

Glossary of terms

Indicator

An indicator is a specific, observable, measurable marker that can show progress has been made – it can measure specific accomplishments or some kind of change (in behaviour, condition, etc.).^[4,6]

Indicators show whether or not progress on your program has been achieved. Progress is measured based on pre-determined aims and objectives of your program. In other words, a survey would only be a good indicator if it relates to your program's specific goals.

The selection of good indicators is sometimes considered the most complex part of building an evaluation assessment.^[1]

Instrument

An evaluation instrument is a data collection tool that can be used to evaluate one or more aspects of a program or intervention.^[2] The term 'instrument' is commonly used to refer to a questionnaire, scale, or individual questions.

Logic model

A logic model is a tool that has been used by the social service sector to improve the design of programs and interventions. By defining what goes into a program and the expected result of that program, the model can describe how change is expected to occur. Through this process, the planning, execution, and evaluation of a program is clarified.^[3,5]

In essence, a logic model is an attempt to capture the relationship between long-term outcomes and the program so that organizations can demonstrate the effectiveness of their activities. If the links between these activities and outcomes are strong, there may be no need to measure the long-term outcomes separately.^[3]

Scale

A scale is a set of questions that have been grouped together in order to collectively measure a distinct concept, such as an attitude or ability. For example, a single question may not be able to measure the concept of 'self-confidence'. However, there may be a group of questions that, when put together, can provide one with a 'self-confidence score'. All questions that are contained within a scale must be relevant to a program's logic model in order for it to be effectively used for evaluation.

A scale assumes that the concept that it is measuring does not change, and it reliably measures what it is supposed to be measuring. A good scale provides the same or similar results every time that it is administered.^[1]

Heading descriptions

Data source

The data source section tells you how the data for this particular question or scale should be collected – through a participant survey, bank account information, transactional data, etc. Based on this information, you can determine if you would have the capacity to collect that type of information.

Instrument description

The instrument description section provides information about who developed the question or scale, how they developed it, and what it is trying to measure.

Limitations

The limitations section outlines the shortcomings of the way the question or scale was tested. Based on this, you can make an informed decision as to whether you would like to use this question or scale with your participants.

Population

The population section provides information about who the question or scale was tested with so that you can determine applicability for your own program participants. You can use it with other populations, but be aware that it may not have been tested with them in mind.

Question description

The question description section provides information about what the question is trying to measure, what information you will need in order to use this question (e.g. access to bank account information), and who the question was developed for.

Reference

The reference section links you to the original documents and reports associated with the question or scale. You can refer to this report for more detailed information on how the question or scale was developed, any specific scoring methods, and the suggestions of the authors on how to use the question or scale.

Scoring

The scoring section tells you whether the scale or question you have chosen has an existing scoring method developed by the original authors. If it does, you will be directed to the original report in the reference section. If it does not, you will be directed to the document on ‘Designing Your Evaluation – Some Tips’ for more information on how to analyze the data the questions will provide you.

Terms of Use

The terms of use section outlines your responsibilities as a user to make an attribution to the original author of the question or scale when you use it with your participants or publish a report. It also provides the licensing terms. We have only accepted measures that are free to use by nonprofits, and most of them are free to use by anyone whether for-profit or non-profit.

Where to get the instrument

The 'where to get the instrument' section links you to the document where the questions or scales themselves are housed. This may be the same or different from the reference link.

References

- [1] Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. (2015). Measuring financial well-being: a guide to using the CFPB Financial Well-Being Scale. http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201512_cfpb_financial-well-being-user-guide-scale.pdf

- [2] European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (n.d.). Evaluation Instruments Bank (EIB). <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/eib>

- [3] Kerr, G. & Powers, L.C. (2009) Measuring the Benefit of Social Ventures: Social innovation and entrepreneurship – enabling solutions to complex social problems. Mars White Paper Series.

- [4] Lennie, J., Tacchi, J., Koirala, B., Wilmore, M., Skuse, A. (2011). Equal Access participatory monitoring and evaluation toolkit: Setting objectives and indicators. http://betterevaluation.org/toolkits/equal_access_participatory_monitoring

- [5] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2002). Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. <http://www.oecd.org/development/peer-reviews/2754804.pdf>

- [6] Salbarria-Pena, Y., Apt, B.S., Walsh, C.M. (2007). Practical Use of Program Evaluation among Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Programs: Developing Evaluation Indicators. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Developing%20Evaluation%20Indicators.pdf>

