

# EJBRM

## SPECIAL ISSUE MIXED METHODS Track from ECRM 2015

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### Editorial

This special issue is based on selected papers from the Mixed Methods mini track from the 2015 14<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Research Methods in Business and Management (ECRM). The conference has run a Mixed Methods mini track for the last three years and it has grown steadily more popular with high quality submissions from around the globe being presented. The authors of selected papers were invited to submit a journal submission based upon the core concepts and data from their conference papers and encouraged to emphasize the methodology and methodological implications of their research for this special issue. Four papers from the ECRM conference and a general submission on mixed methods research choice complete the content of this special issue.

### The chosen papers

The first four papers are from the mixed methods mini track. Pat Bazeley, a well re-noun research methodologist and mixed methodology author provides us with a critique of the use of mixed methods and qualitative research methods by published management researchers based on a review of articles published in two of the fields most highly ranked journals (*Academy of Management Journal* and *Administrative Science Quarterly*) over an eight year period (2006-2014). She concludes that management researchers have been slow to adopt mixed methods approaches and that this has broader issues and implications. She notes that management researchers are well trained in detailed quantitative statistical methods and analysis however they appear to lack the same level of training and skill sets in relation to qualitative or mixed methods research. The limited repertoire of non-statistical methods of the authors from the review being a stand out finding which has implications for research training in the fields of management.

The second paper by Omar Benthari and Roslyn Cameron looks in detail at a mixed methods study from the discipline of project management, in itself a complex field of practice. The study took place across 30 big dam projects and utilised a sequential and concurrent transformative mixed methods research design. The paper walks us through the complexity of the research study and the methodological choices made based around the four purposes for using mixed methods: exploration, explanation, complementarity and triangulation. What results is a very complex research design which mirrors a complex phenomenon: the diversity of roles of project managers in dam construction which itself is characterized by complexity, technical uncertainty, pace and innovation.

The third paper by Paul Buckley reports on a multiphased sequential mixed methods study conducted in Ireland. Like the Benthari and Cameron paper this paper reports on another complex line of inquiry in the field of policy evaluation. The research design has 3 phases with the first phase being quantitative (quasi-experiment) followed by two qualitative phases (case studies and cross case analysis). Buckley walks us expertly through the methodological choices made and presents a strong case for the use of a mixed methods research design. This paper is a good exemplar on how to justify methodological choices for anyone using mixed methods. The paper concludes by also referring to another innovative research methodology qualitative comparative analysis (QCA).

The fourth paper from the ECRM mixed methods mini track takes a very interesting look at conducting a mixed methods study in a culturally sensitive project with a multidisciplinary team. Wardale, Cameron and Li offer some very useful insights into cross cultural research contexts and how the skill sets of a multidisciplinary team can be leveraged to maximize the research effort. The paper reports on a leadership program conducted in Australia for managers from the Chinese oil and gas industry. The paper offers insights for researchers undertaking studies in culturally sensitive contexts and offers data collection approaches that take these considerations on board. The study utilised an explanatory sequential research design which involved two

stages. The first stage was quantitative (online bilingual survey) followed by qualitative data collection (focus groups). The paper offers some very useful and practical ideas for cross cultural mixed methods research.