

Application of Analytic Tools for Theory Testing in Organizational Behavior Research

Kenneth K.S. Law*, Emily Huang** and Chun Hui***

Many management journals insist on having a strong theoretical perspective for empirical studies. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the conditions under which one can claim that a study is theory-driven. The basic premise of our approach is to develop hypotheses that map directly onto the explanatory mechanisms that are employed to explain why a phenomenon would occur. We provide both conceptual and technical tools for evaluating and establishing that a study is theory-grounded. Specifically, we develop standards for evaluating the quality of a hypothesis pertaining to how strongly it relates to a theory. We discuss how different models may be used to demonstrate that a study is theory-driven: single mediator model, multiple mediator model, moderator model, and mediator-moderator model by mapping key explanatory mechanisms of the theory onto the model that is used to test the hypotheses.

Track: Management

* Dr. Kenneth K.S. Law, Department of Management, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Email: mnlaw@cuhk.edu.hk

**Dr. Emily Huang, Department of Management, Baptist University, Hong Kong.
Email: mnhgh@hkbu.edu.hk

***Corresponding author: Dr Chun Hui, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.
Email: chui@business.hku.hk