



# **THE PRACTICALITIES OF MIXING METHODS**

FROM DESIGN TO PUBLICATION

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# Session Roadmap

- 1 The Promise of Multimethod Research
- 2 The Building Blocks: Scientific Reasoning
- 3 Five Archetypes of Multimethod Research
- 4 Common Pitfalls (and How to Avoid Them)
- 5 Integration Strategies: Beyond "And"
- 6 Practical Recommendations for Authors
- 7 Discussion and Questions

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# The Siren Song of Multimethod Research



*"More isn't always better, Linus. Sometimes, it's just more."*

— Sabrina (1995)

## Key Benefits



### Generate AND Test Theory

In a single manuscript



### Triangulation

High internal AND external validity



### Complete Understanding

Capture complex, multidimensional phenomena



### Higher Impact

More citations (232 vs 147 on Google Scholar)

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# The Reality Check

## Challenges

- ⚠ More resources, effort, and time
- ⚠ Different epistemological philosophies
- ⚠ Integration challenges

## What We See at AMJ

### Redundant combinations

Additional methods don't add value

### Poor alignment

Well-done studies, no theoretical coherence

### Wrong methods

Inappropriate for literature state

*The bottom line: More methodologies isn't always better. Sometimes, despite best intentions, it's just more.*

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# The Building Blocks: Scientific Reasoning

## DEDUCTION

- Draws on established principles
- Syllogistic argumentation → testable conclusions
- Extends knowledge through testing

### Associated Methods:

Experiments, surveys, meta-analyses

## INDUCTION

- Draws on empirical experience and data
- Moves toward theories that clarify constructs
- Identifies relationships and processes

### Associated Methods:

Grounded theory, case studies, ethnography



**Key insight: Variation exists BETWEEN and WITHIN methods—methods rarely conform exclusively to a single reasoning approach.**

# Why Mix Methods? Greene's Five Purposes

*Greene, Caracelli & Graham (1989)*



## Triangulation

Convergence & corroboration of findings



## Complementarity

Elaborate & enhance understanding



## Development

One method informs the other



## Initiation

Discover paradoxes & contradictions



## Expansion

Extend breadth and range

Most researchers default to **triangulation**—but **complementarity** and **development** often generate stronger theoretical contributions.

# Five Archetypes of Multimethod Research

Based on review of 238 AMJ articles (2020–present)

93 (39%)

Multiple studies

60 (25%)

Multiple methods

Triangulation for Hypothesis Testing



75%

Triangulation for Theory Development



3%

Test and Explore



8%

Explore and Test



8%

Full Research Cycle



5%

Opportunity: 75% use triangulation—less common archetypes offer greater theoretical potential

## ARCHETYPE 1

# Methodological Triangulation for Hypothesis Testing

## Characteristics

- Combines deductive methods (surveys + experiments common)
- Offsets limitations of individual methodologies
- Boosts internal AND external validity
- Enables constructive replication

75%

of multimethod papers

## Example: Tewfik (2022) — Imposter Phenomenon

- Multisource, time-lagged survey data
- Video data from physician-patient interactions
- Two online experiments
- Different studies investigate different aspects; one examines entire model

## ARCHETYPE 2

# Methodological Triangulation for Theory Development

3%

of multimethod papers

## Characteristics

- Combines inductive methods
- Both methods contribute to theory building
- Develops comprehensive understanding of phenomena
- Neither method positioned as testing hypotheses

## Examples

### Neeley & Reiche (2022)

Qualitative interviews → Quantitative archival analysis to explore boundary conditions

### Schifeling & Soderstrom (2022)

QCA → Qualitative interviews to investigate mechanisms

ARCHETYPE 3

ARCHETYPE 4

8% each

of multimethod papers

## Test and Explore / Explore and Test

### TEST AND EXPLORE

- Deductive methods test initial predictions
- Followed by inductive methods for deeper understanding

#### **Brennecke (2020)**

Large-scale survey for hypothesis testing → Qualitative interviews for mechanism insights

### EXPLORE AND TEST

- Inductive methods generate hypotheses
- Followed by deductive methods for testing

#### **Gabriel et al. (2020)**

Inductive interview analysis → Deductive experience sampling study



These archetypes require genuine expertise in both traditions—consider collaborating with complementary coauthors.

## ARCHETYPE 5

# Full Research Cycle

5%

of multimethod papers

- Alternates between inductive and deductive methodologies
- Establishes phenomenon's strength, universality, and conceptual foundations
- Multiple iterations—genuine back-and-forth

Example: Lee Cunningham et al. (2023) — Anticipated Image Risk



*Caution: Simply having multiple studies ≠ full research cycle. The key is genuine alternation between reasoning modes.*

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## PITFALL 1

# Poor Justification

## The Problem

- Authors fail to explain WHY mixing methods enables theoretical advances
- "Mixing methods is our contribution" is insufficient for AMJ
- Missing articulation of how the combination enables insights impossible with a single method



## What Reviewers Want to See

- Early and explicit justification for mixing methods
- Clear explanation of what each method uniquely contributes
- Articulation of theoretical advances enabled by the combination

## PITFALL 2

# Poor Methodological Fit

*Edmondson & McManus (2007) Methodological Fit Framework*

### Reinventing the Wheel

- Inductive exploration of well-understood phenomena
- Using qualitative methods where mature theory exists
- Rediscovering what literature already knows

### Fishing Expeditions

- Deductive hypothesis testing where theory is nascent
- Testing hypotheses without theoretical foundation
- Quantifying before understanding

### The Key Principle

Nascent theory → Inductive methods (qualitative exploration)

Mature theory → Deductive methods (quantitative testing)

Match your methods to the state of knowledge in your area

### PITFALL 3

# Poor Theoretical Complementarity

## Redundancy

- Multiple studies doing the same thing with different methods
- Offers only incremental validity boost
- No unique theoretical insight from combination

## Disconnection

- Independent interpretations without integration
- Readers left wondering how findings relate
- Studies feel like separate papers stapled together



The Critical Question (Bryman, 2007)

*"Is the end product more than the sum of its parts?"*

If not, why mix methods at all?

# The Integration Challenge

Integration Defined (Tunarosa & Glynn, 2017)

*"Bridging across different intellectual paradigms to combine empirical insights into a coherent and plausible explanation"*

## Two Dimensions of Integration

### Empirical Integration

Making different types of data work together

### Theoretical Integration

Making different explanations work together coherently



*Researchers struggle not with design or instruments, but with "bringing together analysis and interpretation and writing a narrative that linked them." — Bryman (2006)*

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# Relational Algorithms for Integration

*A Framework from Crovitz (1970) via Tunarosa & Glynn (2017)*

## Core Concept

"Take one thing [RELATE IT TO] another thing" — Different connector words generate different integration possibilities

## Beyond Just "AND"

Most Common

**Qual [AND] Quant**

Alternative Connectors

BEFORE • AFTER • WITH • ALONG • NEAR • TOWARD • BEYOND • AS • WITHIN

## Five Integration Strategies

Conjoined

AND

Sequential

BEFORE/AFTER

Simultaneous

WITH/ALONG

Full-Cycle

TOWARD/BEYOND

Mono-Logic

AS/WITHIN

# Integration Strategies: Conjoined & Sequential

## CONJOINED: Qual [AND] Quant

- Most basic form of integration
- Minimal theoretical integration specified
- Works as umbrella term
- Demands less by design

## SEQUENTIAL: Qual [BEFORE/AFTER] Quant

- Methods conducted in sequence
- Each method is bounded
- Well-mapped terrain with clear templates
- Most familiar to researchers



### Risk of Sequential Integration

Theoretical compartmentalization can parallel methodological compartmentalization — methods stay separate conceptually even when combined procedurally.

Sequential Flow

QUAL



QUANT

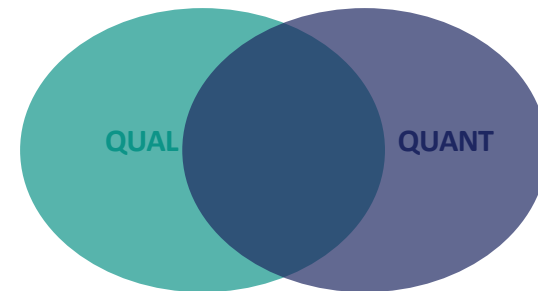
## STRATEGY 3

# Simultaneous Integration

*Qual [WITH / ALONG / NEAR] Quant*

## Characteristics

- Continual iteration between methods
- Methods used contemporaneously
- Dynamic and expedient approach
- Requires skill in commensuration



### Example: Brickson (2005)

Survey instrument combining open-ended qualitative questions WITH quantitative scales — data collected simultaneously, analyzed iteratively

**Challenge: Commensuration — how do you meaningfully mix qualitative and quantitative data in real-time?**

# Integration Strategies: Full-Cycle & Mono-Logic

## FULL-CYCLE: Qual [TOWARD/BEYOND] Quant

- Punctuated iterations over time
- Establishes causal chains
- Tackles encompassing phenomena
- From cause to effect

### Examples:

Navis & Glynn (2010), Edmondson (1999), Tilcsik (2014)

## MONO-LOGIC: Qual [AS/WITHIN] Quant

- Single mode of reasoning (inductive OR deductive)
- Different methods converge on same explanation
- Convergence strengthens argument
- Relatively new, few templates

### Example:

Sonenshein et al. (2014) — interviews AND lab experiment both used inductively



## The Big Picture

Most researchers default to "Qual AND Quant" — but other connectors open up richer integration possibilities  
The connector you choose shapes how your methods relate theoretically, not just procedurally  
More sophisticated integration strategies often yield more compelling contributions

# Practical Recommendations

*Four strategies for successful multimethod research*

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1. Employ less common archetypes
2. Explain why and how you mix
3. Ensure theoretical & operational alignment
4. Use supplements thoughtfully

## RECOMMENDATION 1

# Employ Less Common Archetypes

## The Opportunity

- 75% of multimethod papers use triangulation for hypothesis testing
- Explore-test, test-explore, and full research cycle are underutilized
- Greater potential for groundbreaking theoretical contribution

## Practical Steps

- 1 Consider theoretical goal first: Robustness? Or innovation?
- 2 If innovation, resist defaulting to triangulation
- 3 Build a team with complementary methodological expertise
- 4 Prioritize the method with which you're most comfortable

## RECOMMENDATION 2

# Explain Why and How

### Early in the paper, articulate:

- Your rationale for mixing methods
- How your combination enables theoretical advances
- What your design can accomplish that a single method could not

### Good Example: Martin & Harrison (2022)

#### Field Study

High external validity

#### Archival Analysis

Larger sample, separation of measurement

#### Pre-registered Experiment

Evidence for causality

*Each method explicitly justified in terms of what it uniquely adds*

### RECOMMENDATION 3

# Ensure Alignment

## Theoretical Alignment

- Studies well-grounded in theoretical framework
- Appropriate given literature state
- For meso work: explain how lower-level mechanisms connect to higher-level ones

## Operational Alignment

- Measures sufficiently connected across studies
- Clear construct definitions early in paper
- Consistent statistical representations



## Storyboarding Tool (Knight)

### Rising Action

Initial studies unpack theoretical tension



### Climax

Most significant study — maximum insight



### Falling Action

Replication, mechanisms, boundary conditions

## RECOMMENDATION 4

# Use Supplements Thoughtfully

### The Challenge

- Multimethod work is complex
- Readers need detail but also clarity
- Too much detail obscures the story

### Move to Appendices

- Measure validation studies
- Manipulation pretests
- Robustness checks
- Alternative mechanisms tested

*Goal: Focus readers on the central narrative while providing access to supporting details*



### The Balance

Main text should be self-contained for understanding your contribution. Supplements provide depth for those who want it.

# Key Takeaways

- 1 Multimethod research offers real benefits — but only when well-executed
- 2 Know your archetype and choose deliberately, not by default
- 3 Integration requires both empirical AND theoretical work
- 4 Justify your design explicitly and early
- 5 Ensure theoretical and operational alignment across studies
- 6 Relational algorithms can expand your integration possibilities
- 7 Build teams with complementary methodological expertise

# Discussion & Questions

## For Reflection

- Which archetype best fits your current or planned research?
- What pitfalls might you be susceptible to?
- What integration strategy might you try that you haven't before?

## Key References

Wellman et al. (2023)  
AMJ, 66(4)

Tunarosa & Glynn (2017)  
ORM, 20(2)

Edmondson & McManus (2007)  
AMR, 32(4)

# Thank you!

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