STUNTED GROWTH OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A critical review of the integration of ESD in Japanese education reform

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Introduction

- The expansion of ESD through institutionalization
  - Integration into education policy and practice
- The implementation of ESD
  - Mass education

- Changes in education
  - Relevant policy production
  - Allocation of fund
  - Curriculum change

- Less attention is paid to probe the effects of ESD on education changes
Introduction

- The study aims to examine the integration of ESD in education reform of Japan
- The initiation of UNDESD in 2005 by proposal of Japan
- The leading movement of Japan for UNDESD
  - Collectively challenge conventional education for sustainability
  - The revision of education laws, policies in 2006
  - Integration ESD into national curriculum (UNESCO, 2012)
- 2005 – 2014 “UN decade for education for sustainable development” (UNDESD)
- It is a timely and necessary study
Literature Review

- Education - “large institutional complexes” (Meyer & Rowan, 2006:3)

- Institution - “a structure in which powerful people are committed to some value or interest” (Stinchcombe, 1968)

- Change in social structure - a matter of legitimacy as well as power (Meyer & Rowan, 2006:34)

- Economic recession and a neo-liberal wave of globalization - “high-level knowledge-based society facing intensified international competition” (MEXT, 2008)
Literature Review

- The movement for ESD - not a ‘bottom-up’ collective action of NGOs, but engineered largely by the Japanese state (Nomura & Abe, 2009)

- The revision of Education Law - “situating it within the larger global shift towards neo-liberal and neoconservative state rearrangement and the new role it conceives of for education” (Takayama, 2008:142)

- Drive of the combination of neo-liberal market fundamentalists and neo-conservative nationalists in educational changes is the global trend (Apple, 2011)
Research Questions

Main Question

▪ What are the effects of ESD on education reform in Japan?

Sub-question

▪ Is ESD reflected on the revised Education Law and policies?
▪ Is the integration of ESD in Japanese education successful?
Method

- Analytical Framework

Diagram:
- Political will
- Institutional Change
- Finance
- Legitimacy
Assumptions

1. Political will

   Political status of Japanese government significantly affect the integration of ESD in education reform. Conflicting ideas of ESD with interests of the government are filtered or screened when integrated.

2. Legitimacy

   Preference of subjects and areas of ESD closely relates with what Japan’s practical needs and interests of the government.

3. Finance

   Actual educational changes cause power and resource shift to the relevant sectors.
Findings

1. Only a certain part of the main ideas of ESD is highlighted in the education reform that is environmental education, the reform rather focuses on increasing responsibility, assessment and conservative nationalism.

2. Among many “adjectival” educations of ESD, environmental education has been one of the long-lasting and the most preferred one in Japan.

3. a) The decrease of integrated studies is observed, however, it cannot be simply interpreted as teaching hour for ESD is reduced accordingly.

   b) The government’s support has been given to groups and individuals, and largely to NGOs delivering the ESD movement.
Conclusion & Implication

- Strong evidence of the effect of ESD on the education reform were not found

- The reflection of ESD on the reform, and the integration is mostly restricted

- Environment education is clearly emphasized as it replies to the need and interest of the Japanese government and less burdensome for their neo-conservative policy line

- The integration of ESD in Japan were not truly successful mainly due to the complicated political status of Japanese government which is in between neo-liberal market fundamentalists and neo-conservative nationalists

- The state has power to mediate or even restrict the drive of global agenda, thus focusing on the complex circumstances of political intention is crucial
References


THANK YOU