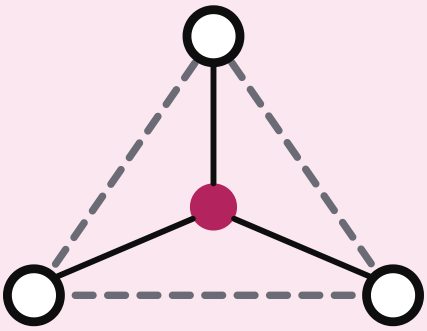
Concept

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)

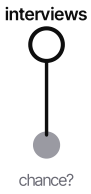
What problem it addresses

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

An example

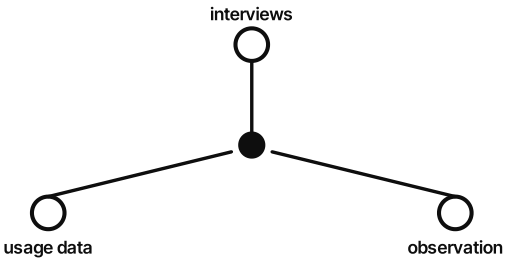
The team believes people do not use a feature because they cannot find it.

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

1 

Each source has its own biases.

2 

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

3 

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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