

Review of Evaluation and Program Planning: Volume 30, Issue 1

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The latest issue of Evaluation and Program Planning offers eleven general-interest articles covering a range of topics related to professional and academic evaluation activities. Unlike some previous issues that have focused on a special topic or interest area, this quarter's publication offers articles from a wide range of subject areas and disciplines. As such, the following review provides a brief overview of each article, in publication order, instead of providing a more in-depth review of the work of select authors.

In the first article, *Effects of multiple stakeholders in identifying and interpreting perceived needs*, authors Yi-fang Lee, James W. Altvchuld, and Jeffry L. White examine the importance of selecting diverse groups when undertaking a needs assessment. Using a mixed-methods approach, two groups of stakeholder representing different interests were examined and compared in an attempt to identify and understand the effects of group selection on needs assessment survey results. Not surprisingly, the authors conclude that group differences do have an impact on responses and that understanding and exploring these differences provides crucial insight into the development of a needs assessment. Certainly, these findings are not controversial, however, it should be noted that because their research was limited in a case-study manner to one scenario—perceptions of college retention efforts and needs by students and faculty gathered via surveys—that these findings may

not be generalizable to all needs assessment situations.

The second article, *Structural equation model for the evaluation of national funding on R&D project of SMEs in consideration with MBNQA criteria*, manages to address an interesting and relevant evaluation topic despite the wordy and jargon-laden nature of its title. The authors attempt to use a quantitative analysis technique, structural equation modeling, to examine hypothesis models amongst identified components of research and development (R&D) management. Variable measurements are made using criteria established by the well-known Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards (MBNQA). Applying this approach in a study of South Korean R&D projects, the authors find that internal management, followed by external evaluation process, has the greatest impact on technological performance of R&D projects, suggesting that both the process of the laboratory or organization receiving the funding and the oversight of the relevant governmental agency or funding agency are important to the success of grant-based R&D efforts.

Author Elizabeth A. Corley also tackles the topic of evaluation of research and development efforts with the third article, *A use-and-transformation model for evaluating public R&D: Illustrations from polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) research*. In it, Corley takes aim at traditional R&D evaluation efforts, which have focused primarily on outcomes, and instead presents a model based on the concept of a Knowledge Value Collective (KVC) and development of

R&D capacity. A case study of PCOS research is used to demonstrate how the development of knowledge amongst a wider range of interrelated researchers, such as physicians, clinical researchers, and academic base scientists, can greatly expand knowledge about the condition and assist in quickly identifying diagnosis criteria. The KVC approach acknowledges the importance of knowledge generation by evaluating the size, direction, rate, diversity, and power of knowledge being generated, as opposed to examining individual project outcomes such as publications. This, Corley argues, holds the advantage of taking into account the concerns of scientists, whose focus is on long-term scientific advancement over short-term economic or academic measures of success, as well as broader public needs for R&D capacity that can continue to tackle new issues.

The fourth article, *Using correlational analyses to improve prevention strategies based on survey data from youth*, looks at how predictor and target behaviors of children vary between communities. Authors Ty A. Ridenour and Mark E. Feinberg address how the use of correlation analysis between variables that predict behavior and measures of targeted behavior can be used in the selection of program interventions. By using correlation analysis to identify variance in risk factors for negative behavior, the authors suggest that decisions regarding community-based tailoring of interventions can be better made.

In the fifth article, *Determinates of youth and parent satisfaction in usual care psychotherapy*, Ann. F. Garland, Rachel A. Haine, and Caroline L. Boxmeyer examine the use of client satisfaction as an indicator of care quality. Using a survey of youths ages 11 to 18 who received outpatient mental health care for at least six months, the authors studied the care satisfaction ratings of both the children undergoing treatment and their parents. Although mean overall satisfaction ratings were nearly identical across both groups, the study showed an

extremely low correlation between the satisfaction levels of the children undergoing treatment and their parents. According to the authors, this disparity challenges the use of satisfaction scores as an appropriate evaluation measure, since outcome determinants would seem to vary so greatly between patients and their observing parents.

Developing the learning door: A case study in youth participatory program planning, by Justus J. Randolph and Pasi J. Eronen, is the sixth article presented in this issue of Evaluation and Program Planning. The authors present the findings of a case study of the planning process for development of a technology education program. A unique aspect was that the planning group consisted of children as young as 10, along with college-aged students and adult researchers.

The seventh article, *Monitoring and evaluation under the PRSP: Solid rock or quicksand?*, by N. Holvoet and Robrecht Renard looks at the role of evaluation under Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), a framework for foreign aid policy. This relatively new system, wherein aid-recipient nations are responsible for developing the framework for aid use and distribution instead of donor countries, has been effective in promoting country-ownership and participation. However, based on a study of PSRP data from 11 African nations, the authors find that under the new system monitoring and evaluation efforts have suffered by expecting the implementation of too complex of a system when a more incremental approach would be more effective.

Process evaluation of a two-year program to educate community popular opinion leaders in Lima, Peru is the subject addressed by the eighth article, *Implementation and evaluation of an HIV/STD intervention in Peru*. The authors discuss lessons and outcomes related to the evaluation's unique process approach of recruiting and educating persons they refer to as community popular opinion leaders (CPOs). The study results suggest that the program

implementation is going well, with the CPOLs changing their own behavior and engaging in discussion with their contacts throughout the community, suggesting that the process is being implemented as planned and stands a chance of positively impacting the program outcomes.

In the ninth article in this edition, *Beyond the limitations of best practices: How logic analysis helped reinterpret dual diagnosis guidelines*, authors Astrid Brousselle, Lise Lamothe, Celine Mercier, and Michel Perreault examine the program theory behind implementation of integrated treatment models that combine mental health and substance abuse treatment efforts. They describe this logic analysis approach as a “theoretical evaluation...a way to improve the theory of the intervention by comparing program theory against scientific knowledge” (p.96).

Finally, the last article, *Analysis of strategic plans to assess planning for sustainability of comprehensive community initiatives*, studies the degree to which six constructs—sustainability, general, principals of comprehensive strategy, risk and resource assessment, concrete goals, and recommendations—were integrated into 19 separate comprehensive strategy plans. Authors Sanjeev Sridharan, Sodam Go, Heidi Zinzow, Aracelis Gray, and Melissa Barrett found that plans scored substantially lower on sustainability than any of the other six components—a finding seconded through discussions with site coordinators and others directly involved in the comprehensive planning process. Furthermore, these findings are, according to the authors, in line with the bulk of existing literature on sustainability, which supports a need to integrate the concept of program sustainability earlier in the planning process.