Perspectives on Family Communication 5th edition Turner Solutions Manual

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CHAPTER TWO
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define theory. Discuss the implications of applying theory to the study of family communication.
- Explain the four goals of theory.
- Describe the intellectual traditions that influence the development of theory. Provide an example of how each tradition could be used in examining the family.
- Explain the four primary assumptions about the family that underlie the writing of the text.
- Describe systems theory. Discuss the six elements which are central to systems theory.
- Identify the limitations to the systems approach to investigating the family.
- Describe social construction theory. Explain the primary assumption of this theory that influences the investigation of family communication.
- Describe the dialectic approach. Discuss the basic elements that underlie this approach.
- Explain the types of dialectical tensions experienced by families.
- Recall Baxter's strategies for managing dialectical tensions. Explain the use of these strategies in the management of tensions in the family.
- Describe developmental theory. Discuss the assumptions of family life which influence this theory. Distinguish between developmental theory and revised developmental theory.
- Identify the three methods of inquiry available to researchers of family communication.
- Describe the quantitative methods of survey and experiment.
- Describe the qualitative methods of depth interviews and textual analysis.

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CHAPTER TWO
PROVIDING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

I. Introduction
- A. Why do we (as family members) do what we do?
  - 1. Researchers use theory to provide a framework to make meaning from behavior.
  - 2. Implicit theories are explanations that everyone carries out in their daily lives, to help provide explanations for behavior.
    - a. When we pose an answer to one of our questions we engage in theoretical thinking.
    - b. All of us follow a process that resembles creating a theory and testing it, as we try to find explanations to explain the implicit theories we have created.

II. The Definition of Theory
- A. Theory is an abstract system of concepts with indications of the relationships among these concepts.
- B. James White (2005) identified the elements of a theory.
  - 1. Statements about the relevant context(s) (i.e., the theory is about newlywed couples' communication).
  - 2. A set of general propositions (i.e., assertions about the context, such as, newlyweds will express agreement with one another, their communication will be more positive than negative, they depend on social support from their extended networks, and so on).
  - 3. Statements that connect the propositions (i.e., if their extended network shows disapproval, their communication will change from mostly agreement to more disagreement, and so on).
  - 4. The theory must have the capability to be tested or applied in a way that will allow a researcher to see if it is useful.

III. The Goals of a Theory – To explain, understand, predict, and influence social change.
- A. Models and Typologies
  - 1. A model is a visual or verbal representation of related phenomena.
  - 2. A typology is a list of categories, or types, that are subsets of larger constructs and distinguished by dimensions, qualities, or characteristics.
    - a. Models and typologies are descriptive and pre-theoretical.
    - b. Models and typologies contain concepts; however, unlike a theory they do not articulate the relationship among them or strive to explain or predict.
- B. Theories as Tools for Studying Family Communication
  - 1. The metaphor of a tool can help researchers employ theory to study families.
    - a. Tools have specific purposes, but people who use tools can innovate them for other purposes.
    - b. Theories do not contain truth but are ways to help researchers

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accomplish as task (i.e., explain, understand, predict, or change family communication).

2. Theories may help makes sense of family life, but they may also prevent us from seeing issues critical to family experience (e.g., it's hard to imagine using a hammer to do anything other than drive nails).

a. Theories lead us to see "positive spaces' and obscure the "negative spaces" when theorizing.

b. Theories are slow to explain fast-moving aspects of culture (technology, social media); but rather than throwing out old theories, we need to determine if existing theories are capable of answering questions and providing useful explanations.

3. Theories offer a way to make sense of raw data to help researchers know which should be considered and which should be ignored.

IV. Intellectual Traditions – a general way of thinking, representing a way to approach and learn about the world.

A. The Post-Positivistic Approach

1. This approach assumes an objective reality that will be imperfectly known, through probability.

2. This tradition borrows methods from the natural sciences and strives to be objective and works for control over concepts in the theory.

3. Researchers operate deductively, beginning with a general theory and collect specific instances to see if the assertions of the theory will hold.

B. The Interpretive Approach

1. This interpretive tradition views truths as subjective and co-created by the participants.

a. The researcher is perceived to be one of the participants.

b. Objectivity is believed to be impossible.

2. Researchers are not concerned with control and the ability to generalize across families, but instead, are interested in thick rich descriptions of the families they study.

3. This is an inductive approach, where the researcher works from specific observations and then induces the general theory based upon what was observed.

C. The Critical Approach

1. This perspective posits that theories exist to bring values to the surface where they can be challenged or changed.

a. Critical researchers argue that those in power shape knowledge in ways to perpetuate the status quo and therefore keep themselves in power by silencing minority voices that question the status quo.

2. Examples of researchers who work in this tradition include Marxists, postmodernists, and feminists.

D. A worldview represents how people see and make sense of the world they inhabit, which is guided by their chosen intellectual tradition.

V. Theoretical Assumptions Underlying This Text

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A. The Centrality of Communication
    1. Communication constructs family identity and relational culture.
        a. A person "gets a life" through performing narrative, as storytelling is how family and personal identity are created.
        b. Communication establishes what it means to belong to a particular family.
    2. Paradoxically, communication creates family conflicts and stress, but it also provides the means for managing them.
    3. Additional assumptions about the centrality of communication in families include the following: families communicate about their changes and manage their pleasures and discomforts about change through communication, families negotiate their social and cultural contexts communicatively, and families make meaning through their communication practices.

B. The Process Approach
    1. The first assumption of the process approach is that family life (i.e., relationships, structure, norms, roles, etc.) changes with the passage of time.
        a. Changes over time impact families, as past experiences affect present situations which then impacts future interactions.
        b. One of the elements that distinguishes marriage and family life from other less enduring relationships is the element of time: possessing a shared history and have an expectation of a shared future.
    2. The process approach to understanding family processes is mapped across two types of time.
        a. Calendar time, or clock time, presumes that all time units are equal (all days have 24 hours, all hours have 60 minutes, each week has 7 days), which allows us to measure and plan allotted time for activities.
        b. Social process time refers to using family experiences to divide (or mark) time (e.g., before Tim got married, after Kim was born, etc.).
        c. Social process time can be overlaid on calendar time to trace time to better understand family interaction.

C. Influences of Social and Cultural Contexts
    1. Families live in an external context (as well as an internal one that they create), or environment, that they have no control in shaping however it exerts influence over how families interact.
    2. Families are influenced by economic and cultural conditions.
    3. Culture influences theory and the conclusions made by scholars using different theoretical perspectives.

D. The Family as a Meaning Making System
    1. A family's relational culture is the results of meanings that family members create among themselves.
        a. This is based upon the constructivist view that the family constructs its own social reality.
        b. Conversation provides the means for creating social reality for families.

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VI. Family Theories

A. Systems Theory

1. Systems Theory was borne out of the post-positivistic intellectual tradition because of the following three aspects:

a. It assumes that all systems share certain characteristics;

b. it focuses on recurring patterns that allow us to predict family behaviors; and

c. in examining the components of systems, it seeks to provide explanations for family behaviors.

2. The central properties of Systems Theory include (1) wholeness, (2) interdependence, (3) hierarchy, (4) boundaries/openness, (5) calibration/ feedback, and (6) equifinality.

a. Wholeness is the most fundamental part of the systems approach, which is the idea that a system cannot be understood by studying the individual parts in isolation from one another but must be seen as a whole.

b. Interdependence means that the elements of a system are interrelated and the behaviors of system members co-construct the system, and all members are affected by shifts and changes in the system.

c. Hierarchy means that all systems have levels, or subsystems, and all systems are embedded in other systems, or suprasystems; and within the family, two subsystems operate.

i. Interpersonal subsystems are the relationships between a small subunit of the family members.

ii. Personal or psychobiological subsystems refers to each individual representing his or her own separate system, where each family member is her or his own person, separate from and yet interdependent with the whole family system.

d. Boundaries/openness refers to the permeability around the family system and the subsystems they contain.

i. Ambiguous boundaries occur when family members are unsure about who is in and who is out of the family system.

e. Calibration/feedback – calibration is checking the scale, and subsequent feedback is to change or stabilize the system allow for control of the range.

i. A thermostat provides an apt analogy.

ii. Feedback is positive when it produces change, called morphogenic, and is negative when it maintains the status quo, called homeostatic.

f. Equifinality is the ability to achieve the same goals through different means.

3. Limits of the Systems Approach

` a. The approach emphasizes homeostasis and is not a true representation

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of family life because the focus is on stability to the exclusion of change.
b. An emphasis on systems thinking of patterns keeps us from recognizing and appreciating the random and unpredictable behaviors in families.
c. The emphasis on the whole has excluded an examination of the individual, where there is a dichotomy between the system and the individual.
d. Systems theory is not sensitive to issues of diversity, as the focus on micro-functioning in families implies that cultural differences do not impact family communication.
e. Systems theory operates from the post-positivist intellectual tradition, assuming there is a universal truth, and positioning the researcher outside the family, to observe and find the truth.

B. Social Construction Theory
1. The focus of this theory is on the meaning-making function of communication.
a. Researchers are interested in how the family works together to create meaning, not just in how an individual member looks at family life.
b. Social Construction Theory in the interpretive tradition and is rooted in symbolic interaction theory, which posits that meaning comes from symbols and their shared interpretation between people engaged in social interaction.
c. The social construction approach to studying communication argues that meanings are created and negotiated situationally by the actors, or co-created.
d. Researchers should focus on the continuous flow of conversation between people.
i. Researchers should study the routine, or everyday talk of family life.
ii. Researchers should realize that family members are making and remaking social words through interaction.
e. The social construction approach leads naturally to a study of family stories and the constructing meaning through family interaction.
2. Limitations of Social Construction Theory
a. It is more abstract and descriptive than focused and explanatory.
b. Since the theory is about words and behaviors in action, it is difficult to employ a research methodology that truly captures social construction as it is happening.

C. Dialectics (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996)
1. The dialectic approach posits that family life is characterized by ongoing tensions between contradictory impulses.
a. Grounded in the interpretive tradition, it focuses on meaning-making processes.
b. This perspective focuses on the discursive struggle that occurs when

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people in unequal power positions voice contradictory utterances.

2. There are three dialectical tensions that are central to family life.
    a. Autonomy/connection occurs when there is a simultaneous desire to be independent of our families but also a desire to find intimacy with them.
    b. The openness/protection dialectic is the conflicting desire to be open share personal information with our family but also to be strategic and protective about what information we share.
    c. The novelty/predictability dialectic is the conflict between the comfort of stability and excitement of change.
3. There are four strategies for managing dialectical tensions.
    a. Cyclic alteration occurs when families choose one of the contradictions to feature a particular time and alternate between the two.
    b. Segmentation is the isolation of contradictory tensions into separate domains.
    c. Selection is when the family chooses one of the opposing tensions over the other.
    d. Integration takes three forms.
        i. Neutralizing is compromising between the polarities.
        ii. Reframing is transforming the dialectical tension in some way that so that it no longer seems to be in opposition.
        iii. Disqualifying occurs by exempting certain issues from the general pattern.
4. Baxter and Montgomery argue that any techniques that family members use are improvisational, affected by time, and possibly complicated by unintended consequences.
5. Rawlins (1992) identified two contextual dialectics that impact the family.
    a. The public and private refer to the tension between the family's private and public life.
    b. The ideal and real refers to the tension a family experiences when they aspire to the ideal (generally portrayed in popular culture) compared to their own actual family experience.
6. The main critique of dialectic theory is that it can support a nearly infinite list of dialectical tensions, and generating a list of tensions in family life does not enable behavioral prediction.

D. Developmental Theory
1. The goal of developmental theory is to explain the ways that families change over time.
    a. The process of family development is goal directed.
    b. Necessary tasks and conditions must be met during one stage before a family can move to the next stage (determinism).
    c. As individual family members develop, the whole family will develop or change.
    d. Family development is a forward, linear process (born, mature, and

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die).

2. Revised developmental theory contains three propositions.
    a. Previous stages influence present stages.
    b. Families develop in consistent patterns over time.
    c. Norms from other social institutions influence the timing of events and stages in families.
    d. The propositions of revised developmental theory rest on the following assumptions: (1) events are the transition points between stages, and (2) the order of stages in a family's life career is not invariant or irreversible (thus, it is not a linear model).

VII. Methods of Inquiry

A. Theories provide explanations about family communication and help researchers organize their inquiries, but to study questions of family communication a variety of methods are used.

1. Quantitative research methods require researchers to gather observations that can be quantified and analyzed to make an argument about their meaning relative to a theoretical position.
2. Qualitative methods help researchers make sense of experiences and require a rhetorical appeal for their findings.
3. Triangulation is when a question is approached with more than one method.
4. Survey research consists of a researcher administering a standardized questionnaire to a sample of respondents.
    a. Surveys can be conducted face-to-face, self-administered paper and pencil type, by phone, electronically (e.g., Qualtrics, Survey Monkey), etc.
    b. Surveys are best suited for research where the individual is the unit of analysis, rather than a group or organization.
    c. Surveys are best for gathering data from a large population.
5. Experiments
    a. Experimental research systematically manipulates the independent variable in order to see what its effects are on another variable, called the dependent variable.
    b. The goal of experimental research is to keep everything constant except the variable being tested in order to measure whether participants behave in the ways predicted by the theory the researchers are testing.
6. Depth Interviews
    a. Depth interviews allow interviewers to question respondents in hopes of obtaining information about a phenomenon of interest.
    b. Depth interviews differ from surveys because they are semi-structured by the interviewer and typically last between one and three hours.
7. Textual Analysis
    a. Textual analysis involves scrutinizing a specific text (e.g., television show, advertisement, etc.) and applying an analytical tool to deconstruct the messages contained within the text.

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8. Genograms
    a. Genograms are a visual depiction of family communication patterns and relationships across at least three generations.
    b. Genograms are useful for a variety of reasons.
        i. To demonstrate who family communication patterns are learned.
        ii. To discern how functional and dysfunctional communication behaviors occurred.
        iii. And to understand the closeness and distance embedded in family relationships.
    c. Genograms may differ among family members, as not all family members perceive things the same way and may construct them differently.
    d. Genograms may overlap with survey and depth interviews because the information contained within it may be part of the data collection technique.

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CHAPTER TWO
ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

THE RESEARCHER: Investigating the Henderson Family

Materials Needed:

- Henderson Family Description / Worksheet

Purpose of Exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to provide students with an understanding of how theory may influence a researcher's investigation of family life. Students will be encouraged to engage in critical thinking in determining the aspects of family life which would be of primary interest to a researcher depending on the perspective/approach that is promoted in the theory that guides the researcher.

Instructions:

1) Divide students into groups.
2) Provide each group with a copy of the "Henderson Family Description/Worksheet."
3) Instruct students to complete the worksheet. Have groups share their responses with the class.

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Henderson Family Description/Worksheet

The Hendersons are a binuclear family. Joe and Jane Henderson divorced approximately one year ago, and they share custody of their two children, Timothy and Suzanne. Jane still resides in the family home, which is located in the suburbs of a major city, while Joe has moved to a condominium located in the city so that he can be closer to his workplace.

Joe Henderson (age 48) is employed as a systems analyst for a major bank. His job requires him to travel to other locations and be away for at least one week per month. Joe was the oldest of four children, and his father deserted the family when Joe was only 11 years old. Consequently, Joe was expected to serve as a "father-figure" to his younger siblings.

Jane Anderson (age 43) recently took a job as a substitute teacher in the local school system. She had quit her job as an elementary teacher after the birth of her two children, but she had to return to work after her recent divorce. Jane is described by her friends as being extremely organized and efficient. She was an only child, and her parents doted on her—often to the extent that some would say she was "spoiled"!

Timothy Anderson (age 16) has recently began smoking and staying out later than his curfew. His grades have been slipping, and he has stopped attending practice for his high school's golf team—although he was just named team captain this year. He argues with his sister and disobeys his mother. The only time that Timothy appears to be happy is when he is staying with his father.

Suzanne Anderson (age 14) is a parent's delight! She continues to make the honor roll each semester and was recently selected as student council president for the coming school year. Suzanne's friends describe her as outgoing and enthusiastic, and she is well-liked by her peers. Her parents both indicate that they have a strong, positive relationship with their daughter, and Suzanne reports that she is satisfied with her interactions with her parents.

Questions for Discussion:

1) Review the communication perspective in examining family life discussed in Chapter 1. Suppose you have been assigned to conduct a study of the Henderson family. What types of things would you examine?
2) Imagine that you have been assigned to a research team. This team has been presented with the task of examining the Henderson family and attempting to explain their current family interactions from each of the following perspectives: positivistic, interpretive, critical. Describe how your research team would develop a plan of investigation by applying each of these three approaches.

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WE'RE ONLY AS STRONG AS OUR WEAKEST LINK: An Analysis of the Systems Approach to Family Communication

Materials Needed:

- Approximately 12-15 lengths of clothesline, cut in 4' lengths

Purpose of Exercise:

This exercise is designed to provide students with a visual image of how systems theory applies to family interactions, as well as demonstrate the changing nature of families as they evolve through time.

Instructions:

1) Select two students to portray the roles in a family. Allow student to select the roles that they will portray. You may provide students with suggestions of roles that may be portrayed to stimulate their thinking about the diversity of families. Some suggestions might include a mother and a daughter; two sisters; a grandparent and grandchild; two cohabiting persons.
2) Create various scenarios that depict social process time as it occurs in a family (e.g., life events which may differentiate various stages that the family experiences).

EXAMPLES:

- You are newlyweds. (Students may identify the need to include in-laws in this model at this point.) Parents of one partner disapproves of the relationship.
- Mexican celebration for a girl's 15th birthday
- The birth of a son/daughter
- An affair/divorce/remarriage
- One spouse loses his/her job
- Marriage of a child
- A bar mitzvah
- Death of a family member

3) Instruct students to each grasp the end of the line and indicate that they should show the strength of their relationship by pulling tightly or allowing the line to slack.
4) As new events occur in the family, students should be instructed to connect to the lines of those that they would have a relationship with in the family. There may be instances where a family member may wish to sever a relationship. In this case, the family member should simply drop any connections via the lines.
5) Allow students to come up with social process events that they may have experienced in their own families. Encourage them to depict the communication demands of each event as they occur. Point out the changes that will occur in the family structure and in the "string web" that they are creating as the family undergoes change.

Questions for Discussion

1) How does this exercise illustrate the following aspects of Systems Theory?

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Wholeness
Interdependence
Hierarchy
Boundaries/Openness
Calibration/Feedback

2) How are family members affected by the changes that occurred within this family system? What suggestions would you offer family members for being flexible in the face of changes and events?

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FAMILY SYSTEMS AND BOUNDARIES: Who's "In" and Who's "Out"

Materials Needed:

- Large sheets of drawing paper for each student (or overhead transparencies)
- Colored markers, crayons, or pencils (or markers for overhead transparencies)

Purpose of Exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage students to identify the subsystems and suprasystems which exist within their families, as well as between their family and the external context. In doing so, students will be able to identify the boundaries which exist as a result of these subsystems and suprasystems and realize their impact on communication.

Instructions:

1) Provide each student with paper and writing instruments.
2) Instruct students to draw all the people they would consider members of their family in the center of the paper.
3) Instruct students to draw circles around all the subsystems which exist in their family. Ask students to indicate the permeable or impermeable boundaries which exist between systems by using a different color to represent each type of boundary when drawing the circle around the family subsystems.
4) Instruct students to add to the drawing by indicating the suprasystems outside the family that exert influence on the members. This may be difficult due to the ambiguous boundaries perceived by various family members.
5) Ask students to indicate the types of information which are shared with those outside the system. Next, ask them to indicate what types of information are not shared with those outside the subsystems.
6) Ask students to volunteer to share their drawings with the class. Overheads are useful in that they can be placed on a projector and easily seen by the entire class.

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RESEARCHING FAMILY COMMUNICATION: Supporting our Guess of "Why"

Materials Needed: Paper and pen

Purpose of Exercise: To provide students with the opportunity to identify questions that they have about family communication, propose possible explanations for those questions, and identify methods by which they can test their explanations.

Instructions:
1) Ask students to individually identify three questions that they would like answered about family communication. Some sample prompts might include:

"Why/how/when do families _____ ?"
"Why/how/when do romantic partners _____ ?"
"Why/how/when do parents _____ ?"
" Why/how/when do children _____ ?"

2) Place students in groups and ask them to share their questions. Have the groups choose their favorite questions and generate possible answers for these.
3) Instruct students to identify a research methodology (e.g., survey, experiment, depth interview, textual analysis) that they think would be most beneficial in helping them to answer the question and test the answers that the group came up with in its discussion.

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MY FIRST GENOGRAM

Materials Needed:

- Large sheet of paper for each student
- Colored markers, pencils, or crayons

Purpose of exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to gain a basic awareness of genograms. Students will become familiar with the technicalities of drawing a genogram. Communication patterns, as well as other patterns, become visual through this activity.

Instructions:

1) Provide each student with paper and drawing instruments.
2) Instruct students to refer to the symbols in the chapter that represent men, women, marriage, etc.
3) Ask students to draw a simple genogram (three generations) of their family, a family they are familiar with, or a fictional family. First diagram the relationships among people. Then, indicate relationships that are noteworthy, such as closeness or distance, by using the appropriate lines illustrated in the text. Finally, develop a description of the complexities of the system.
4) Have students volunteer to share their drawings and observations of alliances and communication patterns.

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PERSPECTIVES ON

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

5TH EDITION

Lynn H. Turner
&
Richard West

Because learning changes everything.™

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CHAPTER 2

Providing Theoretical Frameworks

Definition of Theory

- The Goals of Theory/Models and Typologies
- Theories as Tools for Studying Family Communication

Intellectual Traditions

- The Positivistic Approach
- The Interpretive Approach
- The Critical Approach

Theoretical Assumptions Underlying the Text

- The Centrality of Communication
- The Process Approach
- Influences of Social and Cultural Contexts
- The Family as a Meaning-Making System

Family Theories

- Systems Theory, Social Construction Theory, Dialectics, Developmental Theory

Methods of Inquiry

- Surveys, Experiments, Depth Interview, Textual Analysis, Genograms

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Defining Theory

Theory is an abstract system of concepts with indications of the relationships among these concepts.

Elements of a theory:

- Statements about the relevant context(s)
- A set of general propositions
- Statements that connect the propositions
- Must have the capability to be tested or applied

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The Goals of a Theory

Goals of a Theory: explain, understand, predict, and influence social change

Model

- A visual or verbal representations of related phenomena

Typologies

- A list of categories, or types, that are subsets of larger constructs and distinguished by dimensions, qualities, or characteristics

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Theories as Tools for Studying Family Communication

Metaphor of a tool can help researchers employ theory to study families

Theories may help makes sense of family life, but they may also prevent us from seeing issues critical to family experience

Theories offer a way to make sense of raw data to help researchers know which should be considered and which should be ignored.

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Intellectual Traditions

Post-Positivistic Approach

- assumes objectives an objective reality that will be imperfectly known, through probability

Interpretive Approach

- views truths as subjective and co-created by the participants

Critical Approach

- posits that theories exist to bring values to the surface where they can be challenged or changed

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Theoretical Assumptions Underlying the Text

The centrality of communication

- Communication constructs family identity and relational culture

The process approach

- Family life changes with the passage of time

Influences of social and cultural contexts

- Families live in an external context (and an internal one that they create) that they have no control in shaping however it exerts influence over how families interact

The family as a meaning making system

- A family's relational culture is the results of meanings that family members create among themselves

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Systems Theory

Central properties of Systems Theory include:

Wholeness

- system cannot be understood by studying the individual parts in isolation from one another

Interdependence

- elements of a system are interrelated and the behaviors of system members co-construct the system

Hierarchy

- all systems have levels (subsystems) and all systems are embedded in other systems (suprasystems)

Boundaries/Openness

- the permeability around the family system and the subsystems they contain

Calibration/Feedback

- calibration is checking the scale, and subsequent feedback is to change or stabilize the system allow for control of the range

Equifinality

- ability to achieve the same goals through different means

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Limits of System Approach

Emphasizes homeostasis

- not a true representation of family life because the focus is on stability to the exclusion of change

Keeps us from recognizing and appreciating the random and unpredictable behaviors in families

Emphasis on the whole has excluded an examination of the individual

Not sensitive to issues of diversity

- Focus on micro-functioning in families implies that cultural differences do not impact family communication

Operates from the post-positivist intellectual tradition, assuming there is a universal truth

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Social Construction Theory

Focus is on the meaning-making function of communication

- How the family works together to create meaning
- From interpretive tradition, rooted in symbolic interaction theory, which posits that meaning comes from symbols
- Meanings are created and negotiated situationally by the actors
- Researchers should focus on the continuous flow of conversation between people
- Studies of family stories and the constructing meaning through family interaction

Limitations of Social Construction Theory

- more abstract and descriptive than focused and explanatory
- it is difficult to employ a research methodology that captures social construction as it is happening

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Dialectics

Posits that family life is characterized by ongoing tensions between contradictory impulses

Dialectical tensions that are central to family life:

- autonomy/connection
- openness/protection
- novelty/predictability

Strategies for managing dialectical tensions:

- Cyclic alteration
- Segmentation
- Selection
- Integration
  - Neutralization
  - Reframing
  - Disqualifying

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Developmental Theory

Goal is to explain the ways that families change over time

- The process of family development is goal directed
- Necessary tasks and conditions must be met during one stage before a family can move to the next stage
- As individual family members develop, the whole family will develop or change
- Family development is a forward, linear process

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Revised Developmental Theory

Revised Developmental Theory contains three propositions:

- Previous stages influence present stages
- Families develop in consistent patterns over time.
- Norms from other social institutions influence the timing of events and stages in families

Propositions of the Revised Developmental Theory rest on the following assumptions:

- Events are the transition points between stages
- Order of stages in a family's life career is not invariant or irreversible

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Methods of Inquiry, 1

Quantitative research methods - gathering observations to be quantified and analyzed to make an argument about their meaning relative to a theoretical position

Qualitative methods - make sense of experiences and require a rhetorical appeal for their findings

Triangulation - when a question is approached with more than one method

Survey research - administering a standardized questionnaire to a sample of respondents

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Methods of Inquiry, 2

Experiments - systematically manipulating the independent variable to see its effects on the dependent variable

Depth interviews - questioning respondents to obtaining information about a phenomenon of interest

Textual analysis - scrutinizing a specific text and applying an analytical tool to deconstruct the messages contained within the text

Genograms - visual depiction of family communication patterns and relationships across at least three generations

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