Editors’ Introduction to the Mixed Methods Manifesto Inaugural Special Issue

Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, John H. Hitchcock, R. Burke Johnson, Brigitte Smit, Vanessa Scherman, and Donggil Song

During the nearly two decades of the 21st century, the mixed methods research movement has gone from a field “just entering its ‘adolescence’” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003, p. 3) to a field that has entered young adulthood. Indubitably, a major factor in the development of mixed methods research, as an international research community, stems from the birth of the only two mixed methods research journals, namely: Journal of Mixed Methods Research (JMRR) and the International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches (IJMRA). Coincidentally, both JMRR and IJMRA were launched in 2007. In this editorial, we chronicle the birth, death, and rebirth of IJMRA, culminating in a special issue entitled, the Mixed Methods Manifesto Inaugural Special Issue. This special issue contains 43 articles and 2 editorials involving 93 authors, many of whom are giants in the field of mixed methods research. IJMRA is dead, long live IJMRA!

A Brief Modern History of the Mixed Methods Research Tradition

As described by Teddlie and Johnson (2009), since the beginning of the 20th century, the mixed methods research movement has undergone the following four methodological stages:

- **the traditional period (1900 to World War II),** which was characterized by the discrediting as a viable philosophy of the social and behavioral sciences of logical positivism (i.e., driven by six significant themes: emphasis on verification, pro-observation, anti-cause, downplaying explanation, anti-theoretical entities, and anti-metaphysics; Hacking, 1983; Yu, 2003) and the limited use of mixed methods research;

- **the postpositivist era (end of World War II to 1970),** which was marked by the emergence of multimethod designs (i.e., involving the use of more than one method of data collection within the same study);

- **diversification of and advances in mixed methods in the human sciences (1970 to 1990),** which was characterized by early promotion of what later came to be called mixed methods research (e.g., Reichardt & Cook, 1979); the exacerbation of the paradigm wars (i.e., fervent debates surrounding the belief that either the quantitative research tradition or the qualitative research tradition is the only appropriate tradition; see Johnson & Gray, 2010; Onwuegbuzie, 2012) among some philosophers, theorists, monomethod researchers, and methodological purists in the social/behavioral/human sciences (Gage, 1989); the promotion of the incompatibility thesis (i.e., assertion that quantitative and qualitative research methods/approaches cannot and should not be mixed due to their immutable differences; cf. Howe, 1988); the advancement of various forms of pragmatism (i.e., philosophy of what works for whom in what contexts; cf. Biesta, 2010; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, De Waal, Stefrurak, & Hildebrand, 2016; Maxcy, 2003); and the continued development of rationales for designing mixed methods research studies (see Nastasi, Hitchcock, & Brown, 2010); and

- **the institutionalization of mixed methods as a distinct methodological orientation (1990 to the present),** which has been marked by the development of productive dialogue between qualitative and quantitative researchers; the promotion of the compatibility thesis (i.e., assertion that quantitative and qualitative research traditions, including their associated methods, can and should be mixed when the research question warrants this action; Howe, 1988); and the promotion of mixed methods research as a distinct methodology that, as described by Greene (2006, 2008), comprises four interrelated but conceptually distinct domains: (a) philosophical assumptions and stances (i.e., core philosophical or epistemological assumptions associated with a methodology), (b) inquiry logics (i.e., that situate researchers in their studies such that the phenome-
non of interest is observed, documented, and understood and explained in defensible ways), (c) guidelines for research practice (i.e., that provide specific strategies for inquiry practice [e.g., research design, sampling scheme, data collection, data analysis, data legitimization, data interpretation]), and (d) sociopolitical commitments (i.e., specification and justification of how the research is located in society). Table 1 presents the history of mixed methods research from the 20th century onwards, alongside the history of quantitative research and qualitative research.

**Table 1. History of Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Research: Twentieth Century to Present Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Quantitative Research$^1$</th>
<th>Qualitative Research$^2$</th>
<th>Mixed Methods Research$^3$</th>
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<tr>
<td>1900-1929</td>
<td><strong>Formal emergence of the social and behavioral sciences:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moment 1: Traditional:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Formal emergence of the social and behavioral sciences:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Classical positivism: introduced by Auguste Comte (French Philosopher) in early/mid-19th century</td>
<td>Many researchers who rejected (classical and logical) positivism embraced a qualitative research paradigm</td>
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<td>Logical positivism (circa 1920s): originated in the Vienna Circle, a group of European Scholars</td>
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<td>Birth of behaviorism and operationalism.</td>
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<td>Birth of hypothetico-deductive model</td>
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<td>Development of basic statistical and anthropological methods</td>
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<td>1930-1949</td>
<td><strong>Traditional period:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moment 1: Traditional:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Traditional period:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discrediting of logical positivism</td>
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<td>Uncontroversial but limited use of mixed methods research</td>
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<td>Early forms of postpositivism</td>
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<td>Popper’s critical rationalism</td>
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<td>Further extensions to the hypothetico-deductive model</td>
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<td>1950-1959</td>
<td><strong>Postpositivist era:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moment 2: Modernist or golden age:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Postpositivist era</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attempt to make qualitative research (e.g., grounded theory) as rigorous as quantitative research; causal narratives were central; many texts attempted to formalize qualitative research; new interpretive theories emerged (e.g., ethnmethodology, critical theory, feminism, phenomenology)</td>
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<td>Campbell and Fiske (1959) formalized the practice of using multiple research methods by introducing the concept of triangulation</td>
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<td>1960-1969</td>
<td><strong>Publication of Thomas Kuhn’s (1962) Structure of Scientific Revolutions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moment 2: Modernist or golden age:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Postpositivist era:</strong></td>
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<td>Publication of Thomas Kuhn’s (1962) Structure of Scientific Revolutions</td>
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<td>Emergence of multimethod designs</td>
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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Quantitative Research</th>
<th>Qualitative Research</th>
<th>Mixed Methods Research</th>
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<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>Growing popularity of causal models of explanation</td>
<td>Moment 3: Blurred genres: Qualitative researchers had full arsenal of paradigms, methods, and strategies; computers came to the fore to aid qualitative analyses; new approaches surfaced (e.g., poststructuralism, neopositivism); several qualitative journals emerged; naturalistic, postpositivist, and constructionist paradigms gained power</td>
<td>Diversification of and advances in methodologies in the human sciences: Denzin (1970) further outlined how to triangulate methods</td>
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<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>Paradigm wars</td>
<td>Moment 3: Blurred genres:</td>
<td>Paradigm wars: Continued development of rationale for the use of multimethod and mixed methods research</td>
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<td>Moment 4: Crisis of representation: Research and writing became more reflexive and led to questions about issues of gender, race, and class; new models of truth, representation, and method were sought; issues such as validity, reliability, and objectivity re-emerged as being problematic; triple crises of representation (i.e. qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience), legitimation (i.e., makes problematic the traditional criteria for evaluating and interpreting qualitative research), and praxis (i.e., involves asking how it is possible to effect change in the world if society is only and always a text)</td>
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<td>Emergence of newer paradigms such as constructivism that led to paradigm wars</td>
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<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>Moment 5: Postmodern period of experimental ethnographic writing: Struggle to make sense of triple crises; new ways of composing ethnography emerged (e.g., auto-ethnography); concept of passive observer discarded; more action, participatory, and activist-oriented research emerged</td>
<td>Moment 6: Post experimental inquiry: Writings connected to the needs of a free democratic society; experimental forms of qualitative writing published that blurred the boundaries between social sciences and humanities</td>
<td>Institutionalization of mixed methods as a distinct methodological orientation: Increasing conversations between quantitative and qualitative researchers</td>
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2000-2009

Moment 7: Methodologically contested present:
Period of conflict, great tension, and retrenchment; growing body of
literature on paradigms, approaches, and methods

Institutionalization of mixed methods as a distinct methodological orientation:


Moment 8: Un-named:
Period of confronting the methodological ramifications of the
evidence-based social movement

First highly visible article articulating mixed methods as a third research paradigm published
in a flagship education journal (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) that went on to be cited in more
than 10,000 works

Moment 9: Fractured future:
Methodologists form two opposing camps (i.e., “gold standard” of scientific
research vs. socially, culturally, ethnically, and racially responsive,
communitarian, justice-oriented research)

First textbook to include the term “mixed methods research” in the title (Creswell & Plano Clark,
2007)


International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches launched (2007)

Special interest group formed (e.g., American Educational Research Association, American
Evaluation Association)

Emergence of dialectical pragmatism introduced as a meta-paradigm (2009)

2010-Present

Moment 9: Fractured future:

(2010)

Mixed Methods International Research Association (2013)

Mixed Methods Research conferences held in multiple
countries and continents

Mixed methods Webinars held

Dialectical pragmatism changed to
dialectical pluralism (2011)

Emergence of critical dialectical pluralism (2013)


Re-launch of International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches (2017)


Influential Factors in the Mixed Methods Research Movement

During the nearly two decades of the 21st century, the mixed methods research movement can be characterized as having gone from a field “just entering its ‘adolescence’” (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003, p. 3) to a field that has entered young adulthood. Interestingly, several factors have been influential in facilitating this passage. These factors include the three handbooks on mixed methods research (i.e., Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015; Tashakkori & Teddle, 2003, 2010), with another handbook (Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie, in press), two high-profile mixed methods textbooks (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009), and two books on mixed analysis (Bazeley, 2018; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, in press). To date, the 21st century has witnessed at least 64 authored or edited books that include “mixed methods” in their titles, eight mixed methods conferences in the area of health (see, for e.g., Muncey, 2012), mixed methods international conferences conducted in four continents (i.e., Europe, North America, Africa, Asia), special interest groups of various professional research associations such as the Mixed Methods Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association (http://www.aera.net/SIG158/MixedMethodsResearchSIG158/tabid/12201/Default.aspx) and the Mixed Methods Topical Interest Group of the American Evaluation Association (http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=11), websites devoted to mixed methods research, mixed methods research workshops at conferences, and offline and online mixed methods research courses conducted worldwide. Another important factor has stemmed from the advancements in computer-assisted data analysis software in the 21st century that have facilitated increasingly complex analyses (see, e.g., Evers, 2018; Smit, 2005; Wolski, 2018) and greater access to data both online (Lynch, Gerber, & Onwuegbuzie, in press) and spatially (Fielding & Cisneros-Puebla, 2009; Frels, Frels, & Onwuegbuzie, 2011).

Another influential factor has been the Mixed Methods International Research Association (MMIRA), which was formed in 2013 (http://MMIRA.org). According to its website,

The Mixed Methods International Research Association (MMIRA) aims to create an international community to promote interdisciplinary mixed methods research. The mission of the Association is to engage with the international community to support mixed methods research, which broadly includes the following: mixing/combining/integrating quantitative and/or qualitative methods, epistemologies, axiologies, and stakeholder perspectives and standpoints. MMIRA seeks to engage with a broad set of approaches in the service of understanding complex social, behavioral, health, educational, and political concerns related to the human condition and natural world. Our vision includes bringing together diverse communities of scholars, students, practitioners, policymakers, citizens, and other stakeholders, with the goals of expanding knowledge and producing social betterment and social and global justice. (MMIRA, 2018, p. 1-2)

As a result, MMIRA has attracted membership from six continents, significantly increasing international interaction/learning-from-others and the visibility and accessibility of the field of mixed methods research.

However, indubitably, a major factor in the passage of mixed methods research to young adulthood stems from the birth of the only two mixed methods research journals, namely: Journal of Mixed Methods Research (JMMR) and the International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches (IJMRA). Coincidentally, both JMMR and IJMRA were launched in 2007. Whereas JMMR exclusively published articles devoted to mixed methods research, IJMRA published articles dedicated to both mixed methods research and multimethod (i.e., multiple methods) research. These two journals have been influential because not only did they allow researchers worldwide to become consumers of mixed methods research, but also, even more importantly, they provided guaranteed outlets for researchers worldwide to be producers of mixed methods research. The original publisher of JMMR was SAGE Publications, an independent publishing company that was founded by Sara Miller McCune, a U.S. businesswoman and philanthropist, in 1965 in New York, before moving on to Southern California in 1966. The name of SAGE was composed from the first two letters of the name of its founder and her husband George McCune (i.e., SArA and GEorge). SAGE Publications remains the publisher of JMMR.

With respect to IJMRA, the original publishers were eContent Management, a publishing company based in Australia, whose Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director then and now is James H. Davidson. Specifically, eContent Management was the publisher of IJMRA from 2007 through 2014. However, sometime in 2014, James H. Davidson managed the sale and transfer of IJMRA (and 9 other journals and books) from eContent Management to Routledge/Taylor & Francis. Thus, from the beginning of 2015, Routledge/Taylor & Francis published IJMRA. However, on December 2, 2015, a representative of Taylor & Francis sent out emails to all IJMRA authors, notifying them of the following:

We regret to advise that International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches will be ceasing publication on 31 December 2015, with Volume 9 issue 1 being the final issue to be published. This decision has been made by Taylor & Francis after much consultation internally and externally.
Therefore the journal is no longer accepting any new submissions as of 1st December 2015.

Please note that as a result of this change, manuscripts submitted prior to this date and which have not yet received a final decision on their paper, will not be progressing further with the journal’s review process.

Authors to which this applies are welcome to submit their manuscript elsewhere.

Please accept our sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused. If you have any queries, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Extremely concerned about the consequences of IJMRA being discontinued, namely, that JMMR would become the only journal devoted to publishing mixed methods research articles, and spurred on by many scholars from the mixed methods research community, the lead author of this editorial (Tony) contacted representatives of Taylor & Francis to ask them why they had decided to discontinue IJMRA, and offered to become an editor of IJMRA, alongside two other coauthors of this editorial, namely, John Hitchcock and Burke Johnson. After a series of exchange of emails, unexpectedly, Tony was offered the opportunity that went far beyond being an editor of IJMRA—specifically, Tony was very kindly given the opportunity actually to own IJMRA! Although the prospect of owning the journal was scary, after securing the promise of John Hitchcock and Burke Johnson to join the team of editors, Tony signed the Deed of Transfer and officially became the owner of IJMRA on May 5, 2016. IJMRA is dead, long live IJMRA!

The next task was to obtain a publisher for IJMRA. After much consultation and legal advice, Dialectical Publishing was formed on October 16, 2017, owned by Tony and John. The name Dialectical Publishing was inspired by Burke Johnson’s Dialectical Pluralism research philosophy or meta-paradigm—which involves a belief in incorporating multiple epistemological perspectives within the same inquiry (Johnson, 2011, 2012, 2017; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, Tucker, & Icenogle, 2014) — and, to an even greater extent, by Tony’s and Rebecca Frels’s Critical Dialectical Pluralism, which, building on dialectical pluralism, involves researchers serving as research-facilitator(s) who empower their participants by enabling them to assume the role of participant-researcher(s) who make decisions at every stage of the mixed methods research process and who present/perform the findings themselves or co-present/co-perform the findings with the research-facilitator(s) (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2013). Driving the formation of Dialectical Publishing was the vision of empowering scholars, researchers, evaluators, students, practitioners, policymakers, citizens, and other stakeholders worldwide—especially from marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented nations and regions—to document their knowledge production in a high-profile and reputable international journal, namely, IJMRA (and possibly other journals and books published by Dialectical Publishing in the future). However, whereas JMMR continues exclusively to publish articles in the area of mixed methods research, IJMRA, following the great tradition established by James H. Davidson, and consistent with its name, will remain more inclusive and expansive than JMMR by publishing articles in the areas of both mixed methods research and multimethod research across the social, behavioral, business, education, health, and other human sciences—“with the goals of co-constructing knowledge, co-expanding knowledge, and co-producing social betterment and social and global justice in an alternative-fact and post-truth world” (IJMRA, 2018, para. 6). Long live Dialectical Publishing!

During the establishment of Dialectical Publishing, John, Burke, and Tony began assembling scholars from all over the world to serve on the IJMRA editor team (i.e., Brigitte Smit, Vanessa Scherman, and Donggil Song) or editorial board (cf. http://ijmra.org/index.php/editorial-board/). In preparing for the return of IJMRA, we decided to re-launch IJMRA by continuing where Taylor & Francis had ended, namely, with Volume 10 Issue 1. An even more significant decision was to make Volume 10 Issue 1, our inaugural issue, an open-access issue that contained several articles written by some of the most well-known names in the mixed methods research field. Expecting to experience a high rejection rate from mixed methods research “giants” to our invitation to contribute an article to the inaugural issue—mainly because we gave them only three months to write and to submit their manuscripts—we made the decision to ask more than 40 very important authors to contribute an article, in the hope that an acceptance rate even as low as 10% would yield a sufficient number of articles for our inaugural issue. However, to our pleasant surprise, virtually every author that we asked, accepted our invitation—generating greater than a 90% acceptance rate! Including all coauthors, we have ended up with a special issue that involves a total of 93 authors, with the authors’ places of birth and places of work representing six continents.
Welcome to the Mixed Methods Manifesto Inaugural Special Issue!

Now that we have provided you with a brief history of the launch and relaunch of *IJMRA*, it is our pleasure to introduce the Mixed Methods Manifesto Inaugural Special Issue. However, before we do, we want to give credit for the name of our special issue. Mila Steele—Senior Commissioning Editor for Media, Communication and Cultural Studies at SAGE Publications—was the editor of Tony’s and Rebecca’s SAGE mixed methods research textbook entitled, “Seven steps to a comprehensive literature review: A multimodal and cultural approach” (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). And while this book was in progress, Tony met several times at Mila’s SAGE London office to provide her with an update of this book, as well as to discuss British politics and his adventures in academic publishing. Now, during one of these meetings that took place directly outside the SAGE London headquarters on a beautiful sunny afternoon (25°C; 77°F) on July 18, 2017—which was only supposed to last for 15 minutes but ended up lasting for more than 4 hours, well past the close of business day—Mila kindly suggested that the name of Mixed Methods Manifesto be used for our inaugural special issue. According to Dictionary.com, manifesto means “a public declaration of intentions, opinions, objectives, or motives, as one issued by a government, sovereign, or organization” [emphasis added] (http://www.dictionary.com/browse/manifesto?s=t). And because the *IJMRA* editors had decided to make the inaugural special issue contain articles, published by Dialectical Publishing, that are available to everyone worldwide (i.e., open access), all the articles in this special issue would be publicly available and, therefore, would represent a public declaration of opinions, assumptions, ideas, conceptualizations, beliefs, propositions, hypotheses, hunches, theories, schemas, models, procedures, methodologies, findings, interpretations, conclusions, and/or the like that are related to, stem from, or inform the field of mixed methods research. Thus, the Mixed Methods Manifesto was a remarkably apt phrase. And hence, the Mixed Methods Manifesto Inaugural Special Issue was born!

Among them, the 93 authors in the inaugural special issue have contributed 43 articles and two editorials to this issue (http://ijmra.org/index.php/2017/09/06/inaugural-special-issue/). These authors range from a post-doctoral research fellow, to research fellow, to a research consultant, to newly graduated authors working outside the world of academe, to newly graduated authors still seeking full-time employment within the world of academia, to independent evaluation consultants, to assistant professors, to associate professors, to full professors, to a vice-rector for research, to a medical doctor, to retired professors, to a professor emeritus, and to a distinguished professor emeritus—to name some of the professional statuses. The disciplines/fields represented by these authors include social science, medicine, nursing, counseling, psychology, sociology, education, computer science, global health, public health, health services, and evaluation. Among them, these special issue contributors have authored/co-authored at least 28 mixed methods research books and have authored/coauthored several hundred mixed methods research articles, with their combined mixed methods works being cited in several hundred thousand publications.

Using constant comparison analysis (Glaser, 1965), the 43 special issue articles yielded 11 themes, which, in turn, led to the development of 11 sections, as follows: Case Study Approaches to Mixed Methods Research; Mixed Methods Analysis; Digital and Networked Communications; Evaluation; Developing Mixed Methods Research; Re-Conceptualizing Mixed Methods Research; Cross-Disciplinary Mixed Methods Research; Training Mixed Methods Researchers; Mixed Methods Systems and Processes; Media Corner; and Dissertation Corner. It will take too much signature space to introduce all 43 articles, and so we will not do so. However, for doctoral students and advisors/ supervisors, we would particularly like to bring your attention to the Dissertation Corner, which contains mixed methods research articles that stemmed from dissertations authored by former doctoral students of Sam Houston State University—many of which have received some type of dissertation award. Most notably, Dr. Cindy Benge’s dissertation was first runner-up of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Mixed Methods Special Interest Group (SIG) Dissertation of the Year Award in 2013. And only a few weeks before the writing of this editorial, Dr. Shannon Williams’s dissertation was the winner of the 2018 MMIRA MAXQDA Dissertation Award.

The 43 articles in the special issue have generated a total of 665 pages. Thus, it is of handbook length. Indeed, it is likely the biggest special issue ever published in the social sciences! And, as the editor team, we have enjoyed reading every single page. We thank all the special issue authors for taking time out of their busy schedules to submit an article! We hope that you enjoy reading the articles in this special issue and that you find them useful. Most importantly, we hope that this special issue inspires you to submit manuscripts to *IJMRA* because the future of *IJMRA* is in your hands!
References


