



## MIXED METHOD RESEARCH: CONCEPT AND DESIGNS IN MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

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In the mixed method research the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches, methods, techniques and data in a single study. It is an attempt to legitimize the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions. It is a generic term to describe research which involves using multiple elements of research design, which involves using multiple elements of research design, collecting multiple forms of data from multiple sources using multiple strategies of data analysis and generating eclectic and realistic findings. Thus it may be termed as inclusive, pluralistic and complementary (Pandya, 2010)

The purpose of the research depends on the way the researcher is going to answer the questions of research objective in either the descriptive, explanatory or exploratory answers (Saunders *et al.*, 2009)

According to Robson (2002, p. 59), “the object of the descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations”. The researcher needs to have clear idea of the topic before collecting the data. Explanatory study is used for identifying the issues and with analysis of statistical or quantitative data relationship is established between variables and qualitative data provides the explanations, hence it is similar to descriptive research. In both the cases new ideas are not discovered (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Robson (2002, p. 59) states that with exploratory research one can find out “what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light”. On the contrary the nature of the research work is exploratory as the researcher has very limited knowledge and needs to explore more information from the curriculum developers, principals, teachers, students of the school. Exploratory study is useful to clarify the doubts and also provides in depth understanding of the concept which helps to understand the issues. Thus, researcher believes that the concept can be best understood by the exploratory research, by reviewing journals,

articles, books, also through open-ended questionnaire, interviews which will give deep knowledge about the practical implementation. Advantage of exploratory research is it is flexible to change and can explore new ideas giving the research new directions as a result of new findings (Saunders *et al.*, 2009)

Research design consists of research purpose which will help to form the research questions to obtain descriptive, explanatory or exploratory answers. It then includes research strategies where quantitative and qualitative data is defined, research choice and time horizons are justified.

There are several research strategies such as experiments, case study, survey and grounded theory that can be used is for descriptive, explanatory or exploratory study (Yin, 2009). Saunders *et al* (2009) however argues that some of these clearly go with deductive approach and others to inductive. Mixed method approach which uses both deductive and inductive methods of scientific thinking, with the ultimate objective of uncovering and relying on the best set of explanations for understanding one's result (Pandya, 2010). Creswell (2003) defines mixed method research as A mixed method approach is one in which the researcher collects analyzes and integrates both qualitative (qual) and quantitative data (quan) data in a single study or multiple studies in a sustained program of enquiry.

**Six core characteristics of mixed method research are as follows:**

- The collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (open- and closed-ended) in response to research questions
- The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data
- Persuasive and rigorous procedures for the qualitative and quantitative methods
- The integration of these two data sources (merging, connecting, embedding)
- The use of a specific mixed methods design that involves a concurrent or sequential integration (and equal or unequal emphases)
- An approach to research that has a philosophical foundation

**Three types of mixed method research design are as follows:**

Three common designs:

- QUAL-Quan Model

The exploratory mixed methods design

Qualitative data are collected first and are more heavily weighted

- QUAN-Qual Model

The explanatory mixed methods design

Quantitative data are collected first and are more heavily weighted

- QUAN-QUAL Model

The triangulation mixed methods design

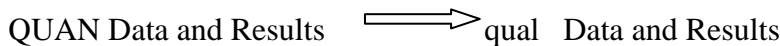
Quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently and both are weighted equally.

**Different Designs in Mixed Method Research:**

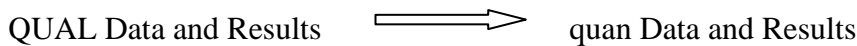
**Triangulation Mixed Methods Design**



**Explanatory mixed methods Design**

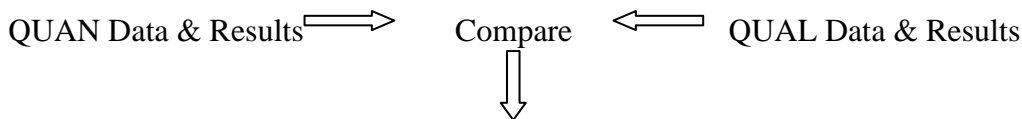


**Exploratory mixed methods Design**



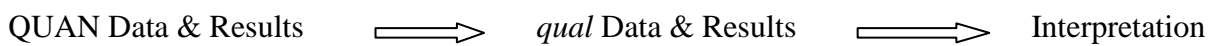
**Concurrent Mixed Methods Designs**

**Convergent (Triangulation) Parallel Design**

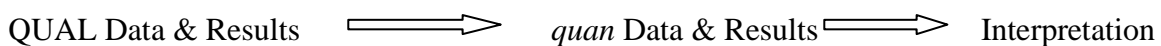


Interpretation

**Explanatory Design**



**Exploratory Design**



**Embedded Design**

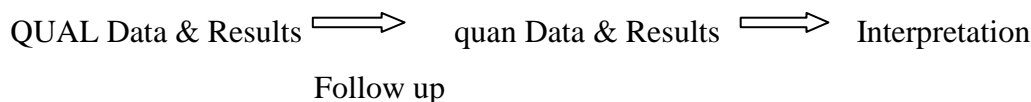


**Sequential Embedded Design**



**Interpretation**

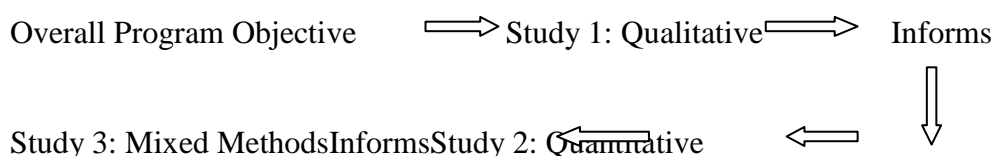
**The Transformative Design**



OR



**Multiphase (or Multi-project) Design**



**Conclusion:**

Type of Mixing	Type of Design	Why Occurs	Mixing	Where Occurs in Research Process
Connecting	Sequential	One phase builds on the other		Between data analysis (Phase 1) and data collection (Phase 2)
Merging	Concurrent	Bring together	results	After analysis of both quan and qual – typically in discussion
Embedding	Sequential or Concurrent	Either building or bringing together	results	Either between phases or in discussion after analysis

While conducting a mixed method study it is very important for the author to think about the following aspects:

The study should employ at least one quantitative method and one qualitative method

The reason why the study is called mixed method study has to be specified

There has to be a rationale as to why the author intends to mix the methods in a single study and what will be gained in the process

The priority has to be given to quantitative and qualitative data and the sequence of their use in the study has to be mentioned

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