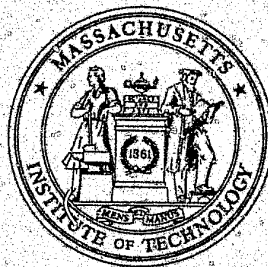
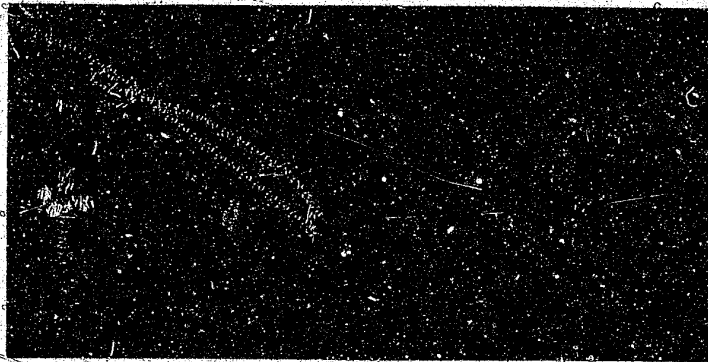


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¹¹⁰FIFTH QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

January 1, 1979 - March 31, 1979

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF METHODS USED
IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE EVALUATIONS

by

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"An Empirical Study of Methods Used In Criminal Justice Evaluations,"
Grant No. 78NI-AX-0007, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Law
Enforcement Assistance Administration, National Institute of Law
Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

Introduction:

Three major pieces of work were accomplished during this quarter, completing the first phase of research on our sample of 200 criminal justice program evaluations and preparing for the second phase. The first of these, a draft version of our "Interim Analysis of 200 Evaluations On Criminal Justice" was completed and presented at a National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice seminar held in Washington, D.C. on March 22, and was very well received. A finalized version will be available at the end of April. Also during this quarter, the evaluator and manager/funder questionnaires (for the second phase of research) were pre-tested and revised in preparation for distribution in May. In addition, we developed a Data Analysis Packet to structure the analysis of responses to these questionnaires.

Questionnaires:

The evaluator and manager/funder questionnaires were developed in order to verify the results obtained from the first phase of research. It is expected that the authors and consumers of the evaluation reports that we read will be able to provide us with further insight into the actual process of criminal justice evaluation, a perspective often lacking in written final reports.

During this quarter the evaluator and manager/funder questionnaires were pre-tested by people involved in recent evaluations of criminal justice programs in eastern Massachusetts. Based on pre-testor comments and further introspection, some relatively minor changes have been made on these questionnaires and final versions have been prepared. Upon completion of our search (being valiantly conducted by Miss Dawn Richard

with assistance from LEAA) for the individuals involved in the studies in our sample, the questionnaires will be mailed out the second week in May. Copies of the questionnaires are attached as Appendix A.

Data Analysis Packet:

The motivation for writing out data analysis procedures stems from two concerns: first, that our hypotheses be clearly stated and that all people engaged in the research share the same understanding of them, and second, that the actual process of analyzing the data be as clear-cut and streamlined as possible. (A computer program will be developed specifically for this phase of the research, based on this packet.) Some sample pages from the packet appear as Appendix B.

Vertical Cuts:

Progress was also made on the project's "vertical" (or theoretical) cuts during this quarter. Ed Kaplan continued his thesis work and produced a draft working paper entitled "Models for the Evaluation of Treatment-Release Corrections Programs," to appear next quarter.

Vicki Bier continued her background reading on the issue of randomization and obstacles to implementing it. Her aim is to develop helpful semi-random designs for use in social program evaluations. To this end, she has conducted an exploratory analysis of a semi-random design used by the Vera Institute of Justice for evaluating a pre-trial program. Her conclusions will appear in a paper to appear next quarter.

Tim Eckels has been researching and writing the second half of a two-part report on the need for effective process evaluation. The first

section of the report deals with issues surrounding the use of process evaluation as a complement to experimental design. In the second section, several means by which experimental approaches can be enhanced by process-oriented techniques will be proposed. Systematic formats for using process evaluation to handle problems that arise from reliance on experimental design will be presented. These formats will prescribe the timing and character of the process component, yet they will also allow for a great deal of flexibility. It is hoped that the proposed designs will offer guidance to evaluators seeking more comprehensive evaluation approaches. Tim will be finishing this part of the project in early May.

The Future:

We anticipate having enough information on most of the studies in our sample to warrant distribution of the evaluator and manager/funder questionnaires by the second week in May. They will be mailed out on a rolling basis, in the hope that responses will thus arrive on a rolling basis, making data storage and processing more manageable.

Our research so far has stimulated more thought on the utilization of evaluations in decision-making, and on ways to improve the evaluation process. This thought is being consolidated in a paper by Richard Larson and Leni Berliner entitled "A Framework for the Comprehensive Evaluation of Evaluations," to appear.

(T2879) QUESTIONNAIRE

Q 1. Where are you *currently* employed and what is your *present* job?

Q 2. (a) Where were you employed during the evaluation? _____

(b) What were your job responsibilities during the evaluation?

Q 3. Was the evaluation performed by:

- (1) _____ program personnel?
- (2) _____ an in-house evaluation team?
- (3) _____ an independent private agency?
- (4) _____ other _____?

Q 4. Did you perform the evaluation:

- | | YES | NO | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To determine whether the desired program outcomes or impacts occurred? |
| (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To assess program activities and operations? |
| (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To publicize the program or methodology? |
| (4) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To aid in program modification and improvement? |
| (5) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To aid in decisions regarding the establishment of similar programs in other locales? |
| (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To fulfill funding requirements? |
| (7) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To aid in decisions about the continuation of the program? |
| (8) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To contribute to social science research? |
| (9) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (specify) _____? |

Q 5. (a) What was the total budget for the evaluation? _____.

(b) What percentage of the program budget was this? _____.

- Q 6. (a) How many people participated in the evaluation? _____
- (b) Please list the positions of the senior evaluation staff members along with a brief description of their backgrounds (degree and field).

- Q 7. Was the evaluation designed (check one):

1. _____ *before* the program or project was implemented?
2. _____ *during* program or project operations?
3. _____ *after* termination of the program or project?

- Q 8. Please indicate whether or not the evaluation was active (i.e., data were being collected) during the following time periods:

Yes No

- (1) ☐ ☐ *during* program design
- (2) ☐ ☐ *at the time of* program implementation
- (3) ☐ ☐ *during* program operations
- (4) ☐ ☐ *after* termination of program operations

- Q 9. With respect to program operations, actual collection of data took place:

- (1) Too early _____ (2) Too late _____ (3) At about the right time _____

- Q 10. Please indicate the time allowed for the evaluation:

- (a) from its design through the final report (total time) _____
- (b) for the collection of data _____

- Q 11. Please indicate the approximate time spent on the following activities, as a percentage of total time spent on the evaluation.

- (1) planning and designing the evaluation _____%
- (2) on-site, observing program activities _____%
- (3) in discussion with program personnel _____%
- (4) collecting data (other than the above) _____%
- (5) analyzing data _____%
- (6) writing the report _____%
- (7) other (specify) _____%

Q 12. Was the evaluation design specified by those who commissioned it?

YES ☐

NO ☐

NOT ☐
APPLICABLE

Q 13. (a) Was there a theory linking program activities to desired results?

YES ☐

NO ☐

(b) If yes, describe it briefly, including how it was derived, if possible.

Q 14. In retrospect, how would you rate the measures or criteria for success used to assess program impact? (circle one)

Highly 1 2 3 4 5 Highly Not applicable
unsatisfactory satisfactory

Q 15. In retrospect, how would you rate the choice of data sources used in the evaluation?

Highly 1 2 3 4 5 Highly Not applicable
unsatisfactory satisfactory

Q 16. Please indicate whether or not any of the following analytical techniques were used in your evaluation.

YES NO

- (1) ☐ ☐ Qualitative Analysis
 (2) ☐ ☐ Descriptive Statistics
 (3) ☐ ☐ Time Series Analysis
 (4) ☐ ☐ Statistical Inference (hypothesis testing)
 (5) ☐ ☐ Analysis of Variance
 (6) ☐ ☐ Regression
 (7) ☐ ☐ Factor Analysis
 (8) ☐ ☐ Formal Models
 (9) ☐ ☐ Other _____

Q 12. Was the evaluation design specified by those who commissioned it?

YES ☐

NO ☐

NOT ☐
APPLICABLE

Q 13. (a) Was there a theory linking program activities to desired results?

YES ☐

NO ☐

(b) If yes, describe it briefly, including how it was derived, if possible.

Q 14. In retrospect, how would you rate the measures or criteria for success used to assess program impact? (circle one)

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 (2) ☐ ☐ Descriptive Statistics
 (3) ☐ ☐ Time Series Analysis
 (4) ☐ ☐ Statistical Inference (hypothesis testing)
 (5) ☐ ☐ Analysis of Variance
 (6) ☐ ☐ Regression
 (7) ☐ ☐ Factor Analysis
 (8) ☐ ☐ Formal Models
 (9) ☐ ☐ Other _____

Q 21. (a) Did any of the following lead you to change the evaluation design?

- | | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Difficulties in implementing the evaluation as originally planned | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Changes in Program operations during the evaluation period | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Interim results which changed your thinking about the program or the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(b) If you answered yes on any of these, please describe briefly the situation that arose and how you modified your evaluation design to respond to it.

Q 22. Given the purposes of the evaluation, please indicate the degree to which the following factors limited the evaluation effort.

- | | not at all
limiting | | | | severely
limiting |
|---|------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|
| a) <u>Funding</u> of the evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) <u>Staff and facilities available</u> to the evaluation effort | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) <u>Amount of time</u> allocated to the evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) The <u>timing</u> of the evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) <u>Requirements stipulated</u> in the grant or contract | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) <u>Working relationship</u> with program personnel | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) Lack of clearly specified program goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Q 23. If you were limited by grant or contract requirements, please describe.

Q 24. (a) Did you include suggestions about how to improve program operations in the evaluation report?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT APPLICABLE _____

(b) Was it within your perceived role to provide such suggestions?

YES _____ NO _____

Q 25. (a) To your knowledge, did the evaluation in any way *influence decisions* about modifying program operations?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT APPLICABLE/DON'T KNOW _____

(b) If not, please explain why; if yes, please describe briefly:

Q 26. (a) Please indicate whether or not the evaluation report discussed the implications of its findings for policy decisions (e.g., decisions regarding the continuation, expansion, replication or replacement of the program).

YES _____ NO _____ NOT APPLICABLE _____

(b) Was it within your perceived role to include such discussion?

YES _____ NO _____

Q 27. (a) To your knowledge, did the evaluation in any way *influence decisions* about any of the policy matters mentioned in the above question?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT APPLICABLE/DON'T KNOW _____

(b) If not, please explain why; if yes, please describe.

Q 28. What do you consider to be the chief strengths of the evaluation?

Q 29. What do you consider to be the chief weaknesses of the evaluation?

Q 30. Additional comments:

Q 31. May we have your name and telephone number in case we have any further questions?

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

(Area Code)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PATIENCE

/DG

*Please return to: M.I.T., Room 24-215
Cambridge, MA 02139*

(TE3079) QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where are you employed now and what is your current job?

2. What was your job title during the time of the evaluation? Please describe briefly your responsibilities at that time.

JOB TITLE:

RESPONSIBILITIES:

3. Did you have the evaluation performed:

- | | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To determine whether the desired program outcomes or impacts occurred? |
| (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To assess program activities and operations? |
| (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To publicize the program or methodology? |
| (4) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To aid in program modification and improvement? |
| (5) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To aid in decisions regarding the establishment of similar programs in other locales? |
| (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To fulfill funding requirements? |
| (7) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To aid in decisions about the continuation of the program? |
| (8) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | To contribute to social science research? |
| (9) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) _____ |

4. Please indicate the degree to which you feel each of the following received satisfactory attention in the evaluation report.

	Highly <u>unsatisfactory</u>					Highly satisfactory	
a) Resources available to implement and operate the program.	1	2	3	4	5		N/A
b) Attitudes and perceptions of the program <i>staff</i> .	1	2	3	4	5		N/A
c) Attitudes and perceptions of the program <i>clients</i> .	1	2	3	4	5		N/A

(continued on next page)

4. (continued)

	Highly unsatisfactory					Highly satisfactory
d) On-going activities and dynamics of the program.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e) Impact of the program on the target population or program area.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
f) Possible unanticipated effects of the program.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
g) Political or situational constraints which limited the effectiveness of the program.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
h) Aspects of the program that could not be easily quantified.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

5. Please rate the choice of measures or criteria for success used to assess program impact.

Highly
unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 Highly
satisfactory

6. Did the evaluators cover a wide enough range of program impacts?

YES ☐

NO ☐

NOT APPLICABLE ☐

7(a). Considering the overall purposes of the evaluation, how would you rate the choice of data sources used?

Highly
unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 Highly
satisfactory

(b). If they were unsatisfactory, what additional sources, if any, should have been used?

8. Please rate the suitability of the technical analysis (e.g., statistical tests) used in this evaluation.

Highly
unsuited 1 2 3 4 5 Highly
suited

9(a). Was there a theory linking program activities to desired results?

YES ☐NO ☐

(b). If yes, describe it briefly, including how it was derived, if possible.

10. The choice of program goals outlined for attention in the evaluation effort was:

Highly
unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 Highly
satisfactory

11. Overall, the evaluation was a fair assessment of the program.

Strongly
disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
agree

12. Communication between the evaluators and the program personnel was:

Highly
unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 Highly
satisfactory

13(a). Did the evaluators discuss their approach and methods with you before the evaluation was performed?

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

(b). If not, would you have preferred that they had?

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

14(a). Do you feel that any significant changes should have been made in the evaluation while it was being done?

YES ☐NO ☐

(b). If yes, please explain.

15. Were the evaluators receptive to any suggestions you might have had about the evaluation while it was being conducted?

YES _____ NO _____ NO SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE _____

- 16(a). Did the evaluators give you feedback on program operations during the time that the evaluation took place?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT APPLICABLE _____

- (b). If not, do you feel you could have used such information?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT APPLICABLE _____

17. The evaluators' knowledge of program activities and dynamics was:

Highly
unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 Highly
satisfactory

18. The presentation of the final report was (please check *one* in each group):

ONE: ☐ *too* technical
☐ *not* technical enough
☐ *at about* the *right* level

THREE: ☐ *too short*
☐ *about* the *right* length
☐ *too long*

TWO: ☐ *well* organized
☐ *poorly* organized

FOUR: ☐ *clearly* written
☐ *difficult* to understand

19. How useful was the evaluation to program personnel?

Not at
all useful 1 2 3 4 5 Very useful

20. How useful was the evaluation to program SPONSORS?

Not at
all useful 1 2 3 4 5 Very useful

21. How useful was the evaluation to other decision-makers? (Please specify decision-makers _____).

Not at
all useful 1 2 3 4 5 Very useful N/A

22. Did the evaluation focus sufficiently on those program elements which are/were within your power to change?

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

23. Did the evaluation report include suggestions about how to improve program operations?

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

- 24(a). Did the evaluation in any way influence decisions about modifying program design or operation?

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

(b). If not, please explain why; if yes, please describe briefly.

25. Please indicate whether or not the evaluation report discussed the implications of its findings for policy decisions (e.g., decisions regarding the continuation, expansion, replication or replacement of the program).

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

- 26(a). Did the evaluation in any way influence decisions about any of the policy matters mentioned in the above question?

YES ☐NO ☐NOT APPLICABLE ☐

(b). If not, please explain why; if yes, please describe briefly.

27. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE CHIEF STRENGTHS OF THE EVALUATION?

28. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE CHIEF weaknesses OF THE EVALUATION?

29. Additional comments: -----

30. May we have your name and telephone number in case we have any further questions?

Name: _____

Telephone: _____
(area code)

:DG

Please return to: M.I.T, Room 24-215
Cambridge, MA 02139

Thank you for your time and patience!

INTRODUCTION

To make the best use of the author and consumer questionnaires, we have written up a general set of "directions" for analysis of the responses, to guide our efforts and enable us to test some hypotheses. We will compare sets of questions from one questionnaire to another, within a questionnaire and occasionally with the original questionnaire that was used to evaluate our sample of 200 criminal justice evaluations. To facilitate the comparison of items, each questionnaire sent out will be labeled with the six-digit number that was used to identify the original report of that particular study.

DATA ANALYSIS PACKET

The packet is arranged approximately in order of hypotheses dealing with evaluation inputs, processes and outputs. The following symbols are used throughout the text:

- O refers to the original (reader) questionnaire
- E refers to the evaluator questionnaire
- M/F refers to the manager/funder questionnaire (sometimes this is split so that only manager responses, for example, would be examined)
- E20 means item #20 on the evaluator questionnaire
- X means that some kind of cross-checking will be performed, exact nature of measures to be performed on cross-tabs will be determined upon examination of responses received.

Before presenting our planned comparisons among questions, it is important to understand that this is a preliminary guide to analysis and, following our own recommendations on evaluation design flexibility, is subject to possible

amendment upon receipt of questionnaire responses.

The first step in the analysis is to select those questionnaires that belong in our various independent categories. The categories are: (1) manager satisfaction, (2) funder satisfaction, (3) usefulness of the evaluation, (4) use of evaluation findings, (5) methodological astuteness of the evaluations, and (6) presence or absence of communication between evaluator and program staff.

MANAGER/FUNDER SATISFACTION

Items used to determine manager satisfaction with the evaluation are #11, 14 and 19 on the manager/funder questionnaire. Managers who rate the evaluation as a fair assessment of the program (ratings of 4 and 5), who don't feel that any significant changes should have been made in the evaluation while it was being done and who rate the evaluation as having been useful to program personnel (again, giving ratings of 4 or 5) would be considered "satisfied." [Note that in this categorization, as in others (and hypotheses tests) involving rating scales, there could be 3 sub-categories, e.g. ratings of 4 and 5 would be "HIGH" and ratings of 3 would be "MEDIUM" and ratings of 1 and 2 would be "LOW." When several items are used, weights will be assigned.] A similar review of responses to items M/F 11, 14 and 20 would be performed to determine funder satisfaction with the evaluation.

USEFULNESS OF THE EVALUATION

To determine whether or not the questionnaire was useful to program

H: Non-useful evaluation may stem from inadequate or improper choice of goals on which evaluation criteria are based.

T: M/F10 X M/F19-22 also X M/F24,26 (use)
 (perception (usefulness)
 of goals
 selected)

H: Non-useful evaluation may stem from inadequate or improper choice of data sources.

T: M19-22 X M7 also F19-22 X F7
 (usefulness) (data sources)

(Data sources used also influence the possible scope of the evaluation, and thus its usefulness and quality.)

H: Evaluator satisfaction with data sources does not assure manager satisfaction with data sources: evaluators need to be more sensitive to manager perceptions about this.

T: M7 X E15

An articulated theory linking program activities to outputs is beneficial in that suitable performance measures are more likely to be chosen in its presence than in its absence.

H: Methodological shortcomings in evaluation may be traced to lack of a theory (on the part of the evaluators) linking program activities to desired outcomes.

The input which perhaps comes most immediately to mind as an "input" is the budget of the evaluation. To judge an evaluation fairly we must have budget information. We will first check Question E22a to see if the evaluators felt that their budget limited efforts. Then:

H: Restricted budgets may be a primary source of trouble
vis-a-vis use (via effects on conduct of evaluation...see
below)

T: (E5a+b) x M/F use/non-use
(budget)

The following questions may be examined in an attempt to determine what (in what instances) budget problems are likely to arise:

E22a in presence of certain responses to E3 (organization of research)
(budget and E4 (purposes)
as
limit)

H: Lower budgets will be associated with "less qualified" personnel

T: E5(b only) X E6

We will examine responses to Question 5b, in conjunction with our original assessment of the quality of the evaluation, to see, for programs of a certain size, what percentage of the total program budget would be necessary to ensure effective evaluation. (Divide evaluations into HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW on evaluation budget as proportion of total program budget, and see where the "good evaluations occur, by size of program.)

TIMING

The timing of the evaluation is important in two ways. First, the timing of evaluation design and procedures affects the adequacy of program coverage, and second, if performed late, the results may not reach decision-makers in time for them to have any use.

H: Evaluations that are designed late tend to be less useful.

T: usefulness X E7 (design, divided into before,
(pre-selected) during and after)

H: Evaluations that are designed late are used less than others.

T: use (pre-selection) X E7

H: Evaluations that are performed late tend to not be used in decision-making.

T: use X E8 (active phase of evaluation)
(pre-selected)

H: Evaluators do not realize that this could be a problem

T: Results of above, checked against responses to E9 (rating of timing
of actual collection
of data)

General check on perception of timing as a limitation--

E22d

H: Evaluations performed over too short a time period tend to be less useful.

T: usefulness X E10 (also use X E10 ?)

H: Evaluations designed by those who commissioned them are less flexible.

T: E21 X E12
 (flex.) (who designed
 the evaluation)

Finally, we check our perception of flexibility of the evaluation design (based on our readings of the reports) with the evaluators' perception:

E21 X O21
 (Evaluators' (our perception
 perception) based on report)

METHODS

We are interested in satisfaction with methods, and lack of recognition of what we consider to be poorly used methods on the part of program managers. This lack of recognition of poor methods, which would be manifested as satisfaction with poor methods, is problematic, especially if the evaluations are used in decision-making.

We test our assessment of suitability of methods used--O24-- by the managers' rating of the suitability of technical analysis--M8.

H: If managers are not satisfied with measures or methods used, it may be for any of the following reasons:
 a) they are not tied to program activities

Ta:	M5	X	M17	:	M5	X	4d
	(satisfaction		(rating of				(satisfaction with
	rating of		evaluators				attention paid to
	choice of		knowledge of				program activities)
	measures)		program				
			activities)				

END