

What is a Research Framework?

A **research framework** is a conceptual or methodological structure that guides the process of conducting research. It provides a systematic approach to defining research questions, gathering data, analyzing findings, and interpreting results. Research frameworks are essential tools for ensuring that research is coherent, logical, and aligned with its objectives. They serve as "blueprints" that help researchers organize their studies and make informed decisions throughout the research process.

Types of Research Frameworks

Research frameworks can vary depending on the discipline and purpose of the study. Some common types include:

- **Conceptual Frameworks:** These outline key concepts, theories, and variables relevant to the study. They help in forming hypotheses and structuring the research direction. For example, in interior design, a conceptual framework might explore how cultural influences shape spatial layouts.
- **Theoretical Frameworks:** Rooted in established theories, these frameworks provide a broader context for the research. For instance, an architecture student might use [Christopher Alexander's "Pattern Language"](#) theory to analyze urban design.
- **Methodological or Analytical Frameworks:** These focus on specific methods or tools for data collection and analysis. For example, a graphic design student might use a qualitative framework like thematic analysis to study user feedback on website interfaces.

Examples Relevant to Design and Business Students

For Design Students (Interiors, Architecture, Graphic Design):

1. **Double Diamond Framework** (Design Thinking): Commonly used in design disciplines, this framework involves four stages—Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver. It helps students approach problem-solving creatively by first understanding the problem deeply before ideating solutions.
2. **User-Centered Design (UCD)**: This framework emphasizes designing with the end-user in mind. It involves iterative stages of research, prototyping, and testing to ensure usability and satisfaction.
3. **Environmental Behavior Framework**: In interior design or architecture, this framework examines how physical spaces influence human behavior—for instance, studying how lighting affects productivity in office spaces.
4. **Hook Model**: In graphic or UX design, this framework focuses on creating habit-forming products by understanding triggers, actions, rewards, and investments.

For Business Students:

1. **SWOT Analysis**: A strategic business framework that evaluates Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Business students can use it to assess market conditions or organizational strategies.
2. **Business Model Canvas**: This visual framework helps map out a company's value proposition, target customers, revenue streams, and cost structure—ideal for entrepreneurship projects.
3. **Porter's Five Forces**: A tool for analyzing competitive forces in an industry—useful for MBA students studying market dynamics.

4. **Lean Startup Methodology:** Focused on rapid experimentation and iteration to develop viable business models efficiently.
5. **PESTLE Analysis:** This framework evaluates external factors—Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental—that influence business operations.

Why Research Frameworks Matter

Research frameworks are crucial because they:

- Provide clarity and focus by aligning methods with objectives.
- Ensure systematic planning and execution of research.
- Enhance the validity and reliability of findings.
- Allow researchers to address complex problems with structured approaches.

By incorporating frameworks into their projects, students can produce well-organized and impactful research that meets academic standards while addressing real-world challenges effectively.

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