Study of School Evaluation System in Japan
－ Focus on the perception of principals and vice-principals －

Cisse Makia
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Abstract: This study examines the perception of principals and vice-principals in the school evaluation system in Japan.　Two hundred and twenty-seven administrators of Primary, Secondary, and High schools in Ishikawa Prefecture were surveyed.　The important material for this study was gathered in Prefectural INSET conducted in 2005.　The survey was also conducted to explore the principals' perceptions of performance feedback, and utility of the evaluation process.　The data used for the study was the principals' perception in the school evaluation questionnaire developed by the researcher to measure the school management skills of Japanese principals.　The school evaluation system questionnaire used a 5-point scale for principal competencies by indicating assessment with each of the items on the following: low competency (1+2), moderate competency (3); high competency (4+5) and difficult (1+2); moderate(3); and easy(4+5).　The principals were considered to be very high competent in the area of vision for the perception in their knowledge of the tasks, the materials to be learned, and their strategies for learning to influence academic success in schools.　With the situation, they can identify and solve study problems and opportunity for self-evaluation.　The importance of the study is to determine the roles of the principals on educational quality.　The study recommends that skills must be acquired in order to evaluate the outcomes of instruction for the full of purposes.　Involving professional responsibilities and leadership, and all other tasks can add to the teaching quality.　The results provide important information about the relevance of evaluation system to principals' work, and issues to consider in implementing standard-based school evaluation system.

Key words: school administration; principal; school evaluation

1. Introduction

　　Evaluation is the center of all education quality improvement policies and strategies. Without high quality teachers is difficult for educational reform effort to be successful. High quality principal performance helps teachers to improve their performance as well as it holds them accountable for their work. For example, the evaluation in Japanese education evident since the Meiji Restoration has occurred in response to pressures for modernization.　Education had existed before the Japanese modernization, but its functions in the pre-modern period were defined in a different frame of reference from the one applied since the Meiji restoration. Education is understood in terms of its four major functions: pattern maintenance, integration, political socialization, and "adaptive" competency.　The Meiji education reforms clearly reflect our view on the developments of separation between elite and mass schooling (MEXT).

　　According to Manabu Sato (1992: 156), Japan is a paradise where school education promoted incredibly high levels of achievement. Positive evaluations of Japanese education

focus on a narrow range of factors. The role of Japanese teachers can be understood by rethinking of the teaching profession from a historical point of view. The recent trends in teacher education reform in Japan will be top-down reform to improve the variety of teachers' efforts to resolve the school crisis. Will these reforms make the teaching profession more attractive despite the new policies of improving teacher's practical competence in pre-service education? The new requirements introduced only few courses; in counseling, extracurricular activities, and teaching technology (Ibid, p.159). In fact, some argue that excellent teachers in Japan have grown primarily by means of informal voluntary study networks on in-service training in their schools. The progressive education movements in the 1920s and the late 1940s nurtured a great number of excellent teachers (Ibid, p.163).

As the assessment of administrator competencies and skills are becoming more commonplace, the expectations and challenges faced by principals are increasing (Embich, 2001) teacher satisfaction with their principals related to accessibility, support in matters of student discipline, and guidance related to curriculum implementation have been identified as critical factors in retaining highly qualified general and special education teachers (Richards, 2003). Principals who are more knowledgeable about special education, diverse learning needs, and behavior management are more likely to view inclusion practices as appropriate (Praisner, 2003). Principals must have the requisite skills to foster a collaborative school environment, model positive attitudes, solve problems, and establish effective discipline procedures (Taylor & Baker, 2002). Assisting principals in understanding special education laws and their implications for not only establishing disciplinary procedures, but also implementing proactive systems that teach and encourage appropriate behaviors is critical (Goor & Schwenn, 1997)

James H. Stronge (2006: 274) summarizes the characteristics of an effective evaluation as follows: 1) a procedure for regular evaluation of the staff development program in terms of its outcomes for both staff and students; 2) identification and analysis of problems affecting the teachers' performance; 3)deliberative processes, such as planning, evaluation and problem-solving; 4) enhancing their self-esteem and self-confidence; 5) giving managers greater control through the setting of objectives within a school development plan; 6) diagnosing student learning needs, teaching methods, and student assessment, and working with parents to improve students learning and whole school; 7) encouragement of teachers to assume leadership roles in planning and assessing professional development; and 8) career-long continuous professional development as a way of life.

Objective

From Japanese management practices at school level in the Prefecture of Ishikawa, the objective of this research is to examine the principals' perceptions of the school evaluation system as follows: 1) to assess the principals perception of the school evaluation; 2) to examine the management of the developmental appraisal system and new integrated quality management: 3) to analyze principals' instructional leadership

2. Method

The samples of the research that were the participants of Ishikawa Prefecture INSET in 2005 are made up of all the two hundred and twenty-seven principals and vice-principals of 3 level schools. The samples are made up of one hundred and ninety male and thirty-seven female persons that are selected as the administrator of each school. All the samples have a necessary teaching qualification. The samples are divided 4 groups, hundred and eight of the primary school administrators; forty-five Junior high school; sixty-three high schools; and eleven other school. Two hundred

and twenty five of the principals were experienced, having spent more than twenty years on the teaching job, while two of them were less experienced. The questionnaire of the principal perception of the school evaluation system had a total of 45 items.

The instrument is, therefore, reliable to measure the leadership competencies of school administrators. Data collected for the study was analyzed using SPSS. The crosstabs statistics was used to measure the general response of the administrators to the items in the instrument. Additional analysis of evaluation data revealed 3 overarching school level issues. First, the relation between schools and communities continue to have strong relationships between administrators and community members. Second, parents understanding what children gain from education. They consider education primarily as part of a proper upbringing. Teachers and students have a direct experience with the teaching-learning process.

Results of research

The research questions formulated for the study are presented as "What is the perception of school principal and vice principal about the school evaluation system?" The results are presented in Table 1.2.3.4

The analysis in table 1 shows that the intention of the leader (principal, vice principal) to carry out the teaching performance in his/her own school, might more clearly define the problems concerning the school. This is evident in this study that the new practices at quite a basic level in a number of schools. Principals and opportunities to learning and the evaluation result show that 47.0% respondents have the opportunity to facilitate individual staff performance for the students' achievement. On the other hand, the principal who finds difficulty in his/her building should not take it personally, but consider many factors, including the nature of relationship and the nature of the students. And, also find keeping morale high is a difficult assignment.

Table 1: Difficulties of evaluation task

| N | Change of School Management Practice | Competency areas | % / Numbers | | |
			Principals N=100	Vice-principals N=127	Total 227
1	Evaluation result used to improve educational planning and practice	Difficult	19	24.4	22
		Moderate	43	36.2	39.2
		Easy	37	37	37
2	Can clarify degree of achievement.	Difficult	23	15.8	19
		Moderate	43	37.8	40.1
		Easy	31	44.1	38.4
3	Clarity of the school tasks.	Difficult	17	15.4	15.4
		Moderate	43	40.9	41.9
		Easy	37	41	39.3
4	Clarity of the problem.	Difficult	16	15	14.5
		Easy	38	41.7	40.1
5	Rationality of school management practice	Difficult	21	22.1	21.6
		Moderate	43	53.5	48.9
		Easy	29	20.5	24.2
6	Staff moral and consciousness.	Difficult	19	30	25.2
		Moderate	48	38.6	42.7
		Easy	30	29.1	29.5
7	Teacher skills and ability.	Difficult	28	36.2	32.6
		Moderate	47	36.2	41
		Easy	22	25.2	23.8
8	Personnel confirm the results of educational practice.	Difficult	15	26.8	21.6
		Moderate	45	34.7	39.2
		Easy	38	36.3	37
9	Facility of individual staff management.	Difficult	18	19.7	19
		Moderate	48	38.6	42.7
		Easy	31	37.8	34.8
10	Personnel affairs based on performance.	Difficult	33	40.9	37.4
		Moderate	44	44.1	44.1
		Easy	21	11.8	15.8
11	Data related to the communication among school community and home.	Difficult	16	22.1	19.4
		Moderate	50	51.2	50.7
		Easy	32	23.6	27.3
12	School information.	Difficult	17	15.8	16.3
		Moderate	39	40.2	39.7
		Easy	41	41	40.9
13	Cooperation with the Board of education.	Difficult	22	29.2	26
		Moderate	57	48.8	52.4
		Easy	19	19.7	19.4
14	Respond to the reliance of parents and local resident	Difficult	17	29.9	24.3
		Moderate	53	48	50.2
		Easy	28	19.7	23.3

The analysis of this table 2, indicate a trend related to change of school management practice. But, another variable examined the number of those principals, who were directly responsible for initiating the developments in their schools. The principals had some positive impact on the quality of teaching and on students learning. But, this does not mean that they have the same management skills. For example, the evaluation results used to improve education planning and practice, the high competency principals, impact on students learning 92.1%, moderate competency 16.0% of school principals. We believe that the training of teachers is quite good compared

Table 2: Expectation of School Evaluation

N	Change of School Management Practice	Competency areas	% / Numbers		
			Principals N=100	Vice-principals N=127	Total 227
1	Evaluation result used to improve educational planning and practice.	Low	2	1.6	1.8
		Moderate	16	6.3	10.6
		High	82	92.1	87.6
2	Can clarify degree of achievement.	Low	6	2.4	3.9
		Moderate	13	14.2	13.7
		High	81	83.4	82.4
3	Clarity of the school tasks.	Low	4	1.6	1.3
		Moderate	17	12.6	14.5
		High	79	85.1	82.4
4	Clarity of the problem.	Low	3	3.2	3.1
		Moderate	18	18.1	18.1
		High	79	78.8	78.9
5	Rationality of school management practice	Low	7	11.9	9.7
		Moderate	40	48	44.5
		High	53	40.1	45.8
6	Staff moral and consciousness.	Difficult	2	4.7	3.5
		Moderate	29	18.1	22.9
		High	69	77.2	73.6
7	Teacher skills and ability.	Low	2	3.2	2.6
		Moderate	32	21.3	26
		High	66	75.6	71.3
8	Personnel confirm the results of educational practice.	Low	3	4	3.5
		Moderate	28	18.1	22.5
		High	69	77.9	74
9	Facility of individual staff management.	Low	3	4	3.5
		Moderate	29	16.5	22
		High	68	79.5	74.5
10	Personnel affairs based on performance.	Low	15	12.6	13.6
		Moderate	41	44.1	42.7
		High	44	43.3	43.6
11	Data related to the communication among school community and home.	Low	11	15.8	13.6
		Moderate	35	44.1	40.1
		High	54	40.2	46.3
12	School information.	Low	7	7.1	7
		Moderate	26	36.2	31.7
		High	67	55.9	60.8
13	Cooperation with the Board of education.	Low	11	11.8	11.4
		Moderate	51	43.3	46.7
		High	38	44.9	41.8
14	Respond to the reliance of parents and local resident	Low	5	4.7	4.8
		Moderate	31	30.7	30.8
		High	64	64.6	64.3

Table 3: Improving and maintaining high standards of education

N	School Management Process	Competency areas	% / Numbers		
			Principals N=100	Vice-principals N=127	Total 227
1	Long terms education plan.	Low	3	14.2	9.3
		Moderate	31	40.9	36.6
		High	66	44.1	53.7
2	Sting up original educational target.	Low	4	10.3	7.5
		Moderate	23	33.9	29.1
		High	73	55.2	63
3	Provision of school vision and effective method.	Low		11	6.1
		Moderate	28	36.2	32.6
		High	72	52	60.8
4	Steadfast ideas and values about education	Low	2	2.4	2.2
		Moderate	21	26.8	24.2
		High	77	69.3	72.7
5	Professional expertise of school function.	Low	4	7.9	6.1
		Moderate	54	44.1	48.5
		High	42	47.3	44.9
6	Management capability of school system.	Low	7	8.7	7.9
		Moderate	49	46.5	47.6
		High	44	44.1	44
7	Powerful leadership of instruction.	Low	6	9.5	7.8
		Moderate	31	48	40.5
		High	63	41.8	51.1
8	Vivid communication and share of school aims.	Low		8.7	4.9
		Moderate	35	33.1	33.1
		High	65	57.5	60.8
9	Evaluation quality of educational activity.	Low	3	8.7	6.2
		Moderate	38	33.1	35.2
		High	57	57.4	57.3
10	Educational structure of progress and self-learning.	Low	2	10.3	6.6
		Moderate	43	44.1	43.6
		High	53	44.9	48.5
11	Organization arrangement of educational instruction as school leader	Low	3	7.1	5.3
		Moderate	30	37	33.9
		High	65	55.1	59.5
12	(PDCA) integration between school business process and instruction.	Low	3	8.7	6.2
		Moderate	29	43.3	37
		High	66	47.3	55.5
13	Positive development of individual teacher.	Low	1	6.3	4
		Moderate	30	40.2	35.7
		High	67	52.7	59.1
14	Consultation	Low	1	8.7	5.3
		Moderate	36	19.7	26.9
		High	61	70.8	66.5
15	Provision of educational idea for all staff.	Low		11.8	6.6
		Moderate	21	40.9	32.2
		High	77	46.4	59.9

with 2.0% find it the evaluation result used to improve educational planning and practice is low. These changes of school decisions have to improve and new practices have to be put in place.

Implementing effective school management practices involve establishing effective decision-making and the organization to make it possible and implement new more effective approaches to teaching and learning. It involves new information systems, increased skills and knowledge development, and motivation with the new performances that are required.

The table 3 and 4 show that the principals play important role in the application of school efforts towards the accomplishment of school goals. Some Principals in those schools motivated teachers, created a team work in schools, and often provided a vision for the school. One important finding is that the Japanese principals see themselves as much more involved in the teachers' professional development.

This analysis, show in some schools that principals were moving away from being the instructional leaders, while in others the principal concentrated on conveying a strong instructional vision. In all restructuring schools, principals were moving towards the role of facilitator and manager of school cultures.

3. Discussion

This study shows the Japanese principals' perception to the school evaluation system; assesses its effectiveness in guiding principals' development and accountability in the performance of the values, and the relationship between evaluation ratings and school performance. The principal have a low competency, moderate competency and high

Table 4: Supervising instructional activities in the
school system.

N	Instructional Leadership	Competency areas	% / Numbers		
			Principals	Vice-principals	Total
1	Teaching observation of the basic and foundation of each subject.	Low	4	1.6	2.6
		Moderate	18	19.7	18.9
		High	75	78	76.6
2	Small group learning	Low	13	10.2	11.4
		Moderate	17	17.3	17.2
		High	66	71.6	69.2
3	Instruction related to class organization according to pupil attainment.	Low	16	16.6	16.3
		Moderate	19	19.7	19.4
		High	61	63	62.1
4	Team teachers, two or more teachers teaching a class, except (ALT).	Low	20	34.7	28.2
		Moderate	35	24.4	29.1
		High	41	40.2	40.6
5	Instructional appropriate to the individual program.	Low	2	4.7	3.5
		Moderate	26	23.6	24.7
		High	69	70.9	70.1
6	Instruct which emphasizes expansive learning more than textbook.	Difficult	5	5.6	5.3
		Moderate	23	16.5	19.4
		High	69	76.4	73.2
7	Remedial learning of those who do not adequately reach the content of textbook	Low	4	10.3	7.5
		Moderate	48	48.8	48.5
		High	45	40.2	42.3
8	Absolute evaluation is adopted academic ability evaluation.	Low	15	22.1	19
		Moderate	64	40.2	50.7
		High	18	37	28.7
9	Instruction that cultivates logical knowledge.	Low	5	6.3	5.8
		Moderate	28	29.1	28.6
		High	64	63.8	63.9
10	Lesson proper to the community.	Low	15	18.2	16.8
		Moderate	39	37	37.9
		High	43	45.2	43.7

competency in the school management
practice areas.

Some areas had a positive impact on the
quality of teaching and on students learning.
There is no area where the principals are
perceived as low competent. The general
Japanese principals have a minimum qualifica-
tion of a first degree or a Postgraduate
Diploma in education, which qualifies them to
be competent to head their schools. Each of
the principals also has a minimum of more
than ten years teaching experience at
different school levels. M. Eraut (1987:737)
claims that the notion that a school can
function as a centre for cooperative curricu-
lum development and evaluation is central to
the problem-solving paradigm, which regards
participation in such activities as one of the
most productive forms. According to Lesley K,
Megan Crawford, Colin Riches (1997: 160),
evaluation methods themselves reflect and
reveal assumptions and beliefs about the
nature of professional practice and about its

development. Indeed, the learning can be
improved by increasing professional staff
effectiveness through a performance evaluation
process that supports principals in enhancing
their strengths and accepting the challenge of
self-improvement. Performance evaluation
should be a continuous, constructive, and coop-
erative. An effective evaluation system
should identify principals' strengths and
weaknesses and provide direction for main-
taining and teacher development needs for
quality improvement, involving the knowledge
base and disseminating for good practice.
Training in the form of in-service activities,
workshops, courses or opportunity to work
side by side with other teacher educators may
be needed to ensure that teachers acquire
such knowledge and skills. Teacher educators
might well find opportunities to take on new
leadership roles and to learn how to share
their own expertise with others. Highly
developed countries are currently experiencing
surpluses of trained teachers; so they have
opportunity of selecting among applicants for
teaching profession. This kind of procedures
could be developed for helping teacher train-
ees evaluate their own suitability for the
profession and make appropriate decisions.
The principals have low competency in the
area of school management practice and eval-
uation system. Attention should be focused
on an analysis of what abilities managers need
in order to be effective and to apply appropri-
ate models and principles of organization
development and management, as well as an
understanding of education laws and policies.
In Oust's study (1993), teachers with manage-
ment responsibilities were asked to describe
the knowledge, skills and qualities they
needed to be able to carry out their main
responsibilities effectively. The study sought
to identify essential capabilities, which the
education manager requires in order to perform
effectively in key areas of management. The
principals have moderate competency in this
regard. Findings by Joseph M., Philip H
(1987: 196), reveal that the people who occupy

the principals position are willing to learn new skills and knowledge that clearly relate to the expectations attached to the position. According to him, principals are to model the learning process for the school, teachers, and students.

Principals have high competency in the area of vision for the school, time management, involvement of staff in school operations, building consensus to resolve conflicts, collaboration with families and community, respect for the rights of others and fairly treatment of students. They are able to communicate this vision to the staff and students, and have the ability to use effective strategies to implement this vision in order to promote positive school success. This study has shown that also the quality of teaching impacts on student achievement. An evaluation system should serve to assess competence of the principals and vice-principal to assure quality of education. Visiting the class discovers what is wrong, and then they can ask teachers to change certain methods of teaching. Classroom visits made by the principals, ensures that they first have to learn what is going on in the school and the class; and secondly to be helpful to the teachers. Evaluation processes also function as tools to improve management skills and knowledge by identifying strengths and weaknesses. In this role, the evaluation guides the professional development and growth of the principals.

Finally, evaluations provide specific information for employment decisions. For the primary schools in Japan, school evaluation provides a means to improve student performance by helping teachers and other staff to assess and improve their skills.

In Guinea, some school managers are not very helpful for overcoming daily difficulties. Teachers are not able to trust evaluations made by school principals who cannot present their ability in difficult situations. To solve the problem of teachers lacking teaching ability, schools need, as part of accountability, to check if each teacher has the minimum ability for pursuing their tasks and expose problematic teachers lacking qualification. Schools suggest that evaluators lacked the skills to provide valuable feedback, particularly with accomplished teachers. Evaluators, instead, use evaluation as an opportunity to work with novice teachers and to build a positive school culture rather than as an opportunity to push instructional practices to the highest levels. However, we cannot discern from our study whether this lack of skill was a cause or an effect of evaluator priorities. In other words, the perceived lack of skill in providing formative feedback to accomplished teachers was qualified by the competing, and perhaps more legitimate goal of enlisting the support of veteran teachers to the new evaluation initiative. Principals supported the new teacher evaluation system, and were willing to invest their time and effort to make it productive.

Conclusion

The study's findings recommend that the school evaluation system should provide a constructive formation of the principal performance relative to all evaluation criteria. This argument is one of considerable interest in the context of life-long education. However, the importance of evaluation, and indeed emphasizes its role in systematic and purpose learning. The school evaluation should occur continuously during the learning process, not just at convenient points. This might include evaluation through observation in actual learning setting, assessment of the extent of transfer of new learning to relevant real situation. Finally, the Japanese principals have a reputation of strong leadership. In fact, the study indicates that the teachers, students and parents clearly support school vision. Principals provide strong leadership in the community by helping to maintain a shared task, and focus for learning to facilitate the development of the school's mission and academic, social, and civic expectations. This study also shows that the principal is an extremely competent professional with high

level of work ethic who sets a positive example for the school and community as a whole.

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(Main Teacher: Toshitaka Okato)