

# Rigor in feminist research

Verifying the scientific adequacy of feminist studies is necessary to assure that research processes and outcomes are well grounded, cogent, justifiable, and relevant. The authors analyze what scientific adequacy means in feminist inquiry and propose standards of rigor by which nurse investigators can plan and evaluate their studies. In the process, conventional empiricist criteria of reliability and validity are critiqued, and more appropriate concepts representing dimensions of adequacy in feminist research are presented.

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**D**ISCUSSIONS OF reliability and validity in conventional empirical studies reflect the reductionism and objectivism embraced by positivist-empiricism. Feminist studies are not well evaluated using these standards of scientific rigor. Verifying the adequacy of research findings remains an issue for feminist researchers, and some criteria are needed to assure that a study's design is able to provide appropriate and dependable answers to research questions. An encompassing discussion of rigor in feminist research has not been available in the nursing literature. Therefore nurse investigators who are involved in feminist research have few guidelines for dealing with reliability and validity issues.

Drawing from a variety of sources, some standards of scientific rigor that are applicable to feminist inquiry are proposed, and methods are suggested whereby accuracy of research processes and outcomes can be affirmed. These standards are elaborated as a repertoire of potential criteria by which investigators can demonstrate the adequacy of

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feminist research. This discussion is also offered as an impetus for further dialogue among nurse researchers, clinicians, and women whose experiences are being represented in research.

## FEATURES OF FEMINIST INQUIRY

What is a feminist perspective in science? In trying to define feminism, Harding<sup>1</sup> emphasizes that “women’s experiences” are pluralistic. That is, there is no universal “woman’s experience,” because women’s lives have never been shaped exclusively by gender. Women’s interpretations, values, interests, and actions can differ dramatically according to sexual orientation, class, race, ethnicity, education, age, and national origin.<sup>2-8</sup> One can only speak of “feminisms” inherent in the labels women have chosen to represent their sentiments, ideas, and political commitments (eg, African-American feminist, liberal feminist, Asian-American feminist, lesbian feminist, socialist feminist, radical feminist, Latina feminist, black lesbian feminist, Native American lesbian feminist, Asian Pacific feminist, Chicana feminist).

In general, “feminisms” share three basic principles:

1. a valuing of women and a validation of women’s experiences, ideas, and needs;
2. a recognition of the existence of ideologic, structural, and interpersonal conditions that oppress women; and
3. a desire to bring about social change of oppressive constraints through criticisms and political action.<sup>9-11</sup>

Feminist scholarship endeavors not only to describe and interpret phenomena of

women’s lives but also to raise consciousness and bring about changes in the interest of the women studied.<sup>12-17</sup> These goals are at once scientific and profoundly political.

Is there a feminist method to be applied in nursing research? Harding<sup>1</sup> says that there is no distinct feminist method. The same basic evidence-gathering techniques used in traditional social science inquiry are used in feminist investigations: observing behavior, listening to or questioning participants, and examining historical traces or records. However, the goals of inquiry, behaviors observed, questions asked, patterns identified, and conclusions reached are often quite different from those of other scientific inquiries. In feminist research, women’s perspectives are afforded primacy. Although studying women is not new, studying them from the perspective of their own experiences, as they understand themselves and the world, is quite unprecedented.

A feminist conception of research for women does not provide a perspective that is immediately available to all women and only to women. Instead, it offers a way of conceptualizing reality that reflects women’s interests and values and draws on women’s own interpretations of their experiences.<sup>14</sup> Feminist research, in general, is distinguished by certain features, even though it may utilize a variety of methods. First, research questions reflect the concerns of particular groups of

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women.<sup>18-22</sup> Their concerns are investigated in their diversity, rather than standardized using a preconceived universal model. Secondly, feminist inquiry is done for the purpose of finding answers for women,<sup>23</sup> rather than for the medical profession, a health care administration, welfare establishment, government, or insurance industry. Feminist studies are designed, implemented, and disseminated with the goal of providing for women explanations that they want and need about phenomena that affect their lives.<sup>1</sup> Feminist researchers consciously avoid contributing to the exploitation of women by analyzing whose interests are being served through their investigations and by anticipating the potential uses to which their findings will be put. Thirdly, in feminist inquiry, the researcher's history, assumptions, motives, interests, and interpretations are explicitly scrutinized in the process of study. The objectivistic stance and the anonymous, invisible voice of authority are avoided in favor of a strongly reflexive approach to inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Researchers actively join in reciprocal relationships with participants and endeavor to understand the world seen through their eyes, rather than construct how their world is observed from the outside.<sup>16,24,25</sup>

Feminist perspectives stand in stark contrast to the philosophical underpinnings of the positivist-empiricist paradigm. The positivist philosophical tradition envisions a universal reality composed of truths that may be discovered with rigorous objectivity. Scientific processes of problem solution, explanation, and prediction are viewed as value neutral and ahistorical.<sup>26-31</sup> Traditional empiricist science assumes an impartial stance toward the contexts in which research populations exist, virtually ignoring the

sociopolitical and historical prism through which investigators make their observations and knowledge claims.<sup>32-35</sup>

Contradicting the assumptions of empiricism, many nursing scholars insist that there is no neutral, value-free position from which to do nursing research or apply research findings in clinical practice.<sup>10,19,36-39</sup> Furthermore, the positivist philosophical stance denigrates subjective experience,<sup>40,41</sup> whereas subjective experience is central to nursing's humanistic, interactive practice.<sup>42-44</sup> Feminist scholarship acknowledges the validity of multiple realities woven by historical, contextual, and relational factors. Its assumptions predicate a perspectival quality to knowledge,<sup>45</sup> which makes knowledge relative to the stance, environment, and experience of the knower. Thus the positivist-empiricist notion of a monolithic, true reality that can be accurately perceived if one somehow controls the vicissitudes of personal bias is rejected. Rather than separating women's experiences from the contexts in which they occur, a feminist perspective recognizes women's everyday experiences as inextricably connected to the larger political, social, and economic environment. Situating investigations in their broader historical, sociopolitical contexts is considered a necessary condition for an adequate science of women's lives.<sup>46-49</sup>

### **INADEQUATE FIT OF EMPIRICIST AND FEMINIST STANDARDS OF RIGOR**

As one feminist scholar suggests, "Dichotomy, duality, linearity, and fixity are not the properties of nature nor of human life and experiencing. They are the properties of a

learned mode of thought that casts reality into rigid, oppositional, and hierarchical categories.”<sup>50(p111)</sup> Feminist scholarship does not abide by these properties, differing significantly at the level of basic assumptions about persons, health, environment, knowledge construction, and purposes of research. The differences are so remarkable that standards for scientific reliability and validity in the conventional empiricist paradigm operate as “dysfunctional stereotypes”<sup>51(p159)</sup> for researchers working from a feminist perspective. Because of the inadequate fit of conventional standards, alternative criteria of rigor have been conceptualized and applied in feminist and other postempiricist inquiries.

### Reliability and validity

In the empiricist tradition, reliability means repeatability. Can an experiment, test, or measured procedure yield the same results on repeated trials? Human experiences are unique, particularized, and not always amenable to verification. The basic premises of feminist perspectives emphasize this uniqueness and the contextualized nature of women’s experiences and interpretations, rather than their standardization and repeatability. The essence of what reliability means, therefore, is more appropriately conceptualized in feminist research as the dependability of the research processes. Analyzing methods as they are actually implemented and revised in research practice is a way of assessing this. Dependability is ascertained by examining the methodologic and analytic “decision trails” created by the investigators during the course of the study itself.<sup>52</sup> Auditing the inquiry (ie, determining whether decisions made are congru-

ent with their circumstances and assessing whether interpretations and recommendations are generally supported by the data) attests to the dependability of the project. Systematically documenting the rationale, outcome, and evaluation of all actions related to data collection, sampling, analysis, and dissemination of results is therefore an important point of rigor in feminist studies.

Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, use of multiple observers, comparison of multiple data sources, and comparison of individual versus group accounts and spontaneous versus elicited data are also ways to check the dependability of specific data collection techniques.<sup>53,54</sup> The degree of stability of participants’ themes over time (diachronic reliability) and the degree of similarity of responses in a single period (synchronic reliability)<sup>55</sup> are other criteria that support dependability in feminist research.

Dependability is thus a measure of rigor which, unlike reliability, does not decontextualize the data and does not expect or require that observations be repeatable or constant across observers and time. If similar meanings can be perceived in the raw data by others who use similar analytic procedures and construct the inquiry from equivalent feminist understandings, then arguments about the dependability of feminist research are strengthened.

In empiricist studies validity refers to the degree to which a data collection instrument measures the attributes researchers claim it is measuring. It is the degree of assurance that effects on a dependent variable result from variability in the independent variable. Usually a number of procedures are implemented to determine whether an instrument appears to be quantifying the same phe-

nomenon as other accepted instruments or procedures. If measurement tools are used in feminist projects, these tests of rigor may constitute an important part of demonstrating scientific adequacy. However, in feminist studies that focus on women's lived experiences and their implications, conventional instruments generally fall short of capturing the full depth and breadth of these phenomena. Qualitative methods are therefore often employed in feminist research, either alone or in conjunction with quantitative instruments.

In empiricist research the purpose of reliability and validity standards is to facilitate generalizability: the application of a finding or "law" to all other similar cases. The contention of generalizability depends on the assumption of one "true reality" that is tangible and unchanging, that governs social situations under all circumstances. Clearly this assumption does not fit the complexity of human experiences. Nevertheless, even though human experiences cannot be generalized, postempiricist researchers assume that some information is transferable from one human context to another.<sup>56</sup>

### Adequacy

Although empiricists have compartmentalized concepts of reliability and validity, in feminist science the interconnectedness of reliability and validity become more evident. A valid measure is of little use if the measurement is inconsistent from context to context; a reliable instrument that measures an irrelevant construct is likewise inadequate. From this standpoint reliability and validity can be considered as continuous<sup>56</sup> and expanded into a more encompassing

standard referred to as *adequacy*. Feminist research is best evaluated by standards of rigor that reflect the adequacy of the whole process of inquiry, relative to the purposes of the study, rather than by standards that focus only on the accuracy and reliability of measurements within the study.

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Adequacy of inquiry implies that research processes and outcomes are well grounded, cogent, justifiable, relevant, and meaningful. Accordingly, feminist researchers must continually question their methods throughout the research process, critiquing goals, questions, design, scope, analysis, conclusions, and impact of the study in the social and political environment. The central question becomes: Are the processes of the study adequate to the problem or situation being explored? Ethical issues become relevant to the adequacy of feminist investigations; the accuracy of the findings are integrally related to the nature and fairness of the interactive processes through which they were accumulated and analyzed. Results are adequate if analytic interpretations fairly and accurately reflect the phenomena that investigators claim to represent. Do researchers' assertions about what is reality for those studied correspond to the reality they actually perceive and experience? Or have re-

searchers merely verified preconceptions of participants' experiences?

## ACHIEVING ADEQUACY IN FEMINIST RESEARCH

How can feminist investigators verify whether a study's design is able to provide appropriate and dependable answers to research questions? How can they demonstrate the fidelity and authenticity of findings? What follows is a discussion of several criteria by which feminist investigators can plan rigorous studies and evaluate their efforts.

### Reflexivity

According to the basic assumptions of feminist approaches to inquiry, knowledge is held to be jointly constructed by researchers and research participants, which obliges reflexivity in study design.<sup>57-59</sup> A reflexive approach to research fosters integrative thinking, appreciation of the relativity of truth, awareness of theory as ideology, and willingness to make values explicit. The planning and implementation of a research project entails a series of decisions, requiring reflexivity at each step of the process, whereby researchers examine their own values, assumptions, characteristics, and motivations to see how they affect theoretic framework, review of the literature, design, tool construction, data collection, sampling, and interpretation of findings.<sup>11,50,60</sup> Whereas conventional methodologists seek to minimize doubt and bias through objectivity and distancing, feminist investigators do not suppress awareness of their feelings and at-

titudes. Instead they allow conflicting realities to coexist in their continuous reflection on research processes. The elimination of bias is presumed to be both impossible and inappropriate. Instead, it is the deliberate, thoughtful assessment of how researchers themselves participate in creating and interpreting research data that is the mark of adequate feminist inquiry.

Reflexivity can also be guarded by deliberately focusing on the researcher-participant relationship during data collection and analysis, pinpointing mutual influences affecting the nature of responses.<sup>9,61</sup> Christman<sup>40</sup> identified a series of questions that are critical for a feminist researcher to ask while analyzing data: "How is this woman like me? How is she not like me? How are these similarities and differences being played out in our interaction? How is that interaction affecting the course of the research? How is it illuminating and/or obscuring the research problem?"<sup>40(p80)</sup> Attending to these concerns can make more explicit the participation of the researcher in the generation of knowledge, adding to the accuracy and relevance of results.

### Credibility

Among the tasks for feminist analysts is the construction of credible descriptions and explanations of women's experiences that can be understood by both insiders and outsiders. A feminist research report is credible when it presents such faithful interpretations of participants' experiences that they are able to recognize them as their own. Member validation is one approach for determining if an authentic rendering of insiders' experiences has been generated. Having insiders

evaluate analytic interpretations is an indispensable way to determine whether they recognize, understand, and endorse researchers' interpretations of their experiences.<sup>9,62-65</sup>

It is helpful if other nurses, feminist scholars, and/or feminist activists also assess the believability of feminist researchers' accounts. However, as outsiders they can only provide an impression of authenticity. They can verify the adequacy of the literature reviewed, the effectiveness of data collection techniques, the logic of political arguments, the comprehensibility of descriptions, and the inclusivity of samples. For example, some questions that might be raised in assessing the credibility of sampling in feminist studies are: Do the spokespersons solicited, the behaviors observed, the historical records studied represent the diversity of the group under study? Does this sample include variously situated women, particularly those who are usually excluded from research (eg, poor women, women of color, lesbians, older women, disabled women)?

Attempts to discuss and validate research content and process, like all social interactions, are shaped and constrained by such factors as social relations, power dynamics, motives, and cultural differences. For example, researchers may be motivated to press for premature consensus. Women may be hesitant to negatively evaluate researchers' interpretations, because they value their relationships with them or because the researchers have special status in the community. Outsiders may misperceive meanings. These factors must be considered in the course of incorporating findings from these validation exercises into the research proc-

ess. Emergent disagreements and criticisms, when evaluated against other data, can signal a need to restructure procedures, reevaluate conceptualizations, and/or interpret new insights. The results of attempts to establish credibility should be reported and discussed, including those that stand in stark contradiction to the final conclusions of a study.

### Rapport

A feminist perspective in science values engagement with, rather than detachment from, the persons and processes to be understood. A researcher must be involved with participants to achieve the depth and scope of data collection and analysis required to present a credible description of women's experiences. Rapport is a criterion of adequacy reflecting how well participants' reality is accessed.<sup>57</sup> Elements of rapport such as trust in relationship, length and frequency of contact, intimacy of setting, and researcher sensitivity to language, connotation, and life style<sup>52,53,61,66-68</sup> indicate the processual validity of data in feminist studies. Unless relationships of trust and openness are developed, there can be no confidence that the research accurately represents what is significant to women in their everyday lives.<sup>9</sup> Rapport can be evaluated in a number of ways for example, by depth and specificity of information shared, verbal and nonverbal indications of participants' comfort and openness, their willingness to be involved over a period of time, and their inclination to recruit other participants.

### Coherence

Coherence is another standard by which to gauge adequacy.<sup>68,69</sup> Research conclusions

are coherent if they are well founded in and consistent with the raw data, systematically connected in a logical discourse, and faithful in principle and interests served to the stories women tell, the behaviors they demonstrate, and the sentiments they communicate. Coherence is a quality indicating a unity in the research account derived from all the observations, records, responses, and conversations involved in the research process. Coherence can be recognized in the consistency of the whole with its constituent parts<sup>70</sup> and in the plausibility and comparability of data and products of analysis.<sup>54</sup>

Checks for coherence can be made throughout the research process by questioning the data and the emerging analytic insights. Does this interview "hold up" internally? Is this historical record plausible? Is this response consistent with other responses from the same participant? Is this observation consistent with other observations made of the same community? Is this account comparable to accounts from other participants? Are there inconsistencies among various sources of data? How cogent are the analytic interpretations? Are they sound renderings that communicate the essential meanings of the raw data? Do they make logical sense in the light of a broader understanding of social, economic, and political realities? Is the emerging theoretic picture whole? Is it faithful to participants' narratives, to the historical record, to the variety of observations made? How well are the interpretations related to basic research questions, overall research goals, and findings of other investigations? Reflections on the answers to such questions can be discussed with collaborators and documented as analytic and methodologic memos.

## Complexity

Rigor in feminist inquiry includes the degree to which research reflects the complexity of reality.<sup>71</sup> Feminist scholarship incorporates an emphasis on complexity. Historically, social science and medical research often oversimplified women's experiences by examining only those aspects of women's lives that corresponded directly to the norms of men's development and experience. However, women, like all persons, are purposeful beings situated in particular historical, sociocultural, political, economic, and embodied life circumstances. Their actions and interpretations of their experiences are intimately affected by the particular contexts in which they occur. Much of traditional empiricist research reduces human nature to an array of isolated variables examined in a narrow, decontextualized format. Frequently the search for universal social processes forsakes attention to the conditions that envelop phenomena. Capturing the complexity of women's experiences involves several tasks: locating the analysis in the context of participants' everyday lives; exploring the influences of larger social, political, and economic structures; and providing historical background.<sup>20,22</sup>

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An adequate feminist study rejects the focus on standardization, prediction, and control of human behavior in favor of concern for contextuality, exceptions, and indeterminants.<sup>72</sup> A significant goal of an ade-



quate feminist inquiry is to elaborate meaningful differences in the experiences of variously situated women. Therefore one of the analytic tasks in establishing similarities in the contours of women's experiences is actually the conscious attempt to identify the dissimilarities. Sampling patterns become crucial in this process of trying to articulate the full complexity of women's experiences.

### Consensus

Another primary verificatory index in research is consensus.<sup>53</sup> Congruence among behavioral, verbal, and affective elements of particular observations, verbal responses, and written records helps to support the presence of consensus. The ability to adequately reproduce imaginatively in the mind of the researcher the motives behind participants' verbalizations, actions, and writings is confirmed by consensus among data sources. The more the researcher confirms women's expressive meanings by recurring themes, the greater the accuracy of the data. By searching for negative cases, divergent experiences, and alternative explanations, researchers can strengthen conclusions regarding experiential consensus.

A value on consensus may appear to be at odds with a standard of rigor based on complexity. It can be observed that consensus is present at one level of scrutiny but seems to "disappear" on more intense, detailed description. Being aware of and demonstrating consensual meanings does not eliminate the need to present women's experiences in their full complexity. Attempts to establish consensus should not circumvent modes of sampling that honor diversity among differently situated women. That is, feminist researchers need to be consciously aware of

and inclusive of women from a variety of ethnic/racial backgrounds and sexual orientations, a range of socioeconomic circumstances, and a latitude of ages and physical abilities.<sup>20,73</sup>

At the core of feminist inquiry is the acknowledgment of the plurality of women's experiences; thus inconsistency among participant accounts does not invalidate their perceptions, but instead illustrates the variety of women's thoughts, actions, and feelings and the entanglement of ideologic, structural, and interpersonal constraints that impinge on them. When comparing accounts, the researcher should establish the social positions, environmental contexts, experiential backgrounds, and loyalties of the various participants or groups involved in the study in order to gain a perspective on similarities and differences among viewpoints.

Questions can be used to evaluate consensus within a study. What are the areas of broadest agreement among participants? Which participants are not included in this area of agreement? At what level of analysis does this apparent similarity become relevant or irrelevant? What are the consequences of assuming that the similarities or areas of agreement are universal? Which women's experiences are not represented by the accounts given in this sample of participants?

### Relevance

Another criterion that undergirds the adequacy and quality of findings in feminist research is relevance. Feminist researchers judge the appropriateness and significance of research by whether the questions address women's concerns and by whether the an-

swers to these questions can serve women's interests and improve the conditions of women's lives.<sup>74</sup> A study that has met funding criteria will not necessarily meet these standards of relevance. As Mies suggests, "The contemplative, uninvolved 'spectator knowledge' must be replaced by active participation in actions, movements, and struggles for women's emancipation. Research must become an integral part of such struggles."<sup>75(p124)</sup> Whose interests are being supported and how research findings might be used by others are key indicators of relevance that should be considered in feminist inquiry.

### Honesty and mutuality

Deception has been employed, to varying degrees, in conventional research, ostensibly because of the belief that if the research relationship is open and mutual, it will "skew the results."<sup>76</sup> To the contrary, feminist values hold that deception is unethical and is an obstruction to the dependability of the data so collected. Information about the research purposes and design must be provided in terms that are understandable and relevant to participants. Women's experiences are not adequately depicted in designs that have hidden agendas or in methods that approach participants as though they are "liars" who need to be "tricked," provoked, or even frightened into telling the truth. Adequacy and ethics are both served in the criterion of honesty in research.<sup>9,11,75,77</sup>

Closely aligned with honesty in feminist research is the value on mutuality. Participants are assumed to be truth-tellers rather than persons disposed to deceit or intrigue, peers rather than objects of study. Unless control is conspicuously shared with women

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participating in studies, researcher-participant relationships are usually marked by a striking asymmetry of power. Reduction of power inequalities among researchers and participants is a means for preserving the subjective validity of participants' statements, affects, and behaviors.<sup>9,61</sup> Egalitarian cooperation is more likely than researcher domination to allow participants to talk about what is important to them, express emotions in a spontaneous fashion, and act in ways that have meaning for them rather than in ways perceived to be desired by researchers. Thus conscious monitoring of power dynamics during data collection provides an important basis for drawing adequate conclusions about the findings.

Oakley's<sup>41</sup> method for interviewing, one of exchange and dialogue, is a way to access women's experiences. In this method mutuality is supported in that researchers do not merely "extract" needed data in a stimulus-response fashion and then leave participants with nothing in return. They convey by their actions and questions that they are genuinely interested in each woman's unique experiences, respectful of her ability to convey relevant information, and grateful for her time and efforts. Information that participants might need from the researcher is also freely given in exchange, as well as meaningful feedback from the research study that might be useful in their social circumstances. In nursing research, health information may

be readily valued and desired by participants, and nurse investigators generally have expertise in health teaching or access to resources that can provide needed information. Seen in this light, the offering of health information, advocacy, or referral is not outside the researcher role and can enhance the quality of data rather than detract from it.<sup>77</sup>

### Naming

Concepts that are selected, defined, and described in research delimit the nature and relevance of the findings. If androcentric notions of the world, derived from research about men, are uncritically applied to studies of women, the results can be very inaccurate.<sup>50,78,79</sup> Existing systems of thought often treat women's everyday experiences and understandings of social reality as peripheral and unimportant.<sup>17</sup> Naming, as a criterion of scientific rigor, is defined as learning to see beyond and behind what one has been socialized to believe is there. It is addressing women's lives in their own terms and generating concepts through words directly expressive of women's experiences. Such naming has two powers. First, it defines the value of that which is named by the emphasis of selecting it, and second, it denies reality to that which is never named.<sup>50</sup>

Naming power can be shared with women involved in studies by trying to understand reality from the gendered perspectives of participants, by using their language to describe phenomena and create theory, and by presenting their verbatim stories to illustrate analytic arguments. As Acker et al<sup>9</sup> point out, a study based on feminist principles is adequate if the active voices of women participants are heard in the research account.

### Relationality

Collaborative working methods are a means of increasing reflexivity, accuracy, mutuality, and therefore the adequacy of feminist research. Communal modes of inquiry that are participatory, nonhierarchical, and oriented toward social action reinforce the relationality of knowledge construction. Collaborating with other scholars as well as members of the groups being studied in designing, administering, analyzing, and reporting the research improves adequacy at each step. A high degree of relationality increases the potential for well-grounded, justifiable, cogent, relevant, and meaningful research. Working with others encourages support as well as challenge and confrontation. Dialogue provides opportunities for more critical reflection and questioning, which can in turn uncover new dimensions of the data and new avenues for exploration. Together, group members can monitor interpretations of data, assess whether context is being incorporated, and judge whether women's experiences are being fully taken into account.<sup>11,80</sup>

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After advancing this new, alternative set of criteria and approaches to ensure the adequacy of feminist research, some qualifications are in order. Feminist inquiry is not confined to the use of a particular method. Conventional quantitative methods may be employed in feminist studies, but in view of the aforementioned criteria, it is not likely that conventional quantitative methods alone will be adequate for studies of women's lived experiences. Therein lies the useful association of feminist science with fieldwork and other qualitative methods.

The criteria for adequacy outlined here rest largely on the perspective of postempiricism, the processes of qualitative methodology in human science, and the assumptions and politics of feminism. They could be applied to other contexts of human experiential research but are particularly useful in guiding feminist research. The history of oppression, invisibility, and objectification

of women underscores the need for a more relevant, just, and complete framework for evaluating research about and for women. Some components of such a framework have been assembled here, and some means of achieving these forms of adequacy have been suggested, with the intent of advancing the dialogue about feminist research in nursing beyond definitional issues.

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