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The perfect mix or just a mish mash? A framework for mixed method evaluation design

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Mixed method evaluations are often a popular approach with evaluators.

But they present their own challenges and pitfalls – what can we learn from this? Where do they enhance and where do they limit evaluations?

This paper critiques a range of mixed method evaluation designs and discusses some of the influencing factors in the design, execution and reporting of such evaluations. Factors include meeting and managing client expectations, audience type, cultural factors, evaluation objectives and outputs, reporting rigour and reporting formats.

Drawing on recent literature, learnings from the field and several case studies as examples, the effective design of mixed method evaluations will be discussed. Case study examples will draw concepts from different types of evaluations, including website evaluations, social and market research, and organisational evaluations.

The use of various qualitative and quantitative data collection methods will be examined - from new technologies, such as web surveys to more traditional methods, such as phone surveys and focus groups.

In summary, a framework for the innovative design of mixed method evaluations will be presented.