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Using Mixed Methods in Program Evaluation

What, Why, and How to?

Presenter:

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Presenter:

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Date and venue:

24–25 March 2015
AfDB CCIA building

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Outline

- What is Mixed Method (MM) Design?
- When to use MM?
- Why to use MM?
- How to use?
- Conclusion

Disclaimer

This material is prepared for training. Views expressed and subsequent recommendations are solely those of the author. They are not necessarily a reflection of the official position of Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the African Development Bank



About Mixed Methods in Program Evaluation

- **There is no consensus regarding mixed method design, and others use the term mixed and multiple methods interchangeably (Morse, 2010:483)**
 - Combined use of qualitative and quantitative methods
 - Use of two methods within a paradigm
 - Use to two complete research projects within the same study, whereas others consider this the definition of a multiple method study;
- **Mixed method design consists of a complete method (i.e., the core component), plus one (or more) incomplete method(s) (i.e., the supplementary component[s]) that cannot be published alone, within a single study (Morse & Niehaus, 2009:9)**
 - Core component + Supplementary component[s]
 - The supplementary component provides explanation or insight within the context of the core component, but for some reason the supplementary component cannot be interpreted or utilized alone
 - QUAL-qual | QUAL-quant | QUANT-qual | QUANT-quant

About Mixed Methods in Program Evaluation

- **Some authors include triangulation in mixed method designs (Wheeldon, 2010:88)**
- **Triangulation:**
 - *“The combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon“*
 - *“a strategy to arrive at a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under observation” (Denzin, 1978: 291), a metaphor from trigonometry*
 - *Methods of the same paradigm („within method triangulation“), can be used as well as methods of both paradigms („between method triangulation“).*
- **Four types of triangulation:**
 - *Data Triangulation* – Different data collected at different locations and different time
 - *Investigator Triangulation* - Multiple researchers can take part of an investigation and analyze the same data – or parts of the same data – independently
 - *Theory Triangulation* – By use of more than one theoretical scheme
 - *Methodological triangulation* - Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used to gather data (e.g. questionnaires, expert interview, documents, observation protocols etc.) and to undertake data analysis

In the remainder of this session, mixed methods refer to a combination involving the two paradigms: QUANT-qual or QUAL-quant.

Why implement a mixed method design?

- **When working under real-world constraints, a well designed mixed-methods approach can use the available time and resources to maximize the range and validity of information (Bamberger et al., 2010:11)**
- **Employing a mixed methods design can help to more accurately identify comparable ‘non-participant’ locations and individuals, and specify what a plausible ‘counterfactual’ (Bamberger et al., 2010: 3) and avoid “systematic bias” of interviewing only project beneficiaries and agencies directly involved in project implementation with favorable impression (Bamberger, 2009b)**
- **Justifications for mixing methods include the following:**
 - to test the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments,
 - to clarify and build on the results of one method with another, and
 - to show how the results from one method shape subsequent methods or research decisions

Greene and Caracelli (1997)

How to implement mixed methods in program evaluation?

- After choosing the evaluation questions, the evaluator next selects the evaluation design approach that is most appropriate given each question (Morra & Rist, 2009: 247)
- The choice of evaluation approach depends partly on the context. (p. 182).
- **Options for choosing a mixed methods research strategy:**

Implementation	Priority	Integration	Theoretical Perspective
No sequence, parallel	Equal	During data collection	Explicit
Sequential: qualitative (QUAL) first	Qualitative	During data analysis	
Sequential: quantitative (QUANT) first	Quantitative	With data combination	Implicit
		With some combinations	

Cresswell (2003:211) cited by Kuckartz (p. 5)

- The pacing and the type of research strategy used is the one that will best enable the research question to be answered (Morra & Rist, 2009: 484)



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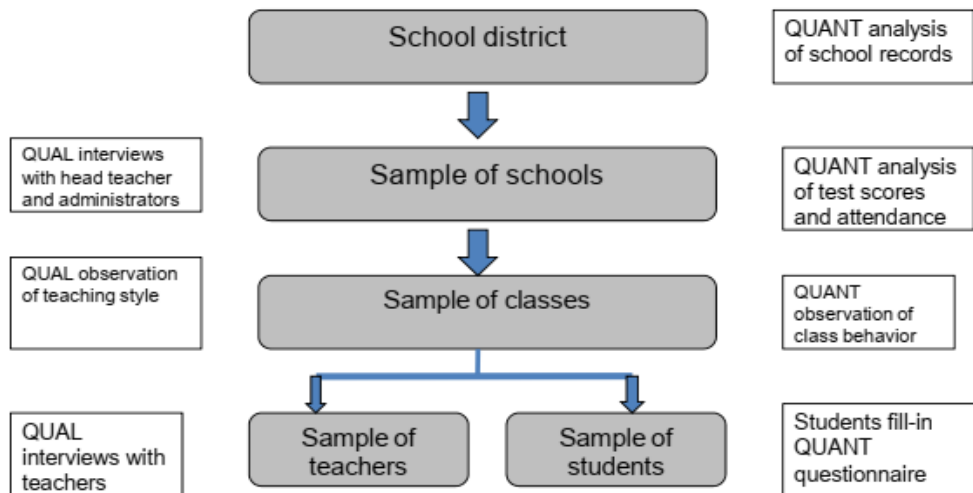
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How to implement mixed methods in program evaluation?

- Development evaluation aims to determine the relevance of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability so as to incorporate lessons learned into the decisionmaking process (Kusek & Rist: 2004:15).
- **Three categories of evaluation questions:**
 - Descriptive questions: What is? Aspects of process, a condition, a set of views, set of organizational relationships or networks: what, how?
 - Normative questions: compare what is with what should be (“compliance and accountability” questions)
 - Cause-and-effect questions: determine the difference what difference the intervention makes. Often referred to as outcome, impact, or attributional questions
Morra & Rist (2009: 223)

How to implement mixed methods in program evaluation?

Figure 1 Multi-level nested mixed methods design:
Evaluating effects of school reforms on student attendance and performance





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Conclusion

Mixed method design consists of a complete method (i.e., the core component), plus one (or more) incomplete method(s) (i.e., the supplementary component[s]) that cannot be interpreted or utilized alone to best answer an evaluation question or set of evaluation questions.

