

3-1-2011

## Mixed Methods Design: A Beginner's Guide

Karen M. Keptner

Case Western University, [kmk112@case.edu](mailto:kmk112@case.edu)

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### Recommended APA Citation

Keptner, K. M. (2011). Mixed Methods Design: A Beginner's Guide. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(2), 593-595.  
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2011.1075>

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## Mixed Methods Design: A Beginner's Guide

### Abstract

Mixed Method Design: Principles and Procedures by Janice M. Morse and Linda Niehaus (2009) is a "how-to" book for conducting mixed method research. Morse and Niehaus go step-by-step through mixed method research and provide clear explanation for combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. They also provide examples of what is not mixed method design. The book is easy to read. It could be an invaluable reference for anyone who conducts research in health and social sciences, seasoned researchers and students alike.

### Keywords

Mixed Method Design, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, and Health and Social Research Methods

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## **Mixed Methods Design: A Beginner's Guide**

**Karen M. Keptner**

Case Western University, Cleveland, OH, USA

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*Mixed Method Design: Principles and Procedures* by Janice M. Morse and Linda Niehaus (2009) is a "how-to" book for conducting mixed method research. Morse and Niehaus go step-by-step through mixed method research and provide clear explanation for combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. They also provide examples of what is not mixed method design. The book is easy to read. It could be an invaluable reference for anyone who conducts research in health and social sciences, seasoned researchers and students alike. **Key Words:** *Mixed Method Design, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, and Health and Social Research Methods*

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The interest in mixed method design has grown over the years as questions related to health and healthcare have become more complex. Janice M. Morse and Linda Niehaus' book, *Mixed Method Design: Principles and Procedures* (2009), offers a clear explanation of mixed method design, and more importantly, offers a roadmap to successfully carrying out mixed method research. They first explain what areas of research are well suited to mixed method design and follow it with a number of terms that aid in the readers' understanding of this type of research. They delve into the types of mixed method design and the importance of recognizing the theoretical drive when planning the design. They consider pacing of the research designs (whether performed simultaneously or sequentially) and issues with sampling before they explore specific ways to conduct qualitatively and quantitatively focused mixed methods research. They end the book with complex mixed method designs and multiple methods designs. Throughout the book, they continue to emphasize what types of designs are not recognized as mixed methods.

As a graduate student, I have introductory knowledge of research and research methods, so this book was very easy to read given my background; and I know that it will be a useful reference as I move forward into a career of research. I found that the most valuable aspects of this book were the authors' explanation of determining the theoretical drive of a mixed method design, the systematic explanation of "how to" conduct mixed method design, and the figures and references throughout the book that provide further explanation of concepts.

In the first six chapters, Morse and Niehaus (2009) lay the groundwork by explaining mixed method design and defining terminology that simplifies discussion amongst researchers. They discuss how the researcher's theoretical drive determines what type of mixed method design to utilize (qualitative versus quantitative). They also differentiate core and supplemental components and explore how the supplemental component influences the results of the study by complementing, confirming, or enhancing the results of the core component. They differentiate the pacing utilized in

mixed method research, simultaneously or sequentially, in exploration of various research aims. Finally, they discuss sampling issues related to using both qualitative and quantitative methods and how to rectify both.

Following the groundwork laid out in the first six chapters, the authors provide straightforward guidelines for conducting mixed methods research. For me, this was the most important part of the book. The authors help the reader determine what types of research designs fit well together and provide wonderful examples of each. In chapter eight, they discuss various types of qualitative research and how each method of qualitative research could be the core component to a mixed method design. For example, when using grounded theory, they discuss how a quantitative supplementary component can enhance the results, enable comparison, reveal change, or confirm findings from the qualitative core component. In chapter nine, they discuss how a quantitative design can be the core component of a mixed method research design. They conclude the body of the book with complex mixed method designs and differentiate multiple methods research from mixed method design.

In order to emphasize concepts throughout the book, Morse and Niehaus (2009) provide easy to understand figures. For example, when explaining pacing and the point of interface in chapter five, they provide a diagram to guide a researcher's thinking as to where to incorporate a point of interface for the data obtained from each component. In figure 5.1 (p. 56) the reader can visualize whether they will have an analytical point of interface for "transforming and incorporating supplementary data into the core set" or a "results point of interface" for "integrating supplementary findings with those of core component." In addition, I appreciated the amount of references provided throughout the book. By giving references, the authors were able to exclusively focus on the "how-to" of mixed method design throughout the book while allowing the reader the ability to explore additional concepts as their comfort, knowledge, and training dictate. Lastly, the authors provide three excellent appendixes in which they present a handy glossary of mixed method designs, a system for dissecting mixed method articles, and tips for locating mixed method studies via electronic searches of bibliographic databases.

Morse and Niehaus (2009) demonstrate that they understand the needs of researchers regarding mixed method design. By first introducing the concepts surrounding mixed method design they enhance a reader's understanding of the final chapters. As a health care professional, I see the value in mixed method design, and this book fulfills a void in the literature. Many researchers have a focus in one area or another, either in quantitative or qualitative methods. Although they might want to conduct mixed methods research, they might not know how to begin. This book outlines how to combine qualitative and quantitative components so well that I think it will take away any anxious feeling related to going outside one's comfort zone in research. I recommend this book to anyone who researches in healthcare in order to understand how to utilize mixed method designs for a better understanding of health-related issues and healthcare.

I also recommend if you are interested in this text that you visit the book's web page located at <https://lcoast.sslcert19.com/book.php?id=223> and download the preface, table of contents, and first chapter. In doing so you will get a good feel for Morse and Niehaus' style and the great substance to their presentation of mixed methods. I think this

inviting sample will also entice you to read more of this valuable guide to the world of mixed method design.

### References

Morse, J. M., & Niehaus, L. (2009). *Mixed method design: Principles and procedures*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.

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### Author Note

Karen M. Keptner is an occupational therapist for Genesis Rehabilitation Services. She is pursuing her doctorate in epidemiology and biostatistics with a focus in health services research and policy at Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio. She frequently teaches in the occupational therapy program at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio. Contact information: 2184 Cottage Grove, Cleveland, Ohio 44118; Phone: (216) 210-3540; Email: kmk112@case.edu.

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### Article Citation

Keptner, K. M. (2011). Mixed methods design: A beginner's guide. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(2), 593-595. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR16-2/keptner.pdf>

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