

Review of the Japanese Journal of Evaluation Study

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The Japan Evaluation Society was established in 2000. Since then, its professional journal, called *Japanese Journal of Evaluation Study (JJES)*, has been published twice a year. These issues can be downloaded from the Society's website (<http://www.idcj.or.jp/JES>).

We can clearly observe several hot issues recently discussed by Japanese evaluation professionals in the journal. In this paper, three of them discussed in the 2005 issues are explained briefly.

Methodology Development in Evaluation

Serious efforts in methodological development in evaluation can be observed. That effort can be seen in "Personal Differences in Rating" (No.5, Vo.1) written by a group of Tokyo Institute of Technology (TIT) (Okubo, Nakagaea, Dr. Muta and Mayekawa). "Rating method", which is to give a certain ratings such as A, B, C

and D, to each evaluatee and evaluand, is widely used in personnel evaluation, product evaluation, and other area of evaluation. Though its conclusion is easy to understand, some ambiguity remains. That is, different evaluators can give different ratings to the same evaluand or evaluatee, because their standards of evaluation are different. The TIT group tried to control this ambiguity. Imagine the case of entrance examination for universities. Numerous examinees take this examination. It is impossible that a single rater rate each examinee. Instead, a team of raters must be employed. Then, fluctuation of evaluative standards comes to be a concern. The TIT group tries to apply factor analysis to the common scales suggested by Allison (1987). They propose the following steps, namely (1) the use of “common raters” and (2) using raters who represent the tendency of the whole as the common raters. As shown in this research, efficient rating designs and highly reasonable rating models were examined and taken under consideration.

Evaluation as a Tool for Effective Public Sector Management

Another major issue discussed in JJES is a trial of evaluation as a tool for effective management in the public sector.

Junro NISHIDE submitted his paper titled “A New Current of Evaluation for Management in Local Government Reform— A Shift from Performance-Focused to Theory-focused Evaluation Perspective” (No.5, Vol.2. JJES) He argued that, the theory-based evaluation perspective overcomes impediments in the current practices such as so-called performance-based or outcome-based evaluation, and it

promotes the best match of evaluation purpose and implementation.

Another paper about a management tool in public sector comes from a group in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) (Oba, Sawada, Morikawa, and Tsukada). The title is “Outcome-Oriented Performance Management of Road Administration— From Theory to Practice of Management Cycle —”(No.5, Vo.1). As this title suggested, the Road Bureau of MLIT has shifted toward use of an outcome-oriented system. With an emphasis on user-oriented performance as its organizational principle, it has introduced new public management systems for road administration which use performance measurement based on outcome indicators. The paper showed their experience and future expectations.

Motonori Yoshida contributed a paper titled “Evaluation of Budget Allotment of Local Governments in Japan Based on Regional Preference Characteristics” (No.5, Vo.2). He conducted an evaluation of budget allotment by local Governments in Japan. Then he also proposes using civil servants and residents in an evaluation system as a tool to make local governments behave efficiently on the expenditure distribution.

Evaluation in Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Another hot issue discussed in JJES is improvement of evaluation practice in official development assistance (ODA). This sector has the longest history of evaluation among all public sectors in Japan. Hirono (2004) pointed out it started in 1965 informally and in 1975 as a formal governmental activity in this sector

A paper titled “Beyond Difficulties of Country Programme Evaluations -A Proposal of Practical Methodology –” (No.5, Vo.1) was submitted by Satoko Miwa, Japan International Development Agency (JICA). She argues that the shift of Japanese ODA toward results-based management has led to better review and stronger focus on aid effectiveness. Then she proposes a new practical methodology for Country Programme Evaluations. Major features of her methodology are the use of a “programme evaluation matrix” to verify 1) the relevance of interventions, 2) the aggregation of programme performance, and 3) the assessment of programme effectiveness in applying the concept of “contribution.”

In his paper entitled “Improvement in Japanese ODA Policy Evaluation-Introduction of a Comparative Analytical Framework-“(No.5, Vo.2), Yasunaga Takachiho concludes that most “policy evaluation reports” do not answer the questions of effectiveness, efficiency, and relevancy of the purpose for the use of the money. He used the comparative policy framework proposed by Dr. Hughes (AusAID) and compares the results of Policy Evaluation for both Japan’s aid and Australia’s to Pacific Island countries. He suggested that in the case of policy evaluation, we should introduce more horizontal by integrated view of evaluation.

References

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