

THREATS TO RELIABILITY

INTERNAL RELIABILITY

1. low inference descriptors
 - inferred categories may not be supported by adequate evidence in data; and non-supporting data may not be included
2. multiple researchers
 - one researcher's interpretations and selections of data to record may influence results
3. participant researchers
 - researcher's interpretations may not be confirmed by participants
4. peer examination
 - are other researchers working in similar settings producing the same findings?
5. mechanically recorded data
 - field notes alone may not produce accurate data; recording devices help to strengthen reliability

EXTERNAL RELIABILITY

1. researcher status position
 - position of researcher in social situation affects the data collected
2. informant choices
 - each informant provides unique information
3. social situations/conditions
 - situational context affects the type and nature of information collected from subjects
4. analytic constructs/premises
 - constructs, definitions, and units of analysis affect the information collected
 - clearly identify and delineate constructs, definitions, and units of analysis
5. methods of data collection and analysis
 - replicability of data collection and analysis are dependent upon descriptive delineation by researcher

THREATS TO VALIDITY

INTERNAL VALIDITY

1. history and maturation
 - changes or events that affect data; changes over time
2. observer effects
 - time spent observing, selection of informants (for maximum variability), adequacy of probing over time, adequacy of uncovering real relationships and views, etc. affect accuracy of results
3. selection and regression
 - when selection of subjects is necessitated, does selection adequately represent the variation in the population or does it represent a regression toward the mean
4. mortality
 - loss of subjects can affect results
5. spurious conclusions
 - are rival explanations investigated

EXTERNAL VALIDITY

1. selection effects
 - are selection procedures delineated? can they be replicated?
2. setting effects
 - individual researchers affect settings differently; groups subjected to a lot of research are affected differently from those not subjected to research
3. history effects

- different groups may have been affected by significant and different unique historical events
4. construct effects
- construct validity:
 - definitions and meanings of terms and constructs can vary across time, settings, and populations
 - explanations for observed phenomena can vary between groups