

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the governments of numerous countries, such as Japan and Taiwan, have been reviewing “education research” and attempting to conceive strategies to improve the quality of education research. This study is part of an integrated research initiative financed by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) in Taiwan entitled “International Comparison on Education Research Organizations, Research Policies, Quality-Standards Construction, and the Relationship between Research and Practices with a View to Improving Education Research Mechanisms in Taiwan” and focuses on Japanese education research, especially the cultivation of next-generation academics in universities and research agencies.

Two prominent points are highlighted in this study. First, Japan’s strategies and implementations for promoting education research and improving the quality of education are efficient. Education research in Japan has continuously been emphasized by the government and academic institutes, which is the reason for including it in the integrated research. In addition, it is widely known that the Japanese are strict in their education and maintain high standards in their research. To maintain the success and high standard of Japanese research, not only the Japanese government but also numerous universities and research agencies, such as The Japan Society for Educational Sociology (JSES), have highlighted the potential of next-generation academics in education research; furthermore, they believe that training next-generation academics is crucial in ensuring high-quality research. In the last 5 years, numerous related policies and strategies have been proposed and implemented. Thus, this study facilitates an understanding of high-quality education research and enables determining the factors constituting the particular social and

cultural background of Japan regarding education research, such as the reason that no Japanese version of the Social Science Citation Index (we propose the abbreviation “JSSCI” for this) exists.

Second, Japan’s challenges and reform trends in education research are a useful reference for Taiwan. As indicated in the following, there are numerous similarities among education research organizations, research policies, and quality-standards construction between Taiwan and Japan. Moreover, both countries face several concerns such as diploma disease (the social phenomenon regarding the excessive demand for and reliance on educational qualifications) and employment for young researchers. Thus, through an analysis of the current state and the process of institutionalization in Japanese education research, this study elucidates Japan’s strategies and implementations to serve as a reference for Taiwanese education research.

This study investigated Japan’s official education research organizations, nongovernmental education research organizations, education research agencies affiliated with higher education institutions, education research policies, education research quality indicators, education research review and evaluation mechanisms, research staff evaluation and promotion in universities and research agencies, and the cultivation of next-generation academics in universities and research agencies. This study explored the relationship between research and practice in various aspects. Moreover, through comprehensive analysis of these eight aspects, this study provides a summary of the current state and the process of institutionalization and indicates the characteristics of Japanese education research. Finally, this paper presents a conclusion and provides relevant recommendations.