[Home](#) > Types of Validity

Types of Validity

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Here is an overview on the main types of validity used for the scientific method.

> "Any research can be affected by different kinds of factors which, while extraneous to the concerns of the research, can invalidate the findings" (Seliger & Shohamy 1989, 95).

Let's take a look on the the most frequent uses of validity in the scientific method:

External Validity

[External validity](#) [1] is about generalization: To what extent can an effect in research, be [generalized](#) [2] to populations, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables?

External validity is usually split into two distinct types, [population validity](#) [3] and [ecological validity](#) [4] and they are both essential elements in judging the strength of an [experimental design](#) [5].

Internal Validity

[Internal validity](#) [6] is a measure which ensures that a researcher's experiment design closely follows the principle of [cause and effect](#) [7].

> "Could there be an alternative cause, or causes, that explain my observations and results?"

Test Validity

[Test validity](#) [8] is an indicator of how much meaning can be placed upon a set of test results.

Criterion Validity

[Criterion Validity](#) [9] assesses whether a test reflects a certain set of abilities.

- *[Concurrent validity](#) [10]* measures the test against a benchmark test and high correlation indicates that the test has strong criterion validity.

- *[Predictive validity](#) [11]* is a measure of how well a test predicts abilities. It involves testing a group of subjects for a certain construct and then comparing them with results obtained at some point in the future.

Content Validity

[Content validity](#) [12] is the estimate of how much a measure represents every single element of a construct.

Construct Validity

[Construct validity](#) [13] defines how well a test or experiment measures up to its claims. A test designed to measure depression must only measure that particular construct, not closely related ideals such as anxiety or stress.

- *[Convergent validity](#) [14]* tests that constructs that are expected to be related are, in fact, related.

- *[Discriminant validity](#) [14]* tests that constructs that should have no relationship do, in fact, not have any relationship. (also referred to as divergent validity)

Face Validity

[Face validity](#) [15] is a measure of how representative a research project is 'at face value,' and whether it appears to be a good project.

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Links
[1] https://verify.explorable.com/external-validity
[2] https://verify.explorable.com/what-is-generalization
[3] https://verify.explorable.com/population-validity
[4] https://verify.explorable.com/ecological-validity
[5] https://verify.explorable.com/design-of-experiment
[6] https://verify.explorable.com/internal-validity
[7] https://verify.explorable.com/cause-and-effect
[8] https://verify.explorable.com/test-validity
[9] https://verify.explorable.com/criterion-validity
[10] https://verify.explorable.com/concurrent-validity
[11] https://verify.explorable.com/predictive-validity
[12] https://verify.explorable.com/content-validity
[13] https://verify.explorable.com/construct-validity

[14] https://verify.explorable.com/convergent-validity
[15] https://verify.explorable.com/face-validity