

Confirmability

A fourth standard is confirmability, which refers to the *quality of the results* produced by an inquiry in terms of how well they are supported by informants (members) who are involved in the study and by events that are independent of the inquirer. Reference to literature and findings by other authors that confirm the inquirer's interpretations can strengthen confirmability of the study in addition to information and interpretations by people other than the inquirer from within the inquiry site itself. The *confirmability audit* can be conducted at the same time as the dependability audit and the auditor asks if the data and interpretations made by the inquirer are supported by material in the audit trail, are internally coherent, and represent more than "figments of the [inquirer's] imagination." (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p 243) If such an audit attests to the confirmability of the study, it is more likely to be accepted by readers. Details on how to maintain an audit trail and conduct an audit are presented later.



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