



Gauging Good Governance: A Practical Tool for Normative Evaluation Research

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ASPA 2021 Conference Tracks

Track Three: Good Governance and Meaningful Public Service

The U.S. public sector workforce is bedeviled with challenges: an aging workforce retiring rapidly, deficient skill sets and HR practices, an unattractive compensation system, a failing pipeline, an overly prolonged hiring process, ethical “gray areas” being redrawn. The list goes on. While efforts are underway to bring this facet of public administration fresh life, it isn’t happening fast enough and COVID-19 has meant a shrinking workforce and low morale at exactly the time when we need to be all things to all people. Can we use present-day challenges to create something new and bold that matches today’s needs? How are regions around the world solving this problem and what lessons can we learn from their efforts? Focus areas include:

Track Four: “Fixing” Our Government: Putting Humpty Dumpty Back Together Again

Things break or fall apart or fail to work properly. It’s a fact of life. When things break, you can glue the pieces back together, you can find the broken pieces and fix them or you can replace it entirely with a newer, better model that fits your current needs. The U.S. government apparatus—the agencies that run it, the administrative bodies that put policies to work—is failing, resulting in inequities across society as some groups of people are better served than others. What is the best solution: glue, fixing pieces or replacing them with new components to better serve our times? It depends on the system. but something must be done. It’s time for the federal government to take control, set policy and provide our country with an equitable apparatus that works for everyone, focused on the most important challenges of our time, instead of piecemeal approaches that only partially work, focusing on challenges from decades ago. We’re looking for innovation, new approaches and cutting-edge models of the “things” that will put our government back together again. Focus areas include:

Types of Research Purposes

- ▶ Exploration
- ▶ Description
- ▶ Explanation
- ▶ **Gauging?** -- Unique applicability to Public Governance

Research Purpose and Conceptual Framework Pairings

Research Purposes	Conceptual Framework
Explanation	Formal Hypotheses
Description	Categories
Exploration	Working Hypotheses
Gauging	??????

Gauging

- ▶ So, unlike the "What?" research question of description, gauging research asks "What should?":
 - ▶ How close is process x to the standard or near ideal?
- ▶ The **research purpose** is to gauge "What should" be done *to improve an administrative **process***

Gauging: Hidden in Plain Sight

- ▶ Accreditation standards of Educational Programs
- ▶ Routine standards reviews by regulatory bodies (OSHA, EPA, Medical Organizations.,)
- ▶ Rating candidates on required and preferred criteria
- ▶ Development of grading rubrics

Evaluation Research

- ▶ Impact and Process Evaluation
- ▶ Impact evaluation uses hypotheses (explanatory)
- ▶ Process evaluation (gauging)
- ▶ Lack of “Tools” that evaluate the **processes**
- ▶ Process evaluations are normative --- Gauging

Research Purpose(s)

- ▶ To highlight the role of normative evaluation research in “good governance”
- ▶ To introduce a practical tool that can be used to frame **applied normative process evaluation**

Gauging: Logic of Rating

- ▶ Logic of rating built into measurement but not purpose.

1. Please rate your overall satisfaction:

Highly Dissatisfied					Highly Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5	



Research Purpose and Conceptual Framework Pairings

Research Purposes	Conceptual Framework
Explanation	Formal Hypotheses
Description	Categories
Exploration	Working Hypotheses
Gauging	Practical Ideal Type

The Practical Ideal Type Framework

- ▶ Enables one to gauge or assess the efficacy of a policy or management process against an (evolving/organic) **ideal** or standard
- ▶ Criteria used to judge a process (classify criteria) (Should – norms)
- ▶ Criteria explicitly informed by the literature
- ▶ Practical (ideal) – Not perfect, subject to improvement

Applied Research Contexts

- ▶ Urban wildlife fire mitigation
- ▶ Municipal housing affordability programs
- ▶ Use of social media by police
- ▶ Partnerships between local park systems and nonprofits
- ▶ Transitional programs for autistic youth
- ▶ Intergovernmental collaboration for domestic violence services
- ▶ Fire incident-command systems

Ongoing Evaluation and Assessment



Developing Criteria for Evaluation

- ▶ Evidence (Scholarly literature; findings, expert opinion)
- ▶ Evidence (rule, law)
- ▶ Definitions
- ▶ Evidence (common knowledge)
- ▶ Examples
- ▶ Argument (logic, if/then, connect evidence, examples definitions)

Gauging the effectiveness of an incident command system

► PURPOSE: The purpose of this applied research project is threefold.

1. First, it will describe the practical ideal components of an effective Incident Command System obtained from the literature.
2. Second, it will assess the San Antonio Fire Departments Incident Command System using the ideal type components.
3. Third, it will provide recommendations for improving the San Antonio Fire Departments Incident Command System.

► <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10877/3759/fulltext.pdf?sequence=1>



Incident Command – Practical Ideal Type

Major categories of the model

- ▶ Responsibility of First Arriving Officer
- ▶ Responsibilities of Incident Commander
- ▶ Overall Scene Safety
- ▶ Effective Communication
- ▶ Professional Development

Definition:

Systematic tool to command, control & coordinate emergency response.



Incident Command – Practical Ideal Type

Refine the model

- **Responsibility of First Arriving Officer**

- Assumption of command
- Size up Situation
- Determine Strategy
- Initial Report

- **Responsibilities of Incident Commander**

- Command
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Administration
- Custom Service

- **Overall Scene Safety**

- Safety Officer
- Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)
- Operations Retreat Policy
- Manageable Span of control
- Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT)
- Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)

- **Effective Communication**

- Standard Terminology
- Designated Radio Channel
- Controlling Communications (Strong command presence)
- Benchmarks

- **Professional Development**

- Incident Command System Standard Operating Procedures
- Incident Command System Training
- Post Incident Critique



Operationalization Table			
Ideal Type Categories	Research Methods	Evidence	Sources
Responsibilities of the Incident Commander			
-Planning	-Document Analysis	-Planning responsibilities outlined clearly	-Incident Management System Standard Operating Procedures
-Logistics	-Document Analysis	-Logistics responsibilities outlined clearly	-Incident Management System Standard Operating Procedures
-Administration	-Document Analysis	-Administration responsibilities outlined clearly	-Incident Management System Standard Operating Procedures
-Customer Service	-Document Analysis	-Customer service responsibilities outlined clearly	-Incident Management System Standard Operating Procedures -Interdepartmental Correspondence
	-Structured Interview	-Describe the current customer service philosophy for the San Antonio Fire Department (Q #1)	-Firefighters and Officers

Operationalization

Responsibilities of the First Arriving Officer		
Component	Method	Evidence
Assumption of Command	-Document Analysis 🔍 Direct Observation	-Strong Support -Strong Support
Scene Size Up	-Document Analysis	-Strong Support
Determine Strategy	-Document Analysis	-Strong Support

Results

Responsibilities of the Incident Commander		
Component	Method	Evidence
Command	-Document Analysis	-Strong Support
Operations	-Document Analysis	-Strong Support
Planning	-Document Analysis	-Adequate Support
Logistics	-Document Analysis	-Adequate Support
Administration	-Document Analysis	-Adequate Support

Results

Professional Development

Component	Evidence	Recommendations
Incident Command System Standard Operating Procedures	Strong Support	The San Antonio Fire Department Incident Management System SOP is clearly written and easily accessible; overall strong support . Continue to provide firefighters with a detailed Incident Management System Standard Operating Procedure.
Incident Command System training	Limited Support	Results of both document analysis and structured Interviews provided overall limited support for Incident Command System training. An Incident Command System training program is recommended.
Officer development program	No Support	Results of both document analysis and structured interviews provided overall no support for the existence of an officer development program. The creation of an officer development program that encompasses the Incident Command System is recommended.
Post incident critiques	Adequate Support	Structured interview questions provided evidence of strong support for post incident critiques. However, no support was found during document analysis. Despite the strong interview support, the lack of documentation provides for overall adequate support for post incident critiques. A departmental document outlining the details of post incident critiques is recommended. Continue to support the use of post incident critiques.

Recommendations

Gauging Classroom Technology Infrastructure

- ▶ The purpose of this research is **threefold**. The first purpose is **to establish a practical ideal model** to assess current classroom technology infrastructure in higher education. Second, is **to assess current classroom technology infrastructure at Texas State University**. The final purpose is **to provide recommendations for improving classroom technology infrastructure** at Texas State University. A thorough review of the literature identified six key components of classroom technology infrastructure. The components include technology planning and policies, equipment, technology applications, maintenance and support, professional development, and technology infrastructure
- ▶ <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10877/3737/fulltext.pdf?sequence=1>

Gauging Procurement Practices used by Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses

- ▶ The purpose of this research is threefold. First, this research identified best practices related to procurement practices used by Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOB) and developed a framework for the assessment of such practices. In particular, this framework was developed by using sources such as the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR, henceforth) and other scholarly sources. Next, this framework is used to assess procurement policies pertaining to SDVOSBs in Texas. Finally, this research provides recommendations to refine Texas procurement policies.
- ▶ <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/8729>

Gauging Succession Planning Programs

- ▶ The purpose of this research is to 1) conduct a thorough review of the literature to identify critical elements of an ideal succession management and leadership development plan 2) be able to utilize the practical ideal type characteristics to assess and gauge existing strategies for succession planning at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 3) provide valuable recommendations to improve and implement a more defined succession plan at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
- ▶ <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10877/8738/Walker-ARP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Gauging Middle School Sex Education Programs

- ▶ The purpose of this research is three-fold.
- ▶ 1. this research will develop a **model middle school sex education program**.
- ▶ 2. this model will be used to **assess** existing middle school sex education programs.
- ▶ 3. **recommendations** will be made **to improve** middle school sex education programs.
- ▶ <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10877/3790/fulltext.pdf?sequence=1>

Conclusion



Findings are unique



Frameworks have wider applicability

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