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Examining The Use of Evaluative Evidence in Decision-Making Within Catholic Faith-Based Organisations

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Research Report

Examining The Use of Evaluative Evidence in Decision-Making Within Catholic Faith-Based Organisations

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Law, Commerce, and Management of

the University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Management

in Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation.

Johannesburg 2023

DECLARATION

I, PAUL EBONG FOTOH, declare that this research report is my work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Public and Private Sector Monitoring and Evaluations at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Johannesburg 25th of May 2023

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late parents, Fon Fotoh Athanasius Angie and Prudentia Memeh Fotoh, who all left this world in 2020 at the heart of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

May their gentle souls rest in peace.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful for the continuous support of my supervisor, Dr Steven Masvaure, who was always available to read and suggest areas of improvement.

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I always gain new insights into issues when I bounce off my ideas with Mr Mthulisi C. – the M&E Specialist at CIE.

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Above all, I thank God for keeping me healthy and safe to complete this work.

Abstract

Catholic Faith-Based Organisations are critical in contributing to social betterment through various development initiatives(Camilleri & Winkworth, 2004). The use of evaluations conducted in these organisations to enhance learning, programme improvement and eventually social betterment through informed decision-making is the concern of this research. Literature on the use of evaluations underlines the fact that evaluations are aimed at providing relevant information to various stakeholders for their decision-making and improvement of the evaluand as well as assessing their merits and worth (Alkin, 1975; Maloney, 2017**a**; Patton, 2012; Stufflebeam, 2001**a**). As a widely researched phenomenon, the use of evaluation has been identified by various authors to include instrumental use, conceptual use, process use, and symbolic use (Alkin & Christie, 2004; Johnson et al., 2009). The need to make evaluations useful has, therefore, been the driving force behind the development of the different approaches to evaluation, evaluation principles and standards, as well as the creation of various voluntary associations to sustain and promote the professionalism of the field (Stufflebeam, 2004). Even though Catholic faith-based organisations conduct evaluations, little is documented about the extent to which these evaluations were used in decision-making processes, if any, and what role the evaluation characteristic factors, organisational and human factors play in influencing use. To investigate the extent to which these organisations use these evaluations and the extent to which evaluation distinct variables play a role in enhancing use, a mixed method was undertaken to gather quantitative and qualitative data from 43 respondents who were selected purposefully among the eligible organisations for the study. A questionnaire was administered online, followed by key informant interviews.

The findings show that most organisations make use of evaluations to inform practice. Still, since the evaluations are commissioned mainly by the funders, the willingness of these organisations to take the initiative of conducting their evaluations is less evident. To some, carrying out evaluations is merely to comply with the funding requirements rather than seeking evidence based upon which informed decisions can be made.

Therefore, I recommend that Catholic faith-based organisations institutionalise monitoring and evaluation units within their organisations to strengthen their internal capacity to generate and use evidence in decision-making. This would equally build evidence-use awareness and establish a culture of evaluative thinking in organisational practices.

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List of Acronyms

AEG	African Evaluation Guidelines
AFrEA	African Evaluation Association
CATHCA	Catholic Health Care Association
CEBMa	Centre for Evidence-Based Management
CFB-NPOs	Catholic Faith-Based and Not-For-Profit Organisations
CIPP	Context Input
CPM	Critical Path Method
CST	Catholic Social Teachings
DAC	Development Assistant Committee
DPME	Department of Monitoring and Evaluations
DSD	Department of Social Development
EBM	Evidence-based management
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
GEI	Global Evaluation Initiatives
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training
JSCEE	Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations
MERL	Monitoring & Evaluation for Results and Learning
NDP	National Development Plan
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
OECD	Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development

PERT	Programme Evaluation and Review Technique
PPBS	Programme Planning & Budgetary System
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
VOPES	Voluntary Organisations for the Professionalisation of Evaluations

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background and context

Various scholars such as Marsh & Glassick (1988), Scriven (1994), Weiss (1988), Weiss et al. (2005b), Kusters (2011), as well as Stufflebeam (1971) and Stufflebeam & Zhang (2017), have supported the fact that evaluations are critical interventions that contribute to good governance by producing evidence that is required by stakeholders for decision making in programmes, policies, and practice. This assertion is equally true for accountability and transparency. Therefore, evaluations can be understood as applied research that systematically examines projects, programmes, policies, institutions, strategies or any activity to establish credible evidence about their merits and worth(Patton, 2012, 2020; Stufflebeam, 2001**b**).

In supporting good governance, evaluations play several roles, including contribution to evidence-based decision-making by providing relevant stakeholders with credible information that informs their choices of action on policy and programmes (Hanberger, 2012). It equally contributes to result-based management by allowing decision-makers to monitor and evaluate if the results and impacts of policies and programmes are achieving their intended outcomes and goals for the betterment of the community (Balthasar, 2009; Champney, 1993). Furthermore, the evaluation function contributes to accountability and transparency by providing independent and objective assessment of the evaluand and contributing to identifying areas of improvements with recommendations for further actions to be taken by the relevant stakeholders(Patton, 2005a; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). However, for the evaluation function to play these essential roles, it must be timely and provide relevant, independent, and objective evidence-based information(Chianca, 2008**a**). To meet this challenge, various associations and professional bodies have emerged to improve and guide the implementation of the evaluation intervention across multiple fields. There has also been a development in the evaluation standards, guidelines, and approaches across different countries in state and non-state organisations aimed at promoting good governance and for the professionalisation of the evaluation function itself (Stufflebeam, 2004).

Given the importance of the evaluation function, as noted above, this study aims to understand the extent to which various stakeholders use evaluations in decision-making within the Catholic network of organisations in South Africa. It also seeks to draw from respondents' perspectives

on the role of the various influencing factors indicated in the literature of evaluation use in promoting informed decision-making within the context of Catholic faith-based organisations.

The choice of the context for this study is based on the fact that Catholic organisations have been among the well-organised faith-based institutions in the world (Sison et al., 2016a) and have, over the centuries, been actively engaged in social development projects in many parts of the world (Camilleri & Winkworth, 2004; Deneulin, 2021). In addition to its active involvement in providing social services to the marginalised and the needy in society, it has since 1891 been engaged in developing what is today known as the Catholic Social Doctrine or the Catholic Social Teachings that support and guide social development interventions in pursuit for social justice and the development of individuals and communities(O'Shea, 1990). (Annexure 3 documents the evolution of the Catholic Social teachings).

1.1.1 Background to evidence generation and evaluation use

Evidence comprises the available body of facts or information about a given situation, programme, or ideology, permitting various stakeholders to be better informed (Cartwright & Hardie, 2012). Evidence must be as objective as possible, allowing different people to make similar or the same judgments. Hence, evidence is considered one of the main contributing factors in decision-making for policy and management purposes. It has become prominent in nearly all fields of study and industry (Rynes & Bartunek, 2017), with its roots in evidence-based practice in Medicine in the West (Russell, 2006).

Evidence-based management (EBM) generally refers to a conscientious application of logical, unbiased, and ethical usage of the best available facts from research and evaluations, the experiences of practitioners, and information from the local context in making decisions in policy directions and organisational practices (Rynes & Bartunek, 2017). In this definition, several authors (Fromer et al., 2009; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Rynes & Bartunek, 2017) underline that the best available evidence from several sources is required to make logically sound choices. However (Barends et al. 2014**a,** 2014**b**; Morrell & Learmonth, 2015) look at the processes and steps needed before making sound and effective decisions that serve the organisation's best interest.

Translating available evidence into action in policy and practice remains a challenge across government institutions and development practitioners Mapitsa & Khumalo, 2018). Nevertheless, as noted by Stewart et al., there has been a growing need for African governments

and development agencies to provide evidence as proof of accountability and to inform policy directions (Stewart et al., 2019). This ever-increasing demand has led to developing systems and research-based evidence-generation networks (Stewart et al., 2019). For example, the governments of South Africa, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda have made the conscious decision to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation systems to support government actions and generate credible information for decision-making in the management of development interventions and policymaking (Porter et al., 2012). On the other hand, development practitioners are keen to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation systems to control and orient programme implementation and for information generation to satisfy donor requests for accountability and funding justifications. Hence, the public and non-public demand for evidence has sparked the growth of private knowledge brokers and evidence-generation networks across the continent (Goldman et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2019).

The evidence ecosystem in South Africa, as noted by Stewart et al. (2019), shows a robust support system and network for the supply of evidence required by the public and private sectors. Creating a government department of planning, monitoring, and evaluation (DPME) aims to ensure transparency and accountability in all government interventions across all government departments in South Africa. Notwithstanding this effort to improve programme delivery and accountability with the institutionalisation of monitoring and evaluation systems within the public service and the abundant supply of evidence from monitoring and evaluation practitioners, several communities still suffer the effect of poor service delivery due to the effective use of evaluations for improvement and social betterment.

Early research into the use of evaluations has categorised evaluation use into instrumental use, conceptual use, and political or symbolic use(Leviton & Hughes, 1981). Evaluation use has also been characterised by the type of evaluation conducted along the life cycle of an intervention, as noted by theorists such as Birgili & Kırkıç (2021). This concept of use links evaluation to five categories defined by the effort, the performance, the adequacy of performance, efficiency and the process (Alkin & Christie, 2004). Similarly, Alkin & King (2017) researched the factors that act as determinants of evaluations, such as the characteristic elements of the evaluation, the human factors, and the organisational or social context. Herbert stresses that the evaluation use concept presupposes "an intentionality, immediacy, and directness that may not always exist" (Herbert, 2014:393). Subsequently, Daniel Stufflebeam came up with the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model designed to evaluate for accountability and decision-making for improving programmes (Stufflebeam, 1971; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

However, other authors such as Kirkhart (2000) and subsequently Henry & Mark (2003) and Mark & Henry (2004) consider the evaluation use concept as limiting the ultimate purpose of evaluations which is to enhance social betterment beyond the evaluand. These authors, therefore, propose evaluation influence as a better terminology or perspective of understanding the multidimensional impact of evaluations (Henry & Mark, 2003; Kirkhart, 2000; Mark & Henry, 2004).

1.1.2 Context of faith-based organisations

Faith-based organisations (FBOs) are generally founded on a religious belief system or at least inspired by a philosophical concept (Jeavons, 2004). The United Nations Development Programme(UNDP), Clark and Jennings (2008) refer to FBOs as "organisations that derive inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of faith or a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith"(Clarke and Jennings, 2008; UNDP, 2014 cited in Olutola, 2019:3). Similarly, FBOs are considered as self-reported entities that view themselves as being motivated or founded on the conviction of faith (Fischer & Stelter, 2006). However, Unruh and Sider indicated that faith-based organisations' operations or activities differ even within the same faith context (Van der Merwe et al., 2014). In this perspective, Sider and Unruh came up with five typologies of faith-based organisations, including Faith-Permeated Organisations, Faith-Centred Organisations, Faith-Affiliated Organisations, Faith-Background Organisations and Faith-Secular Organisations (Jeavons, 2004; Van der Merwe et al., 2014). Faith-permeated organisations are those that remain connected to religious faith, and this is evidenced by their mission statements, staff composition, management structure and some visible religious signs with occasional religious activities. Faith-centred organisations (FCO) are those whose activities remain focused and concentrate only on their community's spiritual developmental aspects. Faith-affiliated organisations are those that function as secular organisations but still preserve the ethos and foundational value systems, with the governing body being part of the faith-based community. The staff members in these organisations are generally free to participate or not in religious-related activities without being coerced or forced to do so. On the other hand, Faith-Background Organisations form part of the organisations that appear secular but have historical roots in a faith tradition. These organisations do not overtly express a religious affiliation, though they are motivated by it. They are primarily engaged in social welfare and development-focused activities. Lastly, Faith-Secular Partnerships are created by a union between secular and

religious organisations. The symbiotic partnership, as noted by Unruh and Sider, is generally managed on a material basis but with some support from the religious institution in the form of supplying volunteer workers.

1.1.3 Contribution of faith-based organisations in the development space

FBOs have been participating in many charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian and development activities worldwide for many years and still constitute one of the largest and most well-organised non-public institutions globally - cutting across race, nationality, gender and class (Tomalin, 2012). In many parts of the world, they have pioneered and still represent one of the most well-developed agencies in service delivery to communities (Heist & Cnaan, 2016). This is evident as various state departments fund more and more faith-based organisations to implement development interventions that align with public funding programmes. For example, the National Skills Fund in South Africa supports private skills providers to upskill South African youths, which aligns with the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP). Similarly, the Catholic Health Service has been one of the agencies at the forefront of providing HIV/AIDs response in the fight against the AIDS pandemic in South Africa (Bate et al., 2014).

In Western countries, there has been a growing trust in FBOs as competent partners in the provision of social services, and this has permitted these FBOs to access public and international funding (Fischer & Stelter, 2006; Tomalin, 2012, 2021). For example, in the United States, several congressional and presidential initiatives have encouraged funding for faith-based organisations through programmes and projects with the view that these organisations are more effective in service delivery than other civil society organisations (Amirkhanyan et al., 2009). This does not come as a surprise because there is enough evidence (past and current) on the contributions of these organisations in various fields towards the social well-being and development of society internationally (Heist & Cnaan, 2016). According to Kagawa, these organisations represented about 70% of service delivery providers in developing countries due to their proximity and selfless services to the local communities (Kagawa et al., 2012).

1.1.4 Contribution of Catholic Faith-Based Organisations in Social Development

The Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church predate all other Christian formations for more than a thousand four hundred years before the reformations and the development of other state-owned Churches in the 15th-16th century (Hastings, 2000). The Catholic Church has given birth to a complex network of institutions comprising local and international FBOs with a broad spectrum of juridical forms and typologies described above by Sider and Unruh earlier (Herzig van Wees et al., 2021). The birth and growth of various organisations within the church over the centuries are rooted in the church's mission for the integral development of the human person, including the spiritual, physical, social, psychological and material dimensions(Himes, 2008; O'Shea, 1990; Sison et al., 2016b). The development of the Catholic Social Teachings resulted from the growing awareness of the Catholic Church's role to intervene in the social development space due to new challenges faced by society with the dawn of industrialisation and the inherent implications it brings with it (Williams, 1993). The first practical response by the church to the growing social issues was contained in the apostolic pronouncement of the Pope (head of the Roman Catholic Church) at that time in a document (encyclical) entitled the Rerum Novarum. This then set the basis for the development of what is today known as the social doctrine or teachings of the Catholic Church. The build-up of the Catholic Social Teachings (CST), which provides a holistic perspective of human development in various dimensions, is the fruit of the Church's experience in its teachings and living the Christian faith over the centuries with a focus on enhancing and promoting the human person both as individuals with intrinsic worth as well as communities with responsibilities and obligations (Himes, 2008). Pope Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum encyclical of 1891, which was written as a guide to address the condition of workers and the social morality of the growing industrial economic world order, was then considered the founding document in the development of the church's position on social, political, and economic issues. It spells out how all the various actors could work collaboratively to address the complex social problems to promote human dignity and progress. Subsequent Pontiffs (Popes), through various encyclicals, have contributed enormously to various aspects of human development (see Annexure 1), with one of the latest being that of Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si' focusing on the care for God's Creation: the Environment. In this encyclical, he outlines everyone's collective moral responsibility towards the everyday survival of the human species on Earth.

As a concrete application of Catholic Social Teaching, various Catholic Faith-Based Not-For-Profit Organisations have evolved over the years with social development programmes and projects operating at different scales covering a broad spectrum of development initiatives. Traditional social interventions to meet human development needs have been education (formal and informal), health, agriculture and food production through cooperatives, immigration services for the displaced and emergency relief services. These organisations operate internationally and regionally under different episcopal conferences and at local diocese or parish community levels.

In South Africa, various Catholic Faith-Based Organisations run different programmes and projects in education; in health care, the Catholic Health Care Association (CATHCA) serves several local community health care units with specialised centres. Other services include home care centres, skills development centres, and cross-cutting programmes such as refugee care and humanitarian services located around various local communities and run by different organisations(Joshua, 2010). Some of these organisations receive funding from state departments such as the Department of Social Development (DSD) and international funding organisations that periodically request accountability and different information needs for their strategic decision-making. Hence, it is common for these organisations to have most of their programmes commissioned for evaluations to generate credible, evidence-based information for their various stakeholder needs. The growing need for credible information generation and its use goes beyond the need for accountability for the effective use of funding to that of integrating such information to improve programme delivery and, therefore, for the social betterment of the beneficiaries.

1.2 Research problem statement

The demand for evidence to inform decision-making has been a basis for commissioning programme evaluations in organisations (Owen & Lambert, 1995). These evaluations, therefore, should serve as credible sources of evidence for decision-making and improvement of practice in programme delivery. Various scholars have developed approaches and methods to improve and maximise the use of evaluations and enhance their impact on the evaluand (Ayers, 1987; Greene, 1988; S. Jacob et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2009; Patton, 2012). Various governments and regional and international bodies, such as the UN agencies, have institutionalised monitoring and evaluation systems with protocols to ensure the use of evidence emanating from evaluations. However, despite the available evaluation approaches, guidelines and

standards, how each evaluation is conducted and their use differ in different contexts (Gill et al., 2016). Despite strong involvement by faith-based organisations in the development field (Tomalin, 2021), little has been documented on the generation and use of evidence drawn from the various evaluations. Hence, literature on the contributions of faith-based organisations in the mainstream discussions of development studies is absent (Tomalin, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to investigate how evaluations conducted in different institutional contexts, such as the Catholic environment in South Africa, promote evidence-based decision-making. Such information would contribute to developing awareness of the role of evaluations within faith-based organisations, particularly in the Catholic environment.

1.3 Research questions

To investigate the use of evaluative evidence in decision-making within Catholic Faith-Based Organisations, there is a need to interrogate across the three dimensions that, according to literature, are critical influencers of evaluation use (Johnson et al., 2009; King & Alkin, 2019). These include the evaluation characteristic factors, the organisational context and stakeholder involvement factors. Hence, the following research question:

To what extent do Catholic Faith-Based Organisations use evidence from evaluations to enhance decision-making?

1.3.1 Sub-questions

- To what extent do the various evaluation characteristics, such as quality of evaluation output, relevance, timing, communication, and dissemination, contribute to promoting decision-making?
- What are the contextual factors such as the organisational size, budget, geographical location, and source of funding that promote or inhibit evaluation use in decision-making?
- What are the human or stakeholder-related factors such as stakeholder involvement in the evaluation processes, stakeholder competence and skills and their improved understanding of the evaluand, as well as the competence of the evaluator that promote or inhibit evaluation use in decision-making?

1.4 Research objectives

The research's main objective is to investigate the use of evidence drawn from evaluations in decision-making within the Catholic Faith-Based Organisations in South Africa.

To attain the primary research objective, the following sub-objectives shall be pursued:

- To investigate the extent to which evaluation characteristics factors such as quality of evaluation output, relevance, timing, communication, and dissemination influence or enhance decision-making in Catholic faith-based organisations.
- To investigate how contextual factors such as the organisational size, budget, geographical location, and source of funding influence evaluations and their use in decision-making within Catholic faith-based organisations.
- To investigate the human factors related to stakeholder involvement in the evaluation processes, stakeholder competence and skills and their improved understanding of the evaluand, as well as the competence of the evaluator that influences the use of evaluative evidence in decision making.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Service delivery and social betterment can be improved if various development practitioners also improve upon social development programmes. South Africa has been named one of the most unequal societies in the world by the World Bank Report 2022, with the former disadvantaged communities bearing more of the brunt of the socio-economic hardship (Chancel et al., 2022). Improved service delivery by all social development actors remains a much-desired outcome that would contribute towards solving the problems of inequality, unemployment, and social injustice within communities. Given the growing influence of faith-based organisations in the social development space (Tomalin et al., 2019), this study would contribute towards building awareness of good governance within the context of these organisations through the conscious use of informed evaluative evidence in their decision-making processes. Secondly, this study would contribute towards understanding the influence or role of various characteristic factors of the evaluation output, the evaluation process, the context of the evaluations, and the importance of stakeholders' role in enhancing evaluation use in decision making. An awareness of the knowledge and understanding of the importance of the evaluation function in driving social development would help stakeholders within and beyond the context of Catholic faith-based organisations to ensure evaluations are adequately

commissioned and well managed to improve their usability as credible sources of evidence for decision making. Finally, this study would add to the literature of an empirical investigation into evaluation use from a faith-based perspective.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

This study is framed to investigate an aspect of the evaluation function in promoting good governance by looking at the use of evaluations in decision-making within the framework of Catholic faith-based organisations in South Africa. It also identifies and inquires into some of the characteristic factors indicated in the literature as determinants or influencers of evaluation use in decision-making. The distinguishing factors are linked to the evaluation output, the evaluation contextual factors and the stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process.

Geographically, this study is located within the ambit of Catholic faith-based organisations operating in South Africa that are involved in social development programmes. The organisations considered for the study were selected based on having subjected at least one or more of their programmes to external evaluations within the last three years of the study period.

The choice of respondents was also limited to people who had participated in an evaluation in their respective organisations and were conversant with the decision-making processes vis-à-vis the organisation's social development programmes.

1.7 Research Report Structure

This report is structured around six chapters: the introduction (chapter 1), overview of the literature (chapter 2), the research methodology (chapter 3), the research findings (chapter 4), the discussions on the findings (chapter 5) and the research summary, conclusions, and recommendations (chapter 6).

The introduction chapter of this report sets the research's context and purpose, indicating the importance of evaluations as sources of evidence required for good governance (section 1.1). Good governance entails informed decision-making processes for improvement on the evaluation and the betterment of society. The introductory chapter also provides information on faith-based organisations and their contributions to global social development and then zooms into the research context: the Catholic Faith-based organisation (sections 1.1.2 -1.1.4). It then identifies the research problem, the research questions, the objectives to be attained by the research process, and the significance of the research, which contributes towards better

understanding and awareness development on using evaluative evidence in decision-making (sections 1.2-1.5).

The overview of the literature chapter succinctly locates previous investigations into evaluation use by presenting the various uses of evaluations (section 2.2). Types of evaluations and the different evaluation approaches are presented by Stufflebeam (section 2.3). It also highlights some of the evaluation standards to which various evaluation associations subscribe to ensure and promote the credibility of the evaluation profession.

The third chapter then provides the methodology detailing how the research is designed and carried out. The pragmatic philosophy underlies the research approach, and a parallel mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis was used. It details how the research participants were selected (section 3.3.6) and the ethical considerations surrounding the research (section 3.5). The research validity and reliability are mentioned in section 3.6, as well as the identified limitations, feasibility, and positionality inherent in the research process (section 3.4)

The fourth chapter provides the research findings from quantitative and qualitative data drawn from participants' perspectives across different organisations. The findings include the contextual dimensions of the participating organisations in the study (section 4.2) and the perspectives on evaluation use as a source of evidence for informed decision-making (section 4.3). This is followed by findings on the perspectives regarding the influence of evaluation characteristic factors, organisational contextual factors, and stakeholder-related factors in evaluating evaluations (section 4.4).

I subsequently discuss the findings in the fifth chapter by interpreting the extent to which they provide answers to the research questions or to what extent they validate previous attempts at evaluation use.

The Sixth and last chapter summarises this study by linking the research purpose and research questions to the findings and drawing conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice as well as for future research.

1.8 Research Assumptions

The assumptions include honest responses from respondents based on their experiences and knowledge about the evaluations in which they were involved in the organisations. Hence, the individual respondent is assumed to be well-informed in the organisational processes. Their

perspectives, drawn from the survey and interviews, also represent their corporate position concerning evaluation use in decision-making.

2 OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Literature on the use of evaluations underlines the fact that evaluations are aimed at providing relevant information to various stakeholders for their decision-making, improvement of their understanding about the evaluand as well as assessing their merits and worth (Alkin, 1975; Maloney, 2017**a**; Patton, 2012; Stufflebeam, 2001**a**). The evaluand could be a development programme, project, policy, product, personnel, process, institution, or infrastructure, as well as training or learning programmes that a client wants to be evaluated (Stufflebeam, 2001). This information may directly or indirectly serve different stakeholders who are also directly or indirectly involved with the subject of the evaluation. The identified information required by the direct or primary stakeholders is expressed in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation. Hence, the concept of evaluation use researched since the 60s has identified four primary areas of use, including instrumental use, conceptual use, process use and political, legitimate, or symbolic use (Leviton & Hughes, 1981) (the various uses are elaborated in subsection 2.1.1 - 2.1.4). However, others such as Kirkhart (2000), Henry & Mark (2003), as well as Henry and Mark (2004), argue that apart from the information needs by the concerned or relevant stakeholders, evaluations have wider tangible and intangible impacts across a range of stakeholders beyond the identifiable use of evaluations within the context of the evaluand thereby introducing the concept of evaluation influence (elaborate in subsection 2.1.5). However, Michael Patton supports that for evaluation to have a meaningful impact, it should be conducted with intentions and focus that permit the relevant stakeholders to act upon the evaluation outputs and maximise its use (Patton, 2020). There are various approaches to conducting evaluations, and each approach contributes to determining or influencing different types of evaluation use (section 2.3). Similarly, different types of evaluations generate different sets of information at different stages or timeframes in the life cycle of the evaluand for the various purposes and uses. For example, during a development intervention's life cycle, different evaluations can be commissioned to provide stakeholders with different sets of information for their various uses. Furthermore, the need for defensible and sound quality evaluation outputs has led to the development of evaluation standards and approaches, processes with indications of the various roles and responsibilities, and expected outputs along the life cycle of an evaluation intervention. The methods and guidelines aim to improve practice and enhance evidence generation from evaluations. Depending on the context of these

evaluations, they are expected to respect some principles and meet established standards (annexure 4) recommended for use in the context, such as country(s), organisation(s), or region. Evaluations are also based on these standards, principles, and criteria (or meta-evaluation) to promote professionalism in conducting defensible evaluations(Stufflebeam, 2001b). Among the various factors associated with the use of evaluations, Alkin and King identify the characteristic elements of the evaluation output, the context of the institution, the human capacity of evaluator and stakeholders, as well as the resources available to effectively operationalise the evaluation use (Alkin & King, 2017). Evaluations are complex undertakings marked with challenges worth noting; hence, section 2.8 outlines some of the difficulties inherent in evaluations. Therefore, to understand how Catholic Faith-Based Organisations use evaluations to inform practice in decision-making, I conceptualise our inquiry by examining the extent to which the evaluation characteristics, the context and the human factors influence decision-making and its use.

2.2 Evaluation use

Given the importance of evaluations as one of the essential sources of evidence and information, evaluation use has been one of the highly researched aspects of the research around evaluations (Alkin & Christie, 2004). The use of evaluation has traditionally been linked to informed policy formulation and decision-making, accountability, and transparency, as well as organisational learning (King & Alkin, 2019). Early research into the use of evaluations has categorised evaluation use into instrumental use, conceptual use, and legitimate or symbolic use (Leviton & Hughes, 1981). Other authors such as Patton, Birgili, and Kirkac have linked evaluation use to the type of evaluation about the different stages of the policy, programme or project life cycle (Birgili & Kırkaç, 2021; Patton, 1988). This concept of use links evaluation to five categories defined by the effort, the performance, the adequacy of performance, efficiency and the process (Alkin & Christie, 2004). Similarly, Alkin and King researched the factors that act as determinants of evaluation use, such as the characteristic elements of the evaluation, the evaluation user, the evaluator, and the organisational or social context (Alkin & King, 2017). Herbert stresses that the evaluation use concept presupposes "an intentionality, immediacy, and directness that may not always exist" (Herbert, 2014:393). Earlier, Daniel Stufflebeam came up with the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model designed to evaluate for accountability and decision-making for improving programmes (Alkin, 2013; McDavid et al., 2018). However other authors such as Kirkhart (2000) and subsequently Henry & Mark (2003)

and Mark & Henry (2004) consider evaluation use concept as limiting the ultimate purpose of evaluations which is to enhance social betterment beyond the evaluand. These authors, therefore, propose evaluation influence as a better terminology or perspective of understanding the multidimensional impact of evaluations(Henry & Mark, 2003; Kirkhart, 2000; Mark & Henry, 2004).

2.2.1 Instrumental use of evaluation.

An early definition of instrumental use was given by Rich in 1977 as the documented response to the use of research for decision-making and problem-solving (Leviton & Hughes, 1981; Preskill, 1994). Patton Quinn supports this view regarding "intended use by intended users"(Patton, 2012:138). For Tennant, evaluation use is directly proportionate to the impact of the evaluation on the programme being evaluated. Hence, if the evaluation findings do not lead to making informed decisions about the programme, then minor or no evaluation use is evident (Tennant, 2010). Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation model develops a framework for evaluators to ensure and promote the instrumental use and conceptual use of evaluations by the intended stakeholders (Patton, 2012). Instrumental use of evaluation, therefore, is linked to action that is taken as a result of the evaluation (Beyer & Trice, 1982; Leviton & Hughes, 1981; Shulha & Cousins, 1997) as well as change of behaviour of the intended stakeholders (Johnson et al., 2009). However, Weiss and others noted that there is no purity in instrumental use because decision-making, for example, considers many parameters other than evaluation findings (Weiss et al., 2005b). In the same line of thinking, House considers instrumental use limited and short of a moral compass (House, 1995). However, Shull and Cousins argue that one person's use can become another's misuse of evaluations in conflictual contexts (Shulha & Cousins, 1997).

2.2.2 Conceptual use of evaluation

Rich considers conceptual use as "the thinking" generated by information from research (Leviton & Hughes, 1981). Many authors refer to this aspect of evaluation use as enlightenment (Balthasar, 2009; Beyer & Trice, 1982; Cook et al., 1980; Cousins & Leithwood, 1993; Forss et al., 1994; Owen et al., 1994; Weiss, 1979; Weiss et al., 2005b) which empowers the stakeholders. Therefore, the conceptual use of evaluation is linked to the new understanding and knowledge development of the evaluated programme for the various stakeholders. This concept of abstract use precedes instrumental use (Leviton & Hughes, 1981) because informed action presupposes

a better understanding and learning about the programme. However, not all conceptual use or understandings of a programme lead to a perceivable action, making conceptual use a more or less subjective notion and challenging to measure (Mark & Henry, 2004).

2.2.3 Legitimate, political or symbolic use of evaluations

Symbolic use of evaluation occurs when an evaluation is commissioned with the intention to justify an existing position(Beyer & Trice, 1982; Weiss,1979; Weiss et al., 2005) or to legitimise a pre-conceived rationale to appear as evidence-based (Mark & Henry, 2004). For example, evaluation could be used to legitimise a policy position or political agenda or to serve as proof of accountability (Hanberger, 2011; Maloney, 2017). It can be used to convince or persuade stakeholders for support (Stufflebeam, 2001b) – in this case, it is referred to as persuasive use of evaluation. However, Patton also considers organisational development and programme improvement to be legitimate uses of evaluations, which should not necessarily be seen as a form of justification for a pre-conceived position (Patton, 2012).

2.2.4 Process use of evaluation

Process use of evaluation is related to the changes that come to fruition (either as instrumental, conceptual, or legitimate use) that are enhanced by the level of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation process. As elucidated by Patton, this concept aims to improve the use of evaluations by intended stakeholders by involving them throughout the evaluation process (Patton, 1988). Process use has as its primary objective to establish the fact that greater involvement of intended users in the evaluation intervention enhances conceptual and instrumental use of evaluations. In other words, process use can also be likened to Cousins's participatory evaluation theory (Jacob et al., 2011).

2.2.5 Evaluation influence

As noted in King & Alkin (2019), authors such as Leviton & Hughes (1981) and Weiss (1972) had an earlier perception that programme evaluation outputs are susceptible to exert influence far beyond the boundaries of the evaluation. Kirkhat (2000) then pioneered and coined the language of evaluation influence because he considered the popular concepts of evaluation use to be limiting the scope of the impact of evaluations. According to Kirkhat, there is a need to explore the broader multidimensional and cross-border effects of evaluation over time and beyond individual programmes, demography, and the interplay between the tangible and

intangible impacts of evaluation. This concept of Kirkhat was amplified by Henry and Mark, who then came up with a framework that explains the mechanisms through which evaluation influence is produced. They equally developed an outcome or results framework indicating whether influence has occurred. These outcomes of evaluation influence were then classified at three levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and collective (Henry & Mark, 2003). Henry and Mark (2004) elaborated on the change processes (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal) responsible for influencing the change of attitude, motivation, and actions that contribute to social betterment.

Despite the limitations advanced about the traditional evaluation use concepts and the evolution of the idea of evaluation influence, it does not discard the fact that evaluation use is part of the range of influences of evaluations. However, the very fact that evaluations are commissioned based on terms of references and coupled with the fact that they are carried out on specific programmes or policies defined by programme theories and logical frameworks indicates that evaluations have specific primary objectives and goals to which they should respond. For this reason, (Alkin & Taut, 2003; Patton, 1997, 2008; Hofstetter & Alkin, 2003) are critical of the theory of evaluation influence for including events and factors outside the sphere of control and awareness of the evaluator and relevant stakeholders. Similarly, other authors (Herbert, 2014; Cousins, 2004) criticise part of Mark and Henry's (2004) model as unrealistic and impractical. They argue that the paths of evaluation influence proposed are indirect, not clearly mapped out and hence difficult to measure.

2.3 Evaluation models and approaches

The various evaluation approaches summarised by Stufflebeam indicate the rationale of ensuring various evaluations are useful to different stakeholders' needs. The various evaluation approaches have evolved over the years due to the increasing need to respond to different information needs. For example, evaluations have increasingly been used to measure the efforts to improve services in institutions such as schools, health care, and social welfare organisations.

In evaluation capacity building, there is a need to know alternative evaluation approaches so that evaluators can assess and consider alternative frameworks appropriate for the different evaluation needs. This also permits evaluators to assess the strengths and weaknesses of alternative frameworks and better determine what works best, for whom, why and when. Where necessary, an evaluator can employ a single or hybrid evaluation approach (Stufflebeam, 2001).

The consideration of programme evaluation approaches here looks at assessment frameworks for different evaluation subjects, including development interventions, school curricular programmes, organisational performance, management systems, students, personnel, and material evaluations. This, therefore, brings to the fore the idea that every human activity, system, product, or service can be subjected to a form of evaluation requiring different or a combination of various evaluation approaches that best meet or address the evaluation purpose - hence their useability.

2.3.1 Classification of evaluation approaches

Stufflebeam categorises the evaluation approaches into four categories. This classification is based on previous works, such as Scriven's work on transdisciplinary evaluations (Scriven, 1981, 1994b), which provided a list and analysis of evaluation models. These categories include pseudo-evaluations (evaluations generally do not promote valid and complete findings), questions and/or method-oriented evaluation approaches, improvement/accountability evaluation approaches, and social agenda/advocacy evaluation approaches.

2.3.2 Pseudo-evaluation approaches

These approaches are used to meet the needs of legitimate, political, or symbolic use of evaluations. Pseudo-evaluation approaches are characterised by the intentional practice of selective or false disclosure of valid assessment reports to the right-to-know audiences and intentionally falsifying the evaluation outcomes for hidden objectives (Stufflebeam, 2001). The pseudo-evaluation approaches are used to justify political objectives as grounded on evidence and to confirm or justify a predetermined position (Hanberger, 2011; Maloney, 2017). Some of the negative consequences of pseudo-evaluations include promoting and supporting injustice, misleading, promoting the lack of confidence in evaluations, and discrediting the profession (Stufflebeam, 2001). However, these approaches become indispensable for political stability, marketing purposes, and the need to convince constituents to support an agenda (Stufflebeam, 2001). As noted by Stufflebeam, two main approaches to pseudo evaluations include public relations-inspired and politically controlled studies.

2.3.2.1 Public relations-inspired studies

This type of study is intentionally designed to use information from evaluation data to convince constituent stakeholders of the soundness and effectiveness of an intervention (Mark & Henry,

2004). Other labels of this approach include marketing and advertising focusing on presenting or exaggerating only the strength of the evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2001). The main cues of this type of study, as noted by Stufflebeam, is propaganda information needs with the purpose of presenting a positive image by programme leaders to gain the support of the audience -hence, the focus of the study is not on merits and worth of the intervention (Stufflebeam, 2001).

2.3.2.2 Politically controlled studies

The main purpose of commissioning the evaluation is to seek assistance to maintain or influence constituents' support for the power position and influence of the client (Stufflebeam, 2001). This study is based on an implicit or explicit threat whereby an evaluation is used for winning political positions. Reports of such studies, as noted by Stufflebeam, can either be subjected to withholding a set of findings, selective release of some findings or outright non-disclosure if the findings are not satisfactory to the client – hence violating the agreement of full disclosure of findings for interventions of public interest (Stufflebeam, 2001).

2.3.3 Questions-oriented evaluation approaches

These evaluation approaches focused on addressing identified questions with the possibility of using various methods (Stufflebeam, 2001). The specified questions are not necessarily judged to be the most appropriate for assessing the programme's worth and merits. According to Stufflebeam (2001), the questions used can be based on the programme's attributes and operational objectives or the funder's information need of accountability of a programme. Examples of question-based evaluation approaches include objectives-based studies and accountability-based studies. These approaches promote the conceptual and instrumental use of evaluations as they promote a better understanding of what works and the extent to which the objectives of the intervention were achieved. Learnings from these evaluations then promote instrumental use in making decisions about the evaluand.

2.3.3.1 Objectives-based studies

Objectives-based studies aim to judge how well the programme or intervention has achieved its predefined objectives. Examples of such studies are performance-based assessments, and the usual audiences include programme managers, sponsors and programme developers who contribute to specifying the objectives of the intervention or programme (Stufflebeam, 2001). The methods involve specifying what constitutes the objectives and then collecting data and

analysing them to draw inferences. Though objective-based studies are the most prevalent for programme evaluations, they are mostly conducted at the end of the programme life cycle; therefore, the results cannot be applied to the process improvement of the same programme. Another shortfall noted by Stufflebeam is that they do not unveil the nature of the effects and may even give credit to less worthy objectives (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.3.2 Accountability (payment by results studies)

Accountability studies form part of the question-oriented evaluation approach and narrow down the evaluation objectives to establish the results or outcomes of the intervention. It is focused on the effect of the intervention on the beneficiaries and hence sets standards for judging successes and rewards. Those responsible for producing the results include programme managers and service providers held accountable by the programme constituents and controllers. Methods used in this approach include success judgement standards settings, payment by results, management by objectives, programme planning and budgeting systems, audits of compliance and goal achievements, and peer reviews on established criteria. Accountability studies are mostly used for community-based programmes aimed at public service improvement; hence, they require baseline achievement records from which independent external evaluators can judge success.

The fear of unclean records, cheating to appear good and non-dissemination of full findings can make this approach susceptible to the trap of a pseudo-evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2001).

2.3.3.3 Objective Testing Programmes.

This approach is used for standardised educational tests for school curricular objectives to test students' performance scores as individuals or groups. The main aim is to improve student learning.

2.3.3.4 Outcome evaluation as value-added assessment.

This is a system-wide standardised testing to assess the impact of the educational programmes and policies of an education system or its components. The primary purpose of the system broad analysis using this approach is to provide direction to policy (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.3.5 Performance testing.

This approach was developed to offset the limitations of multiple-choice tests or assessment approaches and provide learners with more possibilities to use their various skill sets in responding to evaluation needs. It involves using written or spoken responses, musical or psychomotor presentations, and assessing their work portfolios. This approach is based on life-skills objectives and performance tasks that reflect the content of the curriculum. It reduces the chances of guessing and increases the learner's possibilities of self-expression.

2.3.3.6 Experimental studies

This evaluation approach uses two sample groups, whereby one is the treatment group and the other is a control group. The aim is to contrast the impact of the treatment with the non-application of the treatment to the control group and assign the effect of the change to be a result of the programme treatment applied to the treatment group. However, this requires certain conditions and assumptions to establish a true contrafactual of the treatment group. The advantage of this approach is that it produces scientifically credible results but is criticised as unethical when using human subjects as treatment and control groups. It is also impractical when the two groups are geographically located in the same area. Moral theorists criticise this approach for refusing treatment to a group of people for the sake of carrying out an experimental study.

2.3.3.7 Management Information Systems

Management Information Systems is an evaluation approach that provides managers with the information required to manage and report on the programmes. It relies on programme objectives, specified activities with a programme budget and project milestones. This combination is then fed into the system for planning, monitoring, control, and progress reports (Stufflebeam, 2001). The primary purpose is to check on consistency and programme status, including programme goals, planned and actual operations, and the status of the expenses, risks, issues, and milestones achieved. The methods used include the Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), the Programme Planning and Budgeting system (PPBS), the Critical Path Method (CPM), the Management by Objectives (MBO), periodic Staff and budgetary reporting and the computer-based information system. These systems and the databases inform managers yearly and across programmes. Still, they are not versatile for all context-sensitive industries, such as education (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.3.8 Benefit-cost analysis approach.

The Benefit-cost analysis is an approach that seeks to establish the relative economic imperative for the programme by looking at the cost analysis of programme inputs, the comparative cost-effectiveness of similar programmes and the impact of the programme on the environment in terms of monetary values of all the possible range of outcomes. The main difficulty with such evaluations is that non-accountants and auditors are not readily welcome to probe into the financial dealings of organisations (Stufflebeam, 2001).

2.3.3.9 Case Study Evaluations

This approach focuses on producing a detailed, in-depth description and analysis of the evaluation in its context using various methods and sources of information to document what the programme is all about, who the stakeholders are, what the programme was intended to produce and what it achieved as outputs and outcomes. The aim is not to guide or judge programme worth or merits, as noted by Stufflebeam, but to x-ray the programme contextually for a better understanding of its audience (Stufflebeam, 2001). Typical of this approach is the identification and involvement of critical stakeholders in the process of the evaluations, and the critical questions of most stakeholders are to understand the programme's conceptual framework, how it has evolved, how it operates, and how it produces the results. Stakeholders are also interested in knowing what the programme has delivered and whether the beneficiaries' needs were met. A case study also identifies the programme's success and failures and their effects (positive and negative) on society. The case study approach is appropriate for programme evaluations (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.3.10 Programme theory-based evaluation

A theory-based approach to programme evaluation relies on a sound theory that can benchmark and assess the evaluand within the given context or industry (Rogers & Weiss, 2007). Theory, which serves as the measuring rod of the evaluation, must be one that stakeholders generally accept as a valid prototype scale for assessing the programme by mirroring the programme's merits and worth based on the theoretical standards. A typical theory-based approach is represented in programme logic models, representing how inputs and activities combine to produce outputs and, eventually, desired outcomes in a simple flow chart. And where a relevant and logical framework of the programme does not exist, according to

Stufflebeam, the evaluator need not develop one else they run the risk of interfering with the programme design that is done by programme staff (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.3.11 Mixed-Method studies

This approach is intentionally employed to apply quantitative methods of inquiry in conjunction with qualitative methods of investigation to provide direction for improving programmes and assessing their effectiveness. This, therefore, places the use of a mixed method evaluation approach to aim for the formative and summative assessment of programmes. Which of the quantitative and qualitative methods are employed is secondary to the departure point of using mixed methods as the focus is to provide dependable feedback and an in-depth understanding of the programme and promote validity and reliability to ensure the usefulness of findings. This approach also provides a holistic view of the programme and addresses various stakeholder and programme-related questions. This evaluation approach is part of the questions/method approaches, and its application, as noted by Stufflebeam, is intentional and not out of necessity of application (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.4 Improvement/accountability-oriented evaluation approaches

Stufflebeam classified the three approaches in this group: decision-accountability-related studies, consumer-oriented studies, and accreditation-certification studies. They resonate more with the complete definition of evaluations as they comprehensively determine the evaluand's worth and merits (Stufflebeam 2001). They use different combinations of quantitative and qualitative methods, and emphasis is put on program improvement by providing all the relevant stakeholders with information that is required for their decision-making, assessment of alternative options and being able to check for the merits of competing options and institutions (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.4.1 Decision/accountability-oriented studies

This approach improves the evaluation through informed decision-making and checking on its relative worth and merits compared to alternative options. It is based on objectively finding the best answers to stakeholders' needs while involving them in a democratic, participatory process throughout the evaluation journey. The approach uses various methods deemed appropriate to provide timely, relevant information for decision-making and provides records for accountability. In carrying out evaluations utilising this approach, the goals, priorities,

competing programmes, programme plans, relevant stakeholders, decision situations and standards should be identified upfront. The range of evaluative information required can be obtained through various processes, including needs assessments, problems and opportunity analysis, assessments of programme plan, personnel and their performance, processes, intended and unintended outcomes, as well as cost-effectiveness of the programmes. It is an open approach, and according to Stufflebeam, evaluations using this approach also need to be subjected to meta-evaluations to judge their rigour in meeting the required standards and, hence, the improvement/accountability objectives (Stufflebeam, 2001).

2.3.4.2 Consumer-oriented studies

In this approach, the evaluation focuses on determining the ethical processes and quality of the deliverables produced to meet the best standards of consumer welfare. Hence, this approach considers societal values, a cost-effective criterion, societal needs, what is regarded as a standard of goodness, and standards for the assessments. It also considers the merits of competing programmes, services, and products to justify the merits and worth of the evaluand. Standard methods for this approach include checklists and needs assessments, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, cost analysis and codes of conduct.

2.3.4.3 Accreditation/certification approach

It is an approach of evaluating institutions, institutional programmes, and personnel to check if they meet the requirements for certification and accreditation to provide specific professional services or run professionally recognised programmes. The basis of this approach is the guidelines and criteria set out for each accreditation/certification of the corresponding professional certifying or regulatory body. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to determine the readiness of the evaluand for approval to deliver the specified services to the public.

The methods used in this approach include self-study and reporting, expert visits to institutions with checklists and verifications of credentials.

The main advantage of this approach is that it offers assurance of quality services by providing evidence of qualifications to offer such services to the public.

2.3.5 Social agenda/advocacy approaches

These approaches focus on promoting stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process, promoting learning and informed participatory decision-making. Hence, they promote the conceptual, process and ultimately instrumental use of evaluations.

Stufflebeam identifies four approaches that fall under this group as they all focus on integrating the stakeholders' perspective with the expert evaluator in the inquiry and judgements of programmes. This approach seeks to empower stakeholders' involvement in contributing democratically rich and diverse perspectives in obtaining and interpreting findings that matter to them. However, this compromise for democratic social justice approaches might fall short of the rigour of meeting sound evaluation standards and independence of findings (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.5.1 Client-centred studies

This approach is also termed responsive evaluation. This approach focuses on the client's and relevant stakeholders' evaluative needs and perspectives (Stake, 1975). The build-up of findings and interpretations is based on the relativistic and subjective perspectives of the clients. Hence, it calls for a more constructivist, pluralistic, and flexible approach to meeting the client's information needs and concerns. This approach can also be defined as the empowerment evaluation approach, which gives agency to the stakeholders to own their evaluations, hence promoting process use (Fetterman, 2019a).

This approach gives local community leaders and beneficiary groups a voice and helps them develop a more comprehensive knowledge of social development intervention. The study is a dynamic and evolving collaborative inquiry through a continuous relationship with the client to formulate questions, collect data, analyse data, and interpret narratively. It strongly focuses on respecting and enhancing different values of people and their respective perspectives of seeing and interpreting reality.

The most appropriate methods of this approach include case studies, purposive sampling, observations, storytelling, and narrative reports. Hence, the client is the author of their evaluation, and the role of the evaluator is that of a facilitator, guide, and organiser, helping to put together all the evidence collected in a narrative report. However, this approach may lack external credibility and evaluator independence.

2.3.5.2 Constructivist evaluation approach

This approach posits the philosophical underpinning of a subjective epistemology of the evaluation process. The evaluation is hence rooted ethically and is meant to advocate for the disadvantaged group. Stufflebeam (2001) notes that the evaluators' role is to empower, emancipate and involve the stakeholders by building their consciousness, energising them, and guiding them to control their destiny. No ultimate conclusions are envisaged, but rather a continuous update of information and constructs of the evaluand from the participants as each construct is as valuable as the other.

This approach encourages effective change whereby people value and use evaluation when they are more involved in the process. This gives value to participants' knowledge, views, and experiences.

2.3.5.3 Deliberative democratic evaluation

The approach is based on a democratic framework characterised by ensuring active and equitable participation of relevant stakeholders of the evaluand all along the life cycle of the evaluation. The levels of participation include actively consulting all the stakeholders to provide their inputs and ensuring there are no power imbalances, engaging in dialogues to assess various inputs and deliberating with stakeholders in arriving at defensible findings that are reliable and valid. As noted by House & Howe (2000), equity in participation in the process is vital. Still, the evaluator remains in control of facilitating the evaluation process, deciding which of the inputs should be upheld or discarded after the dialogue and has the ultimate responsibility of rendering final judgement and conclusions after the deliberation with stakeholders.

The involvement of stakeholders throughout the evaluation process while ensuring equity in their participation promotes the usability of the evaluation by the stakeholders as they contribute, dialogue, and deliberate on critical issues that affect their lives. Methods commonly used include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and debates. However, this approach seems unrealistic to achieve full democratic and equitable participation of all the relevant stakeholders.

2.3.5.4 Utilization-focused evaluation

The utilization-focused evaluation approach proposed by Patton Quinn focuses on conducting sound evaluations to maximise their use by the intended primary users. The use of evaluations is designed to improve the evaluation in maximising social benefits and providing relevant

information to influence decision-making and action(Patton, 2012). To achieve the objectives of the utilisation-focused approach, the evaluator is invited first to identify the targeted users of the evaluation from which a selected representative of a committed group of stakeholders is selected. Secondly, the evaluator determines all the possible uses of the evaluation by the primary stakeholders within the given context. The evaluator and the representative group work to analyse all the primary stakeholders' needs, interests, values, and concerns while considering the contextual dynamics and then developing the questions the evaluation would address. The focus is not only to develop a good and defensible sound evaluation report that meets the required standards but also to find ways of ensuring the usability of the evaluation findings as the ultimate outcomes of the assessment product.

This approach employs different methods and approaches considered appropriate in the evaluation design that would effectively deliver the findings that answer the evaluation questions and stakeholder information needs. The evaluator's role is that of a servant to the stakeholders, a facilitator, and a guide on the evaluation journey while the stakeholders sit in the driver's seat (Patton, 2020).

This approach also defines the various uses of the evaluation and ways of dissemination to ensure and maximise usability by intended primary users. The advantages are that the strategy is focused on effective contribution to social development and promotes contextual evaluation relevance. It offers room for pragmatic, creative thinking of evaluation designs that meet contextual needs while upholding sound evaluation standards. However, this approach also requires a lot of skills for the evaluator to be effective, including strong negotiation skills, competencies in the application of quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluation, knowledge of evaluation standards, and good communication and interpersonal skills (Stufflebeam, 2001). Also, as noted by Patton, given the fast-changing dynamics of contexts with people movement and turnovers, new stakeholders may derail the evaluation process and even subject the evaluation findings to review. Similarly, in a conflictual or negative political context, conflicts of interest, power and corruption may negatively contribute to the evaluation outcome, compromising its soundness, merits and worth, and usability (Stufflebeam 2001).

2.3.5.5 Developmental evaluations

The traditional evaluations presuppose a stable environment and linear evolution of the evaluand whose worth and merits are being evaluated. In complex environments with continuous systemic interactions of interdependent components without central control, Patton

proposes the developmental evaluation approach (Patton, 2011). This, carried out to guide emergent and dynamic situations, can also be termed an agile evaluation approach as it is suited for rapidly changing and complex conditions. It supports innovation as one of its primary uses because, as noted by Patton, it helps in framing concepts, testing iterations, tracking developmental pathways of the evaluand, and unveiling new insights along the life cycle of the evaluand (Patton, 2010). This approach is an inbuilt internal evaluation system that tracks options for use in the development of the evaluation; hence, real-time information is required to nurture and enhance learning (Fetterman, 2019a). According to Patton, various methods can be used, including systems thinking and critical and creative thinking, with tolerance to adaptability and ambiguity (Patton, 2011).

2.3.5.6 Participatory evaluations

Participatory evaluation involves both the evaluators and the stakeholders having control of the evaluation by jointly designing and carrying out the evaluations and disseminating the results(Jacob et al., 2011). The degree of engagement or involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process and the level of evaluator control define the type of participatory approach envisaged (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; King et al., 2007). The rationale of the participatory approach is attuned to the constructivist philosophical stands that knowledge creation is subject to the contribution of multiple perspectives, and this is more relevant within a community context whereby the historical, social, cultural and political factors play vital roles in defining the community (Jacob et al., 2011). This ensures the voices of the relevant stakeholders form part of the building of evidence generation and learning in the process (Patton, 2001). A participatory evaluation whereby the evaluator wields more control over the evaluation process while constantly engaging with stakeholders defines the collaborative approach(Rodríguez-Campos & Rincones-Gómez, 2013). On the other end, where the evaluator aids the stakeholders in taking control of their evaluations and defines the empowerment evaluation approach (Fetterman, 2019a)

2.3.5.7 Collaborative evaluations

This is one of the variants of stakeholder or client-centred evaluation whereby the collaborative evaluators remain in charge of the evaluation but continuously engage with stakeholders who contribute to the evaluation design, data collection and analysis. The collaborative evaluators then ensure the stakeholders understand how to use the evaluation outputs(Ayers, 1987).

Rodrigues and Gomez (2013a) noted that collaborative evaluations require flexibility and adaptations to the context and people. The model for collaborative evaluations suggested by Rodrigues-Campos and Rincones-gomez involves six stages: clarification of the evaluation expectations, establishing a collective commitment, ensuring open communications, encouraging effective practices, and following specific guidelines (Rodríguez-Campos & Rincones-Gómez, 2013). Each of the six stages can be further elaborated to give details to the content of what each stage entails. For example, in the clarifications of expectations, the authors outlined elements such as the clarification of roles of both the evaluator and the collaborative members, clarifications of the evaluation standards and criteria to be used, the process as well as the budget of the evaluation(Rodríguez-Campos & Rincones-Gómez, 2013).

2.3.5.8 Empowerment evaluations

Empowerment evaluation is designed to give programme staff and community members the ability to carry out their evaluations and make use of evidence generated to meet their needs. In this approach, the evaluators guide the stakeholders by providing professional advice to effectively pursue and learn from their evaluation objectives. As noted by (Fetterman et al., 2014), the evaluators, otherwise known as critical friends, guide the programme staff and community responsible for carrying out the evaluations while ensuring rigour and targets for the evaluations (Fetterman, 2019b). This approach is underlined by the theory of empowerment, which upholds understanding one's environment, gaining control of one's resources, and enabling staff and community members to own the outcomes of the evaluations. As noted by Fetterman, this approach empowers the staff and community members in two ways: it helps develop the capacity of the staff and community members to become solution providers and programme improvement actors through their informed decision-making, and secondly, this approach provides a sense of psycho-social and political liberation – giving more excellent agency to self-determination and power over their destiny (Fetterman, 2019c). Ten principles guide the empowerment evaluation approach proposed by Fetterman, including improvement objectives for programme performance, community control and ownership, inclusivity, democratic participation, promotio of social justice, the respect of community knowledge and evidence-based strategies, stakeholder evaluation capacity building, experiential organisational learning, and promotion of accountability(Fetterman, 2019c).

2.4 Challenges to evaluation use

The effective use of evaluations, according to Leviton, is most often limited to the face value of evaluation findings and recommendations. Evaluation needs to be contextually incorporated into the body of evidence that informs change of behaviour and stakeholders' decision-making (Leviton, 2003). This would require a broader understanding of the processes and mechanisms within the framework of knowledge use, which, according to Leviton, is side-lined in the literature on evaluation use (Leviton, 2003).

The use of evaluations also depends on the users' mental models vis-a-vis the programme characterised by practices and experience of the programme, nature of the social context, policies and behaviours that influence the expectations and perception of new information from evaluations(Leviton, 2003). As noted by Patton, evaluations should overcome reality distortions of stakeholders, but this requires a process that involves immersing the evaluation users in the evaluation process and helping them do reality checks (Patton, 2005a). The use of evaluations also faces the challenge of contextual complexity, which is also related to organisational size and history, the evaluation purpose, evaluator competence and credibility, the political atmosphere and the resource constraints (Patton, 2005a). According to Leviton, new information generated by evaluations is processed by the users based on their mental models, limiting the ability to go beyond one's scope of inference(Leviton, 2003). Similar to this is the idea of limitations to serendipity use of knowledge because evaluation use is based on planned use from critical and logical thinking evaluation models(Leviton, 2003).

Patton argues there is no best fit for an evaluation design; therefore, the evaluations are marked by continuous stakeholder negotiations (Patton, 2005a). Hence, the outcome of the evaluation does not guarantee the best possible achievable results. He further argues that maximising evaluation use also requires the acquisition of evaluative thinking capacity development, permitting stakeholders to think evaluatively, which involves critical examination of the evidence available and integrating and using feedback from evaluations (Patton, 2005a). Patton upholds that for evaluation to be ongoing and long-term, stakeholders have to be immersed in the culture of evaluation, which, as he added, is characterised by the cross-cultural interactions with the evaluators around fundamental elements of clarity and specificity in the definition of goals, programme concepts, assumptions, focus and being systematic in approach(Patton, 2005a). Developing such a cross-cultural evaluation competency in organisations remains a

challenge. Yet, according to Patton, it is necessary to continuously use evaluations because findings and recommendations are short-lived and change as society evolves.

2.5 Conceptual framework

Various authors have interrogated the characteristics of the evaluation itself as determinants for its use in decision-making, such as evaluation findings (Johnson et al., 2009; Maloney, 2017a; Weiss et al., 2005a), the relevance of the evaluation (Bober and Bartlett, 2004; Boyer and Langbein 1991, Cousins, 1995, Greene, 1987), the credibility of the evaluation (Barrios,1986; Bober and Bartlett, 2004; Boyer and Langbein, 1991; Johnson, 1993). The conceptual framework of this study also involves an understanding of the evaluation context(Højlund, 2014, 2014) and examining factors that facilitate or inhibit evaluation use (Alkin & King, 2017; Henry & Mark, 2003; Kirkhart, 2000).

Patton provides a utilization-focused approach for judging the value-added value of evaluations by intended users and how primary stakeholders apply learnings and findings from the evaluations(Patton, 2012, 2020). Similarly, participatory and user-focused evaluation theorists, such as (Cousins, 1996; Greene, 1988; Jacob et al., 2011), provide a framework for understanding the leverage of evaluation use through participant involvement in the evaluation processes. The use of evaluation is mediated through the learning process of the stakeholders about the evaluands (Forss et al., 1994; Owen & Lambert, 1995; Preskill, 1994; Stufflebeam & Wingate, 2005), which according to Mark & Henry(2004), forms part of the influences of evaluation at three levels of individual learning, interpersonal learning and collective organisational learning traditionally linked to conceptual or enlightenment use of evaluations.

From the above literature, this research holds that the extent to which evaluation is used to trigger decision-making is directly related to the evaluation characteristics, the organisational context of the evaluation and the stakeholder or human aspects involved in the evaluation.

The conceptual framework of this research is based on the integrated framework of evaluation use developed by Alkin and Taut (2003), Peck and Gorzalski (2009), the JSCEE programme evaluation utility standards(Stufflebeam, 2001), as well as the utilisation-focused approach of Patton (2012).

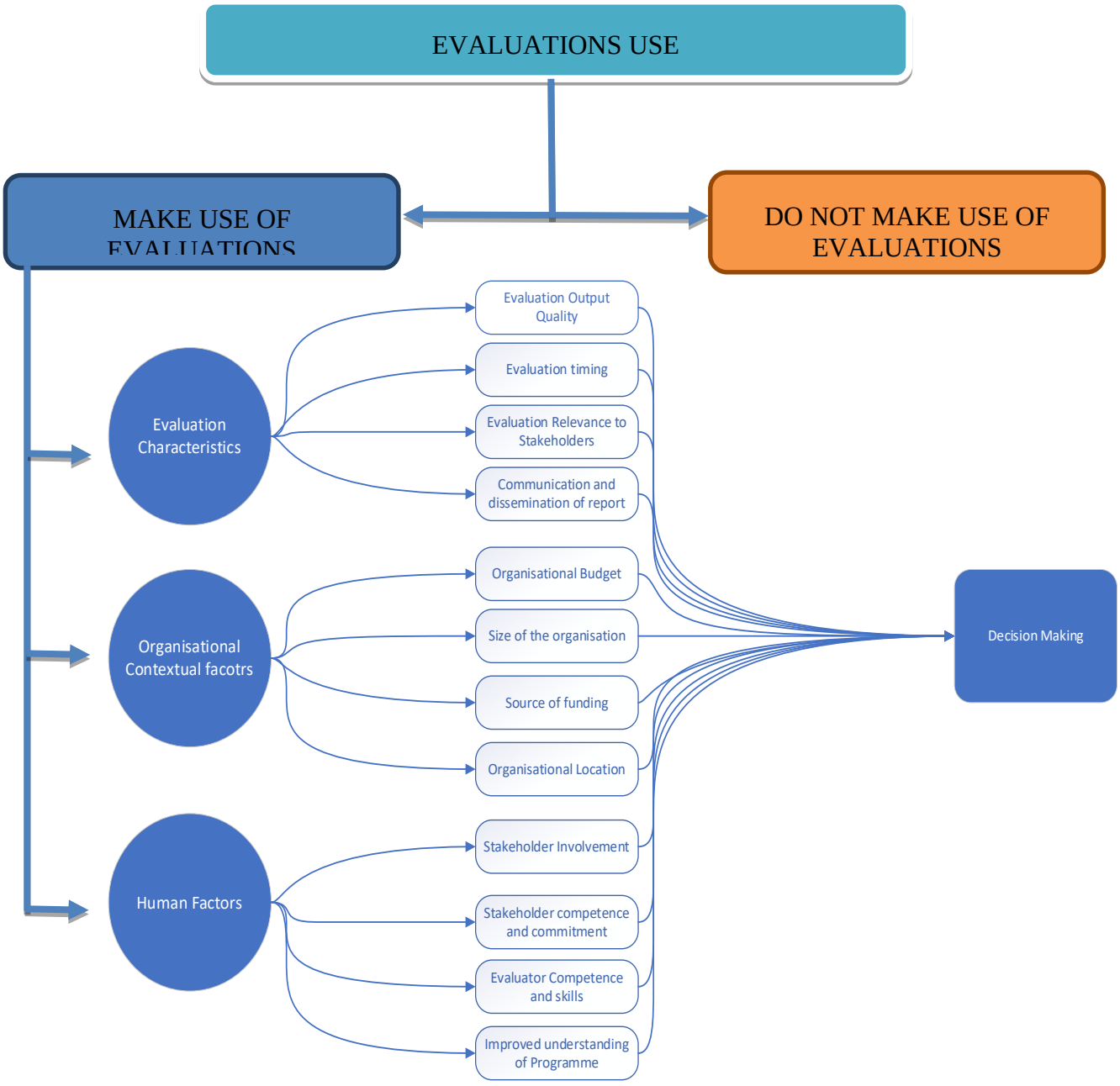
From the respondents' perspectives, the research will seek to find out the extent to which organisations within the Catholic context make use of evaluative evidence for informed decision-making and subsequently verify the extent to which the variables related to the

evaluation characteristics, the organisational context and the human-related factors impact on decision-making within the Catholic context of not-for-profit organisations. This informs the research methodology, which shall employ a mixed-method approach to give a holistic picture of the overt and covert experiential perspectives on using evaluations in decision-making.

Figure 1 below represents the approach for investigating evaluation use within Catholic faith-based organisations. The inquiry first identifies those organisations that self-report using evaluations in decision-making and those that say they do not use evaluations in their decision-making processes. Among the organisations that use evaluations, I investigate the extent to which the evaluation characteristic factors, the contextual and demographic factors, and the stakeholder-related factors influence evaluation use in decision-making.

The figure below depicts the research approach to inquire into evaluation use in the context of Catholic faith-based organisations. The inquiry process would first determine evaluation use or non-use from the respondents' perspectives in their organisational decision-making processes. Subsequently, I verify the extent to which the various factors of the evaluation characteristics, context, and human-related factors, as noted in the literature, influence evaluation to be used in decision-making.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Linking Factors Influencing Evaluation Use in Decision Making.



3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter embodies the framework of interconnected components involved in the research process. The research paradigm defines the researcher's world views (Wagner et al., 2012), laying out the research approach's identification, description and justification based on the appropriately chosen research philosophy (section 3.2). The research design informs the architecture of how the various components are linked (section 3.3). Here, I elaborate on the multiple components, including the research approach and methods used, including an elaboration on the instruments for data collection, the description of the data analysis process, and the research participants from whom data will be collected and how the selection of these participants was carried out (sampling) (subsections 3.3.2-3.3.8). Also included in the methodology chapter is the discussion on the research feasibility, limitations, and the researcher's positionality, as well as discussions on issues related to the research instruments: these include instrument validity (to determine if the instruments measure what they are intended to measure), reliability or dependability (to determine if the instruments can consistently measure same variables over time). This chapter describes the ethical issues considered during this research (sections 3.4 – 3.6).

3.2 Research philosophy

This research adopts the philosophy of pragmatism. This is based on the fact that organisational decision-making depends on many interrelated factors and the information needs of stakeholders (Stewart et al., 2019). However, various authors have developed theories that identify factors that promote or inhibit evaluation use (Duffy, 1994; King, 1988; Leviton, 2003b), which need to be tested contextually. Therefore, inquiry into using evaluation to inform decision-making requires applying the possible approaches that provide information from objective and subjective standpoints. Hence, applying methods that best interrogate and explain contextual experiences and perspectives defines the appropriateness of employing the philosophy of pragmatism. The pragmatic worldview shifts away from the traditional dichotomy of either positivist or interpretivist ontological perspectives and hinges on the fact that both quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed in mixed-method research as the epistemology of knowledge generation for a deeper understanding of not-so-obvious

phenomena (Morgan, 2014; Feilzer, 2010). For this research, therefore, I am convinced that the reality that factors influencing evaluation use in decision-making are, on the one hand, independent of the lone individual perspectives while acknowledging the fact that subjective knowledge development, on the other hand, is related to separate cognition and experience of the reality of evaluations. The individual experiences and knowledge developed from participating in the evaluations can become common knowledge only when shared with others using appropriate methods of inquiry. Therefore, different individuals in the same evaluation environment can learn differently while at the same time upholding a common truth or set of values about the evaluation expectations and predefined objectives to attain. From a pragmatic worldview, the approach towards investigating the use of evaluations within the Catholic context subjected the study to the application of varying methods of inquiry. Therefore, the most appropriate pathway to unravel the overt and covert knowledge embedded in the organisational and individual experiences in different contextual settings explains the epistemological approach of the mixed method to this research.

3.3 Research design

A research strategy gives the step-by-step direction of how to conduct the research- hence the design. There are three main types of research strategies, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method research strategies (Wagner, 2012). For this research, the mixed-method strategy or design was applied as the most appropriate. According to Chen and Chen, a research design provides a plan to answer a particular set of research questions (Chen & Chen, 1995). Hence, the mixed-method strategy is chosen with the research questions of this study in mind and in line with pragmatic philosophy. The research used surveys to reach out to respondents with structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews of key informants to collect the relevant information needed for the study. The Questionnaires were administered to the sampled respondents via an online platform using JotForm. In contrast, the interviews were administered using the telephone, teams or Zoom platforms with identified key informant respondents from different organisations.

3.3.1 Research approach

A research approach defines the process through which the researcher collects, analyses, and interprets the data from respondents. According to Wagner et al. (2012), pragmatism uses the logic of inductive and hypothetico-deductive approaches to empirically inquire into social

realities that have multiple interpretations depending on the context, stakeholder values and knowledge. Studies and concepts that describe the relationship between the variables of evaluation characteristics and their use in decision-making and some contextual and human factors that promote or inhibit evaluation use in decision-making form the basis of the inquiry within the given context.

A concurrent and parallel mixed method approach was applied to this study by taking into consideration the feasibility of the study within the available time, cost, and accessibility to respondents. A survey and an interview guide were used to collect data on respondents' perceptions, from which the relationships were verified deductively with emerging learnings from the experiences and values held by the participants. Hence, some open-ended questions were introduced, but these questions remained within the framework of the predefined conceptual framing of the research (therefore, the deductive option). Thus, the research uses an inductive approach to understanding respondents' views on using evaluative evidence premised on their involvement and individual experiences in the evaluation process.

3.3.2 Research methods

The research methods identify how the data will be obtained from the respondents. The two methods employed in this research include an online survey using questionnaires and a critical informant interview using an interview guide. The study, therefore, employed a parallel mixed method approach whereby quantitative and qualitative data are gathered independently, concurrently, and analysed separately before integrating the results. This mixed-method approach is based on the pragmatic worldview justified by evaluations well intended and commissioned for a purpose (Patton, 2012).

The questionnaire instrument was used to gather perceptions of the relationship between the various evaluation characteristics. This perspective is outlined in the OECD/DAC criteria and contextual and human factors identified as determinants of evaluation use in enhancing decision-making. Also contained in the questionnaire were demographic questions to gather information about the participating organisations, such as the size, geographical location and outreach, participant age range and executive positions, and organisational areas of intervention. The respondents' perspectives on these variables were measured using an ordinal scale of up to 6 categories with a directional definition such as strongly disagree to agree strongly. This is justified because conceptual and instrumental use of evaluation can be deduced from overt quantifiable variables categorised in a Likert scale.

The key informant interview guide, being the other instrument, was to obtain respondents' views and perceptions around the characteristics of evaluation outputs and context that influence their decision-making, as well as the evaluation influence on the participants by participating in the evaluation process. Learnings due to the involvement in the research may constitute subjective individual experiences, which vary across the different stakeholders in an evaluation.

The choice of using key informants was because they were well placed strategically to tell from their organisational positions and experience of having been involved in commissioning and conducting evaluations or using it for policy and management decision-making. Hence, they were better placed and informed about the evaluation intervention and process in commissioning, managing, reporting and disseminating evaluation outcomes.

3.3.3 Data collection procedure

The data collection was cross-sectional, using questionnaires and key informant interviews simultaneously. There was some coincidence with some respondents having to respond to both the questionnaire and the interviews due to their availability and position as key informants. However, this occurred only for a limited number of respondents as the interviews were administered only to a limited number of participants compared to the survey questionnaire.

The developed questionnaire was uploaded on a JotForm platform – an online software sent to respondents via emails and WhatsApp as a web link. Responses from the survey were downloadable as an Excel table with respondents in the rows and the questions to which each responded in the columns. The respondents were anonymous, so they could only be identified by affixing identification numbers. The key informant interview guide was used to interview and engage with the respondents, primarily organisational directors and monitoring and evaluation managers, using teams and Zoom platforms. A fixed phone was used with a recording device for some interviews when load shedding kicked in and the internet was no longer available for Zoom or Microsoft Teams calls. The recordings were then loaded onto the otter.ai voice notes and transcription platform, and the output was downloaded into a Word document for checking before analysis.

3.3.4 Data analysis and interpretations

The survey data was downloaded into an Excel table as noted above (section 3.3.4), checked, and cleaned for errors in an Excel spreadsheet. Using a codebook established to define the

variables in the ordinal scale, the data is then transformed into numerical values to permit descriptive analysis and further statistical analysis. A multivariate regression analysis was envisaged, but the number of respondents needed to be bigger to use advanced statistical techniques, which require a large sample, as noted by Stocker (2019). However, a logistic regression was conducted with variables that had moderate to strong correlations with the dependent variable. Inferences on the relationships between the different variables of the study and their relative impact on decision-making were then established and presented in the findings.

The qualitative data from the KII interviews was loaded on the Otter.ai platform, transcribed into Word documents, checked for correct sentence completion, and loaded into NVivo software for thematic analysis. The various textual responses were coded into pre-defined themes drawn from the research questions and the literature on evaluation use in decision-making as designed in the conceptual framework. The themes were then categorised and analysed descriptively and interpretively in responding to how these organisations use their various evaluations to guide their actions in effectively delivering programmes and projects as fruits of informed decision-making.

3.3.5 Sample determination

The sampling for the data collection using the surveys was determined using a two-stage non-probability purposive sampling whereby the respondents were first drawn from eligible organisations (organisations identified for having carried out programme evaluations on the interventions they implement). The respondents were then selected using other eligibility criteria for having participated in these evaluations in any category, such as commissioning the evaluations, participating in developing the terms of reference, being in an evaluation team, being users of the evaluation output as well, and being a strategic position to oversee and use evaluations. Most respondents identified as possible participants in the survey and the interviews were programme managers, monitoring and evaluation managers and evaluation team members.

3.3.5.1 Survey Sampling

Within each group of eligible respondents, I allowed each organisation to determine the respondent for the survey. A total of 43 participants participated in the surveys, representing just 12% of the eligible participant population.

3.3.5.2 Interview Sampling

For the key informant interviews, 25 of the 90 possible participating organisations were purposefully selected to reach out across diverse geographical regions, types of interventions, and sizes of the organisations. Each organisation indicated the most suitable person to respond to the key informant interviews. 25, only 15 could be reached due to data saturation and time constraints.

3.3.6 Research population

The sampling population comprises the entire group of possible respondents in all Catholic Faith-based organisations that run social development programmes in South Africa. In the field of education, there are 95 200 primary schools and 43 800 secondary schools currently operating around the country, 200+ health care units supported by the Catholic Health Care Association (CATHCA), 25 skills training centres funded by the CIE Thabiso Institute and other social development NGOs supported by CARITAS SA.

3.3.7 Sampling frame

The sampling frame is made up of respondents from Catholic Faith-based organisations that are officially registered with the Department of Social Development (DSD) as Not-For-Profit organisations with functional structures and who meet the criteria of having carried out at least an evaluation on one or more of their interventions in the last three years.

Table 1 Sample Frame

Provincial Representations	Eligible Organisations	Eligible Respondents
9	90	360

3.3.8 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis was based on individual responses as representative of the different organisations with possibilities of desegregating responses into organisational footprints, geographical location, budget, and source of funding of the organisations.

3.4 Limitations, feasibility & positionality

3.4.1 Limitations of the study

3.4.1.1 Technical limitations

The respondents were purposefully selected, and the selection criteria were mainly limited to management, excluding other stakeholders' perspectives. Also absent in the study was the voice of beneficiaries of the development initiatives carried out by these organisations and the perspectives of the evaluators involved in the various evaluations. It would have also been essential to have the perspectives of the funding agencies on the purpose and use of evaluations in their decision-making.

Another limitation is related to the sample of the respondents and access to more respondents to participate in the surveys. This limitation highly impacted the non-utilisation of regression statistics to verify the hypothesis. For this reason, the analysis was limited to descriptive statistics and interpretation due to the limited number of respondents, whereas the study previewed regression analysis. Hence, the study's outcome cannot be confidently generalised due to the low representation of a sample.

The mixed-method approach to this study collected data through interviews and surveys simultaneously. A sequential approach would have given more in-depth information, especially regarding survey perspectives where respondents express disagreements or unlikeliness as ratings of the various factors considered in the survey.

The study did not consider the types of evaluations, approaches and standards used in various organisations' evaluations. Hence, the same generic questions were asked without considering the nature of each evaluation.

3.4.1.2 Administrative limitations

One of the administrative limitations of the study is the difficulties of talking to respondents face to face during the interviews, which excludes the possibility of having some first-hand data and body language information. All data collection was online, which does not guarantee the truthfulness of the responses.

The parallel data collection using both methods was useful in triangulating some of the information. Still, it was not enough for a deeper understanding of some responses, especially

when respondents did not agree or strongly disagreed with various factors in the study. In such cases, likewise in the other extreme, the follow-up sequential approach would have yielded more in-depth information underlying the understanding of the reason why as a follow-up approach.

Another limitation of this research is the inability to ensure an appropriate response rate for the study that could have permitted more advanced statistical analysis and ensured respondents committed to giving accurate information. Reactivity, as noted by Wagner et al. (2012), is one of the most probable limitations to the research because participants would want to appear positive as users of evidence from the evaluations. This is because participants were informed of the research purpose through the consent form, research information sheet, and the type of questions involved. This could lead them to consider supporting or crediting a specific direction to justify evaluation use. Other limitations are related to the limited timing of the research and financial resources to conduct testing of the instruments for validity and reliability purposes. An in-depth investigation into the understanding of the mechanisms of use of evaluation for decision-making within the Catholic faith-based network, as well as the basis of non-use, would have thrown more light on the contributing factors.

3.4.2 Feasibility

The feasibility of this research hinged on examining ways of ensuring the research is effectively realised with the available resources and time. It also refers to ensuring the researcher can gather data given the instruments and methods in this study. To achieve this, the secretariat of the Southern African Bishop's Conference was engaged, as well as various diocesan offices and nationally established organisations, telephonically and by emails to first inquire for information on the possibilities of carrying out the research within the Catholic Context. I then proceeded to procure their permission and consent to participate in the study. Based on this, participants from the various organisations were contacted through a step-by-step process.

3.4.3 Positionality

The researcher's positionality is linked to their worldview, knowledge and background about the study (Chilisa, 2012; Patton, 2015). Being a Catholic and having worked in the Catholic Faith-Based Organisation in different contexts gives me a particular perception of why and how evaluations are carried out. However, I have not participated extensively in any of them. This can influence the interpretation of the collected data and possibly affect my interpretations of the findings, which might distort the information the data communicates. To avoid prejudicial

interpretations, the data from quantitative and qualitative sources were triangulated and converged to give a holistic perspective of the respondents' views across the various research questions.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Research involving human participants should contribute to improving the living conditions of the participants, as noted by the Department of Health of South Africa (Department of Health, 2015). Therefore, critical ethical issues in the research involving human participants needed careful consideration and judgement so that the research participants should not, in any way, directly or indirectly, immediately or in the long term, suffer negative consequences disproportionately to the benefits of the research nor be duly subjected to unnecessary harm because of possible use in future.

Some of the critical ethical issues worth mentioning included the selection bias of participants, the undue burden to the research participants, the threat to participants' dignity, well-being and safety, the possible abuse of vulnerable people with less capacity of autonomy, unjustified inducement of participants to take part in the research, inappropriate use and storage of personal information of participants, misinformation or incomplete information to participants as well as the possible overall risk posed by the research project itself may constitute ethical issues. The selection bias of participants is an ethical problem since this could prevent potential participants from participating in the research and prevent them from contributing or benefiting. Selection bias might also lead to some participants bearing an undue burden of the study.

This challenge to participants' dignity, well-being and safety is related to the fact that participants in the study become exposed to various risks that can destroy their human dignity, well-being, and protection if their identity is not concealed. If participant information is not kept confidential, their personalities, social positions and activities may become exposed to society. This is linked to another ethical issue posed by the inappropriate management system of personal information collected from participants (Adams et al., 2021). For this reason, a rigorous effort to ensure anonymity and confidentiality and the protection of the personal information of participants is a top ethical consideration that the researcher had considered before the research took place. People with limited consent capacity were not used as participants in this research.

Unjustified inducement and coercion of participants to participate in the research pose ethical issues as their freedom to participate or opt out of the study once initiated becomes compromised (Miracle, 2016). Similarly, non-disclosure of the research findings to the research community that might benefit them poses an ethical problem of depriving participants of the research benefits(Miracle, 2016).

Therefore, to address the ethical issues, the researcher participated in ethics training as a prerequisite for conducting this research, as was recommended by the university. The research proposal was equally scrutinised for potential ethical issues, and an honest management plan was established to include a consent form and research information sharing with participants.

Permission was obtained from the participating organisations to conduct the research. Participants were not required to disclose individual identities or the name of the organisation they belonged to. In cases where a participant's position was overt, care was taken to protect participant information by using coded pseudonyms. Hence, the principle of anonymity and confidentiality was highly respected. This research did not employ children or any physically impaired person as participants, nor was anyone with low consent capacity selected as a respondent. The study did not use a face-to-face data collection method. All data collection was web-based; hence, consent was given to participate in the survey from the first page of the survey instrument. The selection bias of participants was addressed by allowing participating organisations to choose among the eligible candidates to respond to the survey. More respondents were selected for the key informant interviews, and the first fifteen respondents were considered.

3.6 Validity, reliability, dependability

3.6.1 Validity

Validity measures the research instrument's ability to measure what the study intends to pursue (Wagner et al., 2012). If the tools are not fit for measuring the constructs or variables of the research it wants to measure, then they are invalid. I used a face and content validity test to examine the instruments used in this study. Face validity was ensured through a peer review of the instruments concerning the theoretical underpinnings of the constructs to be measured. As noted by Trochim, comparing the tool's content with that of the variables or constructs to be measured provides content validity (Trochim & Donnelly, 2001). Such comparison was also done, as suggested by Langdridge and Hager-Johnson, cited in Wagner et al., by using the

literature review on evaluation to verify if the questions in the instrument are suitable for measuring the constructs (Wagner et al., 2012). Lastly, the instruments were subjected to a supervisor review by a technical expert in evaluations to ensure the questions in the instruments could measure the constructs of the evaluation use in decision-making.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability, on the other hand, seeks to test the instrument's consistency in measuring the same constructs or variables across time and that other researchers can use such instruments to arrive at the same conclusions (Wagner et al., 2012). According to Suskie, a reliable instrument is consistent despite the possible changes in respondents' answers to the same questions (Suskie, 1992). Various forms of reliability can be identified, such as test-retest reliability, which is judging the same test by the same instrument in two different moments (Wagner, 2012). Inter-rater reliability considers how reliable the ratings of two individuals of the same construct using the same instrument (Howel et al., 2005, cited in Wagner, 2012). Hence, a reliable instrument can test validity, but reliability alone does not tell if it measures the constructs it is meant to measure. For this study, a pre-test run of the instrument and the use of expert judgment were employed to ensure the reliability of the research instrument.

3.6.3 Dependability

The dependability of the research relates to the question of trust in the instrument over time and when conditions change. It is the qualitative definition of the reliability of the research instrument, but it relates to data stability over time and considering the changing needs. Data collected can be regarded as dependable contextually within the CFBO and was checked for stability with past literature.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided the framework for conducting the study by first setting the philosophical basis of the research within the pragmatic worldview. This worldview aligns with the research approach and design, which uses a mixed method to inquire into the use of evaluations in decision-making within Catholic Faith-Based Organisations. Based on this approach and design, quantitative and qualitative methods with the respective instruments were developed to gather data from a sampled number of respondents within the population context of the study. This chapter also details the sampling strategy and how the respondents would be reached using

various online platforms and software to capture, transcribe, and analyse data. Further, the chapter addressed issues around ethical considerations of the research, the validity and reliability of the research instruments and also identified some of the limitations and researcher positionality that can affect the interpretations of the findings and how they were addressed.

4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of the information derived from the surveys and key informant interviews that were carried out with 43 respondents for the survey and 15 participants in the key informant interviews. The chapter provides information on the demography of the respondents and the participating organisations (section 4.2.1 and section 4.2.2, annexure 1). Subsequently, I provide analysed data from descriptive statistics on the extent to which evaluation findings are used in these organisations' decision-making (section 4.3). This is then followed by findings on the perspectives on how participants rate various factors under study as predictors or influencers to the use of these evaluations and the extent to which they each influence the dependent variable (the use of evaluation findings in decision-making). These include perspectives on the evaluation characteristic factors considered to be determinants of evaluation use (subsection 4.4.1), perspectives on the contextual organisational factors (subsection 4.4.2) and perspectives on the human factors, including evaluator, stakeholder competence and the evaluation process itself (subsection 4.4.3 and 4.4.4). I subsequently incorporated the perspectives of the interviews, which triangulated the survey findings. Hence, subsections 4.4.5 and 4.4.6 provide key respondent views on the various rationale for conducting evaluations in their organisations and contextual factors worth considering. Subsection 4.4.7 then provides for logistic regression analysis.

Since the ratings from the survey are on a six-point scale and are based on subjective opinions, for this research, I consider the two ratings of "agree" and "strongly agree" to be the confidently assertive favourable position of the respondents and the lower ratings other than the two confidently favourable positions in terms of evaluation use in decision-making within the given context of investigation to be the less confident and uncertain opinion of evaluation use from the participants' perspective. Using the STATA software, a correlation table was generated between the investigated variables. A binary logistic regression was then conducted to test the significance of the influence of the moderate to strongly correlated variables in the three dimensions on the use or non-use of evaluations in decision-making.

4.2 Description of organisation demographics

This section provides information on the actual participants of the research as well as some characteristic features of the participating organisations within the Catholic faith-based organisation network.

4.2.1 Demography of Respondents

From the survey, out of the 43 respondents who completed and submitted the questionnaires, twenty-three (23) of them were executive managers, directors, or coordinators, eight (8) were programme/project managers, and five (5) were Monitoring and evaluation professionals. In contrast, seven (7) were comprised of development officers and others who have participated in evaluations in their organisations (Chart 2 below). Of all the participants, 56% have post-graduate education, and 14% have professional or technical training. Most respondents (98%) are Christians, of which 53% are Catholic. The gender parity was 49% male and 49% female, while 2% did not mention their gender orientation. I could also deduce from the survey (chart 1 below) that most respondents were young (68% were less than 55).

Chart 1 Participant Age Distribution

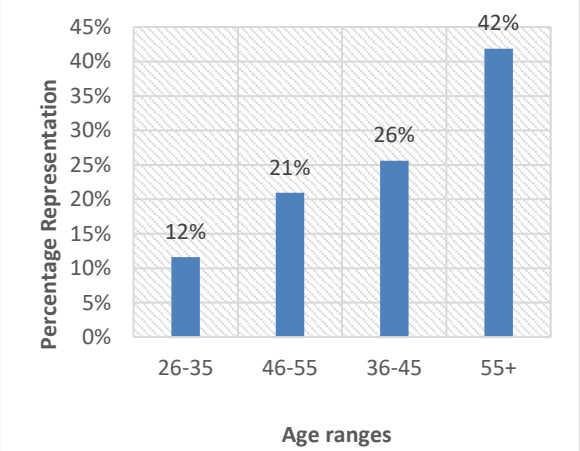
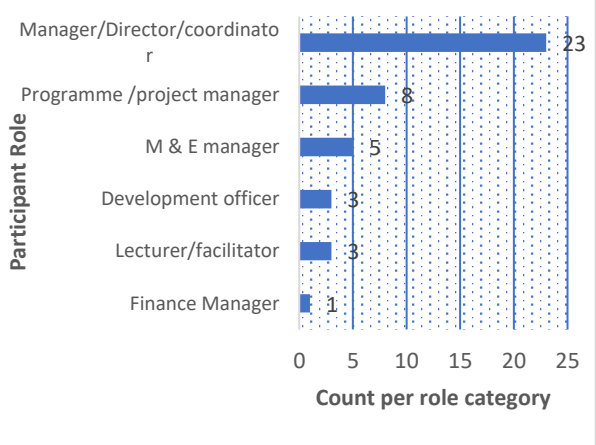


Chart 2 Role of Respondents



4.2.2 Characteristic factors of the participating organisations

Many of the organisations surveyed, making up 86% of them, employ less than 50 people permanently, and they also operate with an annual budget ranging from one million to twenty million Rands. There is a relative parity for international and local funding for these organisations, with the former having a slide lead as a funding source.

The data from charts 3 and 4 below reveals that only 14% of the organisations surveyed have international footprints, meaning these organisations exist in other countries but have headquarters in one of the countries. 46 % of the organisations have a national presence in South Africa, while 40% are localised – meaning they operate only within a district or province where they were initially created. Operationally, 60% of them work in peri-urban and rural environments, which explains their nearness to local communities in need. The respondents to the interviews were made up of thirteen directors and two M&E managers, all from different organisations.

Chart 3 Location of Organisations

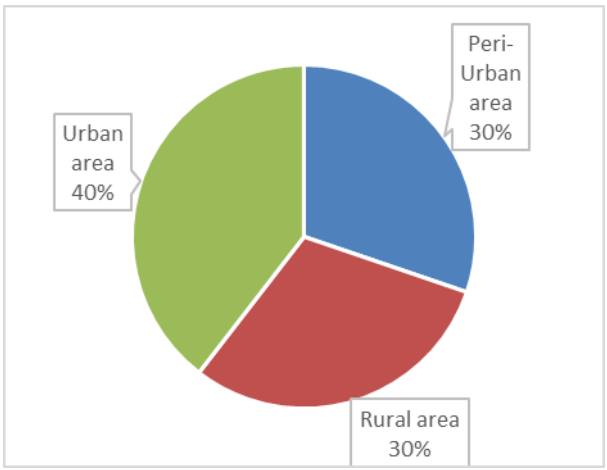
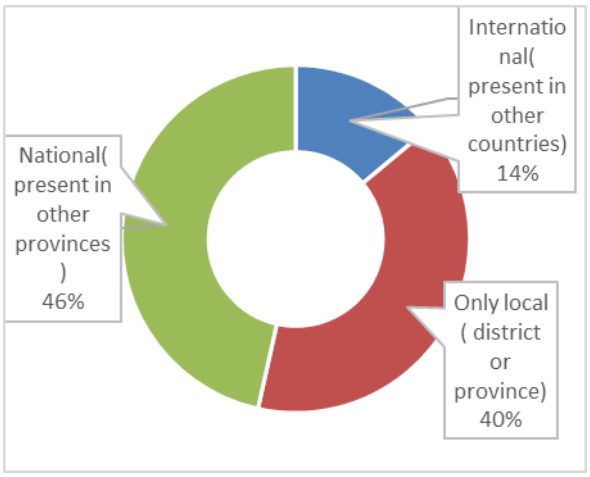


Chart 4 Organisation Footprints



These organisations offer education, health services, vocational skills training programmes, counselling, environmental care and agriculture, and social relief services such as feeding schemes, migration services and nursing homes.

4.3 Use of evaluation in decision-making

In this section, I provide findings on the extent to which respondents acknowledge using evaluation outputs for decision-making. The dimension of using evaluations for decision-making was triangulated using a second question in the survey on the likeliness of leadership keenness to use evaluations given the organisational culture.

From the survey responses, as shown in chart five below, 82% of the respondents found that the evaluation findings were helpful in decision-making (considering "likely" and "most likely") in their respective organisations, and 11% of the respondents partially agree with this affirmation. This was triangulated with another question on the likeliness of organisational

keenness on using evaluation outcomes, which confirms that 79 % rating (likely and most likely) of the participants confidently say their organisation's leadership is committed to using evaluation outputs (Chart 6).

Chart 5: Likeliness of Using Evaluation for Decision-making in Catholic FBOs

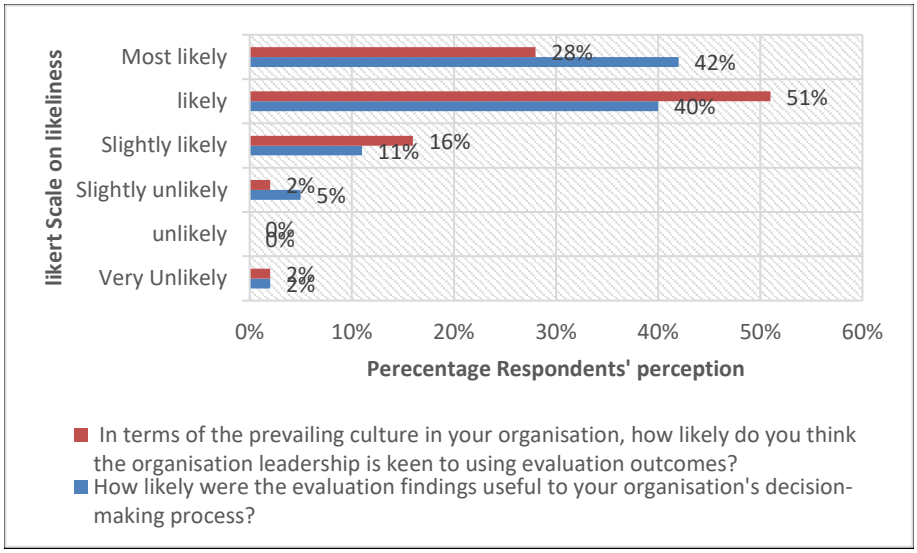


Chart 6: Organisation leadership is keen to using evaluations.



By considering responses of "likely" and "most likely" as undoubted affirmations of evaluation use, the other perspectives represent the non-use of evaluations, and the histogram of evaluation use shows a slight skewness to the right. The mean (average) on a 6-point scale lies at 4.07, and the mode and median have the same value of 4 (which falls in the "likely" usage of evaluation outputs).

4.4 Factors influencing the use of evaluations for decision making.

These sections provide findings on the evaluation characteristic, contextual, and human-related factors that I have conceptualised as key influencers to evaluation use in decision-making. To what extent do these factors influence the use of evaluations in decision-making forms the hypothesis for verification and the basis of this research. Subsequent subsections provide respondents' perspectives on the various evaluation factors as conceptualised to influence decision-making. These include factors characterising the evaluation outputs, contextual settings, process, and stakeholder involvement.

4.4.1 Perspectives on the characteristics of the evaluations that influence evaluation use in decision-making.

This section presents how the evaluation output characteristics influence organisational decision-making. The questions focused on verifying the evaluation output quality, the timing of the evaluations, the relevance and the evaluation communication and dissemination as conceptualised, and additional questions to triangulate responses.

From the responses, considering the "agree" and "strongly agree" to be more affirmative and confident, I noted that 72% of the participants who responded affirmatively (agree and strongly agree) considered the quality of the evaluations as a key element in their decision-making (chart 11). The ratings from the respondents' perception of other factors in this dimension include the relevance of the evaluative questions, where 84 % of the respondents say that the evaluations in which they participated resulted in providing relevant information for decision-making (chart 7). In comparison, 81% of respondents noted that the evaluation outcomes were relevant to programme improvement. Further, the perspectives on the clarity of the report and dissemination obtained a favourable rating of 84%. In comparison, the timing of the evaluation as appropriate for timely interventions obtained a rating of 65%. Equally, most respondents consider the evaluation outcomes (findings and recommendations) to be relevant to the evaluation subject and the fact that the recommendations were action-oriented, as they pointed out where interventions were needed. Other characteristic factors included were used to triangulate and determine if there is a significant difference in perspectives. Two of the respondents interviewed referred to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance,

coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability to ensure the evaluation meets the good quality test.

Charts 7 to 12 below provide the descriptive statistics on the participants' perspectives concerning the abovementioned characteristics of evaluations carried out in these organisations.

4.4.1.1 Relevance of the evaluations

Concerning the relevance of the evaluation, the respondents cited elements such as identifying areas of programme improvement and ensuring that the goals of the evaluation were met in creating the expected positive outcomes for the beneficiaries.

Chart 7 Relevance of Evaluation information

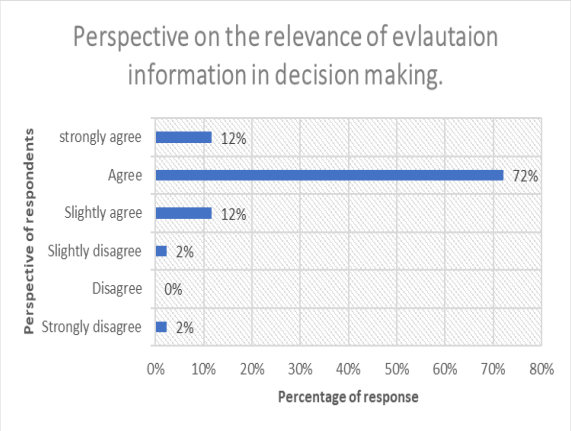
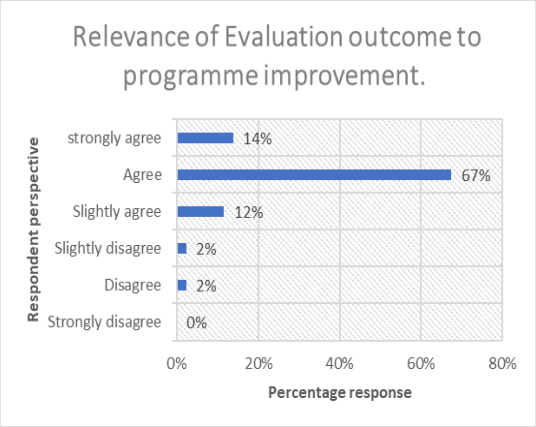


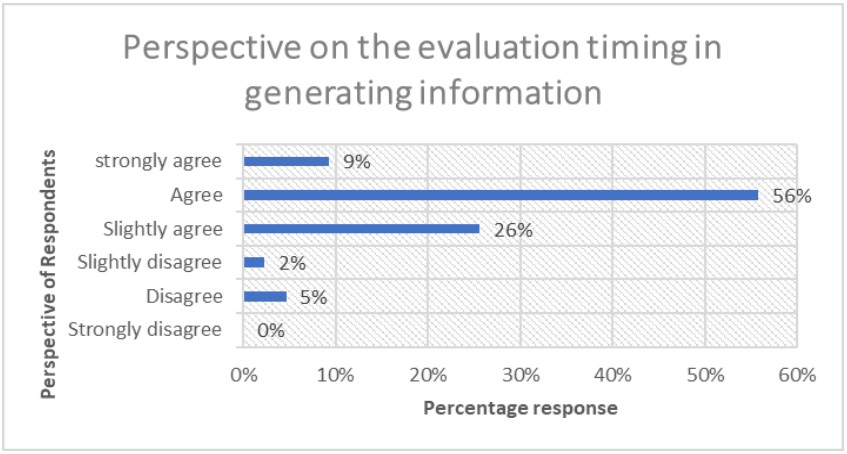
Chart 8. Relevance of evaluation outcome



4.4.1.2 Evaluation timing

In Chart 9 below, 65% of the respondents confidently agree and strongly agree that the timing of the evaluations is crucial to harvesting the relevant evidence. One of the interviewees noted: "We are always working on several projects, so people easily lose focus once a project is completed and try to concentrate on the next project" (respondent 4). Another respondent noted that a timely evaluation permits evidence to be gathered about its execution and impact before it gets diluted or forgotten about. Another interviewee also stated as follows: " I get confused when I am asked questions about programmes that were long executed and forgotten…. I like to talk about programmes when the material is fresh in my mind" (respondent 9)

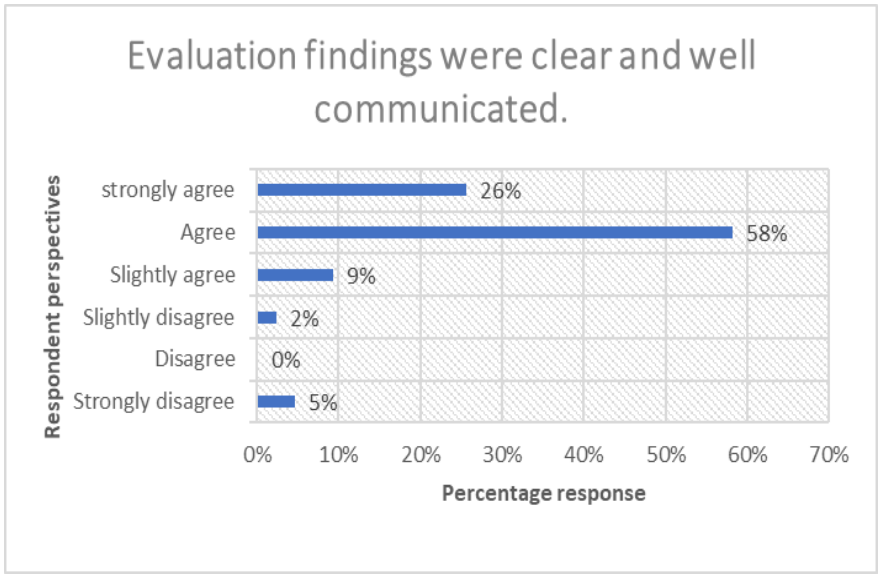
Chart 9. Evaluation timing.



4.4.1.3 Clear communication of Evaluation findings

As earlier mentioned in this section, chart 10 shows that 84% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that among the evaluations in which they were involved, clear communication of the evaluation findings was crucial for the evaluations to be taken seriously. One of the interviewees also noted that communications of evaluation findings were not only an end result but a continuous process due to the involvement of the stakeholders in the process. She noted: "It was not like we were waiting for the evaluator to tell us something completely new that we are not aware of… the evaluator simply helped put the facts together from the different sources so that we can see them together" (respondent 13).

Chart 10. Communications of Findings



4.4.1.4 Effectiveness of the evaluations

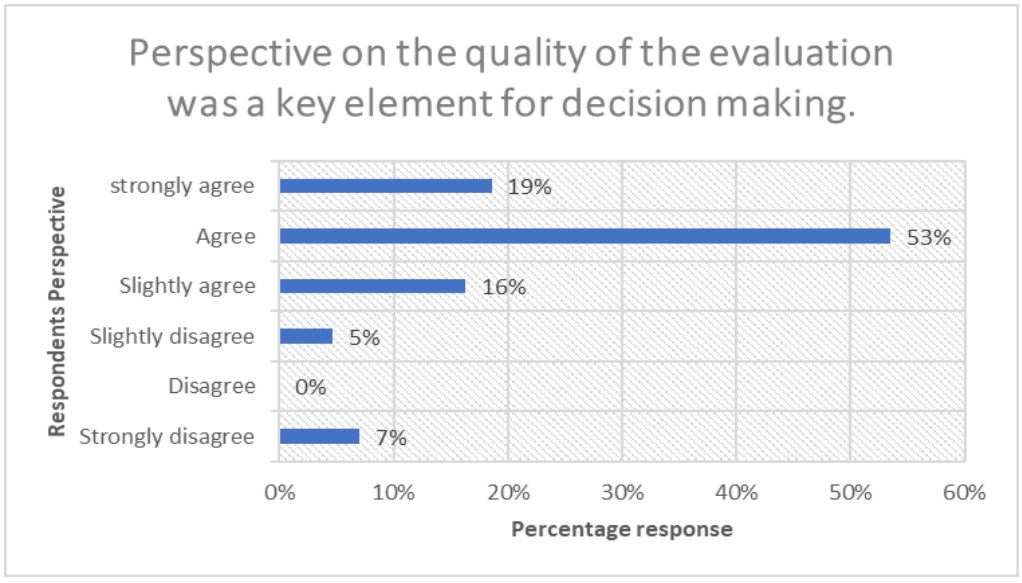
One of the respondents commented, "It's important to check if all activities and interventions help beneficiaries or stakeholders to achieve programme objectives. Therefore, effectiveness is a key factor" (respondent 3).

4.4.1.5 Evaluation quality

The participants in the interview provided various criteria for assessing evaluation quality as well as the processes that should be undertaken, the knowledge and skills of evaluators and the content of the evaluation report itself.

From Chart 11 below, 72% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that the overall quality of the evaluation is crucial for the evaluation to be useful in decision-making. For the evaluation to be of good quality, one interviewee noted that it should use big enough samples for generating information, and the evaluators need to apply critical analysis using both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting and triangulating data, including on-site observations, focus group discussions and a wide range of interviewees. There should be multiple data collection sources, including organisation performance management data. For good quality of the evaluation output, respondents also stressed the preparations that should occur before the evaluation, including formulating the terms of reference (ToR) after using proper procedures to assess and establish a clear purpose for the evaluations with key questions to be addressed.

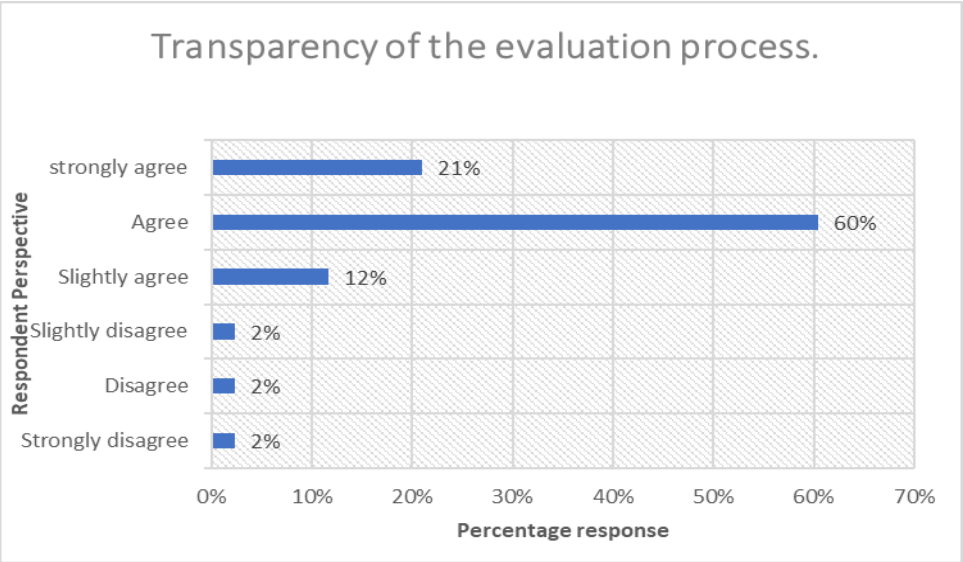
Chart 11 Perspectives on quality of the evaluations



4.4.1.6 Transparency and effectiveness of the evaluation processes

From the survey, 81% of respondents considered a transparent process to underlie the effectiveness and usefulness of the evaluations (chart 12). The process should be transparent with a theory of change and SMART goals based on the evaluative questions. Finally, the respondents also noted that the evaluation outcomes should be contained in a clearly and well-written document (evaluation report) and should be able to describe the extent to which the programme objectives have been met in transforming the lives of the targeted group of the intervention and the impact it has in the broader society. Equally, the evaluation outcomes should be able to give information on the programme's return on investment. In the end, they indicated that evaluators should be able to provide clear, attainable recommendations for improving the evaluand and/or future initiatives.

Chart 12. Perspective on transparency of the evaluation process



4.4.2 Perspectives on contextual factors that influence evaluation use in decision-making.

Some of the contextual factors considered in the conceptual framework of this research looked at the size of the organisation, the organisational budget and its source of funding as influencing elements in the commissioning and use of evaluations. From the survey, fourteen (14) respondents indicated that they have an annual budget that falls between one million and three million rands, and 21 organisations claimed that they do manage a yearly budget of five million rands and above. Concerning the source of funding, 16 respondents acknowledged that their

funders are predominantly external donors augmented by some local funding. In comparison, 14 respondents noted the opposite by being largely funded by local funding agencies with few exterior funding schemes. Ten (10) respondents indicated that their organisations are only funded through local contributions. One representative said their organisation depends entirely on external funding, and another said their organisation also depends entirely on its fundraising activities to fund its projects. One of the key informants noted that one of the key factors is having the funding required to implement the evaluation recommendations, as this limits the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

Concerning the organisational sizes, 12 organisations were reported to employ less than or equal to ten people, and 17 of the organisations employ between 11 and 50 people. In comparison, three (3) organisations employ between fifty-one (51) and two hundred (200) people and lastly, three organisations also employ more than two hundred people in their workforce.

Other contextual variables on the survey looked at leadership commitment to ensuring evaluation outcomes are utilised and ensuring evaluations are well managed to maximise utilisation in decision-making within respective organisations.

4.4.2.1 Leadership readiness to use evaluation outcomes.

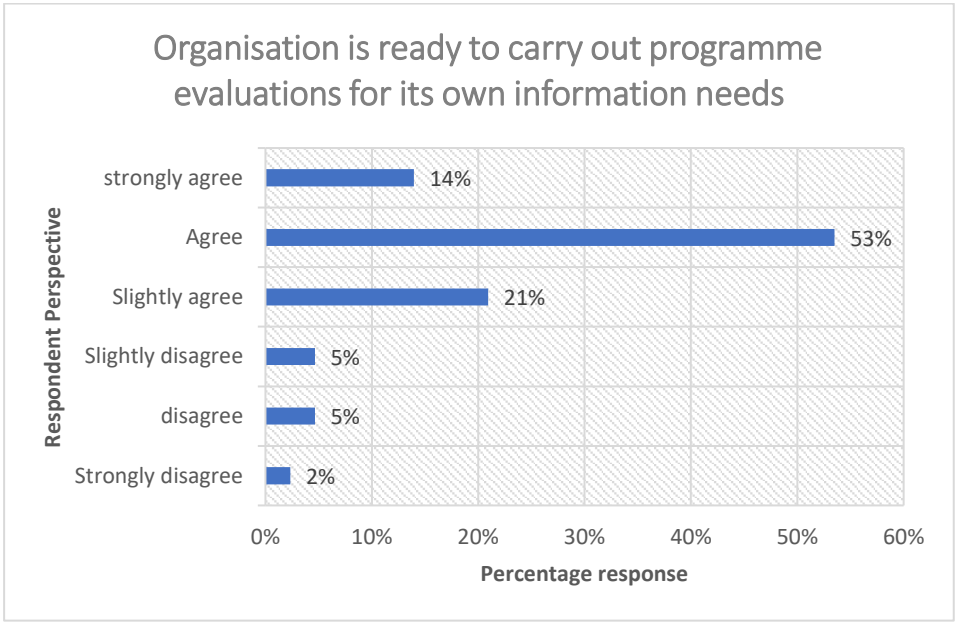
From chart 13 below, the survey ratings show that 79% of respondents confidently consider leadership commitment as key to using evaluation outcomes. While 21% say they are not confident that their organisational leadership is keen to make decisions based on evaluative evidence. From the interviews, one participant noted that most of their evaluations were commissioned by the funder, and the evaluation outcomes were not shared with the implementing organisation.

Chart 13: Perspective on Leadership being keen to use evaluation outcomes.



However, about 67% of the respondents noted that their organisations are ready to conduct evaluations to generate evidence for their information needs.

Chart 14: Perspective on organisation readiness to conduct evaluations.



Only 51% indicate they have a team to manage these evaluations in their organisations, even though 77% of the respondents say their organisations see evaluations as crucial instruments in management for making informed decisions.

Chart 15: Perspectives on Organisational evaluation teams.

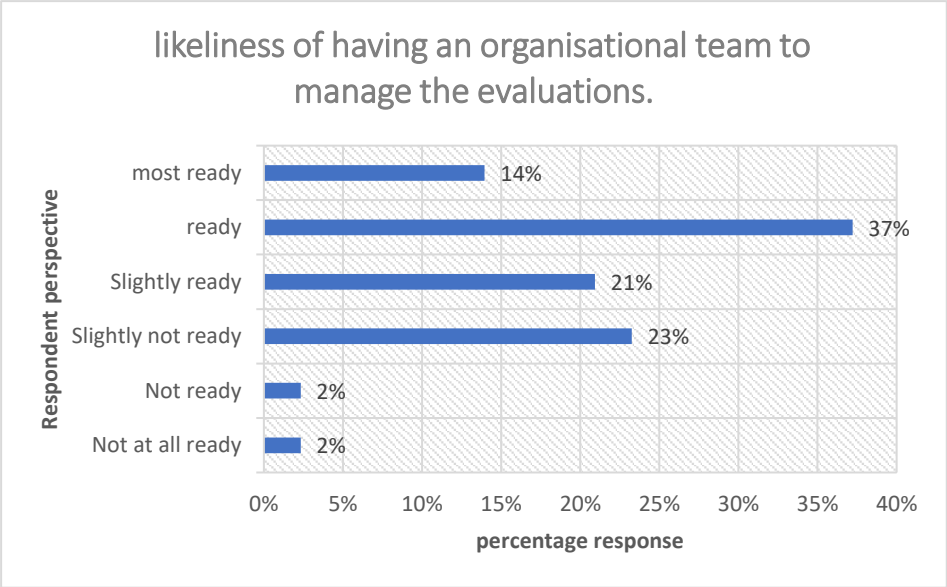
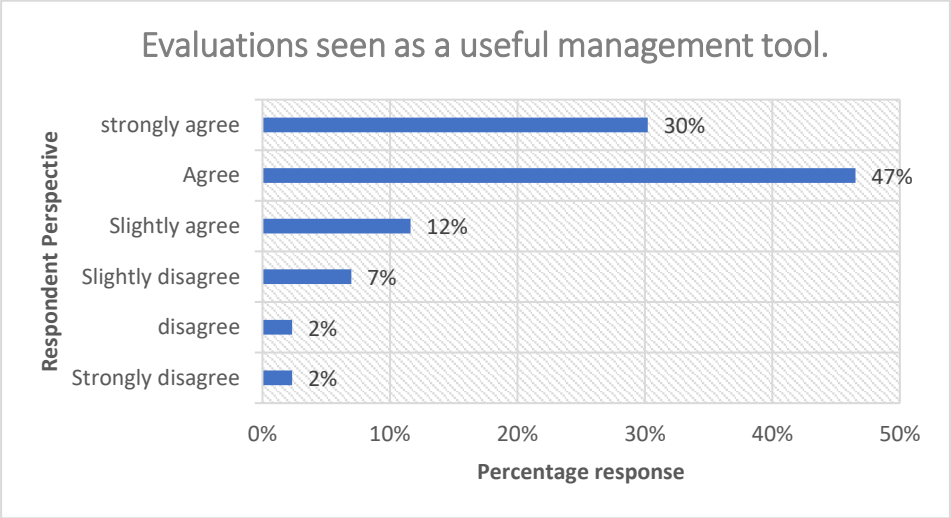


Chart 16: Perspective on evaluations as a management tool



Furthermore, only 47% of participants say there is a formal process to manage evaluations in their organisations. The interviewees identified management commitment as pivotal to ensuring that the evaluations carried out in the organisation are used. As they said, this cannot be done alone without the support of knowledgeable team members with the proper knowledge and skills in monitoring and evaluations, project management and soft skills. One of the directors underlined the importance of soft skills, known as people skills, as one of the most vital tools in helping people work together and be motivated to do the expected work.

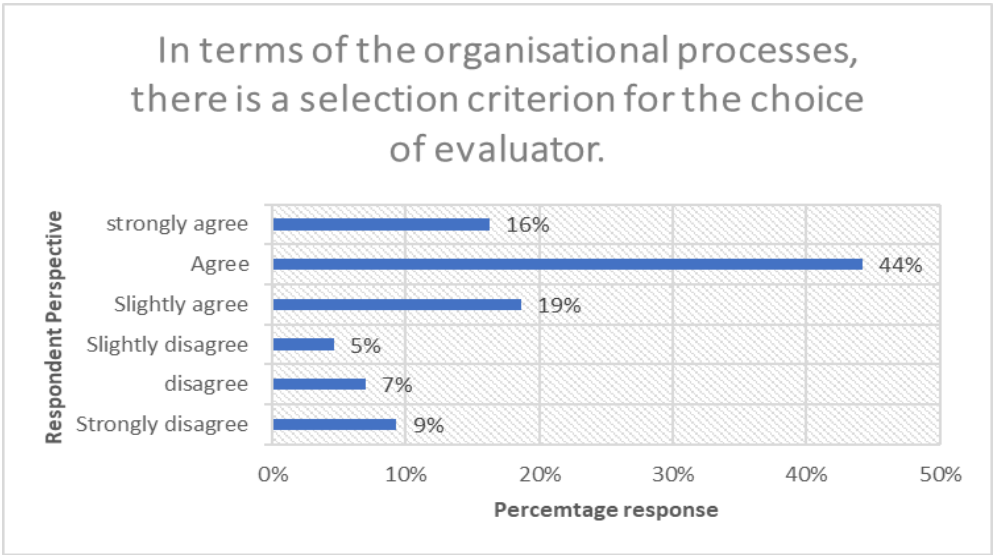
Furthermore, respondents consider stakeholder engagement key to using the evaluations because a director cannot do it alone. One respondent commented that evaluation use would not be maximised without the right people with the right attitude, a collaborative spirit, and strong agency for the beneficiary. Some respondents also noted that their organisations are situated within a volatile socio-political setting marked with strikes, substance abuse and destructive behaviours that, most of the time, infringe on the smooth implementations of their programmes. "It seems we keep throwing water in a basket", said one respondent, "as our efforts to create a positive impact in the lives of the beneficiaries are counterproductive due to the influence of the wider society"(respondent 2).

4.4.3 Perspectives on the human factors that influence evaluation use in decision making.

4.4.3.1 Perspective on choice of evaluator

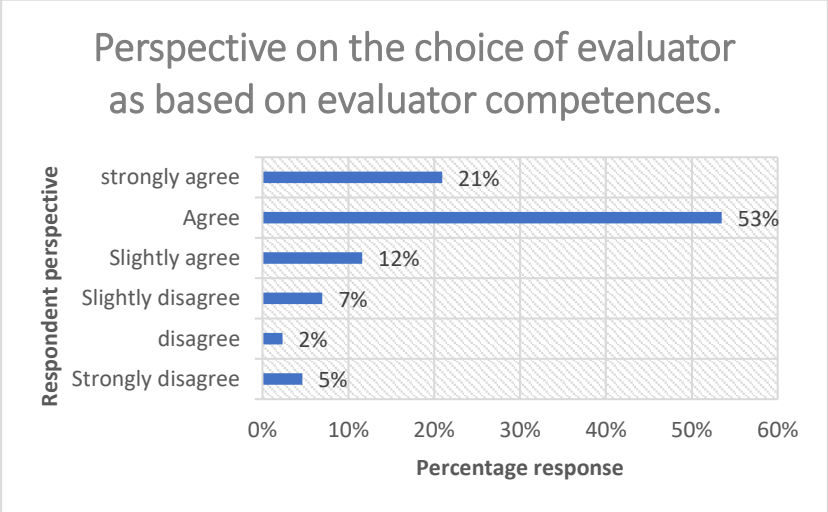
The choice of the evaluator is considered one of the crucial factors in ensuring that the evaluation meets the professional standards and stakeholder expectations as presented in Chart 17 on the evaluator selection criteria whereby 60% of the respondents confidently say that they have some requirements for evaluator selection with 16% more confident of having in place established criteria for choosing an evaluator.

Chart 17: Perspectives on evaluator selection and influence on evaluation use



Furthermore, 74 % consider the choice of the evaluator to be based on the evaluator's competence and track record, and 63% say the funding organisation mainly determines the choice of the evaluator. On the other hand, 39% confidently say their organisations always participate in deciding on the choice of evaluator together with the funding organisation. The triangulation of these findings with interviews revealed that most of the evaluators are agreed upon by the funders in consultation with the organisation management.

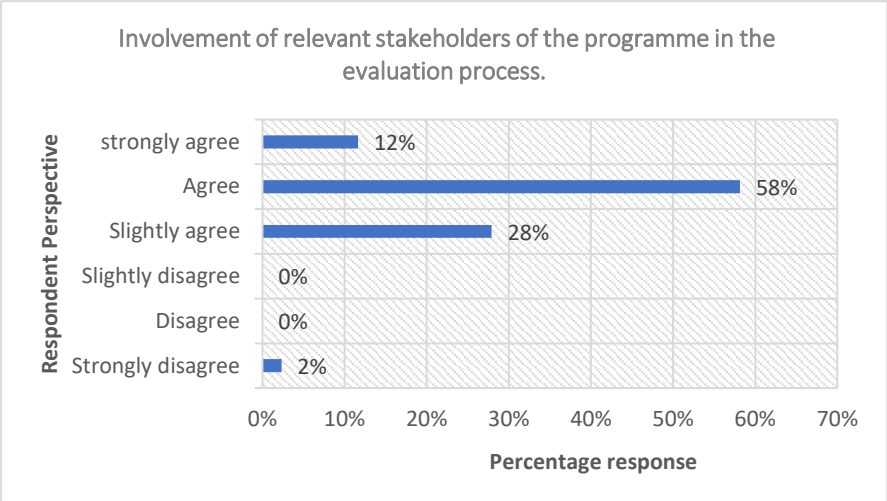
Chart 18 Perspective on evaluator selection and evaluator competence



4.4.3.2 Perspectives on stakeholder participation and the use of evaluation to inform decision-making.

Concerning the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the evaluations carried out in these organisations, 70% of the participants confidently say that the relevant stakeholders were consulted to be part of the evaluation process, and 58%, using the same rating categories, say the outcomes were well facilitated for better understanding.

Chart 19 Perspective on Stakeholder Involvement



Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which their knowledge about the programme had improved due to the evaluation in which they participated and if there were any noticeable changes in the behaviour of stakeholders in general due to participating in these evaluations. From the respondents' perspectives, as found in chart 20 below, 75% (agree and strongly agree) on the fact that their knowledge and understanding of the programme improved due to their participation in the evaluations and 86% (agree and strongly agree) say that the evaluations helped them understand what to do in terms of taking actions that would improve upon the evaluand or similar programmes in the future.

Chart 20: Influence of Stakeholder involvement on evaluation use for decision making.

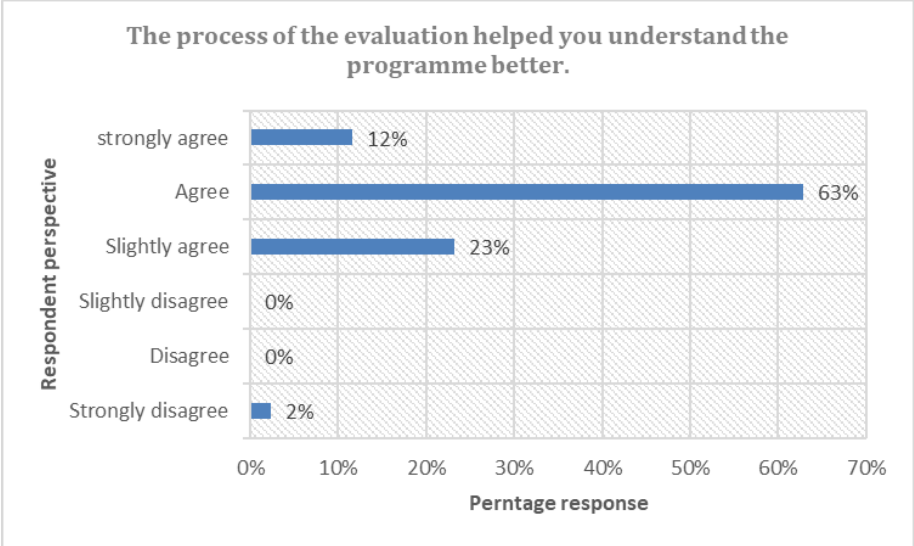
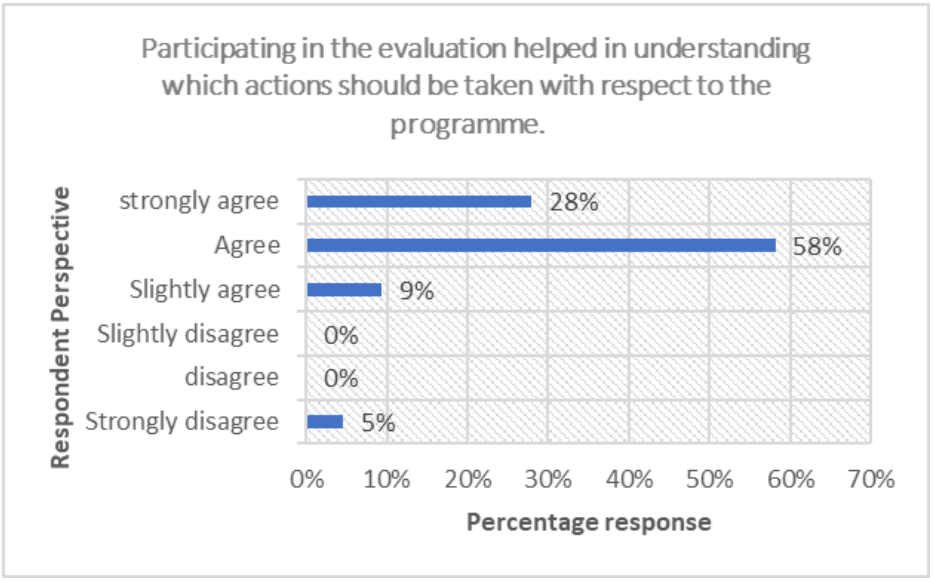
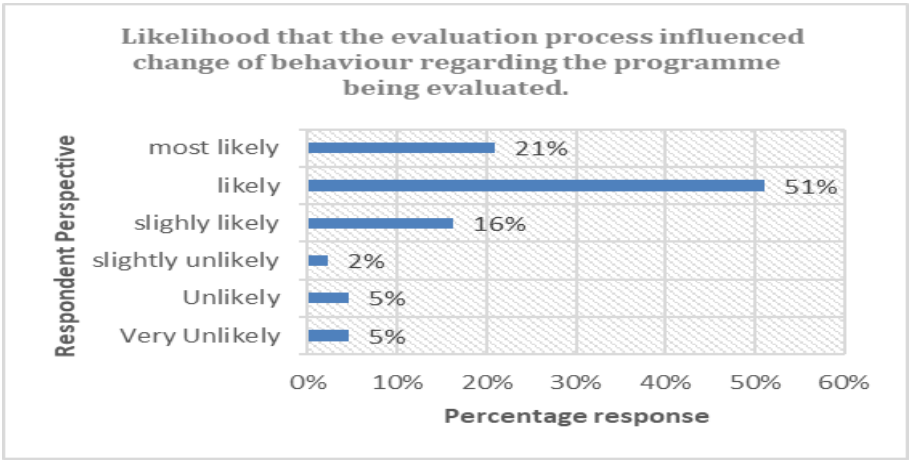


Chart 21. Perspective on the influence of evaluation on stakeholder action



In addition, participants were asked if participating in the evaluations had an effect on their behaviour regarding the programme being evaluated. From their perspectives, 72% affirm (agree and strongly agree) that their behaviour changed regarding the programme by participating in the evaluation process, as noted in chart 22 below.

Chart 22. Perspective on the influence of evaluation on stakeholder behaviour

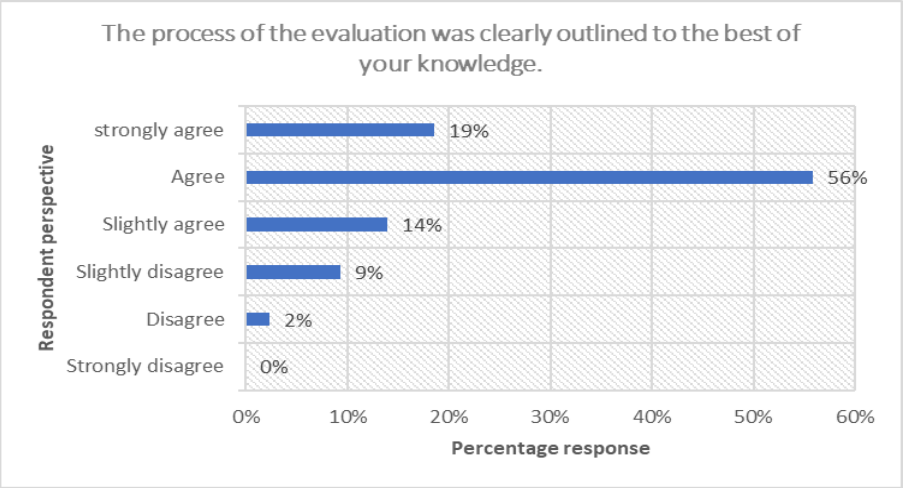


4.4.4 Perspectives on the evaluation process and the use of evaluations in decision-making.

From the participants' perspective, the evaluations carried out in their organisations had clearly outlined objectives, which were made known to stakeholders before the actual interventions of

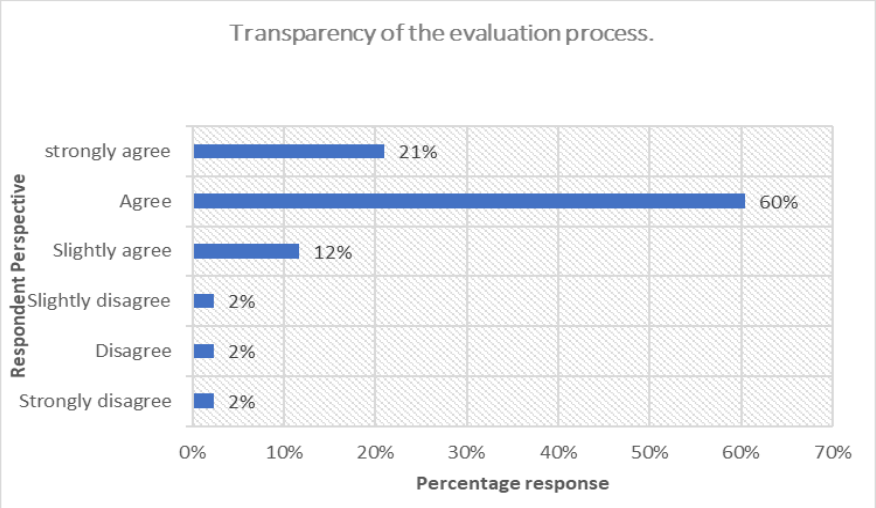
the evaluations. From chart 23 below, 75% of the respondents "agree and strongly agree" that the evaluations in which they were involved were clearly outlined and the process was transparent.

Chart 23: Perspectives on the clarity of the evaluation process



The perspective on whether the evaluations were transparent enough, permitting stakeholders to participate actively in the process, gained a rating of 81% (agree and strongly agree). Chart 25 presents the details of this perspective on the evaluation process and stakeholder involvement.

Chart 24: Ratings on transparency of the evaluation process and stakeholder involvement



4.4.5 Perspective on the main reasons and purpose of carrying out evaluations.

From key informant interviews, what emerged as the primary rationale for conducting evaluations in these organisations was primarily to meet funders' information needs, which to

them was one of the requirements for more funding since most of the evaluations are funder-driven. The funder requirements included accountability objectives, programme effectiveness, alignment, and improvement objectives to assess the extent to which the programme impacted the beneficiaries. Additionally, many respondents considered the evaluations a learning process whereby they could better understand the program, providing lessons learned to leverage for future programs. For example, one of the respondents indicated that "…evaluations are carried out to check progress towards goals and the set objectives of programmes. Also, the evaluation process helps us identify areas that need to be strengthened" (Respondent 9)

Another respondent noted that the evaluation process unveils new pathways and knowledge areas: "The evaluation processes showed us that we need to take a different approach in our health promotion and education work. Therefore, evaluations help us to develop new solutions that are more appropriate than just one single solution" (Respondent 3)

However, one of the key informants indicated that evaluations in their organisation were only commissioned to measure the programme's impact when stakeholders were happy with the programme outcome. It showed that sometimes management would prefer to use an evaluator that would provide a favourable verdict.

Various respondents noted that evaluations served predominantly to improve their service delivery and training offerings, making them accountable to the community and assessing the change. This promotes equity as "every voice counts", noted one of the respondents. For management purposes, the evaluations assessed implementation, outcomes, and impact to establish the relevance of programmes and serve as programme reporting for funders and management decision-making. For example, one of the managers noted that evaluations help him provide a better understanding of how they can achieve better goals and measure the outcome of the programme. Hence, to make their practices and interventions more effective. "The evaluations help us to determine what is working well and what could be improved in our interventions" (Respondent 10)

4.4.6 Perspectives on factors to consider when doing evaluations.

The respondents were asked what, in their opinions, constitute essential elements to consider when conducting evaluations in their organisations and to maximise their use by making valuable and impactful decisions. The responses identified various dimensions, such as the evaluation preparations, processes and the involvement of stakeholders, which were noted as essential aspects of carrying out impactful evaluations.

Respondents noted that identification of the information needed and the type of data required should be the initial guide to the evaluation, which should then be followed by initial pre-evaluation meetings to develop the terms of reference for the evaluations. The terms of reference should be well detailed and agreed upon by the key stakeholders with clear objectives and purpose of the evaluations.

The interviewee also noted that the choice of the evaluator is critical in ensuring impactful evaluations; hence, they noted that the evaluator should know the organisational context and the programme area to be evaluated. Almost all respondents say external evaluators should always be considered to give an objective view of the programmes. Some respondents suggested components of the evaluation process that the evaluator should consider, such as the logical framework, providing opportunities for the voices of the implementers and beneficiaries of the project or programme to be heard and prioritised for substantial evidence generation. Other elements noted by the respondents include taking enough time to gather quality information with a balanced use of both quantitative and qualitative data, capturing the stories and experiences of the target communities, and "developing a good understanding of beneficiaries' background, their expectations, aspirations and establishing whether the programme met their needs"(respondent 5)

Respondents noted that some stakeholders can see evaluations as an investigative and scrutinising exercise. Hence, participants must be educated before engaging them to remove the negative impression. One respondent commented: "It seems that project and field staff see the evaluation process as a big stick that can be used against them. We must take more time to assure everyone that evaluation is more about learning and growth than a potential threat to job security. Field staff often feel overwhelmed by the technical nature of the process as we tend to place a lot of weight on data, whereas behind the latter lies a myriad of stories that don't get enough attention. Hence, I would be keen for the process to create more room for the positive and negative stories to be highlighted" (respondent 1).

Concerning the method of data collection, most of the respondents advocate for a face-to-face data collection method with participants using simple and easy-to-understand questions while making the entire exercise interesting to take part in. Others advocate for wider consultation with the wider society beyond the programme boundaries but within the local community and benchmarking with other evaluations of similar programmes.

4.4.7 Statistical relationships

The variables subjected to statistical verification of the relationship comprise the following:

The dependent variable is the organisational use of evaluation outcomes for decision-making. The independent variables consist of the various factors that influence the use of evaluation in decision-making in the organisations as indicated in the conceptual framework (section 2.9; figure 2 above). These variables are coded as indicated in the subsequent sub-section 4.4.7.1 below.

4.4.7.1 Correlation between variables

From Pearson's correlation coefficients, it can be noted that contextual variables, Size of Organisation(C1), Source of Funding(C2), Budget range(C3), and Location of the organisation(C4) are very weakly correlated with the dependent variable Organisational Evaluation use in Decision making (D1) with two of these coefficients having a negative correlation. Three of the evaluation characteristics variables, Quality of Evaluation (E1), Timing of evaluation (E2), Communication and Dissemination of findings(E4), have a weak correlation. Still, Relevance of Information (E3) shows a strong correlation coefficient with the dependent variable. The stakeholder involvement variables Involvement of Stakeholders(S1), Stakeholder use of Evaluation Recommendations(S2), and Stakeholder understanding of the programme better(S4) all indicate a moderate correlation, while the Choice of evaluator (S3) indicate a weak correlation with the dependent variable.

Controlling for multicollinearity

The result from the table shows a strong correlation between some of the independent variables, such as the correlation between *Evaluation Recommendations* (S2) and *Better Understanding of the evaluand* (S4) at 0.75. The correlation between the Relevance of the evaluation(E3) is moderately correlated with communications and dissemination of evaluation output(E4), strongly correlated with S1, S2 and S4, as seen in the table below.

Table 2 Correlations Coefiscients

	D1	C1	C2	C3	C4	E1	E2	E3	E4	S1	S2	S3	S4
D1	1.0000												
C1	0.0413	1.0000											
C2	-0.1059	0.3590	1.0000										
C3	-0.1119	0.4039	0.3125	1.0000									
C4	0.1929	-0.0612	-0.3268	-0.3966	1.0000								
E1	0.3798	-0.0607	-0.1910	0.0808	0.0666	1.0000							
E2	0.2576	-0.0076	0.0234	0.0225	-0.0024	0.0064	1.0000						
E3	0.5999	0.1240	-0.0678	-0.0555	0.2104	0.5555	0.3010	1.0000					
E4	0.3776	0.1221	0.2707	0.0532	0.0729	0.2959	0.1978	0.5743	1.0000				
S1	0.4652	-0.0130	0.1145	-0.0333	0.0412	0.5199	0.3910	0.7543	0.5169	1.0000			
S2	0.4909	0.0660	-0.0754	-0.1599	0.2083	0.4788	0.2032	0.7864	0.5062	0.5524	1.0000		
S3	0.3842	-0.3401	-0.1815	-0.0481	0.1159	0.4209	-0.1323	0.3143	0.1874	0.1988	0.3264	1.0000	
S4	0.5759	0.0397	-0.0650	-0.3497	0.2889	0.4773	0.2567	0.7747	0.5298	0.6976	0.7539	0.2402	1.0000

Source: Calculated from STATA software.

Table 3 Classification of Pearson's Coefficients of Correlation	
Verbal Description	Value (positive or negative)
Very weak correlation	0,00 – 0,19
Weak correlation	0,20 – 0,39
Moderate correlation	0,40 0,59
Strong correlation	0,60 – 0,79
Very strong correlation	0,80 – 1.00

Source: Coefficients of Correlation Appropriate Use and Interpretations(Schober et al., 2018)

4.4.7.2 Binary logistic regressions outputs

The tables below show the results for predicting the likelihood of evaluation used for decision-making in organisations within the Catholic context. The choice of variables for the logistic regression is based on the level of the correlation coefficients between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Variables that show moderate to stronger correlations with the dependent variable were used. Then, two independent variables (S2 and S4) that show strong correlations were separated in the model; hence, two binary logistic regressions were run, as presented below.

Table 4: Regression Outputs 1

Logistic regression 1 — Number of obs = 42
LR chi2(4) = 20.79
Prob > chi2 = 0.0003
Log likelihood = -8.5267649 — Pseudo R2 = 0.5494

D1	Odds ratio	Std. err.	z	P>|z|	[95% conf.	interval]
E1	1.239694	.6563461	0.41	0.685	.4391904	3.499261
E3	34.50342	51.6585	2.37	0.018	1.834187	649.0537
S1	4.553075	6.066539	1.14	0.255	.334318	62.00831
S2	2.692461	3.064485	0.87	0.384	.2892911	25.059
_cons	3.59e-10	3.16e-09	-2.47	0.013	1.16e-17	.0110975

Table 5: Control regression output 2

Logistic regression 2 — Number of obs = 42
LR chi2(4) = 22.41
Prob > chi2 = 0.0002
Log likelihood = -7.7182529 — Pseudo R2 = 0.5921

D1	Odds ratio	Std. err.	z	P>|z|	[95% conf.	interval]
E1	1.226091	.759138	0.33	0.742	.3643329	4.126167
E3	26.78087	42.42627	2.08	0.038	1.200467	597.4464
S1	2.155605	3.212649	0.52	0.606	.1161351	40.01056
S4	8.417672	12.18087	1.47	0.141	.4936888	143.526
_cons	3.87e-10	3.37e-09	-2.49	0.013	1.55e-17	.009695

From the logistic regression1, the independent variables include the quality of the evaluation output(E1), the relevance of the evaluation(E3), the involvement of stakeholders(S1) and the Evaluation recommendations (S2), which are substituted in Table 2 by S4 (understanding of the programme) for control purpose. The binary indicator is the organisational use or non-use of evaluations for decision-making (D1).

The logistic regression equation

P=exp (bo+b1E11+b2E3+b3S1+ b4S2) / (1+exp(bo+b1E11+b2E3+b3S1+b4S2)

P represents the predicted probability that the use of evaluations for decision-making would take, **bo** is the intercept, and **b1** to **b4** are the coefficients or weights assigned to each independent variable E1 to S2 in our model.

The model shows that the variable *relevance of the evaluation* is statistically significant with a *p*-value of 0.018, which is less than 0.05 at a confidence level of 95%.

The odds ratio of 34.50 indicates that for a unit increase in perception of the relevance of evaluations on a six-point scale, it is 34.5 times more likely that organisations would consider the evaluation as important for decision-making than otherwise.

R2 explains the model's fitness; hence, 55% of the dependent variable is explained by the set of independent variables chosen. However, the chi 2 of 20.79 indicates a low significant relationship between the independent variables (E1, E3, S1, S2) and the dependent variable (D1). The overall model is statistically significant with $p < 0.001$.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the demography of the participants and some of the contextual characteristics that are located and gave a picture of these organisations and the representative respondents. These include the roles of the participants in these organisations, educational backgrounds, and age range, among other features. Also presented in this chapter is the international and local outreach of these organisations, the services they offer and the typical beneficiaries they serve, mostly in the peri-urban and rural areas.

Subsequently, the chapter most importantly provides findings from participants' perspectives drawn from the survey and key informant interviews on various factors that influence the use of evaluations in making informed decisions. The data from the survey was triangulated with information from the key informant interviews to gather more details on the extent to which

these organisations seek to improve their evidence-based management journey. It also provided information on the perception of the extent to which various characteristic factors affect the use of evaluations in these organisations. The extent to which these factors play the role as influencers of evaluation use varies within the context of Catholic Faith-based Organisations. The calculated correlation coefficients show that five of the variables correlate moderately with each other, including the dependent variable. However, the binary logistic regression of these variables indicates that the "perception of the relevance of evaluations" has a predictive effect on using these evaluations in decision-making.

5 DISCUSSIONS ON THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Evaluations have widely been acknowledged as essential tools for decision-making in management and policy development across various domains (Cox, 1977; Goering & Wasylenki, 1993; Johnson et al., 2009; Maloney, 2017**b**; Weiss et al., 2005**b**). This chapter elaborates on the findings of the research. It discusses the extent to which Catholic Faith-Based Organisations use evaluative evidence in decision-making, which is the subject of this research. As conceptualised, the three sub-questions in the study then focused on the characteristic factors that serve as determinants, influencers, or predictors of institutional use of evaluative evidence in decision-making: they include evaluation characteristics as an intervention itself, the operational context of these organisations and the human factors including stakeholder involvement and evaluator competence. In this chapter, I, therefore, looked at the findings outlined in the previous chapter to elaborate on their meaning to establish the relationship between evaluation use in decision-making, the factors that contribute to their use drawing from the perspectives of the participants and the organisational context of the Catholic faith-based organisations. I begin by presenting a summary of the key findings (section 5.2), followed by discussing the different perspectives of respondents concerning the use of evaluations for decision-making in their organisations (section 5.3). A critical appraisal of the extent to which the evaluation characteristics, the context and human factors influence the use of evaluations as a tool for decision-making within the Catholic environment is discussed in sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 before the conclusion of the chapter (section 5.7).

5.2 Summary of key findings

The key findings are articulated on the extent to which these organisations claim using evaluative evidence in decision-making and how the factors confirmed by respondents influence such use. As noted in section 4.3, a good number of respondents attest that their organisations use evaluative evidence in their decision-making (82%), suggesting a high awareness of the importance of the evaluations carried out in these contexts. However, the processes put in place to use evaluations for this purpose are not clearly defined, as only 47% of respondents confidently agree and strongly agree with having an evaluation implementation process in place.

A further investigation into the characteristic factors shows the degree to which various factors are perceived to contribute differently to enhancing evaluation use in decision-making. Among these factors investigated, 72 % of the organisations represented by the respondents considered the quality of the evaluation outputs (as sources of relevant information) to be an important determinant of evaluation use as evidence for informed decision-making. Similarly, the relevance of the evaluation was rated at 72% with a correlation of 0.6, suggesting a strong relationship with evaluation use for decision-making. I also noted an above-average percentage perspective on the number of organisations (64%) who considered evaluation timing to be a determinant factor for evaluation use. Additionally, the respondents considered dissemination of the evaluation output as a key factor, with a rating of 82% and a moderate correlation of 0.39. Concerning stakeholder involvement, it is noted that 86% of the respondents' perspectives strongly support the fact that the evaluation process improved their understanding of the programme. Still, this variable presents a moderate correlation of 0.58. Similarly, involving the relevant stakeholders in the process was rated at 70% with a moderate correlation of 0.46. However, these perspectives were not statistically significant except for the variable indicative of the relevance of information from the evaluations.

Descriptively, the respondents varied in their approval of the influences of these evaluation characteristic properties, contextual elements, and various stakeholder participation in decision-making. They also indicated the conditions, processes, and approaches these evaluations should adhere to to be useful in their decision-making processes: being relevant to programme improvement, providing information on the positive impact on beneficiaries, and providing clear, attainable recommendations. They underlined the competence of the evaluator as critical in conducting a usable and impactful evaluation. Further, the respondents elaborated on what should constitute the quality of the evaluation for it to be useful in decision-making by indicating elements such as clear TOR and good preparations involving management and other relevant stakeholders early in the process, use of big enough samples of data and appropriate approach to the evaluations as well as providing compelling reports with clear, attainable recommendations to act upon.

5.3 Discussions on the findings: the extent to which the Catholic Faith-Based Organisations use evaluation outputs in decision-making.

This study aimed to examine the extent to which organisations within the Catholic faith-based context make use of evaluations to inform their decision-making. From the responses on the likeliness of using evaluations in decision-making, it is noted that not all the organisations within this context are ready to use evaluative evidence in their decision-making processes.

The majority, making up 82% of the respondents, confidently confirm that they "likely and most likely" use evaluations conducted in their organisations for their decision-making processes. Similarly, in a triangulated questionnaire, 79% say their organisational leadership are keen to use evaluations as sources of information to steer the organisational programmes. This use of evaluations, as noted by Michael Scriven (1994) as well as Stufflebeam (2001), Weiss (1988), and Weiss et al. (2005b), informs management if the programmes and policies are meeting their goals and to make decisions in regards to improving effectiveness, accountability and efficiency. However, evaluations may not always be able to address the most pressing concerns and information needs of decision-makers because of various factors linked to the complexity of the organisational context and the body of evidence required to make decisions (Patton, 2005). According to Leviton, overemphasis on technical aspects that overlook the social and political context of decision-making can lead to evaluations that are not user-friendly, especially in situations where stakeholders do not understand nor trust such technical aspects (Leviton, 2003). This was evident from the interviews as some respondents noted the distance between the matrices used for the evaluations, the contextual reality and the information needed by the managing team. For example, some of the elements that the key informants pointed out as problematic included cases where the evaluations were done for compliance's sake, such as in the case of meeting the monthly or annual targets laid out by the Department of Health and where the evaluator's approach was that of an expert investigator into the programme for accountability purpose. Hence, participating in such evaluations, as noted by one respondent, is only to fulfil a duty to secure funding and continuation of the business, as noted by some respondents. However, Leviton argued that there is a need for adequate resources, support of funding, time, and skills to enhance effective evaluation use (Leviton, 2003)

Further analysis shows that among the respondents from the different organisations within the Catholic faith-based context, there are slight differences in their perspectives of evaluation use

in decision-making. For example, organisations with an international footprint show 83% "likely" and "most likely" to use evaluations, while organisations with only a national footprint show 75% ratings. This can be linked to the fact that international organisations, though working in a local context, leverage from a wider international benchmark of best practices worldwide than organisations that only exist locally. Further, I found that most of these organisations with international footprints are in the peri-urban and rural areas in South Africa rather than in the urban, thereby supporting their mission to reach out to the less disadvantaged members of society.

5.3.1 The extent to which the various Evaluation characteristics Influence the use of evaluations in decision-making.

Among the evaluation characteristic factors considered as determinants of evaluation use in decision-making include the quality of the evaluation output, the relevance and timing of the evaluations, and how the evaluation is communicated and disseminated. The descriptive results show an approval of respondents' perspective on these factors, ranging from 72% to 84 % ratings. However, the calculated correlations between these evaluation characteristic variables and their use in decision-making show very weak to moderate correlations, except the variable of relevance of the evaluations, which shows a strong correlation of 0.6. Testing these variables using a binary logistic regression also revealed a statistical significance confirming that a unit increase in the perspective of evaluation relevance contributes to a high likelihood of these organisations using the evaluations in their decision-making processes. However, as noted by Leviton, the quantification of the effect of these factors that influence evaluation use is not clearly defined. Notwithstanding, various authors such as Bober & Bartlett (2004), Johnson et al. (2009), as well as Alkin & King (2017) in their research, identifies these characteristic factors of evaluations as determinants of evaluation use but without a clear indication of the level of influence of each influencing factor. However, Leviton (2003) holds that the usefulness of evaluations should not be limited to face values of its characteristics only but should be incorporated into the body of evidence responsible for change of behaviour and decision-making. Similarly, Leviton notes that there is little clarity on how much value each of the characteristic factors adds to the use of evaluation (Leviton, .

The correlations of these variables are all positive – meaning the variables vary in the same direction, and their variations suggest that all the characteristic factors have varying relationships with organisational decision-making. Notwithstanding the difficulties in effectively

measuring the influence of each characteristic on evaluation use, as noted by Mark & Henry (2004), the descriptive statistics and the subjective perspectives from key informant interviews bring the value added to the context of evaluation use in the decision-making processes. So far, there is no unique measuring standard on quantifying the influencing power of each evaluation characteristic because evaluations have different purposes and are carried out by different evaluators using different approaches with different contextual complexities(Patton, 2005b). For this reason, adhering to an evaluation standard or criteria such as contained in the OECD/DAC guidelines helps to contextually guide evaluators and relevant stakeholders in meeting the requirements of rigour and commitment that is required of an evaluation (Chianca, 2008**a**; Stufflebeam, 1999).

From the key informants' responses, the quality factor was considered by respondents to be an overarching criterion which comprises various contributing elements. Analysing the characteristics and factors of the evaluations conducted in these organisations from the respondents' perspectives, I note that most of the evaluations are generally considered acceptable. This can be explained by the fact that the various elements in the process of carrying out the evaluations, from the commissioning to producing the evaluation outputs (results, findings and recommendations) as outlined by Imas and Rist, met some of the criteria required in the process of conducting evaluations (Imas & Rist, 2009). Establishing a clear and transparent process and purpose of the evaluation is key for stakeholder buy-in and appreciation of the end product, which eventually facilitates evaluation use in decision-making(Chen, 2005). Further, most of the respondents attested that a good quality report that responds to the relevant evaluative questions was critical in making use of its recommendations. However, almost a third of the respondents noted that the latest evaluations they were involved in did not meet the quality that could permit their use in decision-making. For example, 23% of respondents do not agree that the evaluations dwelt with the relevant questions, and 25% felt the process wasn't clear to stakeholders; hence, it was difficult for them to better understand the programme that was evaluated. Consequently, the evaluation could not produce information that could be considered relevant to them. The reasons for this situation could be understood from some key informant interview responses whereby one of the managers was not pleased with the routine evaluations carried out by the Department of Health because they did not involve the health practitioner management team in the process except for responding to their predetermined questions without taking into consideration the local contextual realities and the management's information needs.

For evaluations to be useful in making impactful decisions concerning the evaluand, they must be carried out at the appropriate time to provide the information required within the time frame for decision-making, without which such information can be obsolete and irrelevant (Patton, 2005**b**). The respondents' perspective on timing was rated just above average with a weak correlation coefficient, suggesting the timing of the evaluations is generally not dependent on the management within this context, as noted by some respondents because evaluations carried out in their organisations were mostly funder-drive and primarily for the funder information needs.

Stakeholders would use evaluations when the outcomes are also presented in the right way for better comprehension (Shaw et al., 2006). I noted a weak correlation with the communication and dissemination variable, and 42% of the stakeholders surveyed said that the presentations of the evaluations were not well facilitated. Most of the interview respondents acknowledged that what they received as feedback was mainly in the form of reports without any form of workshops. This presents some limitations in enhancing evaluation use in this context, as decision-makers need clear guidance on how to act on evaluation findings (Patton, 2005a; Scriven, 1996). As noted in Shaw et al. (2006b), for different stakeholders to engage better with the evaluation outputs, various forms of dissemination of the evaluation results, findings, and recommendations should be envisaged, including the writing style and language used in writing as well as the form of presentation of the final report. Forms of dissemination that may appeal to different stakeholders include executive summaries, evaluation briefs, interim reports, workshopping, and discussions with relevant key stakeholders about the evaluation findings (Shaw et al., 2006)

5.3.2 To what extent do contextual factors influence evaluation use in decision-making?

Evaluations are context-dependent, and each context has its own complexities to the conduct and use of evaluations (Højlund, 2014; Patton, 2011; Stufflebeam, 1971). In this study, I examined the influence of organisational size, budget, funding source, and location on evaluation use. The correlation between the organisational size, budget, funding source and location suggests a very weak and insignificant relationship with the organisational use of evaluation in decision-making. None of the variables also show any statistical significance, confirming these variables have very little or no effect on influencing organisational use of the evaluations they carry out in their decision-making processes. This can be explained by the fact

that irrespective of organisational size, location and budget, evaluations in this context are funder-driven. However, 79% of respondents in the survey consider organisational leadership to be keen and committed to using evaluation outcomes. On the other hand, 67% of the respondents say their organisations are ready to conduct evaluations for their own information needs, which indicates a growth in awareness of the need for evidence drawn from evaluations to inform organisational processes. Respondents also confirm this perception of evaluations as a tool to help in management decision-making. From the interviews, some respondents acknowledged that their organisational readiness to conduct their own evaluations and leadership keenness does not necessarily translate into reality because all depend on the funding, especially if an external evaluator must be contracted. The findings equally present the picture of evaluation use in decision-making to be in its infancy; hence, half of the organisational leaders are still less committed to leveraging their management decisions on evaluative evidence. This gap can be overcome by developing evaluation capacity in these organisations, which includes enhancing evaluative thinking competencies (Patton, 2005b; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

5.3.3 The extent to which human factors influence the use of evaluations in decision-making.

From the findings, I can deduce that the respondents consider evaluator competence, stakeholder involvement, and the evaluation process critical factors influencing evaluation use in decision-making. Respondents noted changes in behaviour due to their participation in the evaluations. The participation levels included participating in the evaluation preparatory meetings, contributing to the terms of reference and helping to identify sources of data collection, as noted by the key informants' interviews. Changes in behaviour have been linked to improved awareness, hence the conceptual use of evaluations (Johnson et al., 2009; Owen et al., 1994; Owen & Lambert, 1995). The correlations between characteristics of stakeholder involvement, as noted in Table 3 above (S1, S2, S3, S4) and the evaluation use in decision-making (D1) suggest a stronger relationship than the other factors in the study. However, none of the variables that recorded higher correlation coefficients in this category was statistically significant with the binary logistic regressions.

Earlier studies suggest that active stakeholder participation in the evaluation process is critical to enhancing evaluation use in decision-making (Ayers, 1987; Greene, 1988; Johnson et al., 2009). The involvement of stakeholders permits a better understanding of the subject of the evaluation

(the evaluand); hence, stakeholders become better informed on what is required and what needs to be done along the life cycle of the intervention or future similar interventions (Jacob et al., 2011; Patton, 2012). One of the respondents acknowledged the fact that experienced and competent evaluators are more capable of driving the evaluation process professionally, which includes knowing how to engage the relevant stakeholders early in the evaluation process, designing and conducting the evaluation satisfactorily and producing quality reports that give clear and insightful findings as well as actionable recommendations. Hence, evaluator competency is viewed as a primary condition required for good and useable evaluations, indirectly influencing evaluation use. However, as noted by Stufflebeam, evaluations have different purposes and, hence, different uses (Stufflebeam, 2001). For example, evaluations carried out for accountability and justifications of funding might not necessarily judge the merits and worth of the evaluation but establish how well or not the funds have been spent appropriately as reported. The stakeholder motivation to use evaluations is also closely linked to their level of involvement and how they see themselves as part of the development initiative (Ayers, 1987; Fetterman, 2019a; Greene, 1988; Jacob et al., 2011; Rodríguez-Campos & Rincones-Gómez, 2013). From the interviews, I understood that some of the evaluations do not talk to the stakeholders' needs and concerns but to that of the funding organisations. In this case, the stakeholders' participation in the evaluations may improve their knowledge about the evaluation but not necessarily motivate them to find ways of improving upon it. This notwithstanding, knowledge and experience remain assets for possible change of behaviour and future use in decision-making when faced with similar projects.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the use of evaluation for decision-making and the influencing factors of the research in light of existing literature on evaluation use in decision-making. I examined and discussed the research findings and the extent to which these findings each influence the use of evaluations in decision-making based on the analysis of the respondents' perception in the survey and the key informant interviews.

The characteristic factors of evaluations are seen by respondents as constitutive of the overall quality of the evaluations. They are considered instrumental in the decision-making processes in more than half of these organisations involved in the study but in varying degrees or levels. Among the evaluation characteristics, the question relating to the relevance of the evaluation stands out as a key influencer of evaluation use for decision-making.

The contextual demographics of the organisations are noted to have little or no effect on the organisation's use of evaluations for decision-making. Despite the organisation's readiness to conduct its evaluations for its own information needs, there is still a low commitment from leadership to putting an evaluation team in place to manage the evaluation processes effectively. This could be related to the funding problem whereby setting up monitoring and evaluation units in organisations is considered an extra expenditure, and not-for-profit organisations do not easily get funding from funders for organisational capacity building. Hence, these organisations are generally unable to carry out their own evaluations.

Overall, for evaluations to be useful in decision-making within the Catholic faith-based context from the participants' perspectives in the study, those evaluations should be relevant to the needs of the stakeholders. The quality of the evaluations, as noted by the respondents, rotates around the competence of the evaluator, and for stakeholders to maximise the use of those evaluations in decision-making for management and policy purposes requires their active involvement in the processes and availability of funding whilst also capitalising on the skills to implement the evaluation findings and recommendations.

6 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Evaluation use in decision-making is one of the main purposes of carrying out evaluation studies (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Taylor, 2009). Hence, this study aims to verify this use within the context of a faith-based context in South Africa. Various levels of decisions informed by evaluation outputs range from individual changes of behaviour of stakeholders to strategic choices at the institutional level and for policy formulation (Mark & Henry, 2004; Patton, 2012). From the literature review, various scholars have researched the use of evaluations since the '60s and have established the various uses comprising conceptual use, process use, instrumental and legitimate or symbolic use (Johnson et al., 2009; Leviton & Hughes, 1981). The use of evaluations as evidence for decision-making is mostly ascribed to the instrumental use of evaluations (Alkin & King, 2016), which is closely linked to the capacity of stakeholders to take action and use evidence to influence practice. Making decisions and acting upon them can only happen if the relevant stakeholders embrace the results, findings, and recommendations from the evaluation as valid, credible, hence useful, and applicable in their context. For this reason, Patton (2020) and Ayers (1987) corroborate the perspectives of the respondents in that the process of the evaluations should involve the relevant stakeholders all along the evaluation intervention so that being emersed and becoming protagonists themselves, they can maximise the use of these evaluations. However, this would depend on the type of evaluation, purpose, and approach.

This study, therefore, highlights the perception of evaluation use in decision-making within the context of Catholic faith-based organisations as a contribution to giving voice to the role faith-based organisations play within the development space and, more specifically, uncovering the extent to which they make use of evidence drawn from evaluations to influence organisational decision-making. Hence, the questions addressed by this research were to understand the extent to which organisations within this context use evaluations for decision-making processes and how the evaluation characteristics, contextual realities and human dynamics play a part in influencing such use.

The research applied quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect and analyse data from respondents. Data was collected using online surveys and interviews with key informants to answer the research questions comprehensively. The survey respondents were 43, and fifteen

people took part in the key informant interviews. Both data sources were used to complement and triangulate various feedback information from the survey to provide a holistic picture of the respondents' perspective vis-à-vis their organisational use of evaluations as useful tools in decision-making and policy formulation.

The key factors verified across the three dimensions as influencers of evaluation used for decision-making show that most of the participating organisations are aware of the importance of the active involvement of stakeholders in evaluations and that the evaluations should be relevant to them. Further, the analysed data from the respondents' responses show a development in the awareness of using evidence drawn from evaluations as one of the sources of credible information for management and policy decision-making. The extent to which this makes reality depends on the purpose of the evaluations, credibility, contextual dynamics, and the skills and motivations of the relevant stakeholders. Contextually, most of the evaluations carried out in these organisations are funder-driven, and most participating organisations in the research are keen to carry out evaluations for their own information need. Some of the reasons why these organisations cannot carry out evaluations for their own information need is the lack of their own budget to sustain such valuable interventions and systems or units with the required skills to manage and conduct their own evaluations. This notwithstanding, capacity building in monitoring and evaluation, project management, and soft skills are considered by participants to be important key skill areas for development stakeholders to consider for meaningful participation in evaluations and the use of the evaluation products in decision-making.

6.2 Conclusion

According to the widely used OECD/DAC criteria, evaluations should be conducted in a way that meets the characteristics factors of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability to meet the professional quality and impact required (Chianca, 2008b). Similarly, various evaluation associations such as the JSCEE, AFrEA, and UNEG, as well as national evaluation associations such as the DPME, have established context-based evaluation standards and guidelines to guide the conduct as well as the application of evaluation standards to ascertain the professionalism and practice within a given context. The main purpose of ensuring that evaluations meet certain criteria and requirements is to maximise usability by meeting the stakeholders' information needs.

The use of evaluation for informed decision-making has been one of those critical needs of stakeholders (Greene, 1988; Maloney, 2017a; Patton, 2012) and the rationale for commissioning evaluations. Given the fact that evaluation use is also context-specific (Birgili & Kırkıç, 2021; Stufflebeam, 1971; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017), this study examined the extent to which organisations within the Catholic faith-based organisations make use of evaluations to inform their decision making. I further interrogated the extent to which some of the evaluation characteristics, the contextual and stakeholder-related elements, influence the evaluation's use in decision-making.

The findings from respondents' perspectives drawn from the survey and key informant interviews reveal that about eighty per cent of the organisations participating in the study use evaluations variably to influence their decision-making processes. However, these evaluations are funder-driven primarily for the funder information needs. By examining the factors that influence such use, I note that, on average, three-quarters of the respondents subscribe to the quality of the evaluation output, the timing, the communication, and the relevance of the evaluation as influencers, with the latter having a stronger correlation and statistical Signiant to evaluation use in decision making. The contextual factors, such as the geographical settings of these organisations, did not provide any distinctive indication of evaluation use in decision-making. Still, organisations which have international footprints were found to be "more likely" to use evaluations to inform organisational decisions than local organisations. This factor, as noted by some interviewees, is linked to the fact that organisations with international footprints benchmark on best practices in their international networks. However, 79% of respondents affirmed that their organisational leadership is keen to implement or make use of evaluations to improve the development interventions but requires resources to affect such implementations. The respondents also acknowledged the importance of the involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process as a very important influencing factor in enhancing evaluation use for informed decision-making in organisations. Other human factors highly considered included the evaluator's competence and skills in managing and conducting the evaluation process.

Catholic faith-based organisations over the years have been instrumental in contributing to the social betterment of communities in many parts of the world, including South Africa, in various fields such as education, health services and community development services guided by the Catholic Social Teachings (Fahey, 1998; O'Shea, 1990). The use of systematic approaches to ensure these interventions meet their intended objectives and contribute to improving the evaluation through informed decision-making processes is gaining ground within Catholic faith-

based organisations but is limited by their dependence on funding possibilities. The extent to which these organisations have contributed to alleviating poverty and promoting social equality through the various programmes has been documented anecdotally in silos. In contrast, some of these programmes have been subjected to various evaluations by external evaluators. A study on how these evaluations are used to impact programme delivery and improvement would contribute to building awareness on using evidence for better decision-making. Evidence from this study shows that many Catholic Faith-Based organisations are keen to carry out their evaluations and make good use of them to inform their actions despite the budget deficit. Most of the respondents from the interview identified a functional organisational monitoring and evaluation function as a necessity to foster the use of evaluative evidence in organisational decision-making. These skills, as noted, are not readily available in many Catholic Faith-Based Organisations. However, this requires leadership and management commitment to drive the process by creating the right environment and building the capacity to enhance an evidence-based approach to management.

6.3 Recommendations

The effectiveness of faith-based organisations has been heralded anecdotally, and their proximity to the beneficiaries places them squarely at the centre of transforming communities holistically. With the growing need for information to measure and improve on the millennium development goals and the need for accountability and decision-making in management and policy development, these organisations should position themselves better in the evidence-based management space. For this reality to grow and become entrenched in the organisational culture, as noted by some respondents, I recommend the following:

6.3.1 Organisational Awareness on Evaluations

The first recommendation is the continuous awareness building within the organisations of the importance of evaluations and evaluative evidence in making meaningful decisions for management and policy development. Such awareness paves the way to building an evaluative thinking culture within the organisation and the readiness to conduct evaluations for one's own information needs.

6.3.2 Organisational Information Needs Analysis

The second recommendation is that organisations within the faith-based context should carry out organisational needs analysis concerning organisational information needs to enhance the capacity of their decision-making processes. This would permit evaluations to be focused on providing the information that would best serve these organisations in their programme management and policy areas.

6.3.3 Organisational Evaluation Capacity Building

The third recommendation suggests that these organisations should include evaluation capacity building and promote the institutionalisation of the monitoring and evaluation component to enhance organisational capacity for conducting and using evaluations effectively. Hence, institutionalising the monitoring and evaluation function in faith-based organisations is an important achievement. This would build a culture of evidence-based decision-making in the organisations. Some of the respondents suggested the creation of a monitoring and evaluation hub for the network of Catholic Faith-based organisations to assist organisations with their internal evaluations and help them make good use of the external evaluations commissioned by the funder. Also, a monitoring and evaluation community of practice for the network would help build the evaluative capacity of these organisations in their needs for skill development in monitoring and evaluation purposes.

6.3.4 Funding of Evaluations

The funding of evaluations is most of the time driven by the funder, so for organisations within the faith-based context to be able to conduct internal evaluations and consequently make use of these evaluations for their decision-making, these organisations should include internal evaluations in their budgeting and incorporate these in the proposal stage of the development initiatives - hence the evaluations become a strategic planning tool for these organisations.

6.3.5 Development of a Community of Practice

As noted by some respondents from different organisations during the interview, a community of practice network to support evaluations and capacity building should be encouraged. This would help organisations with less financial capacity and personnel benefit from the entire

network in conducting and managing their own evaluations while using the competency and knowledge of the community of practice.

6.4 Implications for further research.

The participants' perspectives in this research cannot be generalised on a population of more than five hundred Catholic Faith-based organisations operating in the country. Therefore, further research into evaluation use carried out with more of these organisations with a focus on the different fields of activities may give better insights into how these organisations use evaluations for decision-making to promote social betterment.

Another area of research could be an investigation into the types of evaluations and approaches best suited for the different contexts of Catholic Faith-Based Organisations concerning the different types of industry they operate in. This research would be beneficial as it would guide management to focus on the approaches and standards that would best serve their information needs for better-informed decision-making. An inquiry into the need for evaluation capacity building in these organisations would be equally useful as this can permit them to improve their evaluative thinking skills and maximise evaluation use.

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8 ANNEXURES

8.1 Annexure 1: Demography of respondents and organisational settings

What is your position or role in the organisation?	
Finance Manager	2%
Lecturer/facilitator	7%
Development officer	7%
M & E manager	12%
Programme /project manager	19%
Manager/Director/coordinator	53%
Grand Total	100.00%
Your gender	
Other	2%
Male	49%
Female	49%
Grand Total	100.00%
What is your level of education? Please select one that best qualifies you	
Completed Secondary Education	2%
Trade/technical/vocational training	7%
Professional degree	7%

Some College certificate	12%
High school graduate with diploma or equivalent	16%
Bachelor's degree	23%
Master's degree	33%
Grand Total	100.00%
Please indicate your age range. Select one response	
26-35	12%
46-55	21%
36-45	26%
55+	42%
Grand Total	100.00%
Count of Please Indicate your faith/religious group: Select one response	
No religion	5%
Other Christian faith	42%
Catholic faith	53%
Grand Total	100.00%
Count of Please indicate the size of your organisation (# staff): Select one response	
201+ large	7%

51-200 medium	7%
1-10 micro	37%
11-50 small	49%
Grand Total	100.00%
Please indicate your source(s) of funding	
Other	2%
Predominantly local funders + some external funding	2%
only external funding	2%
Own funding through fund raising or sales	2%
Local contributions only (within RSA)	23%
Predominantly local funders + some external funding	30%
Predominantly external funding + some local funding	37%
Grand Total	100.00%
What is the range of your organisation's average annual budget for the last 3 years?	
R above 5 million - 10 million	2%
R 50 million +	7%

R above 3 million-5 million	9%
R Above 10 million - 20 million	14%
R Above 20 million - 50 million	16%
R Above 1million - 3 million	19%
R 500000 -1 million	33%
Grand Total	100.00%
On average how long does your programme run (life cycle time for your programmes)?	
Up to 6 months	9%
Between 12 and 24 months	16%
Between 6 and 12 months	16%
36 months +	28%
Between 24 and 36 months	30%
Grand Total	100.00%
How would you best describe the geographic location of your organisation (where you work)	
Peri-Urban area	30%
Rural area	30%
Urban area	40%
Grand Total	100.00%

To what extent is your organisation footprint (outreach)?	
International (present in other countries)	14%
Only local (district or province)	40%
National (present in other provinces)	47%
Grand Total	**100.00%**

8.2 Annexure 2 Research Sample Frame

Diocese/Institutions	Province	Eligible organisations	Eligible Respondents
Metropolitan Archdiocese of Cape Town **Tel:** 021 462 2417 **E-mail:** archbishop@adct.org.za	Western Cape	5	20
Roman Catholic Diocese of Aliwal **Tel:** 051 633 2342 **E-mail:** contact@catholic-aliwal.org.za diocesedeaar@gmail.com	Eastern Cape	2	8
Roman Catholic Diocese of De Aar **Tel:** 053 631 1149 **E-mail:** diocesedeaar@gmail.com	Northern Cape	2	8
Roman Catholic Diocese of Oudtshoorn **Tel:** 044 272 5054	Northern Cape	2	8
Roman Catholic Diocese of Port Elizabeth Tel: 041 373 2854 **E-mail**:bishop@catholic-pe.co.za	Eastern Cape	4	16
Metropolitan Archdiocese of Bloemfontein Tel: 051 448 1658 E-mail: archbishop@archbfn.co.za	Free State	5	20
Diocese of Bethlehem Tel: 058 303 5351 E-mail: diocese@bhm.dorea.co.za	Free State	2	8
Diocese of Keimoes-Upington Tel: 054 461 1846 E-mail: omikeimoes@telkomsa.net	Northern Cape	1	4
Diocese of Kimberley Tel: 053 831 1861/2 E-mail:	Northern Cape	3	12
Diocese of Kroonstad Tel: 056 212 6639	Free State	2	8

E-mail: Bishop.krd@act.co.za pholidaykroonstad@gmail.com			
Metropolitan Archdiocese of Durban Tel: 031 303 1417 E-mail: chancery@aod.org.za	KwaZulu-Natal	5	20
Diocese of Dundee Tel: 034 312 6591 E-mail: tgrahamrose@gmail.com	KwaZulu-Natal	2	8
Diocese of Eshowe Tel: 035 474 1243 E-mail: bishop@eshowe.org	KwaZulu-Natal	2	8
Diocese of Kokstad Tel: 039 727 2239 E-mail: bishop@kokdiocese.org bpa@kokdiocese.org	Eastern Cape	2	8
Diocese of Mariannhill Tel: 031 700 2704/3850 E-mail: bishop.mlungisi@webmail.co.za	KwaZulu-Natal	2	8
Diocese of Umtata Tel: 047 532 2914 E-mail: bishop@mthathadiocese.co.za	Eastern Cape	2	8
Diocese of Umzimkulu Tel: +27 39 4331421, email: bishopsoffice@telkomsa.net	KwaZulu-Natal	2	8
Apostolic Vicariate of Ingwavuma Tel: 035 550 1051 Bp House telephone number 035 – 5500418 E-mail: vicariatemtuba@gmail.com	KwaZulu-Natal	2	8
Metropolitan Archdiocese of Johannesburg Telephone. 27 (0) 11 402 6400	Gauteng	10	40

Roman Catholic Diocese of Klerksdorp Tel: 018 462 2261 Email: victor.phalana@gmail.com klddio@gds.co.za	Northwest	3	12
Roman Catholic Diocese of Witbank Tel: 013 656 6827 Email: diocesewitbank@yebo.co.za	Mpumalanga	3	12
Metropolitan Catholic Diocese of Pretoria Tel: 012 460 2055 E-mail: archbishop@ptadiocese.org.za	Gauteng	6	24
Roman Catholic Diocese of Polokwane Tel: 015 295 8152 / 56 Email: dioceseofplk@gmail.com	Limpopo	3	12
Roman Catholic Diocese of Rustenburg Tel: +27 83 655 0457, Cell: +27 83 655 0457, Email: diocrust@mweb.co.za	Northwest	3	12
Roman Catholic Diocese of Tzaneen Tel: 015 307 1929 Email: bishopjoao@mweb.co.za	Limpopo	2	8
Salesians of Don Bosco	National	5	20
CIE Thabiso Institute **Tel**: +27 (0)11 433 1888 ext 2230 **e-mail: info@cie.org.za**	National	5	20
St. Vincent de Paul Charity **Phone:** 011 673 3204 **E-mail:** peter.keshwar@gmail.com	National	2	8
Jesuit Institute **office** +27 11 482 4237 email: director@jesuitinstitute.org.za	Gauteng	1	4

Total Population		90	360

8.3 Annexure 3: Catholic Social Teachings founding documents

Key Catholic Documents and their Contributions to the Development of the Catholic Social Teachings		
Document	**Papal Author & Year of publications**	**Key Social Question addressed**
Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*	*Leonis XIII*, 1892	The dawn of industrialisation created new social problems and the question of a just treatment of workers in creating appropriate working conditions for people within the growing capitalistic economy led to the production of an encyclical by Pope Leo XIII that would throw light on how society can address these issues. The encyclical stressed on the collaboration of all forces. The document laid out the prophetic and underlying elements focusing on the rights and obligations of the workers and employers, the rights to property, the rights to form associations, the obligations to protect the weak and the poor and set a base for productive social collaborations.
Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno	Pope Pius XI, 1931	While celebrating the 40th anniversary of Rerum Novarum, this encyclical of Pope Pius XI comes at the wake of the economic crisis of the 1930s, the expansion of financial bodies across the globe and the effects of the first world war. Also, this period was marked by the imposition of totalitarian political regimes in Europe. The encyclical underlines the respect of human freedom and stresses on the principles of solidarity and cooperation among all social forces. It again addresses the question of work and salaries, the principle of subsidiarity between state and private organisations, the need to build more

		social awareness based on moral laws to bring about a new social order that is based on justice and charity.
Encyclical Non Abbiamo Bisogno	Pope Pius XI,1931	This Encyclical was published in direct response to the abuse of power by the totalitarian fascist regime in Italy.
Encyclical Mit Brennender Sorge	Pope Pius XI, 1937	This document was written on the request of German Bishops to address the coercive and repressive measures of the Reich whereby the youths were being forced to enrol as members of the Hitler Youth Movement. This encyclical encouraged and called upon the priests, religious and lay faithful to resist anti-Semitism with an affirmation that we are all Semites spiritually.
Encyclical letter Divini redemporis	Pope Pius XI, 1937	This document stood out as a systematic criticism of communism with an indication towards renewal of Christian life, the practice of evangelical charity, and the promotion of social justice at all levels and to care for the common good. It also encouraged putting in place associations of professional and interprofessional bodies.
Encyclical Mater et Magistra	Pope John XXIII 1961	The main contributions of this encyclical were to update existing documents and to involve the entire Christian (catholic and non-Catholic) communities towards the values of truth, justice, and love as cornerstones towards building the human family where economic growth is not limited to satisfying human needs only but for the promotion of their human dignity.
Encyclical Pacem in Terris	Pope John XXIII 1963	Under the threat of nuclear proliferation, the encyclical addresses all people of good will, and all nations to work together in fostering peace and human dignity. It calls on all public authorities to engage collaboratively in tacking the problems of economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions that threatens peace and the universal common

		good.
Pastoral constitution Gaudium et Spes	Vatican council II 1964	This document systematically constitutes themes on culture, economic and social life, marriage and family, politics and the community, peace, Christian anthropology and underlines the Church's mission with the person as the focus of God's image and likeness. The document addresses issues regarding the entire human society, its structures and development as ingredients oriented towards human progress.
Declaration Dignitatis Humanae	Vatican council II 1964	This document clearly spells out in two chapters the right of religious freedom as a civil right within the legal order of society and its implication in the wider society as identified religious entities.
Populorum Progressio	Pope Paul VI 1967	This document stems from a chapter in Gaudium et Spes on the economic and social life. It outlines and underlines the integral development of man as an individual being as well as the development in solidarity with all humanity. Here development on two fronts is presented as the axes of transition towards a more humane condition. Such developments take into consideration various dimensions including economic, technological dimensions, acquisition of culture, respect of the dignity of others and acknowledgement of the highest good which is the Creator-God who is the author and the end of all blessings. For Development to be of benefit to everyone, the document underlines the need to foster global justice and peace as basis towards achieving a complete humanism.
Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*	Pope Paul VI 1971	This document is reflective of Rerum Novarum marking 80 years as well as the post-industrial world with new complex challenges and the inadequacy of ideologies to respond to the growing issues of urbanisation, vulnerability

		of young people and women, questions of unemployment, emigration, population growth, influences of social communications, as well as the ecological issues.
Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*	Pope John Paul II, 1981	The encyclical elaborates on "work" as a fundamental good to the human person, the key primary activity to the social question. The ethics of work is analysed with a theological and philosophical reflection placing work within the context of the person's natural and supernatural vocation.
Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*	Pope John Paul II, 1987	In commemorating the 20th anniversary of Populorum Progressio, Pope John Paul II revisits the theme of development by looking on one hand the situation of the modern world and the failed development of the third world and on the other hand revisiting the meaning, conditions, and requirements for a meaningful development worthy of man. The document outlines the difference between progress and development while stressing the fact that true development is more than just the multiplication of goods and services but should contribute to the fullness of the "being" of man.
Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*[	Pope John Paul II, 1991	In celebrating the 100 years of rerum Novarum, the Pope demonstrates how the church's social teachings are intrinsically linked to the reciprocity between God and man. Recognising God in every person and Every person in God is the basic condition for an authentic human development.

Adopted from the Catholic Social Teaching. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#From%20Rerum%20Novarum%20to%20our%20own%20day

8.4 Annexure 4: Evaluation Standards

Evaluation standards	Description	Author(s)/Website
Programme Evaluation Standards made up of: 7 Utility Standards, 3 Feasibility Standards, 8 Propriety Standards, 12 Accuracy Standards	o Utility Standards ensures the evaluation meets the intended users' information needs. o Feasibility standards guides an evaluation to be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal. o Propriety Standards requires that an evaluation be conducted in a legal, ethical manner with focus on the wellbeing of all stakeholders. o Accuracy standards seek to ensure that the evaluation produces technically sound information that measures the merits and worth of the programme.	JCSEE programme evaluation standards available at: www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/
OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Sustainability, `impact, and Effectiveness	The six criteria are used to measure and make judgements on the merits or worth of an intervention (policy, programme, projects, strategy). Relevance: evaluation should find out if the intervention is doing the right thing, Coherence: the evaluation seeks to establish how well the	OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria available at: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

	intervention fits the purpose. Efficiency: the evaluation should establish how the resources have been utilized. Sustainability: the evaluation should attest how long benefits of the intervention will last. Impact: the evaluation seeks to establish if there is a difference due to the evaluand. Effectiveness: the evaluation should seek to know if the intervention is achieving its objectives.	
The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) Guidelines	Based on the programme evaluation standards divided into four areas including: Utility to ensure the evaluations produce that meets the expectations. Feasibility to ensure the evaluation meets realism, cautiousness, and efficiency. Respect for ethics to ensure the evaluation meets the legal and ethical requirements. Precision and Quality to ensure the evaluations apply relevant methodology related to the purpose of the	African Evaluation Association available at: http://www.afrea.org/sites/default/files/resources/the%20African%20Evaluation%20G

	evaluation. This is accompanied with a series of checklists. The checklists guide the planning, implementation, and completion of the evaluation process.	
United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluations	It is made up of fourteen norms and five standards to guide evaluations conducted within the United Nations System. The General Norms for Evaluation include internationally agreed principles, goals and targets, utility, credibility, independence, impartiality, Ethics, Transparency, Human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacity and professionalism. The institutional norms include enabling environment, evaluation policy, responsibility for the evaluation function, and evaluation use and follow-up. The Evaluation standards are anchored around five main standards, each with appropriate sections. They include: Institutional framework (5 sections) Management of Evaluation Function (3 sections) Evaluation competencies (3 sections)	Available at: http://www.uneval.org/

	Conduct of evaluations (11 sections) Quality (3 sections)	
Evaluation Standards for Latin America and the Caribbean	Based on the JCSEE evaluation standards with an additional cluster on cultural understanding. They include: Rigorous Evaluation (8 sections) Adequate evaluability (4 sections) Evaluation conducted according to ethical and legal principles (4 sections) Adequate cultural understanding (3 sections) Relevance and utility (7 sections)	Latin American and Caribbean Network of Evaluation (ReLAC) available at: https://www.deval.org/en/about-us/news/news/detail/updated-evaluation-standards-for-latin-america-and-the-caribbean
Swiss Evaluation (SEVAL) Standards	These SEVAL standards have three groups: ABC. Group A has twelve standards which describes the general principles to be upheld by any form of evaluation and lays down the conditions required for good quality evaluations. Group B has nine standards which talks to the practical aspects to be considered when undertaking an evaluation.	SEVAL standards available at: https://www.seval.ch/en/standards-competences/standards/#:~:text=SEVAL%20St

	Group C contain six standards for the assessment and communication of evaluation results.	andards%20are%20a%20reference,education%20in%20the%20evaluation%20field.
South African Government Evaluation Standards	The standards encourage the use of evaluations; hence, it is anchored on five stages, which include: Overarching Considerations (with seven standards) Planning, Design, and Inception (with six standards) The Implementation (with three standards) The Reporting addresses five standards and The evaluation follow-up, use and learning addresses four standards.	DPME evaluation standards for government are available at: http://www.dpme.gov.za/focusareas/evaluationsSite/pages/
Aotearoa Specific Evaluation Standards	It outlines the evaluation processes, the activities, and the outputs. These standards take into consideration the evaluative activities, the stakeholders, the sector, the context, and the cultural settings specific to the region. The standards apply to Evaluation commissioners, evaluators, participants,	Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association Standards available at: https://anzea.org.nz/evaluation-standards/

	and users of the evaluation and are based on four principles: Respectful and meaningful relationships Ethic of care Responsive methodologies and trustworthy results Competence and usefulness	