

## Impact of evaluation results availability on evaluation results utilization in enhancing development effectiveness of Sri Lanka's Public Sector

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### Abstract

An essential outcome of evaluations is the effective utilization of evaluation results. However, ensuring optimal and effective utilization has become as one of the biggest challenges in project management. This study aimed to explore the impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) for their utilization in different phases of development initiatives in public sector in Sri Lanka. The study employed a mixed method. Quantitative data collected from 231 survey respondents, while qualitative data collected from key informants selected from government and private sector stakeholders. As per the regression results, a strong positive relationship shown among availability of evaluation results and their utilization across four dimensions; conceptual use ( $r = 0.594$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); instrumental use ( $r = 0.608$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); process use ( $r = 0.606$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); and symbolic use ( $r = 0.594$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Conceptual use is more effective for creating awareness and raising funds while process use is used to apply lessons learnt and skills gained, instrumental use is used for project scaling and restructuring, and symbolic use is to legitimize framed project strategies. Further, strong relationship exists with availability of evaluation results, and their utilization ( $r = 0.688$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The strong impact of the AER indicates that organizations should focus on ensuring that evaluation results are easily accessible to improve effectiveness of evaluation processes. The findings highlight the significance of incorporating evaluation results in decision-making for improving project outcomes, optimizing resource allocation which is for improving development effectiveness and fostering sustainable development in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Project Evaluation; Evaluation Results; Evaluation Uses; Evaluation Utilization; Development Effectiveness

### 1. Introduction

Numerous projects and programs are implemented aiming to provide positive contributions in various sectors to the betterment of the world. Project management focuses on efficient fulfillment of project requirements which involves the application of tools, techniques, knowledge and skills and also designated project management processes are being integrated to execute projects effectively. Effective project management ensures the alignment of projects with intended goals, meets stakeholder expectations, enhances predictability, and increases the likelihood of success by delivering results timely and resolving issues promptly. It optimizes resource utilization, identifies and addresses failing projects, manages constraints, and handles changes adeptly.

On the other hand, poor management of projects make negative consequences to deviate from the deadlines, cost overruns, poor quality, duplication of works due to rework, uncontrolled project expansion which further leads to damage to organizational reputation, stakeholder dissatisfaction, and failure to achieve project objectives. This situation evident that the importance of effective project management as given the dynamic nature of today's organizational environment characterized by tighter budgets, shorter timelines, resource scarcity, and rapid technological changes. Organizations must view it as a strategic competency to tie project outcomes to enhance competitiveness, ensure sustainability, and adapt to evolving environments by adjusting project management plans accordingly (PMBOK, 2017).

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Monitoring and evaluation plays pivotal roles in public sector project management for effective functioning. Proper monitoring and evaluation practices facilitate functional allocation of resources ensuring accomplishment of the desired outcomes of projects, programs, or policy interventions (Witwatersrand, 2022).

Evaluation entails the determination of the importance or worth of a development activity, policy or program. It helps to identify the significance of objectives, the adequacy and efficiency of objectives' setting and attainment, and the productivity and efficacy of used resources and attained outcomes. Furthermore, evaluations provide lessons that help the stakeholders involved in executing the projects, such as donors and national counterparts. Monitoring and evaluation are interrelated, with monitoring providing essential but insufficient input for rigorous evaluations.

Although monitoring data can be utilized for ongoing management purposes, solely relying on it may introduce biases due to its limited coverage of project or program dimensions. Careful consideration is necessary to avoid unintended behavioral incentives. Evaluation, on the other hand, offers a more comprehensive interpretation of performance but is more detailed, time-consuming, and costly. Consequently, it should be conducted judiciously, with monitoring data often used to identify areas requiring further evaluation (WorldBank, 2023).

Review is now considered as an important instrument in assessing problems and such factors that directly influence time overruns in government construction projects. Such a delay typically leads to attainment of a considerably different level of project execution in terms of the agreed time horizon for the delivery of the planned project scope, which is crucial for actualizing the intended outcomes. On this account, the Sri Lankan government has acted in advance to integrate the evaluation into the development of the public sector. This effort is governed under the National Evaluation Policy and the National Evaluation Policy Implementation Framework.

Understanding the significance of timely completion of projects, the Sri Lankan government has cascaded evaluation as one of the mechanisms of enhancing the quality of executing the projects. Currently, there is a National Evaluation Policy and Implementation Framework, which establish a framework for the routine and comprehensive assessment of the performance of the government's development initiatives. This policy framework defines how and when evaluations are to be conducted to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and uniformity within all sectors. Furthermore, starting the assessment under the National Evaluation Policy and Implementation Framework is a major step towards the creation of a culture of improving the responsibility, openness, and efficiency of the national level policies and programs in the sphere of public services.

Besides enhancing project implementation, the evaluation procedure fosters learning and discovery, which is a benefit of the system. It contributes positively to the development of intricate institutional capacity and increases the government capacity for managing of developmental initiatives.

Through the systematic evaluation the government plans to reach a culture of evaluation and utilization of evaluation results for improved informed decision making. This approach entails the systematic evaluation of business and project activities and outcomes that are undertaken and completed at a specific period. The assessments conducted in these evaluations are supposed to be used when planning and executing the projects in order to avoid making the same mistakes. Therefore, the government should share evaluation results, so that it can gain the people's trust, including the need to ensure that every dollar spent by the government is accounted for.

In this connection, the necessity of establishing the institutionalized research-orientated practices in the government, which is confirmed by the timely demand and utilization of the evaluations, is clear. Assessment information is an essential or a core component of the Monitoring and Evaluation of development programmes, policies, and initiatives. Subsequently, the improvement in definite evaluations, analyses and effectiveness studies mean that practitioners in the development field will be able to implement their programs and policies with a basis on evidence, thereby raising the probability of achieving the intended goals and objectives in the plans. (Community, n.d.).

Evaluation utilization relies heavily on how effectively results are presented in the evaluation report and related dissemination products, ensuring they address the information needs of the key audience. Planning for dissemination should begin early in the evaluation process, even though it typically occurs at the end (Evaluation, 2024). Further, transparency in evaluation reporting is vital for demonstrating program effectiveness, supporting long-term sustainability, and guiding decision-making. While written reports are a primary method for sharing findings, they can also help secure funding, advocate for program sustainability, and communicate lessons from both successes and setbacks (Oguniyi, 2023).

## 2. Literature review

It is factual that several scholars have noted that timely project completion, projects time, budget and quality measures are other successful project delivery indicators that the scholars have noted. Nonetheless, the realization of these goals is faced with many a hindrance which, in most cases may slow down the progress. Realizing how rampant this problem is, a lot of work is being done in studying and addressing delay. Possible measures towards the enhancement of the project implementation process entail the usage of project management tools and applications, flexible and efficient tracking and communicating systems, as well as effective risk management. The importance of using the evaluation results inside the government agencies in Sri Lanka is growing rapidly because of its capacity bearing the heavy impacts towards the evidence-based decision making, efficiency of the implemented policies, and existing system of accountability.

This research is required that focuses on the government's use of evaluation results with various tiers of government and that discusses the function of political factors, administrative mechanisms, and stakeholders in the use of results generated through evaluation. This research aims to provide a systematic overview of current academic sources related specifically to project delays, causes for such delays, effects on schedule delays and the usage of evaluation results by the governmental organizations in Sri Lanka while emphasizing on the theoretical concepts and constituent ideas as well as empirical evidence. Accordingly, the literature review focuses on empirical studies conducted globally, regionally, and specifically in Sri Lanka.

Absence or poor management of projects can lead to missed deadlines, cost overruns, poor quality deliverables, rework, and uncontrolled project expansion, damage to organizational reputation, stakeholder dissatisfaction, and failure to achieve project objectives. In today's dynamic business landscape, characterized by tighter budgets, shorter timelines, and evolving technologies, effective project management emerges as a strategic imperative. By continuously refining project management practices in response to environmental shifts, organizations can thrive amidst uncertainty and drive sustained success (Institute, 2017).

Effective planning helps lay down useful guidelines to achieve the goals of the undertakings, explicate the resources and timescales needed for the implementation of a project, and identify probable problems and their solutions; therefore, improving the chances of implementing and finishing a project. A plan can be described as an outline of activities outlining how a certain project will be executed; it increases the chances of a project's success since everything is well scored (Saeed, 2009).

The use of project management methodologies enables entities to deliver the projects at the right time and within the right resources so that quality is not compromised. This is done by evaluating the project and its activities in terms of a predefined plan and schedule and periodically regulating the project's processes. Project managers are then able to manage the project in a way that ensures that all objectives and constraints that are set are met thus ensuring that the project is completed as planned (University, n.d.).

Numerous research efforts and comprehensive studies emphasize the vital importance of meeting the originally established project completion timeframe. This issue goes beyond national borders, as the construction industry operates globally, facing similar challenges and trends in different regions (Sambasivan & Soon, 2007). By identifying the delay factors and their interrelationships, stakeholders can develop effective strategies to mitigate delays and ensure the timely completion of construction projects, thereby advancing the goals of economic development and infrastructure expansion. (Gebrehiweta & Luo, 2017).

Effective communication and coordination among project parties are crucial to mitigate delays, with proper communication channels established during each construction phase to avoid misunderstandings and ensure timely project execution (Aziz, 2013). The political culture of the country has been identified as a one main cause for time overrun, where the Clients in public sector are unable to withstand the political influence. The consultants have been responsible for delays due to disagreements between the drawing and specifications where the contractors linked in delays because of their poor site management (Gardezia, et al., 2013). Delays in approving significant changes in scope, along with insufficient consultant experience and tardiness in reviewing design documents, were identified as crucial contributors (Al-Kharashi & Skitmore, 2009).

There are not only short-term influences but also long-term effects with negative repercussions in the clients' returns on investment, future business opportunities, and relations. Thus, awareness of such late-terms highlights the significance of careful project planning and efficient risk management measures in order to avoid difficulties and maximize the potential of successful finalization of projects in Ethiopia (Gebrehiweta & Luob, 2017). The delay causes

can be attributed to the client's financial position and contractor's improper planning. Payments to the contractors take relatively a longer time in government owned projects. (Sambasivan & Soon, 2007). Cost overruns and time overrun are more common issues facing the Sri Lankan construction industry in undertaking construction products. Hence, managing these time and cost aspects are highly important. (Rathnayake & Ranasinghe, 2020).

Monitoring and Evaluation encourages amongst organizations adoption of a culture of learning that enhances innovation and creativity besides proactively solving the problems in the society (Benjamin, 2023). Cultivating an evaluation culture, securing high-level policy commitment, and addressing capacity gaps are key factors in promoting the effective use of evaluations at all levels (Dhakal, 2014).

Investing in training and human resources, implementing systemic activities that promote learning among stakeholders, and enhancing integrated planning, regulation, monitoring, and evaluation practices are essential and clearly defining technical policy guidelines and delineating strategies and inter responsibilities are crucial for enhancing management functions, improving practices, and ensuring the quality and security of decision-making processes (Carvalho & Shimizu, 2017). A transparent, independent process helps mitigate conflicts of interest that may arise if policymakers and managers were solely responsible for evaluating their own activities (OECD, 2013). A well-designed M&E plan can facilitate the timely provision of user-friendly evidence to policymakers, streamline evaluation processes, and ultimately foster the use of evaluation information. In order to further encourage the utilization of evaluation findings, it is equally important to assess and evaluate the evaluation processes themselves, gathering insights into various factors that either facilitate or hinder the uptake of information by policymakers and decision-makers (Dhakal, 2014).

By integrating evaluation, project adaptation, capacity development, and knowledge translation functions, developmental evaluation offers a comprehensive approach for fostering positive healthcare outcomes (Alison Laycock, et al., 2019). The evaluation outcome helps to focus on gaps within the programme or policy implementation that fails to meet the intended objectives. Its purpose is to make modifications to the programme structure, or the manner in which it is delivered, in order to improve the programme's viability (EvalCommunity, 2024). Investing in technical capacity building in M&E is vital for Zambia to effectively monitor and evaluate its development initiatives and drive sustainable progress (Njovu, 2015). Clear policies and rules outlining evaluation procedures are vital to ensure utilization is based on established protocols rather than individual discretion (Kabuye & Basheka, 2017).

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### 3. Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on the Knowledge Utilization Theory; and Utilization Focused Evaluation. Knowledge utilization is important for evaluators in providing knowledge useful for evidence-based practice, especially in circumstances where traditional evidence may not fully reflect real-world conditions. Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE), is an approach that ensures evaluation results are practically applied by stakeholders to inform decisions and drive changes in programs and policies. The core principle of UFE is to prioritize the actual use of evaluation findings, emphasizing their applicability, timeliness, and relevance to the intended users. Knowledge Utilization Theory (KUT) focuses on how knowledge; research findings and evaluation results, is created, communicated, and applied in decision-making and practice improvement. KUT consists of several key components: Knowledge Production; Knowledge Dissemination; Knowledge Adoption; Knowledge Implementation; and Knowledge Feedback.

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### 4. Methodology

This research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore how evaluation results are utilized, Key Informant Interviews were conducted with project staff, ministry officials, development partners, Non-Government Organizations and evaluation practitioners to gain deeper insights into their experiences. Additionally, questionnaires were used to collect statistical data from stakeholders regarding the utilization of evaluation findings. The study's design incorporated correlation analysis and cross-tabulation to test hypotheses, offering a more comprehensive and diverse approach. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, this research aimed to provide a thorough understanding of the complexities surrounding evaluation utilization.

Line ministries and government agencies in Sri Lanka operate at the central, provincial, and district/divisional levels, overseeing the daily execution of various projects and programs. Planning, implementation, and execution of development initiatives are critical in addressing both national and regional development needs, managing the complexities of such large initiatives. Given the diversity in size, scope, and activities of government institutions in Sri Lanka, the sample must reflect the variation to ensure the findings are applicable to different agencies. The study

targeted officials from government agencies involved in project-related activities. Accordingly, the sample size was 232, ensuring a representative and reliable sample for the research. The collected data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS.

#### 4.1. Hypothesis; H1

There is a significant impact of availability of evaluation results and the utilization of evaluation results in public sector initiatives of Sri Lanka.

Following sub hypotheses were tested by employing the linear regression to understand the relationship between the evaluation results availability and each dimension of evaluation result utilization, before testing the aforementioned main hypothesis.

- H1a: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Conceptual Use (MEAN\_UERC) of evaluation results.
- H1b: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Instrumental Use (MEAN\_URIU) of evaluation results.
- H1c: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Process Use (MEAN\_URPU) of evaluation results.
- H1d: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Symbolic Use (MEAN\_URSUS) of evaluation results.

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### 5. Ethical considerations

As this research employed a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques such as surveys and Key Informant Interviews, ethical standards were rigorously followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure full participation while minimizing withdrawals. The research prioritized confidentiality, used convenient language for communication, and avoided any bias or misleading information to protect the participants' dignity. Ethical principles such as honesty, objectivity, integrity, and respect for others' work were adhered to from the design phase to data analysis and findings utilization. Participants were informed about the study process, and their consent was obtained before interviews.

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### 6. Findings and Discussions

#### 6.1. Responses for Questionnaire

The research targeted 232 responses, including public sector officials involved in development activities with decision-making authority. Out of these, 231 questionnaires were properly completed, resulting in a return rate of 99.6%. The high response rate was attributed to the convenience of using Google Forms and the implementation of regular reminders through emails and telephone conversations, particularly as the most respondents were government officials.

#### Views of Public Sector Officials on Utilization of Evaluation Results

The study aimed to gather perspectives of public officials on their organization's utilization of evaluation results. Accordingly, a scale from 5 to 1 was used, where 5 represents "Very Large Extent (VLE)"; 4 is "Large Extent (LE)"; 3 is "Moderate Extent (LE)"; 2 is "Small Extent (SE)"; and 1 gives "Not at All (NAA)" to obtain the perceptions of the officials on utilization of evaluation results.

Four uses have been taken in to the assessment of utilization of evaluation results; Conceptual Use; Instrumental Use; Process Use; and Symbolic Use. Specific statements under the four uses were manipulated to assess the extent of evaluation results' utilization among public sector officials at all levels across the country.

##### 6.1.1. Conceptual Use (CU)

Following statements under different dimensions were used to assess conceptual use of evaluation results.

**Table 1** Utilization of Evaluation Results for Conceptual Use

	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
UERCU1	Use evaluation results to understand the project better	3.2	0.5
UERCU2	Evaluation results help to learn more about the project	3.1	0.6
UERCU3	Evaluation results contribute to understanding of others' perceptions	3.3	0.5
UERCU4	Evaluation results help in building awareness about the project	3.4	0.4

The analysis reveals that a significant proportion of respondents use evaluation results to better understand the project, with 46.8% indicating "Moderate Extent" and 28.1% "Large Extent" highlighting that while evaluation results are helpful in understanding the project, there is room for increased utilization to achieve a higher impact. A considerable number of respondents (39.8%) feel that evaluation results help them learn more about the project, with 37.2% indicating a large extent of help. However, the presence of 13.0% in the "Small Extent" category indicates variability in perceived usefulness. Further, evaluation results contribute to understanding others' perceptions of the project for 42.0% of respondents, with 35.5% agreeing to a large extent. This dimension appears impactful, although there remains potential for greater engagement. And also, indicates that the findings have helped in building awareness about the project for 39.8% of respondents, with 39.0% experiencing this to a large extent. This consistency highlights their effectiveness in awareness-building, suggesting a solid but not overwhelming impact.

#### 6.1.2. Instrumental Use (IU)

Following three statements under different dimensions were used to assess instrumental use of evaluation results.

**Table 2** Utilization of Evaluation Results for Instrumental Use

	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
UERIU1	Use evaluation results to secure funding for the project	2.9	0.7
UERIU2	Evaluation results have contributed to scaling up the project.	3.0	0.5
UERIU3	Evaluation results have influenced the decision to restructure the project.	3.1	0.6

While a significant portion of respondents (45.5%) utilize evaluation results to secure funding, the overall mean score is slightly lower. This is attributed to 19.0% of respondents who only use the findings to a small extent and 3.5% who do not use them at all. This discrepancy highlights a gap in the full utilization of evaluation results for funding purposes, suggesting that there is room for improvement in how findings are leveraged to attract financial support. Evaluation results have been instrumental in scaling up projects for 38.1% of respondents, with 32.9% experiencing this benefit to a large extent. While this demonstrates a moderate level of effectiveness in using evaluation data to expand projects, there is still potential for enhancing the application of findings to achieve even greater scalability and impact. Evaluation results have played a critical role in influencing the decision to restructure projects for 39.8% of respondents, with 30.7% agreeing to a large extent. This underscores the importance of evaluation data in strategic decision-making.

However, the presence of respondents who did not find the findings as impactful indicates that there is still room to increase the influence and effectiveness of evaluation results in guiding strategic changes.

#### 6.1.3. Process Use

Following two statements under different dimensions were used to assess process use of evaluation results.

**Table 3** Utilization of Evaluation Results for Process Use

	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
UERPU1	Application of new skills acquired from the evaluation process	3.5	0.5
UERPU2	The lessons learned from the evaluation process integrates into activities.	3.4	0.4

The analysis reveals that a significant number of respondents (42.0%) have applied new skills acquired from the evaluation process, with 29.4% doing so to a large extent. This underscores the important role of evaluation in skill development, indicating solid but moderate engagement overall. Similarly, lessons learned from the evaluation are integrated into project activities for 36.4% of respondents, with 40.7% to a large extent. This demonstrates effective application of evaluation insights, although it reflects a largely moderate level of integration overall.

#### 6.1.4. Symbolic Use (SU)

Following three statements under different dimensions were used to assess Symbolic use of evaluation results.

**Table 4** Utilization of Evaluation Results for Symbolic Use

	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
UERSU1	The evaluation results been strategically framed to shape perceptions.	3.2	0.5
UERSU2	The evaluation results help in building legitimacy for the project.	3.3	0.6
UERSU3	The evaluation results contribute to advancing organizational or political goals	3.1	0.5

Evaluation results are used strategically to shape perceptions for 42.0% of respondents, with 30.3% agreeing to a large extent, reflecting a moderate impact on stakeholder views. Findings help build legitimacy for projects for 36.8% of respondents, with 29.9% agreeing to a large extent, showing their importance in gaining support but indicating a moderate overall impact.

Findings contribute to advancing organizational or political goals for 42.4% of respondents, with 29.0% agreeing to a large extent, indicating a moderate strategic value. During the Interviews it was noted that Key Informants of private sector and Non-Government Organizations have well understanding and awareness of how the evaluation results are utilized.

## 6.2. Availability of Evaluation Results

The study aimed to gather perspectives of public officials on their organization's utilization of evaluation results. The Availability of Evaluation Results were explored through six dimensions: Documentation and Reporting, Dissemination, Accessibility, Timeliness, Data Visualization, and Archiving and Storage. Thirteen statements were used to assess the extent of availability of evaluation results among public sector officials at all levels across the country.

#### 6.2.1. Documentation and Reporting

Evaluation results are systematically documented within organizations for 35.5% of respondents, with 21.2% agreeing to a large extent, suggesting room for improvement in systematic documentation. The documentation of others' evaluation findings for easy access is reported by 43.7% of respondents, with 14.7% significantly agreeing, indicating moderate accessibility. Evaluation reports provide comprehensive insights for 43.7% of respondents, with 24.7% significantly agreeing, reflecting good but still moderate reporting practices.

#### 6.2.2. Dissemination

Findings are effectively disseminated to stakeholders for 39.0% of respondents, with 18.2% significantly agreeing, reflecting a moderate level of effectiveness in how results are communicated suggesting that while dissemination efforts are in place, there is room for improvement in ensuring all relevant stakeholders are reached effectively. On the other hand, dissemination practices ensure broad awareness for 42.0% of respondents, with 19.9% significantly agreeing, indicating that while the dissemination process is generally effective in raising awareness, it is not overwhelmingly strong. This demonstrates that although the process of spreading information is good, further enhancements could be made to maximize the reach and impact of the findings.

#### 6.2.3. Accessibility

Findings are accessible to staff involved in decision-making for 37.7% of respondents, with 20.3% significantly agreeing, indicating a moderate level of accessibility. This suggests that while decision-makers have some access to the findings, improvements could be made to ensure that all involved staff can easily obtain and utilize this information. On a broader scale, findings are accessible to all relevant stakeholders for 40.7% of respondents, with 19.9% significantly agreeing, reflecting good overall accessibility. This implies that while the accessibility of findings is generally effective for the

wider group of stakeholders, there is still room to enhance how findings are shared to ensure that all relevant parties have seamless access to the information they need.

#### 6.2.4. Timeliness

Findings are made available in a timely manner for decision-making for 38.1% of respondents, with 22.9% significantly agreeing, indicating a good level of timeliness but predominantly moderate overall suggesting that while the process of delivering findings promptly is generally effective, there is still room for improvement to ensure that timeliness consistently supports decision-making needs. However, delays in access negatively impact utilization for 40.7% of respondents, with 10.8% significantly agreeing, highlighting some challenges with accessing findings promptly indicating that despite efforts to provide timely access, delays are still an issue, affecting how effectively the findings are used. Addressing these delays could enhance overall utilization and support better decision-making.

#### 6.2.5. Data Visualization

Findings are presented clearly through data visualization techniques for 48.9% of respondents, with 16.5% significantly agreeing, indicating that while presentation practices are generally good, they are predominantly moderate suggesting that data visualization is used effectively to communicate findings, but there is potential for further improvement in clarity and effectiveness. Additionally, data visualization aids in comprehension and utilization for 49.4% of respondents, with 18.2% significantly agreeing, reflecting that data visualization is effective in enhancing understanding and application of findings. However, the effectiveness is still considered moderate overall, implying that while data visualization contributes positively to comprehension and use, there is room to enhance these practices further to fully leverage their benefits.

#### 6.2.6. Archiving and Storage

Evaluation results are archived for future reference for 38.1% of respondents, with 22.1% significantly agreeing, indicating that while storage practices are generally good, they are not overwhelmingly strong suggesting that while there is a system in place for archiving findings, improvements could be made to ensure more robust and effective storage practices. Additionally, findings are readily retrievable when needed for 40.7% of respondents, with 18.6% significantly agreeing, reflecting that the archiving systems are effective but still predominantly moderate. This implies that while the systems for retrieval are functional, there is room for enhancement to make access more efficient and reliable. Overall, while the archiving and retrieval processes are in place and somewhat effective, there is an opportunity to strengthen these practices to better support future reference and accessibility.

During the Key Informant Interviews regarding the documentation which is a specific dimension of evaluation results availability, the public sector officials emphasized the requirement of incorporating new technological instruments in evaluation processes, such as developing software, introducing web-based monitoring systems, and reducing documentation through improved IT platforms. In addition, the views of Non-Government Organizations were that evaluation reports are available for most of donor funded projects; however, users do not have better understanding on how to access them for information.

### 6.3. Hypothesis Testing

#### 6.3.1. Hypothesis

There is a significant impact of evaluation results availability and the utilization in public sector of Sri Lanka.

Following sub hypotheses were tested by employing the single linear regression to understand the impact of the evaluation results availability and each dimension of evaluation result utilization, before testing the aforementioned main hypothesis.

- H1a: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Conceptual Use (MEAN\_UERCU) of evaluation results.
- H1b: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Instrumental Use (MEAN\_UERIU) of evaluation results.
- H1c: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Process Use (MEAN\_UERPU) of evaluation results.
- H1d: There is a significant impact of Availability of Evaluation Results (AER) on Symbolic Use (MEAN\_UERSU) of evaluation results.



**Table 5** Relationship between the Availability of Evaluation Results and the Utilization of Evaluation Results

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	(p value)	B	Beta	t
MEAN_URCU	MEAN_AER	0.594	0.353	0.350	123.859	0.000	0.594	0.594	11.129
MEAN_URIU	MEAN_AER	0.608	0.370	0.367	133.257	0.000	0.675	0.608	11.544
MEAN_URPU	MEAN_AER	0.606	0.367	0.364	131.470	0.000	0.635	0.606	11.466
MEAN_URSUS	MEAN_AER	0.594	0.353	0.350	123.847	0.000	0.612	0.594	11.129
MEAN_UR	MEAN_AER	0.688	0.474	0.471	204.37	0.000	1.412	0.688	14.296

In reference to the Hypothesis and its sub hypotheses as mentioned above, the results of regression analysis are given in Table above. MEAN\_URCU, the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.594, reflecting a moderate to strong positive relationship while suggesting a moderate explanatory power. The F-statistic with a p-value of 0.000 shows the model is statistically significant. Accordingly, it reflects that there is a positive relationship between the evaluation results availability and the conceptual use of evaluation results while evaluation results availability is important for conceptually use the evaluation results.

The MEAN\_URIU, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.608, indicating a strong positive correlation with MEAN\_AER and R Square value of 0.370 means that 37.0% of the variance in MEAN\_URIU reflects a moderate to high explanatory power. Based on the aforementioned regression results, it reveals that there is a strong positive relationship between the evaluation results availability and the instrumental use of evaluation results. Also, the evaluation results availability will support for the practical application of evaluation results in securing funding, scaling up projects, and influencing project restructuring etc.

The MEAN\_URPU, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.606, indicating a strong positive relationship with MEAN\_AER. The R Square value of 0.367 suggests that 36.7% of the variance in MEAN\_URPU is explained by MEAN\_AER. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.635 implies that each unit increase in MEAN\_AER results in a 0.635 increase in MEAN\_URPU. The Beta value of 0.606 indicates a strong effect size, and the t-statistic (11.466) with a p-value of 0.000 confirms the significance of this effect. As per the above mentioned results, despite the explanatory power of the process use of evaluation results by the evaluation results availability is moderate, it shows a strong positive relationship between the two variables.

For MEAN\_URSUS, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.594, reflecting a moderate to strong positive relationship with MEAN\_AER. The R Square value of 0.353 means that 35.3% of the variance in MEAN\_URSUS is explained by MEAN\_AER, which is a moderate amount of explanatory power. The F-statistic (123.847) with a p-value of 0.000 indicates statistical significance. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.612 shows that each unit increase in MEAN\_AER leads to a 0.612 increase in MEAN\_URSUS. The Beta value of 0.594 reflects a moderate effect size, and the t-statistic (11.129) with a p-value of 0.000 confirms the statistical significance of this effect. These results shows that there is a strong positive relationship between the symbolically use of evaluation results and evaluation results availability with a moderate explanatory power. Hence, when the evaluation results are readily available, those will be used for strategic framing and communication to shape perceptions and build legitimacy for the intervention.

As per the results of “Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the availability of evaluation results and the utilization of evaluation results in public sector of Sri Lanka”, the analysis reveals a robust and significant relationship between MEAN\_AER as the independent variable and the MEAN\_UR as the dependent variable. For MEAN\_UR, the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.688 indicates a strong positive relationship with MEAN\_AER. The R Square value of 0.474 means that 47.4% of the variance in MEAN\_UR is explained by MEAN\_AER, which is a substantial proportion, suggesting that MEAN\_AER is a strong predictor.

Hypothesis test results between evaluation results utilization and evaluation results availability as two main variables have revealed the strong positive relationship between two variables as well as strong power of evaluation results availability to predict the evaluation results utilization.

Considering the whole regression outputs of the Hypothesis including its sub hypotheses, in summary, MEAN\_AER consistently demonstrates a strong to moderate positive relationship with each dependent variable across all models. The statistical significance of all coefficients suggests that the observed relationships are unlikely to be due to chance.

The R Square values show that MEAN\_AER explains a significant portion of the variance in each dependent variable, highlighting its role as an important predictor in each case.

Accordingly, these results confirm the sub hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d, indicating that the availability of evaluation results significantly influences all dimensions of the utilization of evaluation results as well as on the evaluation results utilization as the main dependent variable. Then, all null hypotheses of the Hypothesis and its sub hypotheses referred to the four dimensions of evaluation results utilization are rejected at 95% confident level with 5% error margin while their alternative hypotheses are accepted

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## 7. Conclusion

Regarding the Context of Use, they seemed to indicate that the availability of the evaluation results was a most mediating factor that influences all the aspects of the UER. The regression analyses revealed that AER significantly predicted several key uses: There were moderate positive significant relationships between Conceptual Use ( $R^2 = 0.353$ ), Instrumental Use ( $R^2 = 0.370$ ), Process Use ( $R^2 = 0.367$ ), and Symbolic Use ( $R^2 = 0.353$ ). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that, if evaluation results are easily retrievable, they can be more likely to be used for insightful purposes, for funding or restructuring purposes, in terms of the implementations of skills and experiences acquired, as well as focusing on establishing appropriate frames of reasoning and disguising legitimization strategies. This emphasizes the need for making the evaluation results accrued available to all the stakeholder, because organizations that put much consideration into this will have a higher likelihood of utilization based on all the dimensions of UER.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the questionnaire results and insights into the utilization of evaluation results among government officials and private sector individuals, it is evident that there are significant differences in how these findings are applied. Government officials reported utilizing evaluation results to a moderate extent, while individuals in the private sector indicated a very large extent of utilization. To bridge this gap and enhance the use of evaluation results within the government sector, several recommendations can be made to make available evaluation results adopting an agile approach.

- Ensure that evaluation results are systematically documented and reported in a user-friendly manner.
- Create a centralized repository for evaluation reports that are easily accessible to all relevant stakeholders, facilitating easy access and reference to important evaluation data.
- Implement targeted dissemination strategies to ensure evaluation results reach the right stakeholders.
- Use multiple channels such as newsletters, seminars, and digital platforms to share findings widely, tailoring communication methods to the preferences and needs of different stakeholder groups to maximize reach and impact.
- Incorporate data visualization techniques to present evaluation results clearly and effectively.

### *Suggestions for Further Research*

Future research should expand the range of subjects, incorporating perspectives from the public sector and regions most engaged in development activities. It is recommended to examine how evaluation findings are utilized across administrative levels, from local to national, to gain a comprehensive understanding of their application in various governance systems. Such research would provide insights into the factors influencing the use of evaluation results in government settings and identify context-specific adaptations necessary for successful implementation. This broader perspective would enhance the effective utilization of findings, leading to more efficient results delivery across diverse project environments.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

On behalf of co- author, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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