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2021
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Evaluation process use in the University Capacity Development Programme at Walter Sisulu University (13 words)

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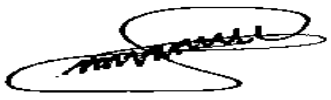
Master of Management (MM) in the Field of Monitoring and Evaluation

50% course work and 50% research, first registered in 2020.

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Declaration

I, Mandla Mantshongo declare that this is my own work. It is submitted to fulfil the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in the field of Monitoring and Evaluation through the University of Witwatersrand.



Abstract

The study investigated the effect of evaluation process use as a mechanism in the performance of the University Capacity Development Grant at Walter Sisulu University (WSU). The significance of the study was to enlighten the project leaders who participated in the evaluation process to acknowledge the changes that have arose, and the learning associated with that the process. Literature identified the lack of clearly defined measures of the process changes with regards to the performance of projects in the context of higher education and further understanding of the effectiveness of the involvement or engagement of stakeholders in the process of evaluation. This research adopted the qualitative approach as the method that was utilised in collecting the data. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were used to undertake this study in the form of semi-structured interviews through Microsoft Teams adopted due to the COVID-19 restrictions, focus groups, and document review in the form of progress reports and assessment reports.

Fifteen participants participated in the data collection with seven individual semi-structured interviews and two focus groups each made up of four participants. The findings of the study demonstrated that: (1) individual thinking or behavioural change cannot be solely attributable to process use as there are other factors that contribute to change, (2) the change and performance could be measured or viewed differently at different levels such as at individual, institutional, evaluators and funders/DHET level, (3) Learning is inevitable to the stakeholders involved in the process, however, the skill transfer to other members who did not participate in the process is lacking, (4) non-conceptualised and non-researched interventions and (6) no convergence in findings for implementation that influences the change of institutional culture. Overall, at individual and project level there are glaring changes in implementation of a project rather than on the performance of UCDG.

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Keywords and abbreviations

UCDG/P	University Capacity Development Grant/Programme
M and E	Monitoring and Evaluation
TDG	Teaching Development of Grant
HE	Higher Education
HETD	Higher Education Teaching Development
HELT	Higher Education Learning and Teaching projects
LTP	Learning and Teaching Projects performance
T&L	Teaching and Learning
WSU	Walter Sisulu University
PGDHET	Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training
PAL	Peer Assisted Learning
CREST	Centre for Research Evaluation and Science Technology
PEP	Professional Excellence Programme

1. Chapter one: Proposal Development

1.1. Introduction

The study centres on the effectiveness of 'evaluation-process-use' as the mechanism in the performance of the 'University Capacity Development Programme. The Higher Education (HE) Teaching Development policy framework identified funding as one of the steering mechanisms, along with quality assurance and academic planning, for the transformation of higher education in South Africa (DHET, 2013). The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced Teaching Development Grant (TDG) as the funding mechanism to mitigate the high drop-out rate, failure rate and enhance the success rate by incorporating the TDG into each University Block grant in 2004/5 and 2006/7 (DHET, 2006, p. 04).

However, upon the implementation of the TDG, it has been noted that there was a poor performance by many universities which was linked to the absence of policies and tools that were guiding the utilization of the grant (DHET, 2013). As a result of the factors in the latter statement, from 2018 to 2020 the Teaching Development Grant (TDG) was changed to the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG). UCDG was formed to replace TDG by combining and expanding two projects namely, Teaching Development Grant and Research Development Grant (DHET, 2013).

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has introduced the monitoring and evaluation during the University Capacity Grant (UCDG) implementation phase as the tool that should be utilized to guide the implementation of the programme and mitigate the challenges, specifically related to performance. The Department has further contracted Centre for Research, Evaluation, and Science Technology (CREST) as the evaluators of the UCDG throughout the 26 South African Universities.

Evaluation use as a concept was first developed in the United States in the 1960s. Alkin and Sandy (2003) came up with two distinct categories of evaluation use namely, process use and finding use. Initially, evaluation use was more focused on finding use that was further classified into three types being instrumental use, symbolic use, and conceptual use that were aligned to finding use (Alkin & King, 2016). After the discovery of process use by Patton (1998) additional two types were developed

namely, process use and persuasive use (Ledermann, 2012). However, the focus of the study will be solely on evaluation process use. Process use was discovered by Patton (1998) when conducting reviews to the participants after the evaluation findings have been issued to assess how have the recommendations been implemented.

Patton (1998) explains that instead of participants responding to the implementation of findings, they responded to the process and how it has helped them to execute their duties which is something that was never taken cognisant of. As a result, process use is defined as “individual changes in thinking and behaviour, program or organizational changes in procedures and culture that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process” (Patton, 1998, p. 06). The above definition is used for this study as it measures the individual thinking and behavioural change of procedures and culture through learning by project leaders that were involved in the process and further change in the programme or organisation. These components are the same components that are critical in assessing the effectiveness of process use which is the subject matter of this study.

The process use definition components above are in line with the ‘learning to learn’ process use as it provides different ways in which the stakeholders involved in the process would learn about peoples’ perspectives and the project itself (Forss, Rebien, & Carlsson, 2002). The discovery of process use has demonstrated that not only the finding use results shall trigger the evaluation use, but the process in which evaluation is conducted could also change how the key stakeholders think or implement the projects (Ledermann, 2012). Furthermore, it illustrates that along the way, skills are developed before the results are produced and a sense of ownership by the stakeholders is enhanced (Patton, 1998).

The purpose of this research, therefore, was to investigate the effectiveness of evaluation process use as a mechanism on the performance of University Capacity Development Programme activities through the project leaders and the project itself. This serves to enlighten the project implementers and decision-makers whether there is any behavioural or thinking change in the procedures when the implementers execute their duties or the way they think around project implementation.

The study focused on one Eastern Cape University, namely Walter Sisulu University, with a specific focus on the Learning and Teaching Development unit where the

University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) programme is administered. The nature of the programme, which was approved by the Department of Higher Education and Training, is that the programme is implemented in three-year cycles; that is, TDG was from 2014 to 2017 and UCDG from 2018 to 2020. The then Teaching Development Grant (TDG) and University Capacity Development Grant components of the results chain were compared and interrogated from inputs to impact to investigate whether the programme performance has since changed. Furthermore, key stakeholders were interviewed to assess if there was any change because of the process from which they were involved.

The introductory chapter begins by introducing the study by presenting an overview of process use and how its components will assist in assessing its effectiveness through UCDP. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the statement of the problem with both the main research question and the sub-research questions tied to the components of process use as highlighted in the definition provided and theoretical framework. The objectives of the study are also presented in this chapter. The researcher also outlines the rationale of the study in chapter 1. Furthermore, a short discussion on the literature review and a proposed research methodology are provided. Due to my involvement in the UCDP that is used as the case study, the number of instruments to be utilised to collect data will be increased to ensure convergence and collaboration of results and furthermore to ensure unimpaired objectivity.

1.2. Problem Statement

There is a lack of clearly defined measures of the process changes with regards to the performance of projects in the context of higher education as well as further understanding the effectiveness of the involvement or engagement of stakeholders in the process of evaluation. Higher education is selected based on the fact that it is the learning hub which makes it easy to analyse process use learning in this environment. In terms of the process use theory inferred from seven theorists, evaluation use became central in designing and implementing evaluation by mainly focusing on the context, situation dynamics and engaging potential users with the aim of fostering various kinds of use in any organisation (King & Alkin, The Centrality of Use: Theories of Evaluation Use and Influence and Thoughts on the First 50 Years of Use Research, 2019). As a result, if the organisation has not centred its project design and

implementation on evaluation use, numerous challenges occur, of which the UCDP at WSU experienced similar challenges. These challenges are detailed below;

- Implementation of the projects is not properly monitored.
- There are no procedures from the monitoring and evaluation framework.
- The evaluator might miss the context in which the evaluation is conducted.
- Lastly, the evaluator might not clearly identify the key intended users who will be fostered in the process use during evaluation of the project. As a result, the change in performance resulting from the project implementation cannot be measured if process use is not central to evaluation.
- The implementation of university projects follows the traditional way of implementing projects which ends at an output and does not reflect the outcomes and impact of the project at any stage. Lastly, implementation does not reflect the change to the beneficiaries and key stakeholders of the project which then defeats the whole process of the intervention.

This study investigates and advances the knowledge of measuring the effectiveness of process-use as a mechanism of performance in the projects of the Teaching and Learning or University Capacity Development Grant in the context of higher learning institutions.

Therefore, this research helps to assess learning by stakeholders involved in the evaluation process. Learning is expected to result in change in individual thinking or behaviour of project leaders, organisational procedures when implementing the activities and further demonstrate the change in performance resulting from this learning.

The study is important because out of many projects at WSU, the M&E tool is only implemented in the UCDG. Therefore, the results of this study would help in demonstrating that the evaluated projects where implementers are involved in a process may have different benefits for both individuals and institutional performance.

1.3. Main Research Question

What process changes have been had within University Capacity Development Programme at WSU as a result of evaluations conducted?

1.3.1. Sub-questions

- What behavioural changes have developed in the implementation of organisational procedures as a result of the process use?
- What is the skill set that has been acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process?
- What are the changes in performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use?
- What are the organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use?
- What are the challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use?

To answer the research questions regarding the gap in the effectiveness of process use as the mechanism in the performance of projects at WSU, the study is structured as follows, (1) the literature review overview presents the themes that are linked to the objectives of the study, (2) the model to be adopted in measuring the effectiveness of process use in a project is presented.

1.4. Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of evaluation process use as a mechanism in the performance of University Capacity Development Programme activities through the project leaders. This will enlighten the project implementers and decision-makers whether there is any change in the way the implementers do things or the way they think around project implementation and further highlight challenges, if any, through the introduction of process use. Lastly, it demonstrates any skills developed during the process of developing and evaluating the project.

1.5. Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was:

- To assess the process changes within the University Capacity Development Programme at WSU as a result of evaluations conducted.

1.5.1. Sub-objectives

To examine the thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use.

- To establish skills acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process.
- To establish the changes in project performance due to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use. To establish the different challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use.
- To recommend procedures that could be put in place for project implementers in enhancing project performance through evaluation process use.

1.6. Literature review overview

1.6.1. Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use

Cottrell et al. (2015) discusses the lack of clearly detailed procedures of evaluation and feedback which limit the ability to learn from the past and further states that more effective activity is likely to provide benefits in the project. These benefits include the positive change to the quality and impact of the programme and additionally, building relationships and educating the stakeholders who are part of the process. In a study whose focus is on mechanisms to be adopted by evaluators in a complex phenomenon where evaluation use is affected by different factors in a context-bound situation, it was established that in a low-pressure and low-conflict situation an evaluation through an evaluator can cause change but bringing new ideas that can awaken people especially if they are of good quality (Ledermann, 2012, p. 170)

Patton (1997) identifies the challenge of evaluation reports as that they do not have a transformative effect on the organisations since they are kept on the shelves to gather dust. To enhance the use, and thereafter the effectiveness on those evaluation reports, evaluation reports are judged on how the intended users utilise the intended results through finding use and process use as guided by the utilisation of focus evaluation (Patton, 1997). On the other hand, while interviewing respondents as a follow-up after completing a study, Patton, (1998) realised that the responses were not directed to the implementation but to the process in which they were involved during the evaluation which then triggered how process use was discovered over and above the finding use. In another study where there was a debate on the usefulness or effectiveness of process use as opposed to finding use and what is the difference between process evaluation and process use (Patton, 2007).

The process use focus is described as the participatory, user-focused and capacity building that enables stakeholders to understand the evaluation and the programme being evaluated in depth (Patton, 2007). One of the key result to address the confusion of many researchers was to treat process use based on the context of each empirical study which then implies that operational definitions would differ as per different contexts, hence the performance measurements would also vary (Patton, 2007). Secondly, the term process use responds to the context and implies that some changes happen to the people involved in programs and organisations where evaluation is taking place (Patton, 2007). This change could be identified as outcomes rather than the findings as it may be found in the finding use.

1.6.2. The skill set acquired by the project leaders through their involvement in the process

Utilisation focus evaluation is key because it is not left only to evaluators but involves the key stakeholders from the beginning of evaluation to the end so that the results may be owned or utilised (Patton, 1997). On the other hand, knowledge management, capacity building and communications are important tactical issues for improving evaluation use but may be relatively insignificant compared to the more persistent and systemic cultural and psychological dimensions as emphases by symbolic use which may turn the performance of any project or organisation holistically (McNulty, 2012).

On the question of what process use entails, one of the results was that process use demonstrates incidental learning as a result of stakeholder engagements (Patton, 2007, p. 105). It is further stated that an evaluation can include the evaluative capacity building to be effective and, in that manner, it produces capacity in the form of process use (Patton, 2007, p. 106).

All the arguments above are significantly focused on the involvement of stakeholders in acquiring ideas and improving the performance of the project. The subject of the involvement of stakeholders in improving project implementation and increased skills from implementers in the context of higher education is still understudied. Literature that taps into the use which will inform the process rather than the decision making requires further exploration.

1.6.3. The changes in performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use

Aapaoja, Haapasalo, and Pia (2013) indicate that where argument of the early involvement of key stakeholders is interrogated, creative solutions and sharing of ideas also emanates which assists the project implementation going forward and increases the project value. This involvement reveals the alternative ways which were never identified when the project was initiated and, as a result, stakeholders' knowledge is utilised. Furthermore, it is emphasised that stakeholder needs, and effects may differ completely from each other; hence stakeholder analysis and needs must be identified so that they may be involved at different stages of the process (Wojewnik-Filipkowska, Dryl, Dziadkiewicz, & Dryl, 2019, p. 10). Lastly, the number of stakeholders should be limited to a number that is manageable to avoid conflict between these members as the interests may be different (Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia, 2013).

Nederhand and Klijn (2017) examine the involvement of stakeholders in public-private partnership projects and what effect their involvement has in terms of project performance and innovativeness of the project. As it has been alluded to in a study by Aapaoja, Haapasalo and Pia (2013), the early involvement of stakeholders in a project brings more ideas. This study agrees with that position; however, these ideas only affect innovativeness but not performance (Nederhand & Klijn, 2017).

Nederhand and Klijn (2017) argue that performance may sometimes be described narrowly as achieving the target set. However, Kaplan and Norton (1996) and Neely et al. (2000) define performance as "the effectiveness and efficiency of a process to achieve a fixed objective or set of goals". It is further stated that to achieve what has been stated in the latter definition, performance needs to measure through performance management system (PMS) (Taylor & Ahmed-Kristensenb, 2017, p. 1291). Nederhand and Klijn (2017) posit that there are indicators that can be used to measure performance. The indicators are categorised into the effectiveness of the solution offered, the support, the integral character of the solution (role played by solution), and whether the solution is doable in the future and finally, cost-effectiveness of the solution (efficiency). Chiesa, Frattini and Lazzarrotti (2007, p. 46) believe that "measuring performance in business is an imperative task to support the decision-

makers, motivating people, stimulating learning, improving coordination and communication, and finally achieving the organisations' results''.

Arnaboldi and Azzone (2010) in their study focusing on the translation of a performance management system into an operational plan in a public sector context, believe that as part of measuring the performance of the project, data gathering is one of the key concepts done through observations, ongoing engagements with the key participants and stakeholders by holding meetings then the data collected would be analysed against the document review. It was further revealed that the involvement of different voices in the network of PMS which enables the organisation to achieve its set goals and that PMS does not go unnoticed. Lastly, it has also been discovered that the system cannot be a blanket approach but rather could be designed for a specific section or context in the public sector.

However, one point that is not clear in this process is the basis from which the results will be measured against, as the policies may be drafted in such a way that they suit the needs of the key decision-makers and this raises issues of ethical behaviour (Boston, Bradstock, & Eng, 2021). The implications of this are found in a study by Patton (1998) which states that what gets measured, gets done. Therefore, performance may be measured through good practices that are associated with an interaction between the key role players in project implementation and in this case, it is DHET, the evaluators (CREST) and each University participant (Arnaboldi & Azzone, 2010).

It is demonstrated that a different perspective is considered when performance measurement is conducted through M&E. Performance measurement is viewed as measuring the progress of a particular programme, project and policy to assess its efficacy through the result-chain (DAC, 2002; Mascia, Pailler, Thieme, Rowe & Bottrill, 2013). This analysis is performed purely to utilise the findings by the decision-makers that will assist them to make informed decisions.

1.6.4. Theme four: The organizational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use

A study by Tanner and Willingh (2014) where the focus was on the factors resulting from agile project success or failure, revealed that organisational culture, as opposed

to hierarchal culture is considered as a success factor. Hierarchal culture is described as a situation where the more senior staff members of an organisation are not involved in the project. As a result, decision-making takes longer. Other factors that were alluded to are organisational resistance to change, the organisational culture of being too traditional and too political that limits flexibility of employees in terms of creativity. Tanner and Willingh (2014) further illustrate that these factors sometimes lead to a lack of buy-in from certain management staff members. While all these factors have been highlighted, the literature does not indicate how these cultural challenges can be reduced or mitigated. Therefore, this study examines the similarities as well as the suggestions of mitigating factors that may be considered in the context of evaluation.

Patton (1998) believes that the evaluator is supposed to involve the key stakeholders through the process of clarifying the goals, the targets of the program and results that are expected from the evaluation as part of process use. This process ensures that skills are developed and in turn, performance is improved before the findings of the evaluation process are issued. He further explains that using a logic model and questions to facilitate evaluation when communicating with stakeholders is also an aspect of process use.

The above arguments from different scholars indicate one factor that this study ventured into: the role of the evaluator in ensuring that the organisational culture, understanding, and ensuring that key stakeholders own the programme or project are glued together to ensure that evaluation would be adopted before finding the results. The second important characteristic is how process use is key to providing an in-depth understanding of the intervention and further developing the skills to be implemented going forward.

1.6.5. The challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use

Defining the benefits and challenges of stakeholder engagement in a systematic review is an integral aspect of assessing the impact of stakeholder involvement (Cottrell et al. 2015). The challenges highlighted in the literature include the costs, resources, finding the right people and difficulties associated with engagements that need balancing between the right type of stakeholders with the right time in the process (Cottrell, et al., 2015). Some challenges may be encountered by key stakeholders when involved in process use. Such challenges include conflict of interests, power

dynamics amongst key stakeholders and stakeholders with different interests who may influence the evaluation process (Patton, 2020). However, there are some mechanisms used to combat these challenges where an evaluator may apply the blue marble principles such as Ying-Yang which is designed to harmonise stakeholders with different interests to work together to achieve objective/s (Taylor & Ahmed-Kristensenb, 2017; Patton, 2020).

Therefore, in addressing the challenges as discussed above, the evaluator should play the role of being the mediator and facilitator or teacher; at the same time, stakeholder involvement needs proper managerial strategies (Wojewnik-Filipkowska, Dryl, Dziadkiewicz, & Dryl, 2019).

1.7. Knowledge Gap

While the literature review provides an understanding of how process use components are viewed by different scholars and how they provide learning in a process and the performance measurement of the businesses, global projects, and projects in the South African context, however, there still seems to be a gap that was not addressed. There is a lack of evidence with regards to measures put in place for the change of individual thinking or behaviour as a result of process use in the higher education context. Therefore, this study sought to advance knowledge by investigating the effect of process use as a mechanism of performance in the context of Learning and Teaching projects in the South African university context. Furthermore, the study explored the different experiences of all the stakeholders who were involved in the process of developing M&E and further participated in the evaluation process. As discussed in the literature above and in the process use definition, measuring performance through process use involves change. Therefore, change in the UCDP project and change in individual stakeholders' behaviours or attitudes was utilised as the yardstick to measure learning through process and change in performance of the project. The results of these investigations assisted in assessing whether there has been any effect in performance. If available, to ascertain if it is a result of process use or other determinants.

1.8. Theoretical framework

The study employed both the prescriptive theory and formal models of evaluation to guide the analysis and interpretation of data and to provide answers to the objectives of the study (King & Alkin, 2019). The two theories guided the researcher by providing

the basis of understanding how learning provides change in the individual thinking or behaviour, programme or organizational changes in procedures and culture that occur among those involved in the evaluation process.

The prescriptive theory was adopted based on the principle that process use is engaged if it provides learning at different levels of stakeholders and interaction which in turn provides experience in line with the 'learn to learn' type of use. Secondly, the basis of the principle that advocates for skills development of different stakeholders was adopted as an analysis tool which was eventually aligned to improve performance in implementing the project (King & Alkin, 2019). Thirdly the principle that allows for process use to be interrogated in a context specific which in this case study is the UCDG project in the higher education sector and situation dynamics was utilised to assess the change in programme and organisational culture. Furthermore, the analysis of change also focused on individuals, organisational, community, cultural and further use of information to inform the evaluation process. Moreover, this study emerged from the background that prescriptive theory allows evaluators to engage and train the stakeholders that are involved in the process so that they may use the skills obtained and indirectly change the way they implement the projects.

Formal models of evaluation use were adopted because it provides a key feature for process use is the organizational learning (King & Alkin, 2019). This principle from formal models of evaluation was utilised to guide analysis and interpret how the evaluator and other stakeholders interacted within the UCDG evaluation.

Therefore, the prescriptive theory and formal models of evaluation as alluded to above were applied to guide the analysis of the data obtained as aligned to all changes specified in the process use definition and were used to guide the researcher to provide clear answers aligned with the objectives of the study.

1.9. Research Methodology

1.9.1. Research Methods and Procedures

The main objective of this section is to tabulate the research paradigm, research design, research approach to be used, describe the instruments employed when collecting data, the sampling approach, explain how the data was processed and analysed and what the limitations of the study were, including the ethical imperatives to be considered.

1.9.2. Research paradigm

This study adopted the qualitative interpretive paradigm as it seeks to get a deeper understanding of the human's experiences of the UCDP project coordinators and project implementers of the evaluation process (Chilisa, 2012). The interpretive paradigm aims at producing individual concepts rather than the generalised concepts of the phenomenon. Moreover, the interpretive paradigm assisted in exploring in significant depth, the individual project managers' and leaders' experience based on the process use effected through the UCDG project that was implemented whilst the evaluators were involved (Chilisa, 2012). This study was used to validate claims that evaluation process use provides change before results through different methods of gathering data which will be explained in sections below. This was done by the researcher through getting closer to the participants in the project to acquire their experiences in the process of evaluating the UCDG (Creswell, 2007).

1.9.3. Research design

The research design espoused is the case study design and, in this instance, the case at hand focused on the evaluation process of the UCDG and its effects at WSU.

Case study research can help derive a richer, more contextualised, and more authentic interpretation of the process use effect in the context of UCDG than most other research methods by its ability to capture a rich array of contextual data (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The data collected in case research can assist to discover a wide variety of social, cultural, and political factors potentially related to the evaluation process of UCDG as alluded to in the process use definition, and further transform those cultures (Patton, 1998).

1.9.4. Research Approach

This study adopted the qualitative approach as the method for collecting the data. Qualitative research is defined as the process that flows from the philosophical assumptions, worldview, theoretical lens and the study of the research problem into the meaning of individual or group problems (Creswell, 2007). The different instruments that were used in collecting data include semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document review. These different instruments were adopted to ensure that the objectivity of the study was not impaired by the reason that the researcher was part of the project espoused as the case study. Secondly, these instruments ensured that triangulation of data was properly performed to ensure convergence and

collaboration of results. A qualitative researcher is expected to study phenomena within their natural settings which then assists in making sense and providing proper interpretation of the phenomenon at hand based on data collected from different participants, in this case, the process used in the UCDP (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, qualitative research is context based and results may take any direction based on a particular context.

1.9.5. Research Tools and their Application

For this study to satisfactorily uncover and respond to the research questions, both primary and secondary data collection methods were used in the form of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document review (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). The case study research strategy is distinguished by its analytical focus on cases and in this instance, process use as the mechanism through which the University Capacity Development Grant allows for the collection of data at two levels being (1) different cases and (2) any other data collection method (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

For the research questions as illustrated above, semi-structured interviews were conducted with different key stakeholders such as the Department of Higher Education and Training participant, Senior Management involved in the project at WSU and the project leaders. Two focus groups made of student development related programmes and the staff development related programmes were interviewed. Moreover, the document review was also conducted where six reports from the WSU for TDG (2014 -2017) and UCDG (2018 -2020) were utilised. Lastly, the two assessment reports from the DHET for each triennium as stated above was also employed which helped to corroborate the data collected from other instruments.

The collaboration of different data collection methods ensured that the data collected from the Programme Manager was trustworthy, credible, authentic, and not biased as he was involved in the evaluation process. (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

However, the data collected in a study is not sufficient without it being analysed and interpreted for meaning. Therefore, the section below discusses how the data collected was analysed. The data collected from different participants will be stored in a password protected computer and the back-up shall be kept in a safe.

1.9.6. Sampling approach

The study adopted the non-probability sampling technique and the approach used was purposive sampling. Sampling is defined as the selection of the specific data source from the target population so that the research aims and questions can be understood (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015, p. 1775). Purposive sampling was adopted in this study with the belief that the expert participants interviewed had the best knowledge of the research topic and would be well-equipped to assist in providing an in-depth understanding of the project and its performance (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014, p. 04).

1.9.6.1. Sampling criteria

The criteria for sample selection that was followed targeted one key stakeholder of the UCDP that is the Department of Higher Education and Training participant. The DHET personnel was interviewed with the aim of assessing if the objectives of the project had been met. Secondly, the Senior management level coordinating the project at WSU. Thirdly, the project leaders' level in the management structure of the UCDG at WSU and the two focus groups of the project per student development-related and staff-related projects. The senior personnel were interviewed to get their perspectives in terms of the overall objectives of the project interrogated in conjunction with the reports submitted by WSU to DHET and assessment produced by DHET about the performance of the UCDG as linked to the strategic planning of WSU and project objectives.

Moreover, the interviews strengthened the findings and results and further reduced bias of the study that could possibly emanate from the Programmed Manager. At WSU, the UCDG management structure consists of the two Executive Managers (overall coordinator and project leader), two Senior Management (Project coordinators), the project manager who is also the project leader, and five other project leaders. The second level of the UCDG management structure is the implementation level where project managers/leaders who are directly involved in the implementation and involved in the evaluation process of the UCDG. In this category, the aim was to get their experiences of being involved in the process, achievements, and challenges thereafter and this category is aligned to research question two and five. All the above categories were selected based on their direct involvement in the UCDG and selecting the above two levels of management assisted in getting a refined unit of analysis as

the participants were experts in their fields (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Lastly, the two focus groups of the project per two focus areas namely student development and staff development were interviewed. This last category was included to corroborate the claims made by the implementers and is aligned to question three and five where the intention is to assess the change in the process and organisational culture as a result of evaluation.

1.9.6. Process of Analysis

1.9.7.1. Thematic analysis

The method of analysis adopted in this study was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is best described as the most flexible method in qualitative research and as the method of identifying themes and patterns of meaning across the dataset with regards to a research question developed (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 175). Furthermore, thematic analysis is further distinguished into two methods which are inductive and deductive analysis. However, an inductive thematic analysis was employed as this study sought to generate analysis that is not based on any theory but shaped by the viewpoint of the researcher which is developed in the form of themes. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documents was transcribed, patterns searched, data reduction and interpretation done, and data patterns analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 166).

Transcribing data assisted in familiarizing myself with the data available for analysis as well as in the coding process. Lastly, the data coding was performed so that data could be reduced to only the data that was needed to explain the phenomenon or research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, complete coding was used which assisted in searching for anything and everything in the dataset that helped to answer the research questions. Once the data had been coded, the overarching themes that encompassed all the coding items were developed. Once the themes had been developed, they were reviewed to check any linkage or overlap between these themes.

Finally, an analysis was done in conjunction with the literature review in chapter two to check for any similarities or whether the findings of the research indeed responded to the gaps identified in the literature.

1.9.7.2. Document analysis

With regards to document analysis, the trends from 2014 -2017 reports before evaluation and comparing them to 2018 -2020 reports during the evaluation process of the UCDG were analysed. Furthermore, the project plan that contains the broad goal and objectives of the project was explored to assess whether the performance of the project indeed improved or achieved its efficacy as a result of the process undertaken when the evaluators were involved (Forss, Rebien, & Carlsson, 2002). The documents that were examined ensured that whatever data was obtained from individual participants was deemed trustworthy and was justified by the document review (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014). Triangulation was performed through cross-referencing the facts from the semi-structured interviews and the document review as stated above.

This analysis from the data obtained from different instruments adopted ensured that everything and anything had been covered in the data set and the strength of the study was achieved and positionality of the researcher did not affect the results of the study.

1.10. Limitations, feasibility and positionality

The study was limited to only one university in the Eastern Cape which is WSU because the university is rural and previously disadvantaged and still struggling with the systems. Therefore, any improvement in the system could be easily identified. Since the non-probability sampling technique was selected, there was an inherent risk of human judgment that could the selection process (Bryman, Social research methods, 2012). Therefore, the study is not generalisable because non-probability sampling technique was adopted, particularly purposive sampling; therefore, the results of the study only relate to the UCDG programme within the WSU learning and Teaching department and can only be utilised in other projects in a different context within WSU (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

Furthermore, the overall programme manager was not interviewed in this research as he is the writer of the dissertation and if interviewed there may be a lack of objectivity. To overcome this limitation, in the methodology the four layers of semi-structured interviews were conducted including the external stakeholders and beneficiaries of the programme, in addition to the document review to ensure that the tools and approaches to triangulate are adequate and that analysis is not weakened by

researcher positionality. Furthermore, this corroboration ensured that researcher positionality does not pose a threat to the quality of the study.

The research was done in one project in an institution under Teaching and Learning where data was easily accessible. This, therefore, means that there were no travelling costs to be incurred to collect the data. Furthermore, the researcher was the one collecting data. The progress report for the 2020 period was not covered in this research given the year under review, and there was no assessment from DHET and CREST that was used to assess some of the information.

Lastly, the participants that were selected for interviews were not vulnerable to the researcher as they were the senior managers and managers for different sections. Therefore, the data collected was credible and could pose no threat of being manipulated by the researcher. For example, the Senior representative from DHET, two Senior Directors, one Executive Director, four campus Managers were interviewed. Furthermore, all participants were made comfortable during the interviews, as a result, they provided as much information as possible.

1.11. Ethics

This study ensured confidentiality and protection against any harm or exposure to harm of the participants that partook in the interviews. The ethical clearance approval was requested from the Wits University Human Research Ethics committee (non-medical). A research protocol was developed and submitted to the Wits Ethics Committee for review. All the participants who partook in the interview were assured of confidentiality as much as possible and their identification or names will not be published to ensure anonymity. A consent form outlining the objectives and purpose of the research provided by Wits University was provided to all participants in the interviews to confirm that they agreed to participate in the study. The consent forms to individual participants and the university adopted as the case study were used to ensure that the normal process was followed despite being part of the project that was evaluated to ensure objectivity. The discretion to withdraw was given to research participants at any point in their participation. The researcher, on the other hand, had to adhere to rules and regulations of ethical research.

1.12. Trustworthiness of data collected and findings

Qualitative research is interested in individual experiences and meanings; as a result, when analysing the data collected through interviews, different findings may be obtained. However, there is a need for assessing the trustworthiness of these findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The trustworthiness of qualitative research should conform to these five key concepts such as credibility, dependability, transferability, conformability, and authenticity (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

1.12.1. Credibility and transferability

The credibility of this study was measured on the basis that three data collection instruments were utilised, namely interviews, focus groups and document review. Furthermore, when analysing the data, triangulation of the information was adopted as the interview data was cross-checked against the document review to fact-check what has been stated in the interviews to ensure that the findings are acceptable (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Lastly, the piloting of interview questions was utilised to ensure the validity of the information. A study is referred to as credible based on how satisfactorily or confidently the data collected addresses or answers the research questions and if the research is acceptable (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014). The findings of this study may be transferred to other projects within WSU which have not adopted the M&E as a tool of monitoring its projects and better performance could be achieved (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Transferability refers to the extent to which results of the research could be transferred to other groups of people or contexts and if the results can be utilised in other settings where the context is different (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 282).

1.12.2. Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability of this study will be conducted through keeping the records of the research process including all the six semi-structured interviews conducted, transcribed and stored, including storage of the documents reviewed so that they can be audited or verified anytime as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Moreover, the data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis will assist in filling the knowledge gap as identified under the problem statement. Dependability can be described by the stability of the data collected over time and from different conditions (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014). To ensure that the research is

undertaken in good faith, the study conducted a member check to all six participants that participated in the interviews to verify if what had been transcribed was indeed what was said in the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Conformability of findings refers to the accuracy of the findings and whether they are presented in the same manner that the data was collected from the participants (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

1.12.3. Triangulation

Triangulation in research is when a researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods when studying the same phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This can substantially increase the credibility or trustworthiness of research findings. In the current study, triangulation was achieved through the use of more than two different data sources, namely semi-structured interviews (Leadership) - two groups of participants (Senior Management and Project Implementers), focus group discussion (beneficiaries) and document analysis (former TDG and UCDP reports). The use of multiple sources of data helped to deal with the problem of uncertainty and unclarified issues as these provided answers to the main research question through responses from research instruments. Briggs and Coleman (2007) pinpoint that the integrity of being rigorous, careful, and utterly accurate in processing information is the mark of a credible researcher.

2. Chapter two: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

Chapter two highlights the importance of this study based on the existing debates around literature, their findings as well as gaps identified. For this research, literature that is relevant to the topic of process use is reviewed and the literature review describes the different perspectives of how other scholars view evaluation theory, the different types of theories of evaluation use with specific focus on process use. The chapter also illustrates the theoretical framework adopted in the study. Furthermore, this chapter defines evaluation use, its originality and unpacks its related concepts with specific focus on process use. The chapter starts by providing the background of establishing evaluation use in general. It further elaborates on the different types of evaluation use and then provides more details on process use as the focus of this study.

Different themes around process use are developed as aligned to the research questions and objectives of this study. A further discussion focusing on business performance measurement in general and then zooming down into the performance measurement of the project is done in this chapter. The chapter continues to examine the different perspectives of different scholars on how they describe the performance measurement of the project as linked to evaluation process use. The chapter ends off with a focus on what is already known, the gaps identified in the literature reviewed, and which direction the study takes.

2.2. Theoretical framework for process use

Evaluation theory is a combination of different theories whether proven or not proven but organised together to address the practice of evaluation as the target (Shadish, 1998, p. 02). However, the main challenge of the evaluation theory is that it is not properly developed, as there is no empirical research to base the evaluation practice on King and Alkin (2019) agree with the latter statement as they mention that there is no descriptive theory based on the empirical research for evaluation use, and further state that evaluation use subscribes to the prescriptive theory which is made up of nine theories. The lack of theory in evaluation based on empirical research has pushed for contingency theories which are used as the dashboard for evaluation practices

such as those theories which have already been developed for other purposes rather than the evaluation practice (Shadish, 1998) and (King & Alkin, 2019, p. 435).

Given the lack of descriptive theory, therefore, King and Alkin, (2019) make a distinction between these two categories for formal theories of use. The first is prescriptive use theories which is a combination of nine theories by different theorists: A prescriptive theory is defined as “a set of rules, prescriptions, prohibitions, and guiding frameworks that specify what a good or proper evaluation is and how evaluation should be done” (King & Alkin 2019, p. 435). In this study, the researcher used both the prescriptive theory and formal models of evaluation to guide the analysis, interpretation and provide answers to the objectives of the study (King & Alkin, 2019). These two theories guided the researcher to analyse and discuss how learning provides change in individual thinking or behaviour, programme or organisational changes in procedures and culture that occur among those involved in the evaluation process.

Furthermore, prescriptive theory aided the researcher in assessing the quality of evaluation performed by CREST and the gaps in terms of evaluator duties during the process. Given that the evaluation process use aims to provide learning and behavioural changes, thus, these theories were chosen to guide the assessment of the evaluators did achieve that in line with the objectives of this study. Moreover, the theories were adopted on the basis that they interrogate the context, situation dynamics and learning that could be obtained by potential stakeholders who will be involved in the evaluation process. This study discussed five themes that are developed based on the research questions that were derived from these two theories adopted. The prescriptive theory was adopted based on the principle that process use shall be engaged if provides learning at different levels of stakeholders, and interaction which in turn provides experience in line with the 'learn to learn' type of use.

Therefore, analysis of the extent of engagement of process use as a tool to provide learning is done. Secondly, the basis of the principle that advocates for skills development of different stakeholders was adopted as an analysis tool that is eventually aligned to improved performance in implementing the project (King & Alkin, 2019). Thirdly the principle that allows for process use was interrogated in context-specifically, which in this case study is the UCDG project in the higher education

sector, which was utilised to assess the change in program, organisational culture. Furthermore, this information can potentially inform the evaluation process to individuals, organisations and communities. Moreover, this study uses as a background, the knowledge that prescriptive theory allows evaluators to engage and train the stakeholders that are involved in the process so that they may use the skills obtained and indirectly change the way they implement the projects (Alkin & Vo, 2018).

Formal models of evaluation use have been adopted because they provide a key feature for process use in organisational learning (King & Alkin, 2019). This principle, drawn from formal models of evaluation, was utilised to guide analysis and interpret how the evaluator and other stakeholders interacted within the UCDG evaluation. This analysis was aimed at providing an understanding of the organisational culture and other complexities in an open system as stated in the process use definition from which the project operates, which may have to be accommodated to provide learning that brings change.

Therefore, the prescriptive theory and formal evaluation models of evaluation, as alluded to above were applied to guide the analysis of the data obtained as aligned to all changes specified in the process use definition and assist to guide the researcher to provide clear answers to research questions aligned with the objectives of the study. Since process use stems from learning through the evaluation process that eventually brings change, it is, therefore, important that the discussion of themes looks at (1) individual behavioural change or organisational procedural change, (2) skill set acquired from the process, (3) stakeholder involvement that would influence change, (4) cultural changes as a result of process, and finally, challenges to stakeholders that may hinder change.

Having discussed different theories and further chosen the one suitable for this study, below are key concepts of the study that are discussed as aligned or guided by the theoretical framework as stated above.

2.3. Originality of evaluation use as a concept

The concept of evaluation use was first established in the United States in the 1960s. However, the challenge that was encountered is that those conducting evaluations at that time lacked the necessary knowledge of identifying the difference between evaluation and research (Alkin & Taut, 2003). As a result, the importance of the

evaluation results was never taken seriously, as it was claimed that it does not talk to users, and it is not utilised in the projects being implemented. This resulted in the shift of focus on the evaluation profession to be more on evaluation use (Alkin & Taut, 2003). Alkin & King (2016) explain that evaluation use originated from two stems being the tests and measurement taken primarily from education and secondly from social research methods with a specific focus on knowledge utilisation. These two categories resulted in evaluation use that was categorised into three types being instrumental use, symbolic use and conceptual use.

2.3.1. Evaluation Use

Evaluation use is defined as how evaluation impacts the results of the programme being evaluated (Alkin & Taut, 2003). It further asks different questions such as, "did the evaluation generate new knowledge, did the evaluation bring change, how the programme was run before it was there, and lastly, did the programme staff acquire new skills that may be attributable to the evaluation process?" (Alkin & Taut, 2003). Johnson, et al. (2009) on the other hand, defines evaluation use “as the application of evaluation processes, products, or findings to produce an effect". When viewing the above definitions from different scholars, it becomes clear that evaluation use is closely linked to the change that may happen during or after the evaluation as a result of the evaluation conducted. Furthermore, it focuses on the skills that should be acquired by the stakeholders involved in the evaluation process.

King & Alkin (2019) developed enough evidence to illustrate the importance of evaluation use indicating that it is central to the implementation of different interventions. Moreover, the evidence of the centrality of use comes from three sources: (1) its prominence in the field's professionalising documents, (2) its distinct role in numerous evaluation theories, and (3) researchers' continuing focus on this topic. Alkin & Taut (2003) came up with two further distinct categories of evaluation use namely, process use and finding use. Previously, evaluation use was more focused on finding use which was further categorised into three types that are instrumental use, (3) conceptual use, and (4) symbolic use (Alkin & King, 2016). However, after the discovery of the second category of evaluation use that is process use, an additional two types were adopted; Process use, persuasive or legitimising use (Ledermann, 2012).

(Alkin & Taut, 2003) further explain that the two categories of evaluation use are informed by evaluation knowledge that is underpinned by three factors namely, human factors, context factors and evaluation factors. Ledermann (2012) believes that low-pressure evaluation can cause change by sensitising people who participate in the programme by providing more skills and knowledge as long as it provides something new which is of great quality. The latter argument is in conjunction with the statement that not only the finding results shall trigger evaluation use, but the process in which evaluation is conducted could also change how the key stakeholders think or implement the project. Furthermore, it illustrates that along the way, skills may be developed way before the results are produced and a sense of ownership by the stakeholders would have been encouraged. Whilst the literature stated above focused on finding use, this study only focused on the additional type of use that is process use.

2.3.2. Process Use

Patton (1998, p. 225) defines process use as “behaviour that is relating to and being indicated by individual changes in thinking and behaviour that occurs among those involved in the evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process". Patton further provides a different dimension of definition by stating that process use, refers to using evaluation logic and processes to help people in programs and organizations to learn to think evaluatively (Patton 1998, p. 226). Alkin & King (2016) use the term process use to describe how "an awareness of this process on both evaluators' and users' parts may enable the evaluation community . . . to look upon the completion of an evaluation as a worthwhile activity . . . " (p. 251). Patton (1998, p. 06) defines process use as "individual changes in thinking and behaviour, and program or organizational changes in procedures and culture that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process". Given all the different definitions by different scholars, the latter definition was used for this study as it assists in the investigation of behavioural or thinking changes in the project leaders that were involved in the process and further change in the programme or organisation.

Process use was discovered by Patton (1997 p. 225) when consulting participants after findings had been issued to assess how the recommendations had been implemented. He further illustrates that instead of participants responding to the

implementation, they responded to the process and how it has helped them to execute their duties. This feedback from participants triggered and introduced process use by Patton in his work on Utilization-Focused Evaluation (1997). Process use emphasises the idea that participants of an evaluation benefit from an evaluation by merely taking part in the process through learning while they are involved in the process which in turn assists the stakeholders to acquire more skills.

Process use is further categorised into five types namely, learning to learn, developing professional networks, creating shared understanding, strengthening the project and boosting morale (Forss, Rebien, & Carlsson, 2002). For this study, learning to learn was utilised. These five categories are the extension of the categories of process use established by Patton (1998). Ever since the introduction of process use, it recently became a key concept in addressing the way the conduct of the evaluation process impacts individual stakeholders and organisations when the evaluator is involved or is guiding the process.

Owing to the discussion of process use above, the following themes were discussed to unpack different scholars' perspectives and knowledge gaps.

2.4. Theme one: Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use

A study by Cottrell, et al. (2015) indicates that the lack of clearly defined measures of reporting and evaluation limits the ability to learn from the past. The study further states that more effective activity is likely to provide benefits in the project. These benefits include the positive change to the quality and impact of the programme and additionally, building relationships and educating the stakeholders who are part of the process. Ledermann (2012) in an article whose focus was on mechanisms to be adopted in a complex phenomenon where evaluation use is affected by different factors in a context-bound situation, found that in low pressure and low conflict situations, evaluation through an evaluator can cause change but bring new ideas that can awaken people especially if they are of good quality. However, in a high-pressure situation, the evaluator is expected to work as the referee and decide on the change after careful interactions with different stakeholders.

Patton (2020) believes that a major factor in evaluation use is evaluation credibility and evaluator credibility that is determined or perceived, and actual evaluator

competency. This statement is supported in a way that if the evaluator possesses great competencies as a teacher, the change in the major stakeholders that are involved in the evaluation process with regards to skills and gained knowledge and performance in executing the duties would be easily noticeable or identified as part of process use.

"The Good Practice project is a lever for change, but primarily a means for gaining knowledge about our strengths and weaknesses, and our margins for improvement" (p.280). This statement is also supported by process use implementation as defined as a tool or device that is brought to bring change on how the role payers think and do things as well as increasing knowledge on how to implement the project going forward way before the results are issued (Patton, 1998).

The literature reviewed above highlighted that there are benefits for stakeholders to be involved in the evaluation process that includes positive change in the quality of the programme, new ideas that could be brought including the importance of evaluator involvement. Furthermore, it highlighted changes in major stakeholders with regards to skills and knowledge gained including performance. Therefore, this study, through interviews, sought to understand what other behavioural changes to individuals and procedures developed as a result of the evaluation process since they are understudied in the literature reviewed.

2.5. Theme two: The skillset that has been acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process

In the study by Patton (2007, p. 105), where the main debate was around what the process use entails, one of the findings is that the process use demonstrates incidental learning as a result of stakeholder engagements. It is further stated that an evaluation can include the evaluative capacity building to be effective and, in that manner, it produces capacity in the form of process use. Other perspectives from different scholars subscribe to the notion that even though the process may pose good, intended results it may also pose bad results such as misuse of process use as distinguished by Star Wars (Patton, 2007, p. 108).

Moreover, good practices are associated with an interaction between the key role players in the project implementation, and this is the case with DHET, the evaluators

(CREST), and university participants (Arnaboldi & Azzone, 2010). These interactions are expected to upskill those actors who are not familiar with the tools that underpin the project being implemented. Patton supports this when explaining the overarching principle of systems thinking that is demonstrated in the blue marble principles that integration in a project yields good results and further promotes working together across different sectors through the cross silos principle (Patton, Blue Marble Evaluation premises and principles, 2020).

In the study by Patton (1997), where the bone of contention is the challenge of evaluation reports that do not have an effect on the organisations since they are kept on the shelves to gather data. It is stated that utilisation focus evaluation is key because it is not left only to evaluators but involves the key stakeholders from the beginning of evaluation to the end so that the results may be owned or utilised (Patton, 1997). Evaluators do not advocate for any model but interactions with different stakeholders assist them to select the best model close to their content. Therefore, evaluators are not the ones determining the model. It has also been discovered that the intended users or key stakeholders are more likely to utilise the evaluation reports if they are involved and have a sense of ownership in the process and findings of the evaluation (Patton, 1997).

Lastly, it was discovered that for the utilisation-focused evaluation effectiveness, it shall be inclusive of the personal factors which are the primary users who care about the evaluation process and its findings (Patton, 1997). The focus of these studies is on the involvement of the key stakeholders in the process so that they may own up and use the result at the end. Therefore, utilisation focus does not address the issue of involvement by key stakeholders which in turn will change the way the project or programme performs before the results or findings are issued.

The key highlights from the literature reveals that during the evaluation process, there must be skill transference from the evaluator to the stakeholders involved that will in turn encourage use. Secondly, the literature highlighted that involvement in the process provides incidental learning of different skills by those involved. Therefore, this study sought to understand the actual skills that may be learned by involving stakeholders in the process which may improve the implementation and performance

of the project. Moreover, the study ascertained whether there were any skills that were transferred by evaluators during the process as illustrated in the literature.

2.6. Theme three: Changes in project performance due to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in evaluation process use

In a study by Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia Söderström (2013) where the early involvement of key stakeholders is interrogated, it has been discovered that creative solutions and sharing of ideas also emanates which assists the project implementation going forward and increases the project value. This involvement reveals the alternative ways which were never identified when the project was initiated and as a result stakeholders' knowledge gets employed. Furthermore, it has been emphasised that different stakeholders are involved in different stages of the project as their importance differs in stages. Lastly, the literature highlighted that the number of stakeholders should be limited to a number that is manageable to avoid conflict between these members as the interests may be different (Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Söderström, 2013). Whereas the literature illustrates different perspectives; however, the criteria of measuring the importance of stakeholders and how to approach these stakeholders specifically, those holding strategic positions were invited to participate in this study.

Nederhand & Klijn (2017) examine the involvement of stakeholders in public-private partnership projects and what effect their involvement has in terms of the project performance and innovativeness of the project. Aapaoja, Haapasalo & Söderström (2013) allude that the early involvement of stakeholders in a project brings more ideas, this study agrees with that position. However, this study believes that these ideas only affect innovativeness but not performance (Nederhand & Klijn, 2017).

Patton (1998), argues that process use may be used for good or bad; it may be linked to performance measurement. He further explains that the mantra of performance measurement – "what gets measured gets done" has different implications as the project leaders whose performance is measured can do anything to manipulate the results so that they may portray the good picture even if it is not good. He further explains the downfall of using evaluation as a performance measurement or accountability tool by stating that when the stakes are very high for those involved, the accountability function of evaluation can lead to distortion of key indicators: what gets measured gets corrupted.

Patton (1998) believes that involvement or engaging in the evaluation process has got enduring benefits in terms of use for both the individuals and organisation such as improved performance in implementation and reporting as opposed to evaluation findings. This argument is based on the fact that imparting knowledge always bears positive results that may not only be used in the evaluation culture but even beyond and this is considered to be process use that advocates how to think in an evaluative manner.

Nederhand & Klijn (2017) argue that performance may sometimes be described narrowly as achieving the target set; however, (Kaplan and Norton 1996; Neely et al. 2000) define performance as "the effectiveness and efficiency of a process to achieve a fixed objective or set of goals". Nederhand & Klijn (2017) state that there are indicators that can be used to measure performance and these indicators are categorised into the effectiveness of the solution offered, the support, the integral character of the solution (role played by solution), is the solution doable in the future and finally how cost-effective is this solution (efficiency).

Chiesa, Frattini & Lazzarotti (2007) argues against Patton (1998) that measuring performance in business is an imperative task to support the decision-makers, motivating people, stimulating learning improving coordination and communication, and finally achieving the organisations results". They further illustrate that if the MPS framework is properly designed it may be utilised as the managerial tool useful for supporting different components in the process such as motivating people and learning improved coordination to the most unpredictable effect it shows during its actual application. The authors further agree with Taylor & Ahmed-Kristensen (2017) that a performance management system is a good tool that can be used by any organisation to measure its performance.

Arnaboldi & Azzone (2010), in their study which focuses on the translation of a performance management system into an operational plan in a public sector context, believe that as part of measuring the performance of the project, data gathering is one of the key concepts through observations, ongoing engagements with the key participants and stakeholders by holding meetings then the data collected would be analysed against the document review. Furthermore, interviews with the key person involved in the project are important so that the authenticity and validation of results

could be obtained through triangulation of the data collected. The results of this data collected would provide a clear picture of how the project has been conducted at organisational level from the top management who are the policy developers to the implementers on the ground.

Lastly, it has also been discovered that the system cannot be a blanket approach but rather could be designed for a specific section or context in the public sector. However, one point that is not clear in this process is the basis from which the results would be measured against, as the policies may be drafted in such a way that they suit the needs of the key decision-makers issue of ethical behaviour (Boston, Bradstock, & Eng, 2021). Arnaboldi & Azzone (2010) explain that the good practices of the project cannot be measured in vain but the systems and policies underpinning the coordination of the project should also be visited which will serve as the benchmark of a good result. Another important area where the good practices can easily be realised is in the support staff that is administering the projects such as project managers, as sometimes the failure may not be in the project implementation but could have been in the enablers such as support staff and resources being managed by such staff.

It is demonstrated that a different perspective is taken when performance measurement is conducted through M&E, the assessment of a project or programme's progress towards desired levels of specific activities, outputs, and outcomes is key and followed (Mascia, Pailler, Thieme, Rowe, & Bottrill, 2013). Using the M&E perspective, performance measurement is defined as the process of measuring progress towards the specified project, programme, or policy objectives, including desired levels of activities, outputs and outcomes (DAC, 2002) or (Mascia, Pailler, Thieme, Rowe b, & Bottrill, 2013). When analysing the M&E perspective, performance measurement is done purely to utilise the findings by the decision-makers that will assist them to make informed decisions. The literature is still scant when it comes to exploring how the process of developing M&E and the evaluation process contributes to upskilling different stakeholders that in turn may improve the performance due to the changed mindset.

It is further argued that given that performance measurement in the M&E perspective does not measure the counterfactuals, that is measuring what could have been the result should the intervention not be undertaken, therefore, the results on outcomes,

outputs, and activities cannot directly be attributable to the intervention (Khandker, Koolwal, & Samad, 2010, p. 22). Performance measurement is aligned with the management assessment and impact evaluation which then demonstrate that in the M&E perspective, the performance is focusing on result use rather than on process use (Evaluation, 2002).

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlighted different issues regarding the relationship between stakeholder involvement and project performance. Some scholars believe that stakeholders' involvement assists in sharing ideas that improve implementation whereas others believe that involvement of different stakeholders does not have an effect on the performance but has an effect on the innovation of the project. Lastly, the literature revealed that measuring performance in the project is key as it provides support to decision makers, stimulates learning, and improves coordination and organisational results. However, one scholar indicated the dual possibility that it may provide good or bad results when evaluation is used as a measurement tool. The literature about the involvement of stakeholders in improving project implementation and increased skills from implementers is still scanty. Therefore, this theme sought to understand if there was any relationship between stakeholder involvement and project performance, specifically at the level of stakeholders that may have effect.

Secondly, what are the bases used for measuring performance by both commissioners and funders in the projects. Given the argument provided with regards to different perspectives of process use when linked to performance measurement, it is vital to further look at other arguments from different scholars with regards to how involvement in the process may affect change in implementation and institutional culture which is discussed in the next section.

2.7. Theme four: The organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use

A study by Tanner & Willingh (2014), where the focus was on the factors resulting from agile project success or failure revealed that organisational culture instead of hierarchal culture is considered as a success factor. Hierarchal culture is described as a situation where the more senior staff members of an organisation are not involved

in the project as a result decision-making takes longer (Tanner & Willingh, 2014). Other factors that were alluded to are organisational resistance to change, organisational culture of being too traditional and too political that limits the flexibility of employees in terms of creativity. Tanner & Willingh (2014) further illustrate that these factors sometimes lead to a lack of buy-in from certain management staff members. While all these factors have been highlighted, the literature does not get into how these cultural challenges can be reduced or mitigated. Therefore, this study investigated the similarities as well as the suggestions of mitigating factors that may be considered in the context of evaluation.

Knowledge management, capacity building, and communication are important tactical issues for improving evaluation use but maybe relatively insignificant compared to the more persistent and systemic cultural and psychological dimensions as emphases by symbolic use which may, in turn, improve the performance of any project or organisation holistically (McNulty, 2012). Ledermann (2012), in an article whose focus was on mechanisms to be adopted in a complex phenomenon where evaluation use is affected by different factors in a context-bound situation found that in a low-pressure and low conflict situation, evaluation through an evaluator can cause change but brings new ideas that can awaken people especially if they are of good quality. However, in a high-pressure situation, an evaluator is expected to work as the referee and decide on the change after careful interactions with different stakeholders.

Patton (1998) believes that the evaluator is supposed to involve the key stakeholders through the process of clarifying the goals, the targets of the program, and results that are expected from the evaluation as part of process use. This process ensures that skills are developed and in turn, performance is improved before the findings of the evaluation process are issued. He further explains that using a logic model and questions to facilitate evaluation when communicating to stakeholders is also important in process use.

Different scholars have indicated that in many cases, the success of the project relies significantly on the number of senior staff involved in the process (hierachical culture rather than organisational culture) who in turn are also the decision makers. Other scholars have referred to resistance to change, political dynamics, and extremely traditional ways of doing things as the challenges that hinder change in

implementation. This research focused on seeking understanding of the role played by the evaluator in curbing the challenges that are associated with organisational culture and other dynamics. Furthermore, the study assessed the involvement of senior staff in the process and the effect it had in terms of change.

2.8. Theme five: Challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use

In an article by Wojewnik-Filipkowska, Dryl, Dziadkiewicz, & Dryl (2019) where the role of stakeholders and how their perspectives, relationships, expectations and risks may affect the project results are analysed one of the key findings is that large diversity of stakeholders may not be linear, which then poses risks and conflicts at each stage of the process (Wojewnik-Filipkowska, Dryl, Dziadkiewicz, & Dryl, 2019, p. 10). Furthermore, it is emphasised that stakeholder needs, and effects may differ completely from each other, hence stakeholder analysis and needs must be identified so that they may be involved at different stages of the process.

Cottrell, et al. (2015) argues that there is a lack of clearly defined measures of reporting and evaluation which limits the ability to learn from the past. Further, they believe that defining the benefits and challenges of stakeholder engagement in a systematic review is an integral part of assessing the impact of stakeholder involvement. The challenges highlighted in the results include the costs, resources, finding the right people, and difficulties associated with engagements that need balancing between the right types of stakeholders with the right time in the process (Cottrell, et al., 2015).

Some challenges may be encountered by key stakeholders when involved in the process use and such challenges include conflict of interests, power dynamics amongst the key stakeholders and stakeholders with different interests who may influence the evaluation process (Patton, 2020). However, there are some mechanisms used to combat these challenges where an evaluator may apply the blue marble principles such as Ying- Yang which is designed to harmonise stakeholders with different interests to work together to achieve a certain objective/s (Taylor & Ahmed-Kristensenb, 2017; Patton, 2020). Therefore, in addressing the challenges as discussed above, an evaluator should play the role of being the mediator and facilitator or the teacher at the same time as stakeholder involvement needs the proper managerial strategies (Wojewnik-Filipkowska, Dryl, Dziadkiewicz, & Dryl, 2019).

Different challenges have been illustrated in the literature which includes conflict of interests from different stakeholders who have different agendas and power dynamics; hence, it is stated that defining challenges becomes key in order to combat those challenges in a systematic manner which in turn demonstrates impact through their involvement in the process. The most critical challenge that has been mentioned is the issue of identifying the relevant people to be involved in the process. However, the role played by the evaluators in identifying the challenges including the right people are assessed in this theme.

Having discussed both the key concepts of the study which are process-use and performance, the literature has revealed different views by different scholars; however, there are still gaps that are not addressed which are detailed below.

2.9. Knowledge gap

While the literature review provides an understanding of how the process use components and changes are viewed by different scholars on how they provide learning in a process and the performance measurement of the local and global businesses; however, there still seems to be a gap that is not addressed. There is a lack of evidence with regards to measures put in place concerning the change in the individual thinking or behaviour as a result of process use in the higher education context. Therefore, this study sought to advance knowledge by investigating the effect of process use as a mechanism of performance in the context of Learning and Teaching projects in a South African university context. Furthermore, the study explored the different experiences of all the stakeholders who were involved in the process of developing M&E and further participated in the evaluation process.

As discussed in the literature above and process use definition, measuring performance through process use involves change; therefore, change in the UCDP project and change in individual stakeholders' behaviours or attitudes was utilised as the yardstick to measure learning through the process and change in performance of the project. The results of these investigations would assist in assessing whether there has been any effect in performance and if any, was it as a result of process use or other determinants.

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Research Methods and procedures

The main objective of this chapter was to discuss the research paradigm, the research approach to the study, the procedures that were followed, methods of collecting data and how data was processed and analysed. However, the background of UCDP which is the bases of this study will be discussed to give context of the study. Therefore, the components of the methodology chapter were discussed as follows, research paradigm, the research design, the research approach, instruments employed for collecting data, population sampling approach, ethical consideration, and trustworthiness. The chapter outlines how the data was processed and analysed, and what were the limitations of the study, and how the researcher dealt with the ethical imperatives. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates how successful the research approach was and how it differs from what was initially contained in the research proposal. Lastly, the study outlines how the theoretical framework was used in the methodology to enhance the analysis of the data collected.

The study was approved by the WSU and all the participants have given consent to participate in the data collection process (See attached Annexure B). The first evaluation was conducted when the project was still two sister Grants namely Teaching Development Grant and Research Development Grant in 2017. Following the combination and expansion of the two to UCDP only one participatory evaluation was conducted in 2020 on which this study is based. Five of the participants that were interviewed were involved in the process of evaluation from the onset and the other two participants joined the evaluation at a later stage as a result of staff turnover that was initially part of the evaluation. In both focus groups, none of the participants were involved in the evaluation initially however, two of the focus group participants later were involved after they became the project leaders.

All the participants that were initially involved in the project evaluation were there from the start to the end of the evaluation with interactions time and again with the evaluators. The evaluators have adopted a participatory evaluation approach that was based on the previous annual progress reports that were submitted to the DHET for 2018 and 2019. From there, the evaluators established that the role players of the

project leaders have little knowledge of the key components of the logic model that was adopted in the UCDG. As a result, evaluators organised sessions for all the involved stakeholders to provide basic knowledge of the key components which has resulted in the 2018 period not being evaluated (Cousins & Earl, 1992).

The data collection process started with the literature review. The literature was read then themes and topics that were relevant in responding to the overarching questions of what process changes have been had within the University Capacity Development Programme at WSU as a result of evaluations conducted were developed. The literature was important in identifying the knowledge gap and further structuring the study. Finally, the questions and themes for interviews were shaped by the literature review, and the analysis was guided by the theoretical framework. The questions were framed around the learning and skills that have been brought by evaluation process use and changes that resulted from that learning from individuals, projects and institutions. The literature review and the theoretical framework further informed the discussion of the findings and analysis of these findings to make informed recommendations.

After all the interviews were completed, the data collected was then transcribed into more meaningful information. Each participant transcription took a minimum of an hour to an hour and a half depending on the audio sound quality. Thereafter, the similarities and differences were prepared and further, the positionality of the researcher based on those findings. These findings were compared to the literature to assess which ones agree or contradict with the literature. As part of the interviews, the second step was to interview the two focus groups that were selected. The first set of the focus group was made up of project implementers where initially five were invited but only four turned up. The second focus group was comprised of beneficiaries where initially five were invited and only four turned up. The findings from the focus groups were also part of the similarities and differences exercise that was done in the main interviews.

The next step of data collection was the document review where the trends from 2014-2017 were compared to trends for 2018 -2019 to assess the change in the performance of the project. The interviews were conducted with the five project leaders who were involved in the evaluation process. Secondly, the project coordinator was

also interviewed. Lastly, the DHET representative who was the funder and was also part of the evaluation process was also interviewed.

3.3. University Capacity Development Programme overview.

The high attrition rate, student retention, throughput, and graduation rate in Higher Education as stated in the government Gazette (No. 25824 of 9 December 2003), have enforced the Department of Higher Education and Training on adopting different strategies that would help to improve the dropout rate, retention rate, throughput rate as well as graduation rate in the Higher Education sector (DHET,2006). The Higher Education (HE) Teaching Development policy framework identified funding as one of the steering mechanisms, along with quality assurance and academic planning, for the transformation of higher education in South Africa (DHET, 2013). To give further context to the University Capacity Development Grant, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced Teaching Development Grant (TDG) as the funding mechanism to mitigate the above-mentioned factors by incorporating the TDG into each University Block grant in 2004/5 and 2006/7 (DHET, 2006, p. 04).

However, upon the implementation of the TDG, it has been noted that there was a poor performance by many universities which was linked to the absence of policies and tools that were guiding the utilization of the grant (DHET, 2013). As a result of the factors in the latter statement, from 2018 to 2020 the Teaching Development Grant (TDG) was changed to the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG). UCDG was formed to replace TDG by combining and expanding two projects namely, Teaching Development Grant and Research Development Grant (DHET, 2013). As part of the summit that was held one of the resolutions that was taken was the increased focus on curriculum activities and transformation that examine the new and alternative content and pedagogies with regard to student success in the context of South Africa (DHET, 2018, p. 03). As a result, the UCDG is underpinned by three pillars which are (1) student development, (2) staff development, and (3) programme/curriculum development as they seek to address the same challenges that led to the development of TDG.

3.4. Research paradigm

Paradigm is defined as a particular way of seeing the world views or beliefs provided by the research which shapes the way the research will be conducted" (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Chilisa, 2012; Cresswell, 2009). Worldview according to Creswell and Clark

(2011) is described as informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology), and ethics and value systems (axiology). There are five common paradigms identified for this study from which the suitable paradigm was selected. Interpretive qualitative paradigm, positivist paradigm, post-positivist paradigm, constructivism paradigm, and Critical paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2013: Bhattacharjee, 2012; Bryman, 2012).

The paradigm espoused in this study is the qualitative interpretive paradigm as it seeks to get a deeper understanding of the human experiences of the UCDP project coordinators project leaders, project implementers, and the funders in the evaluation process (Chilisa, 2012). Qualitative interpretive paradigm ontologically moves from the premise that there are many intangible realities as people construct them therefore, reality is judged per personal mindset or social construct (Chilisa, 2012; Fraenkal & Wallem, 2007). Based on the latter statement interpretivists believes that knowledge is subjective as it is based on personal mind set and cannot be generalised into one common reality and that truth lies on the human experience. Thus, each researcher approaches research with an aim of enhancing/improving and sometimes contradicting philosophical assumptions and viewpoints.

The interpretive paradigm aims at producing individual concepts rather than the generalised concepts of the phenomenon. Moreover, the interpretive paradigm assisted in exploring the individual project coordinators, leaders and implementers experience based on their involvement in the process use through the UCDG project that was implemented in the institution (Chilisa, 2012). These are the project leaders who were involved in the evaluation process, including the decision-makers.

Through this qualitative study, it became possible to get a deeper understanding of different participants in the interview and further gather more information than was expected with regards to their involvement in the evaluation process use. The participants reflected more on their experiences and some on their lack of experience in the process and how they view things and the UCDP after the evaluation process.

This qualitative interpretive study further contributed to the researcher in terms of reducing bias as a deeper understanding of deeper issues was brought by different experiences of participants who participated in the data collection.

3.5. Research design

The research design espoused is the case study and, in this instance, the case at hand focused on the evaluation process of the UCDG at WSU and its effect. Common research designs that are linked to qualitative interpretivism include ethnography, phenomenology, biography, case study grounded theory (Ceswell, 2009). Case study research is defined as an in-depth investigation of a problem in one or more real-life settings over an extended period (Bhattacherjee, (2012) from individuals, groups, institutions of the community (Merriam, 2002).

The case research helped to derive a richer, more contextualised, and more authentic interpretation of the process use effect in the context of UCDG than most other research methods by its ability to capture a rich array of contextual data (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The data collected assisted to discover a wide variety of social, cultural, and political factors potentially related to the evaluation process of UCDG as alluded to in the process use definition and further transform organisational cultures (Patton, 1998).

The case study design assisted this study to get a deeper and contextual understanding of different factors that may affect the change in the project such as structural, cultural, political, and people involved in a project. Secondly, it has further assisted to understand that change may differ at different levels of the project, institution, and funders. Moreover, it became clear that change cannot be measured within a short space of time.

Furthermore, engaging in this research using a case study has shaped the researcher's thinking to understand more contextual factors that may lead to different results of the project. Given that I was once part of the project, my interpretation of the results was very limited; however, the case study provided a deeper context of challenges that even hinder the changes.

3.6. Research Approach

The study was conducted in a natural setting in which the project coordinator, the external funder, project leaders, project implementers, and beneficiaries of the University Capacity Development Grant were interviewed. The interview questions were used to gather and answer the questions based on self-reflections around experience in evaluation process use and changes encountered during the process. The information gathered in this context assisted the researcher to discuss the problem and come up with recommendations. An important concern of qualitative researchers is the meaning of human behaviour and experience. In this study, the researcher was interested in the process changes within the University Capacity Development Grant including the individuals who were involved in the process.

This study primarily adopted the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is defined as the process that flows from the philosophical assumptions, worldview, theoretical lens and the study of the research problem into the meaning of individual or group problems (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative research approach was adopted based on its of its characteristics that are drawing from the theoretical lens and assumptions to actual analysis of the individual thinking that was obtained through the data collection period.

At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. The different instruments that were used in collecting data include semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document review. Qualitative research is expected to study things and their natural settings which then assist in making sense and provide proper interpretation of the phenomenon at hand based on data collected from different participants; and in this case being process use in the UCDP (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, qualitative research is context-based, and results may take any direction based on a particular context.

3.7. Research Tools and their Application

For this study to satisfactorily uncover and respond to the research questions asked, both primary and secondary data collection methods were used for this study in the form of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document review (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). The case study research strategy is distinguished by its analytical focus on cases and in this instance, process use as the mechanism

through the University Capacity Development Grant and allows for the collection of data at two levels being (1) different cases and (2) any other data collection method (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.7.1. The key participant interviews

Key participant Interviews were qualitative in-depth interviews with experts or officials who were selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic of interest. In this study, the interviews were guided by a semi-structured instrument that probed the various aspects of project implementation in line with the prescriptive framework and evaluation models. The overall sample for the key participants' interviews was 05 project leaders, three females and two males, one project coordinator in the WSU, the DHET representative responsible for UCDP. The expectation was that each project leader, project implementer or would provide unique and rich information of value to the study (Bernard 2002; Lewis & Sheppard 2006; Polit & Hungler 1991).

An interview is defined as a professional conversation to get a participant to talk about their experiences and perspectives and capture their language and concepts about the topic that has been determined (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Interviews can be fully structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, or unstructured interviews but in this study, a semi-structured interview method was adopted.

Semi-structured interviews are defined as a prepared interview guide data collection tool that allows the researcher to have a list of the questions but does not rigidly get bound by pre-prepared questions either in terms of the sequence or the way of asking the question (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 78). This type is regarded as being on target even though it is hanging loose.

Semi-structured interviews were key as they assisted in getting a deeper insight into the different experiences including broadening the thinking of the researcher to some areas that were never initially thought of. The only challenge that was encountered was that these interviews were conducted via Microsoft teams and in some cases, the network challenges were experienced by other participants.

3.7.2. Data collected using Focus Groups

Focus groups are suitable for gaining an understanding of issues that a group of participants feels comfortable discussing and share group dynamics on the various issues being discussed. In the context of this study, the inputs from active participants

of the focus groups provided evidence for measuring successes, performance and how the participants viewed project implementation from their perspective.

Two focus groups made of five beneficiaries for the staff development focus area and five project implementers for the student development focus area were conducted. However, in both focus groups, only four participants managed to participate in the interviews.

In the initial proposal, the two focus groups were made up of five beneficiaries but later, one focus group was changed to focus on the five project implementers on the ground who were not part of the evaluation process. This group was included to assess the interaction between them and the project leaders and how information gets cascaded to the relevant target group. This assisted in strengthening the results and better triangulation.

With regards to sub-question three and five, two focus groups for student development-related programmes made up of peer-assisted learning coordinator, writing centre coordinator, academic advisor, and E-Learning coordinator were interviewed. The staff development-related programmes made up of PGDHET support lecturer, Master's programme beneficiary, VC Teaching Excellence award holder, and PHD beneficiary were interviewed.

The advantage of a focus group, unlike one-on-one interviews, is that the participants can provide different dynamics in a discussion topic without the interviewer probing follow-up questions. Therefore, this ensures that deeper understanding is provided after the discussion.

3.7.3. Data collected using document review

The documents were requested from the Learning and Teaching section where the UCDP was administered. Documents requested and reviewed were mainly the six progress reports from WSU for TDG (2014 -2017) and UCDG (2018 -2020). These progress reports were used to gather the expenditure trends between two trienniums that will assist in assessing the performance of the UCDG project that may be aligned to changes brought by evaluation process use if any. The UCDP plan was utilised together with the Monitoring and Evaluation template that was utilised to monitor the progress of the project.

Lastly, the two assessment reports from DHET for each triennium as stated above were also employed which helped to corroborate the data collected from other instruments. These evaluator/DHET assessment reports were important specifically that, as part of this study, was to assess change in performance that may be aligned to evaluation process use. Furthermore, it was important to understand what the expectations of the funder were opposed to the information provided by the University.

The questions for interviews were derived from the literature which included these documents and were further aligned to the theoretical framework. The strength of this method is that the documents are the data that is already in existence. Therefore, its authenticity is assured as it cannot be easily tampered with. The collaboration of different data collection methods helped to ensure that the data collected was data trustworthy, credible, authentic data and reduce bias from the Programme Manager as he was involved in the evaluation process and the results of the study obtained are strong (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

The above data collection instruments were used to ensure that all the research questions were answered, which in turn provided an in-depth understanding of the trends of this project (UCDP) before the evaluation process and during the evaluation process. This further provided evidence of whether the involvement of the project coordinators, managers and leaders in the evaluation process use had displayed any change in their thinking or behavioural procedures and the performance of the project. Lastly, whether the skills were acquired during the process may influence the organisational culture.

Table 3.7.3.1 Summary table of data collection instruments.					
Description	**Research Question one**	**Research question two**	**Research question three**	**Research Question four**	**Research Question five**
Key Participants	Senior Manager - Project coordinator, all five project leaders	Executive Manager – Project Leader (1) Finance – Project Leader (2). Manager: Project leader (3) Manager: Project Leader (4). Specialist Project leader (5).	Senior Manager - Project coordinator and DHET representative Focus group for project implementers (PAL, E-Learning, Academic Advising and Writing Centre Focus group for beneficiaries (Masters, PHD, PGDHET and Professional Academic Development)	Executive Manager: Project Leader (1) Finance – Project Leader (2) Manager: Project leader (3) Senior Manager – Project Coordinator (1) Manager - Project Leader (4). Specialist - Project leader (5).	Senior Management - Project coordinator DHET representative from T & L. Focus group for project implementers (PAL, E-Learning, Academic Advising and Writing Centre Focus group for beneficiaries (Masters, PHD, PGDHET and Professional Academic Development)
Instrument Used	Semi-structured interview	Semi-Structured interviews and document review	Semi- Structured interviews, document review and focus group	Semi- Structured interviews, document review.	Semi- Structured interviews and focus group
Number of participants	Six	Five	Ten	Six	ten

3.8. Document Review

- The three-progress reports from 2014 – 2017 for TDG and two progress reports from 2018 – 2019 for UCDG were used to compare the financial trends between the two trienniums to ascertain if there had been any change in performance of the entire project before the evaluation time (TDG tenure) and during the evaluation time (UCDG tenure).

- Lastly, the assessments report from the DHET and evaluators were used to validate if what had been stated by participants in the interviews correlated with the assessments made for 2014 to 2017 and 2018 to 2019 in terms of implementation changes.

3.9. Sampling approach

This study adopted the non-probability sampling technique and the approach used was purposive sampling. Sampling is defined as the selection of the specific data source from the target population such that the research aim, and questions could be understood (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015, p. 1775). Bhattacherjee (2012) defines purposive sampling as the approach which focuses on the selection of participants who are experts in the phenomenon being investigated and they are anticipated to provide rich and relevant information with regards to the research question. Purposive sampling was adopted in this study with the belief that the expert participants interviewed had the best knowledge of the research topic and would be able to assist in providing an in-depth understanding of the project and its performance (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014, p. 04).

- The DHET representative was selected on the basis that they are directly involved in dealing with the universities' progress reports and they are the ones who assess in terms of progress and performance.

- The project coordinator and the project leaders were selected on the basis that they were directly involved in the evaluation process of the UCDG.

- The project implementers, on the other hand, were selected based on their involvement in the implementation of the UCDG on the ground.

- Lastly, beneficiaries were selected to give their perspective on the claims that were made by the project coordinator, project leaders, and project implementers about the changes in the project.

The types of sampling approaches that are used from both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are categorised under two sampling techniques that are random sampling and non-random sampling techniques. Random sampling approaches include the simple random approach, systematic random approach, stratified random sampling approach and cluster random sampling. The results of this type of technique are generalisable across the entire population and they aim to keep the sampling error at a minimum level (Bryman, 2012, p. 184).

The non-random sampling approaches include these four examples: (1) Purposive sampling, convenience sampling, snowballing sampling and quota sampling (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

3.9.1. Sampling criteria

The criteria for sample selection that was followed targeted one key stakeholder of the UCDP that is the Department of Higher Education and Training participant. The Senior manager was interviewed specifically to focus on the main question, sub-question three and four. The DHET personnel was interviewed to assess if the objectives of the project had been met, getting their perspective in terms of UCDG implementation and performance of the project in the University. Moreover, strengthening the findings and results and further reducing bias from the Programme Manager. Secondly, there were two levels in the management structure of the UCDG at WSU and the two focus groups of the project per student development-related and staff-related projects. At WSU, the UCDG management structure consists of the two Executive Managers, two Senior Managers who were project coordinators, the project manager who is also the project leader, five other project leaders, and the project implementers on the ground.

The DHET representative was interviewed to assess and strengthen the findings obtained from university participants who were involved in the evaluation process. It was expected that the DHET representative would provide his experience when it comes to WSU's holistic view in terms of project implementation and performance. Secondly, the first level is project coordinators at the strategic level who were involved in the development of the project plans such as Senior Management personnel and semi-structured interviews were conducted and aligned to the main research question, sub-question number one, three, and four (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). The senior personnel was interviewed to get their perspectives in terms of the overall objectives of the project interrogated in conjunction with the reports submitted

by WSU to DHET and assessment produced by DHET about the performance of the UCDG as linked to the strategic plan of WSU and project objectives.

Whether the implementation of this project assisted in changing the mindset of the implementers, skills developed through process use, and if the project performed better to achieve its efficacy. The second level of the UCDG management structure was the implementation level where project managers/leaders who were directly involved in the implementation and involved in the evaluation process of the UCDG and the semi-structured interviews were also conducted. In this category, the aim was to get their experiences of being involved in the process, achievements, and challenges thereafter, and this category is aligned to research questions two and five. All the above categories were selected based on their direct involvement in the UCDG and selecting the above two levels of management assisted to get the different perspectives of this study, even the areas that were never thought of initially as units of analysis or as they are experts in the field (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Lastly, the two focus groups of the project per two focus areas namely student development, staff development were interviewed. This last category was included to corroborate the claims made by the implementers and was aligned to question three and five where they seek to assess the change in the process and organisational culture as a result of the evaluation. Although all these categories were aligned to different questions, however, the engagements overlapped in such a way that they touched on other questions that they were not allocated to. However, the data collected alone is not sufficient without being analysed and interpreted to give meaningful findings therefore the section below discusses how the data collected data was analysed. The data collected from different participants were stored in a password-protected computer and backed up to be kept in a safe.

3.10. Process of Analysis

The descriptive theory and evaluation models provided the analytical framework to be used as a guide in analysing the findings for this research. The data was thematically organised according to the literature themes that were derived from the research questions. There were five overarching themes similar to the literature review themes and sub-themes. Therefore, the researcher ensured that the themes speak as directly as possible to the questions established for this study.

3.10.1. Thematic analysis

The method of analyses that was adopted in this study was thematic analysis as it is best described as the most flexible method in qualitative research and defined as the method of identifying themes and patterns of meaning across the dataset with regards to a research question developed (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 175). Furthermore, thematic analysis is further distinguished into two methods being inductive and deductive analysis. However, inductive thematic analysis was employed as this study sought to generate analysis that is not based on any theory but shaped by the viewpoint of the researcher which was developed in the form of themes.

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews and documents review was then analysed; however, that cannot happen randomly, as a certain procedure had to be followed. Firstly, the data collected from semi-structured interviews were prepared by transcribing the audio data collected from seven interviewees and two focus groups into transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 166).

Transcribing one participant, every ten minutes took an hour plus to transcribe which was a very lengthy and tiring exercise. However, while it was a tiring exercise, it was equally important as it has granted the researcher time to familiarise himself with the data collected to be analysed as well as coding. A comparison of similarities and differences and further providing the researcher's viewpoint was done in the form of a spreadsheet which was an exercise of searching data patterns and further reducing data so that it can be interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2013). After the comparison was completed, interpretation and analysis of the data patterns was carried out (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Lastly, the data coding was performed to reduce to only the data that was needed to explain the phenomenon or research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Therefore, complete coding was used which assisted the researcher to search for anything and everything in the dataset that would help to answer the research questions. After all that had been completed, the five overarching themes were developed, and further sub-themes were also developed under each overarching theme. These themes were further reviewed to check for any linkages or overlap between them.

Finally, an analysis was performed in each theme by looking at the similarities and deferring statements and how the researcher could make sense out of each argument tabled.

3.10.2. Document analysis

Document analysis is defined as analysis that is performed by the researcher that focuses on any type of document to get facts (Silva, 2016). Its importance is on the meaning or the content it contains rather than the actual document, therefore, the focus is that of investigating the content of the documents selected (Silva, 2016, p. 141)

The first documents that were analysed were the "WSU TDG progress reports from 2014 to 2017 and WSU UCDG progress reports from 2018-2020. These were audited reports that contained both the financial trends and the narrative for the progress in each particular year. These documents were written in April following the end of the financial year which is March for every year. The authors of the documents were the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning working together with the Director/Senior Director Teaching and Learning. These documents were written for the attention of the Department of Higher education and Training who are the external funders of the UCDP project. The actual purpose of the document is to reflect the progress of the project and indicate whether the objectives as stated in the plan were met or partially met, as well as the performance of the project.

The second set of documents that were analysed are the assessment reports from the Department of Higher Education and Training and evaluators for each triennium. These documents are titled 'Capacity development at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) to student success and staff Development' for 2017 and WSU_CREST UCDG 2019. The first triennium report was written by DHET and the second assessment report was written by CREST who were the evaluators of the UCDP projects. These documents were written for the university management. The purpose of these documents was to provide feedback on the progress that the university had reported each year and further to sensitise the university if it is achieving its objectives.

With regards to document analysis, the trends from the 2014-2017 reports before evaluation and comparing them to 2018 -2019 reports during the evaluation process of the UCDG were analysed. Furthermore, the assessment report was analysed to

assess if there was any change in project implementation after the introduction of evaluators. The documents were examined to ensure that whatever data obtained from individual participants is trustworthy and justified by the document review (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014). Triangulation was performed through cross-referencing the facts from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and the document review as stated above.

3.11. Limitations, feasibility and positionality

The study was limited to only one university in the Eastern Cape which is WSU because the university is rural and previously disadvantaged, still struggling with the systems; therefore, any improvement in the system could be easily identified. Since the non-probability sampling technique was selected, there was an inherent risk of human judgment that could have affected the selection process (Bryman, 2012). The study could not be generalisable because a non-probability sampling technique was adopted that is the purposive sampling; therefore, the results of the study are only those of the UCDG in the WSU learning and Teaching department and can only be utilised in other projects in a different context within WSU (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

Furthermore, the overall Programme Manager was not interviewed in this research as he was the writer of the dissertation and if interviewed there was going to be a lack of objectivity. This limitation was overcome by adding in the methodology the five layers of semi-structured interviews that were conducted including the external stakeholders and beneficiaries of the programme, in addition to the document review, to ensure that the tools and approaches to triangulate were adequate and that analysis was not weak due to researcher positionality. Furthermore, this corroboration ensured that the researcher's position did not pose a threat to the quality of the research. Furthermore, the paradigm and research design selected further contributed to mitigating bias and more contextual, and deeper understanding was acquired from different experiences.

The research was done in one project in the institution under Teaching and Learning where data was easily accessible. This, therefore, meant that there were no traveling costs incurred to collect the data furthermore, the researcher was the one who collected data. The progress report for the 2020 period was not covered in the study given that it was the year under review and there was no assessment from the DHET, and CREST that would be used to assess some of the information for the 2020 period.

It is further acknowledged that there is other body of literature on organisational learning culture and organisational structures that is relevant for this study but could not be addressed as it is beyond the scope of the study. The time factor to engage in all the literature was limited hence are considered as being beyond the scope of this study.

Lastly, the participants that were selected for interviews were not vulnerable to me as they were the senior managers and managers for different sections. Therefore, the data collected is credible and can pose no threat of being manipulated by the researcher. For example, the Manager of Learning and Teaching from DHET, two Senior Directors, an Executive Director, four campus Managers were interviewed. Furthermore, all participants were made comfortable in the interview so that they may provide as much information as possible.

3.12. ETHICS

In upholding the basic research ethics, all the participants were informed about the study before the commencement of the interview or group discussion. Anonymity resulted in the research report and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants unless the participants consented to be quoted. However, in terms of the ethical clearance form from Wits, anonymity throughout the data collection process would not be guaranteed as its definition means that the researcher is not able to identify the participant.

The ethical clearance approval was requested and granted from the Wits University Human Research Ethics committee (non-medical). A research protocol was developed and submitted to the Wits Ethics Committee for review. Furthermore, the letter requesting permission was drafted and sent to the Research Office of WSU and the gatekeeper approval letter was also granted. The consent form outlining the objectives and purpose of the research as provided by Wits was provided to all participants in the interviews to confirm that they agreed to participate in the study. All of them were willing to participate except for two participants in both focus groups who never responded to the request. The discretion to withdraw was also emphasised to research participants at any point in their participation. The researcher, on the other hand had to adhere to rules and regulations of ethical research.

3.13. Trustworthiness of data collected and findings

Qualitative research is interested in the individual experiences and meanings, as a result, when analysing the data collected through interviews different findings were obtained, however, these findings were assessed for their trustworthiness (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The trustworthiness of qualitative research should conform to five key concepts, namely credibility, dependability, transferability, conformability and authenticity (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

3.13.1. Credibility and transferability

The credibility of this study was measured on the basis that the three data collection instruments were utilised such as interviews, focus groups, and the document review. Furthermore, when analysing the data, triangulation of the information was performed as the interview data was cross-checked against the results of focus groups specifically beneficiaries, progress reports as well as assessment reports. (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Lastly, the piloting of interview questions was also utilised before the data collection started to ensure that the questions address all the research questions. A study is referred to as credible based on how accurately or confidently did the data collected address or answer the research questions satisfactorily (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014). The participants welcomed the interviews as they stated that the interviews gave them some time to reflect on their experiences. Furthermore, all the participants agreed that they would love to see the results being communicated so that M&E could be rolled to the institution at large (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Transferability refers to the extent to which results of the research could be transferred to other groups of people or context and that these results can be utilised in other settings where the context is different (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 282).

3.13.2. Dependability and Confirmability

The records of this study were compiled and kept in different folders in a password-protected computer. These records include all the six semi-structured interview recordings that have a separate folder, transcribed data that was also stored, the analysis sheet where similarities and differences were collated, and the documents reviewed were also stored so that they can be verified anytime they are needed and be auditable over time (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Moreover, the data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis will assist in filling in the knowledge

gap as identified under the problem statement. Dependability can be described by the stability of the data collected over time and from different conditions (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014). Due to limited time between the time of obtaining ethical clearance and submission which was in December, the member check to all six participants that participated in the interviews was not done to verify if what has been transcribed was indeed what was said in the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013). However, in areas where data was not clear follow-up calls were made to get clarity from participants. Conformability of findings refers to the accuracy of the findings and whether they are presented in that same way the data was collected from the participants (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kante, Pölkki, & Utriainen, 2014).

3.13.3. Triangulation

Triangulation in research is when a researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods when studying the same phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This can substantially increase the credibility or trustworthiness of research findings. In the current study, triangulation was effected through the use of more than two different data sources namely: semi-structured interviews (Funders DHET)- three groups of participants within the institution (Project coordinator, Project leaders and focus group for implementers), focus group discussion (beneficiaries) and document analysis (former TDG and UCDP reports and assessment report). The use of multiple sources of data assisted in dealing with the problem of uncertainty and unclarified issues as these provided answers to the main research question through responses from research instruments. Briggs and Coleman (2007) pinpoint that the integrity of being rigorous, careful, and utterly accurate in processing information is the mark of a credible researcher. Triangulation in some cases revealed convergence, however in other areas specifically in the change in implementation, there was no convergence from key participants and that might need further research.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research approach to the study, the procedures that were followed, methods of collecting data, and how data was processed and analysed. The research paradigm and the research design were discussed. The chapter also discussed the research approach used, instruments employed for collecting data, population of the study, sampling approach followed, how the data was processed and analysed, the limitations of the study, and how the researcher dealt with the ethical imperatives.

This chapter presents data collected from three data sources, namely interviews and focus groups discussions and document review. This presentation and analysis of data is done in the form of key themes that emerged from the research questions. Furthermore, the positionality of the researcher is provided under each theme to highlight how the researcher understands the findings. The research questions and objectives of this study were set according to prescriptive theory and formal evaluation models. The analysis was guided by this theoretical framework of the study.

In line with the theoretical framework, the study adopted the following objectives below.

Main objective

- To assess process changes have been had within University Capacity Development Programme at WSU as a result of evaluations conducted.

Sub-objectives

- To examine the thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use;
- To establish skills acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process;

- To establish the changes in project performance due to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use, and
- To establish the different challenges faced by key stakeholders in their involvement in process use.

After completing the entire research process, there were five overarching themes. As expected, these themes are aligned with the themes that were highlighted in the literature review. Furthermore, sub-themes under each overarching theme have also been developed to get a deeper understanding of the results from the analysis. These sub-themes ensure that everything that can be used to answer each research question is covered. When these themes and sub-themes are linked together, they help answer the research questions.

Below are the five overarching themes that came out of the research process.

4.3. Qualitative themes

- **Theme one**: Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use. This comprised semi-structured interviews and data from six participants were analysed.
- **Theme two**: The skill set acquired by project implementers through their involvement in the process. This is comprised semi-structured interviews and data from five participants were analysed
- **Theme three:** The changes in performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in evaluation process use. This is comprised semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis.
- **Theme four**: The organisational changes of culture with regards to UCDG implementation as a result of process use. This is comprised semi-structured interviews and document analysis.
- **Theme five**: The challenges faced by key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use. This comprised semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

To address the 5 research objectives, the researcher sought to provide answers to the following specific questions:

What process changes have been had within the University Capacity Development Programme at WSU as a result of evaluations conducted?

Sub-questions

- What behavioural changes have developed in the implementation of organisational procedures as a result of process use?
- What is the skill set acquired by project implementers through their involvement in process use?
- What changes in performance of UCDG are related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in evaluation process use?
- What are the organisational changes of culture with regards to UCDG implementation as a result of process use?
- What are the challenges faced by key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use?

4.4. Theme 1: Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through the process use

In an attempt to answer the main question of what process changes have been had within the University Capacity Development Programme at WSU as a result of evaluations conducted, the first step required a further break down of the overarching question into sub-questions to narrow down into the analysis of the actual problem. Therefore, a further inquiry into what individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use became necessary. For process use to be determined there must be change either in individual thinking, or of procedures in the organisation.

This study, through the interviews, interrogated what noticeable changes were identified from individual stakeholders who participated in process use. It further sought to establish the influence or change in the procedures as a result of the process engaged with the evaluators, namely CREST. These questions were important to understand whether stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process has allowed any learning that will, in turn, change the way of thinking when they are dealing with the project and that will further provide the behavioural changes in the procedures adopted by the institution or project.

The reason the theme was considered important was for the researcher to establish if capacity would be properly provided in the process in terms of project implementation to enhance the thinking ability of the stakeholders involved or for the procedures to improve the performance of the project. If indeed improved thinking ability and behavioural change can be achieved should stakeholders engage in the capacity process, how then do these changes affect the project performance and further organisational culture. Therefore, the interviews conducted revealed different perspectives regarding the question that is unpacked below based on two sub-themes.

4.4.1. Individual thinking or behavioural changes developed

All participants were convinced that monitoring and evaluation is a very important tool that shall be adopted in the entire institution. Participant 01 proclaimed that there was need for the SENATE to adopt the tool. Many participants applauded the role played by the evaluators, indicating that it was then up to the universities to run with the project using the skills they had obtained throughout the process. Participant 02 added the contribution made by evaluators to the project coordinators and leaders in terms of understanding the basic concepts of the M&E logic model. A participant said:

So I'm not talking to only the funding of 'uh' UCDP if we can maybe implement it to the whole university to say yes, If you have projects or you have a certain funding or even the council funding, they can use these, 'uh', these evaluators. (Participant 01.)

While not all participants demonstrated the full understanding of the evaluation process and experience of being involved in the process, most showed confidence in the experience they received from the adopted M&E tool.

A follow-up question on the actual noticeable changes to individuals or the project in general was asked and different views were obtained. Participants 01 and 03 indicated that the project leaders, who are key stakeholders, are more conscious of what it is that is expected and that, because of the exposure to the monitoring and evaluation tool, their confidence had been boosted by participation in the process. Participants 02, 04 & 07 admired how the training had changed their mindsets in terms of crafting and aligning the project activities and attaching value to the importance of monitoring and evaluation. One participant indicated that:

> *It gave us as a university 'uh' all of us an opportunity to reflect on how we have been doing things and it gave us an opportunity to actually change the manner in which we have been doing things.* (Participant 04.)

Furthermore, Participant (MJ) in focus group B, which was made of beneficiaries, commended the interventions for creating positive competition at the departmental level due to the way they are designed. The participant said:

> *I know that I have created a positive competition across the Department of Civil Engineering and for other departments in my faculty because everybody now looks at it that it is possible to attain all these attributes, it is possible to gain all these recognitions within the university.* (Participant MJ.)

While Participant 02 concurred with all other participants that the evaluators played a big role in shaping the project, they claimed that in terms of the current state of the project there was no difference between TDG and UCDG implementation. However, the participant acknowledged that there are nascent movements that were starting to show after the introduction of CREST. Another participant added:

But from where I'm sitting I don't see much of a meaningful change from the, you know, the way the UCDG is run, or the UCDP is run at WSU from you know, 'uh' the two sister grants were run. (Participant 06.)

The statement made by Participant 02 illustrates that change cannot be measured in a short space but in the long term. For example, in comparing the previous triennium to the current triennium the participant indicated that small movement is noticeable after the introduction of the evaluators. The arguments above open different angles and levels from which change could be measured. These levels include individual level, project level, institutional level, and national level. Therefore, as indicated by Participant 02, the change might be noticeable at the individual and project levels, but it has not gone far at the institutional and national levels (DHET funders).

During the interactions with focus group A, which was composed of the project implementers, all the four participants shared the same sentiments with participant 6 that they did not know of CREST as the evaluators of the UCDG, and thus could not comment more on the benefits. One of them said:

*I haven't heard of CREST and I do not know how they are involved in the project. (*Participant SP.)

Participant 02 highlighted that even though the selected stakeholders were trained with the aim that they in turn train other stakeholders back in their universities, the training within the university was never cascaded to the project implementers as they were not aware of the evaluators and their involvement in the project. Participant 06 could not link any change to the training by CREST as they stated that they had never participated in the evaluation process. The participant further indicated that behavioural change or improvement in thinking ability could only be measured through reflections from the beneficiaries of the project. Both Participant 07 and Participant (SP) in focus group A stated that they did not concur with the point that change in attitudes was brought by evaluation process. Instead, they believed that it was brought by the change of leadership to leaders who understood the work of academic development. One said:

So, the change in leadership is the reason for the change in the project implementation itself, so that is not caused by CREST, but it has it has caused by the change in attitude in the environment..... the attitude now of Senior Management, understands the work of academic staff development. (Participant 07.)

Whilst there are clear indications of the change in individual perceptions that have been brought by the involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process, it is equally important to give the same weight to other factors that may have contributed to the change. Therefore, the counterfactual step can also be performed to ascertain if the results that could be found if they are only attributable to involvement in the evaluation process use. While project leader 05 illustrated that they had been part of the process and training or capacity building, the participant revealed lack of understanding of conceptual underpinnings of the motive behind their involvement in the process. The participant demonstrated the issue of compliance and lack of contextual factors.

The findings above show that individual change can come from different factors that include learning from the process, change management, etc. and that the time factor determines when the change can be noticed at different levels of the organisation. The

findings also demonstrate some sluggishness in terms of integration as some levels of participants within the same project and the same institution seemed to be lost in other aspects of development. The second theme is around change in the implementation of organisational procedures. This is the focus of the section below.

4.4.2. Implementation of organisational procedures

A question around the changes that have been noticed concerning organisational procedures was asked to all participants and the following perspectives were found. Participants 01 and 07 stated that the old procedures in which the project was administered by a few stakeholders had been changed in the current regime to accommodate more stakeholders, specifically Senior Management at the steering committee level including faculty representatives. Furthermore, Participant 07 highlighted that the project stretched to have more streamlined activities after the easily measurable involvement of CREST.

> *One other benefit is that now each faculty is developed its five-year strategic plan, and in there to own the student success and not be referred to another directorate. (Participant 01.)*

Participant 01 further claimed that meetings were frequently held to capacitate the new stakeholders. Participant 02 alluded to the fact that there was a great improvement in terms of meeting deadlines, which is aligned to report submission to DHET.

I must agree that I mean at WSU as well we are beginning to see those you know improvements and the question of deadlines. (Participant 02).

Participants 03, 04, and 05, who were project leaders, added that there were changes in terms of reporting, as quarterly M&E reports were required. However, Participant 03 emphasised the resistance from preparers of the internal reports and the difficulty in meeting deadlines from the implementers on the ground within the institution. Another participant said that:

Well, interestingly, 'uhh' for the institution itself, there was no 'uhm' 'uh', I don't remember there being 'a' 'a' requirement for us to submit reports. However, for the project itself, reports were generated quarterly and those were produced quarterly,

and indeed those reports 'uh' gave us an opportunity to check our implementation progress. (Participant 04.)

The findings above illustrate a key issue in all the participants who responded positively as opposed to Participant 03 who raised the issue of noncompliance in terms of deadlines of internal reports within the institution, and the idea of doing things for compliance. DHET representative alluded that there was improvement in meeting deadlines, and this would align with the fact that the external reports are done to get more funding unlike the internal reports. Therefore, this analysis demonstrates that mindsets have not changed yet within the institution, as things are done only for compliance rather than understanding the importance of certain procedures. This is evidenced by the claims made by project leader 05 who mentioned the issue of bureaucracy in financial procedures that delay the spending of project funds.

> *I think the university red tape; the financial procedures delay a lot of usage of the funds because of the policies and procedures that we have to follow.* (Participant 05.)

Another factor that came out of the analysis is that the importance of organisational procedures may be known at the level of project coordinators and project leaders given that they were involved in the process, but the skills obtained from the training by evaluators has not been fully cascaded to project implementers to be at the same level with the project leaders. Participant 07 did not link the quarterly reporting to the influence of the evaluation process but believes that it was the procedure for the institution to report quarterly on different platforms such as Senate. The participant said:

It is the culture; I wouldn't say reporting specifically was brought about change by CREST because it is a culture of the University to report with the Internet stakeholders to this SENATE to the line manager, etc. (Participant 07.)

Contrary to Participant 07, Participant 04 stated that there were no reports institutionally that were required from which the quarterly submission of M&E reports became the new procedure that assisted in monitoring their progress. However, Participant 02 commended the improvements in terms of meeting deadlines, but the participant raised concerns with the institution meeting set targets in the project. Furthermore, the improvement in the submission of reports did not come without

challenges, as Participant 03 indicated that adjusting to the new way of reporting proved to be cumbersome and brought new requirements in terms of reporting, but it eventually became doable.

It was never easy at the very first time…… there were a lot of 'uh' changes in terms in terms of us reporting on the information…… it was a lot of work that we needed to do some of it we were aware, but we could not make it to take off on the ground. (Participant 03.)

If the reporting process proves to be cumbersome to the project leaders who were directly involved in the evaluation process, then it was worse for the project implementers, who showed a lack of knowledge in terms of the evaluator's involvement. This, therefore, indicates that more work needs to be done at all levels of project implementation, either by evaluators or the stakeholders that were trained to ensure acceptance in behavioural change in procedures. This further brings into question the silo mentality challenge that was brought by DHET representative and Participant 04, namely that while we may see change in the way the project leaders were doing things, it was for themselves and not for the improvement of the project.

Another perspective was provided by Participant 05 who indicated that there were few changes like the time taken for processing a request, the signing, and also the amount of money that would be signed for by a specific person in the form of SOP. Furthermore, the participant believed that the university red tape on financial procedures delay usage of the funds because of the policies and procedures in place. The participant said:

Policies were there but mainly it was the way to manage the claiming and their request form faculties and within ourselves, the logistics per se so to be a little bit audited and edited. (Participant 05.)

The issue of reporting proves the level of understanding at different levels. Participant five demonstrated a lack of understanding of the importance of policies and procedures and a high level of contextual factors. This would be considered to be lack of improvement in learning by some project leaders albeit their involvement in the process of learning that is not aligned with the ideology of the project. This risk further demonstrates a lack of capacity building on the ground to create awareness and understanding of different procedures and their importance.

Lastly, a different procedure was provided by participants 06 and 07 who commended the development of standard operating procedures that were used and which they felt assisted the processes and systems. They further explained that these helped them to work according to timelines and to be strict in reporting in line with time frames in the M&E.

In summary, the findings above illustrate that within the project leaders there is a different understanding of the core of the project as well as different acquisition skills from those that were involved in the process. Another indication from these findings is the frequency of interaction with evaluators to provide this training and further work as a teacher to stakeholders involved as some still show a lack of the skills necessary to run the project. Based on the evidence, there are areas that demonstrate change in individual thinking and further change in the procedures, but they are still at the project level as the funders vouch against that change.

4.5. Theme two: The skill set that has been acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process

The second strand of the enquiry interrogates what skill set has been acquired by the project coordinators and leaders through their involvement in the process, and this is the second step of getting to the broader question. Secondly, the definition of process use explains that for it to be determined there shall be change skills or learning that has been acquired by the project coordinators and leaders through their involvement in the process. This is also guided by a theoretical framework that advocates for the involvement of key stakeholders to acquire skills. This study, through the interviews, investigated what skill set or learning has been acquired by the project leaders through their involvement in the process with the CREST as the evaluators.

This question was important for understanding whether stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process has provided any learning that will, in turn, change them as individuals as well as the institution through their skills. The reason this theme was considered important was for the researcher to establish if indeed there was capacity development in line with 'learning to learn', and process use definition as guided by the theoretical framework. Moreover, it was critical to confirm if this capacity would be properly utilised in the process in terms of project implementation to enhance the performance of the project. If indeed there were skills acquired, then should stakeholders engage in the capacity process, and how then do these changes affect

project performance and further the organisational culture? Therefore, the interviews conducted revealed different perspectives as unpacked below.

4.5.1. The skillset acquired by key stakeholders

Participant 01 explained that the introduction of the evaluators benefited the project leaders in different ways, including equipping them with skills to draft the proposals, and the basic skills of understanding the logic model component such as outcome development, indicator development, and targets. The participant further submitted that even the whole monitoring and evaluation concept became an eye-opener as aligning project activities became easy. Participant 03 agreed with Participant 01 and added that monitoring resulted in confidence. The participant said:

> *As a person myself, I am much confident or bit. 'Uhm' 'uhm' there is improvement in terms of 'uh', understanding whatever thing I am touching with my hands, it gave me a lot of confidence in terms of knowing what I'm doing.* (Participant 03.)

Participants 04, 05, 06, and 07, who were all project leaders, highlighted the whole experience of managing the project as the great skill that they had acquired and that was coupled with monitoring of the project. They further explained that they had previously taken everything for granted without putting the logical sense in what they were doing. Participant 06 went further to provide more skills that she had acquired, such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, issues of accountability, being a team player when interacting with different stakeholders at different levels within and outside the university. They said:

> *So, it was a nice way of learning how to manage a project, especially the M &E strategies that are used because all that it did was moving from 'uh', the baseline would just be moving as you wish.* (Participant 05.)

I learnt, so much in terms of how to run a successful project. (Participant 04.)

Whilst Participant 06 agrees that they were indeed upskilled in the process of being the project leader, the participant also indicated that these skills were not directly as a result of evaluators since they had personally never had any engagements with the evaluators except when the participant's project was assessed. The participant said:

I wouldn't reflect much on CREST in terms of whether it assisted me to do things differently because the only time I became aware of CREST is when there was the issue when they issued those score sheets or those reflective assessments and unfortunately it was already towards the end of the project and you couldn't as it didn't assist me much. (Participant 06.)

The very important finding as alluded to in the statements above is that there were skills acquired by all the stakeholders including those that were not involved in the process. Furthermore, also critical is an indication that even though some project leaders were not involved in the process with the evaluators, the skills transference somehow did take place as the project leaders explained that they developed some skills that they never had. This also came out in the focus group with implementers, who indicated that whilst they never heard of CREST, there are changes that they noticed as compared to the previous tenure. They indicated that they could now see where they fit into the bigger picture because of the transparency of the project leaders. A participant submitted:

> *I would say It did it develop me, in terms of management skills, particularity so because it was for the first time for me to participate in the project as a project leader and at first, I was little overwhelmed, I was a bit anxious not knowing but 'uh' as well as in terms of 'uh' I would say being accountable.* (Participant 06.)

The participant further indicated that they were assisted by the Grants Manager, who had a lot of patience. The participant spoke thus:

> *But with the support that I gained particularly from the grants manager taking me through the process in terms of how the projects should look like in terms of how to develop or to shape the activities that were part of the project in terms of reporting 'uh' how to report, in terms of everything all the aspects related to project.* (Participant 06.)

However, another thing that came out is the fact that somehow the skills acquired were for a certain level of the project in the university as the project implementers indicated that only those implementers who happened to be project leaders had a deeper insight of the involvement of evaluators. This then demonstrates that skills transference has not cascaded enough to all levels of key stakeholders. In this regard participant said:

> *I would like to start with the issue of CREST, 'uhm', …..I think it goes according to the levels because people that 'um' the Mr I mean, Participant SP and Participant SM they're programs leaders as well as the managers and I want to believe that it's still in the management space because it has not yet been cascaded to myself and Participant TM (laughing) at the moment*. (Participant TK.)

Together, the views for and those against the theoretical framework, the indication is that skills were acquired by those that were involved, but it would seem the project leaders involved mostly acquired the skills for themselves, and not for the benefit of the institution. This is evidenced by the fact that it is only at the project implementation level that all do not agree on any skills or communication being received from the project leaders. This, therefore, would have a negative effect on the other changes such as culture, including even the implementation of the project.

Albeit lack of training or interactions by the project implementers, beneficiaries commended the excitement, passion, and enthusiasm they noticed from the project implementers. They indicated that this encouraged the faculties and departments to welcome the intervention with open hearts. However, there are detrimental factors, such as culture, that make it difficult for the implementers to carry their work, specifically if the cultural issues do not support the interventions that are brought forward. Furthermore, the limited skills at a certain level of the project may further prolong the change that is needed in the project. A participant said:

We don't have students, almost borrows students from the departments and faculties so that is the main thing for advising that impact on the utilization of budget. (Participant TK.)

Participant 07 highlighted how important it was for her to bring the theoretical framework into play when implementing the project, which is something that she was very abreast of. Furthermore, she highlighted the skill of being able to design theoretically or conceptually conceived projects to suit the context of the organisation, which in a way revealed that some of the projects they were implementing are not research-based.

Participants SM and SP in focus group A believed that there had been improvement in terms of communication between project leaders and project implementers as they

are now aware of what is happening in the project and are able to participate in other initiatives. One said:

I at the level of knowledge and level of exposure to I UCDG and the level of iii communication that has been forwarded to me, whether as an acting manager or as a PAL coordinator has at least allowed one to see I improvement in terms of communicating your ideas in terms of communicating 'uhh' your vision or ambition at least there is that scope. (Participant SP.)

Contrary to that the above, all participants in the beneficiary focus group indicated that communication was still one of the challenges that affected project implementation, specifically when it comes to the targeted audience. Albeit claims made by Participant SP that old stakeholders who were part of the sister grants TDG and RDG seem to possess more knowledge than the new stakeholders who recently joined the project due to transformation or staff turnover, Participant YM held the view that:

My recommendation would be maybe to revise or revisit how these programs I I'm sure there are plenty of them as you have mentioned, but they just not reaching the targeted or the people that would benefit from them. So maybe the communication strategies they should be revisited. (Participant YM.)

Some skills acquired were still unfolding as it was mentioned by Participant 02 that it will not be easy to measure change due to the time constraints of the project. This statement is evidenced by the contradiction between project implementers, who at least give the project leaders a small credit, and the beneficiaries, who do not feel the same in terms of communication from either project leaders or project implementers. The issue of particular stakeholders that seem not to be much knowledgeable of project implementation might be the result of staff turnover that may lead to trained staff leaving the institution with the institutional knowledge, which may delay the change in the project implementation. This implies that if some of the project implementers are not skilled, there may be disjuncture or disconnect between them and the beneficiaries, which is evidenced by claims made by beneficiaries.

Therefore, the findings that can be highlighted include the fact that there were skills obtained by stakeholders involved in the process, but the calibre of stakeholders that were participating is still questionable as there is little or no evidence of what they did from the training to upskill those that never participated in the process. This was also

alluded to by DHET representatives who indicated that they had witnessed the silo mentality in most of the reports or plans that were submitted by different universities.

4.6. Theme three: The changes in the performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use

The third point of enquiry related to changes in the performance of the UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process. For process use to be determined, there must be change in performance of the project as a result of the learning acquired by project coordinators and leaders through their involvement in the process. This study, through the interviews, investigated changes in the performance of the UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process.

This question was important for understanding whether the stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process has provided any learning that will in turn change the performance of individuals who will influence the performance in the project and the institution as a whole. The reason the theme was considered important was for the researcher to establish if the capacity building would affect the project's performance to meet its targets. If the capacity or skills can be acquired through an evaluation process, how then will these changes affect the project performance and the change of organisational culture? Therefore, interviews conducted revealed different perspectives as unpacked below. The first sub-theme relates to changes in the performance of UCDP.

4.6.1. Changes in the performance of UCDG

The question asked in this sub-theme was, "Would you provide an overall conclusion in terms of the performance of the project based on the progress reports that have been submitted to the Department of Higher Education." Participant 01 and LM stated that there are the glimpses of performance that are identified in some of the interventions of the project. Participant one intensified his claims in terms of performance as he highlighted that in the previous triennium, the projects and activities were thumb-sucked. However, after the introduction of UCDP and evaluators, projects have reshaped or reconceptualised. Furthermore, he touched on the issue of capacity-building workshops that were conducted by the Department of Higher education and Training as the achievements in the project. He said:

> *When moved to the University Capacity Development Grant what I saw were some capacity-building workshops that we were held by the Department of Education and Training, including the introduction of an agency to help with the monitoring and evaluation and these people have also held several workshops with us project leaders on how to do the monitoring and the and the evaluation.* (Participant 01.)

While the project coordinator saw small improvements, he further elaborated that the project had not yet reached maturity, as was still at training stages. Participant LM provides an example of lecturers supported to do a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and how they come back and share the expertise in the communities of practice, which was impacting the project. The participant submitted that:

Uh' so you can imagine that thirteen people across the institution have benefited 'uh', through this project and now it is for us for example I would put this example in my department as introduced, what is known as a constructive alignment. So, it's this community of practice that change and that change was brought about by the project itself. (Participant LM.)

Participants 02, 07, and TK expressed views different from those of participant 01. The DHET representative believed that the performance of the project needed not be looked at in a narrow mind, but other factors must be considered to arrive at a decision. These factors can either be structural, cultural or the agency or the people who are tasked to coordinate the project may not be the right people for the job. If these conditions are not attended to, all projects will come and go without making any impact. The participant also said there was no meaningful change in the UCDP at WSU as compared to the previous project since the above factors still needed to be addressed. He said:

> *The implementation of the UCDP …… depends on a on a range of factors and unfortunately those factors if not addressed on time 'uh' there are possibilities of 'uh', seeing a perpetuation of a similar situation in some institutions than others. The conditions that normally shape the effective implementation can be structural, 'uh' can be cultural and can be, …'uh' 'uhm' dependent on also on the agency in other words, on people who are responsible for that.* (Participant 02.)

However, the views of participants TK and SP, who were implementers, did not match with those of the DHET representative above in terms of inefficiencies of the project. Instead, they align the unspent funds with the cultural issues. They continued to say that proper plans were in place but due to the cultural issues, activities that were supposed to be performed at the beginning of the year tended to be done sometime in April. (Participant TK.)

Based on the claims provided by the project coordinator, there is seemingly lack of understanding in terms of how to measure performance as far as the project is concerned. When discussing the changes in performance, the project coordinator, namely One participant alluded to capacity building done to other stakeholders, which do not measure performance in a project, but which are building blocks to improve performance. He further highlighted that the introduction of evaluators assisted them to reshape or reconceptualise the projects rather than thumb sucking them. He said:

> *This is the reflection of how far they have moved in terms of alignment and performance in a project, specifically student success.* (Participant 01.)

This could be in line with the commendations made by the DHET regarding a small glimpse of change. Another participant said:

> *So, that is a very important 'uh' 'uh' you know injection that we find through the introduction of CREST and we do think it's really gonna go a long way in terms of developing capacity through the UCDP.* (Participant 02.)

Furthermore, the literature reviewed earlier in this study demonstrated a different way to measure the change in the project performance and that it cannot only be measured by one factor, which is capacity building by evaluators to the key stakeholders. A holistic approach needs to be considered in the institution where the project is administered to break the barriers that may delay or hinder the performance. This is supported by factors that were provided by DHET, such as structural, cultural, and agency.

Participants 02, 07, and MJ in focus Group B and participants SM, TK and TM in focus group A, all agreed that performance/impact cannot be easily measured, as the interventions that are run by the university are not researched based on any data or evidence. They further state that when they are run successfully, these interventions

only benefit the few individuals whose problems are aligned, and the rest remain unassisted.

It has been suggested that a bottom-up approach should be adopted to problematise the intervention from the people affected and that for the intervention to have more impact, it has to be based on research evidence. The participants said:

> *I think it is very important for us to problematise the alignment even further I have seen that from my experience. To the extent that you only find out that we are aligned to only a few individuals in, the faculty is not the entire faculty. I think there is a scope for us to be research-based.* (Participant SM.)

> *But also in terms of them being done appropriately, correct if I could put it that way, one would say maybe they were supposed to look at the ground level, but not putting it from the download communication 'uh' fraternity.* (Participant MJ.)

There is a fragmentation in the services that are offered by the project, which could be the result of interventions that are not based on evidence, interventions that are not researched. Participant seven, focus group B (Participant MJ and Participant YM from the beneficiaries side share the same sentiments with the DHET representative where they indicated that whilst they understand that a university is an academic institution, the way it is structured is such that it has support staff who are supposed to do the administrative duties and academics who are supposed to do the academic duties. Therefore, to allow the person by virtue of being a PHD holder with an academic discipline hinders the performance of the project, as the selected PHD holder does not possess the necessary expertise to coordinate the project.

Participant 07, who is the project leader, further stated that while there were additional stakeholders in the UCDP, as long as there are no clearly defined roles, some of them are there for compliance, without the passion and effectiveness to run the project. Participant MJ said:

> *The proper performing administered departments are administered by people without PHD's and properly administered grants are administered by people without PHDs. And once you put someone with PHD you are steering the focus to a certain perspective or discipline.* (Participant MJ.)

Based on the findings above, there are three sections under which the performance can be discussed. These are its performance at the project level, performance at institutional level, and performance at DHET level. First, at the project level, the evidence, as discussed above, indicates that there is movement in terms of where the project was before the evaluator process and where it is after. However, and secondly, there seems to be no convergence at institutional level as beneficiaries are conflicting against each other; while some see improvement, some accuse the administration of the project of hindering performance. Lastly, at the funder level, the DHET representative feels that the project performance has not changed from the sister grants and he believes that besides the project itself, other factors need to be considered.

4.6.1.1. Document Review

The tables below illustrate the overall performance per every three years where the first table shows results for TDG and Table 2 shows results for UCDG.

Table 4.6.1.1: Percentage of total allocated TDG funds to WSU from 2014/15 – 2017 that were not utilised. (DHET, 2017)

TDG allocations	Budget allocation per annum	Actual Expenditure per annum	Over/Under Expenditure	% of under expenditure
2014/15	53 292 323.50	37 713 583.65	15 578 739.85	29%
2015/16	47 033 786.62	46 560 569.99	473 216.63	1%
2016/17	45 525 599.00	45 725 983.00	- 200 384.00	0%
2017	35 207 280.97	29 999 851.97	5 207 429.00	15%
Total	**181 058 990.09**	**159 999 988.61**	**21 059 001.48**	**12%**

Table 4.6.1.2: Percentage of total allocated UCDG funds to WSU from 2018 – 2019 that were not utilised (DHET,2017)

UCDG allocations	Budget allocation per annum	Actual Expenditure per annum	Over/Under Expenditure	% of under expenditure
2018	38 021 000.00	32 379 865.00	5 641 135.00	15%
2019	40 058 000.00	33 873 555.35	6 184 444.65	15%

Total	**78 079 000.00**	**66 253 420.35**	**11 825 579.65**	**15%**

NB. The two tables above illustrate Walter Sisulu University's ability to use its earmarked University Capacity Grant to meet its objectives

When Analysing the performance of the two trienniums, the TDG tenure has better performed (12% unspent) as compared to the UCDG which has demonstrated the deterioration in terms of expenditure patterns (15% unspent). The progress reports and assessment reports that were analysed intensified the finding by the funders that as compared to the previous triennium, there is not much change in terms of performance with regards to the UCDP.

4.6.2. Involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process

The involvement of different stakeholders like project leaders and project coordinators, whether they were selected by the institution to represent them with CREST or they were selected by CREST, would you say they were identified in terms of the process to represent the university? The project coordinator and participants 03 and 04 who were both project leaders, highlighted the importance of the involvement of different stakeholders who in turn learn from each other. This statement is qualified by the view that in some instances the evaluators would not understand the context of WSU, but DHET would clarify some of the contextual issues to evaluators. One said:

The fact that we had DHET 'aa' 'aa' staff sitting with us in the sessions also helped, because then they could clarify issues that were a little bit fuzzy. (Participant 04.)

Whilst Participant 02 acknowledged the importance of the involvement of different stakeholders, he agreed with other two project leaders, namely participants 05 and 07 that the staff turnover rate of those that were trained or the change in the leadership had somehow derailed the progress and made it difficult to see the change. However, in terms of capacity building, they all agreed that the old project leaders were tagging along and knew what was expected of them based on the experience they had from the process with the evaluators.

The change in leadership 'uhh' actually reversed, …. some of the things that we have learned in that many people were brought in,…. people who will come with 'uh' different understandings, theories and perceptions of what the UCDG was. (Participant 07.)

However, Participant SM, a project implementer, acknowledged the skills obtained by different project leaders that were involved in the process, somehow feels that the new stakeholders do not take charge as they always shy away to the benefit of old stakeholders. He believes that they do not see that they can know anything better than the old key stakeholders. The participant said:

I picked up that, 'um' ((pause)) those that have been involved with TDG and UCDG, they have an upper hand in terms of knowledge. And those that are still new or upcoming or novice in this space tend to suffocate their ideas because they assume that because Mr. Mantshongo has been here so I cannot say anything or otherwise.

(Participant SM.)

The issue of clearly defined roles resurfaced among the stakeholders, as often new stakeholders do not know their roles play in the project clearly. Secondly, the stakeholders who were part of the evaluation process from the beginning often are not very transparent in terms of the information and even in terms of upskilling the new project leaders so that their confidence is boosted. Therefore, these challenges may delay the performance of the project, and they may delay the cascading of the information to relevant places such as faculties and departments.

The DHET representative indicated their expectations in terms of stakeholder involvement as he explained that a healthy consultative engagement is very key in the conceptualisation of the project. He further stated that should these engagements not be in place, one finds only one or two people determining what shall go in and out of the project initiatives, which in a way does not represent the needs of the whole organisation. As a result, they have witnessed a process that is not transparent in terms of the selected stakeholders that were involved in the evaluation process, which does not have good results in terms of project implementation going forward.

> *What would normally happen is that you find there sitting alone making a determination of what can go in and what can go, what cannot go in ((pause)) that that is a reality. To a very significant extent, there's no involvement of all the stakeholders at the level of conceptualization.* (Participant 02.)

Participant 04, who is project leader, sided with the DHET representative by revealing that there is a gap in terms of the stakeholders that were involved in the process and

she voiced out that the involvement of the DVC AAR could have gone a long way in terms of steering the direction of the project. She further explained that people from the institution would look at the project as a collective of different spheres of the institution should relevant key stakeholders be involved.

While all key stakeholders believed that the involvement of new stakeholders has stalled the progress, project leader 05 believed that the involvement of the new DVC who is hands-on has shown a great change or progress in terms of performance and in terms of adopting the integrated approach when implementing the project. He said:

> *The new DVC, so she was more hands-on than the previous DVCs, yes there is more change because now it was not about CLTD and Research only, but even the colleagues from the faculties were roped in as part of the management of the teams.* (Participant 05.)

The findings reveal a lot of structural issues as two statements coming from project leader five, Participant 02, contradict each other. In the previous discussions project leader five showed discomfort with the staff turnover as he claimed that they delayed continuity, yet in the above statement he alluded to the positive results on the arrival of the new DVC.

> *The people who were in charge of UCDG changed, management changed, so it means there's no continuity of the same people who are there.* (Participant 05.)

The two contradicting statements illustrate that the influence of different stakeholders is very key in terms of selection, which justifies the point that was made by the DHET representative that relevant people must be involved in the process for the changes to be seen in the project. The factors that were highlighted by DHET, specifically structural and agency or people leading the project come into play in terms of the performance of the project. If the senior personnel are not part of the evaluation process, changes or the skills obtained by those that were involved may not find their way into the university system due to the weight that is aligned to the people advocating for those changes. If then Senior key stakeholders who sit in senior

platforms of the institution are involved, the changes as a result of the process might be easily noticed in the institution at large.

Participants 05, 06, 07 and SP in focus group A highlighted a very key factor that the project leaders or key stakeholders that were involved in the process had the necessary expertise and relied on the Grants Manager for guidance. One said:

Maybe if we could keep the same Project Manager for some time to keep it going because we introduce new, you have 'uh' to waste a lot of time training them and then the money is not used and becomes a problem then university. (Participant 05.)

Both participants 06 and 07 indicated that they only met evaluators a very few times, which made it difficult for them to understand some of the skills or knowledge obtained by other project leaders. Participant 07 qualified this statement by bringing in the observation of the frequency of meetings organised by the evaluators where she feels that they have noticed that more training is required, which could be a demonstration that the previously trained skills were not properly transferred.

The findings also highlight the issue of skills transfer from the project leaders who were involved in the process to those that arrived late including the project implementers on the ground. The assumption to be made here is that the stakeholders did not get enough training during the process, or the cultural issues of working as individuals have not yet transformed. There is a disjuncture in terms of cascading information from the project coordinators and project leaders, as project implementers believe that evaluators were designed for the level of management.

Therefore, the findings above demonstrate different issues in terms of stakeholder involvement. One key issue is that no matter how many stakeholders may be involved, if the roles are not clearly defined, they may be there only for compliance purposes, which does not help the performance of the project. The second point that has been revealed is that the diversity of stakeholders is very key as they learn from each other. This is evidenced by the contribution made by DHET in assisting evaluators to understand the context of the university. Lastly, the key issue that became clear is the importance of the involvement of senior personnel in the evaluation process who may assist in steering the project in the right direction.

While there are contradictory statements above, what is dominant is that the involvement of diverse stakeholders with clearly defined roles is key, as these learn from each other. However, stakeholder should occupy strategic positions in the institution to influence the change.

4.7. Theme four: The organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use

The fourth major point of enquiry focused on the question of what organisational changes of culture are there with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use. In line with the theoretical framework, for process use to be determined, there shall be an understanding of context and its complexities to change the organisational culture that comes as a result of the evaluation process. This study, through the interviews, investigated organisational changes of culture with regards to the implementation of UCDG as a result of the evaluation process. This objective was important for understanding whether the evaluators understood the context and its complexities, and whether the stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process has provided any learning that will transform the organisational culture which in turn changes the implementation of different institutional projects.

The reason the theme was considered important was for the researcher to establish the impact of the role played by the evaluator in uprooting the contextual challenges in the institutional culture, which will better the implementation of institutional projects. If the culture of the institution indeed changes, how then would these changes affect the implementation of the project afterwards? Therefore, the interviews conducted revealed different perspectives as shown below.

4.7.1. Organisational changes of culture

The question that was asked to assess cultural issues was, "Share your views on whether you think that the evaluators completely understood the context of WSU in the process. If yes, is there any shift in terms of how they are doing things, for example in the context of cultural issues?

Different views were provided on whether the evaluators completely understood the culture and context of the institution. Most participants indicated that evaluators' advice clashed with their initiatives to an extent that some were resolved by the DHET. One said:

> *There were cases where we could see that the way they evaluate was commenting was probably because they didn't know or understand our context, but because of the iterations and engagements with them, in the end, we were ((pause)) all on board and they could understand why we wanted certain projects.* (Participant 01.)

Some participants claimed that they had never met CREST, and some that they had only recently met them on a few occasions. One participant said:

> *Hayi lento ka CREST I am not comfortable ngayo because I don't understand CREST mna..... Maybe it was I would say maybe the mention of CREST was minimal at the time I was still project leader. (*Participant 06.)

Then, the DHET representative and Participant 05 provided a different understanding of the approach that CREST evaluators should take given that they have particular expertise, which is a model that works better in terms of implementation programs and UCDG not to build capacity in the entire system. Participant 05 further emphasised that it is not about evaluators' understanding of the institution but more about the accountability of the institution for the public funds. The participants said:

The approach that CREST 'uh' is using it's not ((pause)) of 'uh', an expertise in terms of, people capacity development programs across the system ((pause)), 'uh' CREST only brought the model which works better in terms of the implementation of programs and projects such as the UCDP. They are not experts in the initiatives that can work better for WSU. (Participant 02.)

Well for me it's not about them understanding WSU but it was about them training us on how to properly manage a project, 'uh' and I believe I don't think it was more about WSU it was about accountability for funds that allocated to any project by the government. (Participant 05.)

The findings above illustrate lack of understanding from both the commissioner who is DHET as well as the institution on different roles that can be played by the evaluator in the process. This is further evidenced by comments made by Participant 05 that is illustrated above. It might be the scope provided by the commissioners which in a way limited learning of the involved stakeholders. Moreover, the guidance of the evaluators

might not necessarily talk to the cultural issues of the university but to the holistic issues of the sector should the context of each university not be properly understood.

Participants 06 and 03 believed that frequent interactions with the evaluators would assist them in understanding the contextual factors including the culture, and that will assist in shaping the mindset of the institution in line with their context. Participants 01 and 03 believed that culturally the institution is shifting a bit since previously the implementation and the involvement of key project leaders was only for a few individuals but now a more integrated approach was adopted, where faculties are pushed to develop their strategic plans, incorporating project plans. Furthermore, in interactions with the evaluators, all the project leaders became part of those interactions, which is an improvement in the way things are done. Participant 04 further stressed that the issue of bringing together different initiatives was breaking down the barriers of silo mentality that were highlighted by Participant 02 as one of the key challenges and that people would look at initiatives as a collective from different spheres of the institution.

People now can look at a project as a collective from different spheres within the institution, so the common meetings that are held 'uhm' from time to time it was it was not happening during the 'uh' Teaching Development Grant era and the Research Grant era. (Participant 04.)

The DHET representative was comfortable to state that when comparing the previous triennium with the current regime, there seemed to be no change in terms of how the institution has been operating. He further stated that the claims were based on the fact that there were deeply structural and cultural issues among the people selected to participate in the project. Furthermore, he indicated that the initiatives from the institution remain improperly conceptualised as they are not based on research or evidence from data gathered. He alluded that the same projects that were there in the previous triennium are still the same projects without any change provided. Below is an excerpt from a participant:

I may not be very privileged and to those conditions, because these are deep-rooted structural issues that only WSU know. But from where I'm sitting I don't see much of a meaningful change from the UCDP is run at WSU from you know, 'uh' the two sister

grants were run. The whole question of conceptualization of, initiatives….. I have a sense 'uh' that there is there are continuing weaknesses in that area in terms of the conceptualization of interventions…. (Participant 02.)

Participant 07 agreed with participants 02 and 05 that the challenges are systemic and contextual and that they require a change in the attitudes or behaviour in senior management. The change in their mindset would easily prevail over the change in all aspects of the institution. Participant 05 added that university senior management was a bit sluggish in buying into the new developments, which would likely delay the change in the university. He further stated that the change must not be bottom-up, but it should be the reverse, to make the change accepted on the ground.

While process use might bring a great change to those involved in the process, if senior management has not participated in that process a change might be delayed or not happen at all at the institutional level, culturally or otherwise.

Evaluators should play a key role in breaking the barriers of culture, and the evaluators have to ensure that the stakeholders involved are at a level where they can be able to tabulate cultural issues during the engagements so that the guidance can align with those cultural issues. For changes to be seen as key, stakeholders need to have been involved in the process. Whilst Participant 01 held the view that there is a cultural shift, but he also agrees with claims made by Participant 02 that there are still factors that need to be considered for the project to experience change. Participant 01 mentioned that there is more involvement of different stakeholders in the interactions, but these stakeholders are there for compliance purposes.

When looking at both arguments, there is an indication that at a broader university scale there is no change, but when narrowed down to the beneficiary level there are slight changes that may be noticeable culturally. This, therefore, indicates that the change may not be seen overnight at a broader scale, and it could agree with what Participant 02 has highlighted, namely that it is still too early for a massive change as the evaluators only participated in 2018, which means measuring change will not be drastic. Participants 02 and TK stated that another cultural challenge was the issue of a fragment approach in running the interventions. Participants 01, 03, 05, and 06 believed that the mindset of the recipients, including the implementers, had not

adjusted to the transition as they feel that all these changes are extra work and they are not necessary.

Participant TK agreed with Participant 06 that the culture of support at all levels is on what the institution still has to look at. They indicated that this implies that they confine the thinking ability and limit the flexibility and creativity of project leaders and implementers. She further stated that support goes with accountability; hence, should that culture not change, staff members would continue doing the same thing since they know there will be no accountability. Participant SP believed that the dependency syndrome culture from faculties is another factor hindering change. He believed that the faculties should own up on these initiatives, which will then boost the performance of the project.

All participants in focus group B, made up of beneficiaries, agreed that culturally the university still operates differently on campuses, which makes it difficult to harmonise the ways of doing things. As a result, they feel that other campuses are getting more preference over other campuses. One of them said:

*I stand to support the speaker who just left the podium right now. 'Uh', I would also say that 'uh' Nelson Mandela drive it's it's more supported than other campuses. (*Participant MN.)

Given the nature of process use, namely that it advocates for learning, the evidence provided indicates that learning at the moment is still for those that were involved in the process and those who were not part of the process are yet to learn. Whilst participants 01 and 04 spoke of integration, evidence reveals that there is still some disconnect in terms of cascading information so that the learning is across the university.

The challenge of deep structural issues that was brought up by Participant 02 kept coming up. If there are still challenges on how campuses are run, stakeholders selected majority may come from one campus and that may delay the change in the university culture and ways of doing things. Therefore, there is an indication that the stakeholders who participated in the evaluation process held no strategic positions in the university, which would have been of assistance in influencing the direction that

has been provided by evaluators to transform the institutional culture. Another angle would be that evaluators did not perfectly read the context and its complexities; hence, they come and go with no clear changes noticeable in terms of institutional culture.

4.7.2. Change in UCDG implementation as a result of process use

Under this sub-theme, the question asked was if there was any difference noted in the UCDG implementation as a result of the involvement of WSU project leaders in the evaluation process by CREST. Participants 03, 04, and 05, who were project leaders, and participants S) and SP, who were implementers, all agreed that there was improvement in terms of tracking the progress and results of each intervention including objectives. Participant 01 added that previously their reporting was traditional and did not worry about the outcome, impact, and evidence, yet now they go all the way to seek that information. However, even though there are noticeable improvements, there is still big room for improvement in the implementation of the project.

> *There is an improvement in terms of tracing, tracing the success". We were only achieving our goals up to a certain point where we could not tell what the outcome ……is. We could not trace them up until we say this is a graduate that is supported under staff studying elsewhere from UCDG.* (Participant 03.)

Participant 02 did not agree to the view that there was any change in terms of implementation of the project from the previous triennium. He proceeded to say that different factors need to be considered first to see changes in the project. These factors may be structural, cultural, and the agency or the people that are involved in the project. The participant also stated that while he is not privileged in the institution, there are deep-rooted structural issues and if these are not addressed interventions will come and go without any change. Participant 06 agreed with Participant 02 that monitoring and reporting that they were doing as the University was only for compliance and that there were no truthful reflections done. She felt that in the three years there should be a year when the project leaders are doing only reflections of impact by conducting interviews with the recipients to build up evidence. She said:

That tool for me would be more meaningful, but what I've gathered from experience and observation is that we were reporting, filling up, or responding to that tool only for compliance, that one there is serious and it is very disturbing. (Participant 06.)

The submissions made regarding the monitoring used as a compliance tool indicated lack of understanding of the actual purpose of the tool, which indicates that there is still a lot of learning from the project leaders and implementers that should be done. It may be that it is difficult to transition from the old culture to the new developments or it could be that the evaluators did not do justice in playing the role of being teacher so that the project leaders or stakeholders that were involved are clear of the importance of the process. The last assumption would be that key or senior management were not part of the engagements with evaluators, which made it difficult to instil the importance and further steer the direction as advised by evaluators.

Participants 04 and 01 alluded that there had been a shift in the way in which the project was implemented because previously it was housed at the Centre for Learning and Teaching, but it currently includes other elements as they were advised by evaluators to be creative and to adopt a more integrated approach when designing the projects. Participant 04 further stated that these engagements had assisted in breaking down the silo ways of doing things, and different units thus viewed the project as a collective. The participant said:

I think it's not the same they the fact that it was repackaged as a UCDG has introduced other elements that were off the radar 'uh' before the UCDG was there. (Participant 04.)

Even though project leader five acknowledged the change that came through from the process, he added the issue of change management as another contributing factor in terms of change in implementation. He mentioned that the current DVC was more involved and the focused changed from merely the Teaching and Learning and Research Centre to also include the faculties. This is supported by Participant 06 as she believed that the involvement of senior management in the engagement with the evaluators would have ensured that the changes are smoothly integrated in university activities to ensure continuity. Another participant said:

Yes, 'uhhh', especially when the management was changed to the new DVC, so she was more hands-on than the previous DVCs, yes there was more change ….. even the colleagues from the faculties were roped in as part of the management of the teams. (Participant 05.)

Moreover, whilst some additional key stakeholders were roped into the project, the issue of understanding their roles and passion was not clear as Participant 2 spoke of compliance and relevancy of the people involved in project implementation. However, Participant 07 was against the point that change in leadership had positive change, as she believed that it had reversed everything they had learned. She stated that new leadership came with philosophies, different theories, and perspectives that were completely different from their predecessors. She added that the issue of involving certain project leaders in the process was another challenge that affected implementation negatively because it became a hearsay thing where some of the information may be distorted. The participant elaborated:

If, 'uh', you are going to meet with a Senior Director, if I can make an example, and then I am supposed to be one who is implementing the project, then there will always be that 'he knows', 'I don't know'. The change in leadership 'uhh' actually reversed, if I may put it that way, some of the things that we have learnt. (*Participant 07.)*

The submissions made by different participants indicated that the change cannot be brought by one factor, but a hybrid of factors would bring change. Therefore, the involvement of key stakeholders in the process and the involvement of the DVC at the Senior Management level can be an added advantage to the institution and can bring positive spin-offs in terms of implementation and attitude. This connects more to the stakeholders that are involved in the evaluation process based on the influence they have in the university. Even though in many circumstances it also depends on the agenda of the key stakeholder that is involved, the involvement of senior personnel in the process can either be positive or negative (Weiss, 1998).

Participants 02, 06, 07 and SM shared the same sentiments that the interventions were the continuation of the previous triennium and that this was an indication that these interventions are not based on any scientific research, any data or evidence; hence, it will be difficult to see change in implementation. Participant SM and Participant MJ further stated that it would be better if all the interventions were problematised so that they could cover a broad spectrum rather than for individual needs. Participant MJ emphasised that project leaders should a bottom-up approach, which involves understanding what is practically happening on the ground so that

interventions are aligned to the needs of faculties and departments. Below are excerpts from two of the participants:

> *I think it is very important for us to problematise the alignment even further I have seen that from my experience.* (Participant SM.)
>
> *To snap it from the ground, understand practically as to what are the needs on the lecturer's perspective at ground level before say this is what we are going to do, this is what we are going to offer.* (Participant MJ.)

Participant SM stated that he had noticed changes that he was not sure if they were a result of training by CREST. He indicated that they were now given templates to use when reporting, which he thought was an indication of lack a bigger picture. However, Participant TM and TK believed that at least now they could see where they fit in the bigger picture. One said:

I don't know whether it's the source of the training that has led to that, but indeed there are some changes we've been given templates in terms of how to report, but is to whether it's positive or negative I will remain neutral. (Participant SM.)

There has seemingly been a missing link or disconnect in terms of communication downwards. This is supported by Participant SM who states that there has been a change but he is not sure whether it is a result of training by CREST. This means that information is somehow not cascaded to the relevant people, namely the implementers or the recipients. This could be the result of lack of knowledge of what is being implemented.

The findings above revealed four key issues that need to be highlighted. First, at a project level and institutional level there are noticeable changes in terms of implementation that are evidenced by how the progress is tracked up to the stage where objectives can be measured. The second is the integrated way of working where different stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the project. However, whilst all these changes are noticeable, it has also been noted that all these changes are the ideas of a specific group or level in the project as well as in the institution as project implementers and beneficiaries seem to lack a clear view of the changes. This is evidenced by a plea from the ground for a bottom-up approach and

the fact that some project implementers are not clear of the objectives of the tools they are using.

Thirdly, it has also been noted that the agenda of senior management can steer the project in either positive or negative direction. Lastly, at the funder or DHET level, the changes in the implementation do not seem to be noticed and that has been indicated by some project leaders within the institution. Then, therefore, this means that whilst there are some noticeable changes, these are not as glaring as they should be because other aspects of the institution are the opponents of the claims.

4.8. Theme five: The challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use

The fifth major point of interest in this enquiry was on the challenges faced by key stakeholders in their involvement in the evaluation process. This study, through the interviews, investigated the challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use. The question required project leaders to highlight the challenges that they encountered during their interaction with evaluators. This question was important to understand the challenges that could hinder the learning as alluded to in the literature. Secondly, the enquiry was interested in establishing whether stakeholder involvement had any specifications needed for the learning to be achieved or if it was a standard norm that once stakeholders participate, they are automatically going to learn.

The reason the theme was considered important was so that the researcher could unpack different findings in line with the question and further establish if the involvement of key stakeholders would be changed and to the extent to which this would affect change in the projects and affect the particular individuals involved. If there are challenges encountered by key stakeholders in the process, what effect would they have in the change, and how then would these changes affect project performance and further the organisational culture? Therefore, the data collected through interviews revealed different perspectives as highlighted by the different sub-themes below.

4.8.1. Challenges of key stakeholders involved in the process

Participants 02, 03, 07, SM, TK and TM all agreed that the project coordinators and leaders had a big operational challenges, with the interventions that are not well conceptualised, interventions that are not based on research or evidence, all which

makes it more difficult to measure them in the process. Furthermore, three participants agreed that stakeholders had systemic challenges that affected the implementation, monitoring, and managing of the project in the process. One said:

I have a sense 'uh' that there is there are continuing weaknesses in that area in terms of the conceptualization of interventions, so those are the things that Mandla I do think do require attention, and so far. Those you know initiatives were not very well conceptualised; they were not based on research; they were not based on evidence, and as a result, there was a serious doubt if they are, having a meaningful contribution in terms of growing capacity within our system. (Participant 02.)

Participant 02 highlighted different challenges from those highlighted above, and these affected key stakeholders. They included lack of integration, silo implementation of the project within the institution, and that there were glaring indications of lack of harmony among project leaders. The participant said:

Now, now challenges relating to you know, intergratedness, 'uh', challenges relating to siloed implementation approach, 'uh' no issues to do with, 'uh' you know 'uh' ((pause)) just not being in harmony in terms of how staff development student-developed within their program development. (Participant 02.)

All the above findings reveal that challenges affecting the stakeholders during the process did not emanate from the process itself but are scattered from project level to institutional level. At the institutional level, the structural challenges keep coming up, specifically how the communication skills are cascaded to the implementers and the beneficiaries. A further issue of culture also emerged where project implementation is the continuation of old projects whether they have an impact or not, and that might prevent the new project leaders from coming up with fresh researched ideas that may help to conceptualise the project to address key problems.

Participant 01 revealed that project leaders and implementers felt that the guidance provided by evaluators through the introduction of the M&E tool brought them too much work that could have been done by accountants and auditors. One said:

Project leaders and implementers 'uh' found that the introduction of the M&E meant extra work on their part so they complained mainly that this was too much work. (Participant 01.)

It would seem evaluators needed to play the teacher role, and where there was disconnect an evaluator had to play a mediator role of harmonising the situation within WSU. This is supported by the blue marble principles on the key role that should be played by the evaluator as part of upskilling the stakeholders and harmonising where there is conflict (Patton, 2020).

Participants 04 and TK concurred on cultural challenges that either delay the process or frustrate it all together. Participant TK elaborated that the main reason every year the institution returned a lot of money to DHET was that plans set to take place early in the year often took place mid-year, distorting the whole plan. Participants 06, TK, and SP emphasised lack of support from senior management or the from project leaders themselves. They continued to say this was a cultural issue in the university which hindered them from being innovative and that limited their thinking. Participant TK said:

I think 'uhm' we kind of lack the culture of support..... the culture of support that I'm talking about is the collaboration between the support as well as the faculties. I am aligning it to all levels. (Participant TK.)

Participants 03, 05, and 07 agreed that stakeholders faced the challenge of the issue of staff turnover in that the continuation of the project would be stagnated or derailed since the new stakeholders would require proper training. Participant 05 further emphasised that at least proper means to keep the project manager for longer should be utilised. The participant said:

The people, other members of the senior management were gone, so the new ones that came in had depend on the few that we left behind to do things the way they are supposed to be done. (Participant 05.)

While participants SP and SM view staff turnover as an opportunity that has made them at least understand the whole project and be involved in critical areas. They further said that, previously, they would be instructed to implement interventions where they do not even know how they were crafted or developed. One participant said:

> *I think 'uh' also I change management to a certain extent 'a' style change management style let me put it like that to say one was able to be given an opportunity to own up to some activities.* (Participant SP.)

The questions that should be asked are, what are the causes of disruptions, are interventions not communicated clearly enough to the recipients? Furthermore, these findings unleash lack of integrated systems as alluded to by the funders, represented Participant 02. If the systems were fully integrated, staff turnover would not matter much as the systems would be running the projects smoothly, and whoever joined would find smooth running systems. Therefore, whether the stakeholders are fully capacitated during the process, if there are system or cultural issues, progress would be hindered.

All the participants in focus group B, made up of beneficiaries, highlighted lack of communication from the project leaders. They emphasised that sometimes you do not even know who should be contacted for different interventions. Participants 07, SM, TK, TM, and SP also concurred with the beneficiaries that information is not always fully cascaded to the relevant people, and that makes it difficult to implement the interventions. Participant LM said:

> *The challenge is always communication. 'Uh', communication is always a challenge, 'uh' in particular communication channel you know 'yeah', we in an institution you get communication challenges.* (Participant LM.)

Participant SP indicated that the project was affected by the participation of academic faculties in the interventions, which hinders progress or change. The participant extended this by saying that the faculties were affected by the dependency syndrome and they still saw these interventions as something for a specific department. However, Participant 05 raised a different view concerning challenges, specifically between project leaders and beneficiaries, further indicating that the issue of the disconnect between project leaders and lecturers comes from the term M&E. He further stated that lecturers had a different interpretation of outcomes of M&E. A participant said:

> *Challenges interpretation of terminology for instance outcome in for a lecturer is something else than when you talk, finance, so there was a challenge of understanding and when we first interacted with them.* (Participant 05.)

While it is clear that the information does not sufficiently get into the targeted audience, disconnect between different levels in terms of communication is further emphasised

by the project leaders who felt that cascading of information from the project leaders who participated in the process was not enough. If some key stakeholders were not involved in the process, the question that would crop up is, who then was involved in the process and what role did they play in the project. This encompasses a lot of other issues that include how the information was cascaded to the areas where it matters most.

The issue raised by funders is that they have witnessed a situation where the selection of representative in an institution is questionable, relevant people are not part of the delegation. A participant said:

> *To a very significant extent, there's no involvement of all the stakeholders at the level of conceptualization. So, when people that are normally sent for capacity development are properly selected Interviewer remains problematic as we have witnessed as we have seen across all the universities…… it's a common phenomenon.* (Participant 02.)

Participant 07 also brought up the issue of involving a few project leaders to interact with the evaluators as a big challenge. She elaborated more by saying that there will always be the 'he knows', 'I don't know', which is challenging, specifically when one is an implementer of the project.

Overall, the findings above indicate that different challenges may affect the stakeholders in the process, either internally or externally to the process. These dynamics require a strong understanding of the institutional context or culture by evaluators so that when they interact with the stakeholders they are clear of inherent challenges that can be mitigated and of how they can shape evaluation to mitigate these challenges. The role that needs to be played by evaluators in this instance is critical, whether the challenges are within or outside the process (Patton, 2020).

5. CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the effect of evaluation process use in the performance of the University Capacity Development Grant at Walter Sisulu University. To unpack this research focus, the study looked at some questions that interrogated the involvement of different stakeholders in the evaluation process that was undertaken by evaluators at WSU to learn through the process. The study sampled and interviewed seven stakeholders that were involved in the process and further sampled two focus groups; one made up of project implementers who run the interventions on the ground as well as beneficiaries of the project within the same institution. Furthermore, the progress reports and assessment reports were analysed to get the perspective of funders and evaluators with regards to the changes in implementation and performance of the project after the involvement of evaluators in the process.

Therefore, this chapter provides the discussion of key findings as related to the literature on different themes that were developed from research questions which shaped this entire research. These themes were an attempt to answer all the five questions as provided in the initial proposal. These discussions further answer the questions and compare them to similar literature around the same research focus and further contribute to the body of knowledge with regards to process use. Lastly, the chapter provides the conclusion of all chapters and further recommends the future areas of research where new interest emanated.

This chapter contains discussions that help to answer the research questions and future areas of research. The five themes discussed below include:

- Theme 1: Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use.
- Theme two: The skillset that has been acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process.
- Theme three: The changes in the performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in evaluation process use.

- Theme four: The organizational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use.
- Theme five: The challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use.

The previous chapter was on data analysis and it presented detailed findings from different participants on how they viewed the project based on the questions and further, the interpretation and analysis by the researcher. These findings were drawn heavily from the interviews and the two focus groups. Therefore, this chapter brings back the other components of findings from the documents review to triangulate these findings and further provide implications of each finding.

Secondly, the chapter will reflect on the literature where the results of this study will be compared to other scholars to assess if there are any similarities or new findings that have emerged which will contribute to the body of knowledge as a result of this study. The chapter ends with conclusions and recommendations.

5.2. Discussion of overarching themes

5.2.1. Theme 1: Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through process use

The findings for this question revealed that individual change or behavioural change can be viewed at four different levels of the project namely at an individual level, project level, institutional level, and DHET or funder level. At the individual or project level, all interviewed participants agreed that their mindset has changed ever since they were exposed to the evaluation process in such a way that it has pushed them to take a step back and reflect on how they have been implementing the projects in general which means that in a way, their involvement in the evaluation process has changed their mindset.

However, some findings indicated that even though there was a shift in their mindset but that would not be linked to the involvement in the evaluation process use as they never participated in the process, but they link the change to the change of leadership. At an individual level, there is a clear indication that the change cannot solely be measured by one factor, but many factors would contribute to the change of individual thinking.

At the institutional level, the findings from the focus groups concur with the findings obtained from the individual participants that the mindset for project leaders has changed which has influenced the change in the mindset at an institutional level as the beneficiaries have seen potential opportunities that may change as a result of the intervention that is implemented in the project. Even though the findings revealed that there are changes specifically around organizational procedures; however, the evidence also revealed that there is still reluctance in these procedures as some staff members feel that they bring extra work and worse, others believe that the procedures are the red tape that delays the implementation of the utilisation of the project funds. These findings necessitate that more training is needed not only to project implementers but even the project leaders themselves as they still seem to lack the understanding of the importance of these procedures (Alkin & King, 2016) as one project leader believes that;

"The university red tape, the financial procedures delay a lot of usage of the funds because of the policies and procedures that we have to follow." Participant five

This finding, therefore, indicates that more work and awareness of this process needs to be done at all levels of project implementation either by evaluators or the stakeholders that were trained to ensure acceptance in behavioural change in procedures. This further brings into question the silo mentality challenge that was brought by DHET representative and participant four, in a way that the project leaders that were involved in the process, whilst we may have evidence that there is a change from them they were doing it for themselves, not for the improvement of the project.

On the other hand, even as the focus group for the project implementers does not share the same sentiments with the project leaders and beneficiaries but, the change that was experienced by the project leaders indirectly affected them as mostly claimed that they can now see where they fit into the bigger picture even though they have not been involved in the process.

However, at the funder level or DHET level, the feeling is not the same as the funders feel that between the two sister grants that were discontinued to form the UCDG, there is no meaningful change in terms of thinking and the way the project is implemented. One thing that the funders alluded to as the noticeable change is procedural in terms of improvement in the reporting deadlines, however, that is accompanied by the

challenges of not meeting targets as it was the common practice even in the previous triennium.

The findings as provided at the funders level illustrate that change cannot be measured in a short space but in a long term as when comparing the previous triennium and current triennium, he indicated that a small movement is noticeable after the introduction of the evaluators.

5.2.1.1. Response to the research question

In responding to the first research question on, 'Individual thinking or behavioural change of procedures developed through the process use.', the researcher broadly interrogated the noticeable changes from the way the project was implemented and further the procedures that were developed through these individual changes or behavioural changes that may improve the effectiveness of interventions.

At an individual level, the evidence demonstrated that there was a change to the individual thinking as the mindset of most project leaders and project coordinators has shifted in the way they looked at project implementation. Even though some project leaders do not attribute these changes to the evaluation process. Similarly, at the institutional level, specifically the recipients, there is a shift in the mindset as positive competition has been noted based on the influence made by the interventions at the faculty and departmental level.

At the funders' level, procedural changes are still at nascent stages; however, there are still gaps that have been noted specifically with regards to the targets. These gaps are in line with the literature that advocates for mechanisms that shall be adopted for complex situations, these gaps may be as a result of other factors that were alluded to by DHET representatives such as cultural, structural, and so on (Ledermann, 2012).

Two key findings that prevail in this research question is that while evaluation process use may change the individual thinking and procedures, however, other factors need to be considered that may be contributing to the change in attitude such as a change in the leadership. Secondly, another finding is that at a different level, the measurement of change might not be viewed the same, as the findings have revealed that at the individual and institutional level there are glaring changes whilst at the DHET level there are uncertainties with regards to noticeable change. Therefore, the time factor is established as pivotal in investigating the change at different levels.

5.2.1.3. Comparison of research results to other similar studies

A review of similar studies had common research results related to individual thinking and behavioural change. A study by Cottrell, et al. (2015) that interrogates the lack of clearly detailed procedures of evaluation and feedback which limits the ability to learn from the past highlighted that more effective activity is likely to provide benefits in the project and includes the positive change to the quality and impact of the program and additionally, it is building relationships and educating the stakeholders who are part of the process. The findings for this study to a certain extent agree with the literature based on the findings from the DHET, other project leaders, and implementers that the quality of interventions did not improve as these interventions are not based on any research or evidence as a result reporting is still not convincing; hence, no glaring changes are noticeable by funders. However, at an individual and institutional level, a different perspective is provided in terms of quality services and positive change. During interviews, it became clear that process use has an effect of changing mindset of individuals, an issue which did not come out clearly from the literature.

Furthermore, in a study whose focus is on mechanisms to be adopted by evaluators in a complex phenomenon where evaluation use is affected by different factors in a context-bound situation, the literature review revealed that in a low-pressure and low-conflict situation an evaluation through an evaluator can cause change by bringing new ideas that can awaken people especially if they are of good quality (Ledermann, 2012, p. 170). This is in line with the findings from the DHET that there are other factors besides evaluation that may hinder the change in the project. These factors may be structural, cultural, and even the people that are involved in the project may hinder the process. Therefore, the finding that addresses other factors that contribute to the change are in line with the literature, and therefore, process use alone cannot produce glaring changes, and the evaluators have a role of understanding the context fully. Furthermore, evaluators have a role of influencing the stakeholder selection that may influence change in the organisation.

While the literature emphasises the role of evaluator in high pressure conflict situations where other factors such as structural, cultural that may affect the change, however it does not provide the extent of the effect should the role not be played. However, this study demonstrated that if evaluators' role is not clearly played such as understanding critical factors, the shift in the mindset as a result of process from the involved

stakeholders might not clearly come out as hindered by other challenges not addressed. Therefore, in the terms of reference, the evaluators shall demonstrate transparency to the commissioners on their responsibilities which may condition the mindset of the commissioners. This study, therefore, demonstrated that there is a close link between the individual or behavioural change and the role played by the evaluator.

5.2.2. Theme two: The skillset that has been acquired by the project leaders or implementers through their involvement in the process

The discussion of findings under this theme revealed that the skills acquired can be discussed at two levels; namely at project leaders that were involved in the process and those that were not involved in the process. One glaring finding is that all participants at the project leaders' level who were involved in the process have acquired different skills that would help them to shape their mindset in implementing the project. This finding is in line with the theoretical framework that advocates for interactions between different stakeholders that will influence learning (King & Alkin, 2019).

At the project leaders' level, the evidence has shown glaring skills that they have obtained through their involvement in the process, the beneficiaries of the project have identified communication as a bigger skill that is still lacking from the project implementers. This weakness, as identified, proves the danger that project leaders put in the project and the institution as the skill transfer may limit the implementers who in turn limit the recipients in terms of interventions. I would say while these skills have been obtained, however, they have not been put into good use as long as the systems are not running smoothly; there are cultural and systemic issues that hinder progress.

The second finding indicated that with regards to project leaders who were not involved in the process, the results have shown that they indeed acquired the skills necessary to run the project through assistance from those that were involved in the process. Although they do not believe that the skills were as a result of evaluators, however, they have commended some project leaders who were involved in the process for assisting them which then indicated an angle of skill transference from which again indicates the role that was played by evaluators.

The third key finding illustrates that at the level of project implementers who did not participate in the evaluation process, there has not been enough transference of necessary skills to run the project. Whilst the project implementers saw some glimpse in terms of communication skills, but they all agree that in the previous tenure they never knew the bigger picture and they were only implementing what they are provided with. However, currently, they believe that at least they know where to fit in the bigger picture. The claims made about the lack of enough skills transferred by the project leaders are demonstrated by the fact that the two project implementers along the way have changed the portfolios to be the project leaders which made them have a deeper insight after starting to have interactions with evaluators.

When looking at the components of what process use seeks to change such as organisational procedures and culture, the lack of skill transfer from the stakeholders who were involved might delay some of these changes specifically at an institutional level (Patton, 1998). The implementers on the ground are very key stakeholders who shall be directly involved in the process so that they may improve their skills in terms of implementing the interventions. Secondly, the limited skills at a certain level of the project may further prolong the change that may be seen in the project as it has been stated that if project implementers are not involved in the process there will always be that

5.2.2.1. Response to the research question

In responding to the second research question on, ' what skill set have been acquired by the project leaders or implementers through their involvement in the process.' the researcher broadly interrogated the different skills acquired by project leaders and coordinators through their involvement in the evaluation process.

The level of knowledge and exposure as alluded by some key stakeholders, the experience in managing the project to its entirety, the confidence obtained, the interaction with different stakeholders at different levels, theoretical framework understanding, inter alia are the skills that have been acquired by the project leaders that were involved the evaluation process. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of cascading information to the project implementers as the ultimate goal is to improve the institutional procedures and culture for the effective implementation of different projects.

Whether directly or indirectly, at the project leaders' level, glaring skills were acquired throughout the process; however, at the project implementers' level there seems to be a lack of skills transferred by the project leaders and that may delay the change as implementers are directly interacting with target beneficiaries.

5.2.2.2. Comparison of research results with similar studies

A review of similar studies with regards to skills acquired have had common research results as McNulty, (2012) highlighted that knowledge management, capacity building and communications are important tactical issues for improving evaluation use which may in turn improve the performance of any project or organisation holistically. However, in terms of communication, the findings have demonstrated that the weaknesses in the communication skill may lead to challenges such as delay in the change in implementation of a project which does not conform to characteristics of process use. This weakness implies that the interventions may not reach the targeted audience if there are no proper channels of communication as alluded to by McNutty (2012).

Furthermore, Patton, (1998) is also in line with the findings that involvement or engaging in the evaluation process has enduring benefits in terms of use for both the individual and at organisational level. However, at organisational level in terms of improving performance in implementation and reporting as opposed to evaluation findings that evidence is yet to be seen as DHET have indicated that the project was still in the first three years under evaluation. Lastly, one of the findings by Patton, (2007) that was demonstrated by this study is the issue of incidental learning as a result of stakeholder engagement as some project leaders learned even beyond mentioning how they have to understand the theoretical framework in the context of monitoring and evaluation.

The findings in this study illustrate that skills acquired or learning achieved during the evaluation process may only be confined to those who participated in the process if there is no proper plan of transferring the skills to other members of the project that were not involved in the process. Therefore, to notice change in the implementation of the project, there needs to be a proper plan in place on how the skills shall be transferred to different key stakeholders that were not involved in the process.

5.2.3. Theme three: Changes in the performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use

The first finding that has been brought into the discussion is the importance of the involvement of different stakeholders as they indicated opportunities for learning from each other (Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia, 2013). This was further intensified when the evaluators' understanding of the context of the institution was brought into the discussion that in many times DHET has assisted in giving their deeper insight of the context of the institution to evaluators who have learned from that process. However, this illustrates the weakness in terms of the stakeholders who were involved as this context was expected to be provided by the institution stakeholders rather than the DHET. Moreover, the evaluator's role regarding the institutional structural level of stakeholders selected seem to be lacking as partly no influence was demonstrated by those involved.

Secondly, the staff turnover rate, specifically, the stakeholders that were involved in the process and playing the leadership role has been discovered to be derailing progress in terms of performance as more training is required for new stakeholders and they come up with different ideologies and philosophies.

This finding intensified the concern of the lack of integrated systems that was raised by the DHET and some stakeholders within the institution. It is expected that if the systems are well integrated the staff members joining the project will carry on with the work unless the systems were not in place and that would require more ideas and other thinking. This further reveals the role that was supposed to be played by the evaluator to ensure intergratedness as was the case in the key blue marble principles (Patton, 2020)

The latter finding contradicts the claims that were made by project leaders that it depends on the leadership agenda in terms of either derailing or improving the performance of the project. It has been stated that the arrival of the new DVC who is hands-on in the project has brought more changes in terms of structural issues, the performance of the project, and cultural changes in the institution. It has been stated that there was an improvement in the integrated system as more senior personnel were roped in from faculties. When one considers the counter argument above, there is an indication that if stakeholders who have occupied key strategic roles in the

institution may be involved in the evaluation process, more positive changes would be achieved including the change in performance.

There is another finding that indicated the issue of involvement of many different stakeholders in the process who may not be relevant or whose roles are not clearly defined in the project (Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia Söderström, 2013). Furthermore, the issue of clearly defined roles could mean that whilst many hands were expected to boost performance, instead, they would be there for compliance purposes. The funders concurred with this finding as they indicated that they have witnessed many situations where projects are decided by a few individuals on what shall be in and out. As a result, all other stakeholders would only be there to implement what was planned by a few individuals with no further contribution.

Secondly, how the stakeholders who were part of the evaluation process from the beginning might not be very transparent in terms of the information and even in terms of upskilling the new project leaders so that their confidence is boosted. Therefore, these challenges may delay the performance of the project, moreover, they may delay the cascading of the information to the relevant places such as faculties and departments.

While there are these different findings that were provided in terms of the effect of stakeholder involvement in the performance of the project, at the funders level, they are convinced that albeit the involvement of the different stakeholders in the process, they do not see the meaningful change in the performance of the project as compared to the previous triennium. This argument revealed the fact that at different levels change differs with time. Even though at the project and institutional level there was no meaningful change, but project leaders believe that they have moved an inch as compared to the previous project even though they have not reached maturity. The funders concluded that there are some factors that, if not attended to, may delay the performance of any project in an institution. These factors are structural, cultural, and calibre of stakeholders tasked to coordinate the project.

Thus, the progress reports and assessment reports that were analysed in table 4.6.1.1. and 4.6.1.2 intensified the finding by the funders that as compared to the previous triennium, there was not much change in terms of performance with regards to the UCDP. The two tables illustrate Walter Sisulu University's ability to use its

earmarked University Capacity Grant to meet its objectives. When analysing the performance of the two trienniums, the TDG tenure has better performed (12% unspent) as compared to the UCDG which has demonstrated the deterioration in terms of expenditure patterns (15% unspent) (CREST, 2020).

5.2.3.3. Response to the question

The submission made by different participants indicated that the change cannot be brought by one factor, but a hybrid of factors will bring change. Therefore, the involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process and the involvement of the Senior Management level can be an added advantage to the institution and brings positive spin-offs in terms of implementation and attitude. However, one thing that became clear in the findings from interviews and documents review as demonstrated in table 4.6.1.1 and 4.6.1.2. is that there is no glaring relationship between number of stakeholders involved in the process and the performance of the project as long as those stakeholders do not have influence in the organisation at senior positions.

This connects more to the calibre of stakeholders involved in the evaluation process based on the influence they have in the strategic levels of the university. Even though in many circumstances it also depends on the agenda of the key stakeholder that is involved, therefore, the involvement of senior personnel in the process can either be positive or negative depending on the particular agenda (Weiss, 1998). Therefore, at this moment, no evidence can solely demonstrate a link between stakeholder involvement in the process and the performance of the UCDG project.

5.2.3.4. Comparison of research results to other similar studies

The review of similar studies with regards to stakeholder involvement has had common research results as it has been alluded to in the study by Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia (2013) that the early involvement of stakeholders in a project brings more ideas. This study agrees with that position however, these ideas cannot be implemented if the key stakeholders in the institution have got different agendas. Nederhand & Klijn (2017) posits that there are indicators that can be used to measure performance and are categorised into the effectiveness of the solution offered, the support, the integral character of the solution (role played by solution) and whether the solution is doable in the future, and finally how cost-effective is this solution (efficiency). Based on the evidence provided in the table 4.6.1.1 and 4.6.1.2, there

seems to be a gap in terms of effectively implementing the intervention efficiently as some funds were returned unutilised which was also alluded to by DHET.

The finding by the funders agrees with (DAC, 2002; Mascia, Pailler, Thieme, Rowe, & Bottrill, 2013) that when performance measurement is conducted through M&E, it is viewed as measuring the progress of a particular program, project and policy to assess its efficacy through the result-chain. The funders' determination of UCDP performance, the commissioners and evaluators were mainly based on the progress of the project through result chain and whether it has met its targets and objectives. Overall, there is convergence in all participants that there is little or no change in performance in the project, but their views differ in terms of the extent of the little. Some believe that there is a slight change even though it is far from maturity whereas others believe that there is no change at all.

This study has contributed to the theory by looking at the relationship between stakeholder involvement and performance which has been demonstrated that only senior management involvement might have influence in the performance if they are involved in the process.

The finding that relates to a large number of stakeholders agrees with Wojewnik-Filipkowska, Dryl, Dziadkiewicz and Dryl, (2019, p. 10) when they state that stakeholder needs and effects may differ completely from each other; hence, stakeholder analysis and needs must be identified by evaluator so that they may be involved at different stages of the process. Lastly, the number of stakeholders should be limited to a number that is manageable to avoid conflict between these members as the interests may be different (Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia, 2013). This brings in the role that should be played by the evaluator as guided by the skin in the game principle as alluded to in the blue marble principles to mitigate conflict from different stakeholders (Patton, 2020).

The findings above indicate that even though there were key stakeholders that were involved in the process; however, performance does not seem to correlate with the learning or capacity these stakeholders acquired. (Nederhand & Klijn, 2017) beleives that the effect can only be seen on innovativeness rather than the actual performance. Therefore, this finding necessitates further research on the factors that may be adopted to enhance performance in addition to learning from process use.

Lastly, the key finding that still needs further research is the effect of involvement of key personnel that hold strategic positions in the institution in the evaluation process. This finding has a differing view where there was no convergence between different project leaders where others claimed that it improves performance whereas others believe that it derails performance.

5.2.4. Theme four: The organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use

The first finding is around the traditional way of reporting from which the change is noticeable from both the institutional level and funder or DHET level. It has been indicated that previously it would be sufficient to report the number of activities performed per project, however, after the involvement of evaluators, the reporting did improve to such an extent that progress was tracked up to the outcomes and impact of the project and further evidence to prove the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives.

Whereas in the interviews, the DHET representative agreed with the improvement in terms of reporting such as meeting deadlines, however, could not agree more in terms of meeting the targets. As a result, the funders claimed that from the previous project there were no meaningful changes in terms of implementation of the UCDP from their perspective. They further elaborated that there were some deep-rooted structural, cultural, and agency servicing the project that needs to be uprooted for the performance to be glaring. In addition to this counterargument, one project leader is still not satisfied with how the institution approaches the M&E tool as she believes that it is only there for compliance rather than its purpose of continuous monitoring of progress.

A further interrogation was made on the assessment report that was provided by the evaluators with regards to how the project has since changed its implementation to achieve its objectives. The table below depicts the results from the evaluators.

Table 5.2.4.1. Three main dimensions scorecard (CREST, 2020)

Dimension	Raw score	Standardized score (/100)	Rating (see legend
Project management	7/11	**64**	**Average**
Conceptualisation	50/75	**67**	**Average**
Implementation and achievement reporting	39/45	**87**	**Good**

In trying to unpack the findings from evaluators, the following summary is provided.

- The 'strength' and 'positive features' of the UCDG report are quite detailed reporting on implementation and achievement of outcomes as well as lessons learned. This reflects a culture or organisational learning that the team should build on for the next round. In addition, project underspend was relatively low at 15%.
- Some areas that require the most improvement refer to the understanding of the logic model and its components. The relatively average score for dimensions around conceptualisation – description of activities and outputs, and especially of outcomes and outcome indicators, point to an area into which the team needs to put more effort in the future.

There is no convergence in the findings as indicated above as at the institutional level and the evaluator level they converge but the funders are still not satisfied with the implementation. These differences are associated with the fact that the DHET when measuring the change in implementation aligns it more with financial trends whilst the institution and evaluators, on the other hand, consider the financial trends but also consider the progress in actual implementation and reporting as literature explained when measuring performance (DAC, 2002; Mascia, Pailler, Thieme, Rowe, & Bottrill, 2013). The project implementers have provided a different view to counter the claims made by DHET with regards to the issue of unspent funds that may be aligned to a lack of change in implementation. They claim that culturally the institution is still lacking

support at all levels as some interventions may not be implemented based on the fact that there is a lack of buy-in from the faculties.

To some extent, from the DHET perspective and one project leader, there was a lack of understanding of the roles that may be played by the evaluator as they claimed that they believe that the evaluators needed not to understand the context and cultural issues of the university - but they were only there to teach them compliance and how to report properly. Whilst the scope of work by commissioners is known but from the evaluator perspective for the process to influence the change and buy-in mostly shall be aligned to the context and systemic dynamics from which then cultural changes would be seen (Patton M. Q., 2020) and (Ledermann, 2012).

The role played by the evaluators should be key in breaking the barriers of culture through the calibre of key stakeholders and understanding the context (Ledermann, 2012). The evaluators have to ensure that the stakeholders involved, are at a level where they can be able to tabulate cultural issues during the engagements so that guidance should try and align with those cultural issues. Should the evaluators not play this role, it may be difficult to transition from old culture to the new developments (Tanner & Willingh, 2014). Evaluators in the process have the role of being a teacher so that the project leaders or stakeholders involved are clear of the importance of the process. Lastly, the assumption would be that key or senior management who holds strategic positions were not part of the engagements with evaluators which made it difficult to instil the importance of evaluation and how can it be infused in the institutional context and further steer the direction as advised by evaluators.

In addition to the finding above of change in implementation due to the involvement of evaluators, it has been further discovered that the changes in implementation are not solely depending on the evaluators, the change in management and their involvement in the process has also had a great deal in the change in implementation. This submission indicated that while the focus of this study was on process use, other factors were considered as they could also contribute to the change. This finding goes beyond the claims, but it intensifies the calibre of the stakeholders that shall be involved in the process which may influence the changes in organisational culture should they be involved in the process.

The third finding from the DHET and project implementers with the issue of culture is that there is not much change in the project as the interventions that are implemented are a continuation of the old interventions that were not based on any research or evidence. These findings indicate that culturally, a bottom-up approach shall be adopted where interventions shall be problematised from the ground, from the people who need these interventions, so that when interventions are designed they respond to the actual needs of many rather than a few individuals. This may change the claims that were made by the DHET that the institution has returned a significant amount of money from which on their side they associate it with inefficiencies within the institution.

5.2.4.2. Response to the question

At the project level, the implementation of the UCDG has shifted positively which has changed the old cultural way of doing things as previously, the project was housed in the Teaching and Learning Centre and after the involvement of evaluators, it has been stated that activities were stretched to cover the broad spectrum in the university. Secondly, a more integrated way of working has been adopted which has served to break the silo mentalities that were previously there.

At the institutional level, while there is a glimpse of changes in some areas, the findings reveal that there is still a long way to go as the project implementers cried out that there is still a separation between the project and academic enterprise and as such there is a lack of buy-in from faculties. The project implementers feel that they need to beg for the slot to bring in the intervention. These findings provide a disconnect in terms of communication between project leaders and project implementers as the project coordinator indicated that the faculties have now designed their faculty plans that incorporate the interventions.

Holistically, there is no convergence in terms of change in the implementation that has a direct influence on the cultural changes as the funders have their perspective yet on the other side the institution and evaluators have a different perspective. However, there is convergence from all evidence that conceptually the project still needs focus as the interventions are carrying over from the previous project and that they are not tailored to address the actual needs and cultural disparities.

Therefore, the implications of the findings above are that although the evaluators' role is key in understanding the context in order to shape guidance; however, there are other factors that need to be considered specifically by evaluators. These factors include the calibre of stakeholders that should be involved as they may influence the cultural changes (Tanner & Willingh, 2014). The findings have demonstrated that senior managers that have influence were not included in the process by evaluators which has been demonstrated by drastic change when the new, hands-on DVC took over.

5.2.4.3. Comparison of research results to other similar studies

A review of similar studies with regards to stakeholder involvement has had common research results as Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia (2013) who indicated that involvement of key stakeholders reveals the alternative ways which were never identified when the project was initiated, and as a result, stakeholders' knowledge gets employed. DHET findings with regards to factors such as culture that may hinder progress is in line with McNulty, (2012) when he stated that more persistent and systemic cultural and psychological dimensions as emphases by symbolic use which may either improve or derail the performance of any project or organisation holistically.

Furthermore, Patton, (1998) believes that involvement or engaging in the evaluation process has got enduring benefits in terms of use for both the individuals and organisation such as improved performance, implementation, and reporting as opposed to evaluation findings. This was evidenced by the evaluator's assessment that has demonstrated improvement in the project implementation and reporting. The interaction between different stakeholders has resulted in creative solutions and sharing of ideas which assisted the project implementation to move forward and increase the project value in line with literature by Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Pia (2013). The implication of this finding is that the more hierarchal culture changes the more changes in the project implementation will prevail (Tanner & Willingh, 2014)

Furthermore, the belief provided by the project leader that evaluators were commissioned to assist them in compliance and accountability, contradicts the statement made by Patton (1998) that "what gets measured, gets done". He believes that if the evaluation process would be viewed in that manner the process or results can be manipulated as the stakes are high to those involved. Hence, one participant showed discomfort on how the M&E tool is viewed as she mentioned that it is viewed

as a compliance tool rather than retain its actual purpose. These results indicate a very big role that should have been played by the evaluator to create awareness and learning by stakeholders who are part of the process.

The issue of hierarchal structure, meaning the seniority of staff members plays a key role in the cultural encapsulation and this is in line with the claims made by Tanner & Willingh (2014) that if they are not involved, decision makers might delay the project changes and further limit the scope of work specifically to project leaders and implementers. Lastly, the finding regarding lack of understanding of different roles that can be played by the evaluator when complex cultural issues prevail, Ledermann, (2012) in an article whose focus is on mechanisms to be adopted in a complex phenomenon where evaluation use is affected by different factors in a context-bound situation states that in a high-pressure situation an evaluator is expected to work as the referee and decide on the change after careful interactions with different stakeholders.

5.2.5. Theme five: The challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use.

One of the key findings that were discussed across all participants was the issue of stakeholders that are operating in the interventions that are not well conceptualised, not based on research, and not based on any evidence which makes it difficult for these interventions to be measured in the process. This revealed several issues such as the people who are involved in the initial stages of the project are the relevant people with aligned skills of running the project. Secondly, if these interventions are not researched or based on any evidence, are they then addressing what they were supposed to address. The beneficiaries indicated that they would like to see the change of approach when it comes to project initialisation where a down-up approach is used to first problematise the intervention, base it on the reflections from the target group in the form of interviews and other evidence so that they may cover the broader spectrum rather than few individuals. If the approach won't change, during the evaluation process there won’t be a noticeable change which resulted from inherent challenges rather than challenges of the process itself.

All the above findings revealed that challenges that affected the stakeholders during the evaluation process are not challenges that emanated from the process itself but their inherent challenges that are scattered from project level to institutional level. At

the institutional level, the structural challenges keep coming up specifically how the communication and skills are cascaded to the implementers on the ground up to the beneficiaries. A further issue of culture also emerged where project implementation is the continuation of old projects whether they have an impact or not and that might prevent the new project leaders to come up with fresh researched ideas that may help to conceptualise the project to address the key problems.

Another finding was a lack of sufficient knowledge from the project leaders and project implementers as they felt that the capacity building into the M&E tool meant extra work on their side. This has indicated gaps in the role that was supposed to be played by the evaluator in ensuring that a bigger picture is seen by those that were involved in the process and how this capacity-building would help them in executing their responsibilities (Patton, 2020).

The third finding revealed a lack of clear vision from the project coordinators and Senior Management as it has been explained that there is a more integrated approach adopted as a result, some staff members, specifically from faculties, have been roped in. However, the issue of their roles has not been clearly defined. The implications of this would be a situation where you see many stakeholders with different agendas who may hinder the change or progress (Patton, 2020). Secondly, the stakeholders who would be there just for compliance and not have a direct impact on the project implementation. Lastly, the finding that was highlighted was the issue of staff turnover specifically those that were involved in the evaluation process then left the institution affected the continuation and that has stagnated or derailed the progress.

In these challenges, there seems to have a big role that was supposed to be played by evaluators where they needed to play the teacher role, and where there were disconnects or differences an evaluator had to play a mediator role of harmonising the situation within WSU. This is supported by the blue marble principles on the key role that should be played by the evaluator as part of upskilling the stakeholders and further harmonise where there is conflict (Patton, 2020).

5.2.5.1. Response to the research question

In responding to the last research question on, ' what challenges did the key stakeholders encounter with regards to their involvement in process use.' the researcher broadly interrogated the different challenges that were highlighted

throughout the process. Across all participants, it became clear that project leaders were sitting with the projects or interventions that were not measurable which made it very difficult for funders to notice any change in the project. This is the result of interventions that were not researched nor based on any evidence when they were crafted. Some of the project leaders that were included in the project as trying to improve the integration have not been given clear roles to play whilst they are holding key positions in the project and that may hinder progress.

Overall, while there may be findings directly from the evaluation process use however there are other challenges besides the challenges that may be encountered in the evaluation process which may affect the change, there are also external challenges that need to be considered that derail the change in the process. To combat these challenges explained above and to ensure the evaluation process brings change to the stakeholders, the evaluators have a big role of identifying the challenges that may hinder change. Secondly, as part of combating the challenges, evaluators have to ensure that in the stakeholder selection, at least senior management who have the influence in an institution are involved in the process. Lastly, clear roles to those stakeholders shall be provided to ensure that knowledge is shared across all participants and minimise the staff turnover and skills transfer risk.

5.2.5.2. Comparison of research results to other similar studies

A review of similar studies demonstrated the following similarities and differences. According to Cottrell, et al. (2015), in a study about lack of measures believe that defining the benefits and challenges of stakeholder engagement in a systematic review is an integral part of assessing the impact of stakeholder involvement. The challenges highlighted in the findings include the costs, resources, finding the right people, and difficulties associated with engagements that need balancing between the right types of stakeholders with the right time in the process (Cottrell, et al., 2015). In line with the latter finding, the issue of finding the right people and difficulties associated with engagements that need balancing between the right types of stakeholders was alluded to by two participants in the findings.

Secondly, this study further revealed that in many cases, one of the reasons that lead to lack of proper measurement is the fact that the initiatives are not researched, not based on any evidence which makes it difficult to set measurable targets and outcomes. Therefore, this necessitate a much bigger role to be played by evaluators

to identify such challenges in each context so that during the evaluation process, the learning is channelled through the same direction.

Some challenges may be encountered by key stakeholders when involved in the process use and such challenges include conflict of interests, power dynamics amongst the key stakeholders, and stakeholders with different interests who may persuade the evaluation process (Patton, 2020). The findings around structural and cultural issues are also in line with Patton's line of thought. However, in the literature that I have engaged in, there is no related literature around the effects of staff turnover involved in the process and this needs further investigation as it may contribute to the changes in project performance. Therefore, this study, has contributed on the importance of the role that should be played by the evaluator which would facilitate a change in the way the stakeholders interpret the learning during the process. Evaluator has a duty of ensuring that the stakeholders do embrace the change and easily adapt to a systematic way of working using the M&E tool and its components.

Some of the findings that were understudied include the calibre of stakeholders to be included in the evaluation process. This study has revealed that when evaluators select stakeholders to be part of the process mostly, they should target the more senior management who will be able to influence the change and assign the roles to all other stakeholders. In the study by Tanner & Willingh, (2014), the issue of hierarchal culture has been emphasised however, the intentions and roles that they shall play in the process was not clearly explained in this study.

5.3. Conclusion

This section will conclude the research by discussing the overall findings as they relate to the research questions and objectives. The main aim of this research was to investigate the effect of evaluation process use as the mechanism in the performance of the University Capacity Development Grant at Walter Sisulu University. It was expected that the findings would enlighten the project implementers and decision-makers whether there is any behavioural or thinking change in the procedures when the implementers execute their duties or the way they think around project implementation. Below are the key findings of this study.

- The first finding has revealed that while evaluation process use provides individual and behavioural change during the process, however, when viewing

the change other factors need to be considered which bring positive attitude such as a change in leadership.

- Secondly, it has been found that at different levels, the measurement of change might not be viewed the same as it has been stated that at individual and institutional level there are noticeable changes whilst at funders/ DHET level there are no clear changes that can be seen in the project that is linked into the project. The time factor is noticed to be key at different levels to measure the changes.
- This study has further provided evidence that indeed in the process, there is learning from stakeholder involvement as all stakeholders that were involved demonstrated different skills that they have acquired throughout the process that have assisted their mindset.
- One thing that was also noticed is the issue of skill transfer that is lacking from those project leaders that were involved in the project implementers who did not participate in the process and that is regarded as providing disconnect in terms of communication between different levels including the targeted audience.
- It has further been discovered that at different levels performance measurement is viewed differently as the findings indicated that the funders measure performance through financial trends whereas the evaluators and institutions measure performance through other components of the result chain such as outcome and impact. Moreover, the findings indicated that performance cannot only be attributed to process use but other factors such as a change in leadership should also be considered when measuring performance.
- It has been established that one of the reasons for lack of a proper measurement plan emanates from initiatives that are neither researched nor based on any evidence which makes it difficult to set proper targets and outcomes.
- Furthermore, it has been discovered that one of the challenges that may delay change in the implementation of the project is that the project itself is not properly conceptualised, as it was stated that the same intervention carries over for many years without any evidence of its effect.
- In terms of changes in implementation that directly affect the institutional culture, there is no convergence because there are different perspectives from different

participants. The funders see no change in the implementation, they believe that culture is one of the key factors that derail the change in implementation, whilst the institution and funders have a different and positive view.

- It has also been discovered that the change as a result of process use might be delayed by different challenges from which some of these challenges may not be coming from within the process but may be inherent from the particular institution challenges which in a way would affect the change in the process. Hence, the evaluator role of identifying these challenges and providing mitigating factors during the process becomes key.

The above findings are aligned and respond to the five research questions and objectives as they were outlined in the research proposal chapter. These findings are crucial specifically to the institution as they illustrate how the funders view the project implementation and performance in the university. Moreover, this finding have been highlighted by the three key stakeholders namely institutions, funders, and evaluators that in terms of performance measurement they have different lenses to view the project. This will assist going forward that all measurement tools shall be integrated to form a holistic view that would be acceptable to all three key stakeholders. Furthermore, these findings will assist the institution not only to focus on the results of the project but even the people that are involved in the evaluation process and how they can make use of the capacity building from evaluators to build learning in the process.

Additionally, the conceptualisation of the project has been highlighted in most areas of the research. Secondly, these findings are key as they highlight some external factors that may need necessary attention for the smooth running of the project. These factors include institutional culture, structural factors, systemic factors, and so on.

Whilst the research was focusing on the changes that are brought by evaluation process use; however, the outcomes of this research have indicated that other intertwined factors need to be considered in the discussion that affects the change.

Theoretically, the findings of this study were mostly aligned to the literature from the different scholars in all five themes that were developed. However, some findings were not linked to any literature that may be considered as research areas to be considered in the future.

This qualitative interpretive study has contributed more to the researcher in terms of reducing bias as a richer understanding of deeper issues was brought by different experiences of participants who participated in the data collection. Furthermore, engaging in this research using a case study has shaped the researcher's thinking to understand more contextual factors that may lead to different results of the project and further hinder drastic changes from the evaluation process. Given that I was once part of the project, my interpretation of the results was very limited. However, the case study has provided a deeper context of challenges that broadens the mind.

One of the key limitations that were encountered was in the focus groups where five participants were expected but only four pitched in each group. Secondly, given that the researcher was once part of the project, there were answers that he was expecting; however, the involvement of key stakeholders such as DHET, project implementers, and beneficiaries helped to reshape the thinking by providing very diverse answers that the researcher never thought of. It has further assisted in triangulating the data from different data sources. Lastly, the time factor from the period I was waiting for ethical clearance approval negatively contributed to the data collection and further process of this study.

5.4. Recommendations

Given that this research was only limited to investigating the effect of evaluation process use, these following recommendations were made.

- The exploration of the change that might be brought where the fundamentals of monitoring and evaluation would underpin the strategic plan of the WSU which in a way would encourage the entire university to adopt the tool and persuade learning.
- To set the tone in the institution and to combat the cultural and structural challenges it is further recommended that for all the projects it must be policy regulated that M and E be used to underpin all the projects planning with the sole purpose of inclusivity and learning to those involved.
- Transferring of acquired skills and cascading of learned information using different forums shall be considered to improve learning and cultivate cultural behaviours.

- There shall be the proper documented plan of streamlined procedures that are policy based on how awareness or communication shall be channelled to all key stakeholders within the institution.

Moreover, some interesting areas emerged that further research could engage on. These areas include the following:

- The extent change of the structure of UCDP to include leadership can influences the process use changes.
- Other factors that may hinder progress or changes such as structural, cultural, and people involved in the evaluation process.
- Further research can use different methods to gather data such as the quantitative method where the focus will be more on numbers and that would reveal a different perspective of performance.
- The factors that may be adopted to enhance performance in addition to the learning from process use.
- The calibre of stakeholders involved in the process needs further research of who shall and who shall not be part of the project as well as the role that each participant plays in the institutional structure.
- Lastly, one key area that still needs further research would be the role that should be played by stakeholders that were involved in the process of transferring skills.

5.5. Summary

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrated that evaluation process use is a key feature in building capacity to the stakeholders that are involved in the process. However, spreading the change into the organisation or institution is subject to other factors that need to be considered for the change to be meaningful. These changes include the structural or systemic factors, cultural factors, and even the role played by the stakeholders in the strategic positions of the institution concerned. Secondly, the evaluator's role became a glaring feature in the process to ensure that all participants are clear of the outcomes of their involvement in the process. That may even mitigate the challenge of skill transfer which was one of the findings in this study.

Lastly, different measurement lenses from key stakeholders need to be integrated so that the progress of the project may be viewed holistically rather than having different views from different stakeholders.

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Annexure A

Main research question	*Participants*	*Possible list of semi-structured interview questions*
What behavioural changes have developed in the implementation of organisational procedures as a result of the process use? And What are the organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use? What are the changes in performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use? **(Semi- structured interview) Background information linking to the question** **The senior personnel will be interviewed to get their perspectives in terms of the overall objectives of the project interrogated in conjunction with the reports submitted by the WSU to DHET and assessment produced by DHET about the performance of the UCDG as linked to the strategic planning of the WSU and project objectives.** **Whether the implementation of this project assisted in changing the mindset of the implementers, skills developed through the process use, and the project has better performed to achieve its efficacy?**	**Senior Director**	Firstly, I will introduce myself to the participant and purpose of my interview Tell us about your experience of leading the TDG and UCDG? Kindly elaborate on the differences between these two projects? Could you share with me what would you provide as overall conclusion on the performance of the project based on the progress reports submitted to DHET for TDG (2014 -2017) as compared to reports submitted for UCDG (2018 – 2020)? In comparing the assessment reports for both trienniums, elaborate if there was a change in the performance in the project implementers and the project itself as explained by the DHET? If yes, what would you attribute that change to? If no, why there is no change? Please elaborate on what the UCDG programme sought to address? Given that the project goals are aligned to certain strategic goals, share you insights on how has the project implementation closely achieved the set goals and objectives? During the UCDG tenure CREST was introduced as evaluators of UCDG that assisted 26 universities throughout the process, share insights on how was the journey of different project leaders due to their involvement in the process? Are there any implementation changes that could be highlighted in the project based on the experience acquired by project leaders whilst being assisted by CREST? If yes what are those changes? If no what could be the reason? In terms of understanding would you say that the project leaders and project coordinators obtained better understanding of project that before CREST involvement? How was the UCDG programme processes managed as compared to the TDG where there were no evaluators involved? Share your views on whether you think that the evaluators completely understood the context of WSU in the process? If yes is there any shift in terms of how they are doing things such as meeting deadlines? Do you think that the stakeholders that were involved in the process were clearly identified by the evaluators? If yes what makes you think so? Kindly share any skills gained by the project leaders including yourself as Senior Director that you would attribute to CREST's involvement in the project and evaluation process? If they were any skills gained, what are those skills? If no what could have been the challenge, please elaborate? Kindly share any insights on the effect of the involvement of CREST as evaluators that they had on organisational procedures. (time limes, deadlines etc were there any improvements) Kindly share your insights on whether the involvement of the project leaders have an effect in the performance of the project? If yes, how different did they handle their duties? If no, why?

		Please share if you foresee other university projects implementers keen to adopt the use of M and E as tool in their projects in the future? Did the project leaders easily adapted to the involvement of the evaluators in the project? And if so, what were the challenges that they experienced during this process? Please share if you think that the initiative taken by DHET for introduction of monitoring and evaluation provides clear measures of projects in the context of higher education? Is there any change that you see in the project leaders in terms of the ways of thinking and implementation which could be influenced by the CREST involvement?, if yes, what were those, if not please share any challenges ? Would you say that the involvement of the CREST as evaluators have assisted the project to achieve to its objectives? If yes, why are you saying so? If not, what are the gaps or challenges? In the platforms that you are sitting like Institutional Management Committee (IMC) and so on would you advocate for the inclusion of M and E tool in other projects of the institution based on your experience obtained throughout the process? What can you pick up as outstanding being involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating the project that is different from other projects without this tool? Please share if you have any recommendations on how the evaluators could carry the process besides the way they have conducted it is the 2018 – 2020 UCDG phase?
• What are the changes in performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use ? ▪ What are the organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use? ▪ What are the challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use**?** **Semi- structured interview) Background information linking to the question** **The DHET personnel will be interviewed to get the perspective of the external stakeholder in terms of the overall objectives of the project interrogated in conjunction with the reports submitted by the WSU to DHET and assessment produced by DHET about the performance of the**	**Department of Higher Education and Training personnel DHET**	Firstly, I will introduce myself to the participant and purpose of my interview Could you please explain your role and experience at DHET in terms of assessing the Universities' TDG and UCDG? Kindly elaborate on the differences between these two projects? Could you share with me what would you provide as overall conclusion on the performance of the WSU project based on the reports submitted to DHET for TDG (2014 -2017) as compared to reports submitted for UCDG (2018 – 2020)? In comparing the assessment reports for both trienniums, elaborate if there was a change in the performance in the WSU programme and individual projects? If yes, what would you attribute that change to? If no, why there is no change? Is there any difference that has been noted in the UCDG implementation as a result of the involvement of WSU project leaders in the evaluation process by CREST? In your own assessment would you conclude that the UCDG achieved its objectives? If yes, why? If not, what could be the challenge that can be highlighted? Given that the comparison is done between two trienniums are there any noticeable changes in the organisational behaviour such as meeting deadlines and other procedural matters that have been noted in the project implementation at the WSU? If yes what are those noticeable changes?

UCDG as linked to the strategic planning of the WSU and project objectives. **Furthermore, the data from this will assist to strengthen the objectivity of the results and better triangulation.**		Based on your assessment would you conclude that the WSU did include key stakeholders that have influence in the process? If yes what are the key pointers that demonstrate that and would you link these pointers to performance? If no what makes you think of that? Share your views on whether you think that the evaluators completely understood the context of WSU in the process? If yes is there any shift in terms of how they are doing things such as meeting deadlines? Do you think that the stakeholders that were involved in the process were clearly identified by the evaluators? If yes what makes you think so? In terms of the national priorities would you say that the WSU project was aligned and if yes did it provide any impact? Overall, in dealing with these projects what are the key challenges specifically aligned to WSU project leaders and the project holistically? What are the recommendations you can provide in terms of the implementation of these projects going forward and further how shall CREST improve in engaging with universities in M and E?
What is the skill sets that have been acquired by the project implementers through their involvement in the process? What are the organisational changes of culture with regards to the UCDG implementation as a result of process use? What are the challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use? **Background linking to the interview questions in this section** **The aim would be to get their experiences of being involved in the process, achievements, and challenges thereafter.**	**Five project leaders:** Executive Director – Student Affairs**;** Senior Director – Research and Innovation Learning and Teaching Manager: Mthatha Campus Learning and Teaching Manager: Komani Campus Teaching Development Specialist/Curriculum Development Specialist	Firstly, I will introduce myself to the participant and purpose of my interview. • I believe that you participated in the UCDG implementation as project leaders. Can you please take me through your experience of being part of the project? • What was your role in the project? • After the introduction of CREST as evaluators was there any change in the way you looked at the UCDP project implementation or implementation of projects generally? If yes what was that change and how it has assisted you in the implementation of the project further? If no what was lacking in the evaluator's guidance? Share your views on whether you think that the evaluators completely understood the context of WSU in the process? • Do you think that the stakeholders that were involved in the process were clearly identified by the evaluators? • Did your involvement in the project and process of evaluation changed the way you perceive the project implementation? If yes how were you looking at project implementation before and after the involvement in the process? If no what was lacking? • Being involved in the UCDP and process of evaluation what would you pick as outstanding that you have gained throughout this process? • Were there any policies or procedures changed based on the in the University based on the effect of CREST involvement in the UCDG? • What skills did you get by being part of the evaluation process? • Were there any internal reports required and what were the time frames? Which reports are those?

		• Do you think there are complaints with the time frames of reports from implementers on the ground? If yes, what were those? • Would you recommend that other projects in the WSU shall adopt the M and E tool? If yes why? If no why? • Has the direction of the programme changed to better reflect the priorities of the University or it is still the same albeit the evaluators process? • What challenges did you get whilst you were interacting with CREST? • Did you get any feedback from the beneficiaries such as faculties and other beneficiaries? If yes what are they saying? • Based on the feedback do you believe that the project made an impact in the university or beneficiaries? • In what ways would the UCDG be implemented to better the implementation of this project based on the experience obtained during UCDG evaluation process and other projects? • Do you have any recommendations on how the evaluators/CREST shall engage the key stakeholder or project leaders to ensure UCDG is implemented during 2021 -2023 plan?
What are the changes in performance of UCDG related to the involvement of certain key stakeholders in the evaluation process use What are the challenges of key stakeholders concerning their involvement in process use? **Background information linking to the interview questions.** **The two focus groups of the project per two focus areas namely student development related programmes and staff development related programmes. This last category will be included to corroborate the claims made by the implementers and is aligned to question three and five where they seek to assess the change in the process and organizational culture as a result of evaluation**	**Student Development related programmes:** **Two different focus groups** Peer Assisted Learning Programme Writing Centre Assistants Academic Advisor Professional Excellence Programme (PEP). E -Learning Assistance	Firstly, I will introduce myself to the participant and purpose of my interview. Share how were you identified for the programme? How were you supported in the programme? Given that UCDP is meant to support individuals at faculty and department level through interventions how were the teaching and learning project leaders reaching out to the faculties and the departments? How aligned were their involvement or interventions in the needy areas at faculty or departmental level? I believe that the project was administered by Teaching and Learning Centre, how did they help you in solving your challenges? Would you say that their involvement assisted you to better the way you do things at your level? Would you say that the project implementers fully understood what needs to be done by the project? Would you say that the project has brought change in the university culture and ways of doing things? Are there certain skills for UCDG project leaders possess that different from other project implementers in the university? What challenges did you encounter when interacting with the project implementers? Where do you think project implementers are still challenged or can improve? Do you have any recommendations on how the project should be implemented if it were to form part of 2021 -2023 plan?

	Staff Development related programmes: PGDHET supported lecturer. Scholarship of Learning and Teaching participant. Masters programme beneficiary Teaching VC Excellence awards recipient PHD beneficiary	Firstly, I will introduce myself to the participant and purpose of my interview. Share how were you identified for the programme? How were you supported in the programme? Given that UCDP interventions are meant to support faculties and departments how were the teaching and learning project leaders reaching out to the faculties? How aligned were their involvement or interventions in the faculty plans or departmental plans? I believe that the project was administered by Teaching and Learning Centre, how did they help you in solving your challenges? Would you say that their involvement assisted you to better the way you do things at your level? Would you say that the project implementers fully understood what needs to be done by the project in assisting the academics of the institution? Would you say that the project has brought change in the university culture and ways of doing things? Are there certain skills different from other people that you would link to project leaders? What challenges did you encounter when interacting with the project implementers? Where do you think the project implementers are still challenged from? Do you have any recommendations on how the project should be implemented from 2021 -2023?

ANNEXURE B

DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND RESEARCH
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20 October 2021

Mr Mandla Mantshongo
11 Goddard Street
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Amalinda
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5247

Dear Mr Mantshongo

Gatekeepers Permission Letter to conduct research at Walter Sisulu University

Ethical Clearance Number: WSG-2021-43
Institution: Walter Sisulu University

A Gatekeeper letter is hereby granted for the study "Investigating the effectiveness of 'evaluation-process-use' in the performance of the 'University Capacity Development Programme' in Walter Sisulu University" provided that copies of your completed study will be submitted to the Campus Rector of the campus in which the study will be conducted and the Directorate of the Research & Innovation.

All data pertaining to Walter Sisulu University will be treated confidentially and you are required to abide by ethical principles at all times. It is your responsibility to seek consent from Participants.

Kind regards

.....
Prof W Akpan
Senior Director: Research & Innovation

ANNEXURE C

Research Office:
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Research Ethics Chair:
Rekgotsofetse Chikane
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23 September 2021

Dear Mandla Mantshongo,

Title: Investigating the effectiveness of 'evaluation-process-use' in the performance of the 'University Capacity Development Programme' in ' Walter Sisulu University'
Student Number: 2326839
Degree: Master in Management in the field of Governance
Ethics Clearance Number: *WSG-2021-43*

All candidates must satisfy the University's ethical standards for research. Your ethics application has been received and reviewed by the Wits School of Governance Human Research Ethics Committee.

Your ethical clearance has been approved subject to you getting permission to conduct research from all sites where research is conducted. The letter(s) of permission to undertake research must be submitted to the WSG Research Office and kept on file with your final proposal and other ethics documents.

You may commence your data collection under the guidance of your supervisor. In the event that the scope, methodology or nature of the research changes, you are required to submit another ethics application reflecting the changes.

The onus is on you as the candidate, with support from your supervisor, to ensure your research complies with university human research ethics policies and protocols at all stages of the research process.

It is recommended that you keep this letter in a safe place as you are responsible for ensuring you have proof of ethics clearance and have lodged the ethics clearance / protocol number with Faculty before final submission of your research report. If you do not have an ethics clearance number, you are not permitted to graduate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely
Rekgotsofetse Chikane
Rekgotsofetse Chikane
Research Ethics Chair

B S C C

BE STILL COMMUNICATIONS
For effective communication solutions

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ANNEXURE D

Professional EDITORS Guild

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This document certifies that a copy of the dissertation whose title appears below was edited for proper English language usage, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style by Dr Sindiso Zhou whose academic qualifications appear in the footer of this document. The research content and the author(s) intentions were not altered during the editing process.

TITLE**: Investigating the effectiveness of evaluation-process-use in the performance of the University Capacity Development Programme at Walter Sisulu University**

AUTHOR: MANDLA MANTSHONGO

STUDENT NUMBER: 2326839

Note: The edited work described here may not be identical to that submitted. The authors, at their sole discretion, have the prerogative to accept, delete, or change amendments made by the editor before submission.

DATE: **17 February 2022**

EDITOR'S COMMENT

The author was advised to effect suggested corrections regarding subject-verb agreement, tense-use, prepositions, spelling, comma misplacement, in-text referencing and overall expression.



Signature

PhD Applied Linguistics (UFH), MA Applied Linguistics (MSU), BA (Honours) English and Communication (MSU). A member of the Professional Editors Guild, South Africa 2022