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Living Meta-Analysis: What Contribution Could the Living Educational Theory Research Literature Make as a Resource That Informs Our Meta-Analytic Inquiries?

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Abstract

A meta-analysis is the analysis of the results of several independent studies and offers an opportunity to combine the outcomes of comparable studies. We define a Living Meta-Analysis as a qualitative meta-analysis with inclusion criteria set to Living-Educational-Theory research, and suggest two scenarios:

1. where the researcher proposes to build their own living-educational-theory (let) informed by their meta-analysis of the living-educational-theories of others, and;
2. where the researcher does not propose to build a living-educational-theory (let) but the influence of Living Educational Theory (LET) research is still prominent in the study through the life affirming energy of the other.

We propose an initial classification of the LET research literature, identify, and explore potential research questions, and methods of implementation of cases (1) and (2). We discuss the limitations, choosing a methodology for your research proposal and the contribution that could be made by Living Meta-Analysis to spreading the global influence of Living Educational Theory research.

Keywords: systematic review; meta-analysis; Living Educational Theory research, qualitative meta-analysis; data mining; research proposal; educational research.

Introduction

Our contribution to the June 2021 issue supports its central aim which is to explore the educational influence of Living Educational Theory research as constituted by the claims made in the 109 articles that have been published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs) <https://ejolts.net> Volumes 1-13 between 2008 and 2020, and the over 40 Living-Educational-Theory doctorates that have been accredited for doctoral degrees in universities around the world: accessible from:-

<https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

Since the first issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs) in 2008, and the accreditation of the first Living-Educational-Theory doctorate in 1988, the research has focused on the generation and communication of the living-educational-theories of individual, educational practitioner-researchers. By this we mean that the research has focused on the explanations produced by individual researcher-practitioners for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings.

Research Gap

There have, up to now been no papers that focus on a meta-analysis of these explanations. Hence the focus of this paper is to overcome this research gap in the context of educational responsibility and the concern that living educational theories of individuals may lack objectivity while the meta-analysis of many, relatable but not necessarily generalisable, living educational theories may possess a collective objectivity. Such an aspiration is consistent with our shared value scholarship, and with our collaborate approach in aiming to maintain an educational conversation that inspires critical and creative responses in each other as the paper unfolds.

A quantitative meta-analysis is usually carried out as a statistical analysis of several separate but similar studies in order to test the gathered data for statistical significance. The use of meta-analysis, and systematic review meta-analysis (SRMA), is now widespread in quantitative fields of research, in particular in the synthesis of randomised control clinical trials, the estimation of quantitative fixed effects, randomised effect sizes, and the association between two variables. Terms used in the literature, regarding meta-analytic approaches that support enquiry, encompass a diverse range of definitions and associated techniques. These include the literature review as a research methodology (Snyder, 2019) and meta-analysis as a statistical technique (Hartung, Knapp and Sinha, 2011).

Living Meta-Analysis

In this article we define Living Meta-Analysis as a qualitative meta-analysis and overarching methodology (Timulak, 2014) that is focused on the criteria that distinguishes Living Educational Theory (upper case) research (EJOLTs, 2021) from a living-educational-theory (lower case). We define our 'living meta-analysis' as one specific application of this research method. We accept Timulak's (2009, p. 591) definition that qualitative meta-analysis is an attempt to conduct a rigorous secondary qualitative analysis of primary qualitative findings

functioning to aggregate findings and identify patterns across studies: considered as data points that collectively form an overall picture. In this our methodological paper, published living-educational-theories will form the data for us to distinguish, in our meta-analytic inquiry, Living Educational Theory research as a research paradigm.

Initial Classification of the Living Educational Theory Research Literature

A broad-stroke preliminary review of previously published Living Educational Theory Research was undertaken to find and make explicit what we see as general patterns across the studies. This qualitative meta-analysis combined the results of several related studies from Living Educational Theory research. It has produced a bird's-eye view contribution to improving practice and our professional knowledge base, supporting authors in the sharing of their values and beliefs that relate to educational practice.

Here we are attempting to aggregate findings and identify patterns across living-educational-theories to learn more about the explicit characteristics of a Living Meta-Analysis, and to consider how it may differ from other techniques that are used to synthesise research studies.

Scope

The scope of our meta-analysis is bounded by the contents published in EJOLTs between 2008 and 2020 and living-educational-theory accounts published elsewhere (<https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>). In our meta-analysis, we are making explicit what we see as general patterns across the studies. Our suggested classification of Living Educational Theory literature, codes and descriptors is given in Table 1 in terms of: practitioner; conceptual; organisational; methodological; inspiring others; theoretical.

Potential Research Questions

Here we identify and explore potential research questions that an educational researcher could ask irrespective of whether they intend to build their own let. Using the classification of code and key characteristics in Table 1 above we have identified exemplars and will suggest answers to questions such as:

How do I become a part of creating the new architecture of knowledge that allows co-construction of knowledge between intellectuals in academia and intellectuals located in community settings? (Hall, 2015, p.12).

Questions Asked by a Living Educational Theory Researcher

The research questions asked by a Living Educational Theory researcher are grounded in their questions, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my educational practice?' Their intention is to improve their practice and to make a contribution to their professional

Code	Descriptor Research that seeks to ...	Example
Practitioner	find answers to the question 'how do I improve what I am doing here?'	Panhwar, A. H. (2020) Improving ESL Teaching and Learning Through Living Educational Theory Research at the University Level. <i>EJOLT</i> , 13(2), 48-70.
Conceptual	explore a phenomenon using a value-based lens.	Boland, N. (2020). Lived spirituality: Exploring the richness of inner work. <i>EJOLT</i> , 13(2), 1-20.
Organisational	improve and explain our educational influences in the learning of the institutions and organisations where we live and work.	Parekh, N. (2020). A Culture of Reflection: How my living-educational-theory enabled me to transform the teaching-learning attitude in my school. <i>EJOLT</i> 13(2), 21-47.
Methodological	improve our educational influences in our own learning and in the learning of others by proposing an innovative methodology or method.	Delong, J. (2020). Raising Voices Using Dialogue as a Research Method for Creating living-educational-theories in Cultures of Inquiry. <i>EJOLT</i> , 13(2), 71-92.
Inspiring others	improve and explain our educational influences in the learning of others.	Tofail, F. (2020). A journey to the centre—exploring action research to explain my emerging living-educational-theory and empower local practitioners in policy and practice in Bangladesh. <i>EJOLT</i> , 13(2), 93-117.
Theoretical	contribute to the field of Living Educational Theory research.	Williamson, B. and Whitehead, J. (2021). Living Meta-Analysis: what contribution could the Living Educational Theory research literature make as a resource that informs our meta-analytic inquiries? <i>EJOLT</i> , 14(1), (in press).

Table 1. Our suggested initial classification of the Living Educational Theory literature

knowledge base through generating and sharing their explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their understandings and practice. We have explained how a living meta-analytic approach could extract, from an individual's living-educational-theory, some insights that could be useful by another researcher in the generation of their own living-educational-theory.

The living-educational-theory literature is a resource that can be used to try to find answers to questions of the kind "How do I improve my practice?" Examples include:

- Whitehead's (1976) insight that the 'I' in the above question, exists as a living contradiction, in an explanation of educational influence, in the sense that the 'I' holds together the values that the 'I' intends to live and the negation of these values in what the 'I' is doing.
- Laidlaw's (1996) insight that the values used to explain educational influences in learning are themselves living and evolving.
- Huxtable's (2009) use of a method of empathetic resonance for clarifying and communicating the meanings of embodied values in the course of their emergence in practice.
- Delong's (2020) use of dialogues as a research method for creating living-educational-theories in Cultures of Inquiry.

Questions Asked by Other Researchers Working in the Field of Education

Other researchers working within disciplines such as psychology (of education), philosophy (of education), sociology (of education), history (of education), politics (of education), leadership (of education) etc. are making their contributions to their knowledge to their discipline in such journals as the British Educational Research Journal (BERJ). For example, the December 2020 issue of BERJ, 46(6) contains 17 original papers. The titles are all conceptual and empirical of the kind:

- Social justice education with Chinese characteristics (Tan, 2020)
- Picking winners: An empirical analysis of the determinants of educational outcomes in India (Darko and Vasilakos, 2020)
- Factors influencing the career interest of SENCOs in English Schools (Dobson and Douglas, 2020)

On the other hand, educational researchers are contributing their explanations of educational influences in learning to the knowledge base of education.

These conceptual analyses could draw insights from living-educational-theories from China, India, and England to enhance the validity of their analyses as follows:

The analysis of social justice education with Chinese characteristics could draw insights from the living-educational-theories generated in China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching at Ningxia Teachers University (Laidlaw, 2006). These insights include those from Laidlaw (2008) on 'living-educational-theorising: How I developed a more Democratic Educational Practice?'

The analysis of educational outcomes in India could draw insights from the living-educational-theories that are being generated at Sardar Patel University in India, with the support of Swaroop Rawal, a Global Teacher Prize finalist and Shivani Mishra, the Director of the Social Work Department. These insights include the learning of life-skills as an educational outcome in India:

Swaroop teaches life skills - self-esteem, understanding and managing emotions, self-awareness, communication and empathy, problem-solving, decision-making, and creative and critical thinking. In rural areas everywhere, she observes the same dilemma — students who choose not to further their studies need to find a job. Livelihood skills prepare them to go out to work, says Swaroop, who played a part in drafting India's national vocational framework as chair of entertainment studies. The policy was implemented five years ago. Now, we are refining it and adding more professions, such as hairdressing and dress designing. (Tan Gim Ean, 2020)

The analysis of factors influencing the career interest of SENCOS in English Schools could be enhanced by the inclusion of insights from the living-educational-theory of Christine Jones (2019) on living inclusive and inclusional empowerment:

I use a multimedia account to clarify and communicate my journey and meanings of living inclusive and inclusional empowerment. I draw on my experience of working as a statutory special educational needs manager in a small English local authority, working with my manager and a team of people which I manage. I claim that my notion of empowerment emerges through my research which has an influence on me, my team, and children and young people with special educational needs and their families within the local authority. I conclude my thesis with a reflection on my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and the learning of social formations. (Abstract)

An example of where a meta-analysis of Living Educational Theory Research could contribute to questions asked by a researcher influenced by Critical Theory, can be appreciated by focused on the four questions asked by Hall, with both a content influenced by Critical Theory and the 'I' of the researcher:

Some Questions for Myself

1. How do I decolonise, deracialise, demasculanise and degender my inherited intellectual spaces?
2. How do I support the opening up of spaces for the flowering of epistemologies, ontologies, theories, methodologies, objects and questions other than those that have long been hegemonic, and that have exercised dominance over (perhaps have even suffocated) intellectual and scholarly thought and writing?
3. How do I contribute to the building of new academic cultures and, more widely, new inclusive institutional cultures that genuinely respect and appreciate difference and diversity – whether class, gender, national, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, epistemological or methodological in nature?

4. How do I become a part of creating the new architecture of knowledge that allows co-construction of knowledge between intellectuals in academia and intellectuals located in community settings? (Hall, 2015, p.12)

In the formulation of his questions, Hall had no intention of generating his living-educational-theory. However, if such questions are not to be open to Adorno's criticism of Heidegger that the "I" remains formal and yet pretends that the word contains content in-itself (Schroyer, 1973, p. vii), a Living Educational Theory researcher must accept their educational responsibility for researching their 'I' questions (Whitehead, et al. (2021). Our meta-analysis of Living Educational Theory research could be helpful to such a questioner, as Hall, who takes seriously an exploration of their 'I' questions. All the living-educational-theories in the papers in EJOLTs present different 'I's as containing content in themselves as they accept their educational responsibility for asking, researching and answering their 'I' questions with their positionality, horizon of understanding, concerns and contexts of inquiry.

On Methods of Implementation:

For Case (1): Researcher proposes to build their own living-educational-theory.

Here the researcher builds their own living-educational-theory (EJOLTs, 2021a) informed by their meta-analysis of the living-educational-theories of others.

In explaining one's educational influence in one's own learning a Living Educational Theory researcher makes the independent decision of personal knowledge, "I must understand the world from my point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising his personal judgement responsibly with universal intent". (Polanyi, 1958, p. 327)

In explaining their educational influences in the learning of others a Living Educational Theory researcher integrates the responses of others in explaining an educational influence in the learning of others. In explaining their educational influences in the learning of social formations a Living Educational Theory researcher engages in the networks of relationships and communities that constitute the social formations being influenced.

EJOLTs Criteria

The meta-analysis may support the researcher to 'creatively and critically engaged with their own thinking and the thinking of others' (EJOLTs criteria: 1: <https://ejolts.net/review>), 'has all claims are supported by appropriate evidence' (criteria:5) and 'communicates clearly how knowledge claims are validated' (criteria: 6). We recommend Bigger's (2021) analysis to show how to fulfil these criteria whilst recognizing that a research method can be both ethical and objective:

Finally, I suggest that LET is a globally useful research method, ethical rather than objective, promoting compassion, respect and justice. LET is not neutral about main aims and values such as compassion and social justice. Unique researchers investigating unique circumstances cannot be replicated by others in other contexts. We cannot talk about proof,

simply suggestiveness based on thematic analysis. Themes invite investigation by others who might agree or disagree with our general approach, inviting broader discussion.

Whole is something besides the parts

Meta-analysis is the analysis of the results of several studies with parallels to the concept of statistical sampling in the natural sciences. Here in order to make inferences about a population of interest, the researcher studies the characteristics of a sample in the hope that this may render a study of the entire population unnecessary. This supports the emergence of a synergy of the sample over the individual datum. Aristotle wrote:

In the case of all things which have several parts and in which the totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something besides the parts, there is a cause; for even in bodies contact is the cause of unity in some cases, and in others viscosity or some other such quality. (Ross, 1924)

It is clear that EJOLTs has several parts: several living educational theories. But the notion that one living educational theory, objectified as a datum, can exceed, or in some way be something besides its parts, greater than a solitary living educational theory; may seem contrary to what we believe a living educational theory to be. How then could one 'I' be greater than another 'I'? Could a living educational theory that has been, enhanced by being built on the shoulders of others be in some way 'greater' if its purpose is to provide a more comprehensive, description of a phenomenon that can influence other inquiries in the field?

For Case (2): Researcher does not propose to build a living-educational-theory

Here the researcher does not intend to build a living educational theory of their own, but rather to use the living educational theories of others to advance their own enquires. The influence of Educational Theory research would still be prominent in the study through the life affirming energy of the other, however, 'details of the normative background' (<https://ejolts.net/review> criteria: 7) would not include the overt identification and explanation of the researcher's values and beliefs.

A step beyond the semi-structured interview

How could other researchers use the Living Educational Theory literature to find answers to educational research questions? Perhaps through an eclectic mix of methodologies. Perhaps by perceiving the implementation of case (2) as a step beyond the semi-structured interview? Taking the point of view that the body of Living Educational Theory literature is, in part, a rich collection of self-directed interviews with oneself. By this we mean, relatable self-talk validated by, discussions with others and the literature of others. The Living Educational Theory literature could then be seen as the transcripts of hundreds of semi-structured interviews with 'my I'. Further, perhaps this verbatim data would have the added desirable characteristic of being value-based, more valid and reliable.

Theory in Qualitative Research

Advancing a researcher's own enquires may involve the building of a theory that is not a living educational theory. There is no one universally accepted definition of theory in qualitative research, and 'compared to quantitative research, qualitative research has a varying and even troubled relationship with theory' (Leeming, 2018, p. 668; Bendassolli, 2014), however, the notion of theory as a framework (Anfara & Mertz, 2015) suggests itself as a key ingredient of a qualitative theory.

For the purpose of our discussion, theories other than Living Educational Theory research may include the creation of theoretical frameworks based on an open-ended list of methodologies: case study, ethnographic, narrative, storytelling, phenomenological; and methods: grounded theory, content analysis, thematic analysis, interviews, surveys, etcetera.

The body of Living Educational Theory literature is 'a mere heap', a rich collection of self-directed interviews waiting to be coded, classified, or synthesised and the living-educational-theories in the minds of researcher-practitioners are an equivalent resource. It follows that applying any non-Living Educational Theory research methodology to this new-found data could contribute towards, or inspire, the generation of other theories and the creation of exciting theoretical frameworks based on the above open-ended list of methodologies and methods.

Traditional or other theories are distinguished from living-educational-theories because other theories are usually presented as sets of determinate relationships between a set of variables in terms of which a fairly extensive set of empirically verifiable regularities can be explained. The explanations for the behaviour of individuals is '**derived**' from the conceptual framework of the theory and **applied** to a particular case. A living-educational-theory is **generated** in the course of asking, researching and answering a question of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' as an explanation of the individual's educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations.

Researchers who are interested in generating a general, explanatory framework, rather than a living-educational-theory, could draw insights, from individual living-educational-theories or a meta-analysis of Living Educational Theory research, into their conceptual theory. For example, traditional theorists of International Development can draw insights from Briganti's living-theory of International Development (Briganti, 2020), into their conceptual framework, arguing that such values form explanatory principles in a conceptual explanatory framework of International Development.

Another example is provided by the contributions that Kaplan's inquiry (2013): 'how do I use my living and lived experience to influence creative economic independence in others?' makes to a traditional theory of economic independence. Kaplan's concern was focused on high levels of unemployment in Durban, South Africa, and the desire of the unemployed to become self-employed in order to find social and economic independence. However, there was a problem in that the unemployed seemed to lack self-confidence and self-esteem in the start-up process of their business. Hence Kaplan focused her coaching, of

these emerging entrepreneurs, on building their self-confidence and self-esteem so that they had the courage to “go for it”. Hence Kaplan’s living-educational-theory focus on ‘How do I influence emerging entrepreneurs to become sufficiently self-confident to be able to design, establish and sustain their own employment and employment for others?’. The insights offered by Kaplan are freely available for integration within a traditional conceptual economic theory of researchers who are interested in the development of economic independence in the unemployed.

Discussion

Synthesis using five stages of meta-analyses in education

Ahn *et al.* (2012) offer a particularly good methodological structure in their five stages of Meta-Analyses in Education 1: Problem Formulation: the research question, 2: Data Collection: literature search and information gathering using a coding sheet, 3: Data Evaluation: the ‘extent to which the methodology used in primary studies corresponds to the desired inferences that should be drawn’ (page,456), 4: Data Analysis: choosing and using an appropriate analytical method that can answer the research questions and 5: Reporting Results: major findings and general limitations. In the following Table 2 we are proposing methods of Living Meta-Analysis implementation based on these five stages of Meta-Analysis in Education.

Case	Problem Formulation	Data Collection	Data Evaluation	Data Analysis	Reporting Results	Outcome
Generation and enhancing of a living-educational-theory (let)	Practitioner, Conceptual, Organisational, Inspiring Others, Theoretical	Coding metadata, setting, values and beliefs etc.	How appropriate is Living Educational Theory research as a way of addressing the problem?	Synthesis	Through a Living Educational Theory Research lens	The researcher’s living-educational-theory
Generation of other theories					Through the lens of another methodology	Theoretical framework

Table 2: Proposed methods of Living Meta-Analysis implementation based on Ahn, Amesand & Myers’ (2012) five stages of Meta-Analyses in Education.

Validity, internal and external reliability

Ahn et al. (2012) make recommendations relating to reliability and validity of meta-analyses in education. The validity of a research instrument is the extent to which it represents the phenomenon it was intended to represent. Establishing validity criteria for qualitative research is challenging 'because of the necessity to incorporate rigour and subjectivity as well as creativity into the scientific process' (Whittemore, Chase and Mantle 2001, Table 3) who ask specific questions to assess validity criteria. In our meta-analysis many Living Educational Theory researchers use 4 questions, in validation groups, that are related to Habermas' (1976) ideas on 'Communication and the Evolution of Society'. These ideas are particularly relevant to explaining educational influences in the learning of social formations as this is related to the evolution of society. A validation group is usually constituted by some 3 to 8 peers who are willing to help to strengthen the validity of a living-educational-theory through the mutual rational control of critical discussions (Popper, 1975, p. 44). These rational controls include responses to the following 4 questions below that are related to the 4 criteria of social validity identified by Habermas (1976, pp. 2–3). Question 3 differs from that of Habermas in stressing the importance of socio-historical and socio-cultural influences in explaining educational influences in the learning of social formations:

1. How can I improve the comprehensibility of my explanation of educational influence?
2. How can I strengthen the evidence I provide to justify the claims that I make?
3. How can I strengthen my understandings of the socio-historical and socio-cultural influences in my explanation of educational influence?
4. How can I enhance the authenticity of my explanation in the sense of demonstrating that I am living as fully as possible the values I claim to hold?

In Table 2 we also value Snyder's (2019) insights on phases of a literature search process in terms of (1) design, (2) conduct, (3) data abstraction and analysis and (4) structuring and writing. For example:

1. In relationship to the overall research field, is this literature review needed and does it make a substantial, practical, or theoretical contribution? (Design).
2. Is the process of the inclusion and exclusion of articles transparent? (Conduct).
3. Is the data abstracted from the article appropriate in concordance with the overall purpose of the review? (Data abstraction and analysis).
4. Does the article synthesise the findings of the literature review into a clear and valuable contribution to the topic? (Structuring and writing the review).

Questions can also be raised as to what insights from a living meta-analysis of the ideas of others can be used to strengthen the validity of an individual's explanation of their educational influences. A validation group can help with internal reliability by clarifying, focused and relevant answers to the researcher's inquiries. It can also help with external reliability by providing ideas on additional areas of practice that could be brought into the enquiry. For example, Charles' (2007) living-educational-theory was generated in his enquiry, 'how can I bring Ubuntu (I am because you are) as a living standard of judgment into the academy?' This moved beyond decolonisation through societal re-identification and guiltless recognition' and included both internal and external reliability in relation to the explanation of educational influences in learning. Internal reliability helped to clarify the value of guiltless recognition in relation to moving beyond decolonisation. External reliability helped to clarify the value of societal re-identification in relation to moving beyond decolonisation. External reliability is also supported by the responses of validation groups in enhancing objectivity through the mutual rational control through critical discussion (Popper, 1975, p. 44).

Choosing a methodology in your research proposal: further differences between cases 1 and 2

In much traditional qualitative research, researchers chose the methodology they are going to use at the beginning of their research. There are a wide range of methodologies to choose from including, Action Research, Narrative Inquiry, Self-Study research, Case Study, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography and Autoethnography. Our meta-analysis of contributions to the Living Educational Theory literature in Table 1 shows that Living Educational Theory researchers draw insights from these methodologies in the generation of their own, unique, living-educational-theory methodology. The distinction between 'drawing insights from existing methodologies' and generating a living-educational-theory methodology', is important as it stresses the difference between choosing and applying an existing methodology and generating one's own in an enquiry of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. This is important as researchers such as Creswell (2007) stress the importance of choosing a methodology such as Action Research, Case Study, Grounded Theory or Phenomenology before the research is undertaken. It is worth repeating that a Living Educational Theory researcher generates their methodology in the course of the inquiry.

We have drawn attention above to the way a researcher such as Hall could ask, research, and answer his 'I' questions (Case 2) with a content defined by Critical Theory, using insights from living-educational-theories in which the 'I' of the researcher is taken seriously, rather than remaining formal.

Contribution to knowledge

In making a claim to have contributed to knowledge it is important to justify such a claim by providing details of the unit of analysis, the standards of judgement and the logic used. The unit of analysis in the contributions to EJOLTs is an individual's explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings.

In terms of standards of judgement and our meta-analysis, the papers in EJOLTs provide meanings of the expression of embodied values that are used as explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influences in learning. These embodied values are often characterised as flowing with a life-affirming energy. Contributions from different cultures provide different meanings of energy flowing spiritual values such as Aloha from Hawaii (Demirbag, 2015) and Ubuntu from South Africa (Charles, 2007). Each individual provides the meanings of the unique constellation of values they use to give their lives in education meaning and purpose and that they use as explanatory principles. For example, in her living-educational-theory of International Development Briganti (2020, Abstract) describes these values as:

...the relationally dynamic values of empathy, social and gender justice, outrage, responsibility, love for and faith in humanity and dignity. The originality lies in their use as explanatory principles in my explanation of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that affect my practice as a development professional.

The logics of the explanations are the modes of thought of the Living Educational Theory researcher that are appropriate for comprehending the real as rational (Marcuse, 1964, p. 105). The logics of the explanations in EJOLTs are consistent with Thayer-Bacon's (2003) who offers a relational perspective of knowing.

Thayer-Bacon offers a feminist (e)pistemological theory that insists that knowers/subjects are fallible, that our criteria are corrigible (capable of being corrected), and that our standards are socially constructed, and thus continually in need of critique and reconstruction (p. 7). Thayer-Bacon argues that none of us can know what is True or Real, in a universal sense, and so we must all be content to continue to talk about "knowledge" and "reality" with quotation marks around them. This is why Thayer-Bacon puts () around the "e" in epistemology and refers to traditional Epistemology with a capital "E". This (e)pistemology must be capable of being corrected because of its assumption that our criteria and standards are of this world, ones we, as fallible knowers, socially construct.

Conducting a living meta-analysis would contribute to the subsidiary aims of the issue because it may clarify the salient features of Living Educational Theory research as a field of enquiry. This clarification includes our understanding of the publishing criteria for submitted living-educational-theory accounts and the educational influence and reach of the Living Educational Theory research community and the contribution of the living-educational-theory accounts published in EJOLTs (EJOLTs, 2021).

It is important to understand that nominal data, for example the codes in Table 1, can be put into categories but cannot be organised into the hierarchical category system of a taxonomy. Ordinal data can be organised into a taxonomy and subject to analysis using non-parametric statistics. The nominal data of values are also resistant to any categorisation that tries to define intervals between the values as needed in analyses of the interval or ratio data with parametric statistics. In making this point about nominal data we are mindful of a point made by Husserl about knowledge that is refractory to every methodologically devised scheme of constructive symbolism:

... in the transcendental sphere we have an infinitude of knowledge previous to all deduction, knowledge whose mediated connections (those of intentional implication) have nothing to do with deduction and being entirely intuitive prove refractory to every methodically devised scheme of constructive symbolism. (Husserl, 1912, p. 12).

Given the nominal nature of flows of values-laden, living energy, we are interested in exploring the question, 'Could our meta-analysis of living educational theories support a researcher's living-educational-theory by clarifying the meanings of the unique constellation of values-laden flows of energy that individuals use as their explanatory principles in their explanations of educational influences in learning?' Next, we could answer our question as we consider living-educational-theories as a unit of analysis using methods of Living Meta-Analysis implementation.

Using our meta-analysis as a bridge and sensing themes (Boyatzis, 1998) informed by our living values, in generating their living-educational-theory, practitioner-researchers may have found that the data they used to clarify the meanings of their values as explanatory principles, were nominal, rather than ordinal, interval or ratio. We are thinking of such meanings as, 'living inclusive and inclusional empowerment' (Jones, 2019); 'How has love influenced me as a teacher-researcher and learning' (Campbell, 2018); 'How am I bringing an educationally entrepreneurial spirit into higher education' (Crotty, 2012); 'Love at Work' (Lohr, 2006).

Limitations of our Living Meta-Analysis methodology and the different contributions that could be made to spreading the global influence of Living Educational Theory research

The main limitation is the danger that a Living Meta-Analysis could be mistaken as providing a valid explanation for an individual's explanation of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations. The main value of a Living Meta-Analysis is that the analysis is demonstrably integrated within an individual's living-educational theory.

The potential contributions to policy of our Living Meta-Analysis are limited by the lack of both financial and cultural support from policy makers. These supports should be given for the generation and sharing, by individuals, of their explanations of their educational influences in learning as they ask, research and answer questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. Rather than stressing the importance of the consumption of existing research, educational policies should balance this support, for the application of existing research findings. It should be balanced with support for the generation and sharing of practitioner-researcher knowledge that emerges from asking, researching, and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

The potential contributions to practice are also limited by a lack of encouragement, from educational leaders, for practitioners to give as much attention to their knowledge-creation capacities in the above questions, as to understanding and using the existing insights from the ideas of others. This is why syntheses of living-educational-theories, in response to a research question, is potentially a robust means of investigating a global cooperative-democratic, 'we' through meta-analysis.

Plenary questions and answers

Q: Is case 2 a valid form of Living Educational Theory research?

A: Case 2 is not a valid form of Living Educational Theory research as there is no intention to generate a living-educational-theory.

Q: How does Living Meta-Analysis differ from other forms of qualitative meta-analysis?

A: The main difference is the requirement that a Living Meta-Analysis is integrated within an individual's living-educational-theory.

Q: How useful is meta-analysis in spreading the global influence of Living Educational Theory research?

A: The main use of meta-analysis, in spreading the global influence of Living Educational Theory research, is that it can be used in conceptualising Living Educational Theory research as a research paradigm. A meta-analysis functions to aggregate findings and identify the patterns across living-educational-theories that constitute and help to identify Living Educational Theory research as a research paradigm. We have already recommended Bigger's (2021) analysis in this issue of EJOLTs to supplement our own case on how this can be done.

Closing Remark

We have a final piece of evidence to show how a meta-analysis functions to aggregate findings in supporting our understandings of Living Educational Theory Research as a research paradigm. On the 10th May 2021, Williamson organised a meeting of the Living Educational Theory-Researcher/Practitioner's Forum at the University of Bolton, UK. You can access the evidence in the slides used in this meeting from: -

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bolton/bwslides100521.pptx>.

Living Educational Theory- Researcher/Practitioner's Forum

Would you like to create your very own:-
'LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY FROM QUESTIONS OF THE KIND,
'HOW DO I IMPROVE MY PRACTICE?'

2pm to 3 pm on Monday 10th May 2021
Facilitated by Dr Brian Williamson

We believe that the slides demonstrate our Living Meta-Analysis Methodology in drawing insights from the ideas of other Living Educational Theory Researchers. Williamson

does this in producing a coherent, pedagogical approach to his communication, of how to generate a living-educational-theory, to a group of PhD students and staff at the University of Bolton. Williamson's integration of the ideas of other researchers into his living meta-analysis also provides support for the importance of reliability that has been highlighted in the Foreword to this issue.

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