

The Japanese Journal of Evaluation Studies

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General Summary of Activities

The Japanese Evaluation Society (JES) —available at www.idcj.or.jp/JES/—began publishing *The Japanese Journal of Evaluation Studies (JJES)* in 2001. The journal is published twice each year. Complete copies of each issue of *JJES* can be found at the JES web site. The complete text of most articles is in Japanese. Some articles (about 15% of all articles since 2001) are printed in English. All other articles are accompanied by an abstract in English. Each issue of *JJES* also contains an English-language index.

JJES is dominated by articles written by authors from Japanese organizations. Nearly 90% of the 64 articles published since the journal's founding are by Japanese authors. The large majority of these articles concern examples of evaluation practice, methodology, and theory as they relate to Japan.

I reviewed all issues of *JJES* and categorized each article according to Lori Wingate's (in this issue) adaptation of Michael Scriven's analogy for understanding disciplines. Wingate identified four categories of focus for journal articles—practice, methods, theory, metatheory—that I used below and one category—history—that I eliminated because no articles fit the description.

Practice issues dominated the 64 articles from the journal's first four years (50%). The practice articles dealt with a range of evaluation issues concerning Japanese government activities. Local and national government attempts to institute systems

for evaluating their policies were a consistent theme. The evaluation of development assistance programs run through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was also a popular topic.

One out of four articles concerned theory. Typically, an author would highlight a model of evaluation (utilization-focused, empowerment, etc.) and discuss how the model was being used in Japan. Another area that was prevalent under this category involved articles concerning gender equity, gender mainstreaming, or gender policy evaluation. These articles emphasized the importance of addressing gender differences when evaluating a policy or program.

I categorized fifteen articles (23.5%) as methods articles. Many of these articles addressed methodological issues around developing indicators for performance measurement. Other articles focused on methods that were helpful in evaluating gender equality in programs and policies.

The metatheory category included only one article. This article¹, one of the few English-language articles, concerned the preparation of professional evaluators. The author, James W. Altschud of Ohio State University, argues that evaluation training is more than just learning a set of methodological tools. He reviews some research on the state of evaluation training and raises several issues that need to be addressed when thinking about how we train evaluators.

¹ Altschud, J.W. (2002). The preparation of professional evaluators: Past tense and future perfect. *The Japanese Journal of Evaluation Studies*. 2(1): 1-10.