

RCCN Workshop on Aging, Health, and Disparities

Qualitative Methods

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Objectives

- An appreciation of the different ways of approaching knowledge and research that differ between qualitative and quantitative methods
- To understand what questions qualitative research can be useful for that quantitative methods alone cannot answer
- If you are a quantitative researcher, future goals might include:
 - Collaborate with qualitative researchers on a mixed methods study
 - Read and understand qualitative papers
 - Understand how to evaluate qualitative research in research grants or papers

	Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Research Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement of controlled or manipulated variables by experimental and other methods • Causal and measurable relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description and analysis of patterns, values, worldview, meanings, beliefs, and attitudes • Totality of experiences in natural or particular contexts
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow and limited focus • Controlled • Excludes more than includes • Deductive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally broad, holistic and comprehensive • Inductive
Research Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing hypotheses to obtain measurable outcomes among variables under study • Precision and objective findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing hypotheses for future quantitative work • Understanding phenomena complex • Gaining insight into causal mechanisms • Understanding and interpreting “truths” from different perspective



Qualitative exploratory analysis
to generate hypotheses

Survey to test hypotheses and
determine generalizability

Intervention

Epistemology

The nature of knowledge, how do we know what we know?

How we look at the world and make sense of it?



Methodology

The strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods

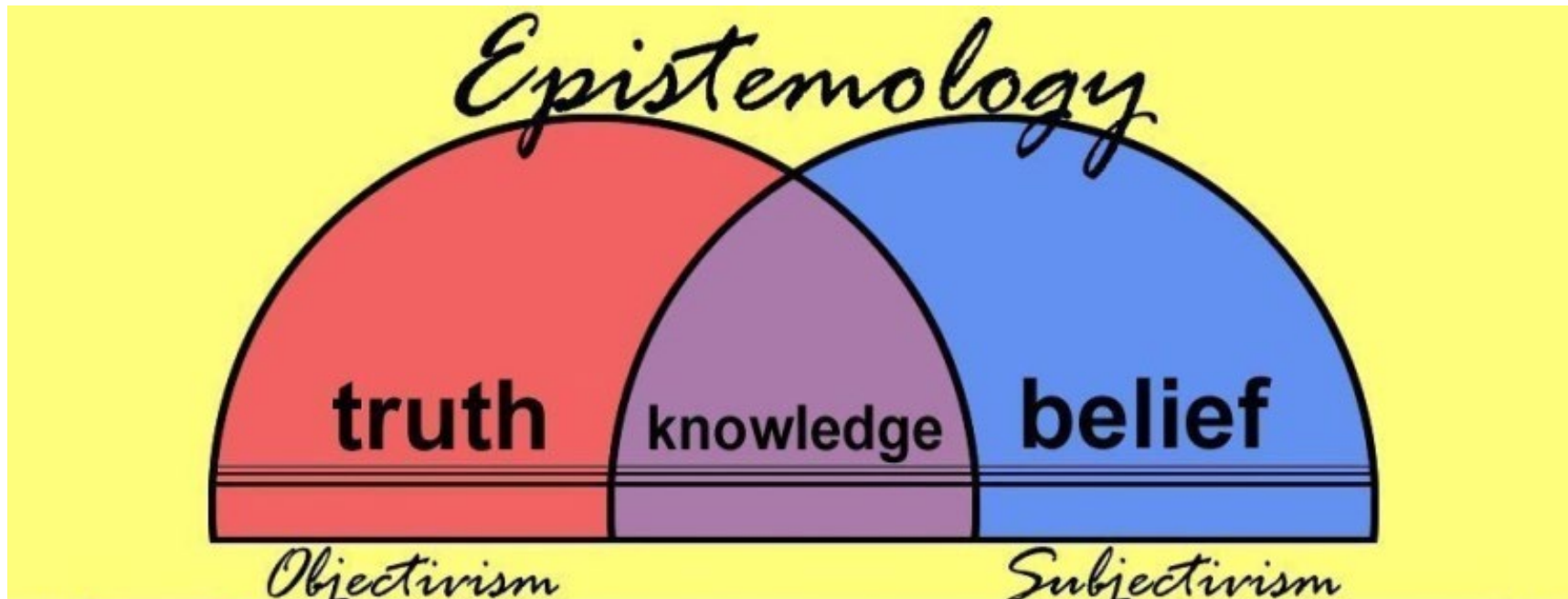
Objectivist
Positivist

Constructivist
Subjectivist



There is a single, unequivocal reality or truth which is entirely independent of the researcher and of the research process

There are multiple perspectives of the world that are created and constructed in the research process





What is
“Fake
News”?



What about generalizability in qualitative research? Does that reflect the epistemological foundations of qualitative research?

How does one address “bias” differently in qualitative and quantitative research?

Examples of Qualitative Research

- Focus groups
- Structured interviews
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews
- Ethnography/participant observation
- Open-ended surveys



Using qualitative research in disparities research

- Centers the voice of minoritized community
- Understanding lived experiences
- Allows for co-creation of research with community members through e.g., community based participatory research methods
- Describe and understand complex social interactions and actions
- Rich history of scholarship in the social sciences, e.g., critical race theory, decolonial studies, sub-altern studies



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