explains the evolution of species through natural selection.

The ability to describe phenomena and provide explanations and reasons for their occurrence, the ability to predict results or future behaviors based on theoretical principles, testability and the possibility of examining and testing the theory through scientific methods, internal coherence and logical consistency, applicability and the ability to use the theory in real situations and problem-solving, are among the main characteristics of a theory.

The indicators for identifying a theory are as follows:

- ✓ Comprehensive explanation: A theory seeks to explain a phenomenon or a set of phenomena comprehensively and coherently. This explanation goes beyond a simple relationship between two variables and considers more complex relationships.
- ✓ Scientific support: Theories are built on significant scientific evidence from various studies. This evidence may be obtained from quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods.
- ✓ Predictive power: Strong theories have the ability to predict new phenomena or future behaviors.
- ✓ Coherence: The various components of a theory are logically related to each other and create a coherent intellectual framework.
- ✓ Ability to be revised: Theories are not absolute and may change or be revised with new evidence.

8-1-2. Theory Construction

Theory construction refers to the process of creating and developing a theory in a more structured and systematic way than theorization. This process may include specific stages such as formulating concepts, creating relationships between concepts, defining variables, formulating hypotheses, designing and conducting research, and revising the theory based on research results. Therefore, theory construction is a repetitive and evolutionary process. Example: theory construction regarding the effects of social

media on the political behavior of members of society, or theory construction about the influence of individual or group penetration on the computational system of the people and officials of the system.

The indicators for identifying theory construction are as follows:

- ✓ Structured and systematic: Theory construction is carried out in a more systematic and structured way than theorization and often includes stages such as formulating concepts, defining relationships between them, formulating hypotheses, designing research, and interpreting results.
- ✓ Repetition and revision: Theory construction is a repetitive and evolutionary process in which the theory is continuously revised and improved based on new evidence presented.
- ✓ Use of the scientific method: The scientific method is used to design research and test the theory.

8-1-3. The Concept of Theorization

Theorization is the scientific process of constructing, developing, and revising theories, which is carried out in various fields such as natural sciences, social sciences, philosophy, and art. This process generally includes identifying issues or phenomena, collecting data and information using scientific methods, analyzing evidence and interpreting information, finding patterns or relationships between variables, presenting coherent conceptual frameworks, and structuring related ideas and concepts into a theory to explain and predict phenomena, and finally examining the theory through further experiments or studies and revising the theory if necessary. Theorization is a creative and intellectual process that is supported through research.

Example: theorization about how the human brain functions.

"Creativity and the ability to present new and original ideas," "critical thinking and the ability to analyze and critique ideas and assumptions," "extensive knowledge and deep awareness of the fields related to the subject," and "communicative ability and expressing the theory in a clear and understandable manner" are among the main characteristics of a successful theorist.

The indicators for identifying theorization are as follows:

- ✓ Mental and creative process: Theorization is an intellectual process that includes creating connections between concepts, forming conceptual models, and providing a convincing and reasoned explanation for phenomena.
- ✓ Collecting and interpreting evidence: Although it is a mental process, it uses empirical and theoretical evidence to build the theory.
- ✓ Constructing conceptual models: Theorization involves creating conceptual models that show the deep relationships between concepts.

8-1-4. Key Differences Among Concepts

A hypothesis is a testable statement, while a theory is a comprehensive and well-supported explanation. Research is the process of collecting and analyzing information to answer questions, whereas theorization and theory construction are the processes of creating and developing theories. Theory construction is often more structured and systematic than theorization.

It can be said that hypotheses are testable guesses that can help confirm or reject a specific aspect of a theory or lead to the creation of new theories. Research is a tool for testing hypotheses and developing theories. Theories are comprehensive

and well-supported explanations of phenomena that are backed by multiple experiments and empirical evidence. Theorization and theory construction are mental and creative processes that lead to the creation or revision of theories.

Identifying each of these five terms (hypothesis, theory, research, theorization, theory construction) in scientific texts requires attention to their specific indicators and characteristics. Considering the general indicators—although in some cases there may be subtler differences—each of these five terms can be identified in scientific and research texts. The subtler differences between these concepts require deeper and more detailed investigation. These subtle differences often appear in how these terms are used in specific scientific and methodological contexts.

The main difference between a hypothesis and a theory lies in the level of empirical support (a hypothesis is testable; a theory is supported by evidence). The subtler difference lies in their scale. A hypothesis usually addresses a specific aspect of a phenomenon, whereas a theory attempts to explain the entire set of phenomena. A hypothesis is a small piece of a large puzzle, but a theory shows the whole puzzle. A hypothesis can act as a component of a larger theory. In fact, a theory may include several related hypotheses that together provide a comprehensive explanation.

In this regard, it should be said that a hypothesis can be the stimulus for research. Research is conducted with the goal of testing a hypothesis. The results of research can confirm or reject a hypothesis and, as a result, lead to the development or revision of a theory. This is a repetitive process.

From another perspective, research is a tool for theory construction. Research collects and analyzes data, but theory construction requires the interpretation of this data, creating connections between them, and building a coherent conceptual framework. On the other hand, research can be conducted without the goal of theory construction (for example, descriptive research), but theory construction without research is usually limited and weak. A study can help confirm, reject, or modify a theory, but it does not necessarily lead to the creation of a new theory.

The two terms theorization and theory construction are often used interchangeably, but they have a subtle difference. Theorization shows more of the mental and intuitive aspect of creating a theory — a cognitive process in which the researcher, using creativity, experience, and understanding, interprets data and creates connections between concepts. Theory construction, however, is a more systematic and methodological process that follows specific stages, including formulating concepts, building conceptual models using data analysis methods, designing experimental research, and continuously revising the theory based on research results. It can even be said that theorization may be considered as a stage within the process of theory construction.

It should be noted that the subtler differences among these concepts also depend on the field and scientific discipline. In the natural sciences, theories are often supported by mathematical models and specific laws, while in the social sciences, theories may be more flexible and supported by qualitative evidence. In any case, these five concepts exist in a mutual and dynamic relationship. Hypotheses serve as motivations for research; research contributes to the development of theories; and theorization and theory construction are the mental and methodological processes of creating and evolving theories. Understanding the subtle differences between these concepts is essential for a better understanding of the scientific method and the advancement of knowledge.

The Role of Theories in the Advancement of Science

Theorization is the process through which scientists, philosophers, and researchers seek to

understand and explain the world around them and the phenomena within it. This process plays a pivotal role in the progress of science and human knowledge. Fundamentally, theories are the pillars of scientific advancement—they not only allow us to comprehend the surrounding world but also serve as roadmaps for future research. In essence, theories function as the driving engines of discovery, innovation, and technological development.

Some of the most vital roles of theories in the advancement of science are as follows:

- ✓ Organizing Knowledge: Theories help organize scattered information and diverse observations into coherent and understandable frameworks. They clarify the relationships between various phenomena and assist in uncovering hidden patterns in nature, leading to a deeper understanding of the world.
- ✓ Guiding Research: Theories direct the course of scientific inquiry by raising new questions and highlighting gaps in existing knowledge. They act as guiding frameworks that inspire further research and exploration.
- ✓ Interpreting Data: Once new data are collected, theories help interpret and assign meaning to them. They clarify which data are significant and how different findings are related, enabling systematic analysis and interpretation.
- ✓ Predicting Phenomena: Well-developed theories possess predictive power. For instance, Einstein's general theory of relativity predicted that starlight would bend when passing near a massive object—a prediction later confirmed through empirical observation.
- ✓ Driving Technological Innovation: Theories play a crucial role in technological advancement. Many of today's technologies are rooted in scientific theories. For example, Maxwell's theory of electromagnetism laid the foundation for communication technologies such as radio and television.

As another example, Darwin's theory of evolution, regardless of debates surrounding its validity, remains one of the most influential scientific theories. It provided a framework for understanding biological diversity and explaining the process of evolution, influencing not only biology but also fields such as medicine, agriculture, and even the social sciences.

Overall, theories serve as frameworks for understanding and analyzing phenomena, helping researchers examine problems systematically (Bertalanffy, 1968; Naderi & Saif Naraghi, 2015). They are powerful tools that drive the growth of human knowledge. Recognizing the role of theories in science allows us to fully appreciate the significance of scientific research and intellectual innovation.

Review of Related Studies on Theorization

Giddens (2009), in Sociology, discusses the key concepts of sociology and the major theories associated with them. Morgan (2009), in Images of Organization, explores organizational theories and examines the role of paradigms in organizational analysis. Habermas (2009), in The Theory of Communicative Action, analyzes the theory of communicative action and its significance in sociology.

Hassanzadeh (2013), in Qualitative Research Methodology: A Comprehensive Approach, investigates qualitative research methods and their applications in the social sciences. Flick (2013), in An Introduction to Qualitative Research, addresses the main concepts and methods of qualitative inquiry. Yarmohammadian (2014), in Qualitative Research Methodology in Management: A Comprehensive Approach,

focuses on qualitative methodologies in management and the social sciences.

Naderi (2015), in Research Methods and Evaluation in the Humanities, elaborates on research methodologies and their evaluation in the field of humanities. Kuhn (2016), in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, explores the concept of paradigms and scientific change. Delavar (2016), in Theoretical and Practical Foundations of Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, presents a comprehensive reference for understanding theoretical and practical foundations of research in these disciplines. Sarmad, Bazargan, and Hejazi (2017), in Research Methods in Behavioral Sciences, examine both quantitative and qualitative approaches relevant to behavioral research, contributing to methodological understanding in social inquiry.

In general, previous studies demonstrate that theorization is a complex and multilayered process influenced by numerous interrelated factors (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yarmohammadian, 2014).

However, despite the abundance of prior studies in the fields of research methodology and theory development, the innovation of the present study lies in proposing the “Onion of Theorization” metaphor—a conceptual model that, to the best of current knowledge, has not been explicitly presented in any previous research.

Why the Onion Metaphor?

The idea of the Onion of Theorization was first proposed within the theoretical core of Imam Hossein Comprehensive University. Afterward, a scholarly–promotional session was held to discuss the concept, and later, the same lecture was repeated in a theorization workshop. During the presentation of this idea, one of the attending professors suggested that, instead of the onion, the metaphor of the tree be used for theorization.

The Tree of Knowledge is a conceptual or organizational model used for organizing and managing knowledge, information, and learning. It serves as a visual or graphical method for representing relationships among concepts and pieces of information within a particular domain in a layered and structured way. The Tree of Knowledge helps organize information into a systematic structure across different knowledge areas, prevents conceptual overlap, and provides a comprehensive view of knowledge as a whole.

The Tree of Knowledge can be illustrated from two perspectives: process-oriented and object-oriented. The type of tree required for an organization depends on factors such as organizational needs and the nature of existing knowledge. A process-oriented tree is designed based on the processes and skills necessary for performing specific tasks. In this type, specialized work domains are regarded as the main areas of knowledge. It is commonly used in organizations that have diverse products but similar processes. An object-oriented tree, by contrast, organizes knowledge domains based on the components of a product or the services of a unit. Owing to its simplicity and clarity, this type is often used in organizations that have a limited range of services or products but operate with advanced technology and specialized expertise.

In truth, the Tree of Knowledge is primarily suited for identifying and classifying knowledge domains. When knowledge fields are systematically categorized, the process of identifying knowledge resources also becomes easier. The multi-layered nature of the Tree of Knowledge allows for the classification of knowledge areas and makes the relationships and correlations among them more visible. With categorized knowledge structures, knowledge retrieval also becomes more efficient. In a schematic and visual form, the tree provides an understandable representation of the scope of existing knowledge and facilitates the processes of knowledge mapping and identifying subject-matter experts with greater accuracy and precision. For this reason, rather than employing the metaphor of the tree, I chose to use the metaphor of the onion.

The onion, on one hand, is a symbol of complexity and layeredness in theorization. It allows one to explore the multiple layers of a theory, each comparable to a layer of an onion: the outer layers correspond to observable concepts and empirical data, while the inner layers signify abstract notions and more intricate relationships among variables. On the other hand, the process of theorization itself can be studied through the process of peeling an onion—a gradual, step-by-step journey through which theoretical insight deepens progressively. Each layer of the onion represents a distinct stage in the process, such as data collection, hypothesis formulation, experimentation, and so on.

In this analogy, the onion can be regarded as a model for complex systems, since scientific theories often aim to describe such systems. The onion's layered structure provides a model for understanding how different elements within a complex system interact and influence one another. Similarly, theorization proceeds from partial observations toward the construction of broader and more general theories—from detailed, surface-level data (outer layers) to holistic conceptual understanding (inner core layers).

The Onion of Theorization: Layers of Thought and Truth

The structure of theories, in the Onion of Theorization metaphor, consists of multiple layers that interact with one another in a cyclical relationship. The scientific journey of theory construction, based on this metaphor, unfolds through five layers and a central core. The layers of the Onion of Theorization are as follows:

First Layer: School of Thought and Paradigm

A. School of Thought: The school of thought is the outermost and broadest layer of the Onion of Theorization. It refers to a set of shared ideas and viewpoints developed by a group of thinkers. This layer provides the foundation and general direction for theorization. For example, schools such as Marxism, liberalism, or structuralism each offer unique ways of understanding the world and social phenomena (Giddens, 1984; Flick, 2013). The school of thought expresses the overall philosophical and ideological outlook that shapes the researcher's perspective — for instance, whether they view the world through positivism, structuralism, postmodernism, hermeneutics, or feminism. This outlook strongly influences both the choice of research methods and the way data are interpreted.

B. Paradigm: The paradigm (or meta-framework) refers to the conceptual and methodological system accepted by the scientific community during a particular period of time. It defines what types of questions are worth studying and how those questions should be answered. For example, the positivist paradigm focuses on observation and experimentation, while the interpretive paradigm emphasizes understanding meaning and context (Kuhn, 1962; Kuhn, 2016). A paradigm includes shared beliefs, values, and methods among researchers in a field. It provides a theoretical and worldview foundation for inquiry — including ontology, epistemology, anthropology, axiology, and theology. Choosing a paradigm determines how the researcher approaches the problem, what kinds of questions are asked, and how the results are explained. For instance, in studying a theory of personality, the researcher must first clarify their assumptions about human nature, existence, and knowledge before selecting an appropriate paradigm.

Like the outer skin of an onion, both the school of thought and the paradigm define the overall orientation of theorization. They show whether the approach is positivist, interpretive, critical, or ijtihadic, and they reveal the researcher's main assumptions at the beginning of the theoretical process.

Second Layer: Philosophical Foundations and Principles

A. Philosophical Foundations: Refers to the basic principles and assumptions that form the foundation of theories. These foundations include views about the nature of reality, knowledge, and values. For example, a theorist may analyze phenomena based on realism or idealism (Kersbaw, 2003; Hassanzadeh, 2013). This layer represents the theoretical and conceptual basis of research, on which theorization is built. It includes the accepted doctrines and guiding principles that shape the general direction of science, such as resistance economics, information confrontation, defensive deterrence, or food self-sufficiency. These overarching frameworks determine the direction that knowledge and theory should follow. The foundations of science are derived from philosophy, and the principles of science come from the applied philosophies of science. Therefore, a theorist must decide with which principles they intend to proceed and, for example, how to define concepts such as justice. In other words, this layer represents the theoretical framework and worldview governing the scientific domain and the subject of study. Discussions related to ontology, epistemology, anthropology, axiology, and theology belong to this area. For instance, in research related to personality theory, after determining one's view of being, knowledge, and human nature and selecting an appropriate paradigm, the theorist must decide which theories are relevant to the study, what concepts will be used, and how the variables will be defined. For example, a study on the impact of media on adolescent behavior may rely on theories from communication studies, social psychology, or sociology. Like the inner layers of an onion, this layer is nourished by previous theories and concepts. It answers the questions: What key theories and concepts form the framework of our theoretical research? Which variables and ideas are central in this theorization process? It reflects the connection between current theorization and previous works and identifies the theoretical foundations on which theory-building is based.

B. Principles: Refers to the key rules and core concepts used within a theory that help the theorist build a coherent framework for analysis and interpretation. For instance, in General Systems Theory, the principle that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" is considered a fundamental concept (Bertalanffy, 1968; Sarmad et al., 2017). This layer forms the theoretical and conceptual structure that supports the research, serving as the basis upon which theoretical development stands. It represents the accepted doctrines or guiding maps that lead scientific knowledge beyond policies and strategies toward a grand framework. For example, in applied contexts such as resistance economics or defensive deterrence, these principles function as guiding maps that show the direction in which knowledge should progress. The theorist must decide which theoretical principles they will rely on and how they will interpret major concepts in their study. Like the inner layers of the onion, this level draws nourishment from earlier theories and connects new theorization to the previous body of knowledge. It shows which theories, concepts, and variables are most important to the theoretical framework and how they form the foundation of the theorist's intellectual work.

Third Layer: Policies and Guidelines

The third layer represents the policies and guidelines related to theoretical research.

A. Policies: Refer to the general directions and orientations pursued within a theory. This layer shows what goals the theorist seeks to achieve and how they intend to reach them. For example, a theory may aim to reduce social inequality or to increase economic efficiency (Habermas, 1984; idem, 2010).

B. Guidelines: Refer to the strategies and practical actions proposed to achieve the goals of the theory. This layer demonstrates how principles and policies are implemented in practice. For instance, a theory may propose guidelines such as expanding access to education or reforming labor laws (Potter & Wetherell, 1995; Morgan, 2010).

This layer reflects the normative framework that directs scientific programs and discusses how national, organizational, or even financial policies can affect research. It can strongly influence the topic, approach, and scope of a study, creating both constraints and opportunities for the researcher. Limitations, challenges, and ethical, political, or social considerations related to the subject of theoretical research emerge from this layer. For example, does our theorization face financial or temporal constraints, or limitations in data access? What ethical considerations must be observed in carrying out this study? In essence, this layer represents the practical and real-world dimension of theorization, showing how theory interacts with policy and practice.

Fourth Layer: Methodology and Research Method

This layer deals with the operational and methodological aspects of theorization.

A. Methodology: Refers to the rational process of understanding or transforming reality in a reasoned and systematic way. It concerns how philosophical foundations and principles are applied to solve problems. Through mastery of methods, a researcher learns how to organize existing foundations in a logical order to arrive at a theory. Methodology, as a second-order discipline, describes and analyzes research methods, evaluates their efficiency or limitations, and determines their philosophical bases. It refers to the overall approach of research—whether it is quantitative or qualitative, or whether it uses exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or evaluative approaches. Methodology provides the general framework for selecting specific research methods used in data collection and analysis. It determines how the theorist studies phenomena. For instance, a quantitative methodology emphasizes measurement and statistical analysis, whereas a qualitative methodology focuses on deep understanding of phenomena through interviews and observation (Kersbaw, 2003; Yarmohammadian, 2014).

B. Research Method / Technique: Refers to the specific techniques and tools used for gathering information. Research instruments are often created at the intersection between methods and techniques. Depending on whether the researcher employs an explanatory, interpretive, critical, or discursive method, the corresponding techniques must align with that approach. Explanatory research is compatible with statistical techniques, while interpretive research aligns with qualitative techniques. Within this layer, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods are all applicable. It addresses questions such as: What research tools and analytical techniques are being used—library research, field study, observation, questionnaires, or interviews? For instance, the historical method uses data analysis techniques based on textual sources, while the ijtihadic (interpretive-reasoning) method applies analytical review of extracted data from texts. The method determines how data are collected and analyzed. Thus, the research method refers to the specific procedures chosen by the researcher for data collection and analysis. For example, in quantitative research, methods may include regression analysis, t-tests, or analysis of variance (ANOVA), whereas in qualitative research, methods may involve in-depth interviews, case studies, or content analysis.

In summary, research method refers to the concrete techniques used for gathering and analyzing data. This layer is the most practical and operational part of the Onion of Theorization and includes methods such as experiment, survey, case study, and content analysis (Yin, 2003; Delavar, 2016).

Fifth Layer: General Research Orientation and Researcher's Personal Approach

The fifth layer of the Onion of Theorization concerns the researcher's perspective and approach in theorization — that is, how the researcher enters and frames the subject of study.

A. Perspective / Orientation: Refers to the researcher's general outlook or tendency in

approaching the study. It shows how the researcher, in a broad sense, engages with their work — for example, whether their approach is inductive (moving from data to theory) or deductive (from theory to data). It also reflects how critical or affirmative their stance is. The general orientation is influenced by the prevailing social and cultural attitudes that may shape the direction of theorization. This layer demonstrates how the socio-cultural context can influence and guide theoretical orientations (Bourdieu, 1977; Flick, 2013).

B. Approach / Personal Viewpoint: Refers to the individual and innermost layer of theorization, showing how the researcher's personal experiences, cultural background, and beliefs affect their research. It is a key factor in interpreting data and drawing conclusions. The personal approach represents the theorist's individuality — their experiences, values, and creative insights — and shows how these elements can shape the formation of theories (Giddens, 1984; Naderi & Seif Naraghi, 2015).

Sometimes, several researchers may adopt the same topic and method, yet their differing perspectives or points of entry lead to distinct outcomes. The orientation represents the collective viewpoint of a group of researchers, while the approach expresses the personal viewpoint of an individual researcher. For example, in a study using the interpretive method and related techniques such as linguistics, semiotics, and semantics, the orientation may be historical, philosophical, psychological, or social.

A classic example can be found in the comparison between Martyr Morteza Motahhari's Imamate and Leadership and Dr. Ali Shariati's Ummah and Imamate. Both use narrative as a methodological basis, yet their perspectives differ: Motahhari employs a philosophical–theological approach, seeking to explain the doctrinal rationale of Imamate, while Shariati uses a sociological approach, focusing on the social role and function of leadership in communal life. Imamate and Leadership thus reflects a religious-historical method with a philosophical–theological orientation, whereas Ummah and Imamate embodies a religious-historical method with a critical functionalist orientation.

The researcher's orientation may be descriptive, explanatory, applied, or ijtihadic (interpretive–reasoned). Beyond that, the personal approach—as the researcher's viewpoint, experience, and prior assumptions—significantly influences the process of theory-building. This layer, therefore, reveals the human and subjective dimension of theorization.

Core Layer: The Complete Theory

At the core of the Onion of Theorization lies the scientific theory itself — the ultimate outcome of all preceding layers. This core represents the stage where a comprehensive and coherent explanation of the studied phenomenon emerges. In essence, the resulting theory rests upon solid foundations and logical methodologies, integrating the insights of all prior layers into a unified conceptual structure.

The central core embodies a scientifically developed theory, constructed through precise data and rational analysis. Such a theory serves to explain and predict the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, it remains testable, falsifiable, and open to revision or refinement, ensuring its continuous evolution in light of new evidence and insights.

Interaction Between Layers and the Conceptual Model

The interaction between the layers of the Onion of Theorization helps in forming comprehensive and effective theories. For example, the school of thought and the paradigm/model can determine the overall orientation of the theory, while methodology and research methods help in the practical implementation of the theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sarmad et al., 2017).

The Onion of Theorization depicts a more complete picture of the complex process of theory construction, based on the foundations of

theorization. Each layer plays an important role in the formation of a theory, and understanding each of them is essential for achieving a comprehensive understanding of theorization. This onion-like concept helps us engage in theorization in a more systematic and organized manner.

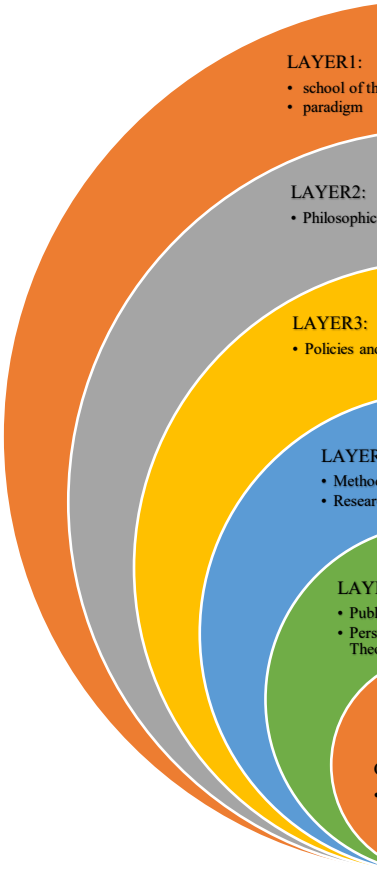

Figure 1. The onion model of theorizing

This model illustrates how the various layers of the Onion of Theorization interact with one another and collectively contribute to the production of knowledge at the central core.

Comparison between the Onion of Theorization and the Onion of Research

Both the Onion of Theorization and the Onion of Research employ the metaphor of an onion to describe multilayered and complex processes. Although they share certain similarities—particularly in their structural depth and sequential logic—they differ fundamentally in their purpose, structure, and application. The following discussion compares these two conceptual models:

The Research Onion: The Layers of a Scientific Journey

The Research Onion is a conceptual model that represents the structure and stages of research as the layered form of an onion. Originally proposed by Saunders et al. (2007; 2019), it serves as a practical tool for designing and planning research in a systematic and coherent way.

By clarifying the architecture of research, the Research Onion demonstrates that every study consists of multiple interrelated layers, each influencing the next. Using this model allows researchers to choose appropriate methods for each layer, thereby enhancing the overall quality, comprehensiveness, and precision of their research.

The six layers of the Research Onion, studied from the outermost to the innermost, are as follows:

1. Data Collection and Analysis Methods: The outer layer concerns the techniques and tools used for gathering and analyzing data—such as questionnaires, interviews, or observations, and their respective analytical methods (quantitative or qualitative). This layer defines the instruments and procedures used to generate empirical evidence.
2. Time Horizon: This layer refers to the duration of the study, which may be cross-sectional (conducted at a single point in time) or longitudinal (conducted over an extended period). It determines the temporal scope and depth of the research.
3. Research Choice: Here, the researcher decides on the overall design and

approach—whether the study will be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods, and whether it will use designs such as case studies, comparative analyses, or correlational models.

4. Research Strategy: This layer outlines the general strategy or purpose of the research—whether it is exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. It guides the overall direction and objective of the study.
5. Research Approach: The researcher determines whether the study will adopt a deductive approach (testing existing theories) or an inductive one (building new theories from data). This decision influences the logic of reasoning and data interpretation throughout the research process.
6. Research Philosophy: The innermost and foundational layer, referring to the philosophical assumptions that underpin the study. It encompasses perspectives such as positivism, phenomenology, critical realism, or pragmatism. The research philosophy defines the researcher's worldview and epistemological stance toward reality and knowledge.

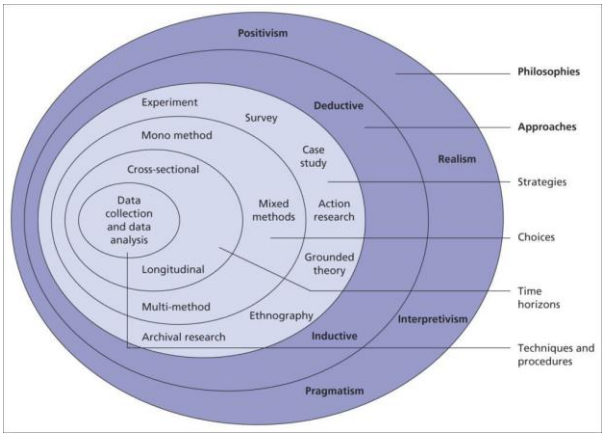

Figure 2. The Research Onion Model Adapted from Saunders et al. (2007; 2019).

In essence, the Research Onion provides a systematic framework that integrates philosophy, methodology, and technique—guiding researchers through each step of the scientific journey, from abstract assumptions to empirical execution.

The Research Onion assists researchers in developing a comprehensive research proposal. By employing this model, scholars can systematically select the most appropriate research methodology for their specific study. In essence, the Research Onion provides a common language among researchers, enabling them to communicate clearly about their methodological choices and design decisions. It establishes a shared conceptual framework through which different scholars can discuss, compare, and refine their research approaches. Accordingly, the Research Onion serves as a practical and valuable tool for any researcher, helping to ensure that the research process is carried out in a structured, coherent, and methodical manner.

Comparison of the Two Onions

The comparison between the Onion of Theorization and the Onion of Research helps to better understand the processes of theory construction and research. This is a visualized model in which the layers of the onion can represent different levels of complexity and depth in both processes. Before comparing the two onions, a discussion about research and theory is necessary. Theory and research are two key elements in the scientific process that have a close relationship with each other but have different goals and natures. Theory seeks to explain phenomena, while research seeks to examine and confirm or reject those explanations. This can be made clearer with an example. A theory is a comprehensive, coherent, and well-supported explanation of a phenomenon or a set of phenomena. Theories usually consist of a set of concepts, principles, and relationships among them that attempt to explain why and how a phenomenon occurs. A good theory, with predictive power, can forecast future events.

However, theories are not absolute and can be modified or replaced with new findings. Example: Newton's theory of gravity explains how bodies with mass exert a force of attraction on one another. This theory is supported by mathematical laws and numerous empirical observations and allows us to predict the motion of planets and other objects. Accordingly, theory is: first, explanatory, not descriptive; second, based on empirical evidence (though not necessarily all possible evidence); third, predictive; fourth, modifiable and replaceable; and fifth, coherent and structured. On the other hand, research is a systematic and organized process for collecting and analyzing data in order to answer a question or solve a problem. In this field, various methods such as observation, experimentation, interview, and statistical data analysis are used. Example: Galileo's experiments on the free fall of objects. Galileo, through careful experimentation and precise measurements, observed that the rate of fall of objects with different masses (in a vacuum) is the same. These observations supported the theory of gravity and contributed to the revision of previous theories. Another example: a study that examines the effect of social media use on the mental health of children, adolescents, and young adults. Accordingly, research is: first, systematic and organized; second, based on specific and repeatable methods; third, aimed at collecting and analyzing data; fourth, helpful in testing hypotheses, developing theories, or solving practical problems; and fifth, its results can be reported and published.

Feature	Theory	Research
Main Purpose	Explanation of phenomena	Examination and testing of hypotheses; development or testing of theories
Nature	Comprehensive and coherent explanation	Systematic and organized process
Product	Explanation, model, conceptual framework	Data, findings, results, research reports
Methods	Logic, reasoning, interpretation of evidence	Observation, experimentation, interview, statistical analysis, etc.
Support	Empirical evidence	Empirical methods and data
Relationship	Theories are supported by research, and research helps to test and revise theories	Research is conducted to test hypotheses and develop theories

Table1. Comparison Between Theory and Research

The truth is that theories, without research, are merely speculation; and conversely, research without theory can be aimless and scattered. The relationship between them is a dynamic and repetitive one. Theories help researchers in selecting research questions and designing methods. Research leads to the confirmation, rejection, or modification of theories and, as a result, contributes to the evolution of knowledge. Newton's theory of gravity is a good example of this relationship. This theory was built upon previous observations and research and later served as the foundation for subsequent studies in the field of physics. This continuous cycle between theory and research is the engine of scientific progress.

In the field of the humanities, we can compare Freud's psychoanalytic theory with empirical studies on defense mechanisms. Freud's

psychoanalytic theory is a relatively comprehensive theory—though adapted to the context of its origin—about personality, psychological development, and psychopathology. According to this theory, human behavior is largely guided by unconscious forces, especially by the conflicts between the id, ego, and superego. Defense mechanisms (such as repression, displacement, projection, and denial) are unconscious strategies that the ego uses to protect itself against anxiety resulting from internal conflicts.

To examine the validity of the claims of psychoanalytic theory, various studies have been conducted. For example, researchers may attempt to evaluate defense mechanisms empirically. This can be done using standardized defense mechanism questionnaires, discourse analysis, or even through case studies.

Psychoanalytic theory provides a relatively comprehensive interpretive framework for understanding human behavior and personality from a Western perspective. This theory was developed based on Freud's clinical observations and qualitative data analysis. However, many of its main concepts (id and superego) are not directly observable or measurable.

Empirical studies on defense mechanisms attempt to examine specific aspects of psychoanalytic theory, such as defense mechanisms, in a quantitative and empirical manner. These studies use various methods and aim to measure and quantify theoretical concepts. The results of these studies can lead to supporting some aspects of psychoanalytic theory, modifying it, or even rejecting some of its claims.

Empirical research on defense mechanisms helps both to evaluate the validity of specific aspects of psychoanalytic theory and to expand and refine it. For instance, studies may show that certain defense mechanisms are more effective under specific conditions, or that these mechanisms operate differently among individuals. These findings can contribute to completing and complicating psychoanalytic theory. Therefore, a comprehensive theory in the humanities can be connected to empirical research. Theory provides a conceptual framework, and research helps to test and revise that framework. This is a dynamic and repetitive relationship that contributes to the development of knowledge in the humanities.

In general, the concept of the Onion of Research refers to the process of conducting scientific research, whose purpose is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to answer research questions or solve problems. It consists of layers such as topic selection, research design, methodology, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and report presentation.
In contrast, the concept of the Onion of Theorization refers to the process of constructing and developing theories. Its aim is to understand and explain phenomena, predict results, and present conceptual frameworks for analyzing issues. The Onion of Theorization focuses on layers such as school of thought, paradigm, philosophical foundations, principles, policies, guidelines, methodology, research method, general outlook, and the personal approach of the theorist.

A. Similarities

The similarities between the *Onion of Theorization* and the *Onion of Research* are as follows:

- ✓ Both models represent multilayered and complex processes.
- ✓ Both models have an outer layer that defines the general and guiding aspect of the process (the *school of thought* versus the *research problem*).
- ✓ Both models have layers that, in sequence, address increasing levels of detail.
- ✓ Both models implicitly contain a central core: in the *Onion of Theorization*, this core may be the final theory or conceptual model, while in the *Onion of*

Research, this core is the results and their interpretation.

B. Differences

The differences between the *Onion of Theorization* and the *Onion of Research* are as follows:

- ✓ The Onion of Theorization emphasizes the intellectual and conceptual framework of research, while the Onion of Research focuses on operational and methodological aspects.
- ✓ The Onion of Theorization includes layers such as school of thought, paradigm, and the personal approach of the researcher, which are not present in the Onion of Research.
- ✓ The Onion of Research describes the stages of data collection and data analysis in more detail, whereas in the Onion of Theorization, these are not elaborated in such detail.
- ✓ The Onion of Theorization may represent a repetitive and cyclical process, whereas the Research Onion appears more linear. The layers of theorization mutually influence one another.
- ✓ The Onion of Research is a goal-oriented and often time-bound process, while the Onion of Theorization can be a longer process with a less clearly defined objective.

In Table 2, the Onion of Research and the Onion of Theorization are compared based on their characteristics.

Feature	Onion of Research	Onion of Theorization
Main Purpose	Conducting scientific research and answering research questions	Constructing and developing theories
Focus	Practical research process and data analysis	Concepts, principles, and theoretical frameworks
Key Layers	Topic selection, research design, data analysis	School of thought, paradigm, philosophical foundations
Output	Research results and practical recommendations	Theories and conceptual frameworks
Time Frame	Short-term and project-based	Long-term and continuous
Role of Researcher	Researcher and executor of the study	Theorist and thinker

Table2: Comparison Between the Onion of Research and the Onion of Theorization

If we wish to present the key difference between these two onions, the following figure illustrates it.

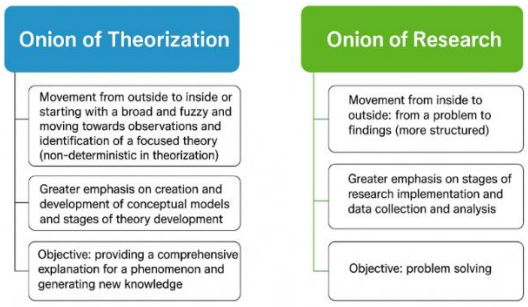

Figure 3. Key Difference Between the Onions of

The Interactive Relationship Between the Two Layered Models: The Onion of Theorization and the Onion of Research

The layers of the Onion of Research can, in fact, be used as tools to complement and test the layers of the Onion of Theorization. Theories derived from the inner layers of the Onion of Theorization can be tested through research, and the layers of the Onion of Research can contribute to refining and improving these theories. In other words, they form a cyclical process of research and theorization. In a precise view, these two models complement each other, and each represents one aspect of the overall process of research and theorization. The theorization model illustrates the deeper and more philosophical layers that influence the overall framework of research.

The Onion of Research can contribute to the development and refinement of theories. The data collected in research can lead to testing and improving theories. On the other hand, the Onion of Theorization can serve as a conceptual framework for the Onion of Research. For example, theories can determine the general orientation of research and assist in the selection of methodology and research methods.

The relationship between the Onion of Theorization (with layers such as school of thought, paradigm, principles, and foundations, etc.) and the Onion of Research (with layers such as research problem, methodology, data, and analysis, etc.) is a cyclical and repetitive process, not a simple linear relationship. They are interconnected and mutually reinforce and complement each other. This relationship can be explained in several ways:

The Onion of Theorization as the Foundation of the Onion of Research

The outer layers of the Onion of Theorization (school of thought, paradigm) determine the overall framework of the research. They show how the researcher views the world, what types of questions are asked, and what kinds of answers are of interest. This framework forms the basis for selecting the research problem and defining its objectives.

The middle layers of the Onion of Theorization (principles and foundations, methodology, research method) influence the choice of research methods in the Onion of Research. If the researcher follows a positivist paradigm, quantitative methods are chosen, whereas an interpretive approach leads to the use of qualitative methods.

The inner layers of the Onion of Theorization (general outlook, personal approach, core essence) specify more details about how the research is conducted and help in selecting specific tools and methods. The personal approach of the researcher can play an important role in the interpretation of data and results.

The Onion of Research as the Tool for Testing and Refining the Onion of Theorization

First, it is a repetitive cycle. The Onion of Research, through data collection and analysis, tests and evaluates the hypotheses and theories presented in the inner layers of the Onion of Theorization. The research results may confirm, reject, or revise the theories.

Second, feedback and revision flow within it. The results of data analysis (the Onion of Research) provide feedback to the conceptual layers of the Onion of Theorization. This feedback can lead to the modification of concepts, hypotheses, and even the overall framework of the research. This cycle is repetitive and can be repeated several times.

To demonstrate an example of the connection between the two, it can be explained as follows:

A researcher intends to propose a theory about the impact of social media on adolescents' self-esteem. Based on the Onion of Theorization, the researcher adopts the positivist school of thought and the quantitative paradigm. The principles and foundations are drawn from communication and social psychology theories. The methodology is quantitative, and the research method involves questionnaires and statistical analysis.

According to the Onion of Research, the research problem is the study of the impact of social media on self-esteem. The methodology is quantitative; therefore, after defining the sample, the researcher selects the questionnaire as the data collection tool. Data are collected through questionnaires, and regression analysis is chosen for data processing. To examine the relationship between social media use and self-esteem, the interpretation of results will be based on communication and social psychology theories.

The research results may confirm or reject the initial theory, or lead to its revision—even to a change in methodology. The researcher may adopt another paradigm or school of thought for subsequent studies.

As another practical example: based on the Onion of Theorization, a theorist in the field of sociology may, following the Marxist school of thought and the interpretive paradigm, develop a theory on social inequality. This theory is grounded in philosophical principles such as historical materialism and employs qualitative methodology for data analysis. Based on the Onion of Research, a researcher may design a study using existing theories of social inequality, including literature review, data collection through interviews, and qualitative data analysis. The results of such research may contribute to the revision or further development of existing theories.

In fact, the Onion of Theorization defines the conceptual framework for research, while the Onion of Research serves as a tool for testing and refining that framework. These two models are connected through a repetitive and reciprocal cycle, each helping to enhance the understanding of the other. The Onion of Theorization focuses more on conceptual and theoretical aspects, with the goal of producing theoretical knowledge, while the Onion of Research emphasizes practical and operational aspects, aiming to answer research questions or solve practical problems. These two concepts complement one another, and the interaction between them can lead to the production of rich and applicable knowledge.

Conclusion

This article has shown that theorization is a multilayered process influenced by various factors. The Onion of Theorization, as a conceptual model, helps to better understand the process of knowledge production. Each layer of this onion represents an important dimension in theorization, and understanding the interaction among these layers can lead to the development of more comprehensive and effective theories. This framework is useful for researchers and scholars, and it can also assist policymakers and decision-makers in designing and implementing effective programs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The layers of the Onion of Theorization form a visual model. Instead of traditional approaches, the simple yet powerful metaphor of an onion has been used to examine the structure and different layers of this complex process in a structured and practical manner. Theorization, like peeling an onion, is a multi-stage and gradual process that presents new challenges and discoveries at each stage. Each layer of the onion represents a fundamental aspect of this process and a crucial stage in the formation of a scientific theory. Neglecting any of these layers can lead to unreliable results.

Success in theorization requires precision, patience, and self-critique of both the researcher and the research process. These layers are mutually interconnected and influence one another; a change in one layer may affect the others. Understanding these layers contributes to a deeper comprehension of the theorization

process, the formation of research, and the evaluation of a theory.

Key questions based on the Onion of Theorization are as follows:

- ✓ In which school of thought (the overarching foundations and principles of thought) does it breathe?
- ✓ What are the fundamental bases governing its scientific theories?
- ✓ What is its doctrine / grand strategy?
- ✓ What are its scientific policies and strategies (the guiding "dos and don'ts" of scientific planning)?
- ✓ Upon which methodological school is its methodology based?
- ✓ What are its techniques and methods of data collection (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods)?
- ✓ What is its attitude and approach (the general/collective or personal point of view)?

The process of theorization within these layers is not always linear and orderly; rather, it resembles an iterative and recursive process. Overlaps and returns between layers—for correction and completion—are common and even necessary. This process may take a long time and is continuously refined through new observations and critical reviews. These layers function recursively with mutual feedback in the process of theorization.

Finally, these layers can provide a precise and operational criterion for evaluating and judging theories. Completing this topic, as well as defining the indicators and measures of such evaluation, should be pursued in further studies. Future research can focus on examining the impact of each layer on the theorization process, developing more refined models, and unveiling how these criteria can be assessed.

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