PhD Course
"Theories in Entrepreneurship and Strategy Research"
(PhD program section "Theory", in English language, Winter term)

Background
Theory is key to research in the fields of entrepreneurship and strategy. Scholarly publications are expected to draw on solid theory and to provide a distinct theoretical contribution. At the same time, the phrase 'theory' is used in one of many ways, ranging from a combination of loosely coupled arguments to theory in its strictest sense (e.g., Bacharach, 1989). Complexity is even increased through recent movements towards more multilevel theorizing (e.g., Hitt, Beamish, Jackson, & Mathieu, 2007, Klein, Tosi, & Cannella, 1999). Overall, adequately dealing with theory poses considerable challenges for PhD students and scholars in the domains of entrepreneurship and strategy.

This module sheds light on when, how, and which theories to use in entrepreneurship and strategy research. On successful completion, you will be able to: (1) explain the different conceptualizations of 'theory', (2) effectively position your own research in the extant theoretical landscape and formulate theoretical contributions, (3) systematically choose between different theoretical perspectives to frame your research, and (4) create and evaluate two critical sections of academic manuscripts, namely the introduction and theoretical background.

Prerequisites
None

Tentative course structure
(1) What is a 'theory'?
(2) Positioning your research
(3) Developing theoretical contributions
(4) Prominent theories in the areas of entrepreneurship and strategy
(5) Multilevel theorizing
(6) Writing the introduction and theoretical background

Certain elements of the course will be emphasized, depending on the background and needs of participants.

Literature
Bacharach, S. B. 1989. Organizational theories: Some criteria for evaluation. *Academy of Management Review, 14(4)*: 496-515.

Colquitt, J. A. & George, G. 2011. From the editors: Publishing in amj - part 1: Topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal, 54(3)*: 432-435.

Corley, K. G. & Gioia, D. A. 2011. Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review, 36(1)*: 12-32.

DiMaggio, P. J. 1995. Comments on "what theory is not". *Administrative Science Quarterly, 40(3)*: 391-397.

Gartner, W. B. 2001. Is there an elephant in entrepreneurship? Blind assumptions in theory development. *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice, 25(4)*: 27-39.

George, J. M. & Jones, G. R. 2000. The role of time in theory and theory building. *Journal of Management, 26(4)*: 657-684.

Grant, A. M. & Pollock, T. G. 2011. From the editors: Publishing in amj - part 3: Setting the hook. *Academy of Management Journal, 54(5)*: 873-879.

Hitt, M. A., Beamish, P. W., Jackson, S. E., & Mathieu, J. E. 2007. Building theoretical and empirical bridges across levels: Multilevel research in management. *Academy of Management Journal, 50(6)*: 1385-1399.

Klein, K. J., Dansereau, F., & Hall, R. J. 1994. Levels issues in theory development, data collection, and analysis. *Academy of Management Review, 19(2)*: 195-229.

Klein, K. J., Tosi, H. L., & Cannella, A. A. 1999. Multilevel theory building: Benefits, barriers, and new developments. *Academy of Management Review, 24(2)*: 243-248.

Mitchell, T. R. & James, L. R. 2001. Building better theory: Time and the specification of when things happen. *Academy of Management Review, 26(4)*: 530-547.

Sparrowe, R. T. & Mayer, K. J. 2011. From the editors: Publishing in amj - part 4: Grounding hypotheses. *Academy of Management Journal, 54(6)*: 1098-1102.

Sutton, R. I. & Staw, B. M. 1995. What theory is not. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 40(3)*: 371-384.

Weick, K. E. 1995. What theory is not, theorizing is. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 40(3)*: 385-390.

Assessment

Participants are expected to submit an essay (15-20 pages) in one of two forms:

(1) a critical reflection on a topic provided by the convenor or

(2) a 'theory upfront', i.e., the introduction and theory sections of a manuscript draft that has been written or rewritten based on insights from the course.

Language

English

Registration

Email your CV to sascha.walter@uni-wuerzburg.de by 15/10/23.

Module convenor and contact

Professor Sascha Walter

Last change: 9th September 2023