

Criteria for Evaluating Research Proposals

You are asked to evaluate a proposed study, one that has been actually submitted to the Office of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. Your professor was one of the Office of Education consultants, evaluating that research. The decision to support or disapprove this proposal has already been made and, therefore, you need not be concerned that your evaluation will in any way effect this proposal. Your professor believes it will be helpful, during the course of your training, to review several of these proposals, in much the same manner as field readers are asked to review them, then to compare your evaluation with one evaluation that was submitted to the Office of Education. Your review should be clear, pertinent, and helpful, assuming that funds would be available for worthy proposals and, secondly, your reaction will be shared with the researcher to provide him with as much help and direction as possible.

Please attend to the following questions:

1. A summary overview of the study, its importance to the field of special education, and its relationship to prior research and literature.
2. Your evaluation of the personnel and their ability to assume responsibility in this particular area of inquiry. Secondly, are the facilities adequate for this task?
3. The adequacy of the research design and evaluation of findings.
4. Your recommendation.

These are the support for this study.

An Outline for the Evaluation of Research in
the Social Sciences
Research and Design Seminar in Exceptional Children

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1. Summary Statement of Problem, Design, and Findings
2. Title
 - A. Appropriateness to problem investigated
 - B. Clarity, conciseness
3. Problem
 - A. Significance and possible contribution
 - B. Clarity and conciseness of the statement
 - C. Parsimony and tenability of the basic hypothesis
 - D. Feasibility and suitability of the study
4. Review of Literature
 - A. Thoroughness and comprehensiveness
 - B. Evaluation and synthesis of source
5. Type of Research and General Method

Type

General Method

A. Historical

Documents
Official records
Institutional records
Memoirs, books, etc.
Primary source
Secondary

B. Survey

1. Descriptive

Testing
Questionnaire
Interview
Observational

- 2. Analytical
 - Documentary frequency
 - Observational
 - Rating
 - Critical incident
 - Factor analysis
- 3. School survey
- 4. Social survey
- 5. Case study
- 6. Participant
- C. Experimental
 - 1. Single group
 - 2. Control group
 - Parallel group with matching
 - Control group random assign
 - Replication
 - Factorial design
 - 3. Correlational
 - a. cause-effect
 - b. predictive
- 6. Design
 - A. Adequacy and appropriateness to problems
 - B. Adquacy of the description of design
 - C. Adquacy of control (experimental)
 - D. Population adequately defined
- 7. Major Variables

Construct

Operational Definition

Measurement

reliability reported
 validity reported

8. Analysis of Data
 - A. Statistics used
 - B. CR
 - C. t test
 - D. Multivariate analysis
 - E. Was analysis adequate
 - F. Was analysis appropriate
 - G. Tests of significance for each statistic computed
 - H. Correlation
9. Conclusions
 - A. Validity
 - B. Based on evidence
 - C. Recognition of assumptions and limitations
 - D. Integration with statement of problem
10. General Scholarship
 - A. Logical and coherent organization
 - B. Breakdown into effective systems of headings
 - C. Evidence of insight into nature of problem
 - D. Imagination in design of study in interpretation of results
 - E. Evidence of adequate grasp of research and statistical tools
 - F. Display of scientific attitudes: effectiveness in presentation of report
 - G. Conformity to Good Form: A.P.A. Style Manual, etc.
11. Areas for Criticism
 - A. Improper formulation of the problem
 - B. Inadequacy of control
 - C. Non-representativeness of sample

- D. Invalidity of data (internal validity)
- E. Invalidity of criterion (external validity)
- F. Inadequacy of analysis of data
- G. Errors in interpretation

12. Assessment of Contribution to Social Sciences

- A. Wisdom research - a thorough review of literature but does not get to the point of testing anything
- B. Unfocused research - goes off in all directions with no problem to guide it
- C. Practical research - solves a local problem, but does not add to theory or solution of further problems
- D. Descriptive research - merely describes a certain phenomenon-polls
- E. Theoretical research - suggests no way a theory can be tested
- F. Critical ratio research - statistics O.K. but lacks a theoretical framework (i.e. correlation of length of eraser and number of errors in mathematics)