

政策提言

——エビデンスに基づいた 教育政策策定・意思決定・実践——

Policy Brief: Evidence-Informed Approaches to Education Policy Formation, Decision-Making, and Practices

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The purpose of this document is to identify the main challenges in integrating research evidence in education policy formation, decision-making, and practice innovation. Evidence plays a critical role in education policy formation, decision-making, and practice innovation to solve today's complex and diverse educational problems worldwide. However, little is known about the relationship among policies, practices, and research in education research systems. More importantly, the lack of understanding of the role of evidence in education policy formation, decision-making, and practice innovation poses theoretical, practical, and epistemological challenges for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. This professional

perspective comes from my policy research in comparative and international education and my professional practice in program evaluation in Canada, Japan, the United States, Germany, and South Africa. This article attempts to scan the current discourse in the literature and make possible recommendations to the stakeholders.

Utilizing evidence in the process of education policy formation, decision-making, and practice innovation faces several challenges. Globalization increases the mobility of students and families across national borders; when globalization and emerging technologies rapidly change, they may even disrupt the existing social and political order. Greater transnational student mobility creates the

issue of managing diversity and cultural differences that add to already stretched local school resources. Contemporary educational policymakers must base their policy formation processes on evidence to respond to the current educational issues in our rapidly changing and complex societies as evidence assists in making an informed decision on education policy. Utilizing evidence in education policy-making requires to meet the need for greater institutional capacity to integrate evidence into educational policy formation, decision-making, and practices.

Although evidence-informed educational policy analysis and evaluation has existed since the 1960s in the United States (Sowaki, 2011), Education Research Systems as an area of research have received attention from academic experts, policy analysts, and practitioners in the last 20 years. For example, one of the earliest research projects on the subject was conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2007). The publication synthesized the existing expert perspectives on the role of evidence and research in education systems across the OECD member countries. In the publication, Cook and Gorard (2007) also examined the epistemological relevance of the existing social scientific methods such as the relevance of Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) and Mixed Methods Research (MMR). More systematic inquiry in this area brings more attention to the current inadequacy of evidence in education policy formation, decision-making, and practices.

Institutionalizing a process of education research systems varies depending on the national context. For example, Japan and Canada have been ranked high in the recent PISA report (OECD, 2015). These two countries seem to take a different path to utilize evidence to formulate their educational policies. According to a study in Japan (MEXT, 2018), insufficient evidence-based policy-making

is prevalent at the municipal and prefectural levels particularly due to a lack of staff with appropriate training to utilize evidence. In Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Education houses an education officer with a background in social science research with a dedicated office to manage data (Kuji-Shikitani et al., 2016). At the same time, even in other Canadian provinces, one study identified the lack of the administration's capacity to utilize evidence remains a challenge. Policymakers described their inadequate preparation for using evidence in policy formation processes (Levin, 2013). More recently, a Canadian study attempted to conceptualize the impact of scholarly research in education on educational policies, programs, practices, and products domestically and internationally by establishing a logic model (Hiratsuka, 2020). While the logic model hypothesized a pathway that illustrated the impact of educational scholarly research production on educational policies, programs, practices, and products, the research faced a challenge to identify sources of evidence to explain the model. The author recommended conducting qualitative research to generate evidence through interviews and other qualitative data. Overcoming the current policymakers' challenge requires institutionalizing capacity and developing skills to utilize evidence for education policy processes.

Most recently, the OECD (2021) has begun to look into these issues systematically across the member countries. In their publication, several main challenges were identified including the following four areas (OECD, 2021):

1. Quality and relevance: the quality use and evaluation of research evidence
2. Culture and mindset: raising awareness and building positive attitudes for research use
3. Relationship and interactions: leadership and coordination to facilitate the stakeholder relationships that contribute to research use
4. Capacities and skills: a lack of skills and

capacities necessary to use, mediate, and produce relevant education research in policies and practices.

Through a series of expert interviews and webinars, the OECD attempts to identify the role of evidence in the education research systems and the relationship among educational policies, practices, and research across the member countries.

Remedying the current need for improving evidence utilization to formulate education policies requires institutional and professional development since some policymakers might feel inadequately prepared. Possible solutions are capacity building and skill training for ministries, policymakers, and practitioners. An international study in Japan and South Africa reported teacher training through lesson studies with a research mediation expert helped improve these teachers' skills for research evidence use (Hiratsuka, 2017). Another Canadian study said that the Ontario Education Ministry houses a research officer to advise on policies through education research mediation. Improving research users' skills and capacities in integrating education research into policies and practices requires a system-wide strategy for capacity building and training (Kuji-Shikitani et al., 2016). As described in the Ontario case, dedicating a unit with adequately trained policymakers who can translate evidence into educational policy formation, decision-making, and practice innovation is an essential first step. The national governments also consider developing a strategy to establish a collaborative relationship among policymakers, practitioners, and researchers through capacity building on evidence-informed approaches identified by the Japanese study. Lastly, further synthesis of the existing literature on evidence and research in education policy formation, decision-making, and practice innovation clarifies the strategic importance of evidence-informed approaches.

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