

Reassessing Mixed Methods: Unity of Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

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Abstract

Mixed methods approaches in social sciences have faced substantial criticism. Critics argue that a central limitation of mixed methods lies in its attempt to merge quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, which are often considered incompatible. This lack of theoretical cohesion, they contend, hinders the effective integration of quantitative and qualitative data, suggesting that mixed methods may exceed practical applicability at present. This article, however, posits that mixed methods can enhance the objectivity of social research by facilitating both the development and verification of new theories. The article is structured in two parts. In the first part, I contend that quantitative and qualitative approaches are neither contradictory nor merely "multiple ways of seeing" the social world; rather, they form an interdependent continuum. I further argue that significant advancements in the social sciences have historically stemmed from the concurrent presence of both approaches, even before mixed methods gained its contemporary structure. In the second part, I propose recommendations to improve the validity and reliability of mixed methods research. Here, I outline mixed methods research as a three-stage process: first, problem identification; second, defining dependent and independent variables and developing a theoretical framework; and third, theory verification.

Keywords: mixed methods; quantitative and qualitative approaches; interdependent continuum; verification; data integration