Qualitative Comparative Analysis â?? A Rigorous Qualitative Method for Assessing Impact

Description

Tweet

A Coffey How-To note, June 2015, by Carrie Baptist and Barbara Befani. Available as pdf

Summary

- QCA is a case based method which allows evaluators to identify different combinations of factors that are critical to a given outcome, in a given context. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of how different combinations of factors can lead to success, and the influence context can have on success.
- QCA allows evaluators to test theories of change and answer the question â??what works best, why and under what circumstancesâ?? in a way that emerges directly from the empirical analysis, that can be replicated by other researchers, and is generalizable to other contexts.
- While it isnâ??t appropriate for use in all circumstances and has limitations, QCA also has certain unique strengths â?? including qualitatively assessing impact and identifying multiple pathways to achieving change which make it a valuable addition to the evaluation toolkit.

Rick Davies comment: The availability of this sort of explanatory and introductory note is very timely, given the increased use of QCA for evaluation purposes. My only quibble with this how-to note is that the heart of the QCA process seems to have been left undescribed (see step 10, page 6), like the proverbial black box. For those looking for a more detailed exposition, keep an eye out for the extensive guide now being prepared by Barbara Befani, with support from the Expert Group for Aid Studies in Sweden (More details here). There is also an introductory posting on QCA on the Better Evaluation website

See also: This new listing of use of QCA for evaluation purposes
http://www.compasss.org/bibliography/evalua.htm

Category

1. Uncategorized

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