

Chapter 3

Mixed Method Research: A Concept

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ABSTRACT

Mixed methods have emerged as the third research community in the social and behavioural sciences during the past decades, joining quantitative and qualitative methods of scholarly inquiry. Mixed methods research, research paradigm, methodology, and action research have encouraged the combined use of quantitative and qualitative research to answer complex questions in recent years. Mixed methods research integrates both methods, the quantitative and the qualitative, to present research findings within a single system process. The chapter aims to provide an insight between mixed method research and action research, which includes the basic foundation of mixed method research and research paradigm. The chapter will discuss the concept of action research and how mixed method is applied to action research and its processes. A brief idea about the future plan of action required for mixed methods research to attain better research designs and processes is also discussed in the chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Mixed methods research is being articulated as the research practice and recognised as the third major research approach along with quantitative and qualitative approaches for research. The importance of mixed methods is reflected when there is no perfect or an essential workable definition to achieve a goal in the field and based on the understanding of the definition changes over time as an approach and continuously grows (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Mixed methods research is also known as mixed research, where researchers combine the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Mixed methods research helps to build on the strength and tries to reduce the weakness by both the approaches such as quantitative and qualitative to draw inferences that can lead to increase that can lead to increased understanding on the researched topic (Hayes, Bonner & Douglas, 2013) Thus, mixed methods research is defined as:

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Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and collaboration.

- Johnson et al., 2007:123

A mixed method researcher focuses on the combination of numeric and narrative data and analysis, whereas the quantitative researcher typically focuses on numerical data and analysis and the qualitative researcher focuses on narrative data. In other words, the mixed methods researcher explores and examines the problems and issues, which are based on the researcher's belief and are important to the scholarly community (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). According to Howe (1988), mixed methods researchers accept ideas, which are compatible with both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Thus, mixed methods researcher works in engaging objective or subjective point of view with respect to the study.

FOUNDATION OF MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Teddle and Tashakkori (2003) revealed that the importance of mixed methods research has started from the traditional positivistic period 1900 to 1950. Many researchers have explored that a mixed method was set out in the early to mid-20th century but did not distinguish their work as it belongs in the area of mixed method research and nor they have critically reviewed that how the mixed method has been applied and under what circumstance that it is dissimilar from traditional research (Datta, 1994). However, actually the beginning of mixed methods was started in the late 1980s with several publications, which focused on describing and defining the importance of mixed methods. The majority of the publications from different countries were published on the same idea at the same time. Thus, researchers from management in the United Kingdom (Bryman, 2003), from evaluation in the United States (Greene, Caracelli & Grahman, 1989), from sociology in the United States (Brewer & Hunter, 1989), from nursing in Canada (Morse, 1991) and from education in the United States (Creswell, 1994) were developing the concepts in the late 1980s to early 1990.

Many of these researchers were giving thought of linking the methods and were discussing how it should mix the method and data and to provide a proper reason for this and give a name to this research. There have been discussions to provide the proper name for this form of inquiry. It was during the last 50 years the researchers have applied different names and, therefore, making it difficult to distinguish the specific character of research subjects that would ring as "mixed methods" research. It used to be called as an "integrated" or "combined" research by advancing the notion that the data are blended (Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird & McCornick, 1992) and by Fielding and Fielding (1986) as "quantitative" and "qualitative" methods. Ragin, Nagel and White (2004) have acknowledged mixed methods as "hybrid research" or "methodological triangulation" (Morse, 1991) which later Creswell (1994) identified as the conjunction of quantitative and qualitative data as "combined research". Accordingly, Tashakkori and Teddle (1998) acknowledged that it is a combination of both methods and philosophical worldview and is called as "mixed methodology." Therefore, Bryman (2006) integrated the approaches together after several years and has discussed the possible research designs and the problems associated with mixing the methods. In 2009, Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) called "mixed research" as it reinforces

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