

# Approaches to Research in the Economic and Management Sciences of South Africa

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## Introduction

Nonetheless, it's important to note that this does not suggest a disregard for disciplinary boundaries. While exclusively adhering to a single research paradigm and staying within disciplinary confines can limit students to a narrow knowledge perspective, the integration of multiple viewpoints fosters interdisciplinary exploration. By endorsing a variety of research approaches, we recognize their utility not for the sake of diversity alone, but for their capacity to effectively address specific research questions. The primary emphasis should always be on selecting the most appropriate method to best answer the research question at hand. Many academic fields are increasingly advocating and applying mixed methods due to the numerous advantages they offer. Qualitative data, for instance, offers a detailed understanding of a problem, while quantitative data provides a broader perspective on the same issue [1].

## Description

The term "mixed methods research" is intentionally chosen in this context as it is a widely recognized and used term in the existing academic literature. It effectively encapsulates the idea of combining research methodologies better than other terms. Mixed Methods Research (MMR) serves as an umbrella term that encompasses situations where researchers employ multiple methodological approaches in combination. These combinations often involve a mix of qualitative and quantitative elements, though they are not limited to these alone. It's noteworthy to mention that Christ discussed the use of multiple qualitative approaches within the framework of MMR. While the utilization of multiple qualitative approaches is often referred to as triangulation, we adopt the definition provided as the foundation for our study, recognizing that ongoing debates on the definition of MMR persist within academic circles [2].

Regardless of the specific definition, it is crucial to emphasize that the integration of methods should not be superficial. It should be approached at both philosophical and methodological levels, rather than solely at the stage of selecting research techniques. The substantial growth of MMR over the past two decades can be attributed to various factors. These include the acknowledgment that contemporary research problems are often complex and require multifaceted research designs and techniques to address questions that cannot be adequately answered by single methodologies. MMR provides researchers with the opportunity to concurrently develop and validate theories within the same study. Additionally, a new generation of scholars has challenged traditional thinking about the research process, embracing methodological innovation and complementarity. Moreover, successful examples of research studies that bridge the quantitative-qualitative divide have contributed to the

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acceptance of combining both approaches, leading to a deeper understanding of research problems compared to using either method in isolation [3].

The popularization of mixed methods research has been facilitated by the publication of comprehensive books and dedicated journals, such as the Journal of Mixed Methods, which exclusively focuses on publishing MMR articles. Several journals, including the Journal of Counselling Psychology, Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management, The International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory and Practice and Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, have dedicated entire issues to articles that incorporate mixed methods research. Despite its increasing popularity, dissenting views on the potential contributions of MMR to knowledge still persist. De Loo and Lowe argue that the actual impact of MMR is often exaggerated. Both words and numbers carry meaning, which is necessary for fully understanding the world. It is clear that there is merit in combining the complementary strengths of qualitative and quantitative research techniques when conducting a study. MMR brings value to diverse disciplines. The primary appeal of MMR lies in its ability to simultaneously address a diverse range of confirmatory and exploratory research questions, while single-method research often addresses only one or the other [4,5].

## Conclusion

In methodological triangulation, the primary aim is to validate an existing solution rather than generating additional data for further analysis. This process can involve different sources of qualitative data (e.g., interviews, documents, observations) and is not limited to quantitative or qualitative sources. Methodological triangulation is primarily concerned with validation rather than the development of new solutions or research designs. In this sense, it serves as a measuring approach rather than a comprehensive research framework.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest associated with this manuscript.

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