

# Mixed Methods: From Paradigm Wars to Paradigm Soup

# Objectives

- ▶ Describe:
  - the reasons for mixing methods
  - different ways to mix qualitative and quantitative research
  - the terms and notation used in mixed methods studies
  - some challenges that may have to be addressed when conducting mixed methods studies

# Key Features of Mixing Methods Research

- ▶ A researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data
- ▶ The researcher analyzes these two datasets
- ▶ The researcher mixes the two datasets in a meaningful way and develops an overall interpretation

# Reasons for Mixing Methods

- ▶ Triangulation – seeking convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon
- ▶ Complementarity – seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method
- ▶ Development – using the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method
- ▶ Initiation – discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to a reframing of the research question
- ▶ Expansion – seeking to expand the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components

Green, Caracelli & Graham (1989)

# Dimensions of Mixing

- ▶ Status - do the qualitative and quantitative components have equal status, or is one dominant?
- ▶ Timing - is the timing of qualitative and quantitative components concurrent or sequential?
- ▶ Stage or location - does the mixing occur when determining the research questions, collecting the data, analyzing/interpreting the data?
- ▶ Approach to mixing – are the data merged, embedded, or connected?

# Mixed Method Designs Matrix

## Time Order Decision

Concurrent

Sequential

**Paradigm  
Emphasis  
Decision**

Equal  
Status

QUAL + QUAN

QUAL → QUAN

QUAN → QUAL

Dominant  
Status

QUAL + quan

QUAL → quan

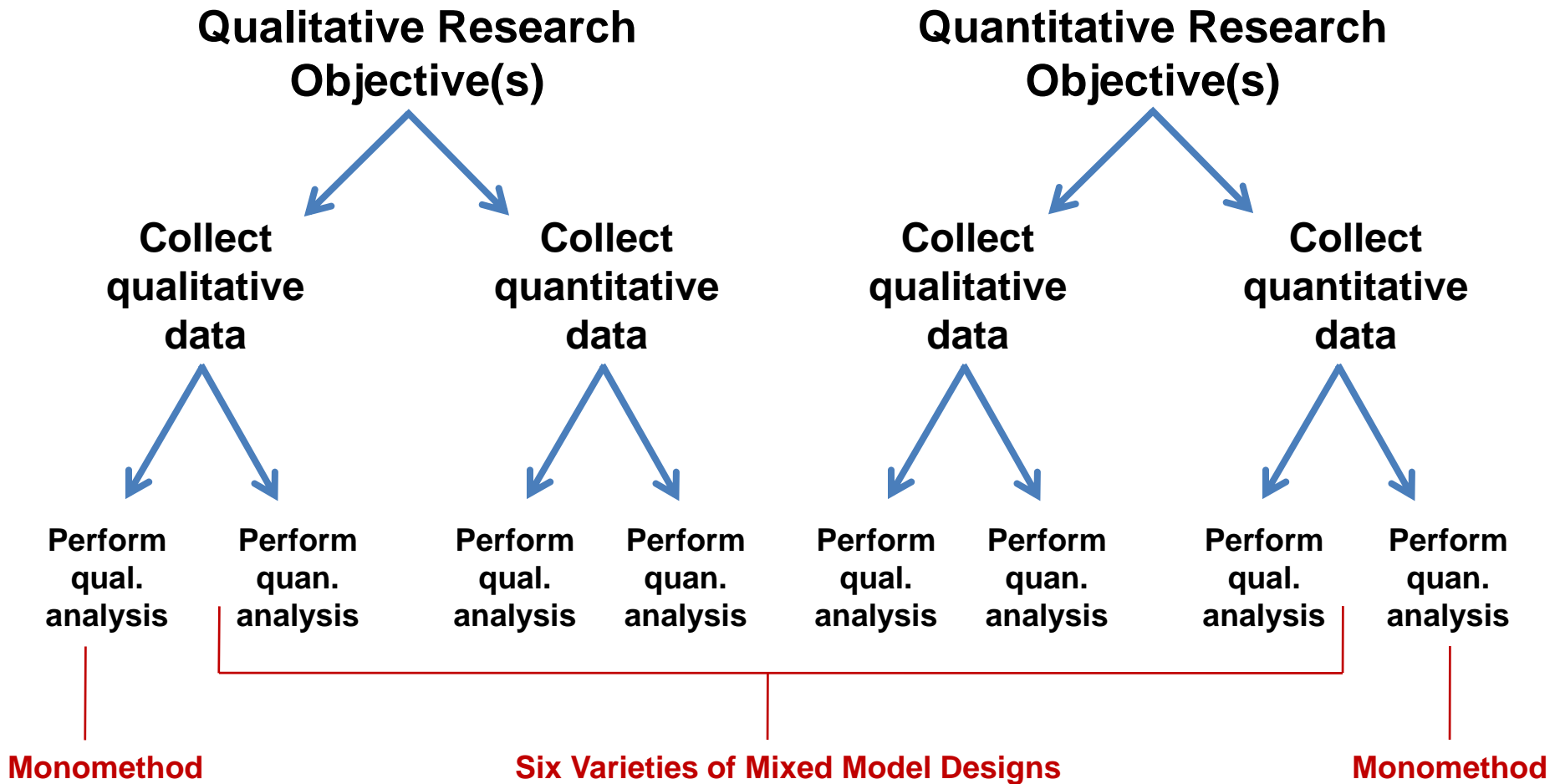
qual → QUAN

QUAN + qual

QUAN → qual

quan → QUAL

# Monomethod and Mixed Model Designs



# Rationale vs. Practice

<u>Category</u>	<u>Rationale</u>	<u>Practice</u>
Triangulation	7.8%	12.5%
Complementarity	28.9%	44.8%
Development	10.3%	8.6%
Initiation	0.4%	1.3%
Expansion	25.4%	31.5%
Not stated	27.2%	1.3%

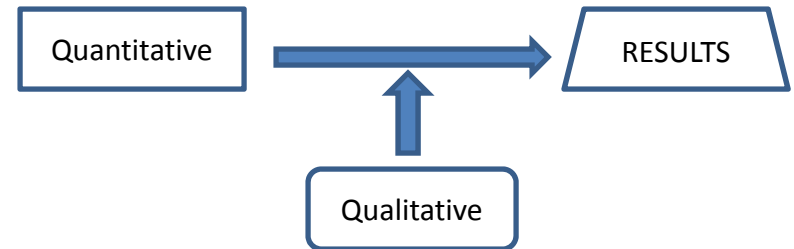


# Illustrations

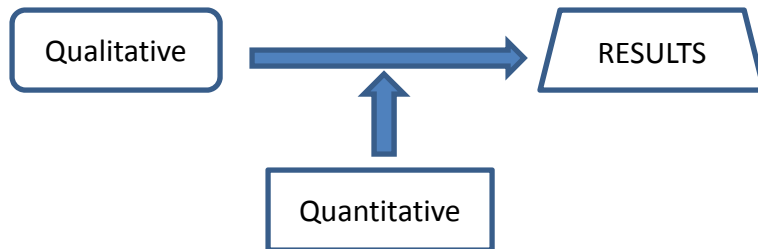
Qualitative Measures to Develop Quantitative Tools



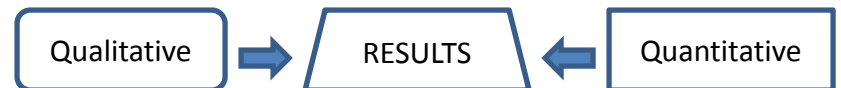
Qualitative Methods to Explain Quantitative Results



Quantitative Measures to Enlarge on Qualitative Study



Quantitative and Qualitative Methods Equal and Parallel



# Challenges of Mixed Methods Research

- ▶ Researchers whose training is either qualitative or quantitative may be uncomfortable with the other tradition
- ▶ Often requires collaboration between researchers of different scientific backgrounds
- ▶ Clear criteria for when and how to mix are lacking
- ▶ Adds to the complexity of research designs
- ▶ Adds to the difficulty of data analysis
- ▶ Subject burden may be increased
- ▶ Some IRBs may make it difficult for qualitative (or mixed methods) researchers who use flexible methods
- ▶ Difficulty finding publication outlets and funding