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Master One

Research Methodology

Syllabus

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I. Content

1. The Mixed-methods Approach.
2. Let's Wrap-up!
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1. The Mixed-methods Approach

The real breakthrough in combining qualitative and quantitative research occurred in the 1970's. The mixed-method approach was first introduced with the adoption of the concept of 'triangulation' into social sciences.

In applied linguistics, over the period between 1995-2005 applied linguists called on for more engagement in the practice of a mixed-methods approach as the suitable research methodology wherein quantitative and qualitative methods are mixed since such a practice can offer possible solutions for the studied research problems.

(a) Main Characteristics of Mixed-methods Approach

In below, some characteristic features of the mixed-methods research are stated:

1. Expanding the understanding of a complex issue: A mixed-methods approach would broaden the scope of the investigation and enrich the researchers' ability to draw conclusions about the problem under study.
2. Corroborating findings through 'triangulation': The use of different data sources, investigators, theories, or research methods generates multiple perspectives on a phenomenon. Such an effective strategy ensures research validity.
3. Reaching multiple audiences: Because of the combination of the methods in mixed-methods research, the final results can be more palatable for certain audiences than outcomes of a mono-method study.

(b) Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed-methods Approach

According to research methodologists, several arguments have been put forward about the value of mixed-methods research. This study can bring out the best of qualitative and quantitative researches. This is further argued by the potential that the strengths of one method can be utilised to overcome the weaknesses of another method used in the study. In addition, a mixed- methods research has a potential to produce evidence for the validity of research outcomes through the convergence and corroboration of the findings.

Contrarily, some proponents view that one cannot help wondering whether there is really a principled approach to guiding the variety of combinations so that we do not end up with a deficient research approach (Dörnyei, 2007).