ABSTRACT 2025

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Rethinking Social Treatment-testing Experimental Designs

The standard control-group-/treated-group sampling design is notorious in contexts where low incomes or social exclusion make some people marginalised and without voice. The method of testing a 'social intervention' as a medical treatment depoliticizes the social role of collective organisations, such as local government. I present four big challenges of using this method, seven potential error moments, and three big solutions. The solutions might be stakeholder-led mixed methods, not medicalising the social, and avoiding individualisation of the social issues of marginalisation and poverty. The wider implication is that Radical Statisticians would promote knowing methods like action research stakeholder analysis, and mixed methods across the Quan-qual boundaries.

Data: A localised experiment in West Africa is used as a touchstone, and we have focus groups and two rounds of questionnaires which I may refer to lightly.

Methods: The career being 'mixed-methods' and the data being mixed-methods implies a need for holism in research. Defining 'individual', individualism, and individualisation, I offer alternatives. Whole, meso, macro, holism, structural change, and structural intervention.

The Findings: The big challenges are randomness, name-spellings, training the administrators, and unfairness of the Restricted Benefits of a social intervention if limited to the treatment group.

Conclusions: The three solutions are a training guide, a wider range of research methodologies, and avoiding creeping individualisation in research.

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University of Manchester   GITHUB REPOSITORY: https://github.com/WendyOlsen/HelpRCTwithMixedMethods