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In the literature review you highlighted the problem that needs ‘fixing’. The theoretical framework is the ‘toolbox’. It details the theories, propositions, hypotheses (if you’re using them) and concepts – the ‘tools’ – that you will use to address or make sense of your research problem.

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## 1 Research Aims & Objectives

Aims:  
Scope:  
Research questions:  
Dominant theory:  
Ontology:  
Epistemology:

## 2 What theory/theories are you using?

Clearly define and explain each of the theories you draw upon.  
Who are the key advocates and proponents?  
How are they typically applied?  
What are the seminal applications?

## 3 Why this theory?

Justify the focus on this theory. Why not others?  
What implications does using this theory have?  
How does it help fill gaps in the literature?  
What novelty does it bring to the field?

## 4 Theoretical schools

What are the various schools within a particular theoretical field, if any?  
How do you situate yourself in relation to them?  
What are the implications for situating yourself in this way?

## 5 What are the key concepts?

Clearly define and explain all the concepts you will be using.  
Why you have chosen these concepts over others?  
What are the implications of choosing these concepts?

## 6 Relationship between concepts and aims/objectives & existing literature

How does this theory relate to the existing literature?  
How does this theory relate to your aims and objectives?  
How is it appropriate in the context of your research questions?

## 7 How are you using the theory & concepts?

What is your epistemological position?  
What is your ontological position?  
If appropriate, what are your concept-indicators?  
How will you measure concepts or, how will you recognise a concept when you see it?

## 8 Are you the first?

Has anyone else used this theory before in this context?  
How do you differ, if at all?  
How are you similar, if at all?

## 9 Drawbacks?

What are the drawbacks of using this approach?  
How do you overcome these?

## 10 Relationship between concepts/hypotheses

If you are building a model, what are the relationships between various concepts and hypotheses?  
Can you categorise them into themes?  
Can you depict these relationships visually?

