



Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Lecture 6

Criteria for assessing trustworthiness of research findings

Question asked	Issue	Qualitative criteria	Quantitative criteria
Have we measured what we set out to measure?	Truth value	Credibility	Internal validity
How applicable are our results to other subjects and other contexts?	Applicability	Transferability	External validity Generalisability
Would our findings be repeated if our research were replicated in the same context with the same subjects?	Consistency	Dependability	Reliability
To what extent are our findings affected by personal interests and biases?	Neutrality	Conformability	Objectivity

Truth value **credibility**

- ◉ Deals with the focus of the research
- ◉ Refers to confidence in how well data and processes of analysis address the intended focus
- ◉ ... our ability to really capture the multiple realities of those we study

Strategies for increasing **credibility**

- ◉ Selection of context, participants and approach to gathering data
- ◉ Investigators with various perspectives
- ◉ Prolonged engagement
- ◉ Triangulation
- ◉ Peer-debriefing
- ◉ Negative case analysis
- ◉ Member checks

Applicability - Transferability

- ◉ The extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings/groups
- ◉ Theoretical, analytical generalization's → the theory is applicable beyond the study sample to similar situations, questions, and problems, regardless of demographic characteristic's
- ◉ It is the fit of the topic or the comparability of the problem that is of concern.

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- ◎ The author can give suggestions about transferability but it is the reader's decision whether or not the findings are transferable to another context
 - ◎ Thick descriptions

Consistency - Dependability

- ◉ Could we repeat our findings in the same context with same subjects?
- ◉ Refers to the ability of the researcher to account for the constant changing conditions of the phenomenon studied, for the interaction with study participants and for the entire research process carried out with an emergent design
- ◉ Audit trail (e.g. different types of personal notes) → another researcher should be able to follow the "decision trail" used by the researcher

Neutrality - Conformability

- ◉ To what extent are the findings affected by personal interests and biases?
- ◉ Refers to neutrality of the data rather than neutrality of the researcher.
- ◉ If the research is confirmable → be able to find conclusions grounded in data
- ◉ Audit trail (focus on the end product)

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- ◎ Personal notes (impressions and decisions made along the research path) → important tool that enhances all aspects of trustworthiness

