

# **Do you Feel Part of the Family? Study on the Sense of Belonging to the Program Evaluation Profession**

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With data from a survey conducted by  
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# Study Objectives

- Strength of a professional communities lies on many factors, including the feeling of belonging of the members to their own profession.
- Present study that is an exploratory research project on feeling of belonging to evaluation profession
- Objective was to identify factors associated with level of feeling of belonging, eventually to explore means to strengthen feeling of belonging – and the community of evaluators as a whole.

# Data Source

- Web-only survey, conducted between May 27 and July 27 2005
- Sample drawn from six sources:
  - » CES members
  - » CES past members
  - » Federal evaluators listed with the TBS Centre for Excellence in Evaluation
  - » Members of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development
  - » SQEP members
  - » Public announcement and word of mouth
- 1,006 complete responses submitted
  - » impossible to calculate a response rate, but likely representative of the Canadian evaluation community
- These analyses: only the 68% of respondents who are currently producers of evaluations.

# Data Used

- Dependant variable:
  - » Agree-disagree scale with statement “I feel I belong to a community of evaluators”
  - » 45% agreed with statement, 38% disagreed, so good distribution.
- Independent variables:
  - » As this is exploratory, tested all variables that were associated using bivariate analyses, plus additional items that were of interest, in addition to descriptives (gender, region, education, years in labour force, etc.).

# Tests

- Multiple regression analyses, using feeling of belonging as independent variable.
- Started with stepwise approach to select set of variables, then “entered” selected variables in model.
- Four models: all evaluators, federal public servants, private sector, and those with less than 10 years in labour market.

# Model 1: All Evaluators (n=630)

Feeling of belonging associated with:

- Agreement that program evaluation offers career opportunities
- Satisfaction with role in evaluation projects
- Availability of a mentor is not a barrier to training
- National capital region (versus Ontario)
- PhD degree (versus Masters)
- Wished there was a way to identify oneself as qualified evaluator
- Satisfaction with training receives at job
- Feeling that work is not routine
- Feels that classification/level does **not** reflect experience

# Model 2: Federal Public Service Only (n=194)

Feeling of belonging associated with:

- Satisfaction with training receives at job
- Wished there was a way to identify oneself as qualified evaluator
- Can easily cope with stress level
- Feeling that work is not routine
- National capital region (versus Ontario)

# Model 3: Private Sector Only (n=133)

Feeling of belonging associated with:

- Satisfaction with role in evaluation projects
- Satisfaction with promotion opportunities in evaluation
- Females
- Organization provides individual with tools to do work
- Number of years in workforce (more years associated with belonging)
- Cost of training is not a barrier to training
- National capital region (versus Ontario and West)

# Model 4: Those Less Than 10 Years in Labour Force Only (n=104)

Feeling of belonging associated with:

- Program evaluation offers career opportunities
- Availability of a mentor is not a barrier to training
- Satisfaction with role in evaluation projects
- Satisfaction with number of hours worked in week

# Discussion

- Key finding: *Not* feeling belonging associated with: Dissatisfaction with training; Perception that availability of mentor is a barrier to training; Dissatisfaction with role in evaluation projects.
- Can we use these results to strengthen feeling of belonging? Supposes causal relationship.
- Can hypothesize causal relationship and build on training, mentorship, valuing role in evaluation (especially among junior evaluators)

# Discussion

- Other interesting result -- those with stronger feeling of belonging like their roles in evaluation but:
  - » Would like way to identify oneself as qualified evaluators
  - » Feels that classification or level does not reflect experience
- Recognition seems to be issue despite feeling of belonging

# Conclusions

- Can hypothesise that CES can develop feeling of belonging through training and mentorship. Senior evaluators could try valuing roles of more junior evaluators on their teams.
- It also appears that those with strong attachment to evaluation have problems obtaining recognition. Solutions could come with CES advocacy role and some form of certification.

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