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Multiple Perspectives on Mixing Methods: A Review of Bergman's Advances in Mixed Methods Research: Theory and Applications

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Multiple Perspectives on Mixing Methods: A Review of Bergman's Advances in Mixed Methods Research: Theory and Applications

Abstract

More books on mixed methods research have been published recently. One notable contribution to this growing body of work is Bergman's 2008 *Advances in Mixed Methods Research: Theories and Applications*. This edited work features contributions by different researchers and addresses a myriad of issues ranging from the need to re-conceptualize the paradigmatic differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to methodological issues and challenges. This book should prove useful to researchers and graduate students interested in mixed methods designs.

Keywords

Key Words: Mixed Methods Design, Mixed Methodology, Mixed Methods Research, Methodological Issues

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**Multiple Perspectives on Mixing Methods:
A Review of Bergman's *Advances in Mixed Methods Research: Theory
and Applications***

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*More books on mixed methods research have been published recently. One notable contribution to this growing body of work is Bergman's 2008 *Advances in Mixed Methods Research: Theories and Applications*. This edited work features contributions by different researchers and addresses a myriad of issues ranging from the need to re-conceptualize the paradigmatic differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to methodological issues and challenges. This book should prove useful to researchers and graduate students interested in mixed methods designs. Key Words: Mixed Methods Design, Mixed Methodology, Mixed Methods Research, and Methodological Issues*

Mixed methods studies are those that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the methodology of a single research study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). A number of publications have emerged in recent years on the topic of mixed methods design as evidence that this particular methodology has become increasingly utilized by researchers. *Advances in Mixed Methods Research: Theories and Applications* (Bergman, 2008) is one such publication. This book edited by Manfred Max Bergman is a compilation of articles written by researchers from different fields and backgrounds, giving both positive and negative aspects of the mixed methods research.

The book is organized into two parts. The first part entitled "The Theory of Mixed Methods Design" is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter by Bergman describes conventionally accepted paradigmatic differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Bergman argues that those differences need to be re-examined and re-conceptualized in order to benefit mixed methods research. The second chapter by Hammersley describes issues related to and types of triangulation. He emphasizes that triangulation may involve using different qualitative sources of data or quantitative methods rather than being a mix of the two. In the third chapter, Fielding identifies three benefits of the mixed methods research: analytic density, linkage between researchers and the expansion of research strategies to study social problems. Brannen, in the next chapter, discusses personal, professional and project issues related to mixed methods research. She also describes both risks and opportunities in conducting this type of research, and gives examples of studies utilizing different mixed methods designs. The first part of the book ends with Creswell et al.'s chapter on methodological issues, specifically challenges, in conducting different mixed methods designs.

The second part of the book entitled "Applications in Mixed Methods Design" is comprised of six chapters. Bryman discusses reasons why researchers combine quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Tashakkori and Teddlie addressed

quality issues in mixed methods designs, categorizing them as design quality and interpretive rigor issues. They also describe nine criteria for evaluating quality. In the next chapter, Pawson discusses three types of hypotheses used in evidence-based policy research using mixed methods design. De Leeuw and Hox outlined problems and consequences of mixing different data collection methods. Widmer et al. discuss the application of the analytical framework APES (Actor Process Event Scheme) in case study research. Finally, the book ends with Niglas et al. introducing the ESO (exploratory soft ontology) approach and its related software as a tool for conducting mixed methods research.

As a whole, the book is useful to researchers and graduate students interested in mixed methods research. The book goes beyond the authors simply giving an overview of mixed methods designs and research. It explores in depth many important current issues related to mixed methods research, for example, the advantages and limitations of using this type of methodology, which had not been presented well in existing and older books on mixed methods research. Additionally, the different perspectives and writing styles from multiple contributors are refreshing and more interesting than a book on mixed methods research authored by one or several authors, for example, Tashakkori and Teddlie's (1998) book. Furthermore, this book is neither as textbook-like nor as dense as the *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (2003), edited by the same pair of Tashakkori and Teddlie.

I found the chapters that discussed methodological issues in mixed methods research to be the most useful, for example, the chapters by Creswell et al. on challenges in conducting this type of research, and by Tashakkori and Teddlie on quality issues. There is a paucity of existing publications that address these issues as well as they are delineated here, but I believe as more books on mixed methodology are published, more emphasis would be given on these methodological issues.

The same merit of having multiple contributors from different backgrounds and disciplines can also act as a deterrent. Unfortunately, I did not find the chapters on the applicability of different tools, for example, APES or EOS, to be interesting. They were very difficult to follow and it may have to do with those authors coming from a very different background and field of work than that of mine. I would like to see a book on mixed methodology that focuses or gives more examples of studies related to the health care field. It would be useful to explore both opportunities and challenges in engaging health-care related mixed methods research.

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Author Note

Dr. Sangasubana received her Ph.D. and M.S. in Social and Administrative Sciences in Pharmacy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She joined Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy in 2007 as assistant professor in the Sociobehavioral & Administrative Pharmacy department. She teaches pharmacy students and is the course coordinator for Social and Behavioral Pharmacy. Dr. Sangasubana's primary research interest is focused on examining perceptions and behaviors in Over-the-Counter (OTC) medication use among different patient populations (e.g., the elderly, college students, etc.). She is also interested in designing and implementing educational interventions to improve the provision of pharmaceutical care services to patients. She is currently testing the efficacy of a pharmacy-based educational intervention to enhance consumers' generic OTC knowledge, self-efficacy and use. She can be contacted at Sociobehavioral & Administrative Pharmacy, Nova Southeastern University, College of Pharmacy, 3200 South University Drive, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33324; Phone: (954) 262-1332; Email: sangasub@nova.edu

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