Chapter 12
Evaluation Research
• Evaluation of social interventions
• Very old tradition of research
• Institute a social reform for a specific purpose, paid attention to the results
Definition

• Evaluation research = research purpose, not a specific research method.
• This purpose is to evaluate the impact of social interventions.
Growth

1.) increase in federal requirements institute a program, prove its effective

2.) the availability of research funds to fulfill those requirements.
Topics Appropriate for Evaluation Research

• Needs assessment studies – Studies that aim to determine the existence and extent of problems, typically among a segment of the population.

• Cost/Benefits Studies

• Monitoring Studies

• Appropriate topics are those with practical significance.
Examples of Evaluation Research

• Emergency room procedures – effective?
• Driver training classes – effective?
• Drug and alcohol prevention programs – effective?
• Scared Straight Program – effective?
Formulating the Problem: The Issue of Measurement

• Program evaluation or outcome assessment: the determination of whether a social intervention is producing the intended result.

• How will you actually measure that the intervention produced the result you wanted?
• Grants Before:
  – Describe how the organization measures impact.

• Grants Now:
  – How will success be defined and how will you quantify it?
  – What are your outcome measures?
• How do we operationalize success or failure?
• What particular variables should we identify?
• Must identify the specific outcome(s) that is the indicator(s) of success.
• How should we measure those outcomes?
Measurement & Methods

• Can evaluate with qualitative indicators, not just quantitative ones.

• Evaluation research uses many methods.
Use of Research Results

• Can be a powerful tool for social change.

• This is research in the context of people’s lives.

• It is very political.
Use of Research Results

- Why evaluation research results are not always put into practice:
  
  • Implications may not be presented in a way that is understandable to the non-researcher.
  
  • Results may contradict deeply held beliefs.
  
  • Researchers may have a vested interest in the results.
Ethics of Evaluation Research

• Evaluation research is often controversial.
• Involves logistical problems because it is:
  – Interwoven into real life issues.