

# **Policymakers Dependence on Evidence in Education Decision Making in Oyo State Ministry of Education**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated policymaker dependence on evidence in education decision making in Oyo State Ministry of Education. The study was conducted under a descriptive survey design, 44 out of the 290 policymakers of the Ministry and Board of Education across the State were purposively selected for the study. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and inferential statistics of Chi-Square were used to analyze the data. The four research questions which guided the study were answered. Findings revealed that policymakers depend on research evidence in making education decisions. Furthermore, the study also revealed that research-related factors, researcher-related factors, channel-related factors and policymakers-related factors are all determinants to the use of evidence in education decision making. Finally, the study found that policymakers are encumbered to use evidence in decision making as a result of: nature of research, researcher-related, medium-related and policymaker-related factors. Based on the findings, the study thus recommended that opportunities should be made available to practitioners and researchers to collaborate, disseminate findings, co-construct ideas, and set research agendas. Finally, that positive attitude towards commissioning and funding of policy-related research should be given top priority.

**Keywords:** policymakers, research evidence, researcher and evidence-based

## **1. Introduction**

Debates about the extent to which research influences policy, both public and institution, are well recognised. Research enhances the professional capacity and decision making quality of a planner and policymaker (Mwakapugi, 2010). In line with this, Babalola (2014) asserts that research results are the right information (options), in the right form (policy brief) available at the right time for informed decision making. This connotes that, research evidence is crucial at every step in the process of policy formulation and implementation. Research is needed to develop interventions. In other words, research findings can influence policymakers' way of thinking about their own professionalism and offer them a conceptual framework, rather than changing their behaviours and practices.

Despite all the importance of research results described above, serious questions remains: is the information really being transferred from the people who have it (researchers) to the people who need it (policymakers)? Do policymakers find research evidence useful or do they base their major decisions on research evidences? And if so, is it making a difference? These are difficult questions to answer. Among other things, researchers complain that well established, unambiguous findings from impeccably designed studies are regularly ignored by policymakers. This is in line with Stevens (2004) who states that policy-makers have not always find it easy to identify their needs or to aggregate the demands from various sources. In turn, policy makers complain that decision making is impeded by conflicting findings and disagreement among researchers, as well as opaque and esoteric research reports. Supporting this statement, Kaestle (1993), describes educational research as having an 'awful reputation'. Berliner (2002) defines it as 'the hardest-to-do-science', which lacks credibility (Burkhardt & Schoenfeld, 2003). Badley (2003) concludes that educational research is in a crisis, while Kennedy (1997) states that 'the main thing we have learned from educational research is that we have not learned much from educational research. Englert and Tarrant (1993) conclude that innovations proposed by educational researchers remain in journals rather than in the hands of teachers and students in the classroom.

Moreover, discrepancies of timing, low status of researchers compared to those they are trying to influence; and the different ways of viewing the world (values, language, interests etc) have been claimed to be among the reasons that make it obvious that sometimes research is not designed to be relevant to policy (Stevens 2004). Most importantly, policy research can impact policymaking significantly, not necessarily on discrete choices or in the linear sequence that researchers and donors would like to see. Research is only one of many competing sources of information, which, as suggested by a descriptive review of the policy process, is itself only one of many factors that affect the final policy decision. Thus, research information provides a diffuse 'enlightenment' function, providing an understanding and interpretation of the data and the situation that is critical to the policy decision (Weiss 1977, Webber 1991, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

It is interesting to note that certain conditions must be met before using any research findings as evidence in making educational decision. According to Denise (2015) there are five main determinants that impact whether or not evidence will be used in decision making, and it was found that these variables are simply different sides of the same concept. To practice in an evidence-based manner, a policymaker needs a positive

work environment, time to use or create evidence, a positive outlook, ongoing education and training, and access to relevant information. Attention must be paid to these factors if policymaker wishes to nurture evidence-based policy as a part of practice. Denise (2015) findings confirm the results of the study conducted by Hiller, Kyrillidou and Self, who found that a supportive organizational culture was critical to successful assessment and evidence use. They further noted that, organizational dynamics emerged as the most important determinant of evidence use. Another key determinant found in Denise's study confirms the findings of Turner, that time constraints are a major reason for not using research in practice. While the Turner study focused on research, and the current study included research as well as other forms of evidence, in both cases, time was a major determinant toward evidence use. The personal outlook determinant has not been identified as a major factor in previous studies, although elements of it did occur in the non-research articles that were included in Booth's synthesis of the literature. Similarly, Moseley and Tierney (2004) when investigating the problems relating to the implementation of evidence-based policy (EBP) noted that implicit to the idea of relevance is the need for the evidence to be generalisable. This refers to whether there is extensive information or just selective case studies and therefore how easily applicable the argument is. It also relates to the way in which we make inferences.

In addition, Babalola, J. B and Babalola, J. A. (1997) cited in Babalola (2014) noted that, encumbrances in linking research to policymaking and planning could be conceived under four major links. These are: Research-related challenges, Researcher – related challenges, Policymaker – related challenges and Channel – related challenges. Similarly, March (1994), found that ambiguity of evidence also shapes its use. Ambiguous evidence, by definition, may be rendered in manifold rightful ways and such interpretations generally are not reconciled by additional information. The greater the ambiguity of the evidence, then the greater the likelihood that policymakers/administrators may interpret it differently and frustrate reform goals (Kennedy, 1982) Corcoran et al., (2001) noted that some administrators report that such ambiguity delays or impedes their decision making because it means the evidence does not provide clear guides for action. On the flipside, studies also suggest that the ambiguity of evidence can enable its use. For example, Kennedy (1982) analyzed administrators' responses to the evaluation of a pilot program in which the evaluator constructed findings in a way that allowed readers to "freely infer what they wanted" about the degree to which the findings supported their position. She revealed that ambiguity about program success enabled incorporation by allowing various people to see their position in the findings and to move ahead with the program.

The researchers as well observed that policymakers based more of their decisions on experiences, intuitions, personal ideas and senior colleagues' suggestions than they depend on research evidence. However, in this study, effort shall be made to investigate the extent to which policymakers depend on evidence in making education decisions, as against perceived total neglects of policymakers on dependence and use of evidence in making decisions by the researchers. It is against this background that, this study is concerned with policymakers' dependence on evidence in education decision making in Oyo State Ministry of Education, Nigeria.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

One becomes more worried when research that should improve quality of decision making is not found useful and relevant to practice. Also, decision makers on their ends are not helping the matter by sitting in the comfort of their offices, not ready to labour in consulting research evidences in making major education decisions. The innovations proposed by educational researchers remain in journals rather than in the hands of policymakers, administrators, teachers and students in the school system. Others argued that researchers do research for themselves. Accesses to research evidences are other problem encountered by policy makers. It appears that policymakers often resort to their intuitions and ideologies while making major education decision and this has not make a significant impact on our educational system. This study therefore, is designed to investigate policymaker dependence on evidence in education decision making in Oyo State Ministry of Education, Nigeria.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to find out the policymakers dependence on evidence in education decision making in Oyo State Ministry of Education. Specifically, the study aims at finding out: policymaker dependence on evidence-based decisions, the types of decision requiring evidence and types they say does not require an evidence, determinants of the use of evidence in decision making at the Ministry and Board of Education levels and the likely encumbrances between research evidence and policymakers at the Ministry and Board of Education levels.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions are generated to guide this study.

1. Do ministry policymakers care to base their decisions on research evidence? Do they desire to base their decisions on research evidence?

2. If yes, to what extent do policy makers at the Ministry depend on research evidence before taking decisions? Which type of decision do they say requires research evidence and which type do they say does not require an evidence?
3. If yes, what are the determinants for wanting to base their decisions on research evidence?
4. If not, why not? Could it be as a result of any of: i) nature of research, ii) researcher- related, iii) medium- related or iv) policy maker related factors?

## 2. Research Design

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. This research method will be considered appropriate because of its merit, which suits a study of this nature. The target population for this study consist all the 290 policymakers of the Ministry and Board of Education across the State. This involves all the education officers, between Grade Level 13 to 16, who take part in major decision making processes on education matters in the State. Details of the population are presented in the table below:

**Table 2.1: the list of the policymakers at the Ministry and Board levels of Education across the State**

S/N	PRESENT STATION (HQ/OUT STATION)	NUMBER(S) OF POLICYMAKER(S)
1	HEAD QUARTERS (QH)	58
2	SUBEB	16
3	ZIE	5
4	BOTAVED	6
5	SOS	15
6	AANFE	9
7	SCHOLARSHIP BOARD	1
8	WESCOS	7
9	PQSI	2
10	LIE	30
11	ZEO	7
12	SCIENCE & INDUSTRY	1
13	LEO	70
14	GTC	7
15	GCI	2
16	WATSAN	1
17	QUEEN SCHOOL	3
18	ZEO	10
19	OTHERS (UNSPECIFIED)	40
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>290</b>

**Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education (DPR&S)**

The study used a purposeful sample of policymakers with a total of nine (9) Stations from across the State. The nine participant stations were geographically distributed across the State. They all work in decision making positions, identify themselves as policymakers and work in the variety of roles and matters. The selected participants' numbers of years of experience as policymakers varied widely ranging from five years to more than thirty years. They include experienced policymakers nearing retirement, while others had very few years of experience and recently begun new positions. Also, sizeable numbers of them are new in their departments and grade levels as decision makers. Thereafter, the researcher selected 20% from each Station. The names of the nine (9) selected stations and 20% of the policymakers selected from each station are shown in the table below:

**Table 2.2: the list of the nine (9) selected Stations and 20% of the policymakers in each selected Station at the Ministry and Board levels of Education across the State**

S/N	SELECTED STATIONS (HQ/OUT STATION)	NUMBER(S) OF POLICYMAKERS	20% OF THE SELECTED(9) STATIONS
1	HEAD QUARTERS (QH)	58	12
2	SUBEB	16	3
3	ZIE	5	1
4	BOTAVED	6	1
5	SOS	15	3
6	AANFE	9	2
7	LIE	30	6
8	LEO	70	14
9	ZEO	10	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>44</b>

Based on the above table, 44 respondents were selected as the sample size for the study.

### 2.1 Research Instrument

The instrument that was used to collect data for this study was a self-developed structured questionnaire titled “The policymakers’ dependence on evidence in education decision making”. The questionnaire has sections A, B, C, D and E. Section A of the questionnaire was used to collect demographic data of the policymakers. Section B of the questionnaire contained items on the dependence of the policymakers on basing their decisions on research evidence. Section C of the questionnaire contained items on the extent to which policymakers depend on research evidence before taking decisions and the type of decision they say require research evidence and those that do not. Section D of the questionnaire contained items on the motivational factors for wanting to base decision on research evidence, while section E of the questionnaire contained items on the encumbrances of using research evidence. The instruments were designed in line with the Likert type scale.

### 2.2 Procedure for Data Collection

The instrument was administered personally. The policymakers were approached in their respective offices to administer the questionnaire. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. The administration of the instrument was to ensure a high rate of return and also enable the respondents to ask questions and obtain clarification on the issues that may appear not clear to them or that need explanation.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Research Question One: Do Ministry policymakers care to base their decisions on research evidence? Do they desire to base their decisions on research evidence?

**TABLE 3.1: SHOWING POLICYMAKERS CARE FOR BASING THEIR DECISIONS ON RESEARCH EVIDENCE**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Df	P
1	The use of research evidence is not contestable	20 45.5%	17 38.6%	5 11.3%	1 2.3%	1 2.3%	17.091	7	.017
2	Utilization of research evidence in policymaking can contribute to policies that may eventually lead to desired outcomes	18 40.9%	24 54.6%	2 4.5%	0 0%	0 0%			
3	Despite the difficulties involved in reaching research evidences, it is more appropriate in making informed decisions (policies)	21 47.7%	21 47.7%	2 4.5%	0 0%	0 0%			
4	Research evidence are facts and figures necessary for making informed decisions	29 65.9%	12 27.3%	3 6.8%	0 0%	0 0%			
5	Research evidences are useful especially to prevent the use of rule of thumb and sheer waste of resources, time, etc.	19 43.2%	24 54.5%	1 2.3%	0 0%	0 0%			

Table 3.1 shows the opinion of respondents whether or not policymakers care for basing their decisions

on research evidence. On item 1, 20 (45.5%) respondents strongly agreed and 17 (38.6%) agreed that the use of research evidence is not contestable, while 1 (2.3%) and 1 (2.3%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item two elicited responses from the respondents whether, utilization of research evidence in policymaking can contribute to policies that may eventually lead to desired outcomes. 18(40.9%) and 24(54.6%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while 0(0.0%) and 0(0.0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Items three on table 3.1 elicited responses from the respondents on whether or not despite the difficulties involved in reaching research evidences, it is more appropriate in making informed decisions (policies). 21 (47.7%) and 21 (47.7%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 0 (0%) and 0 (0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item 4, shows the view of respondents on whether or not research evidence are facts and figures necessary for making informed decisions. 29 (65.9%) and 12 (27.3%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 0 (0 %) and 0 (0 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item five elicited responses from the respondents about their opinion whether research evidences are useful especially to prevent the use of rule of thumb and sheer waste of resources, time, etc. 19 (43.2%) and 24 (54.5%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 0 (0%) and 0(0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed to this statement. Finally, the results from Table 3.1 shows that Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 17.091,  $df = 7$  and  $p = 0.017$ . Since  $p < 0.05$  it implies that policymakers care to base their decisions on research evidence and the researcher concludes that policymakers at the Ministry and its Out Stations care to base their decisions on research evidences.

**3.2 Research Question Two:** If yes, to what extent do policy makers at the ministry depend on research evidence before taking decisions? Which type of decision do they say requires research evidence and which type do they say does not require an evidence?

**TABLE 3.2: SHOWING DEPENDENCE LEVEL ON EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION DECISION MAKING**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Df	P
1	Policymakers do consult research evidence before making decisions	14 31.8%	20 45.5%	6 13.6%	3 6.8%	1 2.3%	21.591	12	.042
2	Policymakers make decisions based on research evidences	9 20.4%	23 52.3%	8 18.2%	4 9.1%	0 0%			
3	Making informed policies on education involved research evidence	7 15.9%	28 63.6%	8 18.2%	1 2.3%	0 0%			
4	Making education decision in the Ministry/Board does not require evidence at all time.	8 18.2%	15 34.1%	8 18.2%	7 15.9%	6 13.6%			
5	There are few decisions that require research evidence in making.	12 27.3%	6 13.6%	10 22.7%	9 20.5%	7 15.9%			

Table 3.2 shows the opinion of respondents on the extent to which policy makers at the ministry depend on research evidence before taking decisions? Types of decision they said it require research evidence and which types they said do not require evidence? On item 1 shows that 14 (31.8%) strongly agreed and 20 (45.5%) agreed that policymakers do consult research evidence before making decisions, while 3 (6.8%) and 1 (2.3%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item two elicited responses from the respondents whether policymakers make decisions based on research evidences. 9 (20.4%) and 23(52.3%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 4(9.1%) and 0(0.0%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed to this statement. Items three on table 3.2 elicited response from the respondents on whether or not making informed policies on education involved research evidence. 7(15.9%) and 28 (63.6%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while 1 (2.3%) and 0 (0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Item 4, shows the view of respondents on whether or not making education decision in the Ministry/Board does not require evidence at all time. 8 (18.2%) and 15 (34.1%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while 7 (15.9%) and 6 (13.6%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Item five elicited responses from the respondents about their opinion whether there are few decisions that require research evidence in making. 12 (27.3%) and 6 (13.6%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 9 (20.5%) and 7 (15.9%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed to this statement. Finally, table 3.2 shows that Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 21.591,  $df = 12$  and  $p = .042$ . Since  $p < 0.05$  it implies that policymakers depend on research evidence in making education decisions and the researcher concludes that policymakers across Oyo State Ministry of Education and her Out Stations depend on research evidences in making education decisions.



**3.3 Research Question Three:** If yes, what are the determinants for wanting to base their decisions on research evidence?

Answers to research question three are contained in the tables 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 below:

**TABLE 3.3.1: SHOWING DETERMINANT OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION DECISION MAKING – RESEARCH RELATED FACTORS**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$z^2$	Df	P
1	Correctness of research design and method determines whether or not to use evidence in decision making.	15 34.1%	16 36.4%	6 13.6%	6 13.6%	1 2.3%	15.727	8	.046
2	The levels of contradictory evidences on the same or similar problems determine the use of evidence by the policymakers.	16 36.4%	23 52.2%	4 9.1%	1 2.3%	0 0%			
3	Time lag between the demand for evidence and the release of a commissioned research determine the use of such evidence.	11 25.0%	24 54.6%	7 15.9%	2 4.5%	0 0%			
4	Relevance of technical (research) evidence is another determinant whether evidence is useful or not.	15 34.1%	22 50.0%	6 13.6%	1 2.3%	0 0%			

Table 3.3.1 shows the opinion of respondents on the determinant of the use of evidence in education decision making– research related factors. On item 1, 15(34.1%) respondents strongly agreed and 16 (36.4%) agreed that correctness of research design and method determines whether or not to use evidence in decision making, while the 6 (13.6%) and 1 (2.3%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In item two, researchers asked the respondents if the levels of contradictory evidences on the same or similar problems determine the use of evidence by the policymakers. Majority of the respondents 16(36.4%) and 23(52.2%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while, 1(2.3%) and 0 (0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Item three elicited responses from the respondents on whether or not time lag between the demand for evidence and the release of a commissioned research determine the use of such evidence. 11 (25.0%) and 24 (54.6%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 2 (4.5%) and 0(0.0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Lastly on table 3.3.1, item 4 shows that 15 (34.1%) and 22 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that relevance of technical (research) evidence is another determinant whether evidence is useful or not while, 1 (2.3%) and 0(0.0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Finally, the results from Table 3.3.1 shows that Chi-Square ( $z^2$ ) value is 51.727, df = 8 and p = .046. Since  $p < 0.05$  it implies that research related factors are determinants to the use of evidence in education decision making. Hence, the researcher concludes that research related factors (such as Correctness of research design and method, The levels of contradictory evidences on the same or similar problems, Relevance of technical (research) evidence, and Time lag between the demand for evidence and the release of a commissioned research) are determinants of the policymakers across Oyo State Ministry of Education and her Out Stations for wanting to base their decisions on research evidence.

**TABLE 3.3.2: SHOWING DETERMINANT OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION DECISION MAKING–RESEARCHER-RELATED FACTORS**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$z^2$	Df	P
1	Levels of agreement among researchers on the same or similar problems determine the use of evidence by the policymakers.	16 (36.4%)	23 52.2%	4 9.1%	1 2.3%	0 0%	21.909	9	.009
2	Degree of investigation carried out by researcher determines utility values of research evidence.	22 50.0%	16 36.4%	4 9.1%	2 4.5%	0 0%			
3	Extent of moral weakness (such as copy and paste, plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, etc) determines the use of research evidence by decision-makers.	16 36.4%	19 43.2%	8 18.2%	1 2.3%	0 0%			
4	Non-audience (users) approach to doing research owing to the failure of researchers to conceptualize their research within the framework of utilization by policymakers can determine its usage.	16 36.4%	22 50.0%	6 13.6%	0 0%	0 0%			

Table 3.3.2 shows the opinion of respondents on the determinant of the use of evidence in education decision making–researcher-related factors. On item 1, majority of the respondents 16(36.4%) strongly agreed and 23 (52.2%) agreed that levels of agreement among researchers on the same or similar problems determine the use of evidence by the policymakers, while 1 (2.3%) and 0 (0 %) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively meaning that they are of the opinion that levels of agreement among researchers on the same or similar problems do not determine the use of evidence by the policymakers. In item two, researchers also asked the respondents if the degree of investigation carried out by researcher determines utility values of research evidence. Majority of the respondents 22 (50 %) and 16 (36.4%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while 2(4.5%) and 0 (0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Item three also elicited responses from the respondents on whether or not extent of moral weakness (such as copy and paste, plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, etc) determines the use of research evidence by decision-makers. Majority of the respondents 16 (36.4%) and 19 (43.2%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 1 (2.3%) and 0(0.0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Lastly, item 4 shows that 16 (36.4%) and 22 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that non-audience (users) approach to doing research owing to the failure of researchers to conceptualize their research within the framework of utilization by policymakers can determine its usage, while 0 (0 %) and 0 (0 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement.

Finally, the results from Table 3.3.2 shows that Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 21.909,  $df = 9$  and  $p = .009$ . Since  $p < 0.05$  it implies that researcher-related factors are determinants to the use of evidence in education decision making. Hence, the researcher concludes that researcher-related factors (such as Levels of agreement among researchers on the same or similar problems, Degree of investigation carried out by researcher, Extent of moral weakness, failure of researchers to conceptualize their research within the framework of utilization by policymakers, etc) are determinants of the policymakers across Oyo State Ministry of Education and her Out Stations for wanting to base their decisions on research evidence.

**TABLE 3.3.3: SHOWING DETERMINANT OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION DECISION MAKING – CHANNEL-RELATED FACTORS**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Df	P
1	Adequacy of information (evidence) needs of policymakers is a determinant to making use of evidence in decision making in education.	15 34.1%	23 52.3%	5 11.4v	1 2.3%	0 0%	16.545	8	.035
2	Hierarchical structure of the Organisation can determine the flow of and use of evidence in decision making.	16 (36.4%)	22 50.0%	6 13.6%	0 0%	0 0%			
3	Lack of functional networks to link policymakers with relevant research findings in institutes, universities, NGOs and web-based repositories both inside and outside country can determine the use of evidence.	14 31.8%	23 52.3%	4 9.1%	2 4.5%	1 2.3%			
4	Lack of policy-specific media (functional library) and sponsored media programmes to project new scientific information for national policies can determine the use of evidence in policy making.	15 34.1%	23 52.3%	3 6.8%	2 4.5%	1 2.3%			

Table 3.3.3 shows the opinion of respondents on the determinant of the use of evidence in education decision making– channel-related factors. On item 1, 15(34.1%) respondents strongly agreed and 23 (52.2%) agreed that adequacy of information (evidence) needs of policymakers is a determinant to making use of evidence in decision making in education, while 1 (2.3%) and 0 (0 %) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In item two, researchers asked the respondents if the hierarchical structure of the Organisation can determine the flow of and use of evidence in decision making. 16 (36.4%) and 22 (50%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 0(0 %) and 0 (0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item three also elicited responses from the respondents on whether or not lack of functional

networks to link policymakers with relevant research findings in institutes, universities, NGOs and web-based repositories both inside and outside country can determine the use of evidence. 14 (31.8%) and 23 (52.3%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 2 (4.5%) and 1 (2.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Lastly, item 4 shows that 15 (34.1%) and 23 (52.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that lack of policy-specific media (functional library) and sponsored media programmes to project new scientific information for national policies can determine the use of evidence in policy making, while 2 (4.5 %) and 1 (2.3 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Finally, the results from Table 3.3.3 shows that Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 16.545,  $df = 8$  and  $p = .035$ . Since  $p < 0.05$  it implies that channel-related factors are determinants to the use of evidence in education decision making. Hence, the researcher concludes that channel-related factors (such as Lack of functional networks to link policymakers with relevant research findings, Lack of policy-specific media and sponsored media programmes to project new scientific information) are determinants of policymakers across Oyo State Ministry of Education and her Out Stations for wanting to base their decisions on research evidence.

**TABLE 3.3.4: SHOWING DETERMINANT OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION DECISION MAKING–POLICYMAKERS-RELATED FACTORS**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Df	P
1	Competency and analytical capacity of policymakers is one of the major determinants of the use of evidence in making education decisions	13 29.5%	26 59.1%	1 2.3%	3 6.8%	1 2.3%	32.909	8	.000
2	Ability to correctly diagnose education problems/challenges determines the use of evidence by policymakers.	13 29.5%	25 56.8%	4 9.1%	1 2.3%	1 2.3%			
3	Attitude towards commissioning and funding of policy-related research by decision makers determines the availability and usability of research evidence.	9 20.5%	27 61.4%	4 9.1%	2 4.5%	2 4.5%			
4	Education and training is another determinant that affects policymakers' well-informed decisions.	18 40.9%	19 43.2%	4 9.1%	3 6.8%	0 0%			

Table 3.3.4 shows the opinion of respondents on the determinant of the use of evidence in education decision making– policymakers-related factors. On item 1, 13(29.5%) strongly agreed and 26 (59.1%) agreed that competency and analytical capacity of policymakers is one of the major determinants of the use of evidence in making education decisions, while 3 (6.8%) and 1 (2.3 %) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item two shows that, 13 (29.5%) and 25 (56.8%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 1 (2.3 %) and 1 (2.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item three also elicited responses from the respondents on whether or not attitude towards commissioning and funding of policy-related research by decision makers determines the availability and usability of research evidence. 9 (20.5%) and 27 (61.4%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 2 (4.5%) and 2 (4.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Lastly, item 4 shows that 18 (40.9%) and 19 (43.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 3 (6.8 %) and 0 (0 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Finally, the results from Table 3.3.4 shows that Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 32.909,  $df = 8$  and  $p = .000$ . Since  $p < 0.05$  it implies that policymakers-related factors are determinants to the use of evidence in education decision making. Hence, the researcher concludes that policymakers-related factors (such as, Competency and analytical capacity of policymakers, Ability to correctly diagnose education problems/challenges, Education and training, etc ) are determinants of policymakers across Oyo State Ministry of Education and her Out Stations for wanting to base their decisions on research evidence.



**TABLE 4: SHOWING ENCUMBRANCES OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN DECISION MAKING**

No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Df	P
1	The ambiguity and terminology of research languages put policymakers off in basing decision on research evidence.	17 38.6%	16 36.3%	9 20.5%	1 2.3%	1 2.3%	8.591	12	.737
2	Research evidences are not related/relevant to issues at the Ministry/Board of Education levels in.	11 25.0%	14 31.8%	13 29.5%	5 11.4%	1 2.3%			
3	Research evidences are not accessible to policymakers.	12 27.3%	13 29.5%	8 18.2%	6 13.6%	5 11.4%			
4	There are few or no medium that disseminates research evidences to policymakers	18 40.9%	10 22.7%	10 22.7%	5 11.4%	1 2.3%			
5	Policymakers are too busy to go out for information (evidences) but rather sit at the comfort of their offices and rely on their experiences and intuitions.	13 29.5%	17 38.6%	9 20.5%	3 6.8%	2 4.5%			

Table 4 shows the opinion of respondents on encumbrances of the use of evidence in decision making

On item 1, majority of the respondents 17(38.6%) strongly agreed and 16 (36.3%) agreed that ambiguity and terminology of research languages put policymakers off in basing decision on research evidence, while 1(2.3%) and 1(2.3%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item two reveals that 11 (25.0%) and 14(31.8%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 5(11.4%) and 1(2.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Items three on table 4 also elicited response from the respondents on whether or not research evidences are not accessible to policymakers. 12(27.3%) respondents and 13(29.5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while 6(13.6%) and 5(11.4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Item 4, also shows the view of respondents. Majority of the respondents, 18(40.9%) and 10 (22.7%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 5(11.4%) and 1(2.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Item five shows that 13(29.5%) and 17(38.6%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 3(6.8%) and 2(4.5%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Finally, table 4 shows that Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 8.091,  $df = 12$  and  $p = 0.737$ . Since  $p > 0.05$  it implies that policymakers are encumbered to use evidence in decision making. Hence, policymakers at the Ministry and its Out Stations are encumbered to use evidence in decision making as a result of; nature of research, researcher-related, medium- related and policy maker related factors.

#### 4. Discussions

The findings from this study revealed that the policymakers care to base their decisions on research evidence. This result is not surprising as it corroborates the work of Angela, et al (2009), which posited that all the interviewed policymakers were involved in use of evidence for planning, budgeting, and reporting activities as part of their key roles and functions. Based on the finding of this study, it is evidently showed that policymakers cared to base their decisions on evidence(s). However, some of the respondents are of the opinion that policymakers do not care to base their decision on any research evidence. The implication of the finding of this study is that policies formulated will be reliable, relevant and a sort of panacea to the yearnings and felt needs of the society on education matters and also savage wastes of meager resources available to education sector in the State. In addition, the study showed that research related factors are determinants to the use of evidence in education decision making (Factors like correctness of research design and method, the levels of contradictory evidences on the same or similar problems, relevance of technical (research) evidence, and Time lag between the demand for evidence and the release of a commissioned research). For instance, Shaxon in Denise, (2015) affirmed that, the key determinants of whether or not research evidence will be used in decision making are: Quality / accuracy / objectivity, credibility of evidence, relevance and practicality. This is in consonance with the finding of this study. The implication of the finding of this study is that researchers, while caring out their researches should be mindful of designs and methods to be used with a bid to make the work users friendly. Also, research should not be carried out for research sake, but must be relevant to practice. Finally, findings showed that policymakers are encumbered to use evidence in decision making as a result of; nature of research,

researcher- related and medium- related factors. This result is in line with Ruben and Johan (2010) study, which found that, burden between educational research and practice, is a more complex and differentiated phenomenon than commonly assumed in the literature. According to them, educational researchers handle too few questions of practical relevance and that many researchers speak and write in a language that is unintelligible to practitioners. Similarly, Babalola, J. B and Babalola, J. A. in Babalola (2014) noted that, encumbrances in linking research to policymaking and planning could be conceived under four major links. These are: Research–related challenges, Researcher – related challenges, Policymaker – related challenges and Channel – related challenges. Ambiguity of evidence also shapes its use. The implication of the finding of this study is that policymakers will continue to rely on their intuitions, experiences, and other sources of information which hitherto has yielded little or no positive impact on education decisions. Hence, policymakers must come out of their comfort zones, put all hindrances behind and seek for relevant research evidences that will promote good policy decisions.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined policymaker dependence on evidence in education decision making in the Ministry and Board levels of Education. The study found that policymakers depend on research evidence in education decision making in Oyo State as against what some researchers earlier noted elsewhere. Based on the outcome of this study, it becomes evident that dependence on research evidence can promote good decision makings and professionalism of the policymakers. Also, utilization of research evidence in policymaking could contribute immensely to policies that would eventually lead to desired outcomes. However, there are some challenges in accessing and using these research evidences. These among other things include; ambiguity and terminology of research languages, no relatedness/irrelevance of research evidences to issues and practices at the Ministry/Board of Education levels, non accessibility of research evidences, few or no medium that disseminates research evidences and policymakers are too busy to go out for information. It is therefore no doubt that dependence on research evidence in making education decision, will make the sector achieve a great feat in satisfying yearnings of the society on education matters.

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Accessibility of users to the existing scientific information in a simple and understandable manner through empowerment of DPRS to soften hard reports; adequate policy-oriented workshops, conferences and dialogues to discuss policy brief and empower workers (introduce regular policy-oriented meetings); provision of functional networks to link policymaking (policy makers) and planning (planners) with relevant research findings in institutes, universities, NGOs and web-based repositories both inside and outside (Provide incentives for DPRS to network) and ; provision of policy-specific media (functional library) and sponsored media programmes to project new scientific information for national policies.

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