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WHAT IS RESEARCH RIGOR? LESSONS FOR A TRANSDISCIPLINE [ABSTRACT]

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	Use of the term “rigor” is ubiquitous in the research community. But do we actually know what it means, and how it applies to transdisciplinary research?
Background	Too often, rigor is presumed to mean following an established research protocol scrupulously. Unfortunately, that frequently leads to research with little or no impact.
Methodology	We identify a sample of 62 articles with “rigor” in the title and analyze their content in order to capture the range of perspectives on rigor. We then analyze how these findings might apply to informing science.
Contribution	This paper offers an approach to defining rigor that is theory based and appropriate for transdisciplinary research.
Findings	Rigor definitions tend to fall into one of two categories: criteria-based and compliance-based. Which is appropriate depends on the research context. Even more variation was found with respect to relevance, which is often used as a catch-all for research characteristics that aren’t associated with rigor.
Recommendations for Practitioners	Recognize that when researchers are referring to rigor and relevance, they often mean these to apply to other researchers rather than to practice. When funding research, it is important to understand who the rigor and relevance are directed towards.
Recommendations for Researchers	When using the term “rigor”, think carefully about which meaning is intended and be transparent about that meaning in your writing.
Impact on Society	A great deal of public money is invested in achieving research rigor. Society should be aware of what it is buying with that funding.

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What is Research Rigor?

Future Research Developing a better understanding of research fitness and the factors that contribute to it.

Keywords rigor, relevance, resonance, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, research

BIOGRAPHIES



Grandon Gill is a professor in the Information Systems and Decision Sciences Department of the University of South Florida. He is also the Academic Director of the Doctor of Business Administration Program at the Muma College of Business. He is Editor-in-Chief of the Muma Business Review and the past Editor-in-Chief of Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline and the Journal of IT Education: Discussion Cases, also serving as a Governor and Fellow of the Informing Science Institute, where he was elected President in 2019. He was also the inaugural recipient of the Zbigniew Gackowski Award for informing science research



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