

Evaluation of Training Programmes: A Review of Selected Models and Approaches

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Abstract

Evaluation is a critical requirement of any programme implementation process. It is estimated that over the last fifty years, over sixty models or approaches of evaluation have been developed. The main objective of this paper is to review selected evaluation models with the view to distinguish their underlying assumptions and processes and assess their strengths and weaknesses and implications for application. Specifically, the paper examines first, the various definitions of educational evaluation to clarify understanding of the concept and secondly, it explores the role and benefits of evaluation in the successful implementation of educational programmes. Thirdly it reviews three commonly used approaches to educational evaluation namely: - Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model; The Consumer-Oriented Model, and the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model. The paper argues that models of evaluation are critical in programme implementation. It concludes that educators need be versatile with various approaches to evaluation and apply them with due consideration to the given circumstances. It recommends the need to carefully select an evaluation model that fits a given situation in programme implementation.

Introduction

Evaluation is a critical component of any programme implementation process regardless of the sector under consideration. In the education and training sector, there are both internal and external reasons for the evaluation of programmes, including accreditation requirements and funding conditions. According to Goldie (2006), educational evaluation is considered to be the bedrock of accountability, improvement, and sustainable programme implementation. In pitching for educational evaluation, Ross (2010) argues that education is a dynamic phenomenon with never-ending perspectives to it and therefore, it is important for educators to advocate for the necessary changes in approach to evaluation based on an examination of various options. Accordingly, educators must be versatile with various approaches to evaluation and apply them with due consideration to diverse circumstances. This essay explores key proposals and arguments underlying selected models or approaches to the evaluation of training programmes.

Statement of the problem

The role of models, frameworks, or approaches in the evaluation of educational programmes is widely acknowledged. First, they help evaluators use sound and tested principles in the evaluation process, and secondly, assist to professionalize program evaluation and support its scientific advancement as a discipline (Stufflebeam, 2001). Over the last fifty years, over sixty models, frameworks, or evaluation approaches

have emerged that propose different perspectives and methodologies in carrying out the evaluation, but all seeking to address the gaps and needs of specific programmes (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). From among these competing approaches, interested parties, including evaluators, are expected to consider, assess, and select certain evaluation frameworks, depending on the situation and other considerations.

Students, teachers, researchers, and policymakers are expected to use programme evaluation frameworks, to make decisions on the evaluation needed, and the objectives or questions to be emphasized in evaluation. However, in the current proliferation of evaluation approaches, the task of selecting an appropriate evaluation framework is difficult, especially in the absence of literature that analyses and summarizes their respective underlying principles, suitability in given circumstances, processes as well as strengths and weaknesses. Therefore there is a need for current critical reviews that students, faculty members, researchers and policymakers, and programme implementers can use to identify, distinguish various evaluation approaches.

In this context, the main purpose of this paper is to review various evaluation models, frameworks, or approaches, to distinguish their underlying assumptions and processes, as well as assess their strengths and weaknesses in terms of practical application. The findings of this review can help students, educators, and researchers to make decisions on the merits of these models, when and how they are best applied and chart directions for improving the approaches and devising hybrid or better alternatives.

Specific Objectives

The paper starts by examining various definitions of educational evaluation with the view to formulate a working definition. Secondly, it explores the role and benefits of evaluation models, approaches, or frameworks in the successful implementation of educational programmes. Thirdly, it reviews three commonly used approaches to educational evaluation namely: - Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model; The Consumer-Oriented Model, and the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model. For each model, the fundamental propositions, underlying assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses are examined.

Methodology

This paper is based on a systematic review of current literature on various evaluation models, or approaches, to distinguish their underlying assumptions and processes, as well as assess their strengths and weaknesses. A literature search was carried to retrieve from global e-databases, articles that are relevant issues covered in this paper. An analytical literature review of retrieved was carried out key issues including definitions of educational evaluation, the role and benefits of evaluation models, approaches, or frameworks in the successful implementation of educational programmes, and three commonly used approaches to educational evaluation namely: - Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model; The Consumer-Oriented Model, and the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model. The survey of literature and discussion is not exhaustive, however, it was possible bring out key propositions, underlying assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses of these models.

Programme Evaluation: Definition

Over the years many definitions have been put forward in efforts to capture the essence of evaluation and specifically programme evaluation. According to Popham (1993: 7), “[to] evaluate something is to appraise its quality”. Aspinwall et al (1992:2) define evaluation as “part of the decision-making process [which]...involves making judgments about the worth of an activity through a systematic and open process of collecting and analyzing information about it and relating this to explicit objectives,

criteria, and values.” By systematic process, it is implied a structured, coherent, and consistent method of data collection and analysis of this data to arrive at objective and reliable findings of the worth and value of a programme. According to Alkin and Woolley (1969), evaluation is “the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analyzing information to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting [from] among alternatives.”

A more detailed definition adopted in this paper is that coined by Scriven (1991: 14) who stated that:

Evaluation refers to the process of determining the merit, worth, or value of something, or the product of that process... The evaluation process normally involves some identification of relevant standards of merit, worth, or value; ... and some integration or synthesis of the results to achieve an overall evaluation or set of associated evaluations.

This definition stresses the keywords in the evaluation as “merit” and “worth” of an object, in this case, an educational or training programme. According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, (2007: 10), “by worth, we refer to a programme’s combination of excellence and service in an area of clear need within a specified context, worth will depend on the specified need and the context of a given setting, and even time period”. The above notions of the purpose and process of programme evaluation has been stressed by Patton (1997) who observed that “Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming”

From these definitions, we can conclude that the process of educational programme evaluation involves systematically collecting and analyzing information related to the design, implementation, and outcomes of a programme, for monitoring and improving the quality and effectiveness of the programme or its activities, characteristics, and outcomes.

Benefits of Evaluation of Training Programmes

A review of literature reveals a consensus among experts that evaluation is an essential component of programme implementation. Generally, it facilitates an understanding of the unforeseen or underlying dynamics within a given educational programme, which facilitates a sharper focus on ways to make improvements (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield 2001; Patton 2011). A good example of this is a programme evaluation aimed at measuring the ‘knowledge gap’, between what the trainer teaches and what the trainee learns (Riech, 1983). This implies that evaluation is part of a learning process for stakeholders geared towards continuous improvement of the programme implementation process.

According to Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, (1987), evaluation assists to adopt a new program, or product to continue, modify, expand, or terminate an existing program and ensure a match between operations and program design, the value of program and cost-effectiveness, and more importantly, identify whether problems are being solved. This argument underlines that one reason to evaluate projects is to identify needs for the programme, confirm its feasibility, design project activity, and resources, project improvement, and make other critical decisions about the project. There are also external for evaluating programmes, such as requirements set by the accreditation organizations, funding agencies, and other stakeholders concerned about the sustainability and accountability of the programmes (Goldie 2006).

Bramely and Newby (1984) have identified four main reasons for programme evaluation: linking learning outcomes to objectives of the project, providing a mechanism



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for quality control through feedback, aligning training to organizational activities and cost-effectiveness, assessing and documenting learning from the experience, and applying the lessons learned to the job performance and the results of the evaluation to the project implementation process. According to Frye & Hemmer, (2012) evaluation process improves project performance and accountability in project implementation work. They further argue that since educational programmes are designed to bring change in any given situation, programme evaluation is a mechanism for determining whether the change has occurred, whether it was as intended or unintended (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).

Drawing on the work of Zorzi et al (2004) and that of Shadish, Cook, and Leviton (1991), we can summarize the key benefits of evaluation as ensuring accountability of programme performance and resources, improving decisions on the direction a programme will take, in terms of resource allocation, implementation, and efficiency; increased understanding of program and client needs, increased capacity for programme design, assessment, and improvement; reinforcing of social change as anticipated by the programme; shaping public opinion on the project, and increased cohesion and collaboration among programme team and other stakeholders

According to Dane and Schneider (1989) at the core of the implementation of educational programmes is the reinforcement of programme integrity, by assessing the extent a programme is implemented as planned. Therefore evaluating programme implementation is part of an effort to enhance the quality of programme outcome, as it provides insights into how programmes work and why they may fail or succeed. According to Duerden and Witt, (2004), evaluation increases the credibility of programme outcome, gives a better understanding of the programme as implemented, deeper appreciation of programme results, formulation of best practices, and provides opportunities for programme improvement. As pointed out earlier, evaluations aid in decision-making on the use of the programme outcomes, products, or services at both strategic and tactical levels since it considers planning for programme design, development, and implementation (Flagg, 2007).

Definition, Structure, and Role of Models and Approaches in Educational models

Evaluation models or approaches to evaluation models are conceptual representations of processes or conceptual frameworks of how to think about the evaluation process. The main purpose of models is to provide a way to reason about evaluation, provide a set of guiding principles, underlying assumptions behind it, and a method of carrying out the evaluation process (Scientific models, 2020). Over the last fifty years, several models, or evaluation approaches have emerged each with a set of structural elements, different perspectives, and methodologies in carrying out the evaluation (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). A shared understanding of the essential structural elements of evaluation models assists any interested party to compare, make judgments and select from an array of models, what is suitable in certain circumstances.

Over the years, efforts have been made to concretize the key structural elements of evaluation models but this has not been a resounding success. The outcome of these efforts is diverse overlapping and at times conflicting proposals on the matter. Brutscher et al (2008) have identified key components of evaluation frameworks as *evaluation objectives* which flow from the rationale for evaluation; *outcome measures*, ranging from outputs to impacts; *levels of aggregation* from individual research to a faculty or research program to a whole research discipline; *timing* from a single piece of research to longitudinal studies; and *methodology*, evaluation methods both quantitative to qualitative.



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On the other hand, according to Lee and Bremner (2012), the four key elements of an evaluation framework should be: *evaluation focus or questions* (the stated focus or articulated questions that guide the evaluation); *purpose/benefit* (the alignment between the particular purpose or objective of the evaluation activity which can be framed as the intended benefit(s) of the evaluation); *audience* (the intended audience(s) for the evaluation such as internal program staff, the funder or sponsoring agency, an external audience of policymakers); and *evaluator role* (the role of the evaluator role such as leadership or direction, collaborative or “participant role as in the case of (program staff)

The role of models or approaches in evaluation activities has been one area of convergence among experts on the subject. There is a shared view among experts that for effective evaluation, the understanding of theoretical principles underlying various evaluation models is essential. Over the last 50 years, several models and approaches have emerged, that range from objectives-oriented to participant-oriented approaches (Ross, 2010). One driving factor for the current multiplicity of frameworks is the diverse understanding of the role of models in evaluation among scholars and the concomitant questions such as: - What should be evaluated? Who should be involved in evaluation planning and decision-making? What data should be collected? (Lee & Bremner, 2012). Students, evaluators, and scholars look to evaluate the given model, framework, approach to assists in delineating, and answering these questions systematically and coherently.

Programme evaluation theories, models, frameworks, or approaches have been used as a tool for understanding and guiding the programme to be evaluated, and also the evaluation itself (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1987). At the bottom line, the assessment, by the evaluators and /or programme developers of an array of models’ theoretical basis against their programme’s complexity and their evaluation needs, gives them the basis for the choice of an appropriate evaluation model (Frye & Hemmer, 2012). Students of evaluation, teachers, scholars, and practicing evaluators and policy can also use existing evaluation frameworks, to determine how much evaluation needs to be done and/or which types of programmes objectives or questions to be emphasized in evaluation. According to Shaddish, Cook, and Leviton (1991; 8), depending on the evaluation framework selected, “Evaluation questions could emphasize description or explanation, the targeting or quality of services, programme effects on individuals, families, schools or neighborhoods, et cetera,…”

Evaluation frameworks tell us when, where and why some methods should be applied and others not. It suggests the sequence methods should be applied, ways different methods could be combined, types of questions suitable for a particular method, and benefits to be expected from some methods as opposed to others (Shaddish, Cook & Leviton, 1991: 8). For example, according to Stame (2004) and (Scheirer, 1987), driven evaluations of educational programmes should be based on good social science theory, since education is a social science since this contributes, respectively to specifying what is all about, what it should deliver, to who and how.

Selected Models and theories in Educational Evaluation

(i) Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model

Overview

The Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Model for educational evaluation, developed by Stufflebeam (2007) is a comprehensive framework for undertaking both formative and summative evaluations of programmes. Stufflebeam, in his pioneering work on programme evaluation, focused on the role of evaluation in decision making. He believed that “evaluations should help programme’s personnel make decisions keyed to meeting beneficiaries’ needs” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007: 201). This model is therefore based on his belief that evaluators should generate information

for decision making, accountability, and improvement of the education programme. He also emphasized the importance of interaction between evaluators and stakeholders, who eventually have to make decisions and choices.

The intention of Stufflebeam was for CIPP Model to focus on programme improvement, through generating information to decision and on the accountability about the programme (Alkin & Wolley, 1969). At its core, the CIPP posits that programme evaluation should be used both proactively and retroactively to sustain improvement of a programme and at the same time make the judgment of its value. This is to suggest that both formative and summative evaluations are undertaken concurrently (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). In their own words: “In the Model’s formative role, context, input, process, and product evaluations respectively ask, what needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Is it succeeding?” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007: 326-7).

As pointed out by Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsey (1999), according to the CIPP framework, the purpose of the evaluation is to verify what the programme is and whether it is delivered as intended to the targeted recipients. These may be the programme managers, or any other stakeholders, when completed, or underway. Implementation evaluation will provide information about programme performance and not so much as to assess the impact of the programme. Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1987: 97) pointed out also that, “the decision-maker is always the audience to whom a management-oriented evaluation is directed, and the decision maker’s concerns, informational needs, and criteria for effectiveness, guide the direction of the study” (p. 97). Similarly, Stufflebeam (as cited in, Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1987: 98) in the CIPP, “Made the decisions of the programme managers the pivotal organizer for the evaluations, rather than programme objectives” (p. 98).

The CIPP Model has been classified as one of the of decision- or management-orientation approaches because it seeks to streamline the project by determining the problem through data collection and analysis to solve or enlighten the problem, find relevance to decision-makers, before, during, and even after the programme is conducted (Yahaya, 2001). This focus is contrasted with the consumer-orientation approach advocated by Scriven (2003), in which the evaluator acts as the more informed or expert in judging the value or worth of a product for the consumers.

Strengths of CIPP Evaluation Model

One of the strengths of the CIPP model is that it has high evaluation requirements, thus avoiding the collection of huge amounts of information only to discard it due to irrelevance. It is highly focused on the information needs of managers to make decisions based on evaluation results. Due to this emphasis on information for decision-makers, CIPP Model is the preferred choice by most managers and boards (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick (1987). Some of the decisions that need the input from the evaluation outcome include “monitoring and adjusting operations; and deciding to continue or terminate an effort” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 198). Therefore, like other management-oriented approaches, the CIPP Model assists evaluators and managers not to wait until summative evaluation at the end of the programme but rather enables timely use of feedback by decision-makers in response to new knowledge about needs, resources, new developments (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1987).

Another advantage of the CIPP Model is that it encourages programme personnel to use evaluation continuously, and systematically plan and implement programmes, thus meeting beneficiaries’ needs continuously. Hence, decisions are made throughout the life of a programme which makes the programme personnel are accountable to the progress of the programme decisions and actions continuously, and the full range of personnel involved in the implementation process are involved in the



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application of the model.

The CIPP Model balances the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis, hence the use of the mixed methods. At the same time, it scores highly in the professional standards for evaluations (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Thus, the CIPP Model is recommended as a systematic guide in the conception and implementation of a programme. The evaluator uses the checklist Context-Input-Process-Product to evaluate programmes with long-term goals, by generating reports that assist groups to plan, carry out, institutionalize, and/or disseminate effective services to targeted beneficiaries. It is the decision-makers, not the evaluator, who use the information. This evaluation is a product of the above recommendation.

The CIPP model addresses all phases of an educational programme: planning, implementation, and a summative or final perspective assessment of desired outcomes (Frye & Hemmer, 2012). Evaluation of the various phases is important for the provision of sound information, needed by service providers in regularly assessing and improving services to beneficiaries, and all levels of stakeholders; those who are targeted as the end-users of the findings. The CIPP Model has one very important tenet: “The most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove, but to improve.... Evaluations serve an advisory improvement function through assisting organizations to free resources and time for worthy efforts” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; 331).

Other advantages of this approach include its loyalty to the professional standards for evaluations; its applications involving the full range of stakeholders; and also the way it presents the framework of information, thus making the programme personnel accountable to the decisions they make and actions they take (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

Weaknesses of CIPP Model

The CIPP has a few barriers in its application. First requires very close collaboration between an evaluator and stakeholders something which may introduce biases on the outcomes of the evaluation exercise. In other words, “evaluator may identify with it (programme’s course), that they lose some of the independent, detached perspective needed to provide objective, forthright reports.” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 202). Secondly, it puts a lot of focus and resources on formative evaluation to the detriment of summative aspects of evaluation, and thirdly by taking into account the interests of decision-makers, it wrongly gives the impression that it serves the interest of this category of stakeholders (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007: 202). This is especially more manifest when evaluators actively influence a programme’s course by identifying so closely with it, to the extent of losing other important stakeholders.

This emphasis on decision-makers has been cited by critics as a weakness on the part of CIPP in that it can result in “the evaluator’s occasional inability to respond to questions or issues that may be significant, even critical, but clash with (or at least do not match) the concerns of questions of the decision-maker, who essentially controls the evaluation” (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, (1987: 104). As such, this approach to evaluation can also easily become unfair and even undemocratic due to the undue preference it seems to give to the top management. The CIPP and the management-oriented approaches generally can result in costly and complex evaluations because of the many questions that have to be addressed. This weakness is linked to the fact that “this evaluation approach assumes that the important decisions can be identified in advance, that clear decision alternatives can be specified, and that the decisions to be served to remain reasonably stable while the evaluation is being done” (Worthen, Sanders, Fitzpatrick, 1987: 105)

Even with the weaknesses discussed above, because of the model’s emphasis on meeting the needs of programmes’ management in decision making, it has strengths that

elevate it above other models of evaluation, and therefore it is very appropriate in various contexts. The management of any institution needs to take an early decision before huge expenditures are incurred in a long-term implementation of a programme. Specifically, the CIPP approach is relevant in the following areas: Evaluating or identifying the training requirements of the teaching staff the institution; assessing the teaching and learning processes in the developmental stages of the programme implementation training programmes; the use of the mixed methods research approach in data collection and analysis; and even assessment of training facilities and resources.

In many evaluations, a decision has to be made on the way the implementation of the programme was going on as far as delivery of content, supply of resources (including human), and assessment procedures, are concerned. Using CIPP Model, it is possible to carry out an evaluation which is an integral part of the development process, helping to improve the implementation of the programme objectives, by removing impediments and problems before they become serious.

(ii). The Consumer-Oriented Model

Overview

The Consumer-Oriented Approach, developed by evaluation and expert and philosopher Michael Scriven is one of the Improvement- and Accountability-Oriented approaches, which emphasizes the assessment of value in programmes (Scriven, 2003). According to (Ross 2010), the consumer-oriented approach seeks to inform consumers about products so that they (the consumers) have the informational basis for making judgments about human service products, such as commercial educational programs and materials.

Michael Scriven was a critic of goal-based evaluation, in favour of evaluation that meets identified consumers' needs, and according to Ross (2010), and Lam (2018) the theory emerged from Scriven's conviction that evaluation should be geared towards the consumer of a particular service, curriculum, policy or product. (Lam (2018) further asserts that the origin of the consumer-oriented theory can be traced back to the 1960s as an effort to roll back on the prevailing view that an evaluation should be an objective assessment of the extent to which the goals of the program were attained and replace it with a new approach in which evaluation not only focus on the value of the evaluand (what is being evaluated) but also assess the extent to which it fulfilled the needs of the users (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985).

Scriven distinguished himself in the way he defined the role of the evaluator in making value judgments, to serve the public interest, which means the inclusion of all potential consumers (Scriven, 1994). In his own words, the consumer-oriented evaluation:

...regards the main function of an applied evaluation field to be the determination of the merit and worth of programs (etc.) in terms of how effectively and efficiently they are serving those they impact, particularly those receiving—or who should be receiving—the services the programs provide, and those who pay for the program (1994: 161).

To solidify his proposals on evaluation, Michael Scriven developed an evaluation checklist and also wrote a guide to the evaluation process, *Evaluation thesaurus* (Scriven 1991) which provides readers with a quick analysis of the major concepts, position, acronyms, processes, techniques, and checklists in the field. Scriven also developed an evaluation approach known as the Formative-Summative Approach which contrasts Stufflebeam's CIPP model (Lam, 2018).

Scriven's consumerist view of evaluation is grounded in objectivism and pragmatism philosophical propositions (Scriven, 2003) geared towards meeting



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consumers' needs. In the consumer-oriented approach, the evaluator takes the role of an enlightened consumer, expert, or an advocate in the value-judgment process, who is also endowed with high competence, sufficient resources, or other means, which enable him to obtain the needed information (Lam, 2018). In this role, the evaluator assists the consumer in "identify and assess the merit, worth, and significance of competing programmes, services and products" (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; 203). According to many of his peers, Scriven's view, evaluation is comparative:

Scriven's practical approach to evaluation calls for identifying and ranking the optional programmes and products that are available to consumers, based on the options' relative costs and effects, and in consideration of the assessed needs of consumers, and the broader society (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; 369).

Strengths of the Consumer-Oriented Model

Lam (2018; 5), has identified three advantages of the *Consumer-Oriented Model*. First, it provides a comprehensive analysis in its assertions concerning the value of an evaluand and evaluation process and therefore leaves no ambiguity on the conceptual and implementation of the evaluation which makes it highly practical. Secondly, by emphasizing the needs of the user, the model entrenches the supremacy of the user needs hence safeguarding the interests of the consumer. Finally, it is systematic in its approach, something that can be attributed to its philosophical arguments. This makes it plausible to both adherents and critics alike. Additionally, the strength of the consumer-oriented evaluation comes from the systematic and comprehensive nature of the approach, which itself is grounded in philosophical arguments concerning the fundamental goal and role of evaluation.

According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, (2007; 204) " One of the main advantages of consumer-oriented evaluation is that...it [emphasizes that] is a hard-hitting independent assessment intended to protect consumers from shoddy programmes, services, and products, and to guide them to support and use those contributions that best and most cost-effectively address their needs

Another advantage of the consumer-oriented evaluation model is that the same information can be used for both formative and summative evaluations- when the information is used to assist in developing programmes, the evaluation is formative, but it is summative when the same data is used to assess the programme or any other object, or when used to sum up the value of something. To make sure developers' programmes succeed, this approach ensures that a comprehensive summative evaluation is preceded by formative evaluation(s). Also, many consumer groups are attracted to this approach by its stress on independent and objective assessments, leading to compressive assessment results (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Furthermore, when evaluation is undertaken by making value judgments of the sub-processes and sub-products, the evaluation designs can be improved to suit the achievement of objectives, and decisions made at each stage or phase, thus leading to the valuation of all outcomes. Moreover, this approach is more adaptable to midstream goal shifts (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1987).

Finally, the consumer-oriented strategy allows stakeholder input to be integrated into the evaluation design. Using a logic model supported by stakeholder input, the evaluation team identified five key dimensions of merit (criteria), addressing the quality of the process, outcomes, and cost of the program. Then, the team worked with the stakeholders to weigh the importance of each dimension of merit

Weaknesses of the Consumer-Oriented Model

According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007), although Scriven's summative evaluation is usually undertaken towards the end of the programme, it can easily stifle the developers' creativity. Mid-stream, the evaluator cannot obtain sufficient evidence to make a confident and credible judgment on the programme's ultimate value. By stressing



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the independence of the consumer, the process can easily alienate the programme staff, such that they do not serve the consumers better (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

Another criticism is that value, conceived by Scriven is not absolute, as it depends on whose standards one is judging any programme. Therefore there is need to consider multiple criteria in making the judgment of a programme, service, or product, as an evaluator cannot be an expert in all areas of evaluation. The criteria should undergo thorough comparisons, and finally be agreed upon. Finally, Michael Scriven's theory, based on "mathematical logic", will most often have a bias when used in social sciences (Worthen, Sanders, Fitzpatrick, 1987). This is because it is highly prescriptive while in the social sciences, there is a major stress on objectivism in studying any social phenomenon. By stressing stringent criteria and standards in the evaluation process may curb creativity in product creation and bias in the evaluation outcomes.

Despite the weaknesses of Scriven's model, it has been applied in many situations and is a preferred choice of many evaluation experts. Particularly it provides an opportunity to use an array of research designs, choice of data collection methods to contact an evaluation. It is particularly useful in assessing the effectiveness of the teaching and assessment methods used in learning institutions, and identification of the staffing gaps and training needs of the staff, all to obtain feedback necessary for strengthening both teaching and learning processes.

(iii). Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model

Overview

The Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model (UFE), whose main premise is that evaluation should be judged on the actual use of the results, was created and propagated by Michael Patton and focuses on the intended use and users of a programme throughout its development and implementation stages (Erickson & Noonan, 2018). According to Patton (2013), "Utilization-Focused Evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design any evaluation with careful consideration of how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use."

Therefore evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance.

According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007), the Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) belongs to the Eclectic Evaluation Approaches, which have no allegiance to any specific evaluative philosophy, or methodological approaches. Rather they follow a pragmatic approach that borrows ideas from other evaluative approaches and apply them selectively. He further observes that this approach is designed to take into account the needs and requirements of diverse clients and stakeholders. This way, evaluators use different evaluative philosophical orientations to achieve particular objectives for their clients. Thus, these evaluations intend to inform stakeholders' decision-making and produce an accountability record by answering their most important questions, just like the Consumer-Oriented Evaluation.

One argument of Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) is that "no matter how good an evaluation report is if it only sits on the shelf gathering dust, it will not contribute positively to programme improvement and accountability" (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; 230). Therefore, in this approach, the evaluation process takes the process of a representative group of stakeholders, who come up with evaluation questions and information needs. This ensures that the findings will be used as anticipated, for example, in the assessment of the merit and worth of the project. In this approach, the evaluator is not just an expert per se, but a technical assistant, with roles such as facilitator in the stakeholders' decision-making, "trainer, planner, negotiator, facilitator,



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measurement expert, internal colleague, external expert, analyst, spokesperson or mediator” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; 230).

Strengths of Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model

One of the key advantages of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model is that it is context-specific and therefore can be adapted and applied in almost every situation. According to Erickson & Noonan (2018: 2), Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model:

...can include any evaluation purposes, theory, model, design, or data. Within this framework, evaluators’ work is to understand the specific situation, intended users, and evaluation purposes. They also build the capacity of the primary intended users to make evaluation decisions.

This means that using the UFE, all evaluation methods, such as quantitative and qualitative, formative and summative, naturalistic and experimental, can be employed relevantly and creatively in different circumstances, by simply putting the client group at the centre of the process. This makes the approach universally applicable to any programme evaluation assignment

Secondly, since the client group is the prime mover in the evaluation process, they determine their most important questions, collect the relevant information, answer the key questions, and thus maximize the use of their findings and applications. As Patton puts it: “By actively involving primary intended users, the evaluation is training users in use, and preparing the groundwork for use, enforcing the intended utility of the evaluation” (as cited in Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; 233). The advantage of having the client group at the centre of the evaluation is that they feel involved and are likely to own the process and the outcome and work on it to make the necessary improvement (Patton, 1990).

The Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model has several other advantages. It engages the stakeholders in determining the evaluation’s purposes and procedures and uses their involvement than some other evaluation approaches. Since it is designed as informative rather than summative evaluation which means it can be applied at any stage of the programme implementation process to ensure that it is moving in the right direction. Finally, it emphasizes strict adherence to standard evaluation practices leading to outcomes that are standard and comparable through triangulation.

Weaknesses of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model

Despite its many advantages, this model has several limitations. According to Patton (1997), the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model leads to the high turnover of involved users, leading to renegotiation and replacement of users something which can lead to costly delays. Secondly, ceding control of the evaluation process to the programme beneficiaries can lead to unorthodox practices and exaggerated or unexpected outcomes. Finally, a programme has several stakeholders which make it difficult to define one single user around whom to center the evaluation activity. In cases of conflicts among the stakeholder interests, the evaluation outcomes may be affected negatively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Several conclusions can be drawn from this discussion. Evaluation provides a platform for a better understanding of challenges and other factors that may affect the outcome of a programme. This facilitates putting in place measures to make the necessary adjustments to the programme implementation process. Therefore evaluation is a feedback mechanism that is essential for programme success. At the core of the evaluation, the undertaking is the selection of an appropriate model, or approach to evaluation. Evaluation models, assist to delineate the objectives of the evaluation, what should be evaluated, key questions to be focused on, who should be involved in the evaluation process, and the kind of data required in the evaluation process. Thus



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programme evaluation models or approaches are tools for guiding the programme evaluation process. There exist myriads of models and approaches to evaluation, which range from objectives-oriented to participant-oriented approaches at the disposal of programme evaluators. The choice of an appropriate evaluation model is very critical to success in the evaluation process. This choice is best guided by a consideration of factors such as the programme's complexity, the evaluation objectives.



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