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A Status Study of Formal Evaluation Procedures Employed by Michigan Philanthropic Foundations

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A STATUS STUDY OF FORMAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES EMPLOYED BY MICHIGAN PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 1993

A STATUS STUDY OF FORMAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES EMPLOYED BY MICHIGAN PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS

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Western Michigan University, 1993

Little is known about the degree that philanthropic foundations use formal evaluation. This study investigated and described how Michigan based foundations of different sizes and types use formal evaluation for decision making regarding the (a) funding of grant proposals and (b) determining the performance of existing projects. Further, the study provides a description of current evaluation practice and capacity in foundations and plans that foundations have for increasing the evaluation capacity for themselves and of nonprofit grantees.

This study was conducted by mail questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher. A total of 134 questionnaires out of 226 mailed were returned (59.2%). The population of interest consisted of four size and three type categories of foundations. Although it was hypothesized that large foundations and community foundations would be different than other sizes and types of foundations on evaluation related issues, few differences were found.

Using the Pearson chi-square distribution to test the proportion of foundations using evaluation for specific purposes such as application evaluation and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on questionnaire items designed to provide a mean score, only 16 differences out of

77 hypotheses tested (20.7%) were found. One difference is that community foundations use application evaluation at a higher rate than do other types of foundations. A second difference is that large foundations have more staff than do other sizes of foundations. Findings without regard to size or type serve as a mechanism for describing the level and type of evaluation activity in foundations.

For example, 45.3% of foundations use application evaluation as part of their approach for choosing which proposals to fund. Moreover, foundations found a variety of strategies at least moderately useful regarding the evaluation of existing funded projects. The most useful strategy was information regarding the degree to which a project met the project's stated objectives. However, foundations have limited resources to conduct evaluation; foundations only average 1.04 staff persons with 36% of these staff having training in evaluation.

Specific recommendations are targeted toward developing a statewide evaluation consortium for foundations and more in-depth research on evaluation prevalence in foundations.

Order Number 9400091

A status study of formal evaluation procedures employed by Michigan philanthropic foundations

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Western Michigan University, 1993

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Few efforts of any kind are done without the contributions of a number of supportive and caring individuals. This dissertation is no exception. This study would not have been possible without access to information provided by the staff of the Council of Michigan Foundations. Equally useful was feedback from the many foundation representatives regarding the survey instrument.

Committee members Dr. Zoe Barley and Dr. Raymond Alie supplied a unique mixture of scholarly rigor and practical experience along with a kick in the pants and pat on the back just when I needed it.

Committee chair Dr. Uldis Smidchens, whom I have often called the hardest working man in education, merits special recognition. Dr. Smidchens worked ceaselessly in his efforts to insure that this would be a quality study. Almost always there was a twinkle in his eye suggesting that even the most daunting of tasks were really opportunities for growth. I feel honored to have had as my chair the finest educator I have met in all of my years of formal education.

I would be remiss if I did not mention retired Educational Leadership Professor Dr. Edgar Kelley. Dr. Kelley displayed confidence in me long before I had confidence in myself. His supportive intellectual challenges built the capacity that allowed me to be in a position to even contemplate starting a dissertation.

My soul mate Lori Perkins Seita is the patron saint of tenacity. She supported and encouraged my efforts even when I was unsure that

the darkest of midnights would soon reveal the newness and brilliance of a rising sun. Lori's belief in me transcended the spiritual to the practical and extended to such mundane tasks as licking and stamping envelopes and data entry. My enduring appreciation of her love is timeless.

Finally, nothing is done without God.

John R. Seita

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

Determining the quality or performance of an object is sometimes self-evident. Established standards for a given industry are often used as a gauge for determining to what degree a product or the performance of a product meets, exceeds, or falls below an accepted standard. For example, in baseball, a hitter who has a .300 batting average is considered to be a good hitter by those who judge such things. Batting .300 in baseball has traditionally been the benchmark for quality hitting. This standard might be considered normative. Likewise, the jewelry industry uses the four C's (cut, color, clarity, and carat) to determine the quality and worth of a diamond. Simply stated, a consumer considering the purchase of a diamond has established standards to use when evaluating the worth of such a purchase.

Thus, a consumer of a tangible product generally has the option of being well-informed and making decisions based upon standards and comparative information. Likewise, the professional baseball team in the market for a proficient hitter may very well consider the proximity of a hitter's batting average to the valued .300 mark.

Both of the above examples provide fairly simple benchmarks to use when evaluating the quality or performance of a product (a diamond) or a service (baseball player). Conversely, evaluating the quality or

performance of services provided by those in the nonprofit sector are much more challenging. The performance of service organizations such as nonprofits are more difficult to evaluate than those organizations which are primarily product oriented. Drucker (1982) asserted that nonprofit organizations provide services rather than observable products; unlike many private organizations, nonprofit outputs are intangible and difficult to measure and consequently evaluate. Nonprofits generally strive to improve the lives of people and this is inherently more difficult to evaluate than say, measuring the number of widgets produced or the variance of a widget toward a degree of statistical tolerance.

Knowing how well nonprofits perform services and provide for the needs of their constituents and the communities that they serve is perplexing and challenging. Most of society is influenced by the quality and appropriateness of nonprofit service delivery. Nearly all community members use hospitals, universities, the public education system, police services, local government, and many other much smaller nonprofit organizations. Thus, nonprofits are for everyone, not only those who are disaffected and disenfranchised. Society has a vested interest in how well nonprofits perform, however difficult at times it may be to determine. According to Kanter and Summers (1987), a nonprofit organization has difficulty

> (1) knowing when it is doing well and (2) being able to make changes or to redirect resources, when members of the organization suspect that it is not going well with respect to its "market," but can still attract resources by nonmarket means from believing donors. (p. 155)

Systematic decision making by nonprofits based upon empirical information is limited. While organizational complexities and culture,

perceptual biases, level of experience, problem definition, time, attitudes, and personality all influence decision making (Tosi, Rizzo, & Carroll, 1990), evaluation is one strategy that could focus a decision maker's options. However, evaluation capacity among nonprofits is limited but may become increasingly important as the number of nonprofits increase and their influence multiplies. Many advocate using formal evaluation as a strategy for decision making by nonprofits (Austin, 1982; Spagnolo-Rodriguez, 1992; Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991); however, this approach may be complicated by the limited experience that nonprofits have with evaluation, the difficulty in evaluating often intangible, service oriented organizations, and the diversity of nonprofits.

Still, nonprofits have stumbled along for decades with little evaluation. However, the need for accountability may soon change. The traditional sources of funds for nonprofits is diminishing or even disappearing. Consequently, nonprofits find themselves creatively seeking out new sources of revenue. Often, this search has led them to philanthropic foundations. And while foundations are a ready source of funds, the competition for these funds may be intense. As a result of diminishing funds for nonprofits, foundations may find themselves as de facto partners with nonprofits and may need a mechanism to determine how well nonprofits have performed and which proposals are meritorious. However, knowledge of the methods by which foundations select which proposals to fund and furthermore, determine what nonprofits have done with those funds is sketchy at best.

Evaluation Practice in Foundations

While the literature suggests that much is known about the capacity and use of evaluation by nonprofits, studies on how foundations use evaluation are generally tightly focused and not generalizable across the foundation population.

> Here is a major class of American institutions numbering in the tens of thousands, a more-than-billion-dollar-a-year enterprise, and yet there are hardly a half-dozen published reports on any substantial efforts at evaluating foundation activities. (Brim, 1973, p. 228)

Little seems to have changed since Brim's (1973) comment of 20 years ago. For example, Smith's (1985) study on evaluation funding by foundations focused on the propensity of major foundations to fund evaluations. His study was a document review and sought to uncover through the use of the Dialogue system and the Foundation Grants Index (both data bases) the level of evaluation use and support by foundations. Smith offered that there have been a "number of self study efforts" (p. 220) by foundations in the area of evaluation. Moreover, he concluded that larger foundations are more likely to conduct evaluations, yet that the level of evaluation use is suggested but unclear. "Much of the evaluation work done by foundations appears to be for internal purposes only and is not generally available" (p. 236).

Little information appears to be available on how foundations as a group use evaluation and what similarities or differences may exist within sizes and types of foundations. Few descriptions of how foundations conduct evaluation and the value of evaluation to foundations are able to be found by the interested scholar. Methods, techniques,

outcomes, and lessons learned are all chronicled by various foundation personnel (Butt, 1985; Carter, 1985; Coleman, 1985; Sullivan, 1985). However, these descriptions were designed to assist other foundations in developing evaluation strategies but were not studies in which one might gain insight into the evaluation efforts across foundations. Information to date on evaluation use by foundations are of the case study variety and are anecdotal in nature. They describe how an evaluation was conducted on behalf of a foundation and the results of the project/ program being evaluated but not the frequency of evaluation use across foundations. This lack of knowledge represents a gap in what is known about evaluation in foundations. More information is needed about foundation evaluation activities that could be collected through survey research and other direct contact methods with foundation personnel (Smith, 1985).

Purposes of the Study

This study was conducted with an interest in examining the level of evaluation use among Michigan's philanthropic foundations. More specifically, this study sought to investigate and describe how Michigan based foundations of different sizes and types use evaluation for the following four purposes: (1) application evaluation (choosing which proposals to fund, (2) project evaluation (strategies that foundations use to determine what happened as a result of grant-making activities), (3) provide a description of current evaluation practice and capacity in foundations, and (4) investigate plans that foundations have for increasing the evaluation capacity for themselves and of nonprofit grantees.

Finally, the study served as a status study without regard to size and type relative to the four purposes of the study. These trends, as well as differences between different types and sizes of foundations, are described and analyzed in the succeeding chapters.

Statement of the Problem

The problem statement for this study may be synthesized into the following: What is the evaluation capacity and current practice of foundations, and how is it different between varying types and sizes of foundations? Secondly, to what degree do foundations of different sizes and types support the evaluation efforts of nonprofit organizations? Finally, what limitations do foundations identify for building evaluation capacity both internally and for nonprofit grantees?

Conceptual Hypotheses

1. Large foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other size foundations.

2. Community foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other types of foundations.

Significance of the Study

Very little, if any, information is known about the degree to which foundations use evaluation for either internal use or to support the efforts of nonprofit organizations (Brim, 1973; Carter, 1990; Smith, 1985).

Since foundations are a major and increasing provider of funds to nonprofits, the utility of investigating and describing the degree to which foundations conduct evaluation is probably unique. The findings from this study may serve as a catalyst for how nonprofit evaluation is conducted and the role of foundations in using evaluation and in supporting capacity building for nonprofit organizations. The burgeoning role of the 959 foundations in Michigan is evident by the $523 million in charitable contributions given in 1990 to nonprofit organizations by Michigan foundations. This compares to 1980-82 when Michigan foundations made grants totaling $251 million to nonprofits, a 108% increase in grant making in a little less than a decade (Michigan Foundation Directory, 1990). Research on evaluation strategies that foundations use could benefit foundations, nonprofits, and ultimately those who are served by nonprofits by way of improving current projects and methods that foundations use to choose proposals.

Strategies and resources for nonprofits seeking technical support and/or funding for evaluations may result from inferences regarding the relationship between size and type of the foundation and evaluation use and support. Through this study, foundations may be able to compare themselves to a "norm" and determine whether they want to change their evaluation practice; foundations may also want to use each other as resources following the findings from this study.

The next section describes the different types and sizes of foundations.

Descriptions of Foundation Types

There are various types of foundations. Private foundations are grant-making organizations whose assets are usually the result of a sole source such as an individual or family. Community foundations are the result of multiple sources of funding and are managed by a board and often an administrator; their focus is almost always in a specific geographic area. Company foundations, as the name suggests, derive their assets from a corporation (Smith, 1985). Foundations of all types usually have their own by-laws and funding priorities.

To aid the reader, a description of the various terms used throughout this study follows in the next section.

Definition of Terms

"Nonprofit organizations are commonly defined by what they are not rather than by what they are: Nonprofits are the residual category left after for-profit and government have been considered" (Wilson, 1991, p. xi). Because nonprofit organizations vary widely in terms of size, mission, funding source, and purpose, it is difficult to use a singular definition to categorize them. The locus of this study was nonprofits that fund human service and educational endeavors (foundations) and those that provide human service and educational endeavors.

For purposes of this study, nonprofit will be defined using the nonprofit corporation act which states: "Benevolent, educational, philanthropic, human, patriotic or eleemosynary organization of persons which solicits or obtains contributions solicited from the public for

charitable purposes" (Wilson, 1991, p. xiii). A type of nonprofit is philanthropic foundations.

Foundations are "nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations with funds and programs managed by its own trustees or directors, established to aid social, educational, charitable, religious or other activities serving the common welfare, primarily through the making of grants" (Michigan Foundation Directory, 1990, p. 221). This study excludes many other organizations that have foundation as a part of their name but whose primary purpose is not grant making. Examples may include trade associations and organizations representing a special interest or other purposes not related to philanthropy.

Evaluation is defined as the "systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object; e.g., a program, project, or instructional material" (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981, p. 152). Scriven (1991) offered a more compelling definition of evaluation, "It is a process whose duty is the systematic and objective determination of merit, worth or value. Without such a process, there is no way to distinguish the worthwhile from the worthless" (p. 4).

Application evaluation is the degree to which the foundation has a systematic process and standards to use when considering what proposals to fund. Factors that may influence a foundation to fund a proposal include: (a) the perceived need for the project, (b) the merit of the proposal, (c) the qualifications and ability of the prospective grantee to carry out the proposed project, (d) the projected impact and effect of the project, and (e) a previous professional relationship with the grantee. All of these characteristics may be part of how a foundation evaluates

the merit of a proposal.

Project evaluations are conducted so that the foundation can determine which projects were most effective (Smith, 1985). Project evaluation considers what process a foundation uses to determine if grantees have "made a difference" with grant monies. The evaluation strategies for project evaluation may involve (a) periodic written formal reports, (b) personal observation of the funded project by foundation staff or designees, (c) external evaluation reports, and (d) visits by foundation board members.

For this study, evaluation capacity will be defined as: (a) number of full-time professional staff with the foundation, (b) number of staff with evaluation responsibility, (c) use of external evaluators, and (d) staff with training in evaluation. Evaluation practice is defined as activities that the foundation conducts that meet the definition of the systematic investigation of the merit or worth of an object, for example, a program, project, or grant proposal.

Limitations of the Study

This study was novel in that no previous studies were located that provided a general overview of the status of evaluation use by foundations. As such, building on previous studies or relying on a review of related literature to provide a conceptual framework for the study was not possible. Therefore, the development of the conceptual hypotheses was founded upon over 3 years of conducting evaluation activities on behalf of foundations and the Council of Michigan Foundations. These experiences were augmented by a 240-hour on-site internship at a major

foundation capped by a study of evaluation needs of this foundation's nonprofit grantees.

Finally, it is worth noting that the response rate and the number of responses for each individual question and test of an individual hypothesis may vary. The reason for these differences are that at two points in the survey, respondents were provided the option to stop and return the survey. The implications of this are that some analyses may have fewer than five responses per cell which could bias the test. However analysis of variance (ANOVA) is considered robust (Wiersma, 1991), minimal distortions are likely to occur. Moreover, in nearly all cases the probability level (p level) for making a Type I error is so low that this is not a concern (Norusis, 1990). Nonetheless, as with any use of inferential statistics, caution is advisable when interpreting the results of such findings.

The remainder of the study is organized so that Chapter II contains the review of literature. Chapter III, which follows the review of the literature, contains a description of the research design. The findings and analyses of the research hypothesis are presented in Chapter IV; and finally, Chapter V is a summary of the entire study and includes a discussion of the findings, implications, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Importance of Nonprofit Organizations

The initial part of the review of literature characterizes the necessity of nonprofits. Secondly, the literature review includes an investigation of the level of nonprofit evaluation acumen. This introductory emphasis on nonprofits is necessary in order to provide a framework for considering the relationship between nonprofits and foundations. Of primary interest are areas in which an evaluation link is established between the foundation and the nonprofit. Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that nonprofits are pervasive, their funding is increasingly coming from nontraditional sources such as foundations, and accountability through evaluation is one way to make improved decisions regarding which proposals foundations should fund. Secondly, foundations may assist nonprofits establish a "track record" of services provided through the use of evaluation.

There are over 40,000 nonprofits in Michigan with varying missions affecting the lives of Michigan residents every day in many ways. Nearly 6% of Michigan's work force is employed by nonprofit organizations (Wilson, 1991). Services provided by nonprofits are diverse and include health and social welfare; advocacy by groups promoting such diverse agendas as right to life, pro-choice, environmental awareness, and education; cultural and artistic enrichment; and general education

forums, to name a few.

However, the pervasiveness and impact of nonprofit organizations may be one of society's best kept secrets and least recognized industries (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1988; Kanter & Summers, 1987; O'Neill, 1989; Wilson, 1991). This is in spite of all the influence of nonprofits on our everyday lives. The relative anonymity of the nonprofit sector has led to the moniker, invisible, or third sector, the other two sectors being business and government.

In spite of the fifth wheel status of nonprofits, most citizens live enhanced lives because of this industry. Nonprofits provide services that otherwise might not be conducted if it were not for this nearly invisible industry.

> Nonprofits employ more civilians that the federal government and the fifty state governments combined. . . . The yearly budget of the American nonprofit sector exceeds the budgets of all but seven nations of the world. Seventy million American adults and teenagers do volunteer work in nonprofit organizations . . . seventy percent of American households donate to charity . . . the third sector has had a major impact on the history of the nation, and continues to shape its social and cultural values, and provides services to millions of its most needy citizens. The third America may be "invisible," but it is hardly insignificant. (O'Neill, 1989, p. 2)

Yet, even though there seems to be an increasing recognition of the contribution of nonprofits, there is some controversy over their emergence. Thus, the reason for the existence of nonprofits, like their definition, is not universally agreed upon. Salmon (1987), for example, suggested that the inability of nonprofits to meet local needs rather than government unwillingness to meet those needs, influences local, state, and federal governmental programs to fill the service gap not being met

by nonprofits.

Weisbrod (1988), however, argued that the value of nonprofits primarily lies in their willingness and ability to fill the service gap for citizens whose needs are unmet by either for-profit firms or the government. "The uniqueness of the sector is its relative independence and freedom to contribute to innovation, advocacy, criticism and where necessary reform" (O'Connel, 1988, p. 2). Nonprofits often provide services that the for-profit sector and the government will not provide. Thus, most scholars would argue that the nonprofit sector has long been recognized as a decentralized and pluralistic alternative to the government and the for-profit sector for the provision of social services. Large, distant, and centrally administered programs may be slow to respond, inflexible, and impose externally designed solutions that may not meet the local and contextually unique needs of citizens.

In contrast, nonprofits are generally locally based, closer to grassroots initiatives, have a clearer sense of local priorities, are smaller, less bureaucratic, and better able to respond quickly to local needs than large remote organizations. Perhaps more importantly, citizens considered to be physically, emotionally, economically, or otherwise disadvantaged may suffer needlessly, and for a prolonged period of time, without the support that local nonprofits often provide. Nonprofits are often a viable and local response to local needs (Magat, 1990).

An example of the increase of nonprofits in Michigan is community mental health (CMH). The Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital (KRPH) has reduced its population by over 3,000 persons in the last 30 years while the state of Michigan as a whole has reduced its inpatient

psychiatric population during the same time frame by over 15,000 (Kalamazoo County, 1992). Many of the former KRPH residents now receive services through local nonprofits. Further reductions of those residing in inpatient psychiatric and developmental disability care is expected to continue. In order to serve citizens released from institutions increased numbers of nonprofits and nonprofit services may result.

Local nonprofit organizations have responded to the mix of state decentralization, deinstitutionalization of patients, and a recognition of the value of providing services in a consumer's own community rather than in centralized locations far from friends, family, and familiar surroundings. Returning home from large, impersonal institutions has provided many previously institutionalized community members with heretofore unknown opportunities to live in a normal home and take part in community life. However, these opportunities may diminish or even vanish if the local nonprofits cannot attract sources of additional revenue.

Diminished Government Funding to Nonprofits

The ability of nonprofits to provide services is becoming more challenging as federal, state, and local government funding directed toward human services and educational programs are declining in both the level and proportion of funding. "Between 1981 and 1985 federal budget cuts cost nonprofit organizations an estimated 30 billion dollars. By 1990, increases in private giving had compensated for about 25% of the lost federal revenue" (Magat, 1990, p. 328). During the Reagan and Bush administrations this government reduction in funding for nonprofits

was theoretically to be balanced by increased volunteerism and private philanthropy. Wood (1990), however, argued that private philanthropy, especially in the form of corporate giving, "would probably be the first to go during an economic crunch" (p. 264). If Wood's argument is true, diverse funding avenues may have to be sought by nonprofit organizations in order to expand or even just to maintain the current level of service delivery.

Government budget reductions in funding to nonprofits may increase the pressure on foundations to support community based nonprofit programs and to compensate for lost governmental support to nonprofit organizations. Further increasing the pressure that foundations may face in supporting the human service network is a sense that the influence and pervasiveness of nonprofits is increasing as citizens become increasingly disenchanted with the role of government in our everyday lives (Weisbrod, 1975). In addition, funding of nonprofits by foundations may be a more flexible method of service delivery for nonprofits than the often bureaucratic government regulations imposed upon acceptance of government funds (Carter, 1990).

Moreover, while nonprofits potentially benefit from increased foundation grant making, government funding reductions may increase competition among nonprofits for diminishing funding sources. As more nonprofits turn to foundations for funding, the difficulty of foundations in making informed decisions on which proposals to fund and which projects to sustain may increase.

Nonprofit Evaluation Practice

The literature on evaluation chronicles examples of nonprofit evaluation; however, there is little evidence to suggest that there is wide-spread evaluation competence among local nonprofits. Moreover, the efforts of nonprofit evaluation are often narrowly focused using externally imposed standards that may little reflect the local context issues that most concern indigenous citizens. As might be expected, however, nonprofit accountability, often in the form of adherence to processes or level of resources, has not been ignored.

One response to the difficulty in evaluating the performance of nonprofits has been accreditation. Accreditation is generally concerned with processes, activities, the types and adequacy of materials, square footage of space per client, and the qualifications of personnel. Accreditation is compliance with standards and does not generally address the quality of services or how well the organization delivered what it said it would (Worthen & Sanders, 1988). Accreditation could be contrasted to evaluation which is the "systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object; e.g., a program, project, or instructional material" (Joint Committee, 1981, p. 152).

Evaluation is arguably broader in its mission than accreditation and considers quality, merit, and worth. Accreditation is mainly resource (inputs) and process driven and by itself is arguably lacking as a strategy in determining the merit or worth of a program. Accreditation could be considered to be a subpart of evaluation. Therefore, while many nonprofits are often accredited by meeting established process and

resources standards, service delivery outcomes (measurement of change) are often ignored. Accreditation serves a useful and necessary purpose; however, by itself it may be an inadequate indicator of how well nonprofits perform.

A second evaluation strategy of nonprofits, and one often accepted by funding organizations, is to report service delivery statistics in terms of volume of clients served rather than in the quality of services provided (Spagnolo-Rodriguez, 1992; Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991; Theobald, 1985). Ninety-six percent of all nonprofits responding to a 1991 United Way of America survey reported using volume of service delivery as the type of evaluation most often used (Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991). Merely reporting how many were served may be an inadequate measure of nonprofit performance.

> In the past accountability entailed little more than documenting the effort expended, i.e., the number of clients receiving various types of services, the nature of the problem addressed by the program, the average length of time that services were provided to clients, references made to other organizations and so on. More objective evidence on program effectiveness is now being required by funding bodies, legislators and the general public. Program evaluation has emerged as the medium for holding programs accountable. (Spagnolo-Rodriguez, 1992, p. 58)

Thus, perhaps more important for nonprofits and funders of nonprofits to consider when evaluating programs are the concepts of effectiveness and institutionalization evaluation proposed by Stufflebeam and Dodson (1991).

Effectiveness is the degree to which an intervention makes a difference, as contrasted with just reporting how many clients were served, or whether the target population was reached (impact). The

very existence or purpose of a program or project is to somehow change and improve the status quo. Merely serving people and reporting on how many were served is important, especially if paired with funding requirements; however, the use of this strategy alone rarely tells the entire story.

Effectiveness evaluation seeks to answer questions about what difference the program made. Are people better off as a result of the program than they would have been if the program had never existed? How is it known that they are better off? By what means can it be documented that they are better off and if they are not, on what basis are changes to be made? Were there unexpected program outcomes? These are all evaluation questions that can augment information about services that may be of unknown quality, merit, and worth. Effectiveness evaluation serves funders, decision makers, managers, other stakeholders, and ultimately program recipients themselves. Project improvement, continuation, or termination decisions can all be based upon useful effectiveness evaluation.

Institutionalization is the extent that the project is supported and sustained by the community. Institutionalization, an indicator of community support and perceived need for a program (also known as sustainability), can be enhanced through effectiveness evaluation. Documentation of how well a program served its clients may be a powerful tool when seeking support for an existing program, pursuing funds for a program replication, or requesting funding for a new program based upon local need. Table 1 depicts one paradigm reflecting the stages of how a program may develop. Also shown in this table are

corresponding evaluation strategies that include impact, effectiveness, and institutionalization evaluation (Stufflebeam & Dodson, 1991).

An illustration from the private, for-profit sector may strengthen the value of effectiveness evaluation in meeting consumer needs and not just quantity of service delivery. Delivery of the contractually agreed upon number of widgets by a supplier firm to one of the "big three" American automakers will not ensure continuation of that contract if the supplied parts do not meet industry standards, or specifications for quality (effectiveness). Inability to meet industry standards (needs) makes it likely that the automaker would find another supplier regardless of how many parts were supplied. The timeliness of part delivery, the degree of employee satisfaction with their jobs, or the process used to manufacture and deliver parts are all immaterial to the consumer of the product if the product does not meet the consumer's needs.

The automaker is most concerned with whether the parts meet standards. Unacceptable quality (or ineffectiveness of the part to do the job) may cost a firm a major contract and jeopardize the ability of the supplier to compete in the marketplace and possibly stay in business. Accordingly, adherence to quality (meeting needs), and not just quantity (numbers served), is crucial for firms competing in the private sector.

"Measurements need to be measures of performance rather than of efforts. It is not adequate, indeed it is misleading to use measures that focus on efficiency of operation, rather than on the services that the agency delivers" (Drucker, 1991, p. 81). Consider findings by a recent United Way of America (cited in Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991) survey that only 19% of nonprofits report using program outcomes as part of

Table 1

Stages of Program Development

Stages	1	2	3	4	5
Program	Formulation of sound policies and plans	Successful implementation of policies and plans	Making an impact by delivering services to targeted individuals and organizations	Achieving effectiveness in bringing about desirable behavioral and organizational changes	Sustaining successful program operations by turnkeying them to the targeted community
Evaluation	Input evaluation. Are the policies and plans clear, appropriate, feasible, and potentially successful?	Process evaluation. Are the plans successfully implemented and do they work well in the community?	Impact evaluation. To what extent are targeted persons and organizations reached by program services?	Effectiveness evaluation. To what extent do persons and organizations that are impacted by the program benefit from it?	Institutionalization evaluation. To what extent do targeted communities institutionalize support for and successfully sustain meritorious program operations?

their evaluation strategy.

A final example of insufficient evaluation practice is defining evaluation solely by the objectives-oriented approach. This approach compares organizational goals to actual organizational outcomes and is a limited form of evaluation when used alone. Disappointedly, many theorists (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1990; Gardner & Parsons, 1990; Smith, 1991), in writing to the nonprofit community, consider Tyler's (cited in Worthen & Sanders, 1973) objectives-oriented evaluation approach to be sufficient. "Program evaluation is a judgement about an agency's performance against stated goals and objectives" (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1990, p. 218). While the objectives-oriented approach to evaluation is valuable, this perspective alone is too narrow to be considered, in and of itself, representative program evaluation. This narrow focus ignores other useful evaluation approaches such as goal free and formative evaluation (Scriven, 1991), Stufflebeam's (1985) Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation paradigm, naturalistic inquiry (Guba, 1981), expertise-oriented, adversary-advocate (Worthen & Sanders, 1988), and Scriven's (1991) big footprint approach, to name a few.

The evaluation approaches noted above are context and situation specific and provide a broader palate of options when choosing a strategy to evaluate to what degree a program really made a difference for a consumer or a group of consumers. When considering the inadequacy of describing evaluation solely in terms of measuring goals (intent) against outcomes, how does one know if the goals themselves are worthwhile and have merit? With what standards and criteria are the goals being compared? Are the critical competitors considered and

needs assessments conducted? Have all stakeholders been consulted? "Evaluation is not necessarily a search for discrepancies between service performance and service standards, it is a premise that uses standards to interpret evaluation findings" (Austin, 1982, p. 15).

Thus, the need for a more sophisticated view of evaluation in the nonprofit world is in order; a view of evaluation that includes not only goals as a part of the evaluation but also the range of evaluation strategies mentioned above that may be more useful for a given program at a given time. Increased knowledge of an array of choices serves decision makers and other stakeholders well with additional tools to use when considering program effectiveness. More choices based upon a more comprehensive scope of information serves program staff well as they implement the program. Finally, service recipients are well served if the program is able to function at its full potential and meets their needs. However, as noted, there is little to suggest that nonprofits have conducted much more than rudimentary evaluation methods or, indeed, have the skills and capacity to conduct and use evaluation.

Capacity Building and the Role of Evaluation for Nonprofit Organizations

The role of evaluation for nonprofits varies. "Evaluation may be used for planning procedures, programs and/or products, improving existing procedures, programs and/or products" (Worthen & Sanders, 1988, p. 6). In this context, then, the role of evaluation for nonprofits is to provide information on which to enhance decision making about the performance of nonprofits. However, that role may be compromised by

multiple influences.

Nonprofit evaluation, as with many human service endeavors, is complicated by a number of factors. Limited technical expertise in evaluation and lack of evaluation resources were both cited as barriers to evaluation use in recent studies (Seita, 1991; Spagnolo-Rodriguez, 1992; Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991). Negative experience with the usefulness of evaluation and the confinement of working in a dynamic, fluid environment with human beings limits the use of experimental design in many nonprofits and may contribute to a limited role of evaluation for nonprofits.

> Particularly with respect to human service programs, a major obstacle to evaluation is what is to be evaluated--human behavior. In these instances we must invariably deal with human behaviors and interventions of sorts for changes in human behaviors. The numbers and types of variables add to the complexity of assessment as controlling for variables can cause a major problem. (Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991, p. 79)

The very nature of nonprofits and the manner in which they grow, adapt, and serve human beings is in a dynamic environment. Nonprofits do not operate in a laboratory-like setting. Accordingly, random assignment to treatment and control groups, controlling for variance, and manipulation of independent variables are difficult, if not impossible, and probably unethical in most community-based nonprofit settings. Still, it can be passionately and persuasively argued that there is a valuable role for the evaluation of nonprofit performance. Yet, most studies and literature suggest that nonprofit evaluation skills are marginal, at best, and little practiced.

Thus, a strong argument could be made that building the capacity of nonprofits to engage in evaluation is important. Funders of nonprofits, and of course the nonprofits themselves, need to know what works, what doesn't work, why or why not, and where to invest resources (Butt, 1985; Carter, 1990). Perhaps most importantly, society needs a method to ensure that nonprofits are providing quality and needed services to dependent constituencies. However, in order to provide sufficient evaluation efforts, a nonprofit organization needs to have the necessary capacity to conduct evaluation.

Austin (1982) discussed readiness for evaluation; the term used here will be capacity. According to Austin, readiness (capacity) includes resources--time, money, attitudes, morale, and leadership. Spagnolo-Rodriguez (1992) cited staff capacity as necessary and addressed time, training, documentation skills, and willingness. Spagnolo-Rodriguez's 1992 study of Michigan nonprofit organizations found that nearly 42% of respondents were dissatisfied with the adequacy of their staff to conduct program evaluation and that 45% of nonprofit organizations were dissatisfied with their budget to support program evaluation. These findings are buttressed by a national study by Sumariwalla and Taylor (1991) of funders of nonprofit organizations (25 were foundations) who found that the greatest barriers for nonprofit organizations to conduct program evaluations were "lack of financial support and lack of staff with necessary skills" (p. 2). In his study of 30 grantees of a major foundation, Seita (1991) found that 70% of grantees suggested that increased technical support and funding for evaluation would serve informational and project improvement needs.

An additional compelling argument for increased evaluation capacity in nonprofits is supported by the role of nonprofits in influencing policy making as well as providing direct services to consumers (Hodgkinson, 1985). If nonprofit performance is not effectively evaluated and performance standards are not established or adhered to, the ability of nonprofits to influence public policy making and legislation may diminish due to a lack of defensible information. Limited capacity of nonprofits to advocate could result in a lessened degree of influence on legislators, policy makers, and other funders.

Reduced quantity and quality of service delivery for already disaffected individuals, who in many cases are unwilling or unable to self-advocate, may be the result if evaluation of nonprofit performance is inadequate.

> For example, evaluations may be the only way that the poor, welfare recipients, students, or the mentally ill can influence policy. These "stakeholders" often are not included in the formulation and implementation of an evaluation. It is in this way that an evaluation can represent the public rather than specific power holder interests. The evaluation thus is an advocate for what a fair and equitable program would accomplish in solving the social problems at which it is addressed. (Spagnolo-Rodriguez, 1992, p. 28)

Managerial decisions, program improvement, sustainability, strategic planning, providing quality services, and influencing policy makers are all defensible reasons for evaluation. Moreover, nonprofit credibility, and thus access to funding, may be enhanced through documented outcomes that address the quality of services provided. Responsiveness to consumer needs goes to the quality and necessity of services provided. This is an area in which evaluation could play a role.

Still, it is recognized that evaluation does not operate in a vacuum, nor are evaluators the purveyors of ultimate wisdom. Nonetheless, informed decision making based upon sound and valid evaluation information is a powerful tool when appropriately used as one of many factors to consider when making organizational decisions. This may be useful as nonprofits seem to be in need of evaluation capacity building and support that foundations may be positioned to augment.

Interdependence of Foundations and Nonprofits

Philanthropic foundations are a type of nonprofit that in some cases seek donations as well as extend funds to service-providing nonprofits. This study focused, of course, on the grant-making role of foundations. The fact that foundations provide funding to nonprofits suggests that nonprofits and foundations are mutually interdependent, that is, exist in a symbiotic relationship. The logic for this point is simple: Foundations rarely provide direct services themselves; their role is to distribute money to organizations, primarily to nonprofits, in the form of grants. Correspondingly, nonprofits provide direct services and are often seeking funds for the continuation of existing programs or to initiate new programs. In essence, as described by Odendahl and Boris (1983), "grantmakers and grantseekers define a community of interest" (p. 23).

Evaluation may be one tie that binds nonprofits and foundations. "Funders, under pressure to use their resources wisely in the face of escalating demands, need to know what programs are effective and for what reasons" (Carter, 1990, p. 1). The effectiveness of a foundation in

carrying out its mission may be based, in part, upon its ability to make informed choices among numerous funding requests from nonprofit organizations. Consequently, the interdependence of foundations and nonprofits may rest upon defensible information on program outcomes. These outcomes may in part be based upon evaluation findings that are provided by the grant-seeking nonprofit organization to the grant-making foundation. This information serves the foundation well as it makes decisions regarding which proposals to fund and determine how well funded projects performed their missions and served their constituents.

Foundations' interest in the ability and capacity of nonprofit organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and service delivery impacts upon them because of their large financial support to nonprofit organizations. Nathan (1988) argued "as government pulled back from applied social science research in the '80s, the contribution of foundations became more important" (p. 189). Butt (1985) supported Nathan in her assertion that foundations must play a greater role in supporting nonprofit evaluation efforts. Knowing how the lives of targeted and needy citizens are improved through the provision of services by nonprofit organizations should be of interest and value to foundations. "An increasing number of foundations are realizing it's part of their responsibility not to just hit and run but to understand the factors that led to the success or failure of their grants" (Leonard, cited in Sommerfield, 1992, p. 5).

> Program evaluation cannot be conducted without the full cooperation and support of the service provider. Program evaluation is expensive. A high quality effort is even more expensive. Only a few well-endowed groups can afford the cost of longitudinal studies. Those and other obstacles

> make program evaluation efforts difficult at best. (Sumariwalla & Taylor, 1991, p. 2)

However, the value and utility of using formal evaluation is not uncritically and wholeheartedly embraced by all nonprofit stakeholders. There may be tangible and functional reasons why evaluation among nonprofits is sparingly used and perhaps little valued. Arguably, evaluation practitioners have failed in their efforts to provide useful information to policy makers, decision makers, and other nonprofit stakeholders. Campbell (cited in Salasin, 1973) suggested that "I don't see the store of red hot findings that are being neglected . . . and at the moment I'm not panicked by the failure to utilize them" (p. 9). Certainly the limited use of evaluation findings and concern over this limited use is well documented (Alkin, 1991; Cousins & Leithwood, 1983; Guba, 1968).

Reasons offered for the low use of evaluation findings are mediocre evaluation reports and design, lack of evaluator responsiveness, low regard for evaluators, misunderstanding of what evaluation is, poor interpersonal relationship skills of evaluators, and technical obscurity (Cousins & Leithwood, 1983; Leonard, cited in Sommerfield, 1992; Scriven, 1991).

While all of these factors may contribute to, and in some situations even justify, not using evaluation to its potential, evaluation should not be dismissed as a way of knowing, and as a contributor to enhancing improved programs. In the end, it is hard to argue that less systematic information is more useful than more systematic information. Evaluation is often expensive, technically difficult, and time consuming; however, it may be one vehicle that will serve foundations as they make

crucial funding decisions regarding who to fund among competing and often similar proposals (Butt, 1985).

> The basic rationale for evaluation is that it provides information for action. Its primary justification is that it contributes to the rationalization of decision making. Although it can serve such other functions as knowledge-building and theory-testing, unless it gains serious hearing when program decisions are made it fails in its major purpose. (Weiss, 1966, p. 165)

The American author and philosopher Mark Twain (cited in San Francisco Foundation, 1984) is purported to have said, "Supposing is good, knowing is better." Correspondingly, the premise here is that evaluation use for nonprofits is probably more helpful than harmful.

Evaluation Practice in Foundations

Although much interest has been generated regarding evaluation use by foundations, little, if any, general information seems to be available across foundations on the role and use of evaluation. The Foundation Center, located in New York City and home to a comprehensive data base, does not provide information on the degree to which foundations fund evaluation. Evaluation is not used as a key word in the Foundation Center's data base to describe evaluation activities that foundations support and fund. "Although 40,000 grants are indexed annually, it is not known which are evaluated" (Carter, 1992, p. 33). Carter further suggested that comparatively little information is available on the level of evaluation staff within foundations. "There are only 20 foundation employees whose major responsibility is evaluating projects" (Carter, 1992, p. 5).

However, as with any somewhat esoteric activity, concepts and vocabulary vary between individuals, programs, and organizations. This may be especially true in evaluation, a still somewhat poor cousin to other social sciences and in many cases still struggling for a distinct identity. For example, multiple concepts of what evaluation is and how it is used may exist within the foundation world. According to Carter (1990), evaluation can mean a number of things to foundation personnel:

> 1. The assessment of incoming proposals.
>
> 2. A requirement made of grantees that they are to create and carry out a review of their activities.
>
> 3. A systematic examination of a program carried out by an outside professional or professionals.
>
> 4. A retrospective view of foundations in a topic area.
>
> 5. Strategic planning by a foundation regarding where future plans and what questions need to be asked of those in philanthropy. (p. 33)

Two independent, but similar, opinions offered by foundation related professionals in presenting papers at professional conferences suggest that uses found for program evaluation include helping foundation grantees improve their performance, helping foundations themselves improve upon their own grant-making abilities, planning and implementing new programs, and accountability as a public trust (Butt, 1985; Knowlton, 1990). According to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1989), evaluation activities are designed to tell the foundation what happened as a result of grant-making activities and which proposals to fund.

In spite of a lack of broad studies chronicling evaluation use among foundations, there is much to suggest that many foundations are highly interested in evaluation. The Saint Paul Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trust, to name a few, have all written manuals on evaluation at their respective foundations (Kroll, 1992). There is a range of evaluation acumen at various foundations, however.

The San Francisco Foundation (1984) is an example of a foundation with an evaluation system whose primer on evaluation is specifically tailored at foundations and provides the following standards for conducting an evaluation: (a) summary of the grant project, (b) background, (c) evaluation methodology, (d) program management, (e) program results, and (f) assessment of the quality of the results. For a contrast to the San Francisco Foundation, consider the Kalamazoo Foundation, which until lately has had a very limited evaluation effort. This community foundation with $107 million in assets (Hopkins, 1992) has recently instituted a systematic process for evaluating the merits of submitted proposals. This process is designed in order for the foundation to be able to compare "apples to apples" (Hopkins, 1992, p. 1) when the foundation considers which proposals to fund among competing proposals. A final example of evaluation activity in foundations is that of the Lilly Endowment (a private foundation). "Evaluation is integral to the grant making process, and has formed a new partnership to further the cause" (Bickel & Eichleberger, 1992, p. 47).

While the above are limited illustrations of foundation activities, they do provide a glimpse into the range of evaluation activities that foundations use. However, this type of information is anecdotal, not empirical and not generalizable to other foundations.

As noted, limited information is available on how foundations as a class have used evaluation. Thus, the following conceptual hypotheses were developed based upon experience and anecdotal information. The following hypotheses were developed in order to provide a framework for investigating differences that may exist between the different sizes and types of foundations already described.

Restatement of Conceptual Hypotheses

1. Large foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other size foundations.

2. Community foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other types of foundations.

Review of the Significance of the Study

Because of the limited information on how foundations use evaluation, the information generated by this study may be useful on several different levels. Findings from this study could be informative to nonprofits seeking funding assistance to conduct program evaluations. Assistance by a foundation may not only provide the capacity for the nonprofit to document project outcomes and results but also to share lessons learned that could benefit society in a larger way. Secondly, the foundation that funded the evaluation could use evaluation findings for

its own programming and funding purposes.

Foundations themselves are likely unaware of how other foundations are using evaluation. Information from this study may be used by foundations to see how any individual foundation compares to the "norm."

Much of the literature suggests that nonprofits could use capacity building in evaluation; foundations may be the vehicle to support capacity building in evaluation for nonprofits. Nonprofits' ability to conduct program evaluation appears to be inconsistent and sporadic. Foundations as a major funder of nonprofits may be increasingly interested and invested in how nonprofits perform and maybe more importantly what happens as a result of grant-making activities.

Because of the dubious ability of nonprofits to evaluate their own programs and those funded by foundations, support of nonprofit evaluation by foundations may be warranted.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

How foundations use evaluation to make decisions on which proposals to fund and the effect of funded projects is not well documented (Carter, 1990). This study sought to investigate and describe, for perhaps the first time, the pervasiveness of evaluation use by foundations as a class and by two specific subcategories (type and size) within the greater community of foundations.

Review of the Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted with an interest in examining the level of evaluation use among Michigan's philanthropic foundations. More specifically, this study sought to investigate and describe how Michigan based foundations of different sizes and types use evaluation for the following four purposes: (1) application evaluation (choosing which proposals to fund, (2) project evaluation (strategies that foundations use to determine what happened as a result of grant-making activities), (3) provide a description of current evaluation practice and capacity in foundations, and (4) investigate plans that foundations have for increasing the evaluation capacity for themselves and of nonprofit grantees. Finally, the study served as a status study without regard to size and type relative to the four purposes of the study.

In order to investigate differences between sizes and types of foundations the following operational research hypotheses were developed. These hypotheses are based upon the review of related literature, personal contacts, and experience.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: A greater proportion of large foundations use an evaluation process for application evaluation than other sizes of foundations.

Hypothesis 2: A greater proportion of large foundations use an evaluation process for determining what happened as a result of grant making than other sizes of foundations.

Hypothesis 3: A greater proportion of large foundations have plans for expanding evaluation use than other sizes of foundations.

Hypothesis 4: Large foundations have a higher mean score on survey questions based upon a Likert scale than other sizes of foundations using the same scale.

Hypothesis 5: A greater proportion of community foundations use an evaluation process for application evaluation than other types of foundations.

Hypothesis 6: A greater proportion of community foundations use an evaluation process for determining what happened as a result of grant making than other types of foundations.

Hypothesis 7: A greater proportion of community foundations have plans for expanding evaluation use than other types of foundations.

Hypothesis 8: Community foundations have a higher mean score on survey questions based upon a Likert scale than other types of foundations using the same scale.

Population and Sample Selection

The population for this study was the 959 foundations in the state of Michigan. Because there are only 43 community foundations and 44 corporate foundations as compared to 872 private foundations, the entire subset of corporate and community foundations were surveyed. The remaining 139 survey participants were private foundations randomly selected using a table of random numbers.

The total sample was 226 of the 959 Michigan foundations. This sample size was chosen based on tables supplied by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). A sample of this size would yield a 90% confidence interval when the population proportion of the response is one of two categories and at .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size. The standard error of the proportion for a sample of this size from this finite population is .029.

Instrumentation

Questions for the survey are based upon the objectives of the study and the review of related literature. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher using the seven step strategy recommended by Borg and Gall (1989), "(1) defining objectives, (2) selecting a sample, (3) writing objectives, (4) constructing the questionnaire, (5) pretesting, (6) preparing a letter of transmittal, and (7) sending out your questionnaire

and follow-ups" (p. 423). A copy of the survey instrument is in Appendix A.

This survey was pretested using five different foundation representatives with feedback from the oral interviews incorporated into the final instrument. Pilot testing groups included staff from the W. K. Kellogg, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Kaiser Family Foundations and included oral interviews as well as completion of two draft survey instruments. Staff from the Council of Michigan Foundations also provided feedback. Feedback from this process was used to refine the final instrument.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred entirely through a mailed questionnaire. Three contacts were made with potential study participants. The initial packet was sent to 226 selected participants as previously described and included, in addition to the survey, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to be sent to an address in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The second contact consisted of a postcard sent to nonrespondents requesting that they complete and return the previously mailed survey. The third and final contact was sent to foundations who had not responded to either of the first two contacts. Enclosed in the third contact was a second letter of purpose of the study, a second copy of the previously mailed survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for survey respondents to use when returning their completed survey. Examples of all correspondence to survey respondents are in Appendix B.

Analysis of Data

Data were entered into the Western Michigan University (WMU) VAX computer system. Data were coded so that each question has its own unique identifier and analyzed through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Norusis, 1990), which is on the WMU VAX computer.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) for independent samples was used to test hypotheses involving questions that were on a 4-point Likert scale (Babbie, 1990). An alpha level of .05 was used to test the null hypothesis. Chi square was also conducted using size and type of foundations as independent variables with other foundation characteristics, such as number of staff, organizational assets, use of consultants, plans for expanding evaluation capacity, and other survey items serving as dependent variables, to determine if found differences by foundation characteristic (as identified on the survey) are related to sampling error or true differences. The null hypothesis was that there is no difference within size and type of foundations and any of the research questions. A .05 alpha level was used.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter IV is to present the results of the analysis of the data collected for this study. Described and analyzed in this chapter are differences within the two variables examined for this study: type and size of foundation. These differences are presented with regard to the four purposes of the study previously described.

Reported in this chapter are a restatement of the purpose of the study, the selection and description of the sample selected for the study, the rate of return for survey respondents, a discussion on and tables presenting the rates of return by both size and type of foundation, data analysis with regard to the research hypotheses, and finally the findings which are presented in order of the four purposes of the study which are the foci of the chapter.

Therefore, the presentation framework for the findings revolve around the four purposes of the study, first introduced in Chapter I. Each of the survey questions analyzed for this study and the appropriate operational hypothesis are grouped within the framework of one of the four purposes of the study. Furthermore, the discussion of findings is presented by subsection within each of the four purposes of the study. Also contained in each individual subsection will be the hypotheses that were tested and discussions about the results of the hypothesis testing.

These subsections were created in order to facilitate a logical way in which to group questions that are similar in nature; for example, questions that are based upon proportions are together and questions that are based upon a Likert scale are also grouped together.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted in order to investigate and describe how Michigan based foundations of different sizes and types use evaluation in the following areas: application evaluation (choosing which proposals to fund) and project evaluation (strategies that foundations use to determine what happened as a result of grant-making activities). The study also sought to provide a description of current evaluation practice and capacity in foundations and investigate plans that foundations have for increasing the evaluation capacity for themselves and of nonprofit grantees.

Selection and Description of Sample

For this study, foundations were classified by size and type of foundation for data analysis. Foundations were placed into the following size categories which represent their assets: $0-$100,000--very small foundations, $100,001-$200,000--small foundations, $200,001-$1,000,000--medium foundations, and over $1,000,000--large foundations. The second variable for this study was type of foundation: community foundation, corporate foundation, and private foundation. The variables of size and type identified for this study are those used by the Council of Michigan Foundations, a membership organization that

exists as an information clearing house, advocate, and technical advisor for Michigan foundations.

Study participants were chosen using a stratified random selection process and a table of random numbers. In addition, because there are 44 community foundations and 43 corporate foundations as compared to 872 private foundations, the entire subset of corporate and community foundations were surveyed.

Rate of Return for Survey Respondents

For this investigation data were collected through a mailed survey. A total of 226 surveys were mailed to foundations in Michigan. Three contacts were made with potential study participants. The first contact consisted of a letter of purpose for the study, the self-administered survey instrument, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for survey respondents to use in returning their completed survey. The initial contact produced 75 surveys, or 33% of possible return. The second contact consisted of a postcard sent to nonrespondents requesting that they complete and return the previously mailed survey. This second contact produced an additional 10 responses, raising the overall response to 85, or 37.6%. The third and final contact was sent to foundations who had not responded to either of the first two contacts. Enclosed in the third contact was a second letter of purpose of the study, a second copy of the previously mailed survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for survey respondents to use when returning their completed survey.

This final contact produced 48 more responses. The overall response rate was 134 out of 226 for a return rate of 59.2%. Samples of all correspondence sent to selected study participants are in the Appendices. Table 2 provides a description of survey respondents by size of foundation.

Table 2

Return Rate by Size of Foundation

Size of foundation	Total sent	Number returned	% returned
Large	75	54	72.0
Medium	54	32	59.2
Small	29	21	72.4
Very small	68	27	39.7
Totals	226	134	59.2

The return rate by size of foundation are all at or near 60% with the exception of very small foundations, which returned only 39% of possible surveys. This low rate of return by very small foundations is not unexpected based upon the study findings. The very small foundations tend to have fewer resources than foundations of other size. Moreover, the review of related literature suggests that foundations are sometimes reluctant to provide information about their assets and activities. The very small foundations tend to be private family foundations set up with a specific type of beneficiary in mind. Foundations in this

category may be protective of providing specifics regarding foundation operations about what may be considered intrusions into their personal finances and lives. This secrecy was evidenced by two respondents who corresponded but chose not to disclose information. "A private foundation is a private foundation" and "my foundation is mine alone" were two comments regarding survey participation.

This low return rate of very small foundations is in contrast to the 91% return rate by community foundations. This contrast between the rate of return for the very small foundations and community foundations may be due to the motivation for each of the different types of foundations. Foundations that are family based may be formed as a private form of utilizing a family trust in order to meet personal philanthropic goals. Families may not see themselves as a part of the larger foundation community. This might extend to the use of evaluation. Community foundations, on the other hand, are formed as a collaborative community trust, with an emphasis on contributing toward a larger community with perhaps more sensitivity toward responsiveness and accountability. Table 3 provides a description of survey respondents by type of foundation.

An additional way to consider the survey respondents is shown in Table 4. This table shows the relationship of foundations responding by type and size.

Data Analysis With Regard to the Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis testing for independent proportions used the Pearson chi-square distribution described in the Statistical Package for the Social

Table 3

Return Rate by Type of Foundation

Type of foundation	Total sent	Number returned	% returned
Community	44	40	90.9
Corporate	43	26	60.4
Private	139	68	48.9
Totals	226	134	59.2

Sciences (SPSS) manual (Norusis, 1990) for questions that were nominal responses. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used for independent means when questions are on a Likert scale. A .05 alpha level was selected as the criterion at which the null form of the hypothesis could be rejected for both the chi square and the ANOVA. Each finding from the survey is not discussed in the narrative; however, all findings are presented in tables. Discussion is presented regarding findings that may suggest a trend or at least seem noteworthy.

The Findings

As described earlier, the findings in this chapter are presented in four sections, with each section corresponding to one of the four purposes of the study. In analyzing the findings, note that in some cases the number of respondents for any one question may not equal the total number of returned surveys. This discrepancy is due to some respondents not answering all questions on the survey. Incomplete surveys are

Table 4

Relationship of Foundations Responding by Type and Size

Type	Over 1,000,000		200,001-1,000,000		100,001-200,000		0-100,000		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Community	21	52.5	11	27.5	4	10.0	4	10.0	40	100.0
Corporate	12	46.2	3	11.5	3	11.5	8	30.8	26	100.0
Private	21	30.9	18	26.5	14	20.6	15	22.0	68	100.0

Note. $p = .08$, $df = 6$, $\chi^2 = 10.97$.

also by design and due, in part, to two points in the survey where respondents were provided the option to stop and return the survey, thus lowering the overall completion rate of the surveys. In essence, some questions will have a higher frequency of response than will others. The next section is a description of findings regarding the first purpose of the study.

First Purpose of the Study

Research Question 1: Do foundations of different sizes and types use application evaluation?

The first purpose of the study was to investigate the degree to which foundations of different types and sizes use application evaluation. The findings are presented to reflect relationships and differences that are found between different sizes and types of foundations regarding application evaluation. Please note that because questions on the survey use both proportions and a Likert scale to investigate foundations' characteristics with regard to evaluation, different types of analyses are required. Accordingly, this section is comprised of two subsections, one for each type of analysis.

Subsection 1 deals with the proportion of foundations that use evaluation to make decisions about funding proposals. Hypothesis testing for the first subsection used with the Pearson chi-square analysis with a .05 alpha level.

Subsection 2 deals with questions that were asked using a 4-point Likert scale with 4 indicating highly interested and 1 indicating no interest. Means were obtained from these questions and responses were

analyzed through the use of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for independent samples with a .05 alpha level.

Subsection 1

There were two hypotheses tested in Subsection 1 of the first purpose of the study: The first hypothesis is that a greater proportion of large foundations use application evaluation than other sizes of foundations. The second hypothesis is that a greater proportion of community foundations use application evaluation than other types of foundations.

The following question from the survey was used to generate responses in order to test the stated hypotheses: "Does the foundation use an information gathering process, such as evaluation, for making decisions about funding proposals?"

No relationships were found between size of foundation and whether the foundation uses evaluation to select which proposals to fund. Using the .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The first hypothesis, that a greater proportion of large foundations use application evaluation than other sizes of foundations, could not be supported.

A summary of the data analysis by size of foundation is presented in Table 5.

Differences were found by type of foundation where community foundations use evaluation for reviewing proposals 85% of the time, private foundations 44%, and corporate foundations 20.6%. The associated probability of this finding occurring by chance was .000 (see Table 6). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative

Table 5

Size of Foundation and Decisions About Funding Proposals Using Application Evaluation

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	Total n
Large	55.8	44.2	52
Medium	45.2	54.8	31
Small	30.0	70.0	20
Very small	36.0	64.0	25
Totals	45.3	54.7	128

Note. $p = .16$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 5.06$.

hypothesis that a greater proportion of community foundations use application evaluation than other types of foundations is supported.

Table 6

Type of Foundation and Decisions About Funding Proposals Based Upon Evaluation

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	Total n
Community	85.0	15.0	40
Corporate	44.0	46.0	25
Private	20.6	79.4	63
Totals	45.3	54.7	128

Note. $p = .000$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 40.92$.

Subsection 2

Subsection 2 deals with application evaluation and how satisfied foundations are with various evaluation strategies used when selecting proposals to fund. Also analyzed in this section are factors that may influence a foundation when considering funding a proposal.

Hypotheses tested in this section are that large foundations have a higher mean score on all of the following survey questions that are on Likert scale than will other sizes of foundations. The second hypothesis is that community foundations have a higher mean score on all of the following survey questions that are on a Likert scale than will other types of foundations.

The following questions from the survey were used to provide responses in order to test the stated hypotheses:

1. "How satisfied is the foundation with its capacity to make decisions about funding proposals?"

2. "To what degree do the following factors influence the foundation when considering funding a grant proposal? (a) documented need, (b) community priority, (c) reputation of applying organization/ individual, (d) previous relationship with applicant."

By size of foundation no differences could be found for any of the questions in this section. Using the .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis could not be rejected for any of the survey questions (see Table 7).

However, there were differences by type of foundation for the degree to which documented need will influence whether a foundation will fund a proposal. Responses regarding the influence of documented

Table 7

Factors That Influence the Foundation When Making Proposal Funding Decisions by Size of Foundation

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Decisions about funding proposals	Large	33	3.27	0.51	.80
	Medium	14	3.28	0.61	
	Small	6	3.50	0.83	
	Very small	10	3.40	0.69	
Documented need	Large	32	3.65	0.65	.50
	Medium	13	3.84	0.37	
	Small	6	3.50	0.54	
	Very small	10	3.50	0.70	
Community priority	Large	31	3.45	0.72	.09
	Medium	13	3.53	0.77	
	Small	6	3.00	1.54	
	Very small	10	2.70	1.15	
Reputation of organization	Large	31	3.25	0.71	.43
	Medium	13	3.53	0.77	
	Small	6	3.66	0.51	
	Very small	10	3.30	0.67	
Relationship	Large	31	2.58	1.23	.47
	Medium	14	2.57	0.75	
	Small	5	2.20	1.64	
	Very small	10	3.10	0.99	

need show that private foundations had a mean score of 3.88; community foundations, 3.75; and corporate foundations, 3.08. Using the .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis could be rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference by type of foundation and the degree to which documented need influences funding a proposal is supported. The Tukey post hoc analysis found that community and private foundations were both different from corporate foundations. There were no other differences found by type of foundation.

Across all foundations without regard to type or size, documented need is the most influential factor with respect to funding a proposal with an overall mean score of 3.65; this was followed by the reputation of the applying organization/individual, 3.36, and community priority, 3.30. The least influential factor when evaluating funding a grant was a previous existing relationship with a grantee with an overall mean score of 2.63. A summary of the data analyses is presented in Table 8.

The next section is a description of findings regarding the second purpose of the study.

Second Purpose of the Study

Research Question 2: Are there differences in the degree that foundations use project evaluation?

The second purpose of the study was to investigate the degree to which foundations of different types and sizes use various project evaluation strategies. The findings are presented to reflect relationships and differences that are found between different sizes and types of foundations regarding the use of project evaluation strategies.

Table 8

Factors That Influence the Foundation When Making Proposal Funding Decisions by Type of Foundation

Question	Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Decisions about funding proposals	Community	33	3.18	0.58	.09
	Corporate	12	3.33	0.65	
	Private	18	3.55	0.51	
Documented need	Community	32	3.75	0.43	.00
	Corporate	12	3.08	0.90	
	Private	17	3.88	0.33	
Community priority	Community	32	3.50	0.87	.16
	Corporate	12	2.91	0.79	
	Private	16	3.18	1.10	
Reputation of organization	Community	32	3.37	0.65	.24
	Corporate	12	3.08	0.79	
	Private	17	3.52	0.71	
Relationship	Community	31	2.54	1.09	.62
	Corporate	12	2.91	1.31	
	Private	17	2.58	1.12	

This section considers the usefulness of reporting strategies by nonprofits to foundations on the effectiveness of funded projects. The questions in this section were asked using a 4-point Likert scale with 4

indicating highly interested and 1 indicating no interest. Means were obtained from these questions and responses were analyzed through the use of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for independent samples with a .05 alpha level.

Hypotheses tested in this section are that large foundations have a higher mean score on all of the following survey questions that are on a Likert scale than will other sizes of foundations. The second hypothesis is that community foundations have a higher mean score on all of the following survey questions that are on a Likert scale than will other types of foundations.

Responses to the following questions from the survey were used to test the hypotheses:

> 1. How useful are each of the following in helping the foundation determine what happened as a result of grant making? (a) periodic written reports by grantee, (b) project site visits by foundation representatives, (c) indirect contact with grantee, (d) financial accounting.
>
> 2. Please indicate if the foundation requires grantees to provide any of the following information when reporting to the foundation and how useful that information is in learning what happened as a result of the grant: (a) volume of service delivery (number of clients served), (b) grantee compliance with licensing standards, (c) assessment of management practices, (d) measures of client satisfaction, and (e) meeting project objectives.

There was only one difference found: Community foundations found indirect contact the most useful strategy as means for finding out what happened as a result of grant making; the mean score was 3.26. They were followed by private foundations (3.15) and corporate foundations (2.45) in the degree of perceived utility for indirect contact. The probability of this finding occurring by chance was .04. Thus, the null

hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference by type of foundation and the degree of utility with indirect contact as a means for evaluating what happened as a result of a grant is supported. The Tukey post hoc analysis found community foundations to be different from corporate foundations. There were no other differences found; thus the null hypothesis for any of the other tests could not be rejected at the .05 alpha level.

These findings suggest that foundations are somewhat consistent with the perceived utility of various methods used to determine what happened as a result of grant making. They are also remarkably consistent with their degree of perceived utility for each of the strategies used in considering the type of information most useful to the foundation in evaluating what outcomes from a grant. The next section is a description of findings regarding the third purpose of the study.

A summary of the data analysis are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9

Grant Evaluation Mean Scores by Size of Foundation

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Written reports	Large	31	3.35	0.70	.34
	Medium	11	2.81	1.16	
	Small	4	3.50	1.00	
	Very small	7	3.14	1.06	

Table 9--Continued

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Site visits	Large	26	3.26	1.00	.65
	Medium	11	3.00	0.63	
	Small	4	2.75	1.89	
	Very small	8	2.75	1.83	
Indirect contact	Large	29	3.31	0.76	.09
	Medium	12	2.91	0.66	
	Small	4	3.25	0.95	
	Very small	8	2.24	1.50	
Financial accounting	Large	27	3.22	0.75	.23
	Medium	12	3.33	0.49	
	Small	4	3.75	0.50	
	Very small	7	2.85	0.89	
Number of clients served	Large	24	3.25	0.73	.81
	Medium	12	3.00	0.95	
	Small	3	3.00	0.00	
	Very small	6	3.16	0.75	
Licensing standards	Large	17	2.94	0.82	.82
	Medium	10	2.60	0.84	
	Small	3	3.00	0.00	
	Very small	5	2.80	1.64	

Table 9--Continued

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Assessment of management practices	Large	15	2.86	0.74	.71
	Medium	11	2.54	0.68	
	Small	4	2.75	0.50	
	Very small	5	2.60	0.89	
Client satisfaction	Large	18	3.00	0.68	.72
	Medium	12	3.08	0.66	
	Small	4	3.25	0.95	
	Very small	5	3.40	0.89	
Meeting project objectives	Large	25	3.44	0.76	.80
	Medium	12	3.41	0.51	
	Small	4	3.75	0.50	
	Very small	7	3.57	0.53	

Table 10

Grant Evaluation Mean Scores by Type of Foundation

Question	Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Written reports	Community	30	3.23	0.97	.59
	Corporate	10	3.00	0.94	
	Private	13	3.38	0.65	

Table 10--Continued

Question	Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Site visits	Community	28	3.21	0.99	.65
	Corporate	9	2.33	1.87	
	Private	12	3.33	0.65	
Indirect contact	Community	30	3.26	0.73	.04
	Corporate	11	2.45	1.43	
	Private	13	3.15	0.68	
Financial accounting	Community	30	3.30	0.70	.71
	Corporate	9	3.22	0.83	
	Private	11	3.09	0.70	
Number of clients served	Community	27	3.22	0.84	.53
	Corporate	8	2.87	0.64	
	Private	10	3.20	0.63	
Licensing standards	Community	21	2.90	0.83	.44
	Corporate	7	2.42	1.27	
	Private	7	3.00	0.81	
Assessment of management practices	Community	22	2.81	0.73	.45
	Corporate	6	2.66	0.81	
	Private	7	2.42	0.53	

Table 10--Continued

Question	Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Client satisfaction	Community	25	3.12	0.72	.49
	Corporate	6	3.33	0.81	
	Private	8	2.87	0.64	
Meeting project objectives	Community	28	3.50	0.50	.93
	Corporate	8	3.50	0.75	
	Private	12	3.41	0.90	

Third Purpose of the Study

Research Question 3: Are there differences between foundations and their current evaluation practice and capacity?

The third purpose of the study was to investigate the capacity and practice of foundations in the area of evaluation. The findings are presented to reflect relationships and differences that are found between different sizes and types of foundations regarding evaluation capacity and practice. Please note that questions on the survey use both proportions and a Likert scale to investigate foundations' characteristics with regard to evaluation; therefore, different types of analyses are required. Consequently, this section is comprised of two subsections, one for each type of analysis.

Subsection 1 deals with questions that are based on a 4-point Likert scale with 4 indicating highly interested and 1 indicating no

interest. Means were obtained from these questions and analyzed through the use of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for independent samples with a .05 alpha level.

Subsection 2 deals with the proportion of foundations with various levels of evaluation capacity that are described below. Hypotheses testing for Subsection 2 used with the Pearson chi-square analysis with a .05 alpha level.

For this study, capacity is defined as: (a) the number of foundation staff, (b) whether the foundation has staff with evaluation responsibilities, (c) training in evaluation, and (d) the use of evaluation consultants.

Evaluation practice is defined as activities that the foundation conducts that meet the definition of the systematic investigation of the merit or worth of an object, for example, a program, project, or grant proposal. This definition, adapted from the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1981) formed the conceptual framework for responding to questions in this section.

Subsection 1

Hypotheses tested in Subsection 1 of the third purpose of the study were that large foundations have a higher mean score on all of the following survey questions that are on a Likert scale than will other sizes of foundations. The second hypothesis was that community foundations have a higher mean score on all of the following survey questions that are on a Likert scale than will other types of foundations.

The following questions from the survey were used to generate responses in order to test the stated hypotheses:

1. "How many staff are associated with the foundation?"

2. "How satisfied is the foundation with its capacity to conduct each of the following: (a) review of current projects, (b) postproject evaluation (summative evaluation), and (c) use evaluation findings for fund-raising purposes?"

Differences were found in the number of staff for both size and type of foundation. For size of foundation and the number of staff, large foundations reported a mean number of 1.57 staff, medium foundations reported a mean of 0.46 staff, and small and very small foundations both reported means of 0.50. The probability of these differences occurring by chance was .01. By type of foundation and number of staff, community foundations had a mean number of 1.41 staff, followed by corporate foundations, 1.08, and private foundations, 0.33. The probability of these differences occurring by chance was .03. Thus, the null hypothesis tested for both questions is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference by size and type of foundation and the number of staff that they employ was supported. The Tukey post hoc analysis found large foundations to be different from medium foundations, and community foundations to be different from corporate foundations.

In general, foundations have very few staff. These findings support Carter's (1990) contention that, nationally, foundations average less than one professional staff per foundation. While differences were found in the increased number of staff by both large and community

foundations, the impact and the value of this finding is dubious. In essence, there may be very little practical significance in the one employed by large and community foundations as it relates to evaluation capacity and use. A summary of the data analysis are presented in Tables 11 and 12. The next set of questions in Subsection 1 deals with foundations' level of satisfaction to conduct with their capacity various evaluation activities.

Table 11

Number of Staff Associated With the Foundation by Size

Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Large	33	1.57	1.63	.01
Medium	15	0.46	0.63	
Small	6	0.50	0.54	
Very small	10	0.50	0.52	

Table 12

Number of Staff Associated With the Foundation by Type

Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Community	34	1.41	1.59	.03
Corporate	12	1.08	0.99	
Private	18	0.33	0.59	

In the area of foundations' satisfaction with their evaluation capacity, one difference was found: satisfaction with the capacity to conduct publicity about foundation activities. This difference was by size of foundation. Small foundations had a mean score of 3.80; followed by medium foundations, 2.92; large foundations, 2.69; and very small foundations, 2.00. The probability of this finding occurring by chance was .01. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference among size of foundations and their level of satisfaction to conduct evaluation to publicize foundation efforts is supported. The Tukey post hoc analysis found small foundations to be different from both very small and large foundations. No other differences were found for any of the other hypotheses tested. Using the .05 alpha level, the null hypotheses for any of these questions could not be rejected.

Overall, foundations are moderately dissatisfied with their ability to conduct evaluation to review current projects with an overall mean score of 2.96. Large foundations have a mean score of 2.86, followed by medium foundations, 2.85; small, 3.40; and very small, 3.22. Foundations are somewhat less satisfied with their ability to conduct postproject evaluation with an overall mean score of 2.55.

A summary of the data analysis are presented in Tables 13 and 14.

Subsection 2

There were two hypotheses tested in Subsection 2: The first hypothesis was that a greater proportion of large foundations use an

Table 13

Degree of Satisfaction With Capacity to Conduct Evaluation Activities by Size

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Review of current projects	Large	29	2.86	0.87	.51
	Medium	14	2.85	0.94	
	Small	5	3.40	1.34	
	Very small	9	3.22	0.83	
Postproject evaluation	Large	30	2.40	0.93	.32
	Medium	14	2.64	1.00	
	Small	5	3.20	0.83	
	Very small	7	2.57	0.53	
Publicize foundation activities	Large	26	2.69	1.01	.01
	Medium	13	2.92	0.64	
	Small	5	3.80	0.44	
	Very small	7	2.00	0.57	

evaluation process for project evaluation than other sizes of foundations. The second hypothesis was that a greater proportion of community foundations use an evaluation process for project evaluation than other types of foundations.

The following questions are based upon frequencies and tested with a Pearson chi-square analysis. The .05 alpha level was used to reject the null form of the hypothesis that there will be no difference in

Table 14

Degree of Satisfaction With Capacity to Conduct Evaluation Activities by Type

Question	Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Review of current projects	Community	31	2.70	0.93	.03
	Corporate	11	3.00	1.00	
	Private	15	3.46	0.63	
Publicize foundation activities	Community	31	2.74	0.85	.12
	Corporate	9	2.33	1.00	
	Private	11	3.18	0.98	
Postproject evaluation	Community	31	2.38	0.88	.16
	Corporate	10	2.50	1.08	
	Private	15	2.93	0.79	

the frequency of foundations and their evaluation related capacities on the following questions.

The following questions from the survey were used to provide responses in order to test the stated hypotheses:

1. "Does the foundation use an information gathering process, such as evaluation, for any of the following activities: (a) review of current projects, (b) postproject evaluation, (c) foundation fund raising efforts?"

2. "Does the foundation have staff whose position responsibilities include program evaluation?"

3. "Does the foundation have staff who have received training in program evaluation?"

4. "Does the foundation use external evaluators (consultants) to conduct project (grant) evaluation?"

5. "Do you require grantees to provide an evaluation plan as part of the grant proposals prior to funding a proposal?"

6. "Do you provide grantees with a specific budget line item for project (grant) evaluation?"

7. "Does the size of the grant influence whether monies for project (grant) evaluation are included as part of the grant?"

By size of foundation, differences were found for two questions: review of current projects and postproject evaluation. For review of current projects, large foundations use evaluation at a rate of 47.1%, medium foundations at a rate of 35.5%, small foundations at a rate of 20.0%, and very small foundations at a rate of 16.0%. The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .02. In the area of postproject evaluation, even fewer foundations use evaluation for this purpose with only 32% of foundations practicing evaluation in this manner. Again, large foundations comprise the largest proportion using evaluation for this function with 46.2%; followed by small foundations, 25%; medium foundations, 22.6%; and very small foundations, 20%. The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .04. Thus, the null hypotheses for both questions are rejected. The alternative hypothesis that a greater proportion of large foundation use evaluation to review current projects and conduct postproject evaluation than other sizes of foundations is supported.

Differences were found by type of foundation, for review of current projects where 62.5% of community foundations report using evaluation. Corporate foundations show a usage rate of 29.2% and private foundations, 17.5%. The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .00. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference in type of foundation and proportion that use evaluation for project review is supported. There were also differences found by type of foundation for postproject evaluation where 65% of community foundations report using evaluation for this purpose, followed by corporate foundations (24%) and private foundations (14.3%). The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .00. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference in type of foundation and proportion that use evaluation for postproject review is supported. There were no other differences found in any of the remaining questions by size in this section. Using the .05 alpha level, the null hypotheses for any of remaining hypothesis could not be rejected.

A summary of the data analysis is presented in Tables 15 through 32.

The analyses of the following questions: number of support staff, number of volunteers, number of foundations with evaluation staff, personnel who are involved in the program evaluation, and the percentage of funds directed toward evaluation were not conducted or further addressed due to an insufficient number of responses; this would have made these analyses meaningless.

Table 15

Size of Foundation and Review of Current Projects

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	47.1	52.9	51
Medium	35.5	64.5	31
Small	20.0	80.0	20
Very small	16.0	84.0	25

Note. $p = .02$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 9.28$.

Table 16

Size of Foundation and Postproject Evaluation

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	46.2	53.8	52
Medium	22.6	77.4	31
Small	25.0	75.0	20
Very small	20.0	80.0	25

Note. $p = .04$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 8.15$.

Table 17

Size of Foundation and Fund Raising Efforts

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	23.4	76.6	47
Medium	23.3	76.7	30
Small	15.0	85.0	20
Very small	16.0	84.0	25

Note. $p = .78$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 1.07$.

Table 18

Size of Foundation and Evaluation Staff With Evaluation Responsibilities

Size of foundation	Staff %	No staff %	n
Large	72.7	27.3	33
Medium	61.5	38.5	13
Small	66.7	32.3	6
Very small	55.5	44.5	9

Note. $p = .39$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 6.23$.

Table 19

Size of Foundation and Trained Staff

Size of foundation	Training %	No training %	n
Large	42.4	57.6	33
Medium	23.0	77.0	13
Small	50.0	50.0	6
Very small	20.0	80.0	10

Note. $p = .12$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 9.89$.

Table 20

Size of Foundation and Use of Consultants

Size of foundation	Use consultants %	Do not use consultants %	n
Large	13.6	86.4	23
Medium	0.0	100.0	8
Small	0.0	100.0	5
Very small	0.0	100.0	5

Note. $p = .44$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 2.65$.

Table 21

Size of Foundation and Request an Evaluation Plan

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	50.0	50.0	18
Medium	25.0	75.0	8
Small	66.7	33.3	3
Very small	12.5	87.5	8

Note. $p = .21$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 8.36$.

Table 22

Size of Foundation and Provide an Evaluation Budget

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	12.5	87.5	24
Medium	25.0	75.0	12
Small	25.0	75.0	4
Very small	12.5	82.3	8

Note. $p = .91$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 2.09$.

Table 23

Size of Foundation and Size of Grant Influences

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	30.7	69.3	26
Medium	16.7	83.3	12
Small	50.0	50.0	4
Very small	11.1	88.9	9

Note. $p = .37$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 3.11$.

Table 24

Type of Foundation and Review of Current Projects

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	62.5	38.5	40
Corporate	29.2	69.9	24
Private	17.5	82.6	63

Note. $p = .00$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 22.45$.

The next section is a description of findings regarding the fourth purpose of the study.

Fourth Purpose of the Study

Research Question 4: Are there differences between sizes of foundations and plans that foundations have for increasing the

Table 25

Type of Foundation and Postproject Evaluation

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	65.0	35.0	40
Corporate	24.0	76.0	25
Private	14.3	85.7	63

Note. $p = .00$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 29.82$.

Table 26

Type of Foundation and Fund Raising Efforts

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	48.7	52.3	39
Corporate	4.5	95.5	22
Private	8.1	91.9	61

Note. $p = .00$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 28.16$.

evaluation capacity for themselves and of nonprofit grantees?

The fourth purpose of the study was to investigate plans that foundations have, if any, to increase their internal evaluation capacity as well as those of nonprofit grantees. The findings are presented to reflect relationships and differences that are found between different sizes and types of foundations regarding plans to increase evaluation capacity for both themselves and grantees. Please note that both proportions and

Table 27

Type of Foundation and Evaluation Staff

Type of foundation	Staff %	No staff %	n
Community	72.7	23.3	33
Corporate	61.5	38.5	13
Private	52.9	47.1	17

Note. $p = .33$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 2.17$.

Table 28

Type of Foundation and Trained Staff

Type of foundation	Training %	No training %	n
Community	45.4	54.6	33
Corporate	33.3	66.7	12
Private	17.6	82.4	17

Note. $p = .14$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 4.50$.

means based upon a Likert scale are tested with regard to expanding evaluation capacity and different types of analyses are required. Accordingly, this section is comprised of two subsections, one for each type of analysis.

Subsection 1 deals with the proportion of foundations that have plans for increasing the evaluation capacity for themselves and nonprofit grantees. Hypothesis testing for the first subsection used the Pearson

Table 29

Type of Foundation and Use of Consultants

Type of foundation	Use consultants %	Do not use consultants %	n
Community	8.7	91.3	23
Corporate	14.3	85.7	7
Private	0.0	100.0	10

Note. $p = .51$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 1.32$.

Table 30

Type of Foundation and Request an Evaluation Plan

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	50.0	50.0	18
Corporate	25.0	75.0	8
Private	66.7	33.3	3

Note. $p = .21$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 8.36$.

chi-square analysis with a .05 alpha level.

The second subsection deals with questions that are based upon a 4-point Likert scale with 4 indicating highly interested and 1 indicating no interest. Means were obtained from these questions and responses were analyzed through the use of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for independent samples with a .05 alpha level.

Table 31

Type of Foundation and Provide an Evaluation Budget

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	23.0	77.0	26
Corporate	0.	100.0	9
Private	20.0	80.0	15

Note. $p = .35$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 4.41$.

Table 32

Type of Foundation and Size of Grant Influences

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	29.6	70.3	27
Corporate	9.0	91.0	11
Private	30.7	67.3	13

Note. $p = .70$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 3.77$.

Subsection 1

There were two hypotheses tested in this part of the study: The first hypothesis was that a greater proportion of large foundations will indicate that they are interested in expanding the evaluation capacity of nonprofits by checking "yes" on the questionnaire than will other size foundations. The second hypothesis was that a greater proportion of

community foundations will indicate that they are interested in expanding the evaluation capacity of nonprofits by checking "yes" on the questionnaire than will other types of foundations.

The following questions from the survey were used to provide responses in order to test the stated hypotheses:

1. "Is the foundation interested in expanding the evaluation capacity of nonprofit organizations who are the recipients of grants?"

2. "Please check all of the following that may limit your ability to expand evaluation capacity: (a) lack of financial resources, (b) lack of knowledge/skills of program evaluation techniques, (c) lack of interest in program evaluation, (d) program evaluation is a low priority, (e) lack of staff time."

No differences between sizes of foundations or types of foundations and plans to expand the evaluation capacity of nonprofit grantees were found. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected at the .05 alpha level. However, 47% of foundations overall are interested in expanding the evaluation capacity of nonprofit grantees.

In spite of the lack of differences, this finding may bode well for nonprofits as nearly half of the foundations suggest that they may move toward expansion of evaluation services. The next set of questions in this subsection deals with limitations to expanding evaluation capacity. A summary of the data analysis is presented in Tables 33 and 34.

Limitations to expanding evaluation capacity were examined in this part of the subsection. Differences were found by size of foundation when considering time as a limitation; 91.3% of the large foundations found time to be a limitation, followed by medium foundations

Table 33

Expansion and Evaluation Capacity for Nonprofits by Size of Foundations

Size of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Large	61.5	10.0	26
Medium	18.1	81.9	11
Small	60.0	40.0	5
Very small	33.3	66.7	9

Note. $p = .06$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 7.40$.

Table 34

Expansion and Evaluation Capacity for Nonprofits by Type of Foundations

Type of foundation	Yes %	No %	n
Community	58.6	41.4	29
Corporate	30.0	70.0	10
Private	38.4	61.6	13

Note. $p = .21$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 3.08$.

(60.0%), small foundations (50.0%), and very small foundations (42.9%). The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .03. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference among sizes of foundations and time as a limitation to expanding evaluation capacity is supported. There were no other differences

found, thus the null hypotheses for any of the other tests could not be rejected at the .05 alpha level.

When the findings from all foundations were aggregated, a lack of time to conduct program evaluation, was considered to be the largest limitation to expanding evaluation capacity; time was mentioned by 74.4% of foundations. This was followed by lack of financial resources, mentioned by 57.5% of the foundations. One encouraging finding was that only 17.9% of all foundations identified program evaluation as a low priority when considering limitations.

Summaries of the data analyses are presented in Tables 35 through 44.

Table 35

Size of Foundation and Financial Resources as a Limitation

Size of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Large	34.7	65.3	23
Medium	66.7	33.3	6
Small	50.0	50.0	4
Very small	42.8	57.2	7

Note. $p = .55$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 2.08$.

Table 36

Size of Foundation and Knowledge and Skills as a Limitation

Size of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Large	69.5	30.5	23
Medium	66.7	33.3	6
Small	100.0	0.0	3
Very small	57.1	41.9	7

Note. $p = .60$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 1.83$.

Table 37

Size of Foundation and Interest in Evaluation as a Limitation

Size of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Large	87.0	13.1	23
Medium	83.3	16.7	5
Small	100.0	0.0	4
Very small	57.1	46.9	7

Note. $p = .23$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 4.28$.

Table 38

Size of Foundation and Evaluation as a Low Priority

Size of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Large	78.2	21.8	23
Medium	80.0	20.0	5
Small	100.0	0.0	4
Very small	85.7	14.3	7

Note. $p = .75$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 1.17$.

Table 39

Size of Foundation and Time as a Limitation for Evaluation

Size of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Large	8.7	91.3	23
Medium	60.0	40.0	5
Small	50.0	50.0	5
Very small	42.9	57.1	7

Note. $p = .03$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 8.89$.

Table 40

Type of Foundation and Financial Resources as a Limitation

Type of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Community	36.0	64.0	25
Corporate	44.4	55.6	9
Private	66.7	33.3	6

Note. $p = .39$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 1.88$.

Table 41

Type of Foundation and Knowledge and Skills as a Limitation

Type of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Community	62.5	37.5	24
Corporate	77.7	22.3	9
Private	83.3	16.7	6

Note. $p = .50$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 1.37$.

Subsection 2

Hypotheses tested in Subsection 2 were that large foundations have a higher mean score on all parts of the following survey question that are at least on a Likert scale than will other sizes of foundations. The second hypothesis was that community foundations have a higher mean score on all parts of the following survey question that are on a

Table 42

Type of Foundation and Interest in Evaluation as a Limitation

Type of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Community	92.0	8.0	25
Corporate	44.4	55.6	9
Private	100.0	0.0	6

Note. $p = .02$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 11.36$.

Table 43

Type of Foundation and Evaluation as a Low Priority

Type of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Community	25.0	75.0	24
Corporate	33.3	66.7	9
Private	16.7	82.3	6

Note. $p = .45$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 1.55$.

Likert scale than will other types of foundations.

This question was asked using a 4-point Likert scale with 4 indicating highly interested and 1 indicating no interest. Means were obtained from the several parts of this question and responses were analyzed through the use of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) independent samples with a .05 alpha level.

Table 44

Type of Foundation and Time as a Limitation for Evaluation

Type of foundation	No limit %	Limit %	n
Community	25.0	75.0	24
Corporate	33.3	66.7	9
Private	16.7	83.3	6

Note. $p = .88$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 1.16$.

The following question from the survey was used to provide responses in order to test the stated hypotheses:

> 1. To what degree is the foundation interested in expanding each of the following in the future: (a) funding of evaluation for grantees, (b) training internal foundation staff in program evaluation methods, (c) adding internal evaluation staff, (d) providing technical assistance in evaluation to grantees, (e) using evaluation methods to report to the board of directors, and (f) monitoring the impact of funded projects?

One difference was found regarding monitoring the impact of funded projects, where large foundations had a mean score of 3.50; medium, 1.80; small, 1.66; and very small, 2.57. The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .01. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between foundations and the level of interest in monitoring funded projects is supported. The Tukey post hoc analysis found large foundations to be different from medium foundations.

By type of foundation, differences were found for interest in

expanding the use of evaluation findings for board reports where community foundations had a mean score of 2.72 followed by private foundations (3.00), and corporate foundations (1.62). The probability of this finding occurring by chance is .02. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a difference among foundations and the level of interest in expanding the use of evaluation findings for board reports is supported. The Tukey post hoc analysis found community foundations to be different from corporate foundations. There were no differences found in any of the remaining questions by size in this section. Using the .05 alpha level of rejection, the null hypotheses for any of the other tests conducted could not be rejected.

Foundations appear only moderately interested regarding the prospects of expanding evaluation capacity. The most interest comes in the area of monitoring of funded grants, with an overall mean score of 3.53. The area with the lowest interest is in adding additional evaluation staff, with an overall mean of 1.41. A summary of the data analysis are presented in Tables 45 and 46.

Table 45

Interest in Expanding Evaluation Capacity by Size

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Funding of evaluation for grantees	Large	19	1.89	0.93	.52
	Medium	3	1.33	1.52	
	Small	4	2.50	0.57	
	Very small	6	2.00	1.26	

Table 45--Continued

Question	Size	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Training staff in evaluation	Large	19	2.63	1.06	.25
	Medium	4	1.50	1.29	
	Small	3	2.00	1.00	
	Very small	7	1.83	1.29	
Adding evaluation staff	Large	18	1.38	0.77	.55
	Medium	4	1.50	1.29	
	Small	3	2.00	1.00	
	Very small	6	1.16	0.40	
Technical assistance to grantees	Large	18	2.50	1.04	.08
	Medium	4	1.75	1.50	
	Small	3	2.66	0.57	
	Very small	6	1.33	0.51	
Evaluation use of board reports	Large	20	2.90	0.96	.13
	Medium	5	2.00	1.22	
	Small	3	2.00	1.00	
	Very small	7	2.00	1.29	
Monitoring of funded projects	Large	20	3.50	0.61	.01
	Medium	5	1.80	1.78	
	Small	3	1.66	1.52	
	Very small	7	2.57	1.51	

Note. The Tukey post hoc analysis showed that large foundations and medium foundations are different at the .05 alpha level.

Table 46

Interest in Expanding Evaluation Capacity by Type

Question	Type	No. of cases	Mean	SD	p value
Funding of evaluation for grantees	Community	19	2.10	1.10	.37
	Corporate	8	1.50	0.75	
	Private	5	2.00	1.07	
Training staff in evaluation	Community	20	2.65	1.13	.09
	Corporate	8	1.75	1.03	
	Private	5	1.80	1.80	
Adding internal evaluation staff	Community	19	1.57	0.96	.38
	Corporate	8	1.12	0.35	
	Private	4	1.25	0.50	
Technical assistance in evaluation	Community	18	2.50	0.85	.08
	Corporate	8	1.50	0.92	
	Private	5	2.20	1.64	
Evaluation use of board reports	Community	22	2.72	1.03	.02
	Corporate	8	1.62	0.91	
	Private	5	3.00	1.22	
Monitoring projects	Community	22	2.86	1.35	.08
	Corporate	8	2.37	1.18	
	Private	5	4.00	0.00	

Note. The Tukey post hoc analysis showed that large foundations and medium foundations are different at the .05 alpha level.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has presented a description of the research design, an overview of the sample surveyed, the rate of return for selected survey respondents, the results of inferential testing of all hypotheses, and an analysis of differences within the two variables examined for this study: type and size of foundation. Findings reported in this chapter were based upon the four purposes of the study and testing of the research hypotheses.

The conceptual hypotheses that (a) large foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other size foundations and (b) community foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other types of foundations received only partial support. The partial support for these two hypotheses is evidenced by the finding that of the 77 hypotheses tested, 16 relationships were found (20.7%).

Undergirding much of this study is that nonprofit organizations are increasingly engaging philanthropic foundations as an alternative source of funding. For many economic and social reasons, there appears to be a transfer of the funding for nonprofits from more traditional sources, such as government and private donors to foundations. Moreover, the review of literature also suggests that foundations may benefit by supporting the evaluation efforts of nonprofit efforts. The derived benefit from enhanced evaluation support to nonprofits by foundations was purported to be increased information regarding effectiveness of grant making. This, of course, relates most closely to application evaluation and project evaluation, the first two purposes of the survey. However,

findings from the survey suggest that foundations are only marginally interested in providing evaluation support to nonprofit grantees.

This desire for more evaluation support in the nonprofit world may more be wishful thinking on the part of evaluators than for those practitioners in the field.

Summarized in Chapter V are a review of the purpose of the study, discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of Chapter V is to: (a) review the purpose of the study and study procedures, (b) provide a summary of the findings by each of the four purposes of the study, (c) consider the implications of the findings, and finally (d) present conclusions and recommendations about the study.

Review of Purpose of Study

This study was conducted with an interest in examining the level of evaluation use among Michigan's philanthropic foundations. More specifically, this study sought to investigate and describe how Michigan based foundations of different sizes and types use evaluation for the following four purposes: (1) application evaluation (choosing which proposals to fund, (2) project evaluation (strategies that foundations use to determine what happened as a result of grant-making activities), (3) provide a description of current evaluation practice and capacity in foundations, and (4) investigate plans that foundations have for increasing the evaluation capacity for themselves and of nonprofit grantees. Finally, the study served as a status study without regard to size and type relative to the four purposes of the study.

Summary of the Findings

Foundations and Application Evaluation

The first purpose of the study, the use of application evaluation, found only two differences, both by type of foundation. One difference was that 85% of the community foundations, 44% of the corporate foundations, and only 20% of the private foundations use application evaluation.

The other difference was found in the area of documented need as an influence on funding a grant application. Private foundations had a mean score of 3.88; community foundations, 3.75; and corporate foundations, 3.08. The scale used was the 4-point Likert scale described earlier where 4 was at the top end of the scale and 1 was at the low end of the scale. Corporate foundations reported that documented need was less influential in making funding decisions than either private or community foundations. No differences were found by size of foundation. Beyond the two cited differences some notable trends were observed.

Documented need (3.65) was reported to be most influential among all of the factors on the survey. The reputation of the applying agency (3.36), community priority (3.30), and previous relationships with the applicant (2.63) all were reported as being lesser influences. Interestingly, foundations report being much less influenced by a previous relationship with the applicant than other factors when making proposal funding decisions.

The use of systematic application evaluation may provide a level playing field for nonprofits who are seeking funds for their agencies. The results reported here regarding application evaluation may be an encouraging factor for nonprofits without existing relationships to foundations. In addition, application evaluation strategies may be especially important to foundations as they increasingly become sources of funds for nonprofits. One mildly optimistic finding may be that 45.3% of foundations use some form of application evaluation for reviewing proposals and seem to be at least moderately satisfied with their ability to make decisions about which proposals to fund.

Moreover, any approximation toward using evaluation may be improvement over gossip, innuendo, or speculation as a means for making decisions (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991). Undoubtedly, communities and society in general should be better served through funding and implementing worthy and meritorious programs based upon systematic evaluation.

Foundations and Project Evaluation

The second purpose of the study, which relates to project evaluation, found only one difference, again by type of foundation. Community foundations reported that indirect contact is the most useful means for finding out what happened as a result of grant making; community foundations had a mean score of 3.26, followed by private foundations (3.15) and corporate foundations (2.45). The value of knowing these differences is probably less meaningful for decision makers and other stakeholders than are some of the foundation-wide characteristics

regarding evaluation.

For instance, foundations found meeting project objectives the most useful (3.47) when determining what happened as a result of grant making. Foundations also reported fairly high utility with written reports (3.22), financial accounting (3.21), volume of service delivery--number of clients served (3.15), client satisfaction (3.10), and indirect contact with grantees (3.05) as a means for evaluating foundation-funded projects. Assessment of management practices was the least useful mechanism to finding out what happened as a result of grant making with an overall mean score of 2.71, closely followed by grantee compliance with applicable licensing standards (2.82). Sumariwalla and Taylor (1991) reported a similar disregard for assessment of management practices in their study of funders of nonprofits (a study which considered both foundations and local United Ways).

A notable finding is that information on meeting project objectives is more useful to foundations as an indicator of project success than are other methods of project evaluation cited in the study. Meeting project objectives is probably the most concrete and tangible method to evaluate the effectiveness or success of a project; either the objective was met or it was not. Conversely, licensing standards, too, are a variation of meeting an established standard and this is one of the least useful methods to foundations as an indicator of project success. One difference in the utility of these two methods may be that licensing standards are externally imposed by regulatory agencies, whereas meeting project objectives could be mutually developed by the foundation and grantee.

The preferences reported by foundations may be generalizable across size and type of foundation as noted by the fact that only one difference was found. Having a sense of what foundations value and find useful regarding project evaluation is important. Equally important is the finding that foundations report a variety of reporting mechanisms have utility. This finding may suggest that multiple evaluation strategies may be employed as part of a comprehensive evaluation design. Therefore, this information may provide a framework for both nonprofits and foundations alike as they consider strategies regarding evaluation design and implementation.

Foundations and Evaluation Capacity and Practice

The investigation regarding the third purpose of the study, current evaluation capacity and practice among foundations, suggests the most diversity among foundations. Each of these differences will not be recounted here as they were previously described in Chapter IV (Tables 11-32).

In regards to evaluation capacity, the study suggests that foundations have few staff; the range in mean staff size is 1.41 for community foundations to 0.33 for private foundations. The lack of staff in general probably prohibits much evaluation effort. Furthermore, foundations are not very satisfied with their own capacity to conduct evaluation. The overall mean score for postproject evaluation was 2.55, capacity to publicize foundation activities was 2.76, and reviewing current projects was 2.96. These reported mean scores are generally lower than other mean scores on the survey and may represent only moderate satisfaction

with evaluation capacity.

Certainly, foundations don't appear mobilized with a cadre of resources directed toward evaluation. Particularly striking was the low use of consultants for evaluation. Only 7.5% of the foundations reported using a consultant for evaluation purposes. No medium, small, or very small foundations report using consultants. The reason for this low use is unknown. Conceivably when foundations do conduct evaluation, they rely upon any internal resources that they may have. Further investigation into this area may be interesting for those who purport to be program evaluators.

The lack of evaluation capacity and support toward nonprofits is epitomized by the finding that only 13.7% of foundations require that nonprofits provide an evaluation plan as part of the proposal process; only 18% are interested in funding evaluation for nonprofits. Moreover, only 36% of foundations have had staff trained in evaluation. Only 33.9% of foundations use evaluation to review current projects--a much lower rate than for those foundations who conduct application evaluation.

Foundations and Evaluation Expansion

The fourth purpose of the study, interest and perceived limits by foundations for expanding evaluation capacity for themselves and nonprofits, found a total of five differences; two were by size and three were by type. One substantial difference was in the area of time as a limitation for expanding evaluation. Ninety-one percent of large foundations found time constraints as a limitation versus only 41% of very

small foundations. This is somewhat surprising as large foundations have more staff than the very small foundations and a logical expectation is that fewer staff would result in even more time constraints. All in all, the likelihood of foundations expanding evaluation capacity paints a mixed, if not bleak, picture.

For example, the overall mean for interest in funding evaluation for grantees is a rather low 1.93, while providing technical assistance in evaluation to grantees is also seemingly not planned as evidenced by the overall mean score of 2.19, which is less than interested. Least hopeful is the interest that foundations have in adding internal evaluation staff with an overall mean of 1.41, which might be considered not interested.

Still, there are some hopeful signs. Only 17.5% of the foundations characterized evaluation as a low priority and as a limitation to expanding evaluation capacity for nonprofits. Yet even this finding must be tempered by other findings in this section that suggest foundations have limited interest in expanding much of their evaluation efforts.

Implications of the Findings

Nonprofit organizations interested in evaluating programs that are foundation funded may be put in the position of using existing internal resources to conduct any evaluations. Findings from the study indicate only remotely that nonprofits will be able to count on foundations for evaluation support in the immediate future. This is not surprising considering that relative degree of dissatisfaction that foundations have with their own capacity to conduct evaluation. No doubt, there are consequences for limited assistance in evaluation to nonprofits.

A major ramification of this finding may be that the value of evaluation, for example, lessons learned, sharing of findings, and common strategies may be lost due to the seemingly limited interest in expanding evaluation. A second ramification may be that nonprofit organizations will be potentially limited in their ability to document the effectiveness of programs. Who nonprofits have served, lessons that could have been learned, and documentation of effective project strategies that may be used by foundations for model project development and future funding initiatives may be lost.

Still, the finding that nearly half of the surveyed foundations purport to using application evaluation as a mechanism to determine which proposals to fund is encouraging. Using application evaluation may weed out potentially weak and unnecessary projects on the front end and could enhance the possibility of funding projects that are meritorious and will serve community needs. This finding might be an enabling phase in a direction toward using evaluation in other areas such as project evaluation, providing technical assistance to nonprofits, and possibly increasing the evaluation capacity of both themselves and nonprofits.

Conclusions

This study provided a basis for considering how foundations of different sizes and types are similar and dissimilar with regard to evaluation.

A total of 77 hypotheses were tested through either the Pearson chi-square test for independent samples or the analysis of variance

(ANOVA) for independent means. As noted earlier, all testing used the .05 alpha level. Specific relationships were discussed earlier in the study, and a listing of those relationships will not be repeated here. However, it is noteworthy that of the 77 hypotheses tested, 16 relationships were found (20.7%).

This finding is somewhat unexpected in consideration of the two earlier stated conceptual hypotheses that: (1) Large foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other size foundations, and (2) community foundations will be more likely to use evaluation than will other types of foundations; and as noted earlier, there is only partial support for these two conceptual hypotheses. This finding is interesting, especially in light of the great diversity in the size variable where foundations' assets ranged from less than $1,000 to over $7 billion. Greater diversity, especially by size, was expected. The reasons for finding only a few differences are unknown. Any suggestions regarding these findings would only be conjecture and speculation. Additional research in this area may be revealing.

This study seemed to serve at least two purposes. It collected and described, for perhaps the first time, findings on the pervasiveness of evaluation use among foundations. Findings from this study can be considered in the following ways: It attempted to identify what Michigan foundations are doing relative to evaluation and also provided information on foundations' plans for expanding evaluation. Recall that this study focused only on Michigan-based philanthropic foundations. It is suggested that any generalizations drawn from this study be to Michigan foundations only.

Much of the theoretical framework for this study revolves around the supposed value of evaluation use by foundations and for nonprofits. However, limited interest in expanding evaluation capacity and the findings reported by all foundations, manifested by the few differences among foundations, suggest that interest in expanding evaluation efforts by foundations may be more the gleam in an evaluator's eye than reality.

One might conclude that evaluation is generally not seen as necessary by foundations and may, in fact, not be necessary for small and very small foundations due to the scope of their services and needs. However, to come to this conclusion would be mere conjecture, a great leap of faith, and clearly outside of the bounds of meaningful scholarly inquiry.

Recommendations

No other studies were found, either in Michigan or nationally, that researched on a cross-sectional basis, the degree to which foundations use evaluation. Prior studies conducted on evaluation and foundations have been case studies and considered, most often, evaluation design on behalf of a foundation funded project or discussed the outcomes of the foundation funded project.

Now that some of the descriptive research has been completed through this mail survey, more formal and individual research may be conducted, based, in part, upon these findings. Case studies, focus groups, telephone surveys, and face-to-face interviews with a smaller group of foundations or individual foundations could augment findings from this study.

Much of the literature review suggests that foundations are interested in increasing their activity and expertise in evaluation. More in-depth research could be used to find out the story behind the story and also to refine any future mail surveys.

The value in this type of research is that nonprofit grant seekers may be more attuned to the type of foundations to approach for funding if they are interested in evaluation. More research may allow evaluators to more clearly understand reasons why foundations have a relatively low rate for the use of consultants in specific and evaluation in general.

Perhaps a more compelling reason to conduct additional research revolves around the relationship between foundations and nonprofit organizations. Much of the literature suggests that nonprofits may increasingly rely upon foundations for funding support as a consequence of diminishing support from traditional sources. A foundation evaluation consortium, perhaps coordinated by an organization such as the Council of Michigan Foundations, may be useful to foundations and the nonprofit community in general. The value of such a consortium might lie in economies of scale and sharing of resources. Dissemination of information on foundation funded and evaluated projects may be used to benefit society in a broader way; that is often cited as a goal by many foundations. Finally, as observed by philosopher and evaluation pontificate, Scriven (1991), "Evaluation has had a very checkered career in foundations. At its best, no one does it better; all too often it is done casually or not at all" (p. 262). Scriven's sage comment is worth considering as lessons learned and improving nonprofits may lie with a partnership involving foundations and evaluation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Cover Letter

November 9, 1992

Aries Foundation, Inc.
210 South Woodward
Birmingham, MI 48009

Dear Foundation Professional:

I am currently a doctoral student at Western Michigan University and am conducting a study of evaluation practices in Michigan based philanthropic foundations. Your foundation has been randomly selected to participate in this study.

I would very much appreciate if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, stamped and self-addressed envelope.

The information that you provide by participating in this survey is meaningful and much appreciated. I am confident that the findings from this survey can be used to assist both foundations and nonprofits in their efforts to serve the citizens of Michigan. An abstract detailing the findings from the survey will be available upon your request.

Although the questionnaire has been coded, this coding is solely for administrative purposes and provides a record of returns. Coding allows me to facilitate the mailing of follow-up questionnaires in order to achieve the maximum response rate. All coding will be removed from the questionnaire upon its return and your responses will be confidential. No attempt will be made to associate any response with a specific foundation.

Best wishes for success in your philanthropic efforts. Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

John R. Seita

Appendix B

Research Instrument

EVALUATION IN FOUNDATIONS

For purposes of this survey, evaluation is defined as the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object; e.g., a program, project, or grant proposal.

1) Does the Foundation use an information gathering process, such as evaluation, for any of the following activities? (Please check as many as apply.) Please indicate any other term used instead of evaluation in the line next to each option if the term evaluation is not used.

	Yes	No	Describe (Optional)
a) Make decisions about funding proposals			
b) Review of current projects			
c) Postproject evaluation (following the grant award)			
d) Foundation fund-raising efforts			

1-a) Are there any other activities for which evaluation is used? If so, please describe.

_____

_____

If all of the above are no, please return the survey in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.
Thank you for your assistance.

2) How many staff are associated with the foundation? Please indicate the number of "full time equivalents" (one full time equivalent = 40 hours per week) in the line next to the appropriate category.

——— **Professional Staff**
——— **Support Staff**
——— **Volunteers**

2-a) Does the foundation have staff whose position responsibilities include program evaluation?

——— **Yes How many?** _____
——— **No**

3) If there are staff with evaluation responsibilities, please indicate the number of full time equivalent staff with evaluation responsibilities (one full-time equivalent = 40 hours per week)

_____

4) Does the foundation have staff who have received training related to program evaluation?

——— **Yes If yes, please indicate the percentage of staff who have received training in evaluation** _____ **%**
——— **No If no, please skip to question 6.**

4a) Please identify the type of training received
(Check as many as apply)

a) ——— **University conferred degree in Program Evaluation**
(Circle the level of degree received: Ph.D/Ed.D, M.A., B.A.)
b) ——— **University studies in Program Evaluation (no degree)**
c) ——— **Workshops/Seminars in Program Evaluation**
d) ——— **Self-directed studies (literature, tapes, etc.)**
e) ——— **Other** _____

5) Does the foundation use external evaluators (consultants) to conduct project (grant) evaluation?

——— **Yes**
——— **No**

6) Who is involved in the following aspects of project (grant) evaluation? (Please check as many as apply)

	Conducts Program Evaluation	Uses Program Evaluation Findings
a) Foundation staff		
b) Foundation board members		
c) External evaluator reporting to the foundation		
d) External evaluator reporting to the grantee		
e) Other (please specify)		

7). How satisfied is the foundation with its capacity to conduct each of the following?

	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
a) Make decisions about funding proposals				
b) Review of current projects (grants)				
c) Postproject (grant) evaluation				
d) To publicize foundation activities				
e) Other activities (please specify)				

8) How useful are each of the following in helping the foundation determine what has happened as a result of grant making? (Please check as many as apply.)

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Do not use
a) Periodic formal written reports by grantee					
b) Project site visits by foundation representatives					
c) Indirect contact with grantee (telephone calls, letters, etc.)					
d) Financial accounting					
e) Other (please specify)					

9) Please indicate if the foundation requires grantees to provide any of the following information when reporting to the foundation and how useful that information is in learning what has happened as a result of the grant.

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Do Not Require
a) Volume of service delivery (# of clients served)					
b) Grantee compliance with licensing standards					
c) Assessment of management practices					
d) Measures of client satisfaction					
e) Meeting project objectives					
d) Other (please specify)					

10) To what degree do the following factors influence the foundation when considering funding a grant proposal? (Please check the appropriate level of influence.)

	Highly Influential	Influential	Somewhat Influential	Not Influential
a) Documented need				
b) Community priority				
c) Reputation of applying organization/individual				
d) Previous relationship with applicant				
e) Other				

11) Do you require grantees to provide an evaluation plan as part of the grant proposal prior to funding a proposal?

——— Yes
——— No
——— Varies according to individual grant

12) Do you provide grantees with a specific budget line item for project (grant) evaluation?

——— Yes
——— No
——— Varies according to individual grant

13) Does the size of the grant award influence whether monies for project (grant) evaluation are included as a part of the grant?

——— Yes
——— No

Why? _____

_____

14) Please estimate the average percentage of a project budget allocated to program evaluation

——— 0 - 4 percent
——— 5 - 9 percent
——— 10 percent or more
——— Varies by project

15) In general, how satisfied has the foundation been with the results of evaluations that it has funded? (Please mark one box.)

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Unsure

Why? _____

_____

16) Is the foundation interested in expanding the evaluation capacity of nonprofit organizations who are the recipients of grants?

——— Yes
——— No

Why? _____

_____

If no, please return the survey in the enclosed stamped and self-addressed envelope.

17) To what degree is the foundation interested in expanding each of the following in the future? (Please check all that apply.)

	Highly Interested	Interested	Somewhat Interested	No Interest
a) Funding of evaluation for grantees				
b) Training internal staff in evaluation				
c) Adding internal evaluation staff				
d) Providing evaluation technical assistance to grantees				
e) Using evaluation findings for board reports				
f) Monitoring the impact of funded projects				
g) Other				

18) Please check all of the following that may limit your ability to expand evaluation capacity

a. ——— Lack of financial resources
b. ——— Lack of knowledge/skills of program evaluation techniques
c. ——— Lack of interest in program evaluation
d. ——— Program evaluation is a low priority
e. ——— Lack of staff time
f. ——— Other

_____

Thank you for your time and interest in completing this survey. Please return it in the enclosed, self addressed stamped envelope.

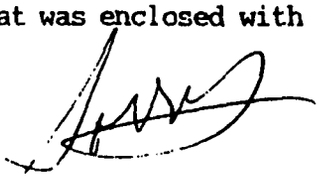
Appendix C

Follow-up Postcard

December 3, 1992

You recently received a survey entitled "Evaluation in Foundations". If you have completed and returned the survey, thank you for your efforts as I complete my doctoral studies. If you have not completed the survey, I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it in the self-addressed and stamped envelope that was enclosed with the original survey.
Thank You,

John R. Seita



Appendix D

Approval Letter From Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-3899

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: October 23, 1992

To: John Seita

From: M. Michele Burnette, Chair M. Michele Burnette JKB

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 92-10-21

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research protocol, "A status study of program evaluation practices in Michigan-based philanthropic foundations" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the HSIRB. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the approval application.

You must seek reapproval for any changes in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

xc: Smidchens, Educational Leadership

Approval Termination: October 23, 1993

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