A guide to quality in interpretive research

(J. Walther & N. Sochacka)

Making Data
Validation: Do the findings appropriately capture & represent relevant aspects of the social reality observed?

Theoretical Validation
concerns the fit between the social reality under investigation and the theory generated

Procedural Validation
concerns features of the research design that inherently improve the fit between the reality studied and the theory generated

Communicative Validation
concerns the integrity of the interlocking processes of social construction with the relevant communication communities

Pragmatic Validation
concerns the compatibility of theoretical constructs with empirical reality

Ethical validation
concerns aspects of integrity and responsibility throughout the research process

Process Reliability
concerns the mitigation of random influences on the research process

Handling Data
Are our interpretations grounded in participants' social realities?

What are robust ways of co-constructing interpretive meaning in a communication community with other researchers?

How can we construct our findings within the meaning conventions of the relevant research community?

How meaningful are our interpretations for the social reality under investigation?

How meaningful are the theoretical constructs we generate for social realities similar to the one under investigation?

How do we know whether these assumptions 'survive' the exposure to the social reality in the field?

How meaningful are our interpretations for the social reality under investigation?

How do I know that the findings make a meaningful contribution to the relevant body of theory?

How can we maintain the meaning constructed in the communication community throughout our analysis?

How can we ensure that our interpretations do justice to the complexity of, but capture patterns of, coherence within the social reality?

How do we ensure legitimate and responsible decisions to inform our interpretations?

Do our findings do justice to the lived realities of our participants?

How can we document and authentically demonstrate the dependability of our entire process of investigation?

What are the impacts of our interests, biases, preconceptions or intentions on this investigation?

How can we mitigate, as far as possible, random influences on our process of seeing the social reality under investigation?

How can we capture & record the constructions of participants’ social realities in a dependable way?

How can we ensure that our interpretations do justice to the complexity of, but capture patterns of, coherence within the social reality?

How can we maintain the meaning constructed in the communication community throughout our analysis?

How do we know whether these assumptions 'survive' the exposure to the social reality in the field?

How can we engage the relevant research community to meaningfully and authentically contribute to our findings?

What features can we design into our process of interpretation to mitigate the risk of mis-constructing the social reality of our participants?

How meaningful are the findings of, but capture patterns of, coherence within the social reality?

How can we construct our findings within the meaning conventions of the relevant research community?

How can we document and authentically demonstrate the dependability of our entire process of investigation?

What are our motivations and intentions for investigating this social reality?

How can we engage the relevant research community to meaningfully and authentically contribute to our findings?

How can we document and authentically demonstrate the dependability of our entire process of investigation?

