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Research Article

A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

The process of conducting an evaluation of organization design and performance remains a form of art or craft which each researcher or analyst is forced to learn by apprenticeship or reinvent by trial and error. Most research methodology texts assume that the researcher is the sole decision maker and user of the results of a studying question. In practice, assessments of complex organizations occur in contexts where the interests and value judgments of many stakeholders need to be taken into account. As a result, people who are commissioned to conduct an organization assessment are confronted with three problems that are largely ignored by organization theorists and research methodologists. (1) Who should decide what measures should be used as the criteria for evaluating an organization? (2) Whose conceptual model or framework should be used to guide the as- sessment? (3) How can facilitate learning and use of results within the organization bei- ng assessed?

This chapter delves into these problems by attempting to (1) clarify some of the conceptual confusion on goals, values, and facts regarding measures of organizational effectiveness. (2) suggest a process model that may be useful for designing and conducting studies to assess organization design and performance, and (3) report our learning experiences in using the process model to guide two longitudinal assessments of organizations.

Conceptual problems of organization effectiveness

Scott (1977) recently pointed out that goals are employed in at least three ways in organizations: (1) to motivate people, (2) to provide direction and constraints on behavi- or, and (3) to provide criteria for identifying and appraising selected aspects of organizational functioning. These conflicting views of goals as factors that (do or do not) motivate and direct behavior of participants are reviewed here primarily so that they may be set aside as largely irrelevant to our present topic. We must analytically distinguish between goals employed to motivate or direct participant's behavior, on the one hand, from goals which are used to set criteria for the evaluation of participant's or the organization's behavior on the other. Scott's perspective allows us to clarify the perspectives of some analysts who ha- ve disassociated themselves from the conventional goal models. For example, Yuchtman and Seashore (1967) have proposed that an organization is effective if it manages to survive. If one views survival as a direction or constraints on organizational behavior, then their approach seems reasonable because a firm cannot obviously continue to operate if it does not maintain a sufficient inflow of essential resources from its environment. However, if Yuchtman and Seashore intended to use survival as a criterion of effectiveness, then it is clear that the third meaning of goals is being used (that is, survival is itself a goal in that it reflect the aspirations of managers to continue the firm inexistence). However, survival may not be a criterion of effectiveness for many organizations. *The Wall Street Journal* provides daily examples in which firms are considered more effective by their owners when they are liquidated, dissolved, or taken over than when they survive. The effectiveness models proposed by other theorists provides additional examples of the different but often-masked uses of the goals concept. Blake and Mouton (1969) state that an organization is effective if its managers exhibit a high concern for people and work (the 9-9 cell of the Managerial Grid). Likert (1967) defines an effective organization as one that approached his "System 4" style. Finally, Beckhard (1969): 10-11) define a healthy organization as one that is aware of, open to, and reactive to change. It searches for new forms and methods of organizing. Employees are entrusted with work responsibilities that are satisfying and increase their self-actualization. An atmosphere of trust prevails among people; conflicts are confronted rather than avoided, and communications occur freely and openly. We interpret these models as applications of the first two ways goals are used, that is, as attempts to motivate and direct the behavior or organizations in ways that are implicitly hypothesized by the authors to lead to effectiveness. However, if these models are interpreted as the criteria of an effective organization, then these theorists are simply revealing their value judgments on what effectiveness means to them, which others may not agree with. For example, Karl Weick (1976) has presented an equally good case for believing that an effective organization is garrulous, clumsy, haphazard, hypocritical, monstrous, octopoid, wandering, and grouchy. Although these opposing views are not necessarily mutually exclusive and may often exist within the same organization, they are reviewed here to illustrate that effectiveness is a value judgment, and that the goals set to motivate, direct, and constrain organization behavior are not the same as those which specify the criteria by which an organization's performance is appraised.

In practices we should, of course, expect the effectiveness criteria to interact over time with the goals set to motivate, direct, and constrain behavior. Hrebiniak (1978) states that this interaction can be observed particularly when assessments are made of organization performance against goals; these assessments represent important learning exercises for those who assign tasks and those who evaluate effectiveness. It force a response to the question of where the organization is versus

where it should have been, and why this is the case. But goal-setting is done not to commit (motivate or direct) the organization to getting from A to B (on of effectiveness). Another purpose is to discover where the organization is, and where it might go next (i.e., to select new effectiveness criteria), an understanding of A and B (Hrebiniak, 1978). In summary, we begin with Scott's suggestion that it is useful to distinguish brew-een goals set to motivate, direct, or constrain behavior and those set to define effectiveness. This distinction clarifies many of the intended meanings of goals and permits one to discuss their interrealations. However since our main purpose is to identify and operarationalize effectiveness, that remainder of this chapter focuses attention on the use of goals to supply criteria for assessing organization effectiveness. In this context, the next issues that require clarification are matters of values and facts regarding goals and criteria of organization effectiveness.

Matters of Values and Facts

John Campbell (1977) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between matters of values and facts. Although the distinction is seldom clearcut and should not be exaggerated, value judgments revolve around question of what goals, criteria, and standards should be chosen to assess the effectiveness of an organization, and why an assessment should be made. Neither the people in organizations nor the outsider studying them can avoid the value judgment of what the goals of the organization should be, even though everyone seems to try…..Well, the obvious moral here is that the value judgment of what goals the organization should adopt must precede everything else how the judgment is madder (e.g., by default) can induce wide variation in way organizational effectiveness is assessed (Campbell, 1977). Once these value judgments are made, it becomes possible to consider more factual matters, which focus on the framework for organization assessment, the reliability of measures, the cost of alternative data collection methods, and the data analysis and reporting procedures. We concur with Campbell's opinion that "most discussion of organizational effectiveness and most research studies attempting to measure it jump to the factual do- main much too soon". Furthermore, it is our opinion that organizational goals and effectiveness criteria have continued to evade organizational theorists for the following reasons. (1) It makes little sense to search for "objective" and universal measures of a concept that is inherently subjective-and is generalizable only to the unique set of decision makers who make the same value judgments in choosing effectiveness criteria. (2) Organization theory and logic of the mind is of little help in defining a concept that reflects the basic values, or simply, the "gut" feelings of people on "what they really want" and "what is important to them". (3) The *processes* by which people in organizations do, don't, and can articulate answers to these questions have been ignored.

A process model for assessing organizations

Figure 1. proposes six phases of activities that often recycle and overlap for conducting an organization assessment designed to answer the three questions in Table 1. The overriding objectives of the process model are to suggest a set of task phases and activities that (1) guides a researcher or analyst in dealing with matters of values and facts while designing and implementing an evaluation of organization effectiveness, and (2) maintains a balanced concern for the technical quality and social acceptance of effectiveness definitions, measures, and explanations that are developed. The process model relies heavily on the evaluation/action research and organization development literature and is a adaptation of the Program Planning and Evaluation Model originally developed by Delbecq and Van de Ven (1971), extended by largely supported (Van *et al*., 1976a,b) Activities within each phase of the process model are now discussed.

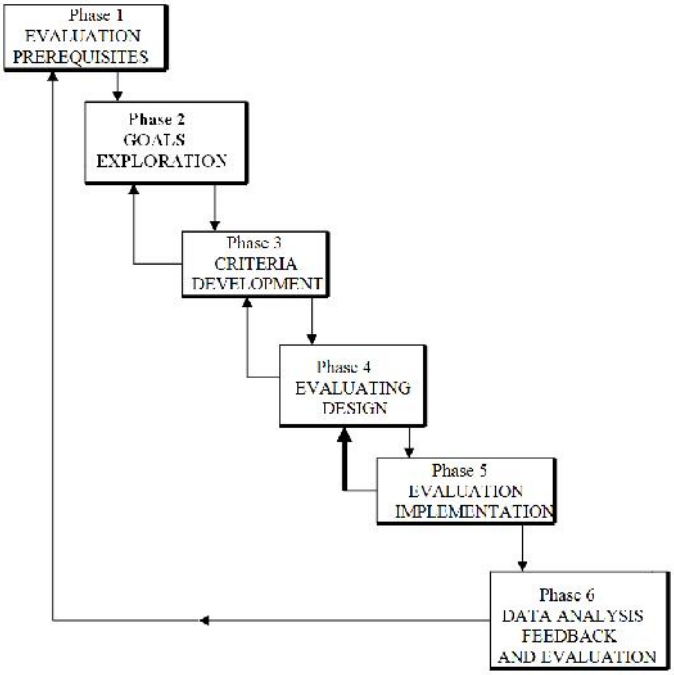

Figure 1. A process model for evaluating organization effectiveness

Phase 1, Evaluating Prerequisites

At the outset, the analyst and the commissioners of the study establish their working contract and clarify their roles by answering the following questions:

1. What are the reasons for conducting an organization assessment?
2. How will the results of the study be used?
3. What organizational components or issues are to be assessed?
4. What individuals and groups will be the users of the study?
5. Who should conduct the evaluation study?
6. Ro what extent is there a commitment to using the methods and knowledge of science to design and conduct the study?
7. What resources are available to conduct the study?

Answers to these questions are crucial for determining whether an evaluation study is worthwhile, what the nature of the working relationship between the analyst and the users will be, and how to tailor the process and content of the evaluation to specific users needs. In varying degrees, the decision to undertake an organization assessment represents a significant commitment of resources and human energy on the part of the analysts and the users involved in the process, as well as all the organizational employees affected by it. It should also be recognized that the involvement of users in the evaluation pro-cess may heighten their expectation that the study itself will increase organization effectiveness in terms of the ways they define it. Furthermore, individuals within complex

organizations have multiple, conflicting, and sometimes dishonest personal motives for and uses of an evaluating study. These realities imply that the negative side effect from naively undertaking an evaluation study without establishing a clear understanding of its process and content can easily outweigh its positive and intended consequences. Thus, the decision on whether or not to undertake an organization assessment should not be considered lightly. As discuss- ed subsequently, it has been the author's experience that most problems encountered in later phases of an evaluation study can be traced back to the initial absence or misunderstanding of answers to the prerequisite questions. With regard to the decision on who should conduct the assessment, Suchman (1967) suggests there are benefits and cost to only using outside evaluators or inside evaluators. The arguments for using an outside evaluator include those of increased objectivity and the ability to see things that persons connected with the organization might simply take for granted. The outside evaluator has less ego involvement in the outcome of the evaluation and will feel less pressure to make compromises in the research design or in the interpretation of the results. On the other hand, the outside evaluator is likely to be less sensitive to either the program being evaluated or to the possible disruption caused by the evaluation study as well as to the practicality of the recommendations that stem from the evaluation. As an outsider he also represents a threat to the staff of the organization. Evaluation by an "insider" has counter advantage and disadvantages. On the positive side, an inside evaluator is more informed about the organization and is in a better position to know which aspects require evaluation. He is also more readily accepted by the staff, especially if the staff considers the study a self-evaluation for self-improvement and results in a greater application of the results. On the negative side, it is extremely difficult for an insider in a self-evaluation to maintain objectivity. There is an almost irresistible tendency to focus upon the successful aspects of the program and to overlook the "minor" weakness or failures. Certain procedures that have a time-honored validity will rarely be brought to question. As a result, evaluation studies by insiders are often considered less credible. From a technical point of view, it is also less likely that the program staff will possess the require research knowledge and skills to conduct a professional evaluation study.

The joint collaboration of insiders and outsiders in conducting an evaluation study, however, has many advantages in a kind of division of labor. The inside evaluator performs the major process role to obtain user involvement in defining and formulating the goals and criteria (Phase 2 and 3) in consultation with the outside evaluator, who is encouraged to raise question. Then, the inside and outside evaluators collaborate in Phase 4 to design evaluation procedures that are scientifically acceptable. Data collection (Phase 5) is conducted by the collaborated efforts of the insiders and outsiders due to the manpower needs during that period. In Phase 6, the outside evaluator performs.the initial data analysis and reporting role, with the inside evaluator serving as a coauthor by reacting to and editing the initial reports. The inside and outside evaluators work as a te- am in conducting the evaluation feedback workshops with users. Throughout the process, the inside and outside evaluators serve as cross checks upon one another to insure that the organization assessment remains o target to users' needs, is sensitive to practical coincerns, and maintains scientific standards of objectivity and quality.

Phase 2, Goal Exploration

Obviously, organizations do not have goals; instead, people have goals for an organization. Therefore, in Phase 2 the evaluators conduct a series of meetings with various groups of users to identify the effectiveness goals they have for the organizational components being assessed. Users were defined previously as people within and outside the organization who had a stake in the organization assessment. If the dominant coalition of decision makers within an organization are chosen in the prerequisites phase as the only users of an OA, (Organzational Assessments) than it is quite likely that the effectiveness goals developed in Phase 2 will narrowly reflect internal managerial and organizational values and tend to ignore issues of who benefits from the organization, whether the organization should exist at all, or what the contributions of the organizations to society or the public should be. These letters issues tend to be questioned only if the user groups involved in Phase 2 represent not only the organizations, funders, community interest groups, and employees within the organization. Including a wide cross section of users to identify effectiveness goals for an organization (1) minimizes the tendency for assessments of organizations to be myopic, (2) brings out the different and often conflict goals various stakeholders expect of an organization and a consequence (3) tends to produce the information needed to stimulate creative problem solving and conflict resolution in choosing effectiveness goals that are responsive to the multiple expectations people ma- ke of an organization.

As discussed previously, these effectiveness goals are value judgments. Rand (1964) states that all values have two attributes: (1) *content*, or what desired results users want an organization to attain, and (2) *intensity*, or how important each of these desired results are to the users. An individual's desired results ranked by intensity represent his or her goal priorities, and the goal priorities of a group would be the sum of the members' intensity ratings for each goal (Locke, 1976).

It is presumptions to expect users to be able or willing to articulate completely the content and intensity of their effectiveness goals for an organization. That would be analogous to expecting an individual to verbalize completely the personal goals for his or her life. However, it is even more presumptions for an analyst to impose his or her own value criteria on which an organization by selecting the effectiveness goals and criteria on which an organization will be evaluated without consulting the people who are the principal users of the study.

The effectiveness goals users cite can often be classified and operationalized further in the following categories: (1) the quantity and quality of inputs (means) and outputs (ends), (2) efficiency (the ration of outputs to inputs), (3) employee moral (job satisfaction and absenteeism), and (4) impact (growth, market share, and contributions to the larger environment or community of which the organization is a part). Another nominal group representing a cross-section of users may meet to clarify and rank goals in these categories. The goal exploration phase concludes with an evaluation session in which user re- presentatives review the unique sets and priority rankings of effectiveness from each user group, confront disagreements, and agree to proceed to the next phase with an explicit awareness of the goals on which there is consensus and conflict among user groups.

Phase 3, Criteria Development

The evaluators obtain the value judgments of users on the criteria they will use to assess the extent to which each goal priority is in attained. Whereas goals are desired end states, criteria are operational dimensions or continua representing the degree to which goals are met. The process of criteria development requires that users make three normative discussions: (1) Select *concrete observable characteristics or dimensions* that are to be measured and used as indicators of goal attainment; (2) specify *standard* or cutoff points on the dimensions above which users believe goals are attained and below which goal attainment is considered unsatisfactory; and (3) in the usual case of multiple criteria, determine the *weights of importance* to be assigned to the dimensions in order to understand hierarchical relations among the criteria and to develop an aggregate or composite measure of goal attainment.(Scott, 1977; Campbell, 1977). The evaluators assist users in making these decisions incrementally through a series of group meetings, discussions, and workshops as in Phase 2.

Of course, the raw data obtained in the criterial development workshops do not automatically become useful for developing operational measures of effectiveness. A necessary intermediate task between the generation of criteria and the development of effectiveness indicators is a content analysis of the qualitative data. Three search and two screening decision rules are proposed as follows to guide evaluators in choosing measurable criteria of effectiveness.

1. Search for criteria of each goal priority that are observable over wide variations in the organizational components being evaluated. Criteria on which there are little or no variations are of limited use for comparative evaluation because they do not discriminate between the organizational components being evaluated (Hage, 1971).
2. Search for criteria of each goal priority that seem to capture or explain a large number of related criteria. It is impossible to measure all criteria that may be considered relevant indicators of goal attainment. The parsimony is an important decision rule for content analysis.
3. Search for criteria that are easiest to measure in a reliable and valid way and lowest in measurement cost.
4. Classify criteria into those which are considered *means* and *ends* of organization effectiveness. That is, determine whether each criterion is a dependent variable in its own right (an end), or whether it is an independent or moderating variable (a means, that is believed to influence some more terminal outcome or end.
5. Classify criteria by levels of organization analyses, that is, those that pertain to individuals, work groups, sections, divisions, and the total organization.

If the overall definition of organization effectiveness is the degree to which the goals and criteria judged to be “ends” are attained, then a direct assessment of effective- ness is possible by operationalizing and measuring only the ends criteria. It is tempting to simply measure all key criteria and empirically establish the pattern of means ends relations among the criteria. However, it is important to recognize that the classification of criteria as means or ends is not a methodological but a theoretical question that requires careful consideration of what goals the users consider ends or outcomes. The classic example is the conflicting empirical evidence on whether job satisfaction causes performance o the latter causes the former, or whether both are ends in their own right (Cummings and Schwab, 1973). Ultimately, the question must be resolved by what outcomes users to include as measures of effectiveness. The question of which criteria are means or ends is largely a function of the level of organization analysis. Means criteria for the total organization are usually ends criteria for specific section, units, or individuals within the organization. However, the aggregation of effectiveness criteria for all individuals, groups, and sections generally do not add up to total organization effectiveness.(Hannan and Freeman,1977). The classification of effectiveness criteria by levels of organization analysis require matching the objectives with the individuals or units held accountable.

A substantial proportion of the classification bias that necessarily enters the content analysis of the data can be detected and corrected in a rigorous review session with us users at the conclusion of the criteria development phase. At this review session, the evaluators present the major effectiveness criteria developed by each user group and present their content analysis of the criteria. In addition, conflicting priorities among the effectiveness criteria of various user groups are outlined. User representatives at the evaluation session then review this material, are encouraged to confront disagreements, and asked if the evaluators can proceed to the design phase with an explicit understanding of the vary- ing degrees of consensus among users on effectiveness goals and criteria

Phase 4. Evaluation Design

Given the goals and criteria chosen by the user groups, the evaluators work with technical staff within the organization to develop and pilot test a set of effectriveness measures. In addition, they conduct a workshop with user representatives to develop an overall conceptual model for explaining organizational effectiveness (question 3 in Figure 1.). In ongoing organizations, many effectiveness measures that directly reflect users’ criteria may already be available in existing performance reporting systems. However, al- though performance reporting is omnipresent in organizations, almost every system has something wrong with it (H\aberstroh, 1965). A socalled “objective” measure of effectiveness in a reporting system is a subjective measure once removed (Campbell, 1976). Many kinds of work occur under circumstances which render inspection impossible, and many performance reporting system are complex that even experienced employees find it difficult to determine what proportions of their working time or completed tasks should be assigned to what standardized time and work output codes designated in the reporting systems. Thus, a search for effectiveness measures from existing information systems requires the same amount of careful investigation and validity checking as would be same amount of careful investigation and validity checking as would be required in designing and testing a new system for measuring effectiveness. A good starting point is to conduct an intensive series of meetings with the technical staff responsible for maintaining and analyzing data from the information systems of an agency. By sistematiclly reviewing each effectiveness criterion selected by users, the technical staff can suggest specific measures fir each criterion from the existing

system. These staff members are generally very knowledgeable about the major problems with each measure in the organization's performance reporting systems. To incorporate the in depth knowledge of the organization that users have and to facilitate their ultimate use of the evaluation results, we have found it helpful to involve users in the formal development of a conceptual model for explaining organization effectiveness. For example, this can be conducting a Nominal Group meeting with users in which selected effectiveness measures are presented, and users are asked. "What situational or organizational factors predict or explain effectiveness (as defined)?" Such a Nominal Group will not result in a complete conceptual scheme, nor does it replace the need for the analyst to have a systematic theory of organization and effectiveness. Instead, such a meeting provides evaluators the information needed to modify their theoretical terminology into the argot and jargon comfortable to users, and to extend or modify their theory to include the factors of concern to practitioner. Indeed, when there is a prevailing consensus among practitioners on the conventional wisdom for including or excluding factors in a conceptual scheme, how can a conscientious evaluator justify ignoring them?

Once the evaluators have (1) identified acceptable effectiveness measures in existing reporting systems and (2) obtained user input to develop and evaluate a conceptual model for answering question 3 in Table 1, they proceed to develop the operational research design for assessing an organization. The process involves the technical tasks described in most research methodology texts for developing a good research design-including selection procedures, sample size, measurement, and procedures for data collection, analysis, and feedback. With regard to measurement and instrument construction, the evaluators develop or select measures of organization design factors included in the conceptual model and additional effectiveness measures not available in existing information systems,. Measures of many situational and organizational factors included in the model can be obtained from published measurement instruments. Indeed, the major purpose for the remaining chapters of this book is to present and evaluate a set of indices in the OAI that may be useful for precisely this purpose. However, just as in the case of using effectiveness measures from existing information systems, the selection and use of published scales and instruments requires a careful evaluation of their measurement properties. This requires that the evaluators review the studies where the selected measures have been used, and also contact the developers of the measurement instruments directly to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each measure and what changes they suggest to avoid past mistakes. Finally, no measurement instrument is applicable to all organizations. Mo-difications in the wording of some questions and data collection procedures will be necessary. A pilot test of any instrument should be conducted in the organizations being evaluated before it is used in Phase 5, even for those measures found to be highly reliable and valid in other studies. This is because evaluations of any measurement instrument are situation specific and limited to the sample or organizations in which the instruments were tested. The work in this phase concludes with a review session with user representatives to evaluate the research design, to revise it where necessary, and to obtain a decision to proceed to Phase 5. Given the knowledge and resource constraints an ideal design, the evaluators present the limitations of the proposed effectiveness study in terms of the desired information that cannot be provided and the factors threatening the internal and external validity of the research results (Campbell and Stanley,1963). The users then judge whether and how to proceed with the evaluation, with a clear understanding of its limitations.

Phase 5, Evaluation implementation

The evaluators and technical staff implement the study by following the procedures outlined and approved in the Phase 4 evaluation design. The principal concerns during this phase are (1) maintaining integrity and controls on the uniformity of data collection procedures, (2) tracking of organizational units and respondents, particularly with a longitudinal study, (3) recording of unanticipated events which may influence results of experimental or quasi-experimental study, and (4) responding to feelings of tgreat and sensitivities of respondents and users.

Phase 6, Data Analysis, Feedback, and Evaluation

The evaluators process the data to construct computer data files and analysis the data following procedures set forth in the evaluation design (Phase 4). The major process concerns during this phase are to provide users opportunities to participate in analyzing, interpreting, and learning from the results of the evaluation study. Although the most appropriate ways for doing this are unknown, we have relied upon a series of one-and two-day workshop with users in which preliminary and interim findings on initial question and problems are presented verbally, in writing and with illustrations. These workshops begin with are view of the purposes for the study, the effectiveness goals and criteria selected by users, and the design and conduct of the study. The scores and standards on the effectiveness criteria of each user group are presented. These highlight the alternative outcomes that are obtained given the conflicting criteria of different users. In addition, simple descriptive and analytic statistics are presented that show the alternative organizationl design profiles that are obtained for high and low effective organizational units under alternative criteria of effectiveness. When these findings are presented, users quite naturally raise a host of questions and issues. They become embroiled in group discussions and debates as they review and evaluate answered by reanalyzing the data, and these become part of the agenda for the next workshop. Some of the questions can be answered by reanalyzing the data, and these become part of the agenda for the next workshop. Some of the questions raised can be clarified and answered directly with the data at hand and require that users make some decisions to change existing organizational patterns. Finally, some new issues and effectiveness goals are raised which cannot be resolved with the current evaluation data and become the inputs for conducting the next assessment cycle of Phases 1 to 6. Subsequent assessment cycle generally require less effort because only marginal revisions are made in each phase from the preceding cycle. However, with each recycling of the evaluation phases, there are significant increases in the amount of information and knowledge available for predicting and explaining organization effectiveness with longitudinal analyses of the data. Moreover, an ongoing process of organization assessment permits users to determine objectively, and thereby learn the consequences of their decisions to implement changes in the organization based on problems identified in previous evaluation cycles.

DISCUSSION

The process described here for assessing organizations may appear to the reader as being too structured, requiring so much involvement of users in each evaluation phase that of stretched out to be an endless series of conflict-ridden meetings and potential veto decisions. Admittedly, the OA process model will not provide speedy solutions, and deviates considerably from conventional notions of what is involved in conducting an organizational study. This is because the OA process model is intended to avoid many of the unintended consequences that result from the ways research and evaluation studies are traditionally conducted. Argyris (1968) points out that in efforts to achieve traditional criteria of "rigorous" research (establish experimental controls, minimize contamination, standardize observations, replicate procedures, etc) the researcher places organizational participants (apply called "subject") into a world where their "behavior" is defined, controlled, evaluated, and reported to a degree that is comparable to the behavior of workers in the most mechanized assembly-line conditions". Argyris goes on to argue convincingly that since the temporary conditions established by traditional research methods are very similar to those found in highly authoritarian organizations, then the unintended consequences found in these organizations are in varying degrees similar to those found in temporary research settings. These unintended consequences of traditional field studies (which parallel hose found in formal organizations) include: not responding to questionnaires or physically withdrawing from interviews (absenteeism and turnover), fudging or lying in answers to questions (sabotage), second-guessing the research design and trying to circumvent it in some fashion (soldering), participating in the study for a price (emphasis on monetary rewards), and ignoring or rejecting study findings (apathy and nonresponsiibility).

We view the OA process model as a realistic attempt to: (1) avoid these unintended consequences of traditional research methods, (2) identify and confront the different and conflicting values held by various groups of users regarding any organizational assessment, and (3) cope with the lack of knowledge about what factors and issues are critical for investigating the specific questions and problems requiring solutions. In even moderately complex and changing organizations, these "crises" pf values and knowledge" (Friedmann, 1973) are beyond the cognitive and physical limits of any single central evaluation or planning unit. The proposed solution is to portray the OA process as a participative form of learning between users and evaluators who collaborate to design and conduct a study that incorporates their value judgments and conceptual perspectives. This portrait is very consistent with Lewin's (1947) original model of action research, which called for repeating cycles of data gathering analysis, planning of action, implem- entation of action, and measurement of the impact of the action. More specifically, the OA process model relies on theory and research which suggests that *learning, technical quality,* and *social acceptance* of which suggests that *learning, technical quality,* and *social acceptance* of solutions to complex problems can be enhanced in four important ways.

First, the proposed process divides the entire evaluation effort into an adaptive but structural set of stages which are similar to the basic phases of creative decision making or problem solving (Thompson and Tuden, 1959), Maier,1964 and Strodtbeck, 1967; Delbecq and Van de Ven, 1971). The evaluation process begins with extended explorations of users' value judgments on effectiveness goals and criteria in Phases 2 and 3 before jumping to more factual matters of evaluation design, implementation, and analysis in Phase 4 to 6. In this way the evaluation process clearly distinguished and addresses matters of values and facts regarding organization effectiveness as Campbell (1976) proposes. Of course, no one evaluation phase deals solely with matters of values or facts. Instead, it is more correct to say that each phase includes varying degrees of factual and value-laden tasks.

Second, the proposed evaluation phases should be viewed as a continuous process of incremental action, review, and adaptation over time and not a discreet, one-shot go/no-go decision. Emphasis is placed on taking and assessing small, tentative, and consecutive steps in evaluation, with each step being subject to review, modification, and reiteration on the basic of experience and knowledge gained during the intervening period. In this way, users cam second-guess their initial values judgments, and tangible effectiveness goals and alternative conceptual schemes of organizations become apparent during the process. The design and use an organization assessment thereby become fused during the course of the action itself (Suchman, 1971; Friedmann, 1973).

Third, the proposed assessment process emphasizes the participation of users, technical staff, and other interest groups in each phase on problems relevant to their functional expertise, experience, and organizational position. Participation not only bring out differing user values and the technical complexities of an evaluation study, it also legitimates and build support and use of the stud. Indeed, there is extensive research evidence to suggest that active self-assessment their adoption of a program (e.g., Bennis *et al*., 1962; Delbecq *et al*., 1975; Filley *et al*., 1976). Bass (1971), for example, found that performance, satisfaction, and motivation of individuals in implementing their own plans are higher than when they carry out someone else's plan. Applying the concept of partici- pation to the design and conduct of an organizational study, Argyris (1968) reports the following:

In our experience the more subjects are involved directly (or through representatives) in planning and designing the research, the more we learn about the best ways to ask questions, the critical question from the employees' views, the kinds of resistances each research methods would generate and the best way to gain genuine and long-range commitment to the researcj.

Finally, the OA process model attempts to address the pluralistic nature of organizations that continually change over time. In most organizations, there are multiple evaluative and monitoring efforts that occur simultaneously. Each of these efforts is conducted with limited knowledge on behalf of those doing the evaluation. Each has its own dictinct sets of users, yet each also overlaps with other sets of users. This implies that, at any one point in time, no one evaluation unit nor any one set of users has sufficient knowledge, control, or power to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of organization effectiveness. However, over time coordinated evaluation efforts can be enhanced (1) by involving other evaluation units in formulation flexible "working" evaluation designs, and (2) through an ongoing process of diffusing evaluation findings to other evaluation units and users of the social system,

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed some of the process problems in conducting an organization assessment. It was argued that effectiveness is inextricably tied to the concept of organization goals. However, to study effectiveness systematically, it is important to distinguish goals for motivating and directing behavior from effectiveness goals and to understand matters of values and facts of the latter. Specially an understanding of organization effectiveness requires answers to: (1) What are the desired results? (2) How should they be measured? and (3) What produces or causes them? The first question primarily requires a value judgment, whereas the latter two are mostly factual. A process model for conducting an organization assessment was developed for answering these questions. The model emphasizes that user involvement on effectiveness goals and criteria and for enhancing the understanding and utilization of research knowle- dge. The theoretical justification for the evaluation process model was presented, as well as the learning experience obtained in using the model at different stages of its learning experience obtained in using the model at different stages of its development in two state agencies. Of course, these learning experiences are simply subjective and retrospective impressions and certainly do not constitute a test of the model. However, we are increasingly using the process model to guide the conduct of future assessments of organizations. The model highlights critical issues in conducting action/evaluation research and provides guidelines for interfacing users and evaluators on matters of values and further suggests group processes and agenda formats to conduct each evaluation phase. Finally, the general character of the process is consistent with current research on the dissemination and utilization of research knowledge (e.g., Rogers and Schoemaker, 1971; Havelock, 1973; Clark, 1976).

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