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PSYCHOLOGY

PAPER No. : 16 : Community Psychology

MODULE No. :12 : Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

1. Learning Outcomes

After studying this module, you shall be able to

- Know the assumptions of Qualitative and Quantitative Research
- Recognize the need for integration or mixing of research methods
- Learn about the advantages and disadvantages of Mixed Method Research
- Identify a few ways of combining research methods through the examples shared

2. Introduction

2.1 Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Every kind of practice has rewards and difficulties. Quantitative approaches permit us to abridge massive bases of evidence and simplify contrasts across groups and over time. Assessments are essential to assess upgrading, a dangerous standard for community interferences and backing activities. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in a solitary education to offer the advantages of both perspectives and overcome the limitations of each (Lipsey & Cordray, 2000; Maton, 1993).

2.2 Assumptions of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

These evaluations in combination can produce a more holistic view of a phenomenon, but must reconcile some assumptions (Table 1) there is not a single set of instructions for the design of a mixed methods study. Rather, there is a guiding principle: the Philosophy of Pragmatism. A philosophy underlies each methodological approach. For mixed methods, the philosophy is pragmatism. (Figure 1.)

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Deductive approach, testing of theory	Inductive approach, generation of theory.
There is one objective reality. Social reality as something objective and measurable.	There are as many realities as there are actors/participants. Social reality as something constructed by people.
Follows a natural science model, particularly positivism.	Interpretative.
Context is less important in examining a phenomenon.	Context is of paramount importance in examining a phenomenon.
The researcher's biases are controlled via careful statistical methods.	The researcher's biases are a necessary component of results interpretation.

Research results are more valuable when analyzing large populations across which we can generalize results.

Research results give us more depth and meaning when analyzing smaller samples.

Table 1. Assumptions of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

According to Victor Lofgreen, “pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method or the world view that is supposed to underlie the method.” Such a way of thinking enables the researcher great flexibility.

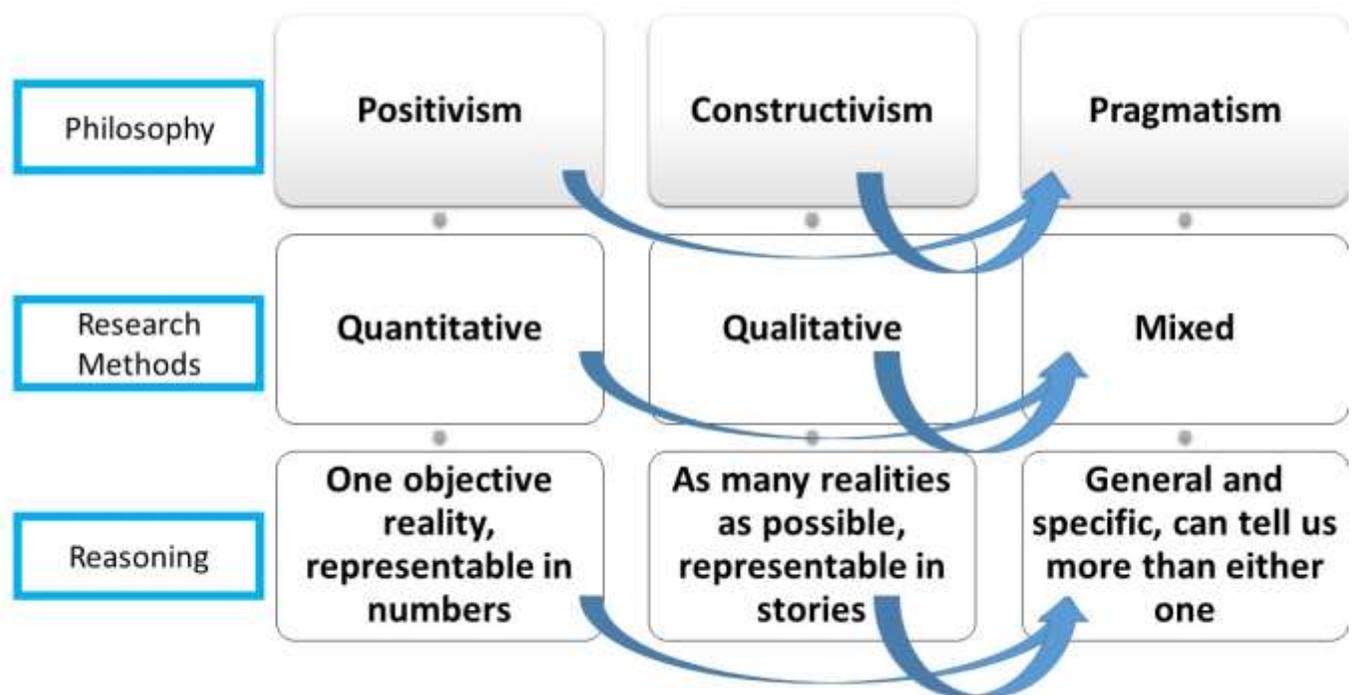


Figure 1. Philosophy of Mixed Research

With that flexibility, however, comes the responsibility to ensure that your research is rigorous. Pool and organize the data and literature at your disposal. Draw from this information the most appropriate question to research. Note that the Philosophy of Pragmatism does not have to support mixed methods design. The pragmatist would be free to complete a quantitative-only or qualitative-only study if the research question called for it.

2.3 Why do we use Mixed Methods Research?

While quantitative and qualitative studies certainly have a place on their own, mixed methods research can, in certain situations, provide a better view of reality than quantitative or qualitative methods alone. According to Greene, et al. (1989), there are five primary purposes for mixing methods in research (Table 2):

Purposes of Mixed Methods Research	
Triangulation	The use of multiple methods concurrently and with equal weight to test the validity of a finding. Seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from different methods. (Figure 2)
Complementarity	The use of multiple methods concurrently and preferably with equal weight to clarify the results of a finding i.e. Seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results one method with the results from other methods.
Expansion	The use of multiple methods sequentially or concurrently and with equal or unequal priority/weight to enhance the richness of a finding. Seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components. (Figure 3)
Development	The use of additional methods sequentially preferably with equal weight to shape future research processes i.e. Seeks to use the result from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly constructed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.
Initiation	The use of multiple methods concurrently and preferably with equal weight to stimulate new questions. Seeks the discovery of paradox and contradictions, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting off questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.

Table 2. Purposes for mixing Research Methods (Source : Based on Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989)

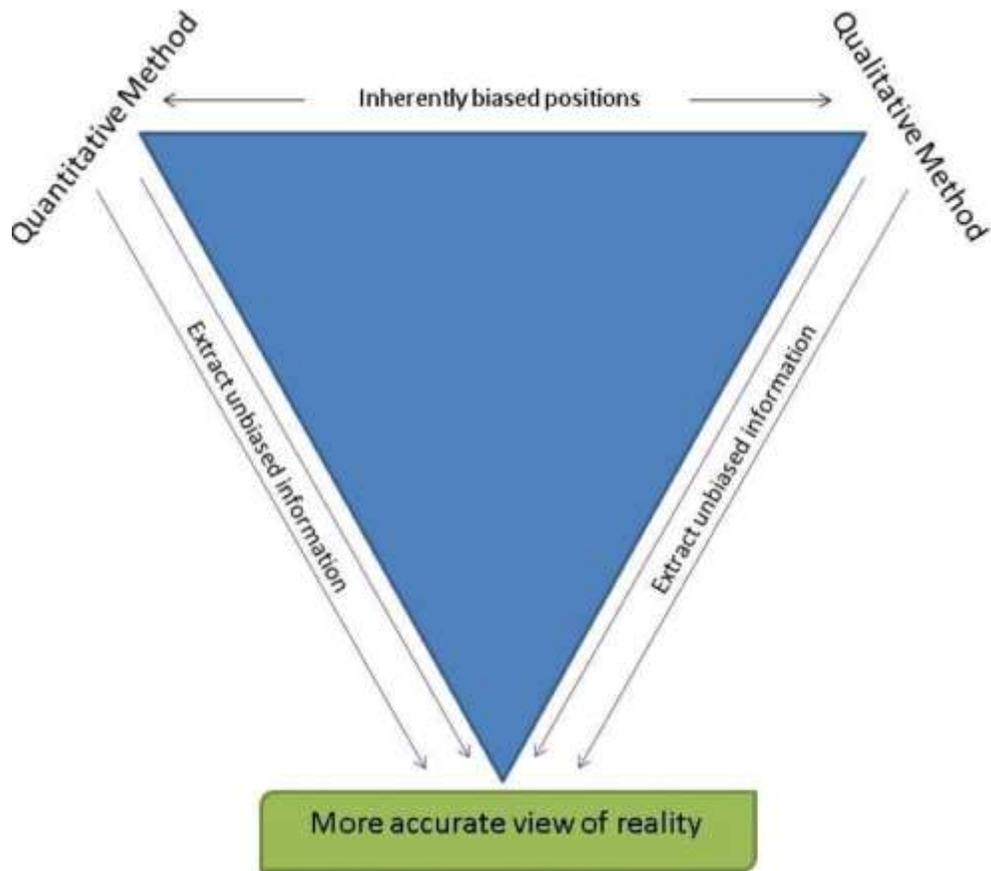


Figure 2. Triangulation

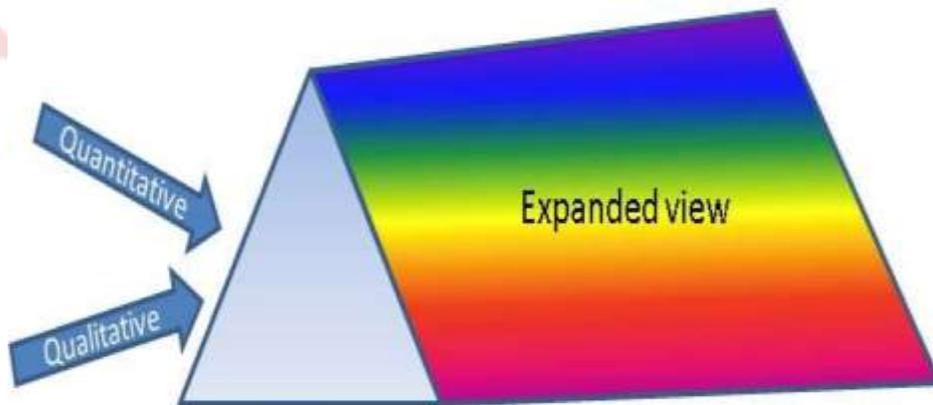


Figure 3. Expansion

(Image Source: United States institute of Peace and UK aid – Mixed Methods ResearchModule:<http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/1.4%20Mixed%20Research%20Methods.pdf>)

2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixed Method Research

Ideally, we would use mixed methods research whenever possible, since it often better captures the richness of the real world than either qualitative or quantitative methods alone. There are of course questions of feasibility. Because both methods are being used, there can be greater cost and time requirements. Success can also be dependent upon the extent of existing research on the subject. The various advantages and disadvantages are listed below.(Figure 4)

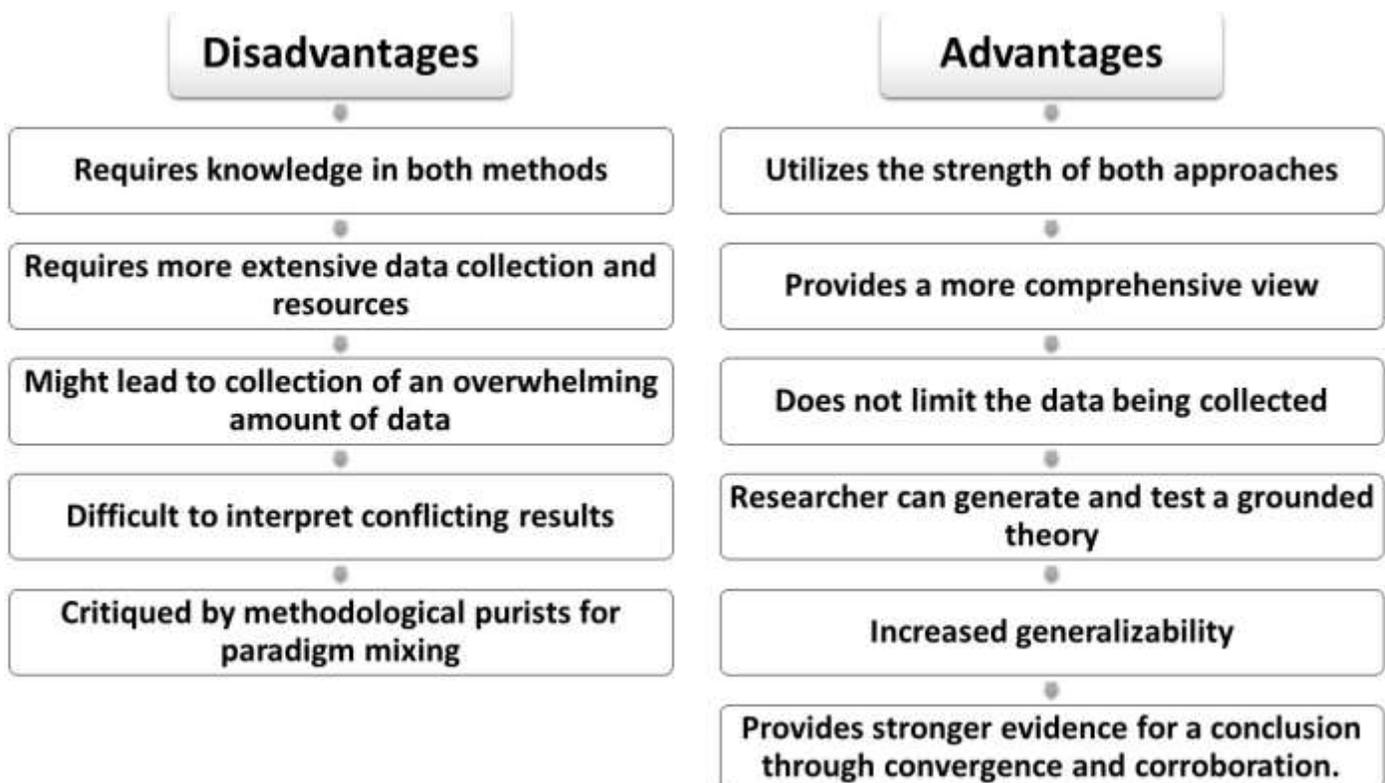


Figure 4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixed Method Research

3. Example A: Combining Participatory Methods and GIS Mapping to Understand Community

Researchers combined ethnographic, participatory, and GIS methods as part of a randomized controlled study on the effectiveness of community-based HIV awareness and prevention strategies within 48 communities in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa, and Thailand (Chirowodza, van Rooyen, Joseph, Sikotoyi, Richter, & Coates, 2009). Prior to intervention in each of the communities, the multilingual and transnational team of researchers needed to work

with members of each of the communities to identify:

- 1) Community boundaries
- 2) How the community was defined socially and geographically
- 3) Where to deliver services, and
- 4) Individuals, groups, and community networks with whom to partner in delivering services.

GIS technologies were used to generate maps of the geographic area and relevant community sites. Yet, in order to identify and define community resources, ethnographic and participatory methods were needed to complement and extend the GIS technologies.

For example, participatory mapping and transect walks were used in a rural community in South Africa so community members could describe the community as they experienced it. Facilitators worked with community teams to create maps, usually on the ground outdoors with natural materials, such as sticks, leaves, and stones. Community members identified such features as community landmarks, infrastructure, transport routes, places for livelihood and dwelling, and boundaries. Maps were transferred to charts by community members for record keeping. Transect walks were then conducted with community members serving as guides to explore key community networks and resources in greater detail. The participatory process complemented and challenged quantitative descriptions generated by outsiders. Multiple methods illuminated key differences between the mental maps of communities, maps generated by government surveys, and census data. A multi-method approach more effectively named community boundaries, challenges, strengths, and resources than any one research method alone.

4. Example B: A Mixed-Method Evaluation of Peer Support for Early Adolescents

Louise Ellis, Herbert Marsh, and Rhonda Craven (2009) integrated quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate a peer support program in Australia for schoolchildren making the transition to adolescence and high school. The peer support program is one that was widely implemented in Australia, with over 1,600 schools adopting the program in New South Wales (including the metropolitan region of Sydney). The program was offered as a set of 12 once-a-week sessions in which high school seniors (who received initial and ongoing training and support) worked with small groups of seventh grade students. The groups discussed and practiced goal setting, decision making, problem solving, and developing support networks.

The quantitative component of the evaluation included a sample of 930 students from three high schools. In the first year of the longitudinal study, all seventh grade students were assigned to the within-school, baseline control group. Researchers collected data at three points from the beginning to the end of the school year. In the second year, new seventh grade students from the same three schools participated in the peer support program. As with the control group, data was collected at three points from the beginning to the end of the school year. Surveys measured the students' self-concept (e.g., physical abilities, relationships, and academic abilities), personal effectiveness (e.g., self-confidence and leadership), coping, and perceptions of bullying. Results for the experimental group were compared with the control group and with the experimental

group’s own baseline data. Multi-level path analysis indicated that the program enhanced psychological well-being and adjustment and that some benefits emerged after time elapsed at the end of the program and were stronger over time. Researchers found this “sleeper effect” surprising, given the steady loss of benefits once many interventions have concluded.

The qualitative component, designed to privilege the personal perspectives of participants, included open-ended questionnaires and focus groups with seventh-grade student and peer support leaders. Content analysis showed themes that were not fully named or examined in the researcher-designed surveys. For example, the strongest finding that emerged was that the program helped strengthen student connectedness and understanding of others. Students also emphasized how the program helped them deal with difficult situations and fostered a sense of possibility for their own futures. Mixed methods strengthened the study, providing complementary evidence and allowing for participants’ voices to be included.

5. Example C: Participatory Action Research on the Impact of Mental Health Consumer-Run Organizations

Researchers in Ontario, Canada (Janzen, Nelson, Hausfather, & Ochocka, 2007), worked with stakeholders to conduct a mixed method, participatory action research project focusing on consumer-run mental health organizations that offered mutual support but also advocated for social change. The organizations, called Consumer/Survivor Initiatives (CSIs) in Ontario, focused on multiple levels in their work for systems change. They worked to impact local services (e.g., mental health and health services, planning bodies), policy (e.g., provincial ministry of health, mental health umbrella organizations), and society (e.g., public, media, educational institutions). The purpose of the research project was to assess the kinds of work that CSIs in Ontario were doing and to evaluate changes in local services, policies, and society due to the work of the CSIs.

The participatory action research approach included a number of components. CSI members were included in developing the study proposal. Fourteen CSI members were hired, trained, and supported as co-researchers. A stakeholder steering committee was formed and guided each step of the study. The research team also provided ongoing feedback to CSIs in popular, accessible formats. The evaluators used quantitative and qualitative components to achieve triangulation of findings. They used quantitative methods to get at breadth and causal impacts. They developed a tracking tool—a spreadsheet that logged all the systems-level activities and outcomes of the CSIs over a 25-month period. Researchers found a total of 665 events over the 25 months of the study, and the most frequently used strategy for social change was community planning—ahead of public education, political advocacy, and action research strategies.

The research team utilized qualitative methods to get in-depth insights into the experiences of CSI members and organizations as a whole. These methods included key informant interviews and focus groups. These methods proved more effective for pinpointing outcomes of CSI social change activities, such as successfully advocating for increased subsidized housing units and hiring peer support workers in a local hospital.

Interestingly, the participatory component of the evaluation became an intervention in itself, as those involved in the research had the opportunity to engage in regular reflection on systems

change. The CSI researchers and steering committee developed a common language for talking about the important work they were doing. Their reflexivity helped them think about how they could be more strategic and collaborative in the future. For example, the steering committee developed a 20-minute professionally produced DVD for CSIs to use in advocacy, education, and planning. They also held a series of regional workshops with CSIs to explore further action together. Participatory processes and mixed methods helped to capture the impact of the CSIs but also extended their impact.

6. Conclusion

“Quantitative and Qualitative are not mutually exclusive techniques. Both the techniques and methodologies in the same research project can be used to benefit the data and gain profits and decrease the lacunas.

There are numerous habits to syndicate quantitative and qualitative methods, they choice in ease and complexity. One rudimentary method would be to make areas of anxiety from a application group. For example, locality inhabitants could answer to quantitative items on how healthy civic conveyance functions in their locality and how significant this subject is to them. People could also label some of their involvements with civic conveyance. The investigation squad might then inspect the delivery of replies and select a insufficient ways illustrative of numerous belvederes diagonally towards spectrum.

7. Summary

- Qualitative and quantitative methods yield complementary forms of useful knowledge.
- Combined use offers the advantages of both perspectives and overcomes the limitations of each
- Mixed Research helps in processes like: Triangulation, Complementarity, Expansion, Development, and Initiation.
- Choice of methods must depend on the questions to be answered in the research.
- Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in participatory- collaborative community research.
- Multiple methods often strengthen a specific study.
- Contextual and longitudinal perspectives often strengthen community research.
- Community psychology is best served by a diversity of forms of knowledge and methods of research.