



Exploring evidence use mechanisms in the North West Provincial Secretariat for Police Service

Andile Mazula

(Student No: 1293014)

Wits School Of Governance

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Commerce Law and Management of the University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the Master of Management in Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation for examination, March 2024

Supervisor: Prof. Nedson Pophiwa

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis report titled 'Exploring evidence use mechanisms in the North West Provincial Secretariat for Police Service' is my own work, completed with the guidance and support of Prof. Nedson Pophiwa as the academic supervisor. I have acknowledged and referenced all sources that I have used and quoted. I hereby submit it in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in the sector Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I have not submitted this report before for any other degree or examination to any other institution.

Andile Mazula

1293014

Date: 31 March 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. N Pophiwa for his guidance, patience, support and inspiration throughout the successful completion of this study. My gratitude also goes to the officials of the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management for taking their time and allowing me to conduct interviews, without them, the completion of this study would have been impossible. Lastly, I give all, thanks to God Almighty for giving me strength and the power to remain focused till the end.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late uncle Mr Mkhululi Mazula for always supporting my decisions of taking my studies to the next level and pushing me to aim higher. I will forever be indebted to my family for allowing me some time and space when I could not be around them, but their support kept me going. I dedicate special gratitude to my daughter Luniko for keeping me up at night when I have to feed and watch over her while busy with school.

ABSTRACT

This study explores ways and mechanisms which the North West Department of Community Safety and Transport Management (DCSTM) utilises evidence from the studies conducted to inform its planning and decision-making. It further analysed attitudes and inclination of departmental leadership to use evidence-based plans and decisions as a way of improving departmental performance. The study sought to address the research question – What mechanisms can be used to promote evidence use in planning and decision making within the provincial Department of Community Safety and Transport Management? An exploratory qualitative design was employed in answering this research because it allows space and time to interpret and analyse data that was collected. A total of fifteen key informants from the department availed themselves for key informant interviews. The results demonstrate that there are recognisable forms of evidence generated within the department, including official crime statistics released by the South African Police Service (SAPS), small-scale commissioned research projects, monitoring data from oversight functions of the department and other *ad hoc* sources of data. However, the overall picture is there are several challenges with regard to the utilisation of evidence. It also demonstrates how insufficient knowledge, competence, and ability to use evidence limits the effective use of evidence. This includes, among other things, the difficulties with evidence quality and accessibility as well as written procedures that serve as guidelines for methods of using evidence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>DECLARATION</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>DEDICATION</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>ABSTRACT.....</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>TABLE OF CONTENTS</i>	<i>v</i>
CHAPTER ONE	1
1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Research Questions.....	6
1.4 Purpose Statement.....	7
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Chapter Outline.....	7
CHAPTER 2.....	9
2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Context: The North West Provincial Civilian Secretariat for Police Services	9
2.3 Understanding evidence.....	13
2.3.1 <i>The meaning of evidence</i>	13
2.3.2 <i>Types of Evidence</i>	14
2.3.3 <i>Types of Evidence use.....</i>	15
2.3.4 <i>The pillars of Evidence use</i>	16
2.4 Legal Framework for evidence use	17
2.5 Theoretical underpinnings of evidence use in policymaking.....	18
2.5.1 <i>Mechanisms of evidence use.....</i>	18
2.5.2 <i>Creating a culture of using evidence</i>	23
2.6 Understanding the Context of Evidence Based decision-making.....	26
2.7 The politics of evidence-based policymaking.....	29
2.8 The challenges of using evidence in planning and decision making within South African public sector	32
2.9 The National Evaluation System of South Africa as a basis for evidence use	35

2.10	Conclusion	38
CHAPTER 3.....		39
3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	39
3.1	Introduction.....	39
3.2	Research design	40
3.3	Sampling.....	40
3.4	Data collection methods.....	41
3.4.1	Key informant interviews	41
3.4.2	Desk review	42
3.5	Data collection tools.....	42
3.6	Data analysis.....	42
3.7	Validity	43
3.8	Limitations of the study.....	43
3.9	Ethical considerations	44
3.10	Conclusion	45
CHAPTER 4.....		45
4	PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	45
4.1	Introduction.....	45
4.2	Description of study Participants	46
4.3	The nature of evidence generated in the Department	48
4.3.1	Provincial statistics on crime.....	50
4.3.2	Empirical research.....	51
4.3.3	Operational research and internal MIS systems.....	52
4.4	The importance and utilisation of evidence in the Department.....	53
4.4.1	Instrumental of evidence	56
4.4.2	Conceptual of Evidence use	57
4.5	The attitude of public officials towards use of evidence	58
4.5.1	Level of training and awareness as determinants of use	59
4.5.2	Quality of evidence	63
4.6	Barriers to utilisation of Evidence	67
4.6.1	Poor communication.....	68
4.6.2	Lack of credibility and reliability of evidence.....	71
4.6.3	Absence of controls, safeguards, and adequate record-keeping for evidence	74
4.7	Conclusion	76
CHAPTER 5.....		79
5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	79

5.1	Introduction.....	79
5.2	Results.....	80
5.3	Conclusion	80
5.4	Recommendations	81
5.5	Future Research	,83
5.6	Overall Conclusion	83
	REFERENCES.....	85

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The origin of evidence-based approaches has been attributed to the British government during the 1980s wherein the government progressively emphasised the importance of informed decision making, and applications based on the precise and stimulating foundation of evidence (Baba & Farimah, 2012). In other accounts, this notion has also been traced back to the 1950s wherein a political scientist, Harold Lasswell sought to find ways through which research can be utilised in order to address policy related challenges (Wesselink, Colebatch & Pearce, 2014). Its primary focus was on the effectiveness of the public service delivery that slowly led to developing detailed strategies and best practices. Hase, Matos, & Styer (2015), consider the evidence-based decision making as finding the right evidence required to lead sound decision making. Evidence use refers to the practice of integrating empirical findings, expert knowledge, and research-based insights into the planning and decision-making process. The concept of "evidence use" has emerged as a critical determinant of informed decision making, policy formulation, and effective program implementation.

In more recent times during the post-2000s, the demand for evidence use has grown, for several reasons. One of these is captured in a speech delivered in February 2009 by Gary Banks, the then Chairman of Australia's Productivity Commission, who clarified key issues and challenges in pursuing an evidence-based approach to public policy. Banks stated;

Now I am not saying that policy should never proceed without rigorous evidence. Often you can't get sufficiently good evidence, particularly when decisions must be made quickly. And you can never have certainty in public policy. All policy effectively is experimentation. But that does not mean flying blind — we still need a good rationale or a good theory. Rationales and theories themselves can be subjected to scrutiny and debate, and in a sense that constitutes a form of evidence that can give some assurance about the likely outcomes. Importantly though, all policy experiments need to be monitored and evaluated and, over time, corrected or terminated if they turn out to be failures. These are things that Governments typically find hard to do — particularly the termination part (Banks 2009, p6).

The words of Banks, cited above underscores the nuanced role of evidence in policymaking, acknowledging the necessity for flexibility when rigorous evidence is unavailable or when decisions must be made quickly. He highlights the inherent uncertainty of public policy, framing policymaking as a form of experimentation where outcomes are uncertain, and policies must be continuously monitored and evaluated. Banks stresses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy experiments, with a willingness to correct or terminate ineffective policies over time, though he acknowledges the difficulty governments often face in doing so. He presents a perspective on policymaking that balances the need for evidence with the complexities and uncertainties of real-world decision-making processes (Banks 2009).

While the speech by Banks was delivered 15 years ago, it captures what is occurring in policymaking across the public sector in other parts of the world and hence the need for evidence use. In the context of South Africa, a more formalised approach to evidence-informed policy making is visible in the crafting of the National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030, in 2012. The NDP's primary goal is to assist the SA government to move beyond focusing solely on the quantity of projects completed and instead measuring the impact that established initiatives or programmes have had. In essence, it represented a shift from the previous planning cycles that were shorter and focused on outputs, towards outcome-based accountability and transparency, as well as value for money. In addition, the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System framework (2007) posits that government has had a challenge of increasing effectiveness, as such, more emphasis has been put on impactful developmental interventions more so through monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, it has been indicated that in most cases there is lack of data policy decision-making and instead there has been sluggish move towards evidence-based policy making away from opinion-based policy making (The Presidency, 2020). To this end, in 2020, the South African government approved the National Policy Development Framework and the main purpose of it is to assist in the development of coherent, evidence based and implementable government policies (The Presidency, 2020 & The Africa Centre for Evidence, 2021).

The NDP emphasises the need for effective policy and decision making, putting in the forefront the development in South Africa and outlines the mandate of solid research relevancy, use sound evidence and clear recommendations. Furthermore, the NDP has embedded through a series of government processes, this includes the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2014-2019) that aligns the objectives and the priorities in newly proposed legislations. These includes evaluations and other evidence in the NDP implementation, documenting formalised and integrated use of evidence in the policy and decision-making cycle (Stewart *et al.*, 2019). It is important to note that good public performance across all sectors is constituted by different disciplines in the organisations and in different countries. The theme of evidence that is recurring entails a holistic departmental performance based on its activities and delivered services or implemented programmes to establish whether those have met the triple effects of efficiency, effectiveness and economy (Bawole & Ibrahim, 2015). Thus, the success of the department would mostly be confirmed by the evidence that is being produced, and drawn from the developed indicators that are meant to measure performance.

For every performance that is being reported there must be evidence to substantiate the levels of performance. For example, evaluations are one of the most important strategies that are being used to produce evidence that can best suit the use to inform planning and decisions. Evaluation seeks to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project or programme that are being implemented in an organisation. Brun and Siegel (2006), emphasises that data and information should be made available across all different levels to serve for different purposes. This will also make an impact in the political and management aspects on implication of information requirements and evidence that will best fit in to the needs of political decision makers and executive authority within the government.

Moreover, critical approaches to measuring performance in the public sector are achieved through the analysis of the available evidence, however, subjective interpretation of that evidence is often the case (Willis, 2005). It can be viewed that at times government use the evidence approach selectively and especially when it mostly supports a particular move or agenda. When it happens that the available evidence makes things difficult, the evidence

happen to be used selectively to extend the career of a political individual and politically driven goals (Marais & Matebesi, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

The literature largely supports the notion that the public sector can enhance its efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling its responsibilities and achieving its goals by regularly conducting performance management, audits and relying on evidence (Bawole & Ibrahim, 2015). Frequently, research findings, despite their solid evidence, are seldom incorporated into institutional frameworks when they need to be connected to the processes of planning and decision making. Inadequate internal systems frequently lead to subpar quality or contradictory outcomes in performance data, which can be challenging to comprehend (Marais & Matebesi, 2012). Consequently, this is likely to have a detrimental effect on the overall absence of strategic planning and the ability to make informed decisions in order to tackle the challenge of wicked problems such as rising crime rates, poverty, and inequality as well as to enhance the delivery of services and implemented programmes.

Research also shows that evidence production and use is not mainstreamed across all sectors and within the spaces of critical decision making, nor is the whole government explicitly engaged in evidence informed decision-making processes for policy making or policy implementation (Stewart *et al.*, 2019). Strong silos are more often experienced which results to shifting the potential of relationship building. In the South African public sector Departments, there is a challenge of accessing evidence and the ability to make sense of it, this also applies to sub national and local levels. Another challenge is the poorly managed/resource knowledge systems, thus, even though evidence is routinely used for decision making but the implementation remains fundamental and problematic (Stewart *et al.*, 2019).

The present study is based on a study of a department which requires evidence generation and use in carrying out its mandate. The North West Provincial Secretariat for Police Service, a directorate that forms part of the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management (DCSTM). Its mandate is “to exercise oversight function with regard to South African Police Service (SAPS) in the province, coordinate crime prevention initiatives and promote community police relations” (DCSTM, 2021). In addition, its outcome mandate is to “ensure a society that works together in respecting and abiding by the law” to respond to the reported increase in crime trends and patterns and to realise the department’s vision and impact of safer communities (DCSTM, 2021). Furthermore, it is mandated to mobilise communities in an effort to encourage active participation in accessing services of the department, targeted dialogues, community engagements and awareness programmes primarily target vulnerable groups such as women, youth, older persons, child headed households and persons with disabilities. It also conducts oversight on the SAPS to improve and ensure compliance to regulations for better service to communities. To that effect, on a yearly basis, research projects are conducted on approved topics whose outcomes are meant to inform decision making in the sector.

A preliminary analysis of the Police Secretariat and the broader DCSTM as an organisation, shows there is lack of research and evaluation capacity. For instance, in the Police Secretariat, there is an internal performance monitoring unit that focuses programme monitoring, and a monitoring and oversight unit that looks at the external implemented programmes. However, these are monitoring functions which are mainly for monitoring, and with such information as opposed to research and evaluation, the directorate Provincial Secretariate for Police Services including the Department may lack capacity to plan and make decision to improve on services rendered by the Department. There has to be mechanisms on how evidence from research and evaluation study findings can be utilised in order to guide decision-making and strategic planning. Such actions are most likely to result in improved outcomes thus subsequently probable to assist the Department to achieve its mandate. Thus, the lack of in-house evaluation capacity in the DCSTM raises concerns on what mechanisms are available in the Department in which evidence use may likely assist towards assessing the relevance of the implemented departmental programmes. Amongst others, the role of the research unit

is to assist the Department to develop informed policies and strategies that will likely assist to improve the service provision and might result in improved performance. It is therefore important to understand how research can positively contribute towards the process of evidence use to influence decision making and allow the development of strategies. There are various interventions that are being implemented by the Department, these interventions should be driven by evidence to establish if they do serve the need as per the departmental objectives and the design of programmes should be based on evidence.

The DCSTM is chosen as a unit of analysis because it is stated in the Departmental Annual Performance Plan (APP), that Provincial Secretariat for Police Service's goal is "to exercise oversight function with regards to South African Police Services in the NW Province, coordinate crime prevention initiatives and promote community police relations" through four sub-programmes (DCSTM, 2021). These sub-programmes are (i) *Policy and research*; (ii) *Monitoring and Evaluation*; [italics for emphasis] (iii) Safety Promotion and (iv) Community Police Relations. Thus, the rationale for specifically focusing on the police services in this study is to explore ways in which evidence is used in planning and decision making on policing matters in the Department. Furthermore, it will also assist in providing a broader knowledge on making use of evidence to enhance the effectiveness of reporting and approaches that are being employed to reduce crime. Moreover, it is likely to assist the Department in determining whether there are challenges or not in making use of evidence in the Department and to what extent is the evidence being utilised. Lastly, if it is used, what would be its effect in the overall performance of the Department.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research question for this study is; **What mechanisms are used to promote evidence use in planning and decision making within the provincial Department of Community Safety and Transport Management?**

In order to address the focus of the study, the following are the questions;

- i. To what extent do officials within the Department understand the importance of utilisation of evidence use?

- ii. To what extent do departmental officials utilise the evidence that is being produced in planning and decision-making?
- iii. What barriers hinder departmental officials from utilising evidence in planning and decision-making?

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore mechanisms for evidence use in the North West Provincial Secretariat for Police Service. Evidence use mechanisms are to ensure the effective co-ordination and making use of evidence during the planning and decision-making processes. These mechanisms are meant to reflect clear roles and responsibilities with mandated lines of accountability. Furthermore, they should also ensure that there is human capacity that has the ability to ensure that the produced evidence is evaluated, and it is credible to be used for the improvement of outcomes.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study makes valuable contribution to the topic use of evidence for planning and decision making in the public sector of South Africa. Utilisation of evidence has been a matter of concern in several studies that have been conducted on the importance of evidence use. The studies also give principles and approaches that can be employed in conceptualising and understanding the context, including creating the culture within the organisation to promote evidence use. South Africa is one of the countries that introduced M&E and developed systems to ensure that the approach can assist public institutions in utilising evidence. This study will add knowledge regarding mechanism of evidence use through the case study of the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management and will benefit not only the Directorate of Secretariat for Police Services, but the Department as a whole.

1.6 Chapter Outline

This thesis comprises six chapters. **Chapter 1: introduction**, introduces the research setting and the context within which the study takes place. It provides the research conceptualisation and outlines the research problem, purpose and questions. It further provides the research justification and delineation and concludes by providing the research outline. It is subsequently followed by **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**, which reviews literature on several topics relevant to this study. It discusses among other themes,

the meanings of evidence use, evidence-based policymaking, legal frameworks for use, the politics of evidence use and lastly the theoretical framework for use. **Chapter 3** of the thesis presents the Research **Methodology** employed in this study. The chapter describes the research strategy, as well as the design of the study. It also articulates the research procedure and methods used to collect and analyse the data. Subsequent to this is **Chapter 4, dedicated to the Interpretation of Findings and Discussions**. The chapter presents the findings of the study and further discuss in-depth factors that hinder the DCSTM in making use of evidence. This chapter provides the analysis of the interviews conducted with key informants to determine how evidence is being produced and utilised by the Department. **Lastly, CHAPTER 5 provides the study's conclusion and recommendations.**

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on the use of evidence use that are imperative to understand the study. A brief background of the Northwest Provincial Government and the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management is also provided, this also includes the mandate of the Provincial Secretariate for Police Services as the focus of the study. A discussion of mechanisms of evidence use and its importance, challenges and mitigation techniques are also provided in this section. This chapter also provides theoretical framework that seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of evidence use, delving into its underlying principles, key components, and the diverse ways in which it can be applied. The theoretical exploration will also uncover the pivotal role that evidence use plays in ensuring effective planning and decision making.

It also delves into the cognitive, organizational, and contextual factors that influence the extent to which evidence is incorporated into decision-making processes. By examining these dimensions, the aim was to construct a comprehensive model that not only elucidates the nuances of evidence use but also provides a roadmap for enhancing its practical application.

2.2 Context: The North West Provincial Civilian Secretariat for Police Services

The North West Province has faced significant challenges, prompting intervention from the National Government to place it under sections 100 (1) and 100 (1) b of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. These challenges include maladministration, non-compliance with supply chain management regulations, and poor service delivery. However, the circumstances that led to the intervention of national government are being realised through strengthening the efforts and remedial actions towards mitigation and improvement (Office of the Premier [OOP], 2020). The province has acknowledged the strides that have been made to restore the dignity of people in improving access to essential services ranging from electricity, water and sanitation, education and health services. The unemployment is unacceptably high with pressure of poverty and inequality that is still rife. Moreover, crime and corruption still remain a huge challenge in the province.

To address these challenges, the Provincial Government of the North West has formulated four key strategies: the Revival Strategy, Kick Start Strategy, Growth Management Strategy, and Maintenance Strategy (Office of the Premier [OOP], 2017). The province channels its focus on the Revival Strategy which seeks to remedy internal problems that are experienced within the province. The focus of the strategy is on re-establishing local economic integrity with creation of several initiatives, including (i) Urban renewal preventing urban decay; (ii) Transformation of distressed mining towns; (iii) Significant public sector investment – infrastructure, services, public amenities and facilities, linkages and general accessibility; (iv) Internal clean-up and management; (v) Crime reduction and improved security initiatives; (vii) Promotion and maintenance of service excellence; (viii) Investment brokerage – take opportunities to the market; and (vi) Risk reduction/business recruitment.

The Department of Community Safety and Transport Management (DCSTM) is mandated to provide public transport, crime prevention oversight of the police and mainly road safety management. Its mandate is provided by a range of legislation, including alignment to the National Development Plan vision 2030, provincial and national priorities. The areas of crime reduction and safety continues to be the heartbeat of the DCSTM as women and children's safety is threatened at their homes and in the communities. Thus, placing pressure on the Department to ensure that communities are and feel safe by 2030, taking in to cognisance the provincial strategies.

To ensure that the DCSTM's mandate is executed effectively there are programmes that are being implemented. To name a few, they include road safety intervention programmes, crime prevention, and strategic law enforcement operations. For these programmes to be effective there should be evidence that is available to inform planning strategies and decisions to be made based on evaluated evidence. Marais and Matebesi (2012), state that there is a need to create a sound understanding among all government provincial Departments about the relevance of using evidence for decision making, and development of policies towards the improvement of implemented programmes. Further to that, concerns have been raised about the academic research studies that are not always relevant to inform policy and decision

making, thus this qualifies the latter notion that government programmes are not always guided by evidence.

In the North West province, the following factors are the concrete reality within which DCSTM carries its services to communities: Migration patterns point to the increase, as communities from other areas follow the mining activities in the province, thereby impacting on resources available to provide basic services; Majority of households led by single persons, to which 71, 5% are females and 81.9% are males; Low levels of combined income per household impacting on the ability to pay for the basic services they require or receive from government in general; Households that are led by children which impacts heavily on social behaviour, care and nurturing; Low levels of opportunities for job seekers both with tertiary qualification and those without primary or no schooling poses a danger to the active nature of North West citizens (majority of whom are between the ages of 20 – 49); The North West unemployment rate was at 33, 3 percent in quarter 4 of 2020; There were about 10, 3 million young people aged 15–24 years in Q4: 2020, of which 29, 8% were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the country (North West, 2021-2022).

The above realities heavily impact on the ability of citizens to remain law abiding as the conditions they find themselves propels individuals to find alternative means of survival which result to some engaging on criminal activities and find themselves in conflict with the law. When these realities increase, there are high chances that also crime increases in the province and with that there has to be strategies that are being implemented by SAPS through the use of recommendations that are evidence-based to inform decision making.

The Civilian Secretariat for Police Services Act of 2011 gives the secretariat an oversight role and an implementation role. The oversight role comprises of, amongst other, to exercise the civilian oversight over the Police Services while the implementation role, includes the implementation of various strategies to mobilise role players and stakeholders to strengthen service delivery by the police services to ensure the safety and securities of communities. Such strategies are: (i) The Partnership Strategy: to mobilise role players and stakeholders to strengthen service delivery by the police services to ensure the safety and securities of

communities and to facilitate the proper functioning of community forums, and associated structures. Role players and stakeholders are mobilised in support of the strategic areas and thrusts both within and outside the Justice and Crime prevention cluster; and (ii) Integrated Crime and violence prevention strategy: the focus of this strategy is on crime and violence prevention. It advocates an integrated and development approach with evidence-based planning and implementation, it further advocates for a collective and collaborative approach between state and non-state actors in promoting safety. The intention is to ensure that the basics are in place in every aspect of a person's life in order to circumvent the possibility of the occurrence of crime and violence.

The strategies further emphasise the importance of effective planning and strategy development which are contingent on reliable evidence and data. Integrated, reliable evidence and data management systems are essential components of the strategic planning process. Strategies, interventions and programmes must be informed by evidence and promising practice. Interventions and programmes must be: (i) Evidence based; (ii) Relevant to contexts and; (iii) informed by needs. These should also integrate monitoring and evaluation to enable continued learning and improvement, thus strengthening accountability and effectiveness. Employed interventions and programmes must be based on demonstrated evidence and proven results, this is a critical component in conceptualization design, implementation and evaluation of strategies and interventions.

Furthermore, DCSTM is required to provide empirical research on the effectiveness of community policing and improving police service delivery. The research needs to be tailored to address pertinent issues and challenges being experienced. Results and lessons derived from research, active programmes and implemented initiatives need to be shared with the police services and recommendations made for improvement. Such research would be useful in guiding the police service. Moreover, results will go towards enhancing the quality and accessibility of safety programmes through improved participation by the community, and the facilitation of proactive and interventionist models in communities.

2.3 Understanding evidence

2.3.1 *The meaning of evidence*

Evidence refers to information or factual data that supports hypothesis and it serves as a foundation for reasoning and also helps to establish validity and credibility of a particular problem. It can come in various forms such as documents, opinions from experts or statistical data. For example, in a legal context it plays a crucial role in determining the verdict of a case, while in other context it contributes towards the advancement of knowledge for improvement. Hence, it is defined as something that is indisputable and concrete to inform rational discourse and its effective use involves careful selection, analysis, and interpretation to ensure its reliability (Morse, 2016).

In the context of decision and policy making, evidence is associated with a range of components such as research/surveys, quantitative/statistical data, qualitative data (Strydom et al. 2010). Furthermore, it can also include economic, attitudinal, behavioural and anecdotal evidence together with knowledge and expertise of experts, insight/experience, history, analogies, local knowledge and culture. Such evidence that is thus combined with other forms of information to generate evidence for policy development and practice. The combination of different forms of evidence also creates and acknowledges the context within which knowledge exists and within which it is understood (Ibid). This broad definition acknowledges the multifaceted nature of evidence and underscores the importance of considering various sources of information in policy development.

Evidence-based policymaking represents a modernized approach to governance, emphasizing a departure from ideology-driven politics towards a more rational decision-making process. It encompasses a set of methodologies that guide policy formulation, prioritizing the utilization of available evidence to inform decisions rather than solely focusing on achieving predetermined policy objectives. This approach advocates for a more systematic and rigorous analysis, aimed at achieving better outcomes (Sutcliffe, 2005). The ultimate goal of evidence-based policymaking is to enable policymakers to make informed decisions that lead to better outcomes. By leveraging the best available evidence, policymakers can identify effective interventions to address societal challenges and evaluate the anticipated impact of policy

initiatives. This iterative process helps establish a degree of certainty regarding the effectiveness of interventions and their suitability for addressing specific challenges under different circumstances. In sum, evidence-based policymaking represents a paradigm shift towards a more informed and rational approach to governance. By embracing a diverse range of evidence sources and prioritising rigorous analysis, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policy interventions, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for society.

2.3.2 Types of Evidence

According to Sanderson (2012) there are two main forms of evidence that can improve the effectiveness of government. The first one is to promote accountability through results and that is evidence that proves government is working effectively. And this primarily on the attributes of performance and the reflection of growth of performance management in government where there is a use of performance indicators with targets attached to measure performance. The second one is evidence to enhance improvement through effective programmes and policies and that is evidence on how well these policies and programmes work under different circumstances. This form is more of qualitative evidence that relates to knowledge and intervention policies to achieve change within the social system.

Further to the above-mentioned forms, there are also types of evidence that are utilised for decision making and to improve government effectiveness. **Policy research and analysis** – includes analysis of policy potential impact, the alignment of objectives and provides guidance to decision making in the formulation of efficient and effective policies. **Public Opinions Surveys** – the evidence is gathered from the public based opinions to gauge on government policies and services. It is important to understand the perspective of the citizens in order to their concerns towards enhancing effectiveness. **Implementation and Process evaluations** – with the assessment of how the programmes and policies are implemented, this can reveal the success and challenges to allow opportunity to refine. The evidence contributes to the process of effective implementation. Outcome and Impact Evaluation – here comes the assessment of the outcomes and the impact of the programme including interventions to ascertain their effectiveness. The evidence comes through measuring of the indicators on specific actions of government.

The utilisation of these types of evidence combined can work towards the improvement of transparency and effectiveness. Moreover, there can be assurance of well-informed policies and programmes are needed to address issues relating to public needs.

2.3.3 Types of Evidence use

To promote the evidence informed practice, a sense of ownership is vital and that will also promote new ideas and practices towards the use of evidence (Eccles, 2009). According to Newman, Cherney and Head (2017), there has been a focus on the effects of political dynamics on improving the use of evidence and there are several different types of ways that evidence can be used in process of policy formulation or development, these includes the instrumental, conceptual and political use. The article further found that more often there are difficulties in deciding on what information constitute evidence and how it is ought to be presented. It is with that reason that led to the classification of how evidence is used, and it has been classified in to three types:

- (i) **Instrumental use** - to facilitate decision making through the use of strategies to share results and engage on the action to achieve specific goals or objectives. This involves the selection, presenting and interpreting information in a way that serves a particular purpose. For instance, in legal settings, lawyers may strategically present evidence that strengthens their case or discredits opposing arguments, recognizing that the impact of evidence goes beyond its objective truthfulness to its persuasive power.

It is important to understand the evidence instrumental use, it plays a crucial role in critically evaluating the motives and intentions behind the presentation as it underscores the idea of evidence not being neutral but it may have the potential to strategically influence decisions and policies

- (ii) **Political use** – this refers to the use of evidence to achieve strategic or political objectives. When information at hand is being used for political purposes, it is can for example be used for justification of decisions that are already been reached for other purposes. This type of evidence use is inevitable in a democratic system and it

dominates more than any type of evidence use in a political space which also results to unattainability of evidence-based policies.

- (iii) **Conceptual use** – the conceptual evidence use refers to the integration and application of theoretical or knowledge to inform decision making and policy development processes. It shapes the understanding by involving the use of models and frameworks, it is more valuable where empirical data is limited or very challenging to obtain. This type of evidence use relates more to evaluations, where in some instances there is little to do on implementing the recommendations for action based on new findings Forss, Rebien and Carlsson (2002).

Decision-makers benefit from embracing a pluralistic view that appreciates the value of diverse evidence sources, acknowledging that each type contributes unique insights to inform more robust and nuanced decisions (Frick *et al.*, 2022). Hence, understanding the interplay between different types of evidence use is crucial for fostering effective communication and collaboration among role players. The synergy between empirical data, practitioner insights, and community experiences creates a holistic understanding of complex issues. Building bridges between the types of evidence enables decision-makers to craft more inclusive and adaptive strategies that resonate with the realities of the contexts they operate within

2.3.4 The pillars of Evidence use

The generation of useful evidence is remains critical, however, focus should also be channelled on how it gets used. This is driven by the pillars of evidence use as principles that underpin the effective utilisation of evidence. These pillars include the following: (i) **Relevance** – evidence should be directly related to the issues that it is meant to address and meaningfully contribute towards the understanding and resolving the problem (ii) **Credibility and Validity**– refers to the reliability of the evidence and that it measures what it intends to assess (iii) **Ethical Use** - Adhering to ethical standards in the collection and presentation of evidence is crucial. This involves respecting the rights and well-being of participants, avoiding selective reporting, and ensuring that evidence is used in ways that align with ethical guidelines and norms (iv) **Contextual Understanding** - Evidence should be interpreted within its broader context. Recognizing the nuances of a situation and understanding how various

factors may influence the evidence helps in making informed and contextually relevant decisions (Stewart, 2023).

Geddes (2023), further highlights pillars of evidence use in relation to Parliament, where he cited the first pillar as submission of information in a form of written evidence that will identify the basis, second pillar is of evidence use is the committee hearings that relate to oral evidence, and lastly consultation and engagements that formally institutionalise informal activities. This pillar would also include the option of rigorous surveys and focus groups including visits to the communities where people share their personal lived experience.

These pillars collectively contribute to a robust framework for evidence use, fostering informed decision-making and promoting the responsible application of knowledge in diverse disciplines.

2.4 Legal Framework for evidence use

The evidence generation and use is supported by several legal frameworks in South Africa. In 2007 the **Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation system** was approved in 2007 by the Presidency and its purpose is to guide the monitoring and evaluation system and also provides legislative mandate for all stakeholders. It also outlines how achievement of outcomes can be supported by evidence, in addition it provides for the development of policy framework on evaluation (Angela and Ajam 2010).

In 2011, the **National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF)** was developed and revised in 2019. Its aim is to promote credible and quality evaluations to ensure improvement in learning related to effectiveness, relevance efficiency and impact. It also sets minimum standards on government wide evaluations to operationalize the National Evaluation Plans. The framework further highlights the need to use evidence from evaluations in planning, policy review, organizational and programme improvement. The NEPF further recognises that within the government environment, use cannot only focus on government's application of acquired knowledge, but should include the public's utilisation of evidence to hold government accountable (Amisi, 2015). Furthermore, the NEPF underlines the importance of sharing evaluation evidence with the public. When evaluations commissioned by government agencies are not made public, an opportunity is missed to inform public discourse and policy

debates, enhance the knowledge base on a particular issue and promote accountability. (Government of South Africa 2019).

Another document that outlines the policy development process is the **National Policy Development Framework 2020** which was developed to support the institutionalization of good public policy making practices in South Africa. It further highlights the policy making processes while also reflecting on how evidence can be used at each particular stage of the policy making cycle (The Presidency 2020).

The **Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System (SEIAS)** is another important framework that was approved by cabinet in February 2015. The SEIAS purpose is meant to assist and guide departments in developing policies, regulations, and laws that are consistent with national priorities. Sibanda and Masiya, (n.d.), in a study of SEIAS found that departments were having difficulty incorporating multiple types of evidence, which was ascribed to difficulties in acquiring, analyzing, and synthesizing the evidence in order to influence policy. With that, the SEIAS further provides guidance on using evidence to strengthen the use of evidence in the processes.

The legal framework surrounding evidence use is crucial for upholding the principles, the establishment of clear rules and guidelines regarding the use of evidence ensures that structured and informed decisions are taken through the use of credibility and relevance evidence

2.5 Theoretical underpinnings of evidence use in policymaking

The utilization of evidence is a complex process that is as intricate as it is vital. It involves a dynamic interplay of various mechanisms and methods that bridge the gap between data, information, and decision making. Understanding the mechanisms is pivotal in unraveling the intricate web of evidence use, and it holds the key to fostering more informed, effective, and evidence-based decision-making processes.

2.5.1 *Mechanisms of evidence use*

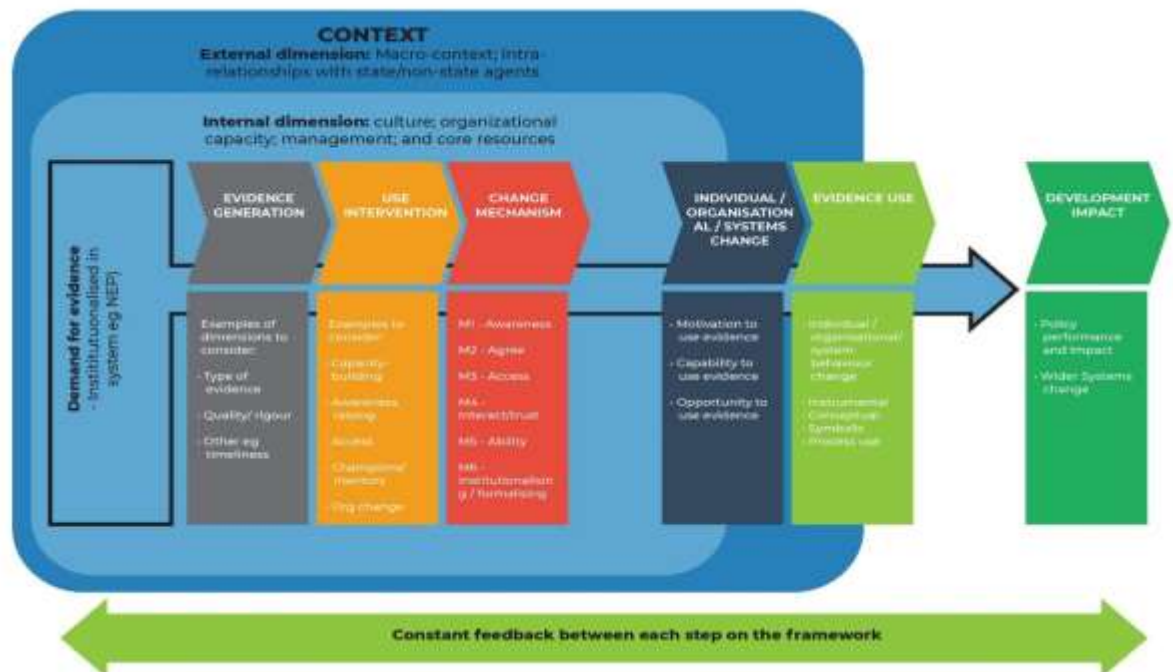
The mechanisms of evidence use encompass a wide array of processes, from data collection and synthesis to dissemination, interpretation, and application. It is a symphony of efforts that harmoniously work together to ensure that data and information are harnessed to

inform decision making. The basis the mechanisms lies in the systematic collection of data and evidence, which serves as the building blocks for evidence-informed planning and decision making.

One key element of evidence use mechanisms is the synthesis and integration of diverse data sources. This step involves compiling, organizing, and harmonizing information from various sources, such as research studies, expert opinions, and empirical findings, to create a coherent and comprehensive knowledge base. The mechanisms also encompass the dissemination of evidence, ensuring that it reaches the relevant stakeholders and decision makers. Effective communication and collaboration play a critical role in the process, as well as the capacity to critically interpret and apply evidence in practical situations.

Paine Cronin and Sadan (2015) state that there are different opinions on what constitutes reliable evidence correlated with differences on what the key current problems are with evidence-use, their underlying causes and, therefore, differences regarding what should be improved, how this could be achieved and the institutional mechanisms and capacities that would be required.

The combined analytical framework that was developed by Langer *et al.*, (2020), discovers an approach of evidence processes from the demand for evidence, evidence generation, use intervention, change mechanisms, individual or organisational change, evidence use and end with development impact.



Evidence use in Africa analytical framework (Langer et al., 2020)

The evidence journey is at the centre of the framework, with evidence generation that is understood to be evaluations, researches etc. What the framework bring is the centrality of interventions to promote use of evidence and the change mechanisms are the strategies to trigger the actions to be taken towards the design and implementation of those strategies. Furthermore, the six mechanisms were identified as the most important mechanisms in supporting the use of evidence in policy practice.

Evidence based decision making is an instrument that can be used by public officials to design and develop policies, and programmes by integrating the greatest evidence towards achieving the effectiveness and efficiency of the intended initiatives and objectives. According to Baba and Farimah (2012), different forms of evidence have to be integrated, the best evidence for decision making can be quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical or can be the combination of all three. However, there are other sources of evidence that may be needed such as public opinions, internal organisational research surveys and financial information, depending on the conditions and decision that has to be made.

Whatever evidence that is available, how the evidence is used for the decision making is an issue that is not often discussed. It is assumed that the best evidence is produced through

proper methodology most likely to be close to the context the evidence will be used on. Another assumption is that the accuracy of the evidence is probably higher when agreement about the research evidence is higher and that the process of generating should be transparent. The best evidence that can be accurate and reliable is the evidence that is evaluated based on the areas of contextuality, consensus and replicability (Baba & Farimah, 2012).

There is a demand for Monitoring and Evaluation where supply for information is of greater capacity, but notably the capacity of demand on quality evidence use is very low for planning and decision makers. Porter and Goldman (2013), ask a question of *“what evidence is there that government Departments are developing stronger demand for evidence that is generated from the M&E systems”*? Further arguing that there is a high increase of demand for evidence use, resulting on to the M&E systems being developed with the domination of monitoring. However, there is even higher demand of evaluation system to produce evidence in the South African government led.

There has to be mechanisms in the organization that should be guiding individuals and officials in to making use of evidence within. The capability and opportunities of using evidence should be assessed so that strategies can be developed to motivate officials in to using evidence. This approach will bring behaviour change in officials and the Department as a whole, and further to that, processes to be followed and instruments to be used may be developed towards the implementation of the mechanisms. This will result to improved policy changes which may yield positive performance impact within the Department and changes in process chains (Langer, 2021).

Although there is no order of importance, the six mechanisms can be an approach that public sector departments may work to strengthen evidence use are listed in the table below.

Mechanism	Description
Awareness	Building awareness of, and positive attitudes towards use of evidence
Agree	Having a mutual understanding on policy relevant questions and the kind of evidence needed to answer them.
Access	Providing communication of, and convenient access to evidence.
Interact	There as to be interaction between decision makers and researchers to build trusted relationship, collaborate and gain exposure.
Ability	Supporting decision makers in developing skills in accessing and making sense of evidence
Institutionalising / Formalising	Influencing decision making structures and processes

Source: Langer, 2021

Cronin and Sadan (2015), also developed an approach of how evidence should be used on interventions: **Policy agenda setting**: ascertain the importance of the need for evidence to formulate the intervention; **Needs analysis, problem, the cause and the feasibility of the intervention**: the evidence that is needed to identify the feasibility and options to develop concrete causal theory for the intervention; **Design**: at this stage we look at the evidence on the best ways for implementation, the operation as well as the monitoring and evaluation of decisions; **Implement and monitor**: there has to be evidence on the progress and the operations if they are yielding the expected results; and **Evaluate**: outcomes and impact of the intervention must be evaluated to assess the expected results and change that will also identify the areas of concerns where improvement is needed. That should be based on the evidence collected and decisions should be made making use of such evidence.

Organisational evidence is of high importance to management and it also plays a critical role when practitioners are unfamiliar with the situation or the problem where historical evidence is unavailable. And in such circumstances, there may be a need for practitioners to learn experimenting with courses of action and also evaluating results. This can also draw mechanisms of sourcing available evidence from concerns relating to the identified problem by engaging the stakeholders and people to draw solutions for implementation. This will also result in having multiple sources of evidence for decision making (Jepsen and Rousseau, 2022).

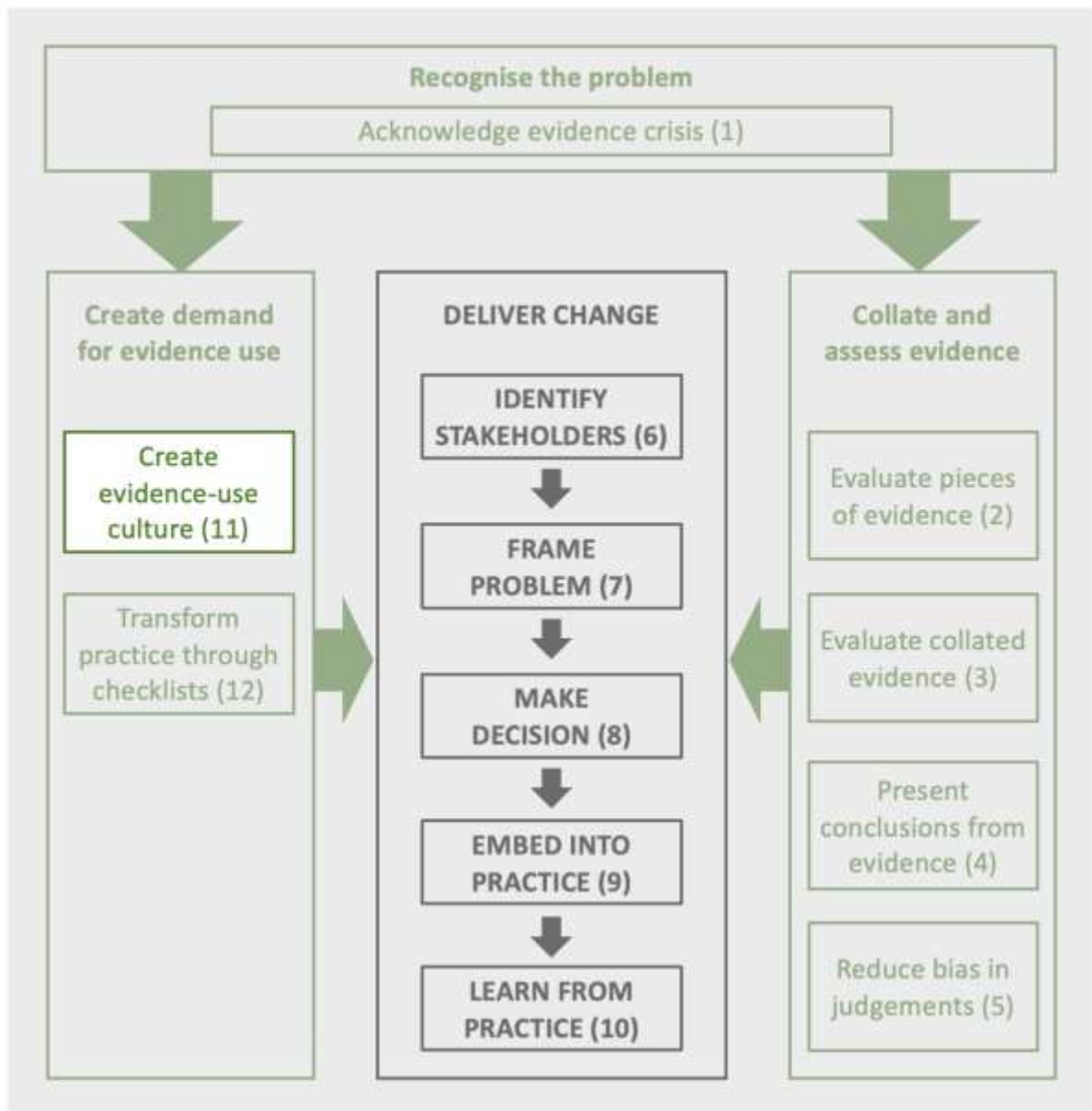
2.5.2 Creating a culture of using evidence

According to Romao (2021), organisational culture refers to values and behaviours including ideas of common practices. The culture of the organisation affects the type of evidence that is used for planning and decision making. For example, an organisation may rely mainly or value the research for use, and the other organisation regard research as irrelevant and only rely on experiential knowledge. Organisational culture has an imperative influence on employee's capacity to be innovative, commitment and on institutional performance as a whole.

There is a wide range of actions that can be implemented to encourage evidence use through creating a culture in the organisation. Work practices and changing attitudes can be seen as challenging because in most cases employees lack the necessary training to foster such changes. Evidence use can be complicated, and that calls for a need to increase practitioners' skill and familiarity with evidence use by providing further training (Frick *et al.*, 2022). Organisational culture can be approached by covering the following areas for implementation: **Auditing current evidence use:** When organisations commit themselves to using evidence, an important starting point is to consider the current available evidence that is used by the organisation, its value and how it is used. This means organisation can conduct self-assessment on how often is the evidence considered for planning and decision making, the mechanisms and the capacity of staff; **Creating an Evidence-Use Plan:** In an organisation, there are results or report of audits where evidence is being requested to support what has been done and achieved. Therefore, the organisation can craft a plan and also the management ensure that evidence will be vital to the business of the organisation; and **Creating expectations and opportunities for evidence use:** This needs to happen in driving the culture

and new models in the organisation, it also includes sharing of commitments and values, approaches and creating processes to enforce practices in building new habits. Moreover, senior leaders should lead by setting expectations and also this process requires participation of all staff to contribute in identifying processes and mechanisms of where evidence is identified, gathered, stored and made available when needed for use; and ***Providing the capacity to deliver evidence use***: It is ideal to identify staff with core responsibilities that are centred around evidence use because not all organisation may be able to hire employees specifically for evidence use. Therefore, it is critical to find ways to adapt the existing workflows within the organisation and reinforce the mechanisms.

As indicated above, creating culture for evidence use in the organisation requires support from all staff and it has to be led by senior managers. It is not a process that can happen in a short space of time, because there are areas that will need to be looked at and considered within the process. Below diagram is a demonstration of an approach towards the process.



Source: Frick et al., 2022 Romao (2021), states that it is common to struggle with the use of evidence in the public institution's routines. This is caused by several factors such as difficulties of technical knowledge to incorporate evidence in the work, different time frames of research and policy, including complexity of the policy making process. In the study that he conducted regarding evidence use in the Brazilian public sector, he further highlighted the steps that can be employed in improving the culture of evidence use. These steps are: The training of public servants on knowledge translation, research methods and application of knowledge in to the policy process; Developing of standards and protocols for the application of evidence;

Eccles (2009), established the fundamental importance of the individual in driving organisational change and for that to succeed there has to be integration evidence informed practice formed through partnership with passionate leaders to champion the approach of engagements with individuals and teams. Establishing relationship with academic organisations and civil societies to increase social participation in the policy-making process; Motivate staff members to better understand and learn from researches, that will promote relationship between public servants and researchers; Invest on staff members that can lead innovation and relevant initiatives in championing evidence informed policy, supporting and influencing other staff members; and Develop a specialised unit such as “evidence to policy” which can be responsible for assessment of evidence needs and implementing a change plan withing the organisation (Romao, 2021).

The impact of having good governance and effective mechanisms goes beyond informed decision making; it resonates with the ability to address complex challenges, improve services, and enhance the use of evidence.

2.6 Understanding the Context of Evidence Based decision-making

The literature on evidence use in policy and decision making has become of age. When one conducts a search of this subject, it becomes evident that the corpus of literature is growing and that there remains a gap in appreciating how context differs in each case. For instance, Waddell (2021) underscores the foundational importance of comprehending context and conceptualizing how evidence can facilitate organizational goal attainment. Moreover, the author emphasizes the necessity for organisational roles to align with the approach to evidence utilisation, contingent upon the contextual nuances and understanding, including identifying points of potential influence. Notably, Waddell (2021) suggests that no universal best practices exist for supporting evidence utilization; instead, the emphasis lies on contextual adaptation and the development of guidance and tools to operationalize these approaches. Central to this process is the recognition of key areas that can facilitate evidence utilisation. Parkhurst and Abeysinghe (2016), argue against the involvement of hierarchy in evidence use. The authors do not support the notion of hierarchy to appropriateness of evidence and this does not mean hierarchy is not relevant. As opposed to adhering to a single

hierarchy of evidence to determine what constitutes good evidence for policy, it is more appropriate to determine evidence through its credibility and appropriateness. This is attributed to the form of evidence, the identification of relevant, and the weight that any piece of evidence holds which must best be suitable for the needs of development policy and implementation. The approach of critical inspection of relevant and appropriate evidence can ensure that the best possible evidence of various forms is used to achieve the desired results and outcomes (Parkhurst and Abeysinghe, 2016). It is important to take note of the developments in the use of evidence that will result to the delivery of evidence-based planning and decision making. The purpose of using evidence is to take what is being produced and use it to guide process and to achieve the best possible outcomes for programmes that are being implemented and ultimately improve service delivery.

Relevant to this study, is the research conducted by Jepsen and Rousseau (2022), revealed that there are little empirical studies within the workplace that exist with regards to evidence use, although the promise is that evidence-based policy development and decision making is the practice that can improve the services rendered by the organisation in order to achieve the desired outcomes. The practice of evidence use to managers is emerging and managers strive to make reliable use of the most suitable evidence for decision making. Jepsen and Rousseau (2022), further emphasise the importance of management's perceived use of evidence in several significant areas. For starters, when employees believe that management uses evidence successfully, it can boost confidence in management, fostering advocacy and goodwill toward the firm. Second, such perceptions can open chances for teaching and learning in the professional setting. Third, decisions based on trustworthy relationships rather than self-interest-driven decision-making by management have the potential to reduce employees' perception of vulnerability, hence minimising poor evidence-based decision-making processes. Finally, distinguishing between evidence usage and decision-making processes, as well as demonstrating leadership traits, can highlight the unique contributions that evidence-based practices can provide to organizational development (Jepsen and Rousseau, 2022).

The government of South Africa has made strides in institutionalising monitoring and evaluation and the demand for research and evaluations by government departments has

increased over the years. According to Stewart *et al.*, (2019), the appetite of the South African government officials towards the use of evidence in planning and decision making is mounting. However, it should be noted that the government systems are embedded with structures, the rules and hierarchies of evidence use are not often emphasized where there are concerns to respond timeously, putting pressure on demand of policy and decision makers to make use of evaluated evidence. With noting the government structures and hierarchies, one of the barriers in using evidence to inform decision making is not having proper mechanisms which emanates from lack of communication and engagement. Strydom *et al.*, (2010), states that communication between the structures and policy makers remains poor, and this results in evidence having limited relevance in resolving the current policy problem and making it difficult to make informed decisions. The policy makers would insist on relevant answers even if those are not contained in the evidence. The poor communication derives from the obstacles such as inadequate dissemination of information, limited understanding and inability to relate to the decision making.

In another article Stewart (2023), discovered that there are noticeable shift in evidence production and implementation with the changes in the policy and political landscape in South Africa which is the new practice of using evidence in decision making. The drive for good governance is increasingly integrated with drive for better use of reliable evidence in government which has shifted from external in to internal initiatives. In the area of evidence capacities, there are also shifts from individual capacity strengthening towards delivery beyond individuals to teams and their institutions, and towards deliver of capacity development via institutions rather than externally funded time-bound initiatives (Stewart, 2023). Exploring into the contextual dimensions of evidence-based decision-making and understanding the context is paramount. The contextual lens acknowledges that what works in one setting may not necessarily translate seamlessly into another, emphasizing the need for a nuanced and adaptive approach to evidence utilization. A comprehensive understanding of the context empowers decision-makers to distinguish the relevance and applicability of evidence within the unique circumstances they face.

2.7 The politics of evidence-based policymaking

In a political setting, the advocates of evidence see it as a problem when evidence is misused, or rather used to serve political goals. This also draw the issues of bias, where it reflects the ways in which particular forms of evidence are used to obscure the political nature of decisions towards a particular outcome. The choice of evidence to be used in not a problem, as it is information that is required to help measure options. However, it is important to recognise whether some pieces of evidence can be used to effectively shift the priorities of policies (Parkhurst, 2017).

Parkhurst (2017), asserts that evidence must be gathered before making decisions or taking actions to assess goal achievement and develop methods for goal attainment. This involves identifying essential information by comprehending the key performance indicators of the department, enabling an official to concentrate just on pertinent information. This study highlights the necessity for the Department to establish a mechanism to coordinate the selection and evaluation of evidence for planning and decision-making. This will lead to the development of effective policies to enhance the programs implemented by the Department. According to Hase, Matos and Styer (2015), use of evidence can provide direction where the organisation needs to make faster informed decisions through the use of evidence combined with collaboration and disciplines that support the process through proper analysis, putting emphasis on plan of actions towards achieving the objectives.

According to Sanderson (2002), he reveals that governments will seek to legitimize their policies with reference to the notion of evidence-based decision making but use research evidence only when it supports politically-driven priorities. Stewart (2023), also observed that South Africa has had a turbulent relationship with evidence. However, in response to the then Covid – 19 the country was lauded for evidence informed response to the pandemic.

Thus, empirical evidence can result in improved planning and decision making, thus finding the right evidence guides the process. This involves having proper mechanisms towards the selection of appropriate data that is critical to address the key areas of concerns or question with the understanding of the key performance indicators that will lead to collecting relevant

information. With the combination of different forms of evidence, this creates and acknowledges the context that exists within the space of evidence use (Hase *et al.*, 2015).

Decisions that are based on evidence are possibly more effective and better-informed compared to the decisions taken through politically constrained processes without concrete substantial evidence (The Africa Centre for Evidence, 2021). Evidence allows confidence on decision that are taken by planners and decision makers, decisions made with validated concepts and solid technical bases that can open up options to be considered. Which this qualifies that evidence can play a vital role in different levels such as the policymaking process, policy agenda setting, formulation and implementation of programmes. Stewart (2023), emphasise that the use of evidence is underpinned by both policies and systems for policy development. He further states that, when these developments are traced back in South Africa there is a shift in the frameworks of national policy and the evidence ecosystem is supported by a strong foundation of legislations.

Despite the availability of evidence, decision makers often feel frustrated robust evidence does not always produce the desired effect in the process of decision making. They have to often respond to rapidly structured and challenging problems, and since many actors such as politicians and other stakeholders take part in the process, it results to conflicting facts and values where at time conclusions are opposed with different solutions to the same problem (Strydom, Funke, Nienaber, Nortje & Steyn, 2010).

It has been argued that no political decision should made by the elected leaders without empirical evidence that is gathered first on accountability and service delivery (Khale & Worku, 2013). Further argued is that, the objective of evidence use through evaluations can result in improved performance of activities in the public sector organisations, moreover, it can also lead to performance accountability.

According to Vestman and Conner (2006), in their article they illustrate that the connection between politics and evaluation can be mounted in three different ways and these are characterised as positions that determine whether it is possible to operationally or desirable conceptually to separate evaluation and politics. These positions illustrate the difference in view of the relationship between evaluation and politics.

The first position is (i) the value-neutral evaluator – its view is that operationally and conceptually, evaluation and politics can and should be separated. This would mean that the evaluator should work independently and submit the assessment to the politicians. It will also assist in allowing the evaluator to produce good and solid objectives of the research and minimise political influences.

Second position is (ii) the value-sensitive evaluator – this position highlights the view that evaluation takes place in a political space, therefore the two cannot be entirely separated but the evaluator should be distant from the political component. Though the emphasis is on professionalism, this position also includes two ideas on how politics and expertise can be conceptualised. The first idea reduces the evaluation politics relation which this relates market perspective and the other idea reflects on the value committed perspective on concerns regarding professional role that makes the evaluation democratic even more. However, this position also admits that it cannot be possible to entirely separate evaluation and politics as evaluation is an activity that is couched in a political context.

Third position (iii) The value-critical evaluator – this position view politics as something integrated in our everyday life and that is not something bad, it further accepts based on that reason that there cannot be a separation from the evaluation and politics,

Vestman and Conner (2006), further state that, one way to separate evaluation from politics is to emphasize its autonomy in relation to political institutions and to powerful interests in society. The basic idea is that it is via citizenship – through people deciding together how they will act and then following through with it – that an individual can achieve his or her full potential. A study from Europe by Breckon and Hopkins (2019) has revealed that, it happens at times that evidence can be detached from the people. This means that it can be a top-down approach, because very little has adopted the evidence informed policy arena. In doing things differently, a meaningful dialogue that will involve the people can go a long way to connecting evidence with people's or citizens priorities, ideas and concerns. There is a need for policy makers to merge top-down approaches with bottom-up, this means citizen engagement, because from bottom up one may risk being disconnected from priorities, and from top down there may be risks of being disconnected from concerns of citizens and stakeholders.

2.8 The challenges of using evidence in planning and decision making within South African public sector

A number of institutional approaches do change over time and that has established a foundation that is strong for South Africa to make use of evidence (Stewart, Dayel, Lange & Van Rooyen, 2019). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the NDP, 2030 along with other legislative frameworks support the initialisation of evidence use, the progress review of the national goals and that South African government has the drive to use evidence in policy and decision making.

An article by Ouimet, *et al.* (2023), discovers factors that are challenges that affect the evidence use. The first one is the institution and organisation, this relates to the support and social relation including access and availability of evidence for use. The second one is the characteristics of evidence, form and content. The third one is the policy and political context, such as interest groups and work-related context. And lastly, the characteristics of the individual, this relates to beliefs, knowledge, skills and attitude towards the use of evidence.

In addition to the above factors, Newman, Cherney and Head (2017) also label some of the challenging factors of evidence use which are more of the same, such as: (i) political manipulation of evidence where only pieces of evidence are being used to support a particular motive. (ii) The difficulty in adopting the results and interpretation (iii) cultural difference that are within, and that results to restricting the communication of evidence.

When there is information or evidence that is withheld that may possibly assist to inform planning, development of policies and decision making, attempts to accurately appraise or effectively deliver services is likely to be hindered. Thus, this may result in choices that might not be possible achieve the intended objective given the prevailing condition of situation. Goldman *et al.*, (2020), states that managers at times do not see their role as forestalling the evidence need for evidence use, but being required to provide evidence at the last minute, meaning decisions are taken without effective diagnosis because of time pressure.

According to Stewart *et al.*, (2018), the effort to improve evidence-based policymaking in South Africa seemed to have placed minimal weight on the decision-making systems and making use of evidence by policy developers and decision makers. Across all government departments, studies show that the approach used by government which is the main source,

were of informal nature, drawing from opinions of expert, personal experiences and interest groups. Using evidence in policy and making informed decisions is proposed by quite a number of basic principles which are that the process of decision making in the government Departments is not viewed from a purely rational perspective. Ideally, a complete search of all the available information and practices is required to make rational decisions (Baba & Farimah, 2012). However, the assumption is that in reality, problems are just simplified and are attempted to be resolved with human mind bounded rational as opposed to comprehensive and objective rational. The latter statement is further worsened by what is described as political interference, that is to say, often times, politicians tend to insist that there should be quick and actionable results in a relatively short space of time, while neglecting the overall evidence use to inform decision making and planning (Head, 2010).

Albeit the foregoing paragraph, the perception of evidence and its use in policy and decision making should be understood, which also takes in to consideration the level of experience and the process of making decision at an individual level. This will bring about the discussion on evidence availability as the basis bounded awareness such as not to overlook important and readily available evidence. Furthermore, use of evidence in policy and decision-making process can affect authority at different levels, such as the context on that process and organisational politics, and for the evidence to be useful, it has to be rigorous and relevant to the context (Baba & Farimah, 2012).

Sibanda and Masiya, (n.d.), note that some types of evidence are not use in planning and policy making, there are problems in terms of gathering evidence and using it systematically for policy making and service delivery improvement within government. Another problem is the knowledge regarding the importance of evidence, how gaps are identified and the mistrust between those generating evidence. This impedes the effective use of evidence and that is where the selective use of evidence is practised.

In a study conducted by Romao (2021), in Brazil, the focus was on enhancing the culture of evidence use within the Brazilian public sector. The author underscored the significant role of organizational culture as a barrier to evidence utilization. Moreover, various obstacles were highlighted that hinder the organization's decision-making processes and the consumption of evidence. These challenges encompass the following: Firstly, the diverse and intricate nature

of available information poses a substantial challenge in effectively communicating findings. Thus, there is a crucial need to streamline information and evidence, prioritising their relevance to the policy or decision-making context. Secondly, political, institutional, and social pressures emerge as influential factors that can divert policymakers away from evidence-informed directions, thereby undermining the use of evidence. Furthermore, barriers such as motivation to utilize evidence, attitudes, and beliefs within the organisational culture also play significant roles in impeding evidence use. Additionally, public servants often lack the necessary skills to generate, locate, and apply evidence in a transparent and systematic manner, further exacerbating the challenges associated with evidence utilisation. Addressing these multifaceted barriers is essential for fostering a conducive environment for evidence-based decision-making within the Brazilian public sector. In addition to the above barriers, public servants often do not have the relevant skills to produce, find and apply evidence transparently and systematically.

With reference to the organisational culture, Goldman *et al.*, (2020), additionally highlights some aspects that also affects the use of evidence, and those are openness to change, incentives and motivation. These refers to the extent to which the organisation encourages and welcome innovation on evidence use, and also concerns on rewards that relates to performance to motivate the drive of employees to use evidence in supporting their decisions. Geddes (2023), also asserts that the process of gather evidence remain the same, this is due to the lack of training and commitment by the official regarding evidence gathering, this includes also the lack of innovations to gather and make use evidence.

In an article written by Howlett, *et al.* (2014), they found that is is generally true that there is a lack in the knowledge of many of the tasks and activities involved in policy formulation and there is limited data on aspect of the policy appraisal activities governments engage in and for the nature of the advice they receive in so doing. They further that emphasise that over the past decade better evidence has slowly accumulated on the nature of policy work and the array of analytical techniques utilized by different actors in different venues of policy appraisal.

2.9 The National Evaluation System of South Africa as a basis for evidence use

The South Africa evaluation system was developed in 2011 and that was where the systematic research was conducted in to countries with relevant existing evaluation system, countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Canada, Australia and the US. The South African government has emphasised planning, monitoring and evaluation as key to improving government performance and the National Development Plan (NDP) and Medium-Term Strategic Framework has undertaken valiant efforts to use evaluation to strengthen its development outcomes (Sibanda and Masiya, n.d.). In South Africa, the use of evaluative evidence is critical as it could contribute to accountability, transparency and equal treatment when allocating resources. The government of South Africa can benefit from using evaluation evidence to develop policies using information from evaluations of what has worked and what did not work, in addressing some of the challenges it is currently facing, including poverty, inequality and unemployment.

There are a number of initiatives that are being implemented by the South Africa government towards the support of policy and decision makers' capacity to use evidence in the process of planning as well as for the purpose of initiating intervention programmes. Initiatives such as components of the Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework issued by the DPME (Stewart *et al.*, 2018). The Government Wide M&E systems focuses on measuring the results produced by government and systems that may exist at the level of the entire Department. Monitoring & Evaluation provides information regarding the performance of a Department, its strengths and credibility. Furthermore, M&E systems provides useful information to help improve performance and its success is normally demonstrated through the following defining characteristics of a successful M&E system which ought to be able to:

- Intensify the utilisation of M&E information in more than one stages of the policy cycle.
- Information that meets standards for data quality and evaluation reliability
- Sustainability, by which the system will survive a change in administration (The Presidency, 2017).

It is an important discipline for the DCSTM to consider carefully what is it that they are trying to achieve from their programmes and to plan accordingly. Thus, it may assist in providing

clarity for each programme being implemented, what success would look likely to be achieved and how they will know if it will be successful or not.

An effective M&E plan should conform to the: **Utility:** It must be useful and serve the practical and strategic information needs of the intended users for decision making purposes and setting of targets, these may range from assessing programme performance to allocate resources and develop policies; **Feasibility:** Be realistic and practical, given the scarcity of resources, the M&E plan should make the best use of existing data collection system. However, if new data collection systems are involved, resources (cost and technical capacity) must carefully be considered; **Ethically sound:** Abide by ethical principles with regards to those involved in and affected by the M&E activities; and **Accuracy:** Provide technically accurate and useful information for decision making and programme improvement (The Presidency, 2007).

Decision makers have to process a lot of information, budgets, audits, impact analyses, and evaluation studies, and the DCSTM must not only rely on monitoring the programmes. According to Stewart (2023), there are three identified significant shifts that can advance the use of evidence (i) growth on initiatives that are focused on supporting evidence (ii) enhance the relationship within evidence generators and other partners (iii) enhance capacity that emphasises on using evidence and not only to produce it. The author also found that with the application of these identified shifts there can be a significant change, for example, the Department of Social Science and Technology with the development of the White paper n 2019 that emphasises the impact of science marked a change in the mandate of the National Research Foundation to endure the impact of research.

Amisi (2015), underscores the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for the efforts of preaching and guiding the custodian Departments in conducting evaluations, however, the DPME has no jurisdiction to communicate evaluation results of an implemented programme. And this is because if the DPME communicate the outcomes of the evaluation, specifically when the results are negative, it would appear as an expose of non-performance to the whole Department and not only on that specific evaluated programme. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.), also reveals that there is limited use of evaluation evidence in South African policy making process that it's a system wide challenge in engaging evidence and use evidence to decision and policy making processes. The authors further note that the use of evidence is

not mainstreamed, limitation of accessing and using evidence were also identified. Which this has remained a challenge is South Africa. Forss, Rebien and Carlson (2002), also asserts that evaluations are not utilize, the linkage between the decision making and evaluation is weak, this also makes it difficult to prove that there is an improvement in organizational learning through the use of evaluations.

However, Stewart (2023), has discovered that there is a movement in South Africa, the delivery of better outcomes has provided a common ground for the values of evidence use. This is due to the increasing regulations for the use of evidence in policy development and those are the key drivers for the use of evidence in the national policy. They have the opportunity to ensure that evidence is considered when changes are being made and when decisions are being taken.

There should be an element drawing information from evaluation studies that can serve as bases for planning. Van Dooren, Bouckaert and Halligan, (2015), state that almost superhuman analytical capacity is required to process all these sources. Performance information comes on top of this pile, and for this reason, the risk of an information overload increases even more. This is also why there has to be capacity mechanisms in place that should ensure that information that is being collected is analysed and converted in to evidence that is to be evaluated for use.

According to Dunn (2012), evaluations perform several functions. First, and of most importance, evaluation provides reliable evidence-based information about programme or project performance, that is, the extent to which needs, values, and opportunities have been realised through public policy. Second, evaluation contributes to the clarification and critique of values that underlie the selection of goals and objectives. Third, evaluation may contribute to the application of other policy-analytic methods, including problem structuring and prescription.

Morra Imas and Rist (2009), concurs that the purpose of any evaluation is to provide information to planners and decision makers to enable them to make sound planning and decisions about projects, programmes or policies. Evaluation should help them to understand what is likely to happen, is happening or has happened because of an intervention and identify ways to obtain more of the desired benefits.

Deliberate design and cultivation are required for evidence use, and to strengthen that it is important to capitalise in building a culture that will promote M&E. This reflects to shared ideas and practices at an organisational level about M&E. Furthermore, note should also be taken on knowledge generation, reporting, learning and accountability to improve performance. M&E should be institutionalised and include the use of good strategic planning processes which will result to linking plans to individual performance, establishing evaluation plan and routinely monitor the pathways to outcomes and impacts. Moreover, eliminating negative compliance by building trust on evaluation and aiming to support continuous improvement on the use of evidence (Pabari and Goldman, 2023).

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has given background about the North West Provincial Government, specifically the DCSTM and also what is considered as evidence. Pabari and Goldman (2023), states that evidence-informed policy and practice is important when navigating through an environment that is increasingly dynamic and turbulent to anticipate the coming changes. That means engaging with complex adaptive systems and complexity. This includes understanding using evidence in the design of the journey with clear consideration of use and knowledge brokering processes which enables supply and demand.

The strategic and responsible use of evidence is paramount across diverse fields, ranging from scientific research and policymaking to organizational decision-making. The pillars of evidence form the foundation for robust decision-making processes. By incorporating various types of evidence, the Department can make well-informed decisions and policies. Additionally, the ethical considerations and awareness of potential biases in evidence contribute to the integrity and reliability of the decision-making process.

Striking a balance between the types of evidence use and mechanisms ensures a comprehensive and nuanced approach to decision-making, acknowledging both the tangible realities and the underlying principles that shape our understanding. In essence, evidence use serves as the linchpin for fostering informed, ethical, and effective practices for improvement and advancement services that are delivered including programs that are being implemented.

An appropriate use of evidence, therefore, would be one which is transparent about the policy concerns at hand, which questions whether intervention effects will be expected in the target area, and which is critically aware of different ways to classify populations areas. Despite the challenges that are being experienced and the influence that politics have in making use of evidence, and although there is a robust policy framework and systems, there are a number of challenges in implementing the national evaluation system in South Africa. The Department should make use of the information that is being gathered through monitoring and evaluation, and also make use of the recommendation that are being made on conducted research. A framework developed by Langer, which consist of two core components namely the “mechanisms and behavioural change” can be used by the Department to support conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of evidence use intervention.

South Africa’s evaluation system has been spreading across government, with evaluations at national and provincial levels, implemented through national, provincial and departmental evaluation plans. The DPME is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of this system. The Department facilitates, influences and supports effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes aimed at improving service delivery, outcomes and impact on society. Evidence-based policy making assists policy makers to make better decisions and achieve better outcomes (Forss, Rebien and Carlsson, 2002).

CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study. It explains the research design, sampling, the data collection and data analysis methods that were used and the rationale for each of them. In addition, the chapter will discuss the study’s limitations and research ethics that were considered in the framing of the study.

3.2 Research design

The study employed an exploratory qualitative design as this allows space and time to interpret and analyse data that was collected. The exploratory research design is more subjective and allows the researcher an opportunity to explore a holistic picture of the subject matter. As a research design, it does not rely on large numbers, but on in-depth information that has been socially constructed by interviewees and observations as primary data interpreted by the researcher. According to McFadzean (n.d.), qualitative methods help researchers to understand motivation, the fact that influence is important, how the implemented strategies work and the resulting consequences. Leedy and Ormrod (2005), further state that qualitative research provides new insight in to a particular phenomenon or can evaluate the effectiveness of existing practises.

The purpose of employing the exploratory research design was to capture the understanding of making use of evidence for planning and decision-making purposes. The major emphasis in an exploratory study is on discovering ideas and insights, not only to point them out but to also formulate them and then use the problem to develop workable research. In addition, this research design is used to study a problem that has not been clearly defined yet. The research is conducted to determine the nature of the problem, exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps us to have a better understanding of the problem. The advantages of this type of research design are that, it is flexible and adaptable to change, low on cost and increase understanding in determining on why and how things can happen. It can also help to plan strategically and to find out possible ways to achieve decision makers goals. The disadvantage of this type of research design is that the area of focus may not be typically for a larger population of interest and that may seldomly give adequate answers to the research questions (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017).

3.3 Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed by the researcher in this study. It is a sampling technique widely used for “the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources” (Patton, 2002 cited by Palinkas et al 2015: p2). Purposive sampling is useful for “identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest” (Cresswell &

Plano Clark, 2011 cited by Palinkas et al 2015: p2). This sampling technique allows the researcher to rely on his or her own judgment when choosing participants for the study and the amount of sample is usually smaller. In addition, purposive sampling focuses on the characteristics of participants that are of interest and enable researcher to gather a lot of information out of the data that they have collected (Mark, 2021).

Officials from the North West Department of Community Safety and Transport Management were the main targeted respondents interviewed by the researcher and. The sample of 15 interviews was divided in to two, 9 officials from the North West Department of Community Safety and Transport Management head office and 6 respondents from the four districts with the province.

3.4 Data collection methods

For data collection purposes, the researcher utilised key informant interviews and desk review of relevant published and unpublished documents on evidence use in DTSCM.

3.4.1 *Key informant interviews*

Empirical data for this study was collected through key informant interviews. Key informants are often identified because they hold “special or expert knowledge” on a topic (Taylor and Blake 2015 cited by Lokot 2021 p3). These informants “may be community leaders or experts on an issue who act as “owners” of important contextual knowledge” (Sharrock 1974 cited by Lokot 2021 p3). The key informant interviews allow a free flow of information and ideas with the use of question guides that will probe for information. Moreover, they can be useful in situations such as when there is a need to understand behaviour and perspectives of partners, and also when the main purpose is to generate the recommendations. However, the approach has its own advantages and limitation. The advantages are that in the interviews are inexpensive and simple to conduct. There is also an element of flexibility to explore new ideas and the researcher gets the information directly from the knowledgeable key informants. And the limitations are that information may be biased if informants are not carefully selected and it may be difficult to prove validity of findings (USAID 1996).

The key informants for this research were the DCSTM officials who were approached to participate in the study. These key informants were mainly those that are more involved in

the planning and the implementation of Departmental programmes and campaigns. The advantage of using these key informants and the population for the study is that the researcher was able to develop common understanding with the officials. The researcher found it useful to conduct the interviews with officials as they were able to provide critical information regarding their experiences with evidence generation and use in the department.

3.4.2 Desk review

Desk review of existing records, both published and unpublished was also included as a key method in this study. The DCSTM produces several reports on monthly, quarterly and annually basis regarding progress in implementation of all programmes that are rolled out. The quarterly reports of programme monitoring, strategic plans, annual reports and the research studies conducted for evaluations, which all these reports are the vital documents to inform planning, decision making and the development of plans and policies.

3.5 Data collection tools

A qualitative question guide was developed to guide questions which were asked during the key informant interviews. The question guide provided a list of questions that participants were asked to respond to in connection with evidence use. It was first piloted on 5 respondents in order to quality check the question guide and it was found to be relevant for the study with no amendments on the questions upon piloting.

3.6 Data analysis

Thematic data analysis was employed in this study. It is a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repetitive patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method for describing data, further to that, it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and assembling various themes. The principles of thematic analysis involved coding data to search for and refine themes, and to report findings are applicable to generally qualitative methods (Watling & Lingard, 2012). Smith (2020) denotes that since qualitative data is the type of data which is gathered directly from the primary sources, through interviews, surveys, focus groups etc., it is important that this data is analyzed suitably to identify the relevant trends and turn raw data into valuable information. Thematic analysis is the process of analysing the raw data collected through the process of qualitative research in an attempt to identify the necessary information and trends

from the collected data (Taylor *et al*, 2012). It further allows the researcher to analyse and identify key information within the data as per their research questions and objectives.

When working with large forms of qualitative data, thematic analysis is highly advantageous as it allows one to divide and categories large data sets in a way that makes it far easier to process by sorting the data into broad themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It is a regarded as being subjective, due to that that it studies and analyses participant's experiences, views, and opinions, hence it is commonly conducted on data derived from, surveys, social media posts, interviews, and conversations, etc. There are several approaches to conducting thematic analysis, which are further classified into a six-step process, i.e. "*familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up*" (Smith, 2020).

3.7 Validity

The validity of data is a foundational element, it also underpins the reliability and applicability of findings of this study. It refers to the degree of which data accurately represents the problem that this study intended to measure. Validity encompasses various dimensions, such as content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity. In this study, approach of content validity was appropriate to assess whether the data captured all aspects of the concept that is being studied to ensure that the conclusions drawn from data analysis are sound and meaningful.

Moreover, there was an ongoing assessment of data validity throughout the research process. This involves not only initial validation but also continuous monitoring as new data is collected and analysed. By prioritizing validity at every stage, it contributes to the credibility of the work and ensure that their conclusions can effectively inform practice and policy.

3.8 Limitations of the study

This study was conducted with selected officials from the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management. Therefore, because of the chosen sampling strategy, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to other governments and institutions in other provinces.

3.9 Ethical considerations

With noting that there are guidelines that should be followed when conducting research, abiding with practises that are upright. Interviews were conducted with the Departmental employees and involving participants from other departments in relation to the research topic(s). Considering the reluctance of government officials to give out information on sensitive issues such as producing evidence to an outsider or someone that is not on their line of environment, the researcher requested permission from the Accounting Officer or the Head of the Department and the respective senior officials of the programmes within the Department.

Once consent would have been granted, the researcher will outline rights of all officials to be interviewed will be clearly explained to them before commencement of interviews to allow them a chance to decide if they want to proceed with the process or to not. Participants will also be welcomed to change their mind and pull out during the interview at any given time. Assurance will be given to them that their identity will be withheld and the information that they will provide will be kept confidential at all times.

The researcher sought permission from the University of Witwatersrand Ethics Committee to ensure that there will be no maltreatment of participating interviewees.

3.10 Conclusion

This research methodology has guided the entire process of the study that is the research questions, data collection and analysis. It clarifies the framework within the study and to enhance the credibility of the findings. The specific objectives of the research are being addressed effectively thus will ensure that the conclusions supported and validated by the collected data. The choice of the research design was critical to determine the validity and reliability of the results. The approach also minimised the biases and errors that could compromise the integrity of the study. Furthermore, ethical practices were considered to ensure that participants are protected as well as the integrity of the research process. The commitment to ethical practices also made a huge contribution to generating credible and relevant knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The crucial phase that results from data analysis and the point at which data becomes insights is the presentation of findings and discussion. The research findings are presented and discussed in this chapter. It acts as the link between the laborious processes of gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. In addition to providing information, this chapter offers insight into the topic of evidence use's applicability. Programme trajectories are impacted by the presentation and discussion of these findings, which paves the way for evidence-based decisions that can spur advancement and enhance programme execution.

Planning and decision-making require the use of evidence since it affects how interventions are implemented and how they turn out. This characteristic entails the thoughtful consideration, efficient interpretation, and application of information to the operations. The findings will address the following sub-research questions of the study, namely, (i) To what extent do officials within the Department understand the importance of utilisation of evidence use? (ii) To what extent do departmental officials utilise the evidence that is being produced in planning and decision-making? (iii) What barriers hinder departmental officials from utilising evidence in planning and decision-making?

4.2 Description of study Participants

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are mechanisms for evidence use in the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management by conducting interviews with key informants and gather their opinions. The 15 participants that were approached by the researcher and willing to participate in the study were subsequently interviewed. Through choosing interviews as a method of data collection the researcher hoped to gain a deeper understanding of the participants. The interview method allows the researcher to seek clarity and probe for deeper understanding. As a result, the reporting and analysis of data is reflective of the views of the participants. The researcher himself is experienced in M&E and currently employed in the field, therefore this enabled him to share his own experiences with the participants, thus placing himself as equal to the participants. In this way the researcher was able to build trust and rapport with the participants and the trust in the interaction emanating from evidence use, thus making it easy for the participants to share their own experiences without fear of being judged. **Table 1** show the distribution of participants by gender.

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage
Male	7	47%
Female	8	53%
Total	15	100%

Table 2 show the frequency distribution of participants by age group.

Participants between the ages of 21 and 30 years old accounted for 20% followed by those between 31 and 40 years, 33%; 41 and 50 years, 127%; and 50 years and above, 20%. This analysis shows that the majority is between 31 > 40 and 41 > 50 years of age. Analysis of data showed that the majority of participants were between 20-25 and 26-30 years of age. The frequency distribution of 21 > 30 years and above are the same.

Table 2. Age Distribution on Participants

Age	Number of Participants	Percentage
21 > 30	3	20%
31 > 40	5	33%
41 > 50	4	27%
Above 50	3	20%
Total	15	100%

The table **(Table 3)** below shows participants level of tertiary qualification. Participants that are in possession of National Diploma account to 13%, followed by 40% those are in possession of Bachelors Degree, Honors degree 27% and Masters degree is 20%. The lowest is the 13% of those in possession of Diploma and the highest are those with Bachelor's degree standing at 40%.

Table 3. Participants level of Qualification

Level of Qualification	Number of Participants	Percentage
Diploma	2	13%
Bachelor's Degree	6	40%
Honors Degree	4	27%
Master's Degree	3	20%
Doctorate	0	0
Total	15	100%

The table **(Table 4)** below shows participants experience in service, this means in the public sector. Participants that have an experience of 12 > 36 months account for 20%, followed by

those who have 37 > 60 months 13%, 61 > 84 months 27%; 85 > 106 months is 13% and above 107 months is 27%.

Table 4. Participants experience in service

Years of Experience	Number of Participants	Percentage
Less than 12 months		
12 > 36	3	20%
37 > 60	2	13%
61 > 84	4	27%
85 > 106	2	13%
Above 107	4	27%
Total	15	100%

4.3 The nature of evidence generated in the Department

The production of evidence within the Department is the imperative for effective program implementation. In the APP (2023), the programme of the Provincial Secretariate for Police Services is mandated to generate evidence and make use of it for planning and decision making. Its purpose is to “To exercise oversight function with regard to South African Police Service in the Province, coordinate crime prevention initiatives and promote community police relations”. Below is the table of how the programme is structured:

Sub-Programme	Sub-programme purpose
Policy and research	To conduct research that informs decision making on policing

Monitoring and Evaluation	To ensure SAPS provision of service is in line with statutory requirements
Safety Promotion	To ensure community participation in the fight against crime
Community Police Relations	

The programme has focus areas where research has to be conducted to inform decision making, however, the monitoring and evaluation part only focuses on the compliance of statutory requirements. Sanderson (2002), states that in the notion of modern government, evaluation in particular is required to play an enhanced role in providing information on performance to enhance accountability and ‘control by results’, and in providing evidence of what works to inform policy learning and improvement.

According to Dhaliwal and Tulloch (2012), there is much greater scope for incorporating evaluation evidence in decision-making, even in the presence of such constraints, and that closer partnerships between researchers and policymakers can foster more evidence-based policy. Furthermore, Vestman and Conner (2006), emphasise that evaluation provide a rational and unbiased data to determine whether the system is on its course, also evaluation can be understood as answer to fulfil symbolic functions to with meaning and rational. Dhaliwal and Tulloch (2012), asserts that evaluations also provide critical proof-of-concept for an innovative improvement of the programme, which can be crucial to get political, administrative and financial support for a larger scale-up. And they can also play an important role in institutionalising change and ensuring continuity in the Department.

The impact of producing evidence is not only limited within the department but also in a broader context of influencing service delivery and the wellbeing of serving the communities. This also results to the improvement of outcomes and the impact made through the programs that are being implemented to curb crime. Stern (2005), distinguishes the following five purposes for evaluation that give a view of how evaluation can have an impact on decisions for planning, developing and termination of a programme, (i) **Planning/efficiency** – ensuring that there is a justification for a policy / programme and that resources are efficiently

developed. (ii) **Accountability** – demonstrating how far a programme has achieved its objectives and how well it has used its resources. (iii) **Implementation** – improving the performance of programmes and the effectiveness of how they are delivered and managed. (iv) **Knowledge production** – increasing our understanding of what works in what circumstances and how different measures and interventions can be made more effective. (v) **Institutional and strengthening** – improving and developing capacity among officials and their networks and institutions (Stern, 2005).

4.3.1 Provincial statistics on crime

The directorate of Provincial Secretariat for Police Services implements various programmes towards combating and reducing crime in the North West province. To ensure that these programmes are implemented effectively and efficiently in order achieve the desired outcome and have a noticeable impact in the communities, South African Polices Services recorded crime statistics reports from all over the North West Province are being used. The statistical reports reflect various categories of crime such as:

- i. **Contact crime:** which refers to crimes in which the victims are the targets of violence or instances where the victims are in the vicinity of property that criminals target and are subjected to the use of/or threats of violence by perpetrators. These crimes are associated with murder, sexual Offences, attempted murder, assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (includes GBV), common assault, common robbery and robbery with aggravating circumstances.
- ii. **Aggravated Robbery:** this refers to crimes such as carjacking, robbery at residential premises, robbery at non-residential premises, robbery of cash in transit, bank robbery, and truck hijacking.
- iii. **Property Related Crimes:** this category is associated with crimes such as Burglary at non-residential premises, burglary at residential premises, theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle, theft out of or from motor vehicle and stock-theft.

There are also other serious crimes that are recorded in the reports, which are commercial crime, shoplifting, Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, drug-related crime and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

These statistics that are being collected from the police stations are then stored as evidence that must be used to support the improvement of the programmes to be implemented and also during planning and decision making processes. It also emerged from the interviews that site visits are also conducted at police stations where quarterly and annual reports are compiled. Recommendations are made for the police stations to implement and those recommendations should be monitored to ensure collected evidence is accurate and is of good quality.

4.3.2 Empirical research

Research project reports that are being used by the Department. These are conducted by the directorate of Provincial Secretariat for Police Services aligned to the National Civilian Secretariat, Provincial plans and needs. The findings and recommendations are meant to influence safety of community members within the province. The research projects reports conducted were Policing Needs and Priorities at Provincial Level, and SAPS Specialized Units.

The aim of the Policing Needs and Priorities project was to:

- a. Identify policing needs and priorities at provincial level to guide and influence formulation of Policing Priorities;
- b. Consult with communities in ensuring that they contribute towards identification of policing needs and priorities within their respective policing precinct.
- c. To achieve alignment between deployment of resources and the need that exists at community level.
- d. To identify gaps in the planning processes of the SAPS; e.g. community consultation during the Policing Needs and Priorities identification process.
- e. Come up with findings and recommendations that could influence collective planning and resolutions of policing problems.

The Project on SAPS Specialized Units; (Stock Theft Units, SAPS Auxiliary Garages and the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units) focused on:

- a. Understanding the core and the impact of criminal activities in the community and its impact of services provided by the Specialised Units,

- b. Analysed resources allocation, the capacity and ability of SAPS Specialized Units to serve community members.
- c. Come up with findings and recommendations that could contribute to improve service delivery at the SAPS Specialized Units.

Reports that are compiled on monitoring visits are reports that indicate issues of non-compliance within the SAPS stations and these are prioritised with constant monitoring to determine the level of improvement on the stations based on the implementation of recommendations that were made on previous visits.

4.3.3 Operational research and internal MIS systems

The Department also make use of internal generated reports that contain in-depth analysis of crime patterns and the overview of Departments activities, achievement and challenges. These reports also include progress information on the programs on crime prevention which are implemented through the use of these sources of information aimed to address specific crime related issues and challenges that are experienced through the Province.

Based on the above background, this section reports on the responses of the participants to the interview questions. Three themes were identified for discussion which are arranged as follows: (i) The importance and utilisation of evidence in the Department; (ii) The attitude of public officials towards use of evidence, and; (iii) barriers to utilisation of evidence. The figure below provides a summary of the evidence sources available to the department.

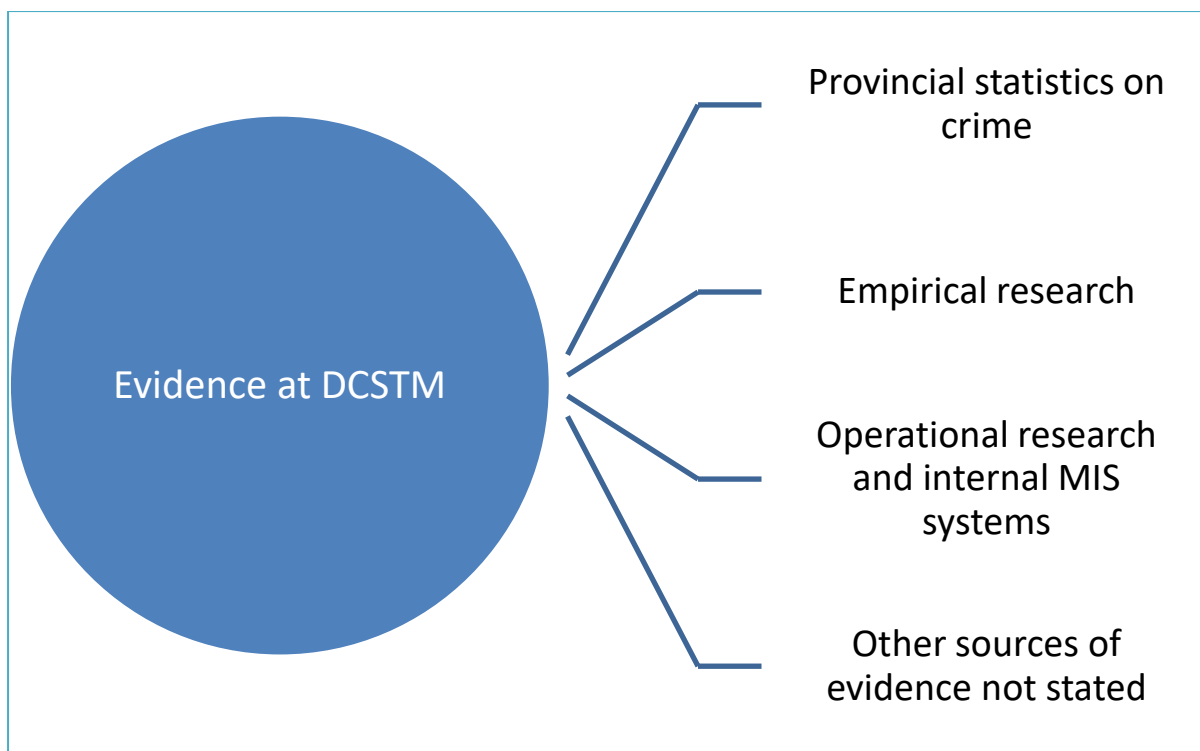


Figure 1: Nature of evidence utilised by DCSTM

4.4 The importance and utilisation of evidence in the Department

Effective evidence utilisation leads to more efficient and equitable services, better resource management, and an overall improvement Departments performance. It involves systematically collecting, interpreting, and applying data and insights to inform strategic planning and program development including implementation thereof. It guides the department's decisions, ensuring that they are entrenched on reliable information. The study also sought to understand the extent to which the produced evidence is being utilised in planning and decision-making by the Department.

Planning and decision require the use of evidence to inform the process and to understand what is it that needs to be done, how and what are the expected or desired outcomes upon implementation. While there is a tendency to mention planning strategically and development of informed policies, the usual outcome is that no achievements are made in delivering what had originally been planned. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.), states that the use of evidence serves two purposes: first, it guides policy decisions, and second, it gathers more

knowledge to better inform future actions. In an era of intense politics and limited public resources, evidence can help bridge the political divide and facilitate evidence-based goals that need to be pursued. Through analysing policies, programmes and data, policies can be made more effective and efficient through the utilisation of evidence.

There may be a monitoring and evaluation unit within the Department, and it is perceived to be providing evidence on implemented programs to determine if are the Department is on the right track and assessing if is progress in improving the services to achieve the departmental vision. However, the question is “to what extent is the Department utilising this evidence to inform planning and decision making thereof”.

One of the participants expressed the rational and motivation behind the use of evidence:

“When it comes to producing evidence for decision making and planning. I am motivated by the opportunity to contribute to informed and well thought out strategies. I believe that evidence-based approaches lead to more effective outcomes and help ensure that decisions are grounded in reliable information. Additionally, I find satisfaction in using my skills in report writing to communicate ideas and data in clear and concise manner. Ultimately, my goal is to support decision makers by providing them with necessary evidence and make informed choices” [Participant 1].

The participant is motivated by the occasion of contributing to the informed strategies and place a reliable foundation on the use of evidence in planning and decision making. With the belief that the participant has, it reflects the understanding that positive outcomes are as the result of reliable information. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills are critical to effectively communicate information and ideas through comprehensive reports which will ultimately serve as the evidence to decision makers within the Department.

Indeed, the principle of evidence utilisation helps to operationalize accountability and rules where by informing decisions within the range of discretion that authorities have over decisions, and by defining the legitimacy of decisions (Parkhurst *et al.*, 2018). Thus, evidence that is to be used should go through several attempts and be filtered out in order, this is a process where particular kinds of powerful evidence is found, the type of evidence that can be then used in policy, and a person can advocate it (Ingold and Monaghan, 2016). Further to

that, the above expression is also supported by other interviewed participants, where they also share the same sentiment confirming the understanding as to how important evidence is when it is used for planning and decision making. The participant below responded with an understanding of the above statement, and underscores the importance of using evidence in planning and reaching rational decisions:

“Decision making and planning that is evidence based is reliable and minimizes chances of making subjective views. It is therefore important to consider the evidence produced in order to plan properly and make rational decisions.” [Participant 2].

The participant also emphasised on the reliability of evidence-based decision making, that there is a high level of confidence when decisions are based on evidence. This also results in minimising subjective views and not to rely more on opinions and objective guided decisions. There should be a high significance of considering the use of evidence that is being produced, which is a method of ensuring that strategies are aligned towards achieving effective outcomes.

Lugo-Gil, Jean-Baptiste and Jaramillo (2019), also expressed that the decision-making on programs at times is not lined up and that there are many contributions that are influencing decision-makers., and one of the factors is subjective evidence. At times it happens that decision-makers become more reliant on subjective findings as compared to the actual generated reliable evidence. Another participant shared the same sentiments on the importance of evidence:

“Evidence based decision making and planning will ensure that all departmental projects have an impact on the communities that are served and that there is sufficient budget allocated for such projects as the need would have been identified through the evidence that is being produced” [Participant 3].

The participant emphasised the need for evidence to support not just decision-making but also attaining the desired impact through evidence, because it is essential to ensure that the implemented programs by the Department have a significant impact to the communities. This is also confirmed by a case study that was conducted in Ghana where it was found that the use of evidence in health policies shows that it does not only respond to a decently useful concern of enhancing the quality of decisions and the development of strategies to be actioned, but it also responds to the need to re-structure and justify decisions. Evidence can

be used to adjudicate such process, but at the same time, where disparity emerges as to the capacity to employ it, evidence can end up shaping policy directions (Parkhurst *et al.*, 2018). With solid evidence, planning will ensure that programs will meet the expected impact. This will result in ensuring that the Department can actually channel resources effectively through the identification of needs and alignment with priority on where the area of focus should be, and assist decision makers as to where the Department should implement the programs to reduce crime. According to Parkhurst *et al.*, (2018), a legitimate approach towards democratic decision processes for more efficient policies and outcomes is through evidence use which plays a prominent role in enabling opportunities for such achievements. The mechanisms and alignment of evidence to priorities to inform future plans and decisions can be seen as a strategy by which technical measurements of policy achievements should employ in shaping the policy direction.

Rather, evaluation evidence serves as a powerful tool for testing the achievement of policy objectives, directing policy discussions, validating a particular policy strategy, and rewarding it by allocating more funds or prolonging its life cycle. This requires navigation through complexity as they aim to create a conducive policy change and providing improved services, advocacy and engaging with other stakeholders (Pabari and Goldman, 2023). A stronger system should be structured in a way that the role of supplying evidence and information is enhanced. In relation to supply, institutions should elicit evidence from within or collect it from external sources to make it readily available for use within the operation of the institution and by users (Banda, Chanda, & Kanyamuna).

4.4.1 Instrumental of evidence

The Department is dependent on crime statistics that are provided by the SAPS, which includes information on various types of crimes reflecting the trends, location and frequency. Information is also gathered through police station visits to understand the state of law enforcement response at a ground level by assessing station operations and observation of local crime issues. It does appear that the directorate within the DCSTM does use evidence and this evidence comes from the external bodies which is the SAPS. The implemented programmes are informed by statistics as evidence and the instrumental use of evidence is

applied, this is also driven by the demand and supply of evidence. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.) states that there are three points concerning the availability of evidence, these are the demand and supply, and the complexity of the system. The authors further note that the existence of evidence does not necessarily imply that policymakers understand how to utilize it, the suitability of the evidence may not be obvious, and that the evidence may not necessarily provide the best option.

However, with the use of statistics, the programmes and policies are likely to be better informed, more effective and less expensive' than policies formulated through ordinary time-constrained and politically constrained processes without evidence input. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.), emphasizes that policies that are based on evidence is also likely to give policymakers confidence in the decisions that they take when implementing programmes. Evidence can play an important role in all three stages in the policymaking process, namely policy agenda setting, formulation and implementation”.

4.4.2 Conceptual of Evidence use

With this conceptualisation of evidence use, the process of evaluating decisions becomes more than a simple managerial or technical function. Conceptualizing and strengthening evidence use is a proof to the impression that informed decisions are not random application of evidence. To improve use of evidence in policy does not only require clarity of what constitute good evidence but also what constitute good use of evidence (Parkhurst, 2017). Conceptualising of evidence use in commissioning decision making should start with asking questions such as when and for what purpose is the evidence being used, where it comes from and who carries evidential information into planning and decision-making processes (Nicolini *et al.*, 2023). The DCSTM does conduct small sample empirical research studies on areas that needs assessment of a situation to inform actions to be taken based on findings and recommendations. However, there seem to be minimal use of the evidence that is generated through these relatively small research projects and that results also to lack of implementation of recommendation.

Amisi (2015), encourages the identification of end-users of evaluations during the conceptualisation phase. This apprises the development of messages and communication where empirical research has to be translated and adapted to formats and language that is accessible to end-users. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.), state that proper use of evidence from

evaluations is important because it provides information and data for policy makers to learn what worked or did not work in previous programmes and policies, resulting in the development of improved policies for better results. Moreover, effective decision making for a better future is promoted by the use of evidence. Forss, Rebien and Carlsson (2002), emphasise that, it may be at times that recommendations are not necessarily followed immediately and that there may be other long-range effects. However, the knowledge generated in any programme context may be applied in a totally different context.

4.5 The attitude of public officials towards use of evidence

Government leaders continue to call for an increase in the instrumental use of evidence in formulating and implementing public policy – or as they call it, an increase in ‘evidence-based policy’. However, evidence-based policy cannot be achieved – or even approached – by a public sector that does not have the capacity to engage effectively with all the forms of evidence available to it (Newman, Cherney and Head, 2017).

It is important for the Departmental officials to play their role in making use of evidence. And this role must not be seen as a secondary task because it is one of the core functions or activity that influences that effectiveness of planning and the implementation of programs. In the study that was conducted by the two authors namely Cronin and Sadan (2015), it was found that respondents indicated that the use of evidence does exist but at time it not often adequate to allow robust decision making, and that results to disastrous policy outcomes. They further elaborated that the poor use of evidence in policy and decision making, including lack of monitoring and evaluation was regarded as the causal factor that weakened the government to use evidence. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.), found that it is reported that most departments' improvement plans to follow evaluation recommendations are not consistently monitored. This has resulted to a negative impact on tracking the use of evaluative evidence in policymaking. Furthermore, evidence-based policy making is hampered by public officials' restricted evidence seeking behaviour resulting in ad hoc use of evidence by public officials, and instead of evidence from research and evaluations, policymakers end up depending on public opinion, political viability, and experiential knowledge.

Departmental officials' ability to make use of evidence does not only influence planning and implementation but also contributes to informed decision making. According to Moore (2019), an effective intervention strategy is not only simplified by choosing one from a list of strategies, one needs to take in to account and consider all the contributing factors, the desired outcome and circumstances in which those interventions will be implemented in. Although the officials may be faced with complex challenges there is a need for ability to effectively gather, interpret and apply evidence, which this is also a competency towards ensuring that the Department meets the developing needs of the communities. Amisi *et al.*, (2021), states that, to address complex problems, stakeholders need to work together and have evidence informed discussions on the root causes of the problem. They further encourage that formation of steering committees is imperative in institutionalising evidence use to strengthen their collaborative response, and this will also strengthen commitment to collaboration, particularly to management and political leadership. During the interviews, participants were asked their view regarding the ability of Departmental officials on making use of evidence.

4.5.1 Level of training and awareness as determinants of use

The level of understanding and the ability varies among officials, and this can be attributed to the of exposure and training in the environment. Because evidence can be complex in most cases and that will require trained officials with skills and ability to interpret and apply it effectively.

One participant highlighted the vital aspects of what constitute the ability of making use of evidence by Departmental officials.

“The ability of officials in making use of evidence differs based on the level of training and exposure to the environment. Evidence that is complex or require specialized skills is not easily interpreted by other officials with limited skills in the directorate, thus officials lack skills or training to interpret and use evidence.” [Participant 1]

It is evident that there is a gap when it comes to ability, this is caused by the lack skills and training, which results to officials not being able to overcome complexities and interpret the evidence for us. Therefore, training and exposure Departmental officials in this regard is crucial to enhance capacity and their ability to make use of evidence. A clear theory of change

is need to strengthened the notion of evidence use, and the organisation can also create a specialised position or units that will focus on promoting the institutional needs and support the application of evidence throughout all the processes of policy and decision making (Romao, 2021).

As noted above, it is understood that there is an expression on the aspect of capacity to generate robust and interpreter rigorous evidence. Policymakers and practitioners often look for an objective assessment of 'what works' (Doughman, Kantengwa and Hakizinka, 2017). The idea that there is a need to tell policy and decision makers, 'do this' or 'don't do that', with relevant and credible evidence at hand. It must not be just because an intervention works very well in one area and implementing it once does not conclusively predict that it will work in other areas as well. With that, it means that to make more reliable policies and decisions, it is imperative for officials to be able to interpret evidence to determine why things work and in what contexts.

Another participant also pointed the inadequacy of training to officials:

"The ability of officials is not at an acceptable level, because they are not trained to produce evidence although the evidence is monitored on a quarterly basis, credibility is low" [Participant 2].

Lack of proper training compromises the ability of officials to possess the necessary skills to collect, analyse and present evidence. This also shows that there is a gap in the Departments training programs to capacitate officials with skill to generate evidence.

The process of having evidence on how an intervention has contributed towards achievement of the outcomes involves generating the evidence from the inputs to the outcome, also taking in to consideration the risk and assumptions. By doing so it is important to make use of different forms of evidence that can be interpreted and relevant to engage to certain issues with the management and users of the evidence (Cook, 2017). There are many aspects in the process and one of key is effective interpretation and tailoring of evidence, gathering data from different sources to have a broader picture of how the situation look like at that current moment.

It came out on in these observations that the interpretation of evidence is a challenge, and the application of it thereof. One of the critical processes in making use of evidence is to be

able to translate it to ensure that there is valuable insight before application. This also plays a vital role in transforming policies and actionable guidelines or strategies to enhance planning through making informed decisions. It also ensures that decision makers are well informed with recent dynamics around the problems, these dynamics can be attributed to laws and regulations, newly developed models that can contribute to evidence-based governance. The evidence translation process also has its challenges because it requires understanding and clear communication of evidence, further to that, it also requires commitment to prevent potential barriers and with the use of translation model, the Department can be able to bring the best out of generated evidence.

The low levels of research use among the officials, in the public sector, may therefore be related to the particular educational training and professional background. In short, there may be individual-level deficits related to levels of education and professional experience, which are preventing the officials from making use of the evidence that is available, and this, however, indicate insufficient capacity (Newman, Cherney and Head, 2017). To address the challenge, starting from interpreting and translating evidence in to use, a model that was developed by Ingold and Monaghan where the two authors had modified the “policy translation model”, this model can assist the Department as an approach of using it as a remedial mechanism to influence and contribute to the use of evidence. The model includes four key dimensions reflected in figure 2 below.

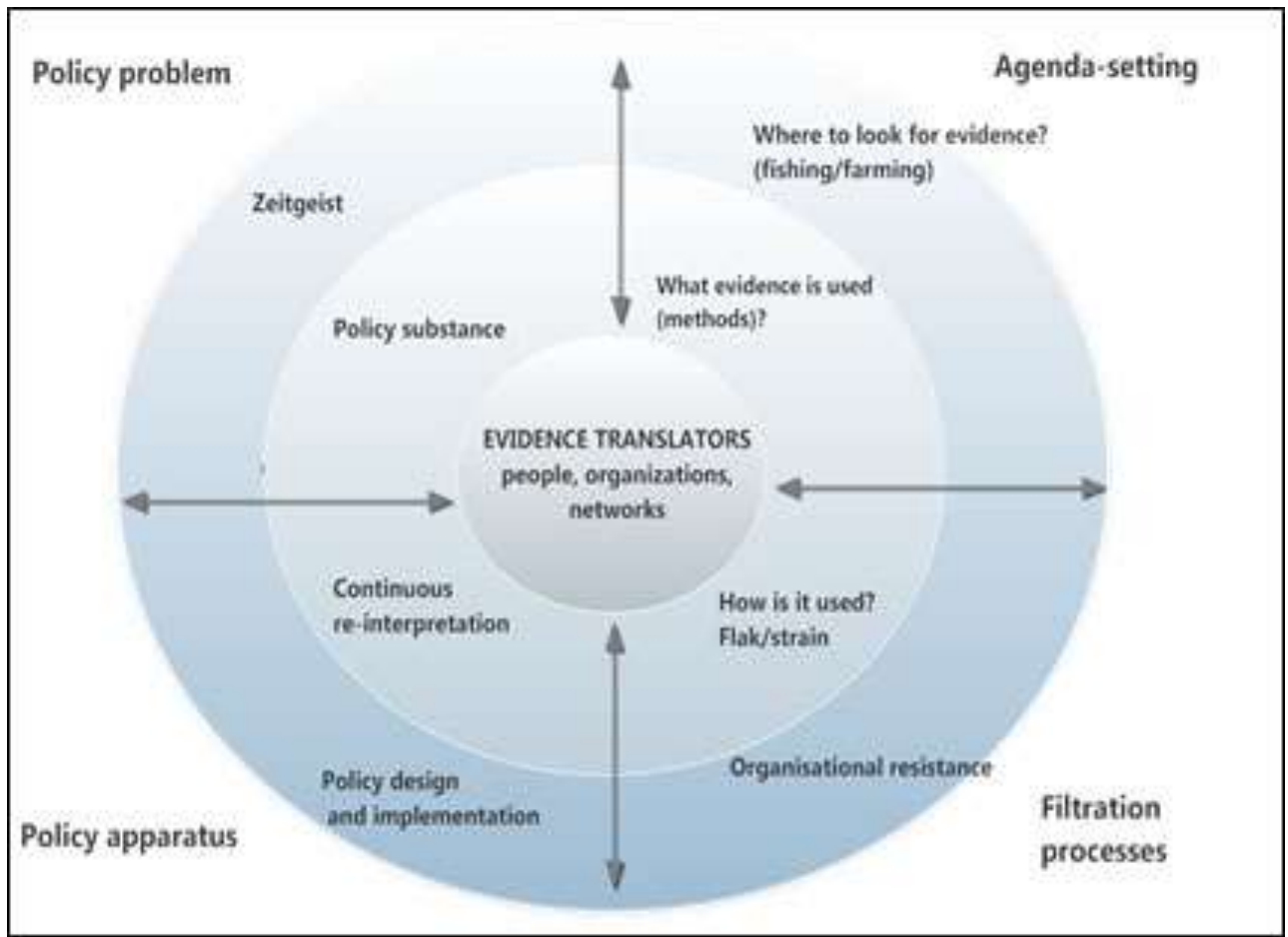


Figure: 2

Source: Evidence translation: an exploration of policy makers' use of evidence

The first entry of the model is the Zeitgeist (top left) which labels the context of constructing the policy problem as a starting point where certain issues are being identified. The second phase (top right) is for the officials to know where to look for evidence and what kind of evidence that is most likely to be used. The third component (bottom right) is that once the evidence has been collected, the filtering process should take place, this include the selection of what evidence will be used and how. The last component (bottom left) refers to the setting and implementation of evidence use in to the process (Ingold and Monaghan, 2016). The actors in this model would be the capacitated delegated official within the Department to serve as a champion in the translation process to influence the use of evidence. Stewart (2023) discovered that, there is a clear shift from a programme designed to “build capacity” of government officials to recognise how little is known by the team on evidence generation and use.

4.5.2 Quality of evidence

This also questions the standard and quality of evidence that the officials generate during the quarterly monitoring, which raises a huge concern because the evidence is fundamental for not only planning and decision making but also for policy implementation within the Departments mandate.

The challenge of understanding the importance of evidence use seem to also be another stumbling block where one of the participants said:

“The use of evidence by officials is minimal because of the challenges of understanding the need and importance of evidence use” [Participant 3].

Identification of evidence that is of high quality can be important where there is a large amount of evidence, and the theory may serve as guidance on which evidence is relevant. Wilkie and Grant (2009), suggest a systematic approach that can be required to determine and select a manageable set of high-quality evidence. The method that can be employed in selecting evidence is the hierarchy, where evidence is ranked according to the manner which it was collected. For example, one would prefer findings on contact interviews where there is a platform to probe responses, rather than using surveys where there is no room to question responses for deeper understanding and details.

The participant pointed that officials in the Department are not making maximum use of the evidence. This can be due to the lack of understanding among officials when it comes to the significance of evidence, and the cause may be that there are communication barriers and that officials are not aware on how to use evidence leading to positive outcomes.

Based on Parkhurst (2017), argument that in the field of policy, to improve the use of evidence, one of the required approaches is the engagement with the question of what exactly constitute the good use of evidence. Rickinson *et al.*, (2022), argues that this may shift the focus of the quality of evidence and focus only on the quality of use. There has to be a distinction between the two because use of evidence requires understanding and clarity on the importance of quality use and only what counts as evidence.

Although there is evidence that is being requested by other sections within the Department for certain processes, the usage remain low. Response from one participant reveals that evidence is available but also it is used selectively by certain directorates.

“Ability of officials regarding utilisation of evidence is not that up to standard, however, the risk management unit would always request evidence to be used for processes and referencing” [Participant 4].

With the various directorate within, it can be suggested that the risk management unit does recognize the importance of evidence for their processes risk mitigations and accountability enhancement. However, the participant underscores that the overall usage evidence withing the Department very low. While the Department may be battling with achieving the maximum standards of evidence use, the risk management unit approach in valuing evidence may serve as a model in motivating other units in promoting the importance of evidence-based approach.

When one has no understanding of the importance of using evidence, they are mostly at times provide their opinion at a moderate level to balance their perspective, one participant responded by saying; “I would say the ability of officials is fair” [Participant 6]. Based on that statement, it means that the respondent’s opinion suggests that there is a fair level of ability on evidence use among the Departmental officials, the indication is that there is an element of competency with the room for improvement. The improvement can be achieved through support, motivation and training as stated by one participant:

“While evidence is always readily available, official’s seldomly utilise it. This is shown by their planning which is sometimes not aligned to their need or even previous results. Their ability to use evidence is limited” [Participant 7].

The above observation by one of the respondents is in contrary with participant 6, although it is noted that opinions or views of individuals vary, the respondent several key points starting from acknowledging that evidence is indeed readily available to the officials of the Department. However, it is not regularly used despite of its availability, and this results to the misalignments in planning which also results to ineffective implementation of programs. The underutilization is also caused by the limited ability from officials, ranging from interpreting

and application of evidence and this will have negative impact in making decisions that are not informed. This is also confirmed by Pabari and Goldman (2023), where they state that people tend to make decisions based on the information at hand. Although the decisions are rational, they are limited by time and capabilities to find relevant information to make sound judgements and decisions. Officials consider that translation models can allow different scenarios to determine the level of contribution of evidence or if it merely used for justification of policies the already exist and decided upon.

Based on all the responses above, it is evident that the ability to make use of evidence by the Departmental officials is below average. The arrangement of time and space for learning within the Department can make a significant difference in influencing the officials to engage in evidence informed practices (Nevo and Slomin-Nevo, 2011). If evidence informed practice can be adopted across the Department, where a range of approaches are incorporated, it is most likely to be successful with also the support of leadership, ongoing training and the allocation of resources.

Officials should consider the use of model to be important and that can also accommodate the utilisation of one piece of evidence and also measuring its weight (Ingold and Monaghan, 2016). Smith *et al.*, (2019), suggest that those who are working with developing of models may want to consider collaborating more with potential users of evidence to enable those models to address the needs of planners and decision makers they are designed to support. The findings show that within the Department, those who are involved in planning and decision-making do not have a framework, and they of utmost importance to practice the use of frameworks, this will result in bridging the gap between evidence producers and evidence users, such a framework should reflect phases starting from where evidence is generated up until where evidence is being used. An example of such framework is given in figure 3 below:

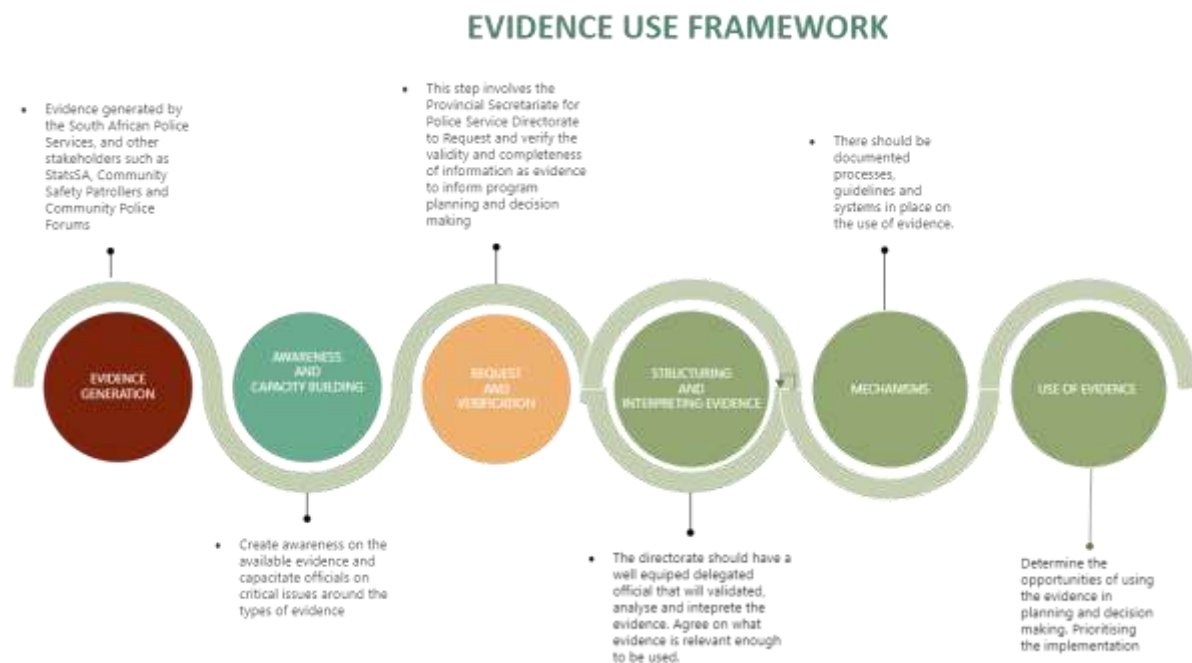


Figure: 3

Illustration of author: Langer

Above is a systematic framework designed to enhance the utilisation of evidence, its purpose is to ensure informed planning and decisions that are taken derive from the best available evidence. The first component of the framework is “**Evidence Generation**”, it involves the identification and gathering of relevant evidence from various stakeholders, in this instance the main stakeholder is the South African Police Services. This first component is crucial because it ensures that there is a foundation of information for planning officials and decision makers.

The second step is “**Awareness and Capacity Building**”, this involves creating awareness on the importance of making use of evidence and capacitating the officials. This can be done through the Human Resource Development unit by inviting expert on the field of evidence use and conduct training workshops that will educate Departmental officials.

Once the evidence is generated, the third step of the framework is “**Request and Verification**”, this is to request and critically synthesizing the evidence for completeness and accuracy. This enables decision makers to assess the quality, relevance, and reliability of the evidence, assisting them to make informed verdicts about its applicability to the programs and policies.

The fourth phase of the framework is “**Structuring and Interpretation**”, this focuses on the translation of evidence into valuable insights. This involves communicating the evidence in a clear and presentable manner to stakeholders, policy and decision makers. Effective communication is key and very important to bridge the gap between the nature of evidence and practical decisions that need to be made. Well-structured evidence also emphasizes and appraise the process of promoting and understanding the limitations and strengths of the evidence that is available

The fifth phase is “**Mechanisms**”, this refers to the pathways and processes through which the evidence is incorporated in planning and decision making, this means the journey of evidence to action and making sure that evidence is not only understood but also integrated in to the Departmental processes. These mechanisms will also highlight guidelines on how evidence should be disseminated, the approach of communicating and selecting based on its reliability including accessibility and use by decision makers.

The final step is the “**Use of Evidence**”, which is the implementation phase of evidence to inform planning and decision making. The main objective of using evidence is to enhance the effectiveness and quality of implementation of plans and decisions that are made on the basis of the most reliable and relevant information. This phase involves the combining the produced evidence in to programs, policies, and promoting the culture of adaptation and learning. By promoting the culture of using evidence, the Department can improve on outcomes, prioritizing and allocation of resources, furthermore, this can also address the challenges that are experienced in an informed manner.

In closing, the evidence use framework will provide a systematic and structured approach of revolving evidence in to action to promote informed processes on planning and implementation of programs, development of strategies and policies, including implementation.

4.6 Barriers to utilisation of Evidence

The utilization of evidence plays a vital role in the process of making informed decision, effective planning, and the effective implementation of programs. Evidence provides the foundation upon which actions and strategies are built. However, in practice, the seamless addition of evidence into decision-making processes can be hindered by various barriers and

challenges. Much less attention has been paid to the possible barriers to evidence-based practice that can arise as a result of insufficiencies within the public service. Newman, Cherney and Head (2017), observed that inadequate organizational processes to support evidence utilisation, in conjunction with poor education, training and leadership among staff, have hindered evidence-based decision and policy-making within the public sector.

In this subsection, the participants highlighted the common barriers that impede the utilization of evidence, complexities and obstacles that the Department encounter. By identifying and understanding the barriers, there can be then a need to pave the way for effective and evidence-informed processes. One of the research questions was to determine “What barriers hinder Departmental officials from utilising evidence in planning and decision-making?”

For informed planning and decision making, including effective policy implementation, evidence is the foundation of the process. However, it happens that the effective utilization of evidence can be impeded by a number of barriers. These barriers to name a few, can be attributed to the organizational culture, lack of training and motivation to officials, resistance to change. As complex as these barriers may be, it is important to establish the nature or the root cause as the first step towards overcoming them. Thereafter the process of developing the strategic remedial approaches can commence.

Dhaliwal and Tulloch (2012), state that the lack of understanding of what constitutes evidence can have an even more malicious effect – it can deter the use of evidence in favour of less rigorous evidence selected to suit immediate needs. The impact of effective strategies to address the barriers should be reflective and cover all areas, from change management and capacity building for foster the culture of continuous improvement. Commitment to transparency is also a demand so that importance of evidence informed decisions and willingness to change is well understood.

4.6.1 Poor communication

According to Howlett *et al.* (2014), drawing from analysis that found that most officials in government primarily engage in process-related tasks and activities without a great deal of

training or effort devoted to more formal policy appraisal techniques. Newman, Cherney and Head (2017), also declares that officials have access to various forms of academic research but do not make use of the research available to them, which indicates that barriers of communication between researchers and policy professionals may be a severe problem in some contexts.

Each and every institution has its own dynamics and challenges that are being experienced regarding the use of evidence, these have a potential of hindering the institution to not achieve its goals and objectives. The participants cited a number of barriers that they are experiencing, indicating communication as one of the contributing factors, by saying:

“The most common barrier is communication and dissemination; inadequate communication and dissemination of evidence can limit its utilization. If evidence is not effectively communicated to decision makers, it may not be considered or acted upon” [Participant 1].

“At times we struggle to validate which evidence is reliable for use, this is because it is not well communicated” [Participant 6].

The participants expressed the challenge of communication and dissemination as one of the most common barriers in the making use of evidence within the Department, which that also hinders impact of evidence-based approach. This clearly shows that inadequate communication can create issues of unclear presentation of information that can make things difficult during planning and decision making. Further to that, is can also limit the utilisation of evidence although it may be of good quality, hence, effective communication if imperative to allow the approach of evidence use to be a smooth process where evidence is well presented and accessible.

Indeed, when there are communication break downs within the institution, the Department risk chances of being unable to establish or ascertain which of the evidence is credible. Above we had also discussed the mechanisms for evidence use, and one of the critical areas is to create awareness to build capacity and also create access by providing communication of, and convenient access to evidence.

Rickison *et al.*, (2021), in a study of insights from a cross sector review on how to conceptualise the quality use of evidence. The authors describe a variety of initiatives to

promote evidence use, and those range from fostering collaboration between practitioners and researchers, developing of approaches for evidence use and capacity building of practitioners. These initiatives are all focused on improving the use of evidence and also give guidance in identifying the best reliable evidence.

The authors further provide principles of that can be useful in conceptualising evidence use. And these are: ***The need to account for the role of practice-based expertise and evidence in context***: this principle reveals a message that evidence is not a standalone, users should be able to exercise judgement based on experience and take account of the complexity of using evidence; ***The need to identify the sector-specific conditions that support evidence use***: Idea of this principle is that there is a need for support and capacity across all stakeholders, including systems and the organisation. There should be consensus from key enablers for quality use of evidence; ***The need to consider the how quality use develops, improves and can be evaluated over time***: the dynamic nature of evidence use should be acknowledged and account to quality improvement over time. Also considering the different stages, processes and purpose of evidence use; ***the need to consider whether to focus on processes and/or outcomes of evidence use***: determine whether the quality of evidence use is associated with the processes and the outcomes thereof; and ***the need to consider the scale or level of evidence use within a system***: this principle takes in to consideration the thought of how evidence use influences the different levels within the system.

Amisi (2015), puts emphases that communication should be understood as more than just words as it involves identifying patterns, constructing order and plausible understanding of the patterns and interpreting the meaning of evidence that might be reliable for use. When it comes to empirical evidence, there has to be meaningful interaction between the evaluators and programme people informing how the evaluation is formulated, best possible methods to respond to the evaluation, and how data are interpreted into knowledge that can be applied. Forss, Reben and Carlsson (2002), highlights that there are many different aspects of how communication influences evaluation work, internally on evaluation teams as well as between the evaluator and various stakeholders. And that it would seem that the usefulness of evaluation hinges directly upon the quality of communication in evaluation exercises, and that such communication requires skills.

In an article by Edwards (2010), he discovered five mechanisms for the improvement of research use, and these mechanisms when applied, they can result to enhancing effective communication. (i) **Dissemination**: presenting or circulating research findings targeted to the potential audience. (ii) **Interaction**: developing stronger links and collaborations across the sectors. (iii) **Social influence**: relying on those with influence, such as experts and peers, to inform and persuade individuals about the research and its value. (iv) **Facilitation**: enabling the use of research. (v) **Incentives and reinforcements**: using rewards and other means to reinforce desired behaviours. These mechanisms, particularly the first three, certainly proved important communication.

4.6.2 Lack of credibility and reliability of evidence

The credibility and reliability of evidence has to be taken in to consideration and not use evidence that can compromise the effectiveness of impact and the ultimate goal or objectives of the programs to be implemented. One of the participants raised the barrier of credibility saying:

“Within the Department there is evidence that lacks credibility, this is one of the major stumbling blocks and challenges experienced in making use, it prevents the department from improving on services that are being delivered and programmes that are being implemented” [Participant 3].

The challenge of credibility was highlighted by the participant, although the evidence is available within the Department, but the quality and reliability of the evidence is not trustworthy. This happens to be another significant obstacle that hinders the Department from improving on its implemented programs and services. M&E units do have the potential to play a role of knowledge broker and provide a clear picture on generating, analysing and making use of evidence, this also includes encouraging the processes to make use of M&E evidence (Pabari and Goldman, 2023).

Credibility of evidence has a direct impact on the quality of services that the Department delivers and without it, the Department may find it difficult to make well informed decision as this will affect the implementation and success of the programs due to unreliable evidence.

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that accurate and reliable evidence is utilised for effective performance of the Department.

Another challenge is the unavailability of mechanisms of selecting the evidence, this is a serious issue when it comes to completeness and interpretation. There could be evidence at disposal which is readily available but is incomplete, then it is as good as nothing and cannot at any stage be useful during the processes. One of the participants stressed out concerns regarding selection of evidence:

“There is no method that is used for selection of evidence, every activity that is conducted, the reports are submitted without choosing which one to use or not to use” [Participant 2].

Evidence serves as the foundation where sound effective strategies and informed policies are developed, the concept of evidence utilization stands as a guiding principle in to significant outcomes. The utilization of evidence also represents connection knowledge in to practical application and the impact results in to effective intervention for improved services to the communities. By promoting the potential utilization of evidence, the Department will be able to have assurance that its actions are informed by reliable sources of information.

Being able to recognise the evidence that is vital for inputs in the planning and decision-making processes is important. According to Wilkie and Grant (2009), the use of evidence sometimes can be challenging due to uncertainty, also at times it can be straightforward and readily available for supply of good evidence. The first step in the use of evidence calls for understanding of what evidence is being produced and how. Evidence is generated as proof on response to a particular issue or problem, and evidencing effectiveness to determine whether remedy or the implemented intervention is addressing the problem without unintended consequences

The expression by the participant was that there is no systematic method that is established for the selection of evidence. The process to which evidence can be utilised for planning and decision making does not exist. This means there is no filtering or discrimination on reports that are being submitted for the purpose of relevancy and credibility. Moreover, the absence of the selection method can cripple opportunities for improvement and shift focus on valuable information, and this will result to less informed planning and the quality of decision

making. With the establishment of evidence selection method or structures, the quality of decision making can also be enhanced.

According to Wilkie and Grant (2009), appropriate data may not exist, its either it can be incomplete or may not be available in time series. This will result to it being unreliable when it comes to quality and also be difficult to select. Therefore, knowing the method and sources used to generate the evidence is crucial when determining which evidence should be used.

The following participant raised the issue of ability to make use of evidence by the users by saying:

“Another challenge in making use of evidence is the ability to correctly interpret the evidence and apply it accordingly” [Participant 2].

According to Pabari and Goldman (2023), skills to analyse and use evidence tend to be missing, as well as the dialogue facilitation skills and relationship building for key policy makers to be motivated and trust in evidence use. Nicolini *et al.*, (2023) also share the same sentiments that capabilities and skills of those involved in evidencing work can produce commissioning decisions. The authors further highlight three types of activities that entails evidencing work, which are to mobilise knowledge and evidential information from various sources, creating a culture and order by combining them and anchoring the results.

The interpretation of evidence seems to also be a challenge, although the making sense and understanding and making sense of evidence can be complex, there are areas where it is misunderstood or misinterpreted. This also affects the application of evidence when it's not interpreted correctly, because the process of evidence use goes beyond having readily available evidence there is a need for skilled capacity that will not only understand the evidence but also having the ability to effectively apply it.

Lugo-Gil, Jean-Baptise and Jaramillo (2019), underscores that the culture of learning and evidence-based decision making, including the tools that are used to support the process have played an important role in making the organisation successful in making use of evidence.

One of the approaches or principles in promoting evidence use is capacity building within the Department for users to be able to interpret and apply evidence effectively. Incorrect interpretation may result to ineffective policies unfounded decisions that may bring the Department in to disrepute by delivering poor services to the citizens. Using the evidence well

requires a person who has sound understanding of its limitations and also how the application of evidence will influence the process, be it planning or policy making (Wilkie and Grant, 2009).

Another participant went to break down the issues that emanate from incomplete evidence due to human error or negligence when compiling the reports that will later have to be referred to or used as evidence.

“A barrier that is sometimes experienced that hinders the utilization of produced evidence is when the evidence is not complete, not signed e.g. reports not authenticated, reports signed after the reporting period, stamps required on the Portfolio of evidence not visible enough or fainty” [Participant 5].

When the evidence is incomplete, it means it lacks important components authenticate the reliability and credibility of the evidence, for example, if there are no signatures on the documents, that means the information that is recorded may not be a true reflection of what transpired. And in most cases this issue happens to prompt the backdating of documents and also signatures that do not fall within the reporting period. Furthermore, this also boils down with visibility of stamps can create doubts for usability. It is important to address all these issues for integrity of evidence that is gathered and effective process of reporting.

To this end, it is evident that, the approach in towards addressing the challenge of officials not fully understanding the importance of evidence use should involve educational initiatives, communication, and training to raise awareness about the benefits of evidence informed planning and decision making. Resolving this challenge could lead to a more informed process within the department, enhancing the overall quality of services and policies.

4.6.3 Absence of controls, safeguards, and adequate record-keeping for evidence

Controls and systems are most important within the Department and there is a need for those to be recognised, for instance record keeping. Mosweu and Rakemane (2020), state that government has lost its ability to document evidence and without reliable record keeping controls, chances are that good governance may also be compromised. Record keeping provides a foundation that is strong towards good governance because it can be impossible

to hold government officials accountable for conducting their bad deeds, weak accountability is a clear impediment to good governance.

Apart from that, this can also be a major contributor that may result to negative audit findings, because auditing is another way or approach towards assessing accountability and compliance to processes as key enablers for audit. It was highlighted by one of the participants that there are no controls in place to safeguard or effective record keeping of evidence, that also means there is no capacity in that area which can lead to evidence not being available for use due to being misplaced. The participant raised the following challenge by saying:

“Evidence safe keeping is still a challenge. And not having a designated official assigned for the safe keeping and availing of evidence when needed for use is a huge impediment to the use of evidence” [Participant 4].

It was also found that the Department is experiencing number of impediments when it comes to record management, which some of them are improper record keeping and having a capacitated official who will be designated to manage records. Mosweu and Rekemane (2020), express that for the establishment of physical and intellectual control over records generated by the Department, there is a need for the development of proper records management strategies. These strategies should be directed in addressing the appropriate Departmental structures, policy and procedures, awareness and proper storages for records, and most importantly capacity building. Training is one of the most important component and officials require appropriate training at all levels for them to be able to acquire knowledge and skills, these should include informal training which an on-job training approach can be used and also formal training that can be conducted by records management specialists. With this strategy, it can provide the record management with direction towards information management throughout the Department.

Safe keeping of evidence is one of the most important elements that should be established in the Department to ensure that protection of evidence and management is enhanced. The lack of capacity when it comes to designated officials who are assigned to safeguard evidence and make it available when needed is a huge impediment. This compromises the Department from accessing the required evidence during the planning or decision-making process.

Therefore, it is important to have a well-structured system to ensure that evidence is organised and readily available for use when requested.

There seem to be a problem of managing records and members of the organisations show very low appreciation to the role of records management and how it can promote organisational efficiency and accountability. Poor management of records can be a major contributor towards negative audits. Recognition and proper records management is one of the most key enablers in the audit process and it promotes and motivate transparency and accountability where officials can be held accountable for inaccessible records due to poor record keeping systems (Mosweu and Rakemane, 2020).

The authors further expressed that appropriate training and lack of staff is also a factor that hinders effective practises of good records management in Africa (Mosweu and Rakemane, 2020). It is a problem that is persisting and the advice is that record management should invest on training officials to gain knowledge and have the necessary records management skills throughout their lifecycle because most civil servants do not have appropriate education information management which could best enable them to manage records.

In order to support the use of evidence, due to complexity of some systems that cannot be controlled, it is crucial to firstly understand the context that one is operating and that will enable one to better support evidence use. Starting with neutral and broad observation will assist more than seeking to identify barriers of using evidence in the system. This can be recognised by starting to ask question of what is it that needs to be done for improvement, the ability to do it, and how the evidence feature in the process (Waddell, 2021). Furthermore, the use of evidence by managers is like to not only impact on the mangers own learning but also to that of their employees. The degree and quality of learning informally in the workplace can be promoted by the managers when discussing process and evidence to be used in decision making with their subordinates (Nicolini *et al.*, 2023).

4.7 Conclusion

Evidence is starting to emerge about mechanisms that seem to work best for people in the public service who deal with policy issues and who want to engage with evidence in solving policy problems. Edward (2010), states that the problem of 'bad' policy choices is further compounded by the fact that once it is being implemented, it will be difficult and very hard

to roll back programmes, even if they are later found to be failures because of the political or other challenges.

It does appear that officials can only generate evidence, however, due to challenges that are experienced, there is limited amount of evidence that is being utilised because of applying bounded rationality. Sibanda and Masiya (n.d.), declares that officials struggle to distinguish values from objective facts and to discover reputable sources of evidence, resulting in no unique claim to objectivity. Further to that the evidence supplied is value loaded, thus contributing to the usage of bounded rationality. Moreover, due to the political nature of policy and decision making, officials are expected to make policy judgments rapidly in the face of a complicated and unpredictable political environment, moving from one concern to another.

In this chapter, the importance of evidence utilisation has been discussed, the attitude of officials toward the use of evidence and the barriers thereof. As much as there is an element of instrumental use, it has to be noted that evaluation is required to assess and understand how policies have worked (or not) and why, so that lessons can be learned to inform improvements. The significance of evidence utilization cannot be overstated in the realms of academia, policymaking, and informed decision-making across various sectors. The systematic incorporation of credible and relevant evidence ensures the development of well-informed strategies and policies that are rooted in empirical support rather than conjecture.

Policies and programmes that are created without evidence lead to ineffective results, wasted resources, and persistently poor outcomes (Newman, Cherney and Head, 2017). Evidence utilization plays a pivotal role in enhancing the efficiency and efficacy of interventions and services delivery. By relying on rigorous research findings, officials can tailor their approaches to better address the specific needs and challenges of their targets. This, in turn, promotes a more equitable distribution of resources and facilitates positive outcomes. In essence, the conscientious integration of evidence into processes does not only upholds the principles of intellectual integrity but also fosters progress, innovation, and societal well-being.

Quality of the data may be poor due to endogenous or institutional causes, such as personnel capacity to collect, collate, manage, and process (i.e., analyse and use the results of analysis) accurate data (Dhaliwal and Tulloch, 2012). On the other hand, there may be exogenous

constraints such as cultural barriers, lack of interest or awareness of data utilisation methods. The attitude of officials towards the utilization of evidence can influence the quality and effectiveness of policies and decision-making processes. Officials who embrace a culture of evidence-based practice demonstrate a commitment to sound governance, transparency, and accountability. By valuing empirical data and research findings, officials are better equipped to formulate policies that are not only responsive to the needs of the community but also grounded in a deeper understanding of the challenges at hand. Therefore, nurturing a positive and open-minded attitude among officials towards evidence utilization is crucial for promoting evidence-informed governance and ultimately achieving positive outcomes.

CHAPTER 5

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The effective use of evidence in decision-making is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone for improving outcomes in public policy and decision making. In an era marked by complex challenges and rapid advancements, relying on rigorous research findings is essential for ensuring that decisions are well-informed and grounded in reality. Evidence-based practices not only enhance accountability and transparency but also foster a culture of continuous improvement, allowing organizations to respond more effectively to the needs of the citizens. Departments and stakeholders must navigate the environment with critical thinking and discernment to effectively engage with the evidence available to them. Training and support are essential to equip practitioners and policymakers with the skills needed to evaluate and apply evidence in their decision-making processes.

Ongoing research into evidence use is vital for uncovering the barriers that inhibit its effective application and identifying strategies for overcoming such as understanding the interplay between organizational culture, stakeholder engagement, and evidence uptake which will inform the development of best practices that promote a supportive environment for evidence-based decision-making. By fostering collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, there can be creation of a robust ecosystem that values evidence, ultimately leading to better-informed decisions and improved outcomes for society as a whole.

This chapter provides the results and recommendations of the study, it also highlights the importance of future research on making use of evidence.

5.2 Results

Decisions made without a solid evidence base are likely to result in ineffective or inefficient practices. This can lead to poor outcomes in policy development also, ultimately affecting the populations served. An example can be made when the Department implements a new program without assessing its effectiveness through conducting research can be a waste of resources and time, perpetuating cycles of ineffective interventions.

The absence of evidence use in policy and decision-making not only impacts immediate outcomes but also hinders the department's long-term effectiveness and ability to meet evolving challenges. Through the analysed collected data, it was evident that in the Department there is a lack of well-trained or capacitated officials in the Department who are skilled in making use of evidence. There are inadequate frameworks and guidelines on evidence use and this results to official's discouragement in promoting the culture of utilising evidence for decision making. There is also a need for structures and external support to embrace the culture of understanding evidence use.

Additionally, the lack of evidence-based decision-making can undermine stakeholder trust and credibility. When the Departments consistently rely on subjective information, it can erode confidence among employees, partners, and the community. Stakeholders may question the legitimacy of the department's initiatives, leading to disengagement and a lack of collaboration, this can also diminish trust that can also affect support from external parties, further hampering the Department's ability to operate effectively.

5.3 Conclusion

The creation of culture to understand one another, and to invest in relationships at individual, organizational, and institutional levels has been identified as key to shared goals, and synergistic developments in the evidence system. A recognition has emerged that decision-makers and decision-making have to be at the centre of efforts to increase the use of evidence in policy (Stewart, 2023). The mechanisms governing the utilization of evidence encompass a complex interplay of organizational culture, frameworks, and individual capacities. Understanding these mechanisms are essential for optimizing the impact of evidence use in

decision-making processes. As organizations invest in creating supportive environments that prioritize evidence-informed practices, they pave the way for a more robust and adaptive approach to problem-solving. With recognition that evidence is dynamic and subject to change, Department must establish mechanisms that encourage a culture of learning and adaptation. This involves not only the ability to incorporate new evidence but also a willingness to reassess and adjust strategies in response to evolving circumstances. An agile approach to evidence utilization mechanisms positions organizations to navigate uncertainties with greater resilience, ensuring that decision-making remains informed and effective over time.

Another problem with senior public servants is accessing relevant knowledge, they need to know who is doing what evaluation and how to access that when they want it. This is the case particularly when the required knowledge crosses disciplines and is needed to assist with issues, therefore, some form of intermediary structure could be needed. Such approach within the Department might assist officials to locate or access the papers when needed and could more actively assist in organising round tables involving public servants on key policy issues (Geddes, 2023). Newman, Cherney and Head (2017), suggest that to increase evidence use in policy and decision making, there are steps that can be taken to also improve the capacity. These steps include, the strengthening data collection around evidence diversity. Identifying what proportion of evidence is reliable and credible.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, what recommendations should the study make targeted at different stakeholders involved in the work of DCSTM such as DCSTM management, the Northwest Provincial Government as a whole and the government of south Africa with regards to the need to generate and use evidence in policymaking?

Based on the findings of the study, below are recommendations which the study proposes. These are targeted at different stakeholders involved in the work of DCSTM such as DCSTM management, the Northwest Provincial Government as a whole and the government of South Africa with regards to the need to generate and use evidence in policymaking. It is recommended that the following stakeholders address the following;

DCSTM Management should;

- i. Invest in enhancing the capacity of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) within the department. This includes developing a well-trained M&E team to design and implement effective monitoring and evaluation systems.
- ii. Prioritize the development of clear frameworks and guidelines for evidence-based processes to ensure consistency and effectiveness in decision-making.
- iii. Foster a culture of informed decision-making within the organisation by encouraging officials to utilize evidence for improvement towards effectiveness.

Based on the findings, **the Northwest Provincial Government**, especially Office of the Premier should;

- i. Support the establishment of evidence advisory systems to promote good governance, ensuring that rigorous, systematic, and technically sound evidence is utilized in decision-making processes.
- ii. Invest in building relationships and investing in individual, organizational, and institutional levels to foster a culture of understanding and collaboration, which is essential for shared goals and synergistic developments in the evidence system.

In a broad sense, the Government of South Africa needs to;

- i. Encourage the development of policy tools and mechanisms within departments to effectively communicate evidence to decision-makers. This could include the creation of policy summaries that provide concise summaries of relevant policy questions, program details, and evaluation results.
- ii. Strengthen data collection efforts around evidence diversity to identify reliable and credible sources of evidence, thereby improving the overall quality of evidence used in policymaking.

In conclusion, there are **general recommendations for proponents of evidence use**, that they should;

- i. Establish mechanisms that encourage a culture of learning and adaptation within organizations involved in policymaking. This includes the ability to incorporate new

evidence and willingness to reassess and adjust strategies in response to evolving circumstances.

- ii. Consider the need for intermediary structures or platforms to facilitate access to relevant knowledge, particularly when required knowledge crosses disciplines. These structures can assist officials in locating or accessing relevant papers and organizing round tables involving public servants on key policy issues.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can strengthen evidence-based policymaking processes, ultimately leading to more effective and informed decision-making within the DCSTM, the Northwest Provincial Government, and the government of South Africa as a whole.

5.5 Future Research

Future research on evidence use is essential for understanding how knowledge is translated into practice particularly in policy-making. As the landscape of information becomes increasingly complex, studies should focus on identifying the most effective strategies for integrating evidence into decision-making processes. This involves exploring the barriers and facilitators that influence evidence uptake, such as organizational culture, stakeholder engagement, and access to data. Furthermore, research can explore the long-term impacts of evidence-informed practices on outcomes of the Departments, helping to establish a clearer connection between the use of evidence and improvements in practice.

5.6 Overall Conclusion

The notion of evidence use is far more than an administrative formality but an approach that can draw significant improvement and change through effective planning and informed decisions. Acknowledging that strategic planning is directly involving the relationship of evidence and decisions towards the achievement of the intended objectives. Evidence that is reliable is based on replicable proof, and the political leadership role in the public sector is to set up the policy agenda to identify priority problems and issues that the policy intends to address. Those should be based on facts that may form the basis of planning and decision making which that will involve adopting the right policy responses based on available evidence (Cronin & Sadan, 2015). Parkhurst (2017) asserts that in order to chart a way forward

that will seemingly try to strike a balance between different schools of thought relating to evidence, evidence advisory systems should be established, whose intention will mainly be promotion of good governance, that will make that rigorous, systematic and technically binding evidence pieces are utilised in making decisions while being cognisant of and responsive towards population being served including their different social interests.

According to Edwards (2010), there is a lack of attention by policy practitioners to the qualifications of their research findings and a fear that 'those driving policy are seeking to justify actions already decided by cherry-picking from among the available evidence with little regard for the robustness or validity of the material selected. This could result to an anti-intellectual approach formed within governments and expose officials to findings that could embarrass the Department. Dhaliwal and Tulloch (2012), suggest that the Departments must develop policy tools and mechanisms that allow officials to effectively communicate evidence. These may include Policy Summaries: For example, each evaluation conducted, the policy developers create an 'evaluation summary' of about two-page synopsis of the relevant policy questions, context, and details of the programme being evaluated and the results of the evaluation.

Building and enhancing the capacity of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is crucial for the Department programs, it will to improve their effectiveness, accountability, and impact. And it can also invest in strengthen M&E capacity by developing a well-trained M&E team, organizations can ensure that they have the expertise needed to design and implement effective monitoring and evaluation systems that will assist in tracking and assessing the outcomes and impacts of the initiatives. This capacity-building effort includes the creating a culture informed decision-making within the organization, encouraging officials to use evidence for improvement towards effectiveness. Moreover, the Department should prioritize the development of clear frameworks and guidelines for processes. By joining in these recommendations, the Department can strengthen their M&E capacity, ultimately promoting a culture of accountability, transparency, and evidence-based planning and decision-making.

REFERENCES

- Amisi, M. M. (2015). Development of South Africa's national evaluation policy and system 2011– 2014. *African Evaluation Journal*, 3(1), 7.
- Amisi, M. M., Awal, M. S., Pabari, M., & Bedu-Addo, D. (2021). How relationship and dialogue facilitate evidence use: Lessons from African countries. *African Evaluation Journal*, 9(1), 559.
- Baba, V. & Farimah, H. (2012). Toward a theory of evidence-based decision making: Management Decision. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00251741211227546>
- Banks, Gary, Evidence-Based Policy Making: What is It? How Do We Get It? (May 29, 2009). ANU Public Lecture Series, Productivity Commission, Canberra, February 4, 2009, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1616460>
- Banda, S., Chanda, J., & Kanyamuna, V. ZAMBIA: PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EVIDENCE USE.
- Bawole, J. & Ibrahim, M. (2015). Contesting Claims on Measuring Performance in the Public Sector Using Performance Audits: Evidence from the Literature. *Public Organization Review*
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2012) Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57-71). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), pp.77-101.
- Breckon, J., Hopkins, A., & Rickey, B. (2019). Evidence vs Democracy: How 'mini-publics' can traverse the gap between citizens, experts, and evidence.
- Brun, M., & Siegel, J. (2006). What does appropriate performance reporting for political decision makers require?. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 55 (6), 480 – 497.

- Community Safety and Transport Management. (2020). North West provincial government Department of community safety and transport management: *Strategic plan 2020-2025*. Retrieved from <http://www.nwpg.gov.za>
- Community Safety and Transport Management. (2020). North West provincial government Department of community safety and transport management: *Annual Performance Plan 2021-2022*. Retrieved from <http://www.nwpg.gov.za>
- Cook, A. (2017). *Outcomes based approaches in public service reform*. Edinburgh: What Works Scotland.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Introduction: entering the field of qualitative research., eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Dhaliwal, I., & Tulloch, C. (2012). From research to policy: using evidence from impact evaluations to inform development policy. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 4(4), 515-536.
- Dunn, W.N. (2012). *Public Policy Analysis* (5th ed). United State of America: Pearson.
- Doughman, D., Kantengwa, K., & Hakizinka, I. (2017). USING KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE. *The Social Realities of Knowledge for Development Brighton: IDS*, 170.
- Eccles, C. (2009). Effective delivery of evidence-informed practice. *Evidence & Policy*, 5(2), 193-206.
- Edmons, W.A. & Kennedy, T.D. (2017). An applied guide to research designs: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Edwards, M. (2010). Making research more relevant to policy: evidence and suggestions. In *Bridging the 'Know-Do'Gap: Knowledge brokering to improve child wellbeing* (pp. 55-63). ANU E Press.
- Engela, R., & Ajam, T. (2010). *Implementing a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system in South Africa*. World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Frick, W. F., Frick, W. F., Cooke, S. J., Dickson, I., Jackson, H. A., Keller, K. E., ... & Young, L. C. (2022). 11. Creating a culture of evidence use. *Transforming conservation. Open Book Publishers*.
-

- Forss, K., Rebien, C. C., & Carlsson, J. (2002). Process use of evaluations: Types of use that precede lessons learned and feedback. *Evaluation*, 8(1), 29-45.
- Geddes, M. (2023). Good Evidence: How do select committees use evidence to support their work?.
- Goldman, Ian, Olaleye, Wole, Sixolile, Stanley, Mokgoropo Makgaba, Ntakumba, & Waller, Cara. (2020). Mere compliance or learning—M&E culture in the public service of Benin, Uganda and South Africa. In Ian Goldman & Mine Pabari (Eds.), *Using evidence in policy and practice: Lessons from Africa*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Hase, C., Matos, E. & Styer, D. (2015). Evidence-Based Decision Making (EbDM): *Techniques for Adding Rigor to Decision Support Processes in Complex Government and Industrial Organizations*. Whitney, Bradley & Brown, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.modsimworld.org/papers/2014/MS1480>
- Head, B.W. (2010). Reconsidering evidence-based policy: Key issues and challenges. *Policy and Society*, 29: 77–94. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2010.03.001>
- Howlett, M., Tan, S. L., Migone, A., Wellstead, A., & Evans, B. (2014). The distribution of analytical techniques in policy advisory systems: Policy formulation and the tools of policy appraisal. *Public Policy and Administration*, 29(4), 271-291.
- Ingold, J., & Monaghan, M. (2016). Evidence translation: an exploration of policy makers' use of evidence. *Policy & Politics*, 44(2), 171-190.
- Jepsen DM, Rousseau DM (2022) Perceived evidence use: Measurement and construct validation of managerial evidence use as perceived by subordinates. *PLoS ONE* 17(4): e0266894. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0266894>
- Khale, S. & Worku, Z. (2013). Factors that Affect Municipal Service Delivery in Gauteng and North West Provinces of South Africa, *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 5(1), 61-70, Retrieved from DOI: 10.1080/20421338.2013.782143
- Kiger, M.E. & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical teacher*, 42(8), pp.846-854.

- Langer, Laurenz, Goldman, Ian, & Pabari, Mine. (2020). Analytical framework used to guide case study research. In Ian Goldman & Mine Pabari (Eds.), *Using evidence in policy and practice: Lessons from Africa*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Langer, L. (2021). Using evidence in Africa: A framework to assess what works, how, and why. Retrieved from <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/>
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical Research Planning and Design* (8th ed). New Jersey. Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Liverani, M., Hawkins, B., & Parkhurst, J. O. (2013). Political and institutional influences on the use of evidence in public health policy. A systematic review. *PloS one*, 8(10), e77404.
- Lokot, M. (2021). Whose Voices? Whose Knowledge? A Feminist Analysis of the Value of Key Informant Interviews. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920948775>
- Lugo-Gil, J., Jean-Baptiste, D., & Jaramillo, L. F. (2019). Use of evidence to drive decision-making in government. *Mathematica Policy Research*, 1, 1-80.
- MacFadzean, E. (n.d). *Quantitative versus Qualitative research*. Retrieved from <http://www.distinctivemanagement.biz/assets/courses>
- Marais, L. & Matebesi, Z. (2012). Evidence-Based policy development in South Africa: the case of provincial growth and development strategies. *Urban Forum*. DOI 10.1007/s12132-012-9179-4
- Mark. (2021). Purposive Sampling Method: Types and Techniques Explained. Retrieved from <https://myassignmenthelp.com/blog/purposive-sampling/>
- Morra Imas, L.G. & Rist, R.C. 2009. *The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations*. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data: Washington.
- Morse, J. M. (2016). The politics of evidence. In *Qualitative inquiry—Past, present, and future* (pp. 121-134). Routledge.
- Moore, T. (2019). Strengthening evidence use in practice: an evidence-informed decision-making framework.
-

- Mosweu, O., & Rakemane, D. (2020). The role of records management in ensuring good governance in Africa. *Journal of the South African Society of Archivists*, 53, 103-123.
- Nevo, I., & Slonim-Nevo, V. (2011). The myth of evidence-based practice: Towards evidence-informed practice. *British journal of social work*, 41(6), 1176-1197.
- Newman, J., Cherney, A., & Head, B. W. (2017). Policy capacity and evidence-based policy in the public service. *Public Management Review*, 19(2), 157-174.
- Nicolini, D., Bharatan, I., Gkeredakis, E., Manning, R. M., & Swan, J. (2023). From evidence use to evidencing work: towards a processual view of the role of evidence in commissioning policy-making. *Shaping Sustainable Healthcare: Meaningful Innovation and System Transformation*.
- Nutley, S. M., Walter, I., & Davies, H. T. (2007). Using evidence. *How research can inform public services*.
- Office of the Premier. (2017). North West spatial development framework. Retrieved from <http://www.nwpg.gov.za>
- Office of the Premier. (2020). North West provincial government Department of Office of the Premier: Strategic plan 2020-2025. Retrieved from <http://www.nwpg.gov.za>
- Oliver, K., Innvar, S., Lorenc, T., Woodman, J. & Thomas, J. (2014). *A systematic review of barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by policymakers*. BMC Health Services Research. DOI 10.1186/1472-6963-14-2
- Ouimet, M., Beaumier, M., Cloutier, A., Côté, A., Montigny, É., Gélinau, F., ... & Ratté, S. (2023). Use of research evidence in legislatures: a systematic review. *Evidence & Policy*, 1-18
- Pabari, Mine, & Goldman, Ian. (2023). The role of monitoring, evaluation, and research units in an increasingly turbulent world. *Revista Brasileira de Avaliação*, 12(1), e120523. <https://doi.org/10.4322/rbaval202312005>
- Paine Cronin, G. & Sadan, M. (2015). Use of evidence in policy making in South Africa: An exploratory study of attitudes of senior government officials', *African Evaluation Journal* 3(1). Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.145>
-

- Palinkas, A., Horwitz, S., Green, C., Wisdom, J., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2013). *Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research*. Adm Policy Mental Health. DOI 10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and policy in mental health*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Parkhurst, J. (2017). *The Politics of Evidence: From evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence*. New York: Routledge.
- Parkhurst, J. O., & Abeysinghe, S. (2016). What constitutes “good” evidence for public health and social policy-making? From hierarchies to appropriateness. *Social Epistemology*, 30(5-6), 665-679.
- Parkhurst, J., Leir, S., Walls, H., Vecchione, E., & Liverani, M. (2018). Evidence and policy in aid-dependent settings. In *Evidence Use in Health Policy Making: An International Public Policy Perspective* (pp. 201-219). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Porter, S. & Goldman, I. (2013). A Growing Demand for Monitoring and Evaluation in Africa. *African Evaluation Journal*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/aej.v1i1.25>
- Prennushi, G., Rubio, G., & Subbarao, K. (2002). Monitoring and evaluation. *A sourcebook for poverty reduction strategies*, 107-30.
- Punch, K.F. (1994). *Introduction to Social Research: qualitative and quantitative Approaches*. London: SAGE.
- Rickinson, M., Cirkony, C., Walsh, L., Gleeson, J., Salisbury, M., & Boaz, A. (2021). Insights from a cross-sector review on how to conceptualise the quality of use of research evidence. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1), 1-12.
- Rickinson, M., Cirkony, C., Walsh, L., Gleeson, J., Cutler, B. & Salisbury, M. (2022). A framework for understanding the quality of evidence use in education, *Educational Research*, 64:2, 133-158, DOI: 10.1080/00131881.2022.2054452
-

Romão, D. (2021). How to improve the culture of evidence use in the Brazilian public sector: a learning brief.

Sanderson, I. (2002). Evaluation, policy learning and evidence-based policy making. *Public administration*, 80(1), 1-22.

Scott Erickson, G. (2017). *New Methods of Market Research and Analysis*. Edward Elgar Publishing: USA.

Sibanda, M. A., & Masiya, T. The use of evidence in policy making in South Africa-An exploratory study. Retrieved from <https://www.ippapublicpolicy.org/file/paper/6476ebe01b0d1.pdf>

Smith, T. (2020). *What is Thematic Analysis and How To do It?* Retrived from: <https://www.totalassignmenthelp.com/blog/thematic-analysis/>

Smith, K. E., Pearson, M., Allen, W., Barwick, M., Farrell, C., Hardy, M., ... & Pellini, A. (2019). Building and diversifying our interdisciplinary giants: moving scholarship on evidence and policy forward. *Evidence & Policy*, 15(4), 455-460.

Smith, K. E., & Stewart, E. (2015). 'Black magic'and 'gold dust': the epistemic and political uses of evidence tools in public health policy making. *Evidence & Policy*, 11(3), 415-437.

Stern, E. (2005). Editor's Introduction. In E. Stern (ed.), *Evaluation Research Methods*. Vol. I. London: Sage. Stern, E. (2005). *Evaluation Research Methods (Editor and introductory essay for a 4 volume collection in 'Benchmark Series in Social Research Methods')*. Sage.

Stewart, R. (2023). How evidence, implementation, policy, and politics come together within evidence systems: Lessons from South Africa. *Development Policy Review*, 41(2), e12657.

Stewart, R., Dayel, H., Lange, L. & Van Rooyen, C. (2019). The evidence ecosystem in South Africa: *Growing resilience and institutionalisation of evidence use*. Polgrave communications. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0303-0>

Stewart, R., Langer, L., Wildeman, R., Erasmus, Y., Maluwa, L., Gerald, J., Sunet, L., Mitchell, J. & Motha, P. (2018). Building capacity for evidence-informed decision making: an

- example from South Africa. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*. DOI 10.1332/174426417X14890741484716
- Strydom WF, Funke N, Nienaber S, Nortje K, Steyn M. (2010). Evidence-based policymaking: A review. *South African Journals*. DOI: 10.4102/sajs.v106i5/6.249
- Sutcliffe, S., & Court, J. (2005). Evidence-based policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries? London, United Kingdom: Overseas Development Institute.
- Taylor, J., Sims, J. & Haines, T.P. (2012). The influence of protection, palliation and costs on mobility optimization of residents in nursing homes: A thematic analysis of discourse. *International journal of nursing studies*, 49(11), pp.1364-1374.
- The Africa Centre for Evidence. (2021). *Evidence-based Policy-Making in South Africa: using the best available evidence to inform the execution and implementation of the NDP*. Retrieved from: https://africacentreforevidence.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ACE-2019-EBPM-in-SA-Chapter_for-webiste.pdf
- The Presidency. (2007). Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. Republic of South Africa: The Presidency.
- The Presidency. (2020). *National Policy Development Framework*. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202101/national-policy-development-framework-2020.pdf
- The Presidency. (2017). Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. Retrieved from https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/complete2.pdf
- USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation (1996). Conducting Key Informant Interviews: *Performance Monitoring & Evaluation TIPS*. Washington DC, USAID. Retrieved from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABS541.pdf
- Vestman, O. K., & Conner, R. F. (2006). The relationship between evaluation and politics. *Shaw IF et al. (2006). The Sage Handbook of evaluation: politics, programs and practices*, 225-241.
-

- Van Dooren, W., Bouckaert, G. & Halligan, J. (2015). *Performance Management in the Public Sector*. New York: Routledge.
- Waddell, S. (2021). Supporting evidence-use in policy and practice Reflections for the What Works Network.
- Wilkie, J., & Grant, A. (2009). Using evidence well. *Economic Round-up*, (1), 17-25.
- Watling, C.J. & Lingard, L. (2012). Grounded theory in medical education research: AMEE Guide No. 70. *Medical teacher*, 34(10), pp.850-861.
- Wesselink, A., Colebatch, H & Pearce, W. (2014). 'Evidence and Policy: Discourses, Meanings and Practices'. *Policy Sciences* 47(4): 339-344.
- Willis, A. (2005). The (un) intended outcome of public sector performance measurement. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 18 (5) pp. 386 – 400 Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513550510608859>
-