

Managing Perceptual Distance to Enhance Project Outcomes

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Introduction

- Increasing dependence on suppliers
- Challenge in governing suppliers
- Supplier relationships are governed via:
 - Contractual governance, and
 - **Relational governance**

“Relational governance is believed to evolve when collaborating partners share ambitions, vision, and have collective ideologies, philosophies and thinking processes.”

Problem statement

- Failure of complex projects
- Development of relational governance difficult
- Partners face low levels of relational governance due to mismatched perceptions and behavior that deviates from expectations → **perceptual distance**

“perceptual distance refers to the difference between collaborating partners’ perceptions of key issues in their relationship.”

First study

Methodology

- Dyadic research (see Figure 1)
- Data triangulation
 - quantitative (questionnaires), and
 - qualitative (interviews) data

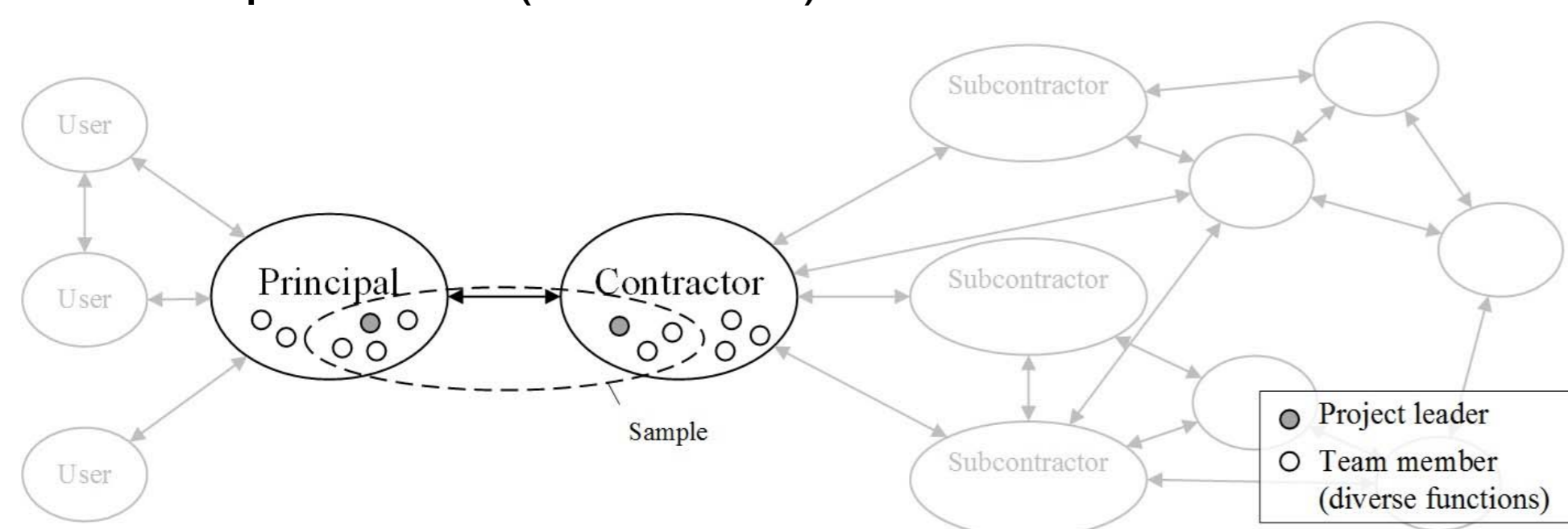


Figure 1: Units of analysis within the three studies in this PhD trajectory

Study 1: Exploratory study

- Construction industry
- Theoretical basis for subsequent studies
 - Agency Theory, and
 - Social Identity Theory

→ Development of a conceptual framework (see Figure 2)

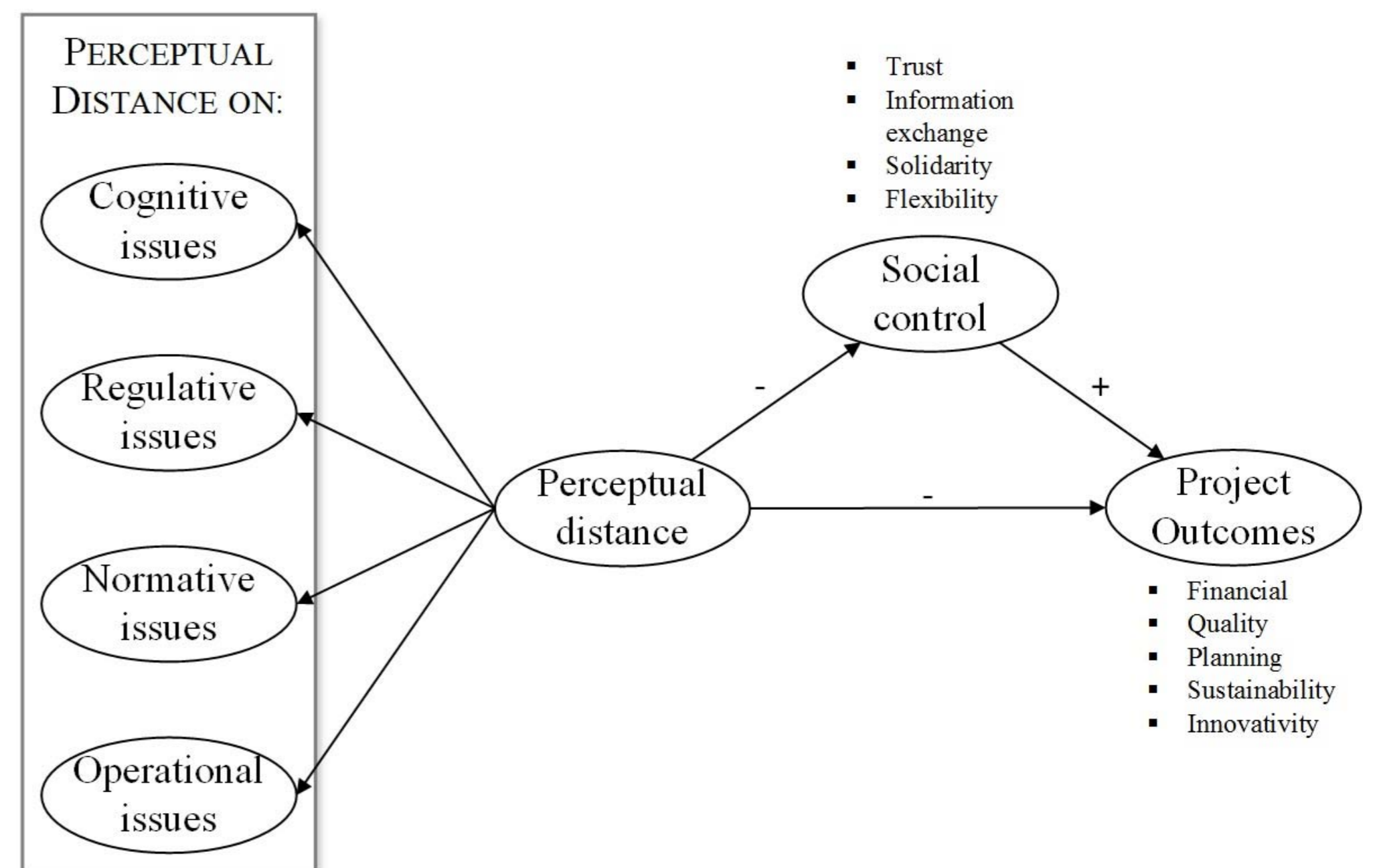


Figure 2: The conceptual framework of the studies

Future studies

Extended study

- Projects in multiple industries
- Development and refinement of conceptual framework
- Inclusion of
 - Coercive power, and
 - Formal control mechanisms

→ Extensive investigation of framework including other relevant variables across multiple industries

Longitudinal study

- Collaborations change over time
 - Perceptual distance believed to change
- Longitudinal research into several projects is interesting

→ Thorough investigation of change in perceptual distance and its effect on project outcomes

Relevance

Academic

- Objections to single-sided research
- Development of relational governance explained
- Importance of relational governance supported

Societal

- Insight in development of relational governance
- Guidelines in governing suppliers
- Enhancing project performance