Evaluation Champions:
A Literature Review

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Background: Numerous studies call for the identification and engagement of evaluation champions in the implementation of an evaluation initiative. However, no agreed definition of an evaluation champion exists in the extant literature. Published studies on evaluation champions are limited and motivations of evaluation champions are not well understood. Understanding of how evaluation champions interact with their colleagues to generate momentum for change is lacking.

Purpose: This article explores champions in organizational settings and highlights the need for an increased understanding of evaluation champions. The research question posed is, 'What does the literature tell us about evaluation champions in organizational settings?'

Setting: Not Applicable.

Intervention: Not Applicable.

Research Design: Relevant articles were identified through systematic searches of selected databases and reference reviews of retrieved articles from the evaluation and organizational development bodies of evidence. Theories that could assist with understanding the role of evaluation champions were also drawn upon.

Data Collection and Analysis: Not Applicable.

Findings: The analysis indicates evaluators and organizations value champions because they work to bring evaluative thinking into their practice and positively promote evaluation among their colleagues. A list of activities that may be indicative of the behaviours of champions has been compiled to contribute to the evidence base.

Introduction

Understanding how evaluation champions interact with their colleagues to generate momentum for change is limited (Silliman, Crinion, & Archibald, 2016a). Documentation on their motivations, attributes, skills, qualities, why they take up the role or how they think about evaluation in their practice is minimal (Silliman et al., 2016a & 2016b). If the evaluation field cannot articulate how evaluation champions are working, we cannot learn from their experiences, emulate or know how to support their efforts.

To improve this situation, the author has reviewed and collated extant literature from the evaluation and organizational development bodies of evidence. The key research question is, 'What does the literature tell us about evaluation champions in organizational settings?'. In this paper the literature review method is outlined and then from the coded information, the findings are detailed in three categories. These include studies specifically focusing on evaluation champions, champions from other sectors and studies that mention evaluation champions. Key references to champions are extracted and presented in a table. These references, when considered in relation to evaluation theory and social interdependence theory, are collated into a list of activities that may be indicative of the behaviors of champions. Conclusions and directions for future research are also outlined.

Method

An initial review of the literature included:

1. Evaluation capacity building in organizations,
2. Evaluation in not-for-profit organizations,
3. Evaluation in cross-cultural contexts.

Sampling involved a structured review of peer-reviewed articles and relevant grey literature, limited to the English language. The search for relevant articles was conducted across the ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar and Proquest Central databases. Google was also used to search the grey literature. The author read and coded the articles using NVIVO (2012) software. The initial coding was intentionally broad in scope to assist with clarifying the research question. Nodes were created to code for definitions, research gaps, cross-cultural, evaluation capacity building practitioner, continuous improvement, measurement, not-for-profit, internal evaluator and champion. A reference to evaluation champions was found in 36 of the 148 articles.

A subsequent review was conducted that was more closely linked to the overarching research question. "Evaluation, champion" and "organisation" were the primary terms and "not-for-profit" and "cross-culture" were also included to enable specificity around the type of organisational setting. The search terms included:

- Evaluation: Evaluat* AND (mainstreaming OR "capacity building" OR "culture of evaluation" OR "evaluative thinking")
- Champion: champion OR leader* OR "emergent leaders" OR "change agent" OR "opinion leaders" OR advocates OR "policy entrepreneurs"
- Organisations: Organi?ation* OR "Organi?ational learning" OR "Organi?ation development" OR Work OR Workplace
- Not-for-profit: "Not-for-profit" OR "Non profit" "Non-profit" OR "Not for profit" OR "Non-government"
- Cross-culture: "cross culture" OR "cross cultural" OR Multicultural OR diversity OR Multilingual & "cross culture" OR "cross cultural" OR Multicultural OR "Ethnic diversity" OR "Linguistic diversity" OR Multilingual

The snowballing technique was also used to pursue relevant references cited in the retrieved literature. Known also as reference harvesting or pearl growing, snowballing is an approach to find additional evidence that was not retrieved through the initial search (Choong, Galgani, Dunn, & Tsafnat, 2014; Smith, 2012). An additional 167 articles were retrieved and they were read and coded against "cross-cultural", "not-for-profit", and "champion."

Evaluation Champions

In this article evaluation refers to how organizations assess their performance against strategic ambitions, how they assess their programs and services, or how they learn and improve on an ongoing basis (Rogers & Williams, 2006). How organizations use evaluation to ask questions, collect data, analyse results and use information, is highly varied (Gill, 2010). However, numerous articles in the literature call for the identification and engagement of evaluation champions as a consideration in the implementation of an evaluation initiative (Taylor-Powell & Boyd, 2008; Labin, 2014; Preskill & Boyle, 2008a; Preskill & Boyle, 2008b; King & Volkov, 2005; Wandersman, 2014; Brandon, Smith, & Hwalek, 2011; Mayne, 2010; Bourgeois, Whynot & Thériault, 2015; Guerra-López & Hicks, 2015; Mackay, 2002; Nielsen, Lemire, & Skov, 2011).

To date, only one qualitative study explores the roles, activities and motivations of evaluation champions from the perspective of the champions (Silliman, Crinion, & Archibald, 2016a). The research involved 40 semi-structured interviews with purposive samples of champions nominated by evaluation specialists or administrators (Silliman et al., 2016a). According to Silliman et al. (2016a) the key role of an evaluation champion is advocacy: speaking up, highlighting the value, and identifying opportunities for evaluation in a range of organizational settings. Champions remind everyone they encounter to "invest time, resources, and gain rewards from skill-building and practice in evaluation" (Silliman et al., 2016a, p. 9). Champions advocate for learning across the organization and focus on influencing long-term program development. The pattern of influence is indirect which complements formal training or advice from external evaluation experts and consultants. However, they do gain experience and credibility and demonstrate the value by also actively participating and leading evaluation activities (Silliman et al., 2016a).
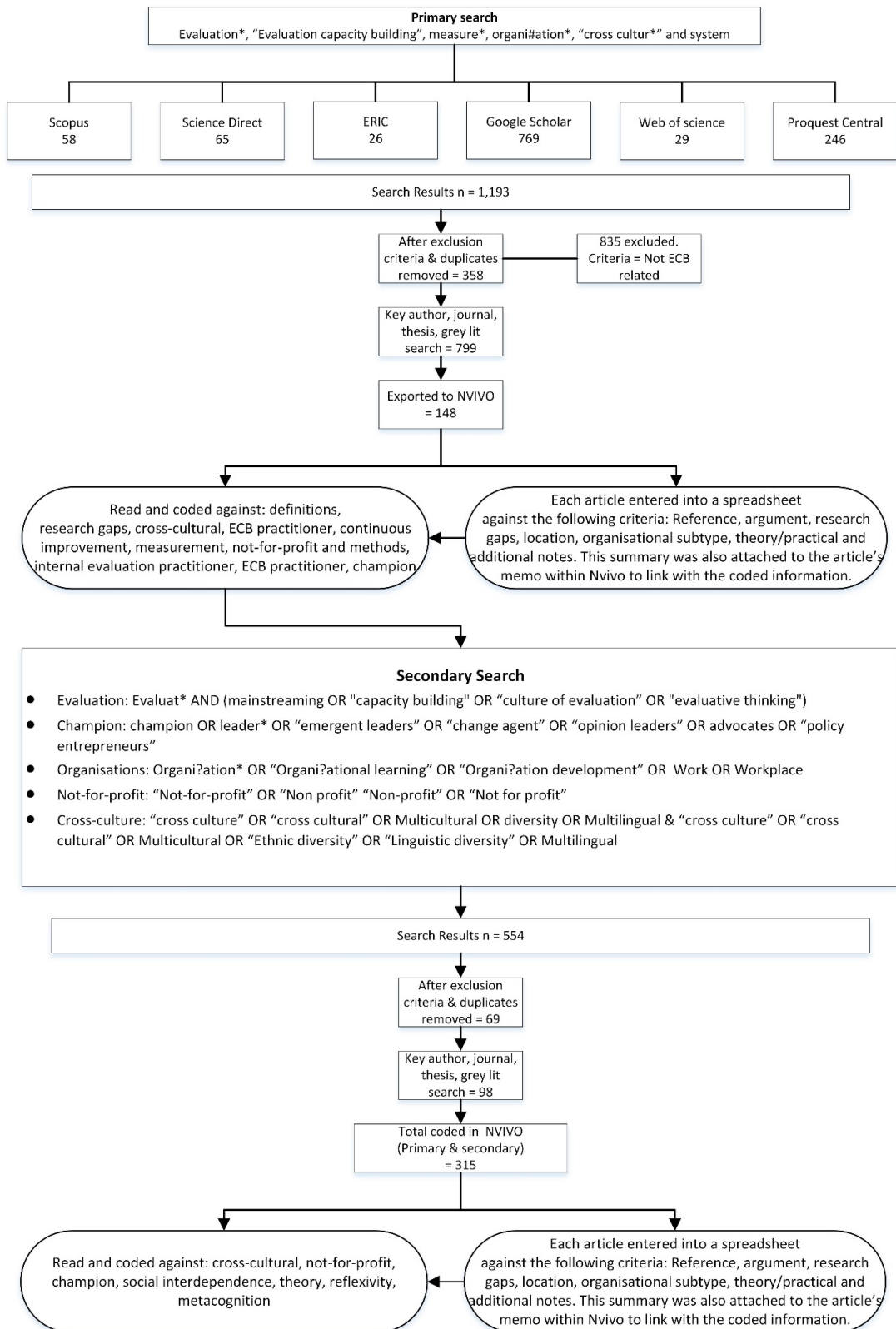
Primary search
Evaluation*, "Evaluation capacity building", measure*, organi#ation*, "cross cultur*" and system

| Scopus 58 | Science Direct 65 | ERIC 26 | Google Scholar 769 | Web of science 29 | Proquest Central 246 |

Search Results n = 1,193

After exclusion criteria & duplicates removed = 358

835 excluded. Criteria = Not ECB related

Key author, journal, thesis, grey lit search = 799

Exported to NVIVO = 148

Read and coded against: definitions, research gaps, cross-cultural, ECB practitioner, continuous improvement, measurement, not-for-profit and methods, internal evaluation practitioner, ECB practitioner, champion

Each article entered into a spreadsheet against the following criteria: Reference, argument, research gaps, location, organisational subtype, theory/practical and additional notes. This summary was also attached to the article's memo within Nvivo to link with the coded information.

Secondary Search

- Evaluation: Evaluat* AND (mainstreaming OR "capacity building" OR "culture of evaluation" OR "evaluative thinking")
- Champion: champion OR leader* OR "emergent leaders" OR "change agent" OR "opinion leaders" OR advocates OR "policy entrepreneurs"
- Organisations: Organi?ation* OR "Organi?ational learning" OR "Organi?ation development" OR Work OR Workplace
- Not-for-profit: "Not-for-profit" OR "Non profit" "Non-profit" OR "Not for profit"
- Cross-culture: "cross culture" OR "cross cultural" OR Multicultural OR diversity OR Multilingual & "cross culture" OR "cross cultural" OR Multicultural OR "Ethnic diversity" OR "Linguistic diversity" OR Multilingual

Search Results n = 554

After exclusion criteria & duplicates removed = 69

Key author, journal, thesis, grey lit search = 98

Total coded in NVIVO (Primary & secondary) = 315

Read and coded against: cross-cultural, not-for-profit, champion, social interdependence, theory, reflexivity, metacognition

Each article entered into a spreadsheet against the following criteria: Reference, argument, research gaps, location, organisational subtype, theory/practical and additional notes. This summary was also attached to the article's memo within Nvivo to link with the coded information.

Figure 1. Overview of the literature search.

Doing evaluation and using evaluation findings at the same time served to promote champions' identity as educators and leaders (Silliman et al., 2016a). The authors found champions understood that evaluation was a way by which they could improve programs and influence the lives of participants. Silliman et al. (2016a) stated, "Champions perform above organizational norms in evaluative thinking…. and use… They prioritize evaluation instrumental use for accountability and funding support, but also offer examples of process use to engage clients and partners, practical use to manage projects, and conceptual use of evaluation to educate stakeholders…" (p. 15). These individuals assisted and mentored co-workers as the champions' reputation and enthusiasm for undertaking evaluation developed. This involved sharing resources and helping to plan, problem-solve, or report on findings (Silliman, et al. 2016a). Regarding motivation, "Champions' interest in evaluation is shaped by internal passion for their field and clientele" (p. 15). This research suggests motivation may be initially related to external requirements but subsequently their efforts are rewarded and reinforced through the cultivation and deployment of their skills and benefits to the organization (Silliman et al., 2016a).

The findings from the Silliman et al. (2016a) study corroborate prior research. King & Volkov (2005) interviewed evaluation champions and others engaged in evaluation activities as a component of a larger case study. The authors developed a framework for evaluation capacity building (ECB) and, as a key component of feasibility, identified evaluation champions under 'organizational context'. Considered to be distinct from leadership, champions were highly valued and in a critical position of "voluntarily implementing evaluation activities and purposely passing their evaluative spirit and knowledge to their colleagues" (King & Volkov, 2005, p. 13).

In another broad exploratory study, Preskill & Boyle (2008b) interviewed both evaluators and their clients to investigate the motivations, strategies and outcomes in relation to ECB in organizations. When presenting the 'Lessons Learned' from their findings the authors did not mention champions in the "creating interest, motivation, and buy- in" (p. 163) section but instead deliberately separated the findings under the sub-heading "Identify evaluation champions" (p. 165). Preskill & Boyle (2008b) found,

> These champions may not be the titled leaders; instead, they might be members who have an interest in and energy for evaluation. Enlisting

these people in motivating others to engage in evaluations, encouraging them to ask the critical questions, helping them implement and act on the evaluation findings, and providing support and resources for evaluation work are all ways in which internal champions can serve the evaluation capacity building effort (p. 165).

These findings contributed to Preskill & Boyle's (2008a) Multidisciplinary Model for Evaluation Capacity Building where they recognised evaluation champions as necessary to support ongoing evaluation activity.

Champions in Other Sectors

To develop a deeper understanding of champions in organizational contexts, literature from fields beyond evaluation have also been reviewed. Since Schon (1963) initially identified champions as emergent leaders in the health, education, environment, and business sectors, champions have been used and their role examined to understand change dynamics when adopting and sustaining a new organizational philosophy, technology, program or process (Taylor, Cocklin, & Brown, 2012; Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak, & Herlin, 2012; Rogers, 2002 & 2003; Muttitt, Vigneault, & Loewen, 2004; Gattiker & Carter, 2010; Fujimoto, Rentschler, Le, Edwards, & Härtel, 2014; Coakes & Smith, 2007; Goodman & Steckler, 1989; Rogers et al., 2016; Tomioka & Braun, 2014; Scheirer, 2005; Howell, 2005). This section of the literature review presents the findings from a variety of these sources to assist with elucidating how champions may influence others.

Rogers (2003) recognized charismatic individuals, who could persuade, influence, and negotiate with others to overcome resistance and support a new idea, are essential when innovation is required in an organization. He aligned champions in organizations to opinion leaders in community settings; individuals who are early adopters of the innovation and use their earned respect and interpersonal networks to model the desired change. Rogers (2003) stated, "The important qualities of champions were that they (1) occupied a key linking position in their organization, (2) possessed analytical and intuitive skills in understanding various individuals' aspirations, and (3) demonstrated well-honed interpersonal and negotiating skills in working with other people in their organization" (p. n.p).

This was supported by a landmark study from Howell, Shea & Higgins (2005) that validated a measure of champion behavior in relation to

product innovation in a business setting. Three factors were revealed to be at the core of the personality of these individuals: "expressing enthusiasm and confidence about the success of the innovation, persisting under adversity, and getting the right people involved" (Howell et al., 2005, p. 1). More recently, Shea and Belden (2016) conducted a scoping review of the literature in relation to health information technology champions. The review revealed champions had combinations of personality characteristics including achievement-focused, persuasive, persistent, innovative, charismatic, enthusiastic, assertive, and risk-tolerant. Champions could be in formal leadership, administrative, or technical positions. The studies included champions as both emergent and appointed with a variety of different experience and training backgrounds (Shea & Belden, 2016).

A systematic literature review on innovation diffusion in health service organizations found strong indirect and moderate direct evidence that an innovation was more likely to be adopted if champions from within the organizational social network were supportive (Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate & Kyriakidou, 2004). The review identified four types of champion roles: the organizational maverick, the transformational leader, the organizational buffer, and the network facilitator (Greenhalgh et al. 2004, p. 603). Champions were placed under the communication and influence category in a conceptual model for considering the determinants which also included social networks, opinion leaders and change agents. Taylor, Cocklin, Brown & Wilson-Evered (2011) conducted research in the Australian water industry to examine the "champion phenomenon" which refers to, "the emergence of a champion who is effective at driving a leadership process to effect change" (p.413). Taylor et al. (2011) defines project champions as,

> A person who acts as a change agent to promote [sustainable urban water management] SUWM on a daily basis within the agency or broader institution, particularly early in the process of change. They exhibit a strong personal commitment to the issue, as well as confidence, enthusiasm and persistence. They are adept at exercising influence, usually through informal sources of power. They also adopt specific behaviors (e.g. identifying, packaging and selling issues as well as building coalitions of support), many of which occur outside of their official role description (p. 417).

Studies Mentioning Evaluation Champions

The first mention of a champion in the evaluation literature can be attributed to Preskill & Torres (1999) when they suggested organizational leadership was required to support evaluative inquiry by modelling and championing ongoing learning. The authors call for executive leaders to, "(a) develop and communicate a consistent learning vision and (b) model and champion learning efforts" (p. 163). Three years later in the special 2002 edition of the journal *New Directions for Evaluation* focusing on ECB, champions were officially recognised in the evaluation literature. Three of the seven articles mention champions. Stockdill, Baizerman, & Compton (2002) identified champions, placing them at a senior level, as crucial human resources that had the capability of facilitating and managing the ECB initiative. Milstein, Chapel, Wetterhall, & Cotton (2002) recommended designating an organizational lead or champion to be a focal point for promoting program evaluation across the organization. The role of the willing champion to "push hard for ECB to happen and to keep pushing hard until it has become embedded in the corporate culture" was recognised by Mackay (2002, p. 96). Champions, or monitoring and evaluation advocates, were included as a key component of an ECB action plan.

Researchers continued to refer to champions from that point on and drew connections with Patton's earlier work around "the personal factor." For example, to provide context for a case study tracking the development of internal evaluation capability, McDonald, Rogers, & Kefford (2003) identified a contextual factor was the presence of an evaluation champion who was involved in one project then moved into a position where they could influence an entire division. They expanded their explanation to include, "Patton (1997: 44) has referred to 'the personal factor' in the success of individual evaluations – the presence of a champion for the evaluation. We believe the same factor applies to the building of capability" (McDonald et al., 2003, p. 12). Owen (2003) also suggested including staff on the evaluation team would serve to "embed the evaluation process in the ongoing fabric of the organisation" (p. 46).

Champions were starting to receive recognition for their positive attitude, open-mindedness, respectful interactions, enthusiasm and humour in relation to evaluation (King, 2005). Descriptions of the role of champions were beginning to emerge: "Committee members would become evaluation champions, serving as visible supporters of the

process, mentioning it in favorable terms, identifying issues for possible study, and taking on naysayers pleasantly but firmly…" (King, 2005, p. 93). In an article that outlined steps for intentional process use for building the evaluation capacity of an organization, evaluation champions were prominent. The step 2 for intentional process use was titled, "2. Identify and support evaluation champions who will nurture evaluative thinking in themselves and others", where "First, you must identify individuals who understand or intuitively get evaluation" was suggested (King, 2007, p. 49). Inviting the evaluation champions onto the advisory group was recommended, where they assist with providing information about the context to inform the options available, assisting with interpreting the findings and "…thinking about how to involve others…" (King, 2007, p.49).

These suggestions were linked with Patton's (2008) personal factor because it is essential to have people who are engaged. King (2007) acknowledged champions may or may not be in a leadership position, but for process use to be successful it requires participants who are interested, motivated, willing to engage, committed, enthusiastic, and bring evaluation skills and knowledge. The final step similarly emphasised the importance of evaluation champions to establish the systems, policies and procedures in the organization for "nurturing evaluative thinking over time" (King, 2007, p. 53).

In 2008 Taylor-Powell & Boyd published an article that combined the findings from King & Volkov (2005) and other sources with their experiences in a cooperative extension organization. Their ECB framework included 'evaluation champions' under 'resources and supports' alongside evaluation and ECB expertise, materials, assets, financing, technology, and time (Taylor-Powell & Boyd, 2008, p.58). From across the organization Taylor-Powell & Boyd (2008) suggest evaluation champions, "…must be continuously identified and nurtured to grow the evaluation culture and to withstand potential setbacks" (p. 61). Self-selection or nomination by management were considered to be valid options for identification particularly because it was a combination of their ability to influence others, their variety of skills or their learning needs, that were all relevant. Taylor-Powell & Boyd (2008) stated, "We found that working with these individuals over time, cementing relationships, and encouraging reflective practice help to build a cadre of key advocates that can communicate the value of evaluation and share ECB responsibilities" (p. 61).

In response to calls for conceptual clarity, recent attempts have been made to develop common measures for ECB. In the Labin (2014) Integrated Evaluation Capacity Building model they are included as an organizational level outcome. "Champion" appears under "leadership" and alongside "coaching, mentoring, level of support in organization" (p. 109). This is in contrast with Nielsen et al. (2011) who, after acknowledging that multiple theorists have documented the importance of evaluation champions, do not include it in their model. The authors consider this to be a notable omission but justify the decision to not include champions because "the presence of a champion is more a driver of change that representative of actual capacity" (Nielsen et al., 2011, p.339). However, Nielsen et al. (2011) do not deny the importance of evaluation champions, as they reason, "efforts of an evaluation champion result in the establishment of structures, processes and culture that form part of [evaluation capacity]" (p. 339).

Regardless of their position in the organizational hierarchy, in Interactive Evaluation Practice (IEP), evaluation champions are, "well respected by colleagues who possess the expertise and skills necessary for supporting the tasks of evaluation or for championing processes" (King & Stevahn, 2013, p. np). These champions are one of the factors that determine if there is a supportive organizational context alongside leadership support and the overall level of interest and demand for evaluation information. External evaluators who are not embedded over the long term particularly need to consider the interpersonal factor:

> The interpersonal factor is critically important to external evaluators' ability to spot possibly problematic situations in a timely manner. They need to have active relationships with individuals in the organization to gain grounding knowledge and a detailed sense of the environment as well as an understanding of which leaders and evaluation champions support the study and which individuals may have problems with the evaluation of feel threatened as it moves forward (King & Stevahn, 2013, p. np).

King & Stevahn (2013) suggest two ways external evaluators can handle this issue: first, spend more time in the organization; second, make the connection with the willing internal participants or evaluation champions who understand the history and can elucidate the interpersonal dynamics.

Key references to evaluation champions from the literature are extracted and presented in Table 1. This is the first step in the process of developing a list of activities that may be indicative of the behaviours of champions. However, the next step is to draw upon evaluation theory and social interdependence theory to assist with understanding the role of evaluation champion.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Theory in this literature review can assist with making sense of this social situation (Gay & Weaver, 2011) where we know champions are interacting with their colleagues. However, limited literature is available to explain what is taking place.

Theory of Evaluation Use

Many theorists have extensively analysed the theory of evaluation use as it has been an important topic of concern, interest, and debate for a very long time (Kirkhart, 2000; Weiss, 2000; Vo, 2015). There are elements of this theory that can explain how interactions between stakeholders, such as champions, can promote use. Within the theory of evaluation use the "personal factor" goes some way to assisting with focusing the evaluation on the concerns of stakeholders to increase the likelihood of the uptake of findings (Patton, 2008). Utilization-focused evaluation is "evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary uses for specific, intended uses" (Patton, 2008, p. 37). For nearly 40 years Patton has been discussing the crucial importance of interactions between evaluators and users; They are invaluable to a successful process and can be defined as the "personal factor" (Patton, 2008). "The personal factor is the presence of an identifiable individual or group of people who personally care about the evaluation and the findings it generates" (Patton, 2008, p. 66). Patton (2012) also adds, "The personal factor represents the leadership, interest, enthusiasm, determination, commitment, assertiveness, and caring of specific individual people" (p. 62-63). However, this theory does not extend to understanding how the dynamics between stakeholders can be fostered to support the evaluation.

Henry & Mark (2003) advocate for the benefits of focusing on evaluation influence as an extension of the theory of evaluation use because of the different ways evaluation can influence change. As they unpack the multiple pathways of evaluation influence, at the interpersonal level they identify a "change agent" as a person who has a focus on changing policies, programs or operations in the organization. Henry & Mark (2003) state, "The successful change agents may in turn be persuasive, which may then trigger other kinds of change" (p. 302). Responding to evaluation findings or participating in the process are examples of how a change agent or champion may be inspired. Along with other interpersonal mechanisms, social norms, minority-opinion influence, justification and persuasion, are mechanisms by which a change at the individual level can influence the attitudes and actions of others (Henry & Mark, 2003).

Social Interdependence Theory

Strengthening evaluation practice by incorporating social psychological research to look at the challenges in guiding interactions and developing and maintaining trust have been suggested (Mark, Donaldson, & Campbell, 2011). Social interdependence theory, originating from the social psychology tradition, is useful for considering how team work dynamics change over time (Tindale & Anderson, 2002). Using the validated and refined social interdependence theory is of value for elucidating organizational interpersonal dynamics to understand the social connections between colleagues. This theory could be useful for assessing the level of cooperation, structuring evaluation tasks with teams, supporting and maintaining productive relationships, and promoting mutually beneficial goals (King & Stevahn, 2013).

According to Johnson & Johnson (2002), "Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each individual's outcomes are affected by the actions of others" (p. 11). The premise of the theory is that competitive goals will lead people to oppose each other but cooperative goals foster relationships that promote mutual success (Johnson, 2003). As stated by Johnson (2003), "...the way in which goals are structured determines how individuals interact,

Table 1
Additional References to Evaluation Champions[1]

Reference	Key Quote
Alaimo, S. (2008). p. 267	Fischer cites Weaver's leadership as the driving force behind enabling him to advance program evaluation in Families First: "He was vitally interested in evaluation, a real champion of it, and he asked tough questions."
Bourgeois, I., Whynot, J., & Thériault, T. (2015). p51	…the capacity level of this organization is likely to remain low, until a champion can be found to support the conduct and use of evaluation on an ongoing basis.
Boyd, H. (2009). p. 1	Evaluation champions are leaders who have influence in the organization and who support and value evaluative thinking…
Brandon, P. R., Smith, N. L., & Hwalek, M. (2011). p.300	Second, a client organization has to have an ''evaluation champion'' who is closely involved in the study. This is a person who brings the evaluation to the right people at the right time for the right discussion…
Bryson & Patton (2010) in Wholey, Newcomer & Hatry, (2010) p. 36	Evaluation sponsors (persons with enough authority or power, or both, to commission an evaluation) or process champions (persons who will focus on managing the day - to - day effort and keeping every- one on track) may be part of the group or may be identified during the group's process.
Christie, C. A., & Vo, A. T. (2011). p. 557, 559	The objective is not to demonstrate that one can do an evaluation, rather to train people who are leading evaluations and who are consumers of evaluation to be ''evaluation champions'' in their organizations; to be evaluation advocates, and informed evaluation consumers. They may or may not stay in the [evaluation] field, but without question they will be champions for evaluation.
Cousins, J. B., & Bourgeois, I. (2014). p.108	Enablers: senior commitment and championing… Such individuals and administrative teams demonstrate commitment to evaluation through the development of organizational policies and procedures that rely on evaluation data.
Cousins, J. B., Goh, S. C., Elliott, C. J., & Bourgeois, I. (2014). p. 38	In this way, they experience success and the institution expands its overall capacity, while meeting its management objectives and reporting/accountability requirements. The process can also spawn a new (user) champion for evaluation.
Dickinson, P., & Adams, J. (2012). p.29	For ECB to be successful, it is also important to identify evaluation champions within organisational management and among groups within organisations.
Guerra-López, I., & Hicks, K. (2015). p 24	This project benefited from the support of internal champions and the active involvement of all other stakeholders... The support of an internal champion drives the initiative as well as sees it through post implementation.

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[1] This is an abridged table including only references not mentioned in this paper. For a full table, please contact the author by email at arogers1@student.unimelb.edu.au.

Hanwright, J., & Makinson, S. (2008). p. 22	By doing this, we have been able to develop 'champions' across the agency who share with colleagues in their immediate work units the value of evaluation.
King (2004) p.10	Committee members would become evaluation champions, serving as visible supporters of the process, mentioning it in favorable terms, identifying issues for possible study, taking on nay-sayers pleasantly but firmly throughout the school day and across the school year.
Mayne, J. (2010). p.8, 11	Strong senior leadership in building an evaluative culture can be evident through such actions as: - supporting the results management regime, including demonstrating the benefits of using evidence, identifying and supporting results management champions… This capacity can be enhanced through: identifying and encouraging *peer champions*
Mertens, D., & Wilson, A. (2012).	The context assessment may reveal people with a passionate interest in evaluation…
Nu'Man, J., King, W., Bhalakia, A., & Criss, S. (2007). p. S31	Organizations realizing the greatest benefits were those that participated as active partners, being motivated to improve the efficacy of their interventions and willing to champion evaluation activities.
Nylen, K., & Sridharan, S. (2017). p. 9	"We recognize that building evaluation culture is a long-term effort that often requires key champions and the right levels of organizational readiness to raise tough questions around self-reflection, learning, and accountability." pg 9.
Pejsa, L. J. (2011). p 40	The need to work with people, identify evaluation champions, and address organizational context are common with studies in the school context, as well as assertions made in the prescriptive literature.
Preskill (2007). p.5	Leaders who support evaluation: - Are champions of evaluation – they actively engage in, and encourage others to think evaluatively.
Sonnichsen, R. C. (2000). p 110	Attempt to gain access to decisionmakers, either top management or "champions"
Stockmann, R., & Meyer, W. (2016). p.61	Institutional evaluation champions that are open to building learning and reflection into their organizational practice should be identified and supported.
Volkov, B. B., & King, J. A. (2007). p. 1	Locate existing and enlist new evaluation champion(s) in the organization.
Wandersman, A. (2014). p. 101	Presents several factors that practitioners should consider when attempting to sustain an effective program: (a) ''buy in,'' (b) effectiveness, (c) diversity of funding, (d) staff training, (e) presence of a program champion, and (f) political capital of the program

which in turn creates outcomes" (p. 934). The underlying assumption of this theory is that an intrinsic motivation to achieve a common goal is based on interpersonal factors or the relationships between individuals (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998).

Five elements of social interdependence that the literature on champions can be linked with include:

1. Positive interdependence,
2. Individual accountability,
3. Face-to-face promotive interaction,
4. Social skills, and
5. Group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 2003).

Johnson & Johnson (2003) first explain positive interdependence is when the success of individuals is linked to the success of the group. Second, individual accountability is when a group member is held responsible for their fair contribution. Third, providing encouragement and facilitating each other's efforts is promotive interaction and could include providing help, assistance, resources, and feedback. Fourth, communicating clearly and resolving conflicts effectively are examples of the small group and interpersonal social skills needed for group cooperation. Finally, group processing is the fifth element and involves reflecting on how well the group is functioning and assessing if improvements are required (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Research has shown when the elements are considered in the design of team work it can lead to increased effort to achieve, or productivity, psychological health and wellbeing, and beneficial quality interpersonal relations (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

Evaluators and social psychologists have proposed that social interdependence theory can assist with investigating the factors that promote cooperation and collaboration while learning, managing conflict, and facilitating for interactive evaluation practice, all of which are essential roles for evaluation champions (King & Stevahn, 2013; Stevahn & King, 2005, 2016). As Stevahn & King (2016) argue, when looking at interactive strategies required to engage stakeholders in evaluation, "…cooperative interactive strategies in particular… are especially useful because they promote an increased sense of commitment to working together to achieve common goals" (p. 78). The theory is of high quality based on the amount of research, the extensive degree of application to practical situations, the strength of the evidence, and, particularly relevant for this research, the strong empirical relationship with the success and functionality of a team (Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Tarricone & Luca, 2002). Social interdependence theory in this review assists with understanding the motivations of champions and how they engage with their teams and establish mutual goals. In addition, the theory provides an appropriate lens

through which to investigate this problem as it can assist with eliciting how evaluation champions use the social structures to enable cooperative team work.

Discussion

Based on the extant literature, the author defines an evaluation champion as an employee who practises reflection and critical thinking, and promotes evaluation among colleagues. However, while this definition captures the essential elements, specific details around what this looks like in practice is lacking. This discussion explains how the author developed an "identity-kit" of an evaluation champion by compiling characteristics of similar roles. Evaluative thinking strategies, internal evaluation models, evaluation capacity building practitioner roles were combined with what we know about champions from the literature and theories about how they might be working with others.

Buckley, Archibald, Hargraves, & Trochim (2015) developed a list of practical strategies and examples of activities for promoting evaluative thinking. Buckley et al. (2015) state, "If Evaluative Thinking is promoted by an evaluation champion in a position of influence and is increasingly practiced by members of the organization as part of a learning community, an evaluation culture will follow" (p. 384). With this acknowledgment, it was therefore relevant to draw upon the list of examples of evaluative thinking provided.

Similarly, the comparison Stockdill et al. (2002) made between a program evaluation practitioner and an ECB practitioner also provided a useful list of characteristics related to role orientation. Distinguishing between an evaluator and a role that was purposefully and intentionally focused on building capacity was a useful distinction to consider in relation to understanding evaluation champions. Volkov (2011) also based a model of the essential roles of the internal evaluator on a review of the literature and personal experience. The resulting model highlighted the multiplicity of roles of the internal evaluator. The roles went beyond the researcher and consultant to also include: promoter and advancer of systematic and positive change; evaluation capacity builder; and facilitator of decision making, learning, and evaluative thinking in organizations (Volkov 2011).

Utilising these frameworks as comparison points with the limited data available that specifically focused on champions was the next step. Silliman et al. (2016) interviewed champions

based in extension organizations to highlight the key roles they play. Drawing upon relevant paragraphs on champions in the Preskill & Boyle (2008b) study highlighted the importance of identifying evaluation champions. The King & Volkov (2005) and King (2005, 2007) articles also provided some useful reference points for understanding what to look for in an evaluation champion. The conceptual model of champion-driven leadership from Taylor et al. (2011) was the only source incorporated that came from beyond the evaluation literature.

Finally, these frameworks, models, and lists were considered in relation to the Social Interdependence theoretical framework which provided a useful way of understanding how champions interact with their peers. It assisted with developing insights into the features, qualities, and attributes in relation to team work, that make up the characteristics of evaluation champions. Social Interdependence theory was used to consider how champions are working in teams and if they were intentionally creating connections that give groups purpose (Tindale & Anderson, 2002). The theory provides an appropriate lens to understand how evaluation champions use social structures to enable cooperative team work and how it has previously been applied in practice to many different contexts (Johnson, 2003).

Excerpts from these key sources have been presented in a table to illustrate how the activities and strategies that may be indicative of the behaviors of champions were derived. (Refer to Table 2). The excerpts were combined and collated to highlight themes across the sources and resulted in the following list:

Evaluation champions may:

1. Advocate for support and resources
2. Motivate others, provide energy, interest and enthusiasm
3. Provide or access tools, resources, networks and expertise
4. Help others to apply evaluative thinking, use evaluation findings and create opportunities for reflection
5. Assist, train, mentor, support evaluation while considering different perspectives and encouraging others to contribute
6. Consider how evaluation can be strategically promoted and used for organizational change
7. Ask and encourage others to ask critical questions and initiate discussions and debates
8. Develop engaging ways to explain details and develop common visions

Conclusions

The main outcome from this analysis of the literature on evaluation champions is a list of indicative activities that could be used to identify champions. Prior to the development of this list, there was evidence in the literature that evaluation champions emerge as leaders to promote collaborations and use evaluation to support the development of an organization (Taylor-Powell & Boyd, 2008). The challenge up until the development of this list has been, 'How would I know an evaluation champion if I bumped into them on the street?'

This list is the first step in a journey to address this challenge. This review attempts to promote discussion about these activities so evaluators and others can begin to recognize evaluation champions, invite participation, further inspire interest, support professional development, and recruit and retain these individuals with their unique skill set. The most important potential use of this list of activities is to articulate and disseminate the contribution that these individuals are making within organisations. The limited literature that does exist suggests that their contribution is highly valued; however, these champions are currently not being recognized to the extent that they should be.

The next step is to gather more evidence from practice to assess if the literature resonates with what is happening in the real world. To support this group of critical change agents to have greater impact, the evaluation field needs a more in-depth understanding of the attributes and professional experiences of evaluation champions. Silliman et al. (2016b) calls for further research:

> Going forward, more systematic and in-depth examination of champions' needs, contexts, and organizational dynamics from champions' own and others' perspectives (e.g., peers, clients, administrators, expert evaluators) is needed. Such research would enhance understanding of when, where, and how training, resources, and supports, formal and informal, might improve their effectiveness. Research within organizations or teams of all sizes and purposes would expand focus beyond larger Extension systems (p. 37).

Table 2
Excerpt From a List of Strategies and Activities that May Be Indicative of the Behaviours of Evaluation Champions[2].

Themes	Buckley, Archibald, Hargraves & Trochim (2015) p.382	Stockdill, Baizerman, & Compton (2002) p.12	Preskill, H., & Boyle, S. (2008b) p. 165-166.	King & Volkov (2005) + King (2005) + King (2007)	Silliman et al. (2016)	Taylor, Cocklin, Brown, & Wilson-Evered, (2011) p. 422
Advocate for support and resources		Orients outward toward co-creating and co-sustaining the necessary state of affairs for program studies and their uses			Advocacy included "speaking up" in policy groups… interpreting the value of and opportunities for evaluation to peers, especially in mentoring, project teams, and professional settings. (p.13)	Strongly promoting new ideas (e.g. communicating clearly) Building compelling cases for initiatives, which are presented to senior decision-makers.
Motivate others, provide energy, interest and enthusiasm		Imagines, conceptualizes, envisions, co- creates, and co-sustains a state of affairs in which evaluation and its use is ongoing	Motivating others to engage in evaluations	'…their positive attitudes toward evaluation, their open-mindedness when challenged, their respect for colleagues' opinions, their enthusiasm for risk taking and creativity, and a continuing sense of good humour.' (King 2005 p. 93).	Champions' own role descriptions more often fit the pattern of *indirect influence* which complements expert evaluators' more *direct and intentional* use of process in intensive training and consulting (p. 13).	Demonstrating many attributes that relate to transformational leadership (e.g. frequent displays of enthusiasm, energy, vision, confidence, persistence and optimism).
Provide or access tools, resources, networks and expertise	Access tools and resources necessary to support all formal and informal evaluation efforts (including the support of external	May belong to multiple occupational communities, including evaluators, managers, and executives	Provide support and resources for evaluation work	'…evaluation champions who will supply ongoing commitment, enthusiasm, and	…give-and-take in skill learning, practice, and mutual support… building on basic knowledge gained in formal settings (p. 13).	Using social networks to build coalitions of support that cross organizational boundaries, with a preference for the

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[2] This is only an excerpt of the analysis. For a full table, please contact the author by email at arogers1@student.unimelb.edu.au.

	evaluators, evaluation capacity building professionals, data analyzers, etc.)				technical know-how.' (King 2007, p. 50)	'strong tie strategy' of social networking
Help others to apply evaluative thinking, use evaluation findings and create opportunities for reflection	Create an intentional evaluative thinking learning environment. Display logic models in the workplace. Create public spaces to record and display questions and assumptions. Post inspirational questions. Highlight the learning that comes from successful programs and evaluations and also from ''failures'' or dead ends.	Uses a long-term, open-ended process for making the organization or program a place in which program evaluation as such and each program evaluation study can be used to enhance organizational effectiveness	Helping others implement and act on the evaluation findings	'people who are willing to spend time with you discussing options, thinking about how to involve others, and eventually making sense of data' (King 2007, 49).	Champions perform above organizational norms in evaluative thinking… and use... They prioritize evaluation instrumental use for accountability and funding support, but also offer examples of process use to engage clients and partners, practical use to manage projects, and conceptual use of evaluation to educate stakeholders. (p. 13).	Establishing pilot projects to trial innovations, learn, minimize risks, educate stakeholders and build coalitions. Coordinating leadership activities across organizational boundaries and managerial levels to ensure collaborators share common visions
Assist, train, mentor, support evaluation while considering different perspectives and encouraging others to contribute	Ensure that all evaluation work is participatory and that members of the organization at all levels are offered the opportunity to contribute their perspectives. Encourage members of the organization to engage in informal, self-guided evaluation work.			'Committee members would become evaluation champions, serving as visible supporters of the process, mentioning it in favorable terms, identifying issues for possible study, and taking on naysayers pleasantly but firmly….' (King 2005 p. 93).	Based on their reputation and enthusiasm for doing evaluation well, champions offer assistance or long-term mentoring to co-workers or supervisees, sharing tools, help with planning, problem-solving, or reporting (p.13).	Fostering trust amongst team members, as a prerequisite for high levels of collaboration. Demonstrating strong inter-personal skills via activities such as active listening, social networking, a preference for face-to-face and one-to-one communication, counselling, mentoring, coaching, negotiation and conflict resolution.

Consider how evaluation can be strategically promoted and used for organizational change	Use role-play when planning evaluation work. Conduct a scenario analysis. Take on various stakeholder perspectives. Conduct an evaluation simulation.	Holds a perspective on how every evaluation may contribute to sustaining the necessary state of affairs and works strategically to those ends. Orients to a politics of guiding and sustaining organizational change, learning, and development.		"voluntarily implementing evaluation activities and purposely passing their evaluative spirit and knowledge to their colleagues." (King and Volkov, 2005 p. 13).	Advocacy for client or peer learning and program improvement points to champions' influence on deeper, longer-term foundations of program development (p. 13).	Learning from experienced mentors and executive champions how to build: strong strategic networks; political, strategic and relational knowledge; and various forms of power.
Ask and encourage others to ask critical questions and initiate discussions and debates	Have participants ''mine'' their logic model for information about assumptions and how to focus evaluation work. Use ''opening questions'' to start discussion. Engage in critical debate on a neutral topic. Engage in supportive, critical peer review. Review peer logic models. Use the Critical Conversation Protocol. Take an appreciative pause.		Encouraging others to ask the critical questions			Undertaking scanning behaviors Questioning the status quo Generating new ideas
Develop engaging ways to explain details and develop common visions	Diagram or illustrate thinking with colleagues. Have teams or groups create logic and pathway models. Diagram the program's history. Create a system, context, and/or organization diagram.				…most mastered existing evaluation tools, especially surveys, but also used checklists, journals or log-books, interviews and focus groups, concept maps, observations, and testimonials… (p. 9).	Developing and communicating visions for initiatives

Future investigations could consider how champions are working in the field to compare evidence from the literature, in relation to the characteristics of champions, with evidence from practice. Researchers need to elucidate how evaluation champions are working in complex settings so that we can support their efforts to foster evaluation. To provide clarity to decision makers in organizations, researchers need to provide more information about the challenges of recruiting, supporting, and maintaining the role of champions.

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