

A Grounded Theory Study of Systems Theory and Clothing and Textiles Theories for the
Development of a Dynamic, Complex Human Systems Theory

by

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(ABSTRACT)

Metatheory, a study of theories, was the focus of this research study. A qualitative, grounded theory research design was used to examine documents on systems theory found outside the field of Clothing and Textiles (CT) and the social psychological theories used within CT. Recognizing the dynamic, complex nature of the human system and its interaction with multiple other systems led to the question of: What multidimensional theoretical framework would address this complexity and provide an expanded view for research and education in the field of CT?

Data were collected from documentary materials pertaining to systems theory and CT theories by the researcher in a library search of the literature. Four domains were identified from the data that were collected and analyzed. The domains were Relationship, Process, Organization, and Outcomes. Then, a holistic, systemic theoretical framework and the Human-Environment Systems model were developed from the integration of systems theory and the CT theories. The model was designed to give a general, abstract visual representation of the theoretical concepts of a holistic, systemic view of the human-environment unit. A discussion of the complex societal issue of body image and eating disorders in females served to illustrate the use of the proposed theoretical framework and model. Recommendations were made for future exploration of the use of a holistic perspective for research and educational practices in the field of CT in order to address dynamic, complex human-environment problems.