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Methodology

Javier Mignone
College of Community & Global Health
The University of Manitoba
Javier.mignone@umanitoba.ca




1



Methodological/methods decisions

- Methodology refers to the overall approach used for an evaluation, which includes the broader theoretical perspective and guiding principles.
- Methods refer to specific techniques, procedures, or tools employed for data collection and analysis.



2



Methodological/methods decisions (cont'd)

- There are no rigid rules for making methodological decisions. Corollaries to this lack of rules are:
- There is no single best plan for an evaluation
- There is no perfect design
- There are always errors and ambiguities

3



Methodological/methods decisions (cont'd)

- Different methods are appropriate for different situations (paradigm of choices)
- Evaluation methods are to be judged on the basis of appropriateness, utility, practicality, credibility, and relevance. These criteria are necessarily situational and context-bound. One cannot judge the adequacy of methods used in a specific evaluation without knowing the purpose of the evaluation, the intended uses of the findings, the resources available, and the trade-offs negotiated (Patton, 2012).

4



Methodological Triangulation

“It has become generally accepted that a mix of theories, analysis strategies, and methodologies often work best in evaluation, particularly in the development field, given the growing scale and complexity of development projects, programs or policies. Mixed approaches can help strengthen the evaluation.” (Morra Ima & Rist, 2009, p. 28)

5



Monitoring

Monitoring is a methodological approach that routinely repeats measurements over a set time period. What we decide to measure depends on whether we are monitoring the implementation of the program or its outcomes.

6



Case Studies

Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required. The focus is on understanding how and why certain decisions, events, or outcomes have occurred. As Robert K. Yin (2017) states, case studies are “an empirical inquiry that investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear, and multiple sources of evidence are used.”

7



Naturalistic

Naturalistic inquiries observe ongoing programs as they unfold without attempting to control or manipulate the setting, situation, people or data. They aim to make sense of programs within (and in relation to) their naturally occurring context. Essentially, it’s an inductive approach, meaning that evaluators begin with specific observations and build toward general patterns. Has many similarities with case studies.

8



Descriptive/Non-experimental

A descriptive approach looks at characteristics, frequencies and associations between the intervention and its effects. It measures in a non-experimental way the relationship between process activities (intervention) and outcomes. It is an appropriate methodology for outcome questions, but not for attribution questions.

9



Descriptive/Non-experimental

1)	I	X	O			
2)	I	X	O	O		
3)	I	O	X	O		
4)	I	O	X	O	O	O
5)	I	O	X	O	X	O

X = Intervention; O = Observation; I = Intervention group;
C1 = Comparison group 1; C2 = Comparison group 2; Y =
Intervention in comparison group

(Shadish, et al., 2002)

10



Experimental/Quasi-experimental

Experimental and quasi-experimental methodologies can determine if the program intervention played a role in the outcomes of interest (attribution questions). These methodologies can do so because they compare groups that have received the intervention with those that have not.

11




Experimental/Quasi-experimental

6)	I	O	X	O	O	O
	C1	O	Y	O	O	O
	C2	O	O	O	O	O

X = Intervention; O = Observation; I = Intervention group;
C1 = Comparison group 1; C2 = Comparison group 2; Y =
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(Shadish, et al., 2002)

12



Distinction between non-experimental, quasi-experimental and experimental

Non-experimental designs


- Single group pretest-posttest (#2-3)
- Single group time-series (#4)

Quasi-experimental designs (non-random assignment) (#6)

- Non-equivalent control group with pre- and posttest
- Time-series with non-equivalent control group

True experimental designs (random assignment) (#6)

13



Indigenous methodologies

We shouldn't assume there is a pan-Indigenous approach to research and evaluation, but there are a series of principles and strategies formulated by Indigenous scholars that should inform evaluations conducted in partnership with Indigenous organizations and peoples.

14



Review and Synthesis

The review and synthesis of existing literature is a way of addressing prospective evaluation questions, which assess the likely outcomes of a program based on the findings from earlier studies. It consists of a systematic review and synthesis of scientific literature to check if our beliefs (theory of change) about the process we plan to use, or are already using, can lead to the outcomes we expect. (systematic reviews, metanalysis, scoping reviews, realist reviews).


15



Methods - Data collection approaches – qualitative (mostly)

- Open-ended or semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Direct observation
- Journal
- Document review
- Combination of approaches (e.g, photo-voice; life-story board)


16



Data Collection Approaches— Quantitative (mostly)

- Data collected from existing records
- Development of codes for existing records
- Development of questionnaires (surveys)
 - Self-administered
 - Administered by interviewer in-person, phone, online
 - Questions can be open-ended or close-ended
 - Other options: e.g., polling booth surveys

17



Mixed Methods

Is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative approaches.


Sequential

Quan → Qual
Qual → Quan

Concurrent

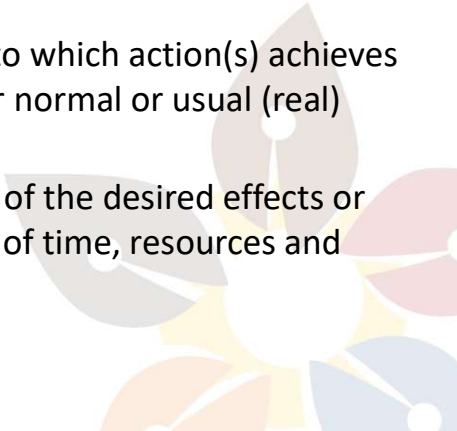
Quan
Qual

18




The Three E's

- Efficacy: the ability of an intervention to produce the desired beneficial effect in expert hands and under ideal circumstances.
- Effectiveness: the degree to which action(s) achieves the intended results under normal or usual (real) circumstances.
- Efficiency: The production of the desired effects or results with minimum use of time, resources and efforts.

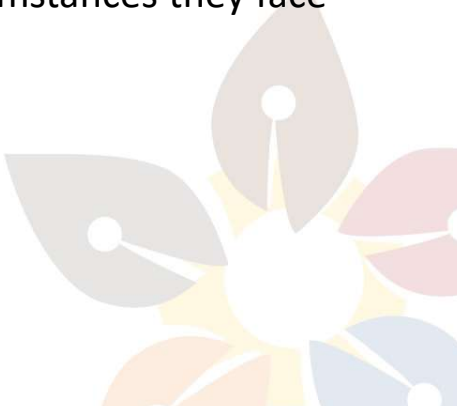


19

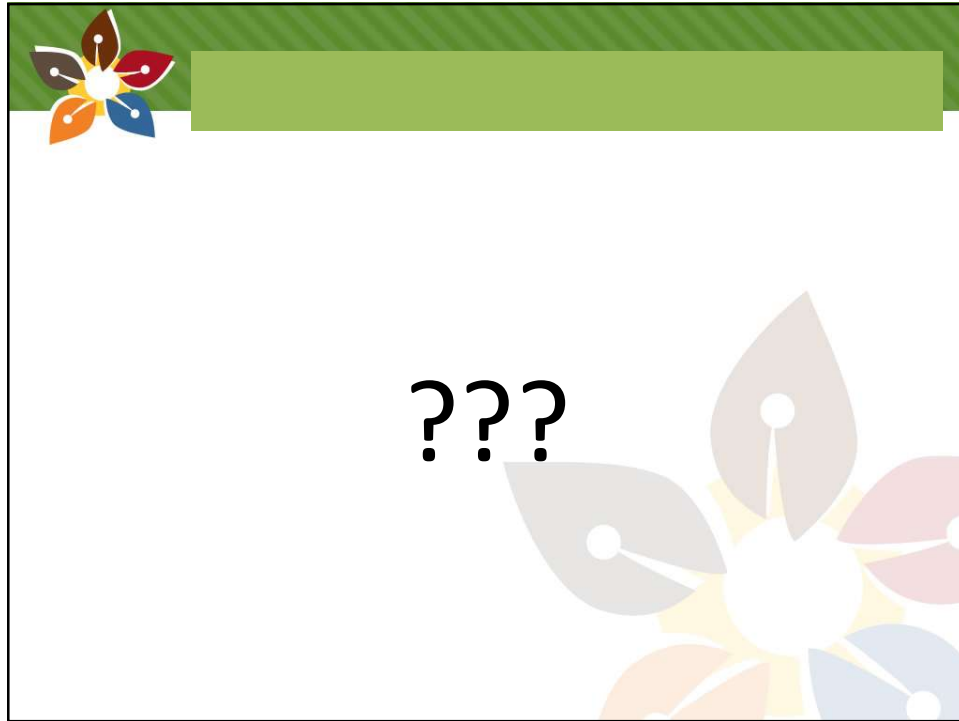


It all depends...

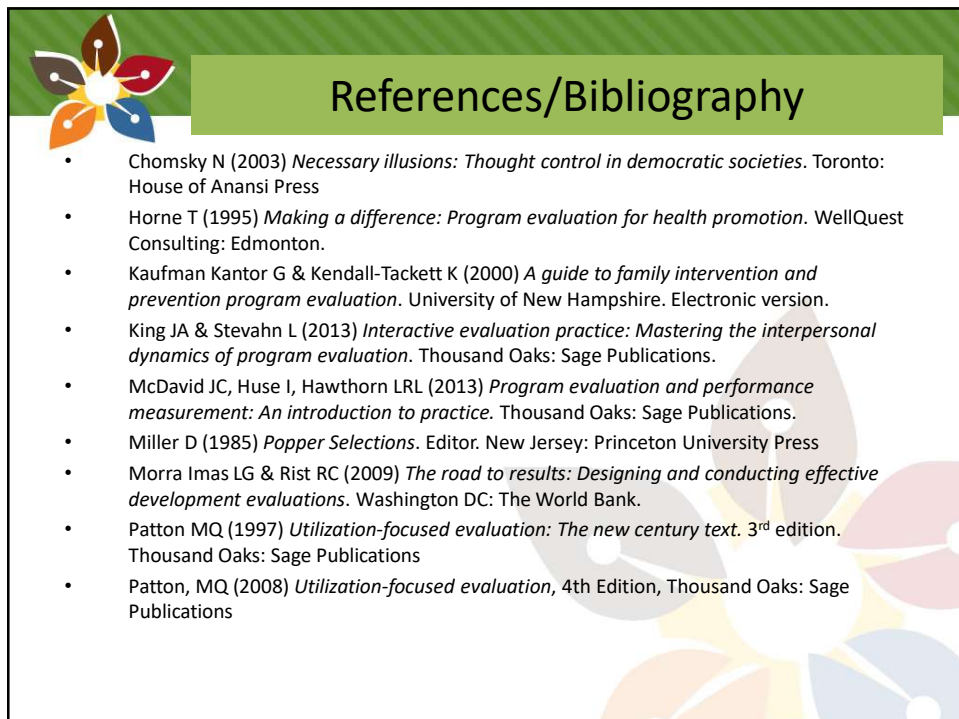
Wise evaluators tailor their approach to fit the complexity of the circumstances they face (Patton, 2012).




20



21



22



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23