

THE NEED FOR HYBRID EVALUATION MODELS
IN MULTI-MODULE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECTS

by

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INTRODUCTION

The terms "evaluation" and "evaluation research" are used to encompass a very wide range of activities and techniques used to assess the extent to which programs fulfill their objectives. The range of variation in the quality of evaluation and evaluation research is quite extensive. The forms vary from presentations of routine annual reports relabeled as evaluations to quasi-experimental and experimental designs. With the increasing awareness of the complexity of evaluation and the need to use evaluation in decision making--as evidenced in the forward to the preliminary program statement of this conference--more systematic and comprehensive approaches to evaluations will be necessitated in the field of criminal justice evaluation.

One of the approaches utilized in this direction is the systematic identification of a criterion or criteria for defining the success of a program. Program characteristics and outcomes are measured and evaluated on the basis of this criterion or criteria. For example, one possibility is the categorization of criteria into the most objective criterion, the most attainable criterion, the most continuous criterion and the most support relevant criterion.¹ Another, but a similar approach, would be to classify the criteria into separate categories, such as 1) effort, 2) performance, 3) adequacy of performance, 4) efficiency, and 5) process.² Another approach would be to identify a list of research strategies or designs followed by a discussion and ranking of the utility of these designs.³

EVALUATION MODEL FOR MULTI-MODULE PROGRAMS

While this approach is very useful in providing guidelines regarding the identification, selection and use of criteria in evaluation and

evaluation research, the evaluative literature is conspicuously deficient regarding the use of multiple criteria. Most of the criminal justice evaluations are usually deficient in the use of multiple criteria and tend to concentrate on one of these three criteria--efficiency, effort and performance. While a systematic use of any criterion is an improvement on most of the earlier evaluations, it is deficient in dealing with many of the existing criminal justice programs which need to utilize more than one criterion, and especially programs with multiple modules or programs which cover more than one law enforcement agency. The basic problems of evaluation are exacerbated due to multi-module programs, which cannot be judged by the same criterion, thus necessitating a combination of multiple approaches which would entail 1) identification of objectives for the entire program and by program parts or modules, 2) identification of criteria and research strategies or designs needed to evaluate the program, and 3) selection of appropriate criteria and designs to match the module objectives within a general program evaluation framework.

This problem of a combination of multiple approaches is discussed and illustrated in the context of a pilot project called Improved Misdemeanor Program for Administration and Caseflow (to be referred as IMPAC from here on) implemented in 1975. IMPAC is a complex pilot program with seven modules in which three law enforcement agencies, the police, prosecutor and courts participate; it cuts across the political boundaries of city, township and the county, aimed at improving the criminal justice system process dealing with misdemeanant offenders.

All evaluation studies face some basic problems. They may be divided analytically into methodological problems and other problems, though these problems often intersect with one another. The methodological problems

revolve around statement of objectives, data needs, collection and analysis of data, and interpretation of findings. All evaluators are also aware of problems which fall in the second category, the most important ones being the human and political dimensions of evaluation.

Multi-module problems such as IMPAC have additional unique problems. Some of the special problems generally faced in conducting evaluations of such a program are listed below.

- 1) Multiple political units: overlapping jurisdictions and lack of uniform policies and procedures.
- 2) Multiple agencies and subagencies: differing intra-agency requirements and policies and procedures.
- 3) Data incompatibility.
- 4) Problem of goal consistency across the modules.
- 5) Coordination of activities: modules start up at differing times.
- 6) Segmental completion: one segment gets completed and implemented while another one does not.

In addition, evaluation research in criminal justice poses special problems related to non-methodological issues such as political variables, assumptions under which goals are established and confidentiality problems. These problems have been amply enumerated in the literature.⁴

A specific research strategy is suggested here as a possible partial solution to the problems involved in the evaluation of multi-module programs--namely, the creation of a "hybrid" evaluation model which is composed of five types of single criterion-referenced evaluation models. The term evaluation model is used here to indicate a taxonomic model with a dominant criterion and the research procedures and techniques used in conjunction with the

criterion to assess the extent to which a program achieves its objectives.

Five of these models are identified as follows:

- 1) Output or effort evaluation model - The main criterion is the amount of effort or activity expended in the program. The research procedures used in this model deal with the comparison of the stated and actual output.
- 2) Performance or effectiveness or outcome evaluation model - The main criterion is the actual outcome or results of the program. The research procedures would revolve around the comparison of the intended and actual outcomes, and the establishment and measurement of standards for those outcomes.
- 3) Efficiency, or cost benefit or cost effectiveness or cost utility evaluation models - The major criterion in this model is the efficiency with which a program works, measured mostly in terms of costs and benefits or the results produced by the program if benefits cannot be monetarily accounted.
- 4) Process evaluation model - The major criterion is the organizational process in order to determine what works well or does not work well in the program and why. Systems analysis perspectives are ideally suited in the analysis of this criterion.
- 5) Comparative evaluation model - The major criterion is a comparison of the performance of the program by estimating the differences in the before and after stages of the program or a comparison of the program with another similar program (other than cost factors). Because of the differing strategies used to measure these two types of comparison, it is advisable to divide these strategies into two categories:
 - a) experimental and quasi-experimental designs;
 - b) other "non-experimental" comparisons.

In using a "hybrid" evaluation model, an evaluation matrix would be established with the modules represented on one coordinate, and the five single criterion evaluation models discussed above on the other coordinate. The selection and combination of appropriate evaluation models is presented below in the context of an actual multi-module program, along with some objectives of the program included for illustrative purposes.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPAC PILOT PROGRAM

This pilot program was established to improve the caseflow and administration of misdemeanor programs. It is an ambitious and innovative program (though limited to selected misdemeanors at the present) sponsored by LEAA, which is one of the few inter-agency programs and encompasses city, township and county jurisdictions. The program consisted of seven different modules. A brief description of the program, modules and selected list of objectives are stated below.

The major goals of this program are to develop 1) a more efficient and effective handling of misdemeanant offenders; 2) more uniform and standardized procedures for offender handling; 3) greater coordination and integration among the local criminal justice agencies; and 4) a prototype development which can be implemented in other communities.

Seven Modules, Selected Descriptions and Objectives:

1) Police Citation System:

Nature of Project: The utilization of a citation system where police issue "tickets" instead of arresting low-risk, trustworthy offenders should reduce processing time for minor offenses, and allow for greater degree of flexibility for police officers in dealing with such offenders and provide fewer negative consequences for the less serious misdemeanant offenders.

Illustrative Objectives: 1) Reduce time spent per arrest transaction where booking occurs; 2) examine the categories of appearance or non-appearance in court; guilty or not guilty pleas; and total number of arrests before and after implementation of the program.

2) Court Summons Sytem:

Nature of Project: Court summons would be issued for misdemeanors not committed in the presence of an officer. It is an attempt to reduce police, prosecutor and court time and costs. This requires the implementation of the Michigan statutory power for the issuance of court summons in misdemeanor and ordinance complaint cases. Agreement between different criminal justice agencies will be necessary.

Illustrative Objective: To reduce personnel and system time through the obtainment of arrest warrants.

3) Prosecution Case Screening:

Nature of Project: This element of the program is intended to improve the performance and consistency of the attorneys by supplying them with uniform procedural guidelines for case screening and decision making.

Illustrative Objective: Adoption of uniform misdemeanor screening and decision-making procedures by the city attorney and county prosecutor of Kalamazoo.

4) PROMIS

Nature of Project: This project is designed to promote systematic procedures for differentiating less serious from more serious cases. It is intended to provide the Criminal Justice personnel, especially the prosecutor's office,

with an efficient, computerized modern data management and information system which provides consistent, reliable information across agencies and jurisdictions.

5) Pretrial Release:

Nature of Project: This project offers release on personal recognizance (ROR) or an alternative to traditional detention and bail practices for persons arrested and awaiting trial.

Illustrative Objective: Establish the effectiveness of the pretrial release program.

6) Short-Form Presentence Reports:

Nature of Project: This project is designed to provide succinct and consistent offender information for use by judges in their sentencing decisions. This component is intended to provide a sounder and more reliable basis upon which offender-handling decisions may be made. The objectives pertaining to this element are both operational or procedural and developmental.

Illustrative Objective: Increase in the proportion of requests and use of presentence investigation reports.

7) Selected Probation Offender Program:

Nature of Project: This project seeks to place misdemeanor offenders in an intensified, individualized and supervised probation environment in lieu of incarceration or unsupervised probation. Offenders are to be selected on the basis of a uniform selection criteria. Selected probation is to provide an option for the court to deal more justly with misdemeanor offenders in need of continuing assistance.

Illustrative Objective: Reduced caseloads for supervisory staff.

HYBRID EVALUATION MODEL

The hybrid evaluation model is presented in a matrix format and this matrix will be referred to as the hybrid evaluation matrix. The matrix consists of the modules and the overall program on one coordinate and the evaluation models on the other. The appropriate evaluation models for each module are checkmarked in the evaluation matrix (page 9). The matrix for the total program is provided on the next page.

The rankings in the matrix are hypothetical and for illustrative purposes only (though they are realistic and can be justified as such); so are the descriptions of the modules and statement of objectives (only a few objectives were selected for illustrative purposes; space limitations prohibit a complete listing of objectives). The pretrial release model is basically result oriented, and not process oriented; and in spite of serious methodological issues, can be compared with pretrial release data prior to implementation in the same program or other programs. The court summons, however, is clearly efficiency oriented; and the procedures and guidelines established in using it contribute to the efficiency and inefficiency of the module. The number of people who fail to appear is clearly relevant but not significant because of the very low proportion of non-appearances in court. The short-form presentence is basically a process-oriented module intended to provide information in capsule form regarding the misdemeanants to the judge. The PROMIS system on the other hand is basically an efficiency-oriented module. Though other evaluation models are by no means irrelevant, the efficiency model is by far the most relevant to the PROMIS module (it has significant impact on outcome and the process of the overall program).

In programs of such a nature, the total program cannot be equated with the sum of its parts. This generally recognized fact or program feature

HYBRID EVALUATION MATRIX - EVALUATION OF MODULES

Illustration: IMPAC Pilot Project With Hypothetical Rankings

Evaluation Models:	Program Modules						
	1 Police Citation	2 Court Summons	3 Prosecution Case Screening	4 PROMIS	5 Pretrial Release	6 Short-Form Presentence	7 Selected Offender Probation
1) Output	✓ 2						
2) Outcome	✓ 3		✓ 1		✓ 1	✓ 2	✓ 1
3) Efficiency	✓ 1	✓ 1					✓ 3
4) Process		✓ 2	✓ 2		✓ 3	✓ 1	
5) Comparative: a) Experimental or Quasi-Experimental			✓		✓		✓
b) Other Comparative Evaluation Model			3		2		2

HYBRID EVALUATION MATRIX (Cont.): GLOBAL EVALUATION

Illustration: IMPAC Pilot Program With Hypothetical Ranking

Evaluation Models	Total Program
1. Output	4
2. Outcome	3
3. Efficiency	2
4. Process	1
5. Comparative a) Experimental or Quasi-Experimental b) Other Comparative Evaluation Model	5

raises an additional problem in evaluation efforts. The hybrid evaluation model addresses itself to this problem and incorporates within the matrices the program modules as well as the total program. The total program evaluation would differ from individual module evaluation in two ways: 1) it would be judged on the basis of stated overall program goals and objectives; and 2) it would incorporate the rankings of individual modules. The first criterion is of primary importance in the evaluation of a total program and in case of a conflict between the two criteria, would take precedence. The hybrid evaluation matrix includes the total program and ranking of evaluation modules. In this particular case, process evaluation model and efficiency evaluation model were ranked higher than the other models because of their overriding importance to the total program. Lack of good coordination and flow between the modules--however efficient and effective individually--would spell failure for the program. Again, only a process evaluation model would identify the areas of overlaps and interdependence between different modules.

A global evaluation or evaluation of a total multi-module program such as IMPAC would have to prioritize the process evaluation model, even though that model may not be the top-ranked model for the individual modules. Similarly, efficiency considerations would also have to be considered as of major significance in the continuation of the program. The other rankings for the total program basically reflect the rankings in the other modules. A hybrid evaluation model can thus accommodate evaluation of the modules in conjunction with the total program and also identify the prioritization of evaluation models for individual modules based on the statement of the nature of the project and stated objectives for each of the modules.

EXTENSION OF THE HYBRID EVALUATION MODEL

The hybrid evaluation model is presented here in its simplest form. It is feasible to extend it in order to incorporate some of the other problems raised earlier either by a more detailed categorization or by extension of dimensions and a detailed clarification of assumptions. Outcomes, for example, could be categorized into expected and unanticipated outcomes. Similarly, objectives may be categorized into real or stated objectives.⁵ Or they could be categorized into real or ideal objectives. Similarly, evaluative research without "hard data" can also be accommodated in this model.

LIMITATIONS

Some methodological questions regarding ranking and weighting of evaluation models and integration of findings are left unanswered here partly because there are no clear-cut answers to some of these questions and partly because it goes beyond the scope of this paper. Also other techniques such as PERT and CPM are not discussed here, which would identify the lags in start up and close up times of individual modules much more adequately.

SUMMARY

The term hybrid is used here in a sense analogous to hybrid computers, a combination of digital and analog computers which perform more than one type of operation. An attempt was made to systematize the problem of evaluating multi-module programs with numerous sets of objectives, multiple criteria, which necessitate a large number of research designs and techniques, through the use of five single criterion-referenced evaluation models in a hybrid model with a general framework to utilize the various evaluation models. Such models are likely to be much more systematic and fruitful than an eclectic choice of evaluation criteria, strategies and technique.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Glaser, Daniel. Routinizing Evaluation: Getting Feedback on Effectiveness of Crime and Delinquency Programs. Rockville, Maryland: National Institute of Mental Health, 1973, pp. 16-25.

² Suchman, Edward A. Evaluative Research Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1967, pp. 60-71.

³ Brenner, M. H., and D. Carrow. "Evaluative Research with Hard Data." Pages 16-20 in Evaluation Research in Criminal Justice. Rome, Italy: United Nations Social Defense Research Institute, 1976.

⁴ Konz, Peider. "Introduction." Pages 7-10 in Evaluation Research in Criminal Justice. Rome, Italy: United Nations Social Defense Research Institute, 1976.

⁵ Churchman, C. West. The Systems Approach. New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1968, pp. 29-30.

⁶ Biles, David. "Evaluative Research Without Hard Data." Pages 77-97 in Evaluation Research in Criminal Justice. Rome, Italy: United Nations Social Defense Research Institute, 1976.



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