Editors’ Introduction to the *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*: Journal Aims, Scope, and Intended Practices

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With this editorial, we introduce the *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* (*IJMRA*) and provide an overview of the journal’s aims, scope, and niche within social science methodology scholarship. We also provide an overview of our intended operational procedures with respect publishing processes and timelines.

Onwuegbuzie et al. (2018) provide an overview of the history of the *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* (*IJMRA*), the near demise of this journal, and how it came under the purview of *Dialectical Publishing*. Hence, these details are not presented in the current editorial; rather, this editorial is written for the purpose of describing *IJMRA*’s aims and scope, its intended niche within social science research methods scholarship, and planned editorial and publishing practices. Some of the writing presented here is also available on the journal’s website (http://ijmra.org/).

**Aims and Scope**

*IJMRA* is meant to offer a venue for scholars who are interested in mixed methods and multiple methods (i.e., multimethod) research. A close reference point is the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* (*JMMR*), which is published by SAGE Publications. Currently, *JMMR* focuses exclusively on mixed methods research (MMR), advances this form of inquiry (focusing on paradigmatic and philosophical discussions), and promotes a better understanding of nomenclature and the value and use of mixed methods research. A summary of *JMMR*’s current focus is available on the journal’s website (http://journals.sagepub.com/home/mmr), and reviewing Fettes and Freshwater’s (2015) related editorial is recommended. The *IJMRA* editors are regular contributors to and supporters of *JMMR*; yet, we see a need for more than one outlet for mixed methods research scholarship. One reason for this is that there simply must be a greater opportunity for the presentation of innovative empirically oriented mixed methods research works—that is, actual mixed methods research studies that should be published simply because they offer good examples. *IJMRA* offers a home for related manuscripts that come from multiple disciplines so long as the article presents novel information about mixed methods, either because of some innovation in design or lessons learned from experience and logistics that would be important to the mixed methods research community. In summary, *IJMRA* will publish empirical articles so long as a methodological innovation is made clear. More broadly, as the *IJMRA* title suggests, we, the editors of *IJMRA*, also are interested in multimethod research.

There is much debate in the literature with regard to the difference between mixed methods research and multimethod research (for a review, see Anguera, Blanco-Villaseñor, Losada, Sánchez-Algarra, & Onwuegbuzie, in press), with some authors obfuscating these terms by using them interchangeably, such as Stange, Crabtree, and Miller (2006), who stated the following: “Mixed methods (also known as multimethod) research involves integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to generating new knowledge” (p. 292) [emphasis added]. Thus, a very important task as editors of *IJMRA* has been for us to make clear how we view the distinction between mixed methods research and multimethod research so that our future authors are not confused about how to frame their manuscripts as they prepare them.
As noted on the IJMRA website, with regard to multimethod research, we build on the seminal works of Brewer and Hunter (1989, 2006), Hunter and Brewer (2003, 2015a, 2015b), and Seawright (2016), by defining it as research that involves systematically combining, mixing, or integrating more than one research element (e.g., method, methodology, paradigms, analyses) to produce a high-quality research study. More specifically, as we outline on our website, multimethod research includes the following three broad cases:

1) (Case a) Qualitative methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. + ... + quantitative methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. (i.e., qual + ... + quan)

2) (Case b) Qualitative methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. + ... + qualitative methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. (i.e., qual + ... + qual)

3) (Case c) Quantitative methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. + ... + quantitative methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. (i.e., quan + ... + quan)

This definition leads to the following two corollaries:

4) The ellipses in Cases a-c allow for the possibility of two or more methods/methodologies/paradigms/analyses/etc. being combined, mixed, or integrated.

5) Case a is a special case of multimethod research, which is commonly referred to as mixed methods research.

With regard to mixed methods research (also known as mixed research, mixed methodology, and integrated research), building on Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner’s (2007) popularized definition, we define it as follows:

an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research. It is the third major research approach (along with qualitative and quantitative research). MMR recognizes the importance of traditional quantitative and qualitative research, but also offers a powerful third choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results. Furthermore, MMR is the research approach that (a) often partners with the philosophy of pragmatism in one of its forms (left, right, middle); (b) follows the logic of mixed methods research (including a both-and-logic, the logic of the fundamental principle of MMR, and any other useful logics imported from qualitative or quantitative research that are helpful for producing defensible and usable research findings); (c) relies on qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection methods, methodologies, paradigms, sampling, analyses, inference techniques, and the like combined according to the integrative logic of mixed methods research to address one’s research question(s); and (d) is cognizant, appreciative, and inclusive of local and broader sociopolitical realities, resources, and needs. Furthermore, the mixed methods research approach offers an important approach for generating and testing critical research questions for drawing full and warranted conclusions about the world in which we live. (IJMRA, 2018, para. 3)

Given this background, we encourage authors to send original manuscripts that demonstrate innovative applications of, say, two quantitative procedures (e.g., combining Bayesian techniques with single-case experimental designs), or for that matter, two qualitative approaches (e.g., insights gleaned from combining phenomenological and grounded theory). To summarize, although we welcome manuscripts that describe innovative (and well conceptualized) mixed methods applications, IJMRA is a multiple methods journal that publishes empirical and non-empirical (e.g., conceptual, theoretical, methodological) articles representing both multimethod research and mixed methods research. The vision that we have for this journal’s niche allows for both quantitative-only and qualitative-only multiple methods research articles, as well as qualitative-dominant, quantitative-dominant, and equal-status mixed methods research articles. Descriptions of multiple methods and mixed methods research will be welcome from any discipline or field representing the social, behavioral, health, and human sciences, as long as innovation is demonstrated and there will be methodological lessons learned or ideas for other researchers to employ in their own works.

**IJMRA Content**

We plan to publish a minimum of four peer-reviewed articles each issue. In addition, whenever possible, we will publish one or more media reviews that are “scholarly, accurate, and balanced to inform the academic community of the advantages and benefits of the media that are available” (Smit, 2018, p. 472). (For detailed information on how to write publishable media reviews for IJMRA, see Smit, 2018.) Further, whenever possible, we will publish one or more book reviews that are “critical, evaluative, but civil” (Scherman, 2018, p. 474). (For detailed information on how to write publishable book reviews for IJMRA, see Scherman, 2018.) Finally, each issue will contain one or more editorials authored/coauthored by editors and/or associate editors. It is intended that these editorials will represent topics that are innovative and thought-provoking—the same standard that we hold for our IJMRA authors!
**IJMRA Editorial Practices**

We will strive to ensure that manuscripts will be reviewed and receive an editorial decision within 4 months of initial submission (after the managing editor agrees that all required submission steps such as proper blinding have been followed). We will require that all authors follow the current conventions of the American Psychological Association (APA) as strictly as possible. As of this writing, this means consulting the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010). Indeed, all manuscripts submitted to *IJMRA* should conform to these guidelines; we anticipate that we will follow future versions of this manual. It is our general hope that manuscripts will be reviewed by at least three peers with some expertise in a relevant methodological area and that these reviews will be summarized by an associate editor who will also provide an independent evaluation. It is our intent that reviewers provide constructive critique (e.g., avoiding overly negative commentary and identifying ways a manuscript can be improved) even if their final recommendation is to reject a manuscript for publication in *IJMRA*. To this end, we have selected our team of associate editors very carefully. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge them, as follows: Professor Hester C. Klopper (Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa), Dr. Charmaine Williamson (Durban University of Technology, South Africa), Dr. Prathiba Natesan (University of North Texas, USA), Dr. Shannon David (North Dakota State University, USA), Dr. Mandy Archibald (University of Adelaide, Australia), Dr. Ann Ooms (Kingston University and St. George’s University of London, England), Dr. Loraine D. Cook (University of the West Indies, West Indies), Dr. Hongjing Liao (Beijing Foreign Studies University, China), Dr. Hannah R. Gerber (Sam Houston State University, USA), Julie A. Corrigan (PhD candidate, University of Ottawa, Canada), Dr. Nancy L. Leech (University of Colorado Denver, USA), Dr. Lesley F. Leach (Associate Dean; Tarleton State University, USA), Dr. Marla Mallette (Binghamton University, USA), and Dr. Gail H. Hughes (University of Arkansas, Little Rock, USA). As can be seen, our associate editors represent five continents, reflecting the international nature of *IJMRA*. We very much look forward to working with all of them. Also, we would like to acknowledge our editorial board, listed on our website (http://ijmra.org/index.php/editorial-board/), who include one of the Founding Editors of *JMMR*, namely, Professor Abbas Tashakkori (University of North Texas), and one of the Current Editors of *JMMR*, namely, Dr. José Francisco Molina-Azorin (University of Alicante, Spain)—showing our commitment to treating *JMMR* not as our competitor but as our partner.

The full manuscript (including references, appendices, tables, and figures) should not exceed 10,000 words in length for either empirical manuscripts or non-empirical manuscripts. In addition, manuscripts should include an abstract that is limited to 250 words, as per APA (2010). For any manuscript that exceeds the 10,000-word limit, the author(s) must provide a rationale for its word count. However, we reserve the right to return to the authors manuscripts that substantially exceed the stated word limitations. If editorial feedback compels authors to add detail to an original manuscript, then we might be open to accepting works that exceed this word count.

Manuscript authors are encouraged to review the submission guidelines on the *IJMRA* website, which offer detailed information; authors are also encouraged to review the “Evidenced-Based Writing Resources” that are available on the journal’s website. These resources include an evidence-based “Review and Scoring Rubric” that we encourage our reviewers and associate editors to use when reviewing manuscripts submitted to *IJMRA* for consideration for publication. This rubric—developed by Onwuegbuzie and Poth (2015), based on 45 reviews of 16 manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication in one of two *International Journal of Qualitative Methods (IJQM)* mixed methods research special issues—currently appears in four languages (i.e., English, Korean, Japanese, Chinese) with more languages to come in the future. While we are discussing the topic of languages, we would like to take this opportunity to point out that although *IJMRA* is an English-based journal, it is also an international one; therefore, both British and U.S. versions of spelling will be allowed, as long as they are used consistently within the manuscript.

**Conclusion**

*IJMRA* is made available so that authors can publish thought-provoking methodological discussions that will push research capacity, especially in the broad arenas of the social, behavioral, health, and human sciences. The editors see a need for more than one outlet in the mixed methods arena and for at least one outlet in the related but distinct arena of multiple methods. Manuscripts that become published as *IJMRA* articles will demonstrate methodological innovation and ideas will be well justified. To that end, we, the current editors of *IJMRA*, hope to maintain open minds about innovation when making editorial decisions, but authors will be...
best served if they make the best arguments for why an innovation is worth understanding and using in future studies. It is our hope that this will help us all to engage in better research.

References


