

Concept

Triangulation

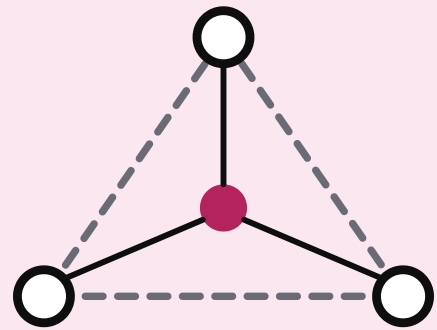
Using several sources, methods, researchers, or theories to study the same thing and check whether the results agree.

In Spanish

Triangulación

Origin

Systematized by Denzin (1970; 2nd ed. 1978)



What problem it addresses

Helps avoid drawing conclusions from a single source, which may be biased or incomplete.

An example

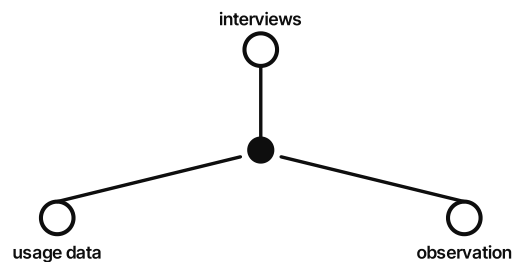
The team believes people do not use a feature because they cannot find it.

A single source



Three interviews say so. **It could be a bias of the method.**

Triangulated



The interviews, usage data, and observation point to the same thing. **More confidence.**

When several different sources agree, the conclusion is much more solid.

Why it happens



Each **source** has its own biases.



By **cross-checking them**, the biases of one offset those of another.



What agrees is more reliable; what does not is worth investigating.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Combine at least two different methods (for example, interviews and usage data) before concluding.

✗ Avoid

Looking only for sources that confirm what you already thought.

👁 Don't fall for it

If the sources do not agree, do not hide it: investigate why.

4 types

What the research says

Denzin distinguished triangulation of data, of researchers, of theories, and of methods (Denzin, 1978).

- ● ● **Solid evidence.** It is a widely accepted methodological principle in the social sciences; it is also used to detect contradictions, not only to confirm.

Connections

Related to



Qualitative and quantitative research



Say vs. do



Design synthesis

Authors and works

1978

Norman Denzin

Systematized the types of triangulation in The Research Act.

Sources

Original sources

- Denzin, N. K. (1978). The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods (2nd ed.). Aldine. (1st ed. published 1970)

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