

Research Methods Seminar Lectures

Week 1 lecture: Mixing research methodologies: Beyond the qualitative/quantitative divide

How do you decide on a method?

- What is the research question?
- Identifying effectiveness of intervention; association between 2 (or more) variables; extent of a problem in a population = quantitative
- Need to understand a phenomenon; meaning of phenomenon or experience; exploratory analysis; subjective experience = qualitative
- Generalize findings to a population and understand meaning = mixed methods

How do you decide on a method?

- Experience and training of the researcher
 - Objective scientific method vs more creative subjective/reflexive analysis?
 - Theory and epistemology adopted
- Audience
 - Who is reading/publishing/evaluating the research?

Positivism and Quantitative Research

- Assumptions
 - Measurement
 - Objectivity
 - Generalizability
 - Hypotheses testing
 - Precision
 - Validity and reliability
 - Predictability
- Types
 - Experimentation
 - Quasi Experimentation
 - Correlational
 - Epidemiological
 - Quantified qualitative methods
- Methods
 - Factorial Design
 - Standardized Instruments and measures
 - Statistical Analyses
 - Content Analysis

Limitations Quant Research

- Complexity of objects of study negated
- Researcher constructed categories and variables
- Knowledge produced is abstract

- Focus on group variables negates individuality and difference – ‘outliers’ omitted
- Negation of social and cultural context

Constructivism & Qualitative Research

- Assumptions
 - Experience
 - Meaning
 - Complexity
 - Subjectivity
 - Context
 - Interpretation
 - Individual
 - In - depth
 - Inter - subjectivity
- Some Types
 - Discourse Analysis
 - Narrative Analysis
 - Phenomenological
 - Grounded Theory
 - Voice Relational Method
 - Ethnographic
 - Case studies
- Methods
 - Interviews
 - Texts
 - Media
 - Images
 - Reflexivity
 - Observation

Limitations of Qualitative Research

- Can't easily examine differences across groups or conditions
- Time consuming to conduct and analyze
- Focus on more limited number of participants
- Specificity of results within population
- Lower face validity and impact on policy

Multi - Method Research: Why?

- Appropriate to the research question
 - Can answer broader and more complex range of questions
 - Complement the weakness of one method with strengths of another
- Can speak to many audiences
- Can have a more powerful influence on theory, practice, policy
- heteronormativity: treating being straight as normal

Strategies of mixed method research

- Sequential : Elaborate on or expand findings of one method with another (qual or quant 1 st)
- Concurrent : Convergence of qual and quant to provide comprehensive analysis.
- Transformative : Use theoretical lens as over - arching perspective for design that contains both qual and quant (Creswell, 2009)

Purpose of mixed methods

- Complementarity : Elaboration, illustration, clarification across methods
- Triangulation : Convergence or corroboration
- Development : using results of one to inform next stage of research
- Initiation : Discovery of paradox and contradiction through recasting question
- Expansion : Extending the breadth and range of inquiry

Using mixed methods

- PMS in a relational context (ARC)
 - Quant: attachment style, self silencing, relationship satisfaction and pm change
 - Qual: Negotiation of pm change in relationships
- Evaluation of self - help pack for PMS (UWS partnership)
 - Quant: pre - post measures of distress
 - Qual: experience of PMS and of intervention
- Evaluation of PMS couple intervention (ARC)
 - Pre - post changes distress, coping, relational factors
 - Subjective experience of PM change and intervention

Using Mixed methods

- Gay and bisexual men and prostate cancer (PCFA)
 - Changes in identity, QOL, cancer related distress, relationship satisfaction, sexual functioning (quant)
 - Experience of cancer as a G/B man (qual)
- Gender Issues and Cancer Carers (ARC)
 - Needs and concerns of cancer carers; gender differences in psychological wellbeing (quant)
 - Subjective experience of caring (qual)
- Sexuality and fertility: patient, partner and HP perspectives (ARC)
 - Quant: QOL, psych wellbeing, relationship functioning and communication
 - Qual: Experience and negotiation of fertility changes; HP experience of discussing sexuality
- Sexuality and cancer
 - Patients and partners (ARC)
 - Women with breast cancer (BCNA)
 - Carers of a person with cancer (ARC)

See PDF for details on her personal studies – not assessable in exam