

P.E.R.V.E.R.T. Protocol

The P.E.R.V.E.R.T. Protocol is a standard set of questions you can ask yourself as a way of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of any research method.

The Protocol identifies a number of areas (Theoretical, Ethical, Methodological and Practical) where potential problems may occur when a particular research method is used.

This, in turn, suggests a range of *possible questions* that need to be considered as part of any evaluation process.

The following table lists the *potential problems* identified by the Protocol and identifies *some possible questions* to ask in each category.

This list is only *indicative* of possible questions - there may be others you wish to consider when evaluating the research method.

Problems	Questions to Consider
Practical	Is the research method time-consuming and costly to apply? Does the researcher need special training? Is it always possible to get access to respondents using this method?
Ethical	Are there ethical problems (such as a lack of informed consent, the possibility of harm to respondents and / or researchers, a lack of confidentiality, etc.) raised by this research method?
Reliable	Can the research be exactly replicated? If another researcher repeated the research using exactly the same methods would they achieve the same results?
Valid	To what extent, for example, does the method measure what it claims to measure? Does the research explore an issue in sufficient depth and detail?
Exemplified	Can you identify studies that have used this method to support your arguments concerning its suitability or otherwise as a research method?
Representative	Does the method allow the researcher to collect representative data and can this data be generalised from the group being studied to wider society?
Theoretical	Is the type of data collected using the method (primary, secondary, quantitative, qualitative) appropriate for the purpose of the study? Do the characteristics (class, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality) of the researcher and / or respondents impact on the ability to apply the research method? How does the theoretical position of the researcher (Positivist, Realist or Interpretivist) affect both choice of research method and how the data is interpreted?